

Your Inner Islands: The Keys to Intuitive Living



By Will Tuttle, Ph.D.

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Table of Contents

Song List for <i>Islands of Light</i>, accompanying piano music	2
Acknowledgments	3
Prologue: Intuition and the Islands of Light	4
Chapter 1: The Island of Understanding	8
Chapter 2: The Island of Energy	27
Chapter 3: The Island of Meditation	49
Chapter 4: The Island of Imagination	72
Chapter 5: The Island of Relationship	86
Chapter 6: The Island of Compassion	110
Epilogue: The Intuitive Imperative	118
Final Blessing	121

(Original watercolor paintings for Chapter 4 by Madeleine Tuttle)

Islands of Light

Compact Disc of Original Piano Music by Will Tuttle

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Song List

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|------|----------------------|
| 1. | Song of Understanding | 3:22 | Em, G |
| 2. | Dance of Light | 3:30 | B ^b m, Gm |
| 3. | Song of B-flat | 3:16 | E ^b |
| 4. | Song of Inner Spaces | 3:20 | Dm |

Fantasia in F Major

- | | | | |
|----|------------|------|---------|
| 5. | Vivace | 3:15 | F |
| 6. | Tempestoso | 3:32 | Dm |
| 7. | Pastorale | 2:52 | F |
| 8. | Trionfale | 4:14 | F, D, F |

Songs from an Art Garden

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|-------|--------|
| 9. | Lost Island | 2:38 | Em, G |
| 10. | Emerging Jewel | 3:02 | Em |
| 11. | Inner Doorway | 3:22 | Em |
| 12. | Time Beyond Time | 4:08 | Fm, Dm |
| 13. | Interbeing | 3:09 | G |
| 14. | The Arrival | 2:57 | F |
| 15. | Song of the Truth-Field | 4:38 | G |
| 16. | Dance of the Jeweled Web | 3:40 | Em, G |
| 17. | Song of Returning Home | 4:21 | C |
| 18. | Song of the Caring Earth | 3:55 | D |
| | Total Time | 63:53 | |

Acknowledgments

This book, and the music and art that accompany it, constitute a multimedia course of study for developing the spiritual faculty of intuition, and I'd like to thank those who have helped bring it to fruition. This course has grown out of the classes, workshops, seminars, and retreats I've been facilitating over the past 20 years.

For six years, during and after my Ph.D. work at the University of California, Berkeley, I taught a variety of college courses in which I was able to present many of the ideas and exercises in this book, and I'd like to thank all of the students of those classes for their valuable input. I am especially indebted to James Jarrett of the U.C. Berkeley Graduate School of Education, and to Joseph Axelrod of the San Francisco State University Department of Humanities.

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Prologue: Intuition and the Islands of Light

Islands of Light lie within us, sanctuaries of understanding, peace, and power, and when we discover these inner islands and spend time exploring them, we find that our intuition grows stronger within us, giving us keys to living more fully, freely, wisely, and joyfully on this earth. This book is about the journey we can make to discover these islands, and about the process and rewards of developing our intuitive resources.

There is perhaps no greater gift we can give ourselves than cultivating our intuition. Intuitive knowing is the doorway to wisdom because it opens our connectedness with an inner power that transcends conditioning, self-preoccupation, and outside authority. What could be more valuable than a reliable source of guidance in our daily lives that supports us in fulfilling the deepest desires of our heart and unfolding the highest potential within us for understanding and blessing our world?

Intuition is tuition from within. Unlike conventional rational forms of knowing that are based on dividing and comparing, and a basic separation between the knower and what is known, intuition is inner and non-dual, and is associated with enhanced creativity, spirituality, and healing. When we intuit, we go “into it,” and the “we” and the “it” merge in direct knowing. While rational knowing is outer and trackable, intuition flowers in inner silence and receptivity, and is neither objective nor linear. Yet it is precious, beguiling, and stands beckoning at doorways that insistently call to us, a mysterious and yet completely natural way of knowing that can provide valuable guidance on our spiritual path and in our daily lives.

How do we cultivate intuition? What are the keys to intuitive living? Intuitive understandings are often best expressed through allegory. In this book we’ll explore these questions by embarking on an allegorical adventure of discovery, using an ancient Buddhist metaphor for spiritual awakening, that of crossing. Enlightenment in this tradition is seen as a crossing from This Shore to the Other Shore. This Shore represents our current state of intuitive and spiritual development, and the Other Shore is our fully awakened potential, in which we become living expressions of the freedom, peace,

compassion, intuitive wisdom, and creative exuberance that are our potential, and that we can vaguely glimpse from This Shore.

Even though a seemingly vast ocean separates us from the Other Shore, there are inner islands of inspiration and understanding that will help us as we make our crossing. These islands beyond the horizon of our knowing are the fabled Islands of Light, also known as the Lost Islands, enigmatic sanctuaries of revelation and spiritual power, and they will be vital connecting points on our journey toward the Other Shore. Each island, it is said, bears unique gifts that can encourage another petal of our intuitive potential to unfold.

In addition to the language of words, which expresses ideas through allegory and verbal concepts, we will be using the languages of music and art as well, weaving words and music together throughout the journey of this book. The music is contained on the accompanying compact disc, *Islands of Light*, which has eighteen pieces of original piano music composed and performed for this book by the author. Reproductions of watercolor paintings created for the chapter on imagination are included as well. Music and art have long been recognized as languages of intuition, and as our intuition opens, we become better able to receive messages through their nonverbal rhythms, harmonies, melodies, and images. As we practice being receptive to the messages encoded in music and art, we become more sensitive to the hidden connections between our inner and outer worlds. Opening to inspired music and art can feed our intuitive muse.

As we journey toward the Other Shore and discover the Islands of Light, we travel within to places of more expanded and connected awareness where intuitive knowing can untangle, clarify, and illuminate our struggles, questions, and concerns, and bring the peace of higher understanding to our hearts. Besides guiding us in our spiritual evolution, intuition points the way to choosing wisely in our personal affairs, relationships, and careers, and inspires us with fresh insights for our creative projects and inspiration for our daily lives. With time we realize that we have no greater friend and ally than intuition, and that this inner knowing is essential in guiding us to higher levels of understanding and freedom. We recognize that our cultural upbringing has mostly ignored this valuable inner resource, and has failed to teach us how to cultivate intuition

as a vital human potential. It is a source not merely of outer success but, more importantly, of inner discernment and richness.

The deepest desire of all human beings, though we may too often be distracted from remembering it, is to reach the Other Shore. This Other Shore has gone by a variety of names. In the Christian tradition, for example, it is essential that we “seek first the Kingdom of God,” for then “all these things shall be added unto us.” This Kingdom is not outside of us, but is within. The Other Shore is likewise within, and the journey we make to reach it is an inner one. The Islands of Light, the sanctuaries of intuitive wisdom that we must discover and learn from in order to reach the Other Shore, are also within. Our journey to reach the Other Shore is in fact a journey from head to heart that can heal the division within ourselves, freeing us from self-preoccupation, and allowing the power of intuition to shine light on the path that leads to discovering the inherent joy and blessedness of living. This is the adventure of every lifetime. The Other Shore, an undiscovered world, is calling.



We stand now on the deck of our ship, looking out over the harbor to the dark ocean stretching restlessly to the far horizon. The first island on the journey toward intuitive awakening is the Lost Island of Understanding, and it can reveal to intrepid pilgrims the right understanding that supports the rest of the voyage to the Other Shore. There are other legendary islands beyond the Lost Island of Understanding that lie farther away, and we hope to reach those as well. Each island is said to be enchanted and filled with power, and to offer specific techniques and opportunities for discovering the keys to intuitive living.

Around us are the familiar sights and sounds of the harbor: the people fishing off the jetty, the gulls calling and flapping around us; the clanging of bells and buoys, the ruffling of sails, and the bubbling and roaring of motors as boats of many sizes and shapes maneuver over the choppy waters.

Behind us is our known world, the busy patterns that have held us for so long. Before us lies the immense and perilous ocean, and our journey to the Islands of Light and to the Other Shore beyond. The ocean reaches in here to this shallow bay and to our docked ship, and waits restlessly, holding us, persistently beckoning. Something stirs within us and, no longer satisfied with the bustle of the harbor, we long for the freedom and challenge of adventure, to live more deeply and discover what treasures lie beyond the horizon of our small, known world. The Other Shore is calling.

1 – The Island of Understanding

As we sail out toward the deepening indigo waters, leaving the harbor, we feel a mixture of joy and sadness, excitement and trepidation. Looking back toward the clamor of the land receding behind us, we sense wistfully the possibility that we may not return here, and a hollow ache arises within us, for we are leaving our world and the security it has given us.

Gliding over the waves toward the open ocean, the wind picks up, and our ship surges forward. Once we are well beyond the harbor, we begin to feel an unexpected sense of relief, as if old weights attached to our shoulders are falling away, lightening and freeing us. This feeling of relief builds, becoming an inexplicable gladness bursting in our heart as we look ahead over the trackless waters. Our sadness and trepidation lighten. We realize that whatever we have left behind, and whatever lies before us, right now we are following our heart's yearning, and there is enormous satisfaction in this. This moment is bright and real, delicious and timeless. We are alive! We savor the lift of every wave, every fragrant breath and sparkle of the sun. We can see for miles, and we spontaneously give thanks for this ship, this ocean, this life, and to everyone and every event that has brought us to this moment, bounding forward over the waves, traveling toward the Other Shore.

As the heaviness that we had gotten used to melts away, we feel our mind becoming clearer and our vision brighter. Old hurts and grudges arise, loosen, and peel away, blown far by the fresh wind that carries us forward. We send blessings to everyone we have ever known, thanking them all for contributing to this opportunity, and for the exhilaration and the potential of the voyage we are undertaking. We realize that even those of whom we have unsavory memories often played vital roles in bringing us to this adventure. We thank them all. There is no looking back. This open sea, splashing in the sun, is our destiny, and we recognize that it has always been our destiny. Everything in our life has brought us to this moment. There have been no mistakes, for everything was

required for us to be here now. We can sense something within us dying, and something urging to be born.

Soon we are out of sight of land, and we sail on for many days and nights. Searching the horizon, our eyes become tired and sometimes the winds oppose us or simply disappear. We do our best to continue on, even when the winds die down or whip the ocean waters into large and dangerous swells. At times the rain and wind lash us mercilessly, and we must work many sleepless hours just to keep afloat and on course.

The Islands of Light are uncharted. For guidance, we rely on our compass and our inner sense, heading generally south and east. The first island, the Lost Island of Understanding, is said to be the hardest to reach, and we have heard it is only visible, to those allowed to see it, at dawn and at dusk.

After about three weeks of sailing, we are getting concerned, for our water supply is starting to run low. Then one morning we notice that the light is somehow different, and that the air seems brighter. There is a sense of presence here, and so we sail very slowly and are especially watchful at dawn and at dusk. We find that by sitting quietly and listening within, letting go of thoughts and just being open, we can tune in to this sense of presence and we can notice when we are moving away from it, and when we are getting closer. We practice this meditative inner listening both day and night because we do not want to miss the mysterious island that we sense is somewhere nearby.

As the days go by, our water supplies diminish further and though we realize that now we must return to land or risk facing dehydration, we continue patiently meditating and sailing slowly in the direction of our inner feelings. We feel how close we must be to the island. Sometimes we can hear a humming vibration, and occasionally see a shimmering brightness over the water. When we sail toward the brightness, the humming seems at times to increase.

We are becoming increasingly thirsty, however, and anxious. It seems we are being pushed to our utmost limits. The sun and moon revolve around us and we sail on, struggling to maintain our mental equilibrium as everything becomes increasingly dreamlike. Waking and dreaming drift into each other as we drift across waves of time and space that expand and contract bewilderingly. Our world becomes distressingly surreal.

A few more days pass and our water supply is almost exhausted. Then one night we dream of a great tree rooted in heaven and branching into the earth, and awakening, we sit quietly on deck, searching the horizon all around us. The water is totally calm. Then, as the sun rises in the east, we see it! Shrouded in mist, off the starboard bow, we see the unmistakable shape of an island being caressed by the first rays of morning light. A deep thanksgiving fills us, and we utter a parched croak of joy. We allow ourselves to collapse onto the deck, our cracked lips smiling, and enjoy the release of tension, anxiety, and doubt. We realize that we are actually drifting toward the island, as if being pulled, and in a few hours, we find ourselves splashing through the water and walking onto dry land at last. Kneeling in the sand, thirsty and grateful, we rest a moment before exploring this beautiful place.

There are high hills here, and walking inland for several minutes, we come to a clear flowing stream with a deep pool. We drink and bathe and refresh ourselves. There are papaya trees as well, and we eat several of their delicious fruits, feeling invigorated and delighted at the abundance and beauty of the island.

Returning to the shore, we walk along the beach and eventually come upon a weathered wooden sign. On it are written these words:

“The ox, trying to go through the gate, is stuck.
Only his tail won’t go through.”

We stop and sit down. There is a deep question in these two lines. What is it? What is this old wooden sign alluding to? A knowing begins to come to us, carried by the spirit of this Lost Island of Understanding. We realize that these two lines are an old *Zen koan*.

We remember that in the Zen meditation tradition, a koan is a meditation question that is unanswerable by the rational mind. We see that as we contemplate the koan, our intuition is naturally stimulated and we feel the question is pushing us toward an understanding we must have in order to continue our journey. What is this koan pointing at? What is this ox? And what is the gate, and where does it lead? How could his little tail keep the ox from going through the gate? How absurd the image is! Why wouldn’t his tail go through? What does it mean?

After a while, we consciously relax our mind as it probes this koan, chewing on it like it does every perceived problem, trying to solve it. Eventually we calm our mind

enough to enter an inner quietness and then, mysteriously, we suddenly hear the presence of the island, as if speaking to us!

“Welcome. I am glad that you are here! I am called the Lost Island of Understanding. It is not an easy journey to find me, and your perseverance has served you well. I am the first stop in your pilgrimage toward the Other Shore and I wish to help you deepen your understanding. But to acquire understanding, you need understanding! Don’t let this worry you. Everything that your intuition discovers and understands is a paradox to your rational mind!

“Intuition is not an exotic way of knowing, available only to rare and special people. Everyone is potentially intuitive, and deeply so. You would not have found me here without your intuition. Like the ox, you have passed the gate and entered the realm of intuition, which is your own true nature, but somehow, like the ox, you have a tail that won’t allow you to go completely through. What is this tail? Why is it always with you, like the tail is always with the ox? Is it perhaps an old wound that accompanies you like a tail, not visible to your own eyes as it dangles behind you, an old nemesis that has you fooled into thinking it’s your friend?”

The voice stops speaking and, instead, we begin to receive impressions as we keep our mind quiet and open. Tuning in to the wise presence of this lost island, we begin to realize that the ox’s tail is an unrecognized assumption, always clinging on to the true being that we are. We gain a distinct impression of this assumption as an appendage, deep-rooted and strong. It is becoming clearer that this usually invisible assumption is an erroneous conviction that we are a thing and others are also things, and that as things we are fundamentally separate. We realize that the tail is a habit, and it is a virtually universal way of seeing: seeing others and oneself as distinct and competing objects. We see that this tail has been at the root of the inescapable sense of struggle we have always experienced.

We suddenly understand that the tail is also a tale as well. It relies on and feeds the old story our self always tells itself, continually reinforcing our existence as an object. The mind, ever thinking and preoccupied with its personal story and with all the regrets, dramas, worries, and struggles that this story involves, becomes utterly convinced that it is its tale. It steadfastly resists the inner silence in which the tale stops because this seems

like a death—the end of its existence. For the mind appendage that believes the story of its essential separateness, even a story of pain and sorrow is better than no story at all!

We see that the ox's tail is the old wound of dualism, the deep sense that we are separate from the world. The tail's story revolves around the mistaken assumption that it is a part separate from and at odds with the whole. The tail's tale keeps it firmly attached as an appendage, which interferes with our seeing and with our understanding. We see that in the culture in which we were raised, the assumption and the wound are so pervasive that the tail runs things and wags the ox—this tail will certainly get stuck in any gate.

“How is this wound finally healed?” we wonder. The island is back again, directly communicating with us.

“The old, painful wound of separation is but an illusion. It is healed when you fully realize, directly and intuitively, that you are, always have been, and always will be, whole, perfect, and complete. You have never been separate from the infinite, benevolent source of your life. The rational mind can never arrive at this understanding, for this requires a true leap, an untrackable shift of perspective. Tears of joy and laughter may spill forth when you see it all directly. The ox is actually completely free at every moment to enter the field of unlimited freedom and boundless wisdom and joy. His little tail shrinks back to its natural size when his perception is cleansed of its deluded assumption of separateness. It has never actually been an obstruction! Your own true nature is likewise free to roam the fields of the infinite once you understand the nature of the ox, your true nature, and of your tail, and your tale.

“Cultural programming makes this understanding difficult to achieve. The deep belief in separateness is embedded in language, culture, and institutions, and it militates against intuitive knowing. Rational knowing reinforces the belief in separateness, for it is devoted to focusing on the parts of everything, continually dividing in order to know. It is the coin of the realm on the shore you just left. Intuition, the other side of this coin, was generally ignored in your schooling: connecting parts into unities, and seeing and comprehending directly the greater wholes that the parts, by themselves, can never reveal.

“Whereas rationality is knowing by *dividing* (Latin: *ana-lysis*: to “cut up”) and *comparing* (from Latin *ratio*), nonrational intuition is direct knowing by relaxing, expanding, opening, and leaping to grander, more inclusive perspectives. At its fullest flowering, intuition dissolves the old dichotomy between knower and known into a transcendent wholeness that leads to far greater insight, transformation, and freedom than rationality on its own could ever begin to achieve or imagine.

“On this Lost Island of Understanding, you are deepening your understanding, realizing that your human evolution requires you to respect and explore intuitive knowing, and that intuition is truly healing, for it brings wholeness to your life by making connections and allowing you to awaken to the larger wholes that were invisible. This wisdom of greater wholeness heals the old wound of separateness that causes you such suffering individually as well as collectively. Through this wisdom your tail can shrink to its proper size. As your inner wisdom flourishes, you understand it is your ego that is your tail, and that you give it far too much power to wag you around. What we call ego is the false belief that you are a self-existent object, and this scrawny but tough appendage—this tail and its tale—has enormous consequences because it gives rise to fear, craving, anger, greed, anxiety, and all the rest. You can see how this little tail unfortunately keeps the great and magnificent ox from joyfully romping in the field of freedom!”

The island both reassures and challenges us: “Your old wound, the tenacious clinging to the illusion of a separate self, can be healed. This is opening the intuitive gate. The practice of meditation is an important key to opening this mysterious gate within you, and there is nothing exotic about it. The old saying is that meditation is not what you think. It is the art of stopping the continuous dialogue of thinking and internal storytelling that feeds the tale of separateness and keeps you divided, distracted, and self-absorbed. When your mind is quiet and clear, whether you are active or not, that is meditation.

“Meditation is inner silence and is nourished by understanding that thinking and concepts can ultimately never bring you to the realm of wholeness or to the wisdom of pure intuition. Thinking and concepts can be valuable if they bring you to the edge of themselves, to the cliff, as it were, beyond which they cannot take you. Then you must jump, and this leap into the vast luminous presence that is utterly silent and mysterious is

meditation. It is a leap pregnant with meaning, deeper than the thinking mind can grasp. This leap must be made over and over again, for the mind loves to chew and think and spin stories, distracting itself endlessly from the radiant essence that is its source. When you practice meditation, and practice letting go of all clinging to the known, you are taking responsibility for your awakening, and as your sincerity deepens, your efforts will bear fruit.

“Meditation is inner listening: aware, alert, open, and present to this moment that is every moment. It is a vivid aliveness that heals and reveals more than mere concepts could ever imagine. When you meditate, you travel outside the boundaries of your experience, outside the realm of ‘me’ and ‘mine,’ and you enter the universal. Concepts are baggage you cannot bring on this journey, and later, if you try to express your meditation experience, words and concepts cannot begin to contain it accurately. Through the practice of meditation, you are metaphorically passing through the gate and entering the field of liberation, for to meditate, you must leave your ego-tail behind you.”

We continue to explore this breathtaking island, contemplating the ideas we have encountered here, and the koan of the ox’s tail. We stop and rest, sitting under a tree. We notice a squirrel sitting on a branch of the tree, eating a nut. Contemplating the scene, we note that the rational mind sees separation, the squirrel and tree definitely separate and distinct entities with different goals and agendas. This way of seeing, as it looks more acutely, contracts, and sees conflict and competition. The squirrel is competing with other squirrels for the tree’s nuts, and the tree’s goal is in conflict with the squirrel, for it can never reproduce itself if squirrels eat all of its nuts. This is all very true and provable to the rational mind, and we allow ourselves to consciously experience this way of seeing for a few minutes.

Now we relax and open, and let go of thinking. We practice looking as the island has suggested, with the mind of intuition. We sense interconnectedness, and see the fundamental cooperation between these two beings, the tree and the squirrel. One provides oxygen, housing, food, shade, and support, and the other provides carbon dioxide, fertilizer, and a means to spread seeds about. More deeply, we see how each provides a context for the other, one offering stability and one mobility, and how they share giving and receiving, and energy and humor, among other things. Even on a purely

physical level, the cells of the tree become cells of the squirrel, and the cells of the squirrel become cells of the tree. We realize further that they are parts of a greater whole, a community which they serve and which serves them, and that they are each perfectly fulfilling their roles in this community, and expressing the wisdom of this community which, as we continue opening, becomes larger and larger, including the whole island, the ocean, the earth, the sun and sky and, expanding beyond one boundary after another, revealing to us a glimpse of the infinite interconnectedness of all life and being.

As we continue to practice looking more deeply, our mind opens more and senses directly, intuitively, that there is one Life manifesting as both tree and squirrel, and in this life, the apparently separate parts we call “tree” and “squirrel” are not at all separate. They are *one* life. They may appear separate, but they are manifestations of a transcendent wholeness that is never divided. In this knowing, we as the perceiver are also drawn into ever deepening spirals of understanding, no longer a separate observer but *also* a function of this infinite life. The transcendent is immanent, wholeness extending within as well as without. There is a sense of clearly seeing that there is *only* life, celebrating, transforming, and evolving in an infinite and endless dance, and that nothing is ever excluded from or separate from anything else. We sense there are truly no “things” at all! As the wall of “me” dissolves in these waves of intuitive understanding, “squirrel,” “tree,” and “me” can be seen more clearly for what they are: manifestations of and within an unimaginably vast and loving Presence that is beyond naming. We can see the truth of the island’s teachings, how words and concepts, the pervasive tools of rationality, must be set aside, and how pronouns and nouns can become distortions and distractions from seeing a dancing process that unfolds fully only when the mind is free from discursive thinking. We can see that it is this freedom from compulsive rationality that opens the intuitive gate.

Now the squirrel runs through the grass and up another tree. Is that what is *really* happening? Where is “squirrel”? Where is “tree”? Where is “grass”? Where is “me”? Are these really out there, separate, or in here, verbal constructions? Intuition smiles with the delight of simply being present and opening to vistas of expanding interconnectedness. We feel and taste the joy and understanding intuitive knowing brings.

This is the gift of this island: the untamed, sacred vistas that appear when we cultivate intuitive knowing.

The island speaks to us again: “Intuition is the higher knowing that rationality desperately needs to fulfill itself. Like rationality, intuition can be educated, trained, and developed. The way is through practice, as with any art or craft. Unfortunately, in school, you were trained generally only in rationality, taking things apart in order to understand them. Now you are aware in ways you couldn’t be as a child, and want to reclaim the other side of yourself—intuition—to help put your world back together again. You realize that unalloyed rationality becomes insanity; it cannot see the larger wholes or understand directly the deep interconnectedness and sacredness of all life. It cannot experience joy, beauty, or compassion. What it takes apart, it cannot put back together again. This is the tragedy of your people, and the source of your mission. You have been called to bring healing to your wounded culture. First, though, you must heal it within yourself.

“Remember when you were a child in school and the teacher would ask the class questions. You learned in an enormously powerful way that there were ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ answers to the questions. Learning the paradigm, the underlying story of your culture, was so powerful because you saw directly that getting ‘wrong’ answers led to disapproval, bad grades, trouble at home, and rejection, and being ‘right’ led to success, approval, power, and safety. Right and wrong: the old nemesis, the wound of dualism, got its claws in early and deep. Remember that as a little child, you were like a sponge, soaking up the subtle and not-so-subtle cues from your culture so that, small and vulnerable, you could survive and make sense of things here.

“Continually drilled in seeking right and avoiding wrong, you learned to wear and use the appropriate cultural lenses for taking things apart, for separating and excluding. Rights and wrongs are terrific for this. Further, as you sought dutifully for the right answers in school, and raised your hand and managed occasionally to give the right answer, sometimes you would hear, ‘Very good! How do you *know* that’s the right answer?’ Scary question! You learned there were basically two types of responses to this. One was, ‘I see it right here on page 79 of the book.’ ‘Yes, class, very good! See, it’s on page 79 here,’ the teacher would say. So you were powerfully trained to accept

outside authority for what is right. The Book contains The Truth, you were told in school, and you had to accept these cultural assumptions of rightness or your very *survival* was, in your young mind, threatened.

“The other valid response to the teacher’s question, ‘How do you know your answer is right?’ was to give a logical, trackable, linear sequence of rational thinking to support your answer. This demand for linear rationality pervaded history and geography as much as mathematics. From early in your schooling, the basic wholeness and interconnectedness of knowledge was ignored as it was divided into categories and subjects. You thus learned that The Book—outside authority—and logical positivist thinking were the *only* safe guarantors of validity. You learned it at school, at church, and at home; it was the invisible cultural air everyone breathed. If you had responded when asked at age eight the great epistemological question, ‘How do you know if what you say is true is actually true?’ with: ‘I know it’s true, teacher, but I don’t know *how* I know exactly. I just have a feeling;’ or, ‘The answer came from the silence within myself, from an inner voice.’ Horrors! ‘Wrong! That is *not* good! You must go to the principal’s office right away!’

“And you wondered why your tail wouldn’t let you go through the gate! As a participant in your culture, you have diligently learned and practiced the very skills that block intuition. The narrowness that results from the belief and practice of separateness impedes intuitive knowing! Now, maturing in understanding, you realize that what was right for one generation is often wrong for another. Perhaps most of what you learned to be true or right in school and from the media was often completely wrong or severely distorted, especially from a perspective based on spiritual values rather than material values. So as you continue your life adventure of learning, and your quest to reach the Other Shore, it is helpful to recognize and acknowledge the enormous amount of practice you have devoted since childhood to becoming proficient in dualistic thinking, in separating things, and in looking *outside* yourself for the truth.”

The breeze plays quietly with the palm fronds above us. It is unsettling to be told that our training in the system we were born into is an impediment to the higher knowing that we long for.

“Here on the Lost Island of Understanding, you realize that intuitive knowing, like rationality, requires training and practice, and this practice must be, in many ways, in a direction completely opposite from all your earlier practice. You must learn to look *inside* for the truth, and learn to *suspend* habitual judgment of right and wrong to see more clearly what is happening, the interconnections. You must learn to *relax* and *expand* rather than contract. You must learn to let go of thinking as the *source* of knowing, to let go of seeing objects as separate and yourself as separate, to let go of the compulsive orientation to past and future. None of these is easy, given your prior training, and yet unlike the case for mere rationality, the rewards for developing direct intuitive knowing are spiritually significant, and will surely bring peace, wisdom, healing, and joy into your life and into your world.

“Intuition develops as an inner art through practice. Instead of engaging in the practice of trusting outside authority and taking things apart through analysis, you can practice trusting inside authority and putting pieces and ideas together, increasingly being able to sense interconnectedness and wholeness. Without intuition, rationality always reaches its own limits, for it is a tool that can only divide and exclude and thus bring the mind more deeply into violence and separatism, if not used within the context of authentic intuitive knowing.

“As you know in your bones, your culture is based on domination and exploitation, on asserting power *over* others and nature. You learned as a child that this is right and acceptable in countless subtle ways. It was right there on your dinner plate every day, a slaughtered, commodified animal, and you were even forced to eat it! Rationality is the tool that serves this orientation of domination and separation well. It is clear why you are trained in analysis, competition and linear thinking, and that intuition, which connects, is ignored and suppressed. Since intelligence includes the ability to make meaningful connections, the higher intelligence of your culture is actually shrinking, even amid a glut of information. Information that is disconnected from the meaning and wisdom that intuitive knowing provides is not helpful, and creates even more confusion and opportunity for domination and exploitation. The shrinking of your culture’s higher intelligence is thus profitable for the few, but the irony is that *no one* is happier for it, for you are all connected.

“You can begin to understand how rationality, when it is bereft of the healing context that intuition provides, causes a withering of intelligence and compassion. Ironically, though, rationality sees itself as superior to what it presumes is the only alternative: irrationality! As usual, rationality here fails to see process and connectedness. Humans can be seen to develop through stages, from pre-rational stages of knowing to rational and then on to post-rational or transrational stages of knowing. These latter modes of knowing, termed intuitive, contain and make use of rationality, but are not limited or bound by it. Intuition is a higher evolutionary stage. Thus you will see clearly that rationality was never meant to be any kind of ultimate level of consciousness. It is certainly a potentially useful tool, but only if used within its proper context, which is in serving the higher understanding intuition provides through its direct seeing of interconnectedness.

“By now, most of you in the postmodern West are aware that domination thinking creates more stress, more waste, more misery, and less meaning and fewer resources for effectively solving the problems you’re facing. Developing intuition is a cultural imperative for your society, and you are, perhaps, a delegate sent by the deep yearning of your people for healing. You may be their emissary and the urge within you that has propelled you here may be more than just yours alone.

“Your people are awakening to these truths. It is becoming increasingly obvious that rationality can no longer properly serve even that bastion of rationalism, science. Physics, being the most physical and mathematically-based of the sciences, was, as you know, the first to hit the wall, when the either/or dichotomy of the scientific method could no longer explain the basic nature of reality: light is not *either* a particle *or* a wave, it is *both, and* what it appears to be depends entirely on the observer! That realization ushered in the slow and painful fall of the hallowed “objective observer” myth that was one of the erroneous assumptions of scientism, the view that science is the only authentic means to truth. This illusory objective observer notion is, of course, the ox’s tail dressed up in a scientist’s white jacket, measuring and attempting to know a reality it conceives to be separate from itself. On this Lost Island of Understanding, such postures can only strike the intuitive mind as comical, and the image of the serious and aloof scientist cutting and dividing in order to *know* brings wistful smiles and head shaking. Here you

can see more clearly that the observer and what is observed are both aspects of a larger reality and that both always participate with and influence each other. Scientists are indeed part of their own experiments.

“Experiments in quantum physics continue to reveal reality as *profoundly* non-dual, with findings that are utterly absurd and irrational from the perspective of rationally-based science. Nonlocality, for example, is basically unthinkable to conventional objectivity, and yet physicists observe that two particles, hundreds of miles or even light years apart, affect each other *instantaneously*—much faster than the speed of light. What is incomprehensible to the ox’s tail, the mind that sees only separate objects, is directly understood by the intuitive mind: that the particles are truly parts of a greater whole — they *are* a greater whole! — and are not fundamentally separate at all, despite appearances to the contrary. That may be how they ‘influence each other’ instantaneously: they are not actually separate!

“You see, scientists have koans, too. In fact, *everything* in life is actually a koan to the rational mind! Especially when it takes time to look a little more deeply. Reality *is* mysterious! When the rational mind tries to penetrate this mystery, it senses its limitations and this may provide the impetus to explore the realm of intuitive knowing. But when rationality avoids looking deeply, and confidently proclaims it knows the truth, it invariably stretches, twists, and ignores what does not conform to its assumptions.”

On this Lost Island of Understanding, we can literally feel our mind expanding, and it is not always comfortable. Our capacity is stretched, and many of the familiar and comfortable handholds on reality are being taken away. We can vaguely sense that much of our thinking has been narrow, rigid, and self-preoccupied. We are building a larger picture in which everything is a whole that is made up of smaller whole parts, and that all these wholes are wholes within larger wholes, comprising even greater wholes. Everything from atoms, molecules, cells, and organs to creatures, communities, cultures, planets, and solar systems are simultaneously wholes comprised of whole parts, and whole parts of larger wholes. We recognize that by understanding the interconnectedness of these wholes and living this understanding, we may be delivered from shallow-mindedness and the violence this fosters. How can we do this?

The spirit of the island continues: “Again, the way to do this is through practice. To become a knitter, you knit; a photographer, you photograph; a dancer, you dance; a painter, you paint; a pianist, you play the piano; and to become intuitive, you practice meditation. This is the road to intuitive knowing. The encouraging truth is that authentic practice does bring authentic results, and your heart-mind *can* open like a flower, it *can* open to whole new vistas of intuition, understanding, and compassion.

“This island is quiet. Meditation and inner listening are easier here. You will discover during your stay here that the practice of meditation contains its own reward and is, in and of itself, a deeply fulfilling ‘activity.’ Non-activity is probably a better word. You will see that the effects of regularly practicing meditative inner listening ripple out into every aspect of your life, bringing more insight, creativity, peacefulness, and love into your relationships and activities, and enriching your inner life. This practice of inner silence frees you from the inner domination of culturally conditioned thinking, and it is the foundation of intuition and prayer. Every hour of the day is an opportunity, filled with enormous potential, to reveal and discover more of the vast inner terrain that lies unexplored within you. You will see that unless you actually engage in the practice of meditation, you will not be able to experience or even imagine the possibilities that dwell within your own mind and being. To access them requires patience and practice, the training of your attention within silence.

“For example, a person fluid and comfortable with a musical instrument, enjoying the unfolding of rhythms and melodies while improvising, and carried away on the wings of the Muses, perhaps filling an audience with soaring joy, has spent countless hours practicing with that instrument to free the spirit of music within for outer expression. Just so, as you practice meditation, returning your attention again and again to this present moment, you are slowly giving birth to inner silence, to mental clarity and brilliance, to emotional richness and equanimity, and to the creative freedom and spiritual radiance that uplift yourself and others, and reveal the true inner beauty of all life and of yourself as an expression of that life. You learn to be more truly understanding of others as your narrow perspective widens to include more than just yourself and your particular point of view and your own in-group. The practice of meditative inner listening trains attention,

returning it repeatedly to this present moment, and is an important key to intuitive living, building character and revealing interconnections.”

In the quiet beauty that permeates this Lost Island of Understanding, we begin to see broader vistas than we ever glimpsed before. Days pass, and we are able to increasingly sense that we are not merely an object arising and passing away in time, but that we participate in the unfolding life of the universe, and that we are that eternal life, manifesting as our particular experience. Looking out over the mysterious ocean one afternoon, we feel ourselves energized and deeply related to an *all-embracing unfolding*, as if poised on the brink of a momentous discovery. The scene is deeply vivid, and suddenly we hear the waves as if within us, and feel the breeze inside us, and hear the far away laugh of a gull inside us as well. The sun shines within us, and everything seems to be happening inside!

Slowly the experience fades, and we feel the island’s now familiar benevolent knowing lapping at the edge of our consciousness, capturing our attention: “Ah! Very good. This direct seeing will help fuel your journey home to the Other Shore. As your intuition develops and you understand more deeply and directly that you are not separate from the larger wholes that sustain you, or from others who are also so sustained, you will discover greater harmony in your life. Your relationships, your work, your eating habits, your patterns of consumption, all become more aligned with compassion as intuition flowers in your mind and heart, for you understand that harming and confining others always harms and confines you, and the more you free others, the freer you will be. As you practice living a life of conscious compassion, your intuitive potential will naturally develop.

“Here, in the beauty of this island, your motivation is deepening and becoming less self-preoccupied. The more universal your motivation for spiritual practice becomes, the more powerful it will be. Like any art, the art of intuitive living matures with practice, and matures more deeply as motivation deepens. Motivation deepens as you experience more directly your interconnectedness with all life, and your oneness with the source of life, and this experience in turn arises from and nourishes your practice of meditation. Meditation and intuition give rise to each other, like the paradoxical growth of a tree’s roots and branches. Which causes which? We cannot say, for without the roots

deepening, the branches could not grow, and without the branches growing, the roots could not go deeper! If each would wait for the other to grow first, they would both wait forever and there would be no growth. They are not separate, like intuition and meditation are not separate! To understand them we must see the greater whole that they serve and that serves them: the *tree* is growing! You, a manifestation of the infinite and eternal, are evolving and awakening! It is a process without separate parts; if you divide it up it is only because you are apparently divided!

“Inner silence can heal these divisions. You will eventually see that the old wound of dualism never touched *you*, your essence. Your true nature is, always has been, and will eternally be free of contamination or any possibility of damage or error. What you are shines serenely, *always*. As this understanding deepens, your motivation deepens and you no longer practice inner silence for yourself and your own peace of mind, but for all beings of the past, present, and future. You see that what you are is part of, and one with, something much, much greater. Your effort and unfoldment are not for yourself alone, but for all beings, and embrace the whole, which is what you actually are.”

These words reverberate within us and we look out over the waves below us, pondering them. Each wave is unique, each wave is born, lives awhile, and eventually dies on the inevitable shore, and yet each wave *is* the ocean. The ocean itself gives rise to countless waves, and is in, and is, each wave, and yet no individual wave can grasp the totality of its true nature, the ocean, without leaving the confines of its narrow wave perspective and realizing that it and all waves have the same source, the ocean, and do not actually die, for what they are is the eternal ocean; they are not merely fleeting waves. As we watch the lines of waves endlessly rising, surging forward, curling, and crashing on the beach, we practice seeing the two levels of truth simultaneously: that every wave is a unique individual, and that it is all just the ocean happening. After a while, our eyes take in the palm trees lining the beach below, reaching toward the sun and holding onto the earth, and we find we can see them also as waves, also arising and passing, manifestations of a greater ocean that is less obviously seen.

The island continues. “What you are seeing is significant, and is a key to intuitive living. Waves are created in the image of the ocean, of the ocean itself, and when you see this directly about yourself and all life, you are seeing deeply, and this is a form of

prayer. It can become a communion that transcends dualism, and its value for healing and illuminating your mind is inestimable. For the wave, prayer is intuitively understanding that its true nature is the ocean. For you, prayer is intuitively and directly seeing your own true nature as whole, complete, undefiled, and one with infinite Being, a manifestation of the universal love that is the source of all life.

“Intuitive knowing is both the treasure behind the locked door, and the key that opens that door. It is the treasure because it confers grace, wisdom, connectedness, healing, spiritual awakening, creative exuberance, freedom, and joy. It takes place outside the ego’s territory, beyond the programmed thinking of the mind. To people who are spiritually mature, intuition is the inner light that brings unshakable peace and understanding. Such people *know* directly the greater reality that is their source, and thus look with eyes that see equality. They see with love, and can sense the deeper connections between events that are invisible to most. There are *only* events, actually, for what are selves and objects but events arising and passing in time? There are no concrete things anywhere, except in the concepts of the thinking, concretizing mind. When this realization penetrates you deeply enough, freedom will be born—and your tail will deflate! The grass in the field is sweet and fresh!

“Intuition is the key that unlocks the door to itself, for it walks hand-in-hand with meditation and inner silence. The practice of meditation opens the door to all the inner treasure rooms, and it is, itself, the treasure there enthroned. The ancient truth is that ‘there is no way to peace, peace is the way,’ for the path and the goal are one. They unfold continually. To practice inner listening is to awaken intuition, and to awaken intuition is to live life as a practice of inner listening. This leads to more direct seeing, free from the interference of self-preoccupation and ingrained thinking. Intuition and meditation practice flow together.

“The barren knowing of rationality produces but a garden of knives, fences, cages, and dangerous weapons; watered by intuition, soft and radiant flowers begin to emerge and dance. Cultivate this garden, which is your true home, your own mind. It requires care and brings learning. Cultivate your garden with the practice of meditation, bringing your attention regularly to touch this present moment.

“Take a breath, and expel it slowly. Feel yourself present in your body, feel the weight and physicality of this experience. Notice the smells and sounds and visual arisings, the temperature, the air, and the sky. Without thinking, simply be, just for this brief moment. Aware. Just this. Here. Just now. Simply being. Nothing but this. Awake. Present. . . .

“Meditation, even if practiced for only a short time, is like a breeze that freshens, a cool wave that opens up your eyes and ears and feelings. Practicing deeply and regularly, your life becomes the practice of inner silence. This is the path to awakening and freedom, the path of intuition. The ox’s tail will shrink back to size as ego-clinging dissolves, and the ox, your true nature, will stroll through the gate to enjoy its boundless life. This gift of aliveness is infinite, precious, and beyond giving and receiving. The ox exults in the field beyond its tale of past and future.

“In the outer world there is much you can do to promote your practice of inner silence. All the sages have exhorted you to universal kindness and caring. All lives flow from the same Life. As you open the intuitive gate, you see directly that you are related to every being, and with that awareness, your heart of love is opened for all of creation. Since the practice and the goal are not separate, as you practice kindness and caring, your mind becomes less self-centered, relaxes, and becomes more still. This stillness fosters intuition and nourishes your direct seeing of interconnectedness, which is the ground of kindness. Deception and connivance bring inner agitation, which works against your opening to intuition. Fear and indifference bring inner insensitivity, which also work contrary to living intuitively. As you open to life, you open to *all* of it, and to seeing your total interconnectedness with all of it. As you deepen your roots of compassion, your branches of intuition automatically unfold higher toward heaven. You are the tree of life.”

The island’s words flow to us like an inner stream, dissolving old knots and tensions. Confusions and complications melt away and dilemmas evaporate as we sit quietly in the presence that saturates the atmosphere of this island.

We stay on the island for another week, walking, swimming, resting, practicing inner listening, and allowing the island’s wisdom to penetrate us more fully. Several more times we experience ourself stretching and expanding, and perceive the world as

arising inside of us. Grateful for the gifts of understanding the island has bestowed, we eventually feel the Other Shore calling us on. An inner window has opened, revealing the beginning outlines of a new understanding of our nature and of the false tale of separateness. We sense the bright field of freedom that lies beyond the gate of the little tail and outside the prison of self-preoccupation, and how it shines beyond the confines of discursive thinking.

The ox of our true self smells the field of joy and freedom that are its home and realizes there is nothing in its way but its little tail. Its nostrils flare; its eyes are bright! Its great heart leaps! How delicious this moment is! Palm trees flutter in the cool morning breeze, and far away we hear the call of a gull. As we walk the beach, saying good-bye to the island and thanking her, we realize that the old wooden sign has disappeared. The koan is within us now.

Before we leave the island, we sit quietly and hear her message to us as music swirling over the sea and through her trees. We listen deeply, and through the rhythm, melodies, and harmony of the music, receive understanding that goes beyond what words can capture.

(For a little taste of this music, please listen to “Song of Understanding,” piece number one on the accompanying compact disc, *Islands of Light*.)

2 - The Lost Island of Energy

It is hard to leave the beauty and abundance of the Lost Island of Understanding, but as we watch her receding behind us to the west, we thank her for all she has shown and given us. We sense her guidance telling us to continue sailing eastward, and that by practicing her teachings, we will safely reach the next island. We have fresh supplies of water, bananas, papaya, breadfruit, and coconuts, and a strong breeze from the southwest. The ocean carries us along like one of her waves.

After several weeks of sailing, we encounter a violent tropical storm. Heavy clouds dump sheets of rain upon us, and roaring winds stir the water into huge swells that threaten to swamp us as they toss us about like a little toy. It takes all our energy to keep the ship from capsizing, and when the waves get especially high and begin to pour across the deck and there is little we can do but pray, we remember the teachings of the Lost Island of Understanding, that the waves and the ocean are one.

Soaked and clinging to our heaving vessel, our prayer is remembering the truth that all being is a manifestation of infinite, loving Spirit. We focus on this understanding. We, as waves, are one with the infinite loving presence that is the source of our life and all life, and our prayer is also giving thanks that every wave is a manifestation of this ocean of perfect and all-knowing love. Focusing on and affirming the great peace that we know shines hidden within the outer appearance of the storm, we mentally relax and trust the loving presence that we feel. The ship continues to be thrown about, but soon we can sense the waves calming down as the wind gradually diminishes. We hold to the truth of being that the Lost Island of Understanding has bequeathed to us, opening to the understanding that what we are is whole, complete, eternal, and undamageable, since the source of what we are has these same qualities, and that we are in no way separate from this source. We are not just a wave; we are the ocean itself. Our prayer is consciously remembering the truth that what we are is fundamentally spiritual and eternal. When thoughts of fear arise, we replace them with the understanding, now more deeply felt than ever, that we are loved, that all life is loved, and that all life is divine and ultimately safe from any harm. As this understanding deepens, we can relax and eventually we drift into

sleep, rocked by the ocean's giant hand in great arcing swells through time, space, and dreams.

The morning sunlight urges our eyelids open; we smile, looking into the clear sky shining serenely over our gently rocking ship. To the south of the sun, we see mist and a sense of brightness. Sailing slowly toward it, we begin to see the distinct outlines of land on the horizon. By mid-afternoon, we can see a lofty volcano in the distance, and before long we are drawing close to a spectacularly beautiful island. Black sand beaches glisten before lush tropical forests that climb up the sides of the mountain. We anchor in an inlet where a stream tumbles over a cliff into the salty blue-green water, and soon we are walking the beach. There is a sense of power here, blended with a palpable sense of benevolence, and it turns our walk first into a euphoric stroll and then into a delightful spontaneous dance. The energy is so strong here, like music, that we just let it move us, and follow its promptings. Sometimes spinning and whirling, and then softly swaying, we play on the beach, and are played by invisible musical strings that ride the warm island breeze.

(For a sense of the music we hear on this island beach, please listen to piece number two, "Dance of Light," on the accompanying compact disc, *Islands of Light*.)

Our dancing slows eventually, and we feel the music entering into our body as energy, running in channels up and down, tingling and vibrating. The energy moves through us, and we feel our body expanding as the energy fills us, enlarging, purifying, and washing through us. Slowly we begin to see images, like shadows, emerging before us on the beach. As we feel ourselves vibrating at higher and higher frequencies, we hear a humming sound, and the shadow images begin to glow; as we expand more, we suddenly realize that these glowing images are beings of beauty and light who have been here all along. The island seems to be raising our vibration so we can perceive them. The beauty surrounding us grows even more stunning.

One of the light beings, appearing as a friendly old gentleman, glides over and begins communicating with us using only thought, welcoming us to the island. We hear this, as a knowing from within: "There is so much more than meets the physical eye. You can only see, and you always see, what you are energetically prepared to see. You can only feel, hear, and think, and you always feel, hear, and think, what you're energetically prepared to feel and hear and think. Therefore, it is most important for you to learn how

to raise the level of your energy. Only when your energy is high enough, and concentrated enough, will you be able to delve deeply, resurrect your intuition, and bring joy and peace to the suffering world. Until you raise your energy, you are like a person who lives in a beautiful and grand mansion but wanders around in the dim light of the basement and never finds the stairs that lead to the mansion's splendid views and treasure-rooms. With a little practice you can raise your energy higher, and with more practice, higher still.

“The surest way to raise your energy is through the inner silence of prayer and meditation. Though there are many types of prayer and meditation, they all share the same principle of transcending the shallow mental preoccupation with the ongoing internal dialogue. You'll learn more about these things later. There are, however, other important elements to raising your energy that you should understand clearly, for you won't be able to meditate or pray effectively unless your energy is high enough.

“It's helpful to understand that you have been conditioned by your culture's intensely materialistic orientation, in which matter is seen as primary and self-existent. This materialistic bias distorts and limits understanding because it blinds people to the essential primacy of energy and consciousness. These are much more difficult to quantify physically than matter and have been therefore ignored when possible, or seen as derivative from matter. The conventional understanding in science, for example, has been that matter is primary and that energy, like heat and light from the sun, manifests from matter, and that consciousness, like the human brain, eventually evolves from matter and its energy.

“The new frontier of understanding in your culture is that consciousness is primary, and gives rise to and conditions energy and matter. However, the materialistic bias, though narrow and misleading, still overwhelmingly dominates your culture. It is being challenged, of course, and the discovery of $E=MC^2$, that all matter is, in actuality, energy, dealt a severe blow to materialism that has yet to be fully realized as people continue to cling to the old materialistic perspective. Even though scientists have stumbled on this realization and have used it enough to unleash nuclear energy in a primitive way, very few people have any inner understanding that matter is a manifestation of energy, and that all form *is* energy. Their energy is not high enough,

generally, for anything but the closed loops of basement-level rationality and conditioned thinking. The next frontier, beyond understanding matter as energy, is understanding that energy/matter is manifested consciousness. Consciousness manifests energy/matter and gives rise to form. Consciousness is not a product of energy/matter, but is their source. Elevating consciousness is the key to elevating your level of energy and to transforming negative perceptions and emotions. This will always bring healing, wisdom, and joy to the physical body and world.

“The highest form of consciousness is love, and it appears to you as both energy and matter. Energy/matter cannot exist independently of consciousness—it arises both in and from consciousness. Everything you have ever seen is possible, ultimately, because of infinite love consciousness that is the source of all energy, which appears to you also as matter. All beings and planets and suns are manifestations of this love. Opening to this understanding, which is difficult and profound, is prayer. Yesterday, you remembered this truth: that the ocean, the wind and waves, and you and your ship all arise from and are perfect reflections of divine love, and this changed your perception—it was your prayer—and through this prayer of understanding, you planted a seed, which is bearing fruit right now, as your safe arrival here with us, and as this moment, which is equally a manifestation of the infinite energy of love, which is consciousness. On this Lost Island of Energy, you can understand that matter, like the apparently solid matter you see, hear, and touch while dreaming, has no independent existence outside of consciousness. All experience arises in consciousness, like your dreams when sleeping. Understanding this is a key to deepening your intuition.

“When you see the light of the sun, you are seeing love, and when you feel its warmth, you are feeling love. When you see, or feel, or hear anything at all, it is love that makes it possible. That you perceive intelligence and consciousness as visible light, for example, is just due to the particular way your body-mind selectively receives and interprets conscious energy. Your sense organs not only allow perception, they also very narrowly define what range of possibilities you will see, hear, feel, smell, think about, and so forth. Where does it all happen? Within consciousness only! You do not need, for example, physical eyes to see. Seeing is an attribute of consciousness, and what you are able to see depends completely on the level and purity of your consciousness. Physical

matter itself has no ability to see or hear or think. It is consciousness that sees, perceives, and conceives. We were invisible to you when your level of energy was too low to see us, but your energy was nevertheless high enough to sense our presence, and you found yourself dancing with delight on this seemingly uninhabited beach. To help you understand and see us, we fed our consciousness to you, which you felt as becoming more energized. You could feel your energy rising. You still need our help, for if we stop sending our consciousness to you, what happens?”

He and the other glowing presences begin to fade and disappear.

“To help you understand more clearly, with your permission, we will raise your energy level briefly to illustrate. Please sit down comfortably here on the sand.”

We do so, and soon begin to hear a humming sound similar to what we heard earlier as he reappears with the others. The pitch of the humming rises higher and higher, though, and we feel our body expanding. The light beings become larger and more dazzlingly bright, slowly merging into a brilliant radiance before us. We feel our body shaking as the humming goes even higher and then is joined by a deep roaring sound, and the exhilarating pressure of expansion becomes almost unbearable. Suddenly we burst through a seeming bubble and the pressure is instantly released. The dazzling light becomes waves of indescribable radiance, and we hear music, beautiful and uplifting beyond description. We *are* the radiance, and the music and the limitless space containing it all. Aware and boundless. Rainbow webs and filaments of light merge, dance, and disappear. Utter freedom and joy flood through us. Sheer timelessness. Pure being without limits, without boundaries, without a center or fringe, without self. Just utter openness and light....

We suddenly wonder what we look like now, and with this thought, the light and music fade away and we become aware that we are sitting on the beach in the evening light. We feel euphoric, yet strangely hollow inside, like a shell filled with nothing but space and light, and like we've been washed inside with a hose of water-light. The humming returns and soon the radiant gentleman has reappeared before us, smiling. We notice that our thrilling experience, so utterly real while it was occurring, now has the feeling of a dream. Again, as if from within, we hear these words:

“Yes, though it may now feel like a dream, what you saw and felt is more real than anything you take as real from your physical senses. We assisted you in raising your energy beyond the usual level of self-consciousness. We did not impose anything at all, but joined with your true self to reveal your boundlessness to yourself. As your consciousness transcended old limits, you felt as if you might burst. You can learn to do this on your own, and you must be able to raise your energy to do it. Your years of effort and seeking have brought you to us, and to this moment. This is the consequent blessing toward which you have been tending, and there is more, much more, to come. We will share with you now some practical ways to raise and maintain your energy at the levels necessary for meditation, prayer, and insight.

“The most important way to increase your energy is to be kind and considerate in all your relationships with other living beings and even with seemingly inanimate objects. This you can begin today and every day, and practice diligently. As you send positive and loving energy to everyone and into every situation, you help raise both your own and others’ energy and create the conditions for healing and transformation. Judgment and criticism of others, even when unspoken, actually reinforces whatever you are condemning in others because of the profound unity and interconnectedness of consciousness. Your negative views of others thus do them a disservice, and your expectations tend to be fulfilled since your consciousness manifests not only your dreams at night, but your experiences while waking as well. You are more telepathic with others than you realize. Viewing others negatively not only potentially hinders others, but it also definitely lowers your own energy and narrows your spirit. As your energy level increases, the field of unconditional love that you radiate will automatically grow and become a field of freedom emanating from you that allows and encourages others to question their limiting assumptions and fulfill a higher potential. Live as truly and deeply as you can a life of sharing, service, and discovery of your interconnectedness with all life, minimizing as much as possible the harm you wittingly or unwittingly cause others. You will know your energy is high by a feeling of spontaneous joy, by an expansive feeling in your heart, and a centered feeling in your body. Thankfulness, fearlessness, patience, and peacefulness are signs that your energy is high, and these are the inner states that build energy as well. Frustration, self-concern, condemnation, anxiety, and

trying to impress others and fulfill their expectations are all indications of lowered energy, and they also drain energy. Finding and living your own uniqueness, beyond the dictates of family, social conditioning, peer pressure, and old childhood wounding, will bring out your true self and raise your energy enormously.

“There are many things that can help to facilitate raising and purifying your energy. In the morning, when you awaken, let your first thought be one of gratitude. Give thanks for the precious opportunity of another day and the limitless possibilities of greater wisdom, abundance, love, and creative expression that can be discovered and cultivated today. The possibilities for good are boundless, as *you are boundless! As your source is boundless!* Truly open to this thought and notice and acknowledge any inner resistance. As your energy rises, this spontaneous thankfulness will become more automatic.

“You will also find that working directly with energy is helpful. The best way to do this is through your daily practice of inner silence, for your mind and spirit have immediate influence on your level of energy. As well, undertaking a regular practice of generating and balancing energy through chi gong, tai chi, yoga, reiki, or other disciplines can be beneficial and can reveal your inner joy. The universal life energy we have been referring to has gone by many names, such as *chi, ki, prana, orgone energy, élan vital*, inner light, the Force, the golden elixir, and there are many paths that cultivate it. Practiced mindfully and in conjunction with meditation, they can be useful in raising energy. There is quite a vast array of practices, and you can explore to see which ones best suit your temperament, lifestyle, age, and so forth. Generally speaking, the more you practice, the greater the effect will be. Yoga, stretching, and tai chi initiate greater flexibility in mind and body, allowing more energy to flow through the energy channels. Chi gong manages and generates energy. Dance, gymnastics, aerobic exercise, weight training, and martial arts can all build energy levels. To be effective in increasing and sustaining energy, they must be practiced regularly and meditatively, without pride, fear, or other ego-enforcing motives. Awakening more deeply to the truth that you are fundamentally a spiritual being, rather than a physical being, accelerates all of these practices, and may eventually replace them.

“Another powerful ally in raising energy is nature, a direct expression of the infinite source. Take time to connect regularly, daily if possible, with nature in a way that is meaningful and nurturing for you. Find ways to deepen your connection with the natural world, to live, eat, and sleep close to the earth. Leaving the world of machines and human constructions behind, enter into the tranquility and beauty of nature. Train your eyes and all your senses to notice nuances in the natural world, to greet the immeasurable colorations of the sky, and to appreciate and honor the wild animals you encounter, and the forests, rivers, mountains, shorelines, deserts, and wild places you visit. Minimize your negative impact on the natural world at all times, leaving no physical trace at all, if possible, that you have been there. Allow yourself to become fully comfortable in nature. Refrain from causing any suffering by hunting or fishing. Your body and mind will naturally become purified and energized.

“The water in rivers, streams, lakes, and oceans is an enormous ally. Enter it often and your energy field will be cleansed and refreshed. Allow yourself to be baptized daily in natural water and your spirit will be renewed. Allow your feet to touch the earth, the forest floor or sandy beach, and feel the energy of the earth and your body as one. When you can, let the energy flow be unhindered by the insulating effect of the rubber soles on modern shoes. Shoes and sandals with hemp soles are excellent; avoid leather if possible because of the cruelty and toxins involved in producing it. Walk, dance, dream, and wander in the beauty of forests, lakeshores, and ocean beaches. Drink in the sun, the moon, the kinship of trees and shrubs, the good tidings of breezes and wildflowers, and the cleansing of all the elements. Exploring nature with appreciation and respect, you are exploring yourself and enjoying yourself. Just spending several days in nature, without any worldly distractions, will increase your energy enormously; solitary time in nature is especially healing and powerful. Opening to the ancient rhythms of the earth, moon, tides, and seasons, you will attune to your heart’s wishes, and your spiritual roots will be strengthened. When you return to the world, you will carry more energy, and you will understand and feel the dissonance of modern culture more acutely. You will be sensitized and purified, and it will perhaps be sad to realize how far from the harmony of organic shapes and sounds your culture has strayed in its cities, factories, suburbs, and

mechanized farms. If you go to nature as a student, guest, and friend, you will always come back strengthened, revitalized, and spiritually deepened.

“Your posture and your breathing are vital keys to increasing the energy in your body-mind. Whether walking, sitting, or standing, be mindful that your spine is straight, relaxed, and balanced, that your head rests gently above your shoulders, and is not protruding forward, stressing your neck. Always allow your breath to be deep, to fill the lowest part of the lungs, and breathe only through your nose. In this way, the energy that is in the air will vitalize your body the most powerfully. When your posture is lofty; your lower belly will automatically relax – let it go! Let it fill with precious air on every breath. With practice, your breathing will become deep and relaxed, vitalizing your body-temple with waves of energy. Your center of gravity will drop down from where it is in most ordinary people, the head and neck area, to the area just below the navel, the ‘dan-t’ien’ as it is referred to in some systems of chi energy cultivation. You will automatically be more intuitive and centered as you shift out of your head and come into your heart and solar plexus and belly. Allow yourself to move with the belly as your center, breathing deeply and calmly. Allow the lower belly to fill as a bellows with every breath, and your whole body will become more relaxed and energized. Moving always from this center, you will have plenty of energy for any undertaking, and you will naturally become a dancer and poet as you flow through daily life.

“Take time to stretch and breathe deeply, to smile often and notice the details around you with relaxed and sparkling eyes. Do a few cleansing breaths in the morning: just exhale every bit of air from your lungs by powerfully contracting your diaphragm and abdominal muscles, completely clearing out all the old stale air from your lungs, and inhale deeply, repeating several times.

“Standing still for a minute or two and imagining you are a tree is a simple and powerful way to build energy and feel more grounded. Imagining you’re a favorite type of tree, with every exhalation, visualize your roots going more and more deeply into the earth. With every inhalation, feel the enriching, invigorating energy of the earth flowing from your roots up through the soles of your feet, and filling the entire trunk and being of the tree that you are. With renewed energy, exhale again, sending your roots even deeper into the earth, and allow your next inhalation to draw even more energy up into your

trunk and into every cell of your being. Allow the energy to build within you, and your feeling of being rooted deeply into the earth to grow strong while you repeat this several more times, or for as long as you'd like. Then allow your arms to float up and imagine they are branches reaching up into the sky. With every exhalation, imagine your limbs reaching higher into the sky, spreading more branches, twigs, and leaves. On the inhalation, imagine and feel the energy of the cosmos entering through your leaves and branches, and filling your entire being. This energy allows you on your next exhalation to send your branches higher into the sky, allowing even more energy to flow into you through your leaves and branches from the universe. Keep breathing, letting the energy build within you, and feeling yourself connected with the infinite sky and all that it represents. Open to the energy of the sun and moon, the stars and galaxies, the clouds, wind, and rain. Enter into the mystery of being a tree, bridging heaven and earth, being rooted in both heaven and earth, and partaking of both. Allow your arms to come back down and continue feeling your connection with the earth and with the sky. Your posture will be naturally erect and poised, and your breathing will flow in a relaxed way deeply into the floor of your abdomen. When you move about now, feel your center in your abdominal area and move from there, a walking bridge between heaven and earth, spirit and matter. Allow, relax, smile, watch, and listen. A quiet walk in nature can now be a delight, every sense open to the miracle of being present to the beauty of nature.

“There are many other ways to increase energy. Dancing whatever energy is manifesting in the moment can be healing and uplifting, as can simply opening to the energy field of nature, perhaps under a tree or by water. A partner can ‘bathe’ you in energy with his or her hands or just by being present. Embracing large trees or connecting with their energy field through your hands are ancient ways of building, exchanging, and purifying energy. Countless techniques, practices, visualizations, postures, and attitudes that contribute to increasing energy have been discovered and shared, openly or secretly, in virtually every culture since time immemorial. All these ways are part of your human heritage, and according to your interest and inner potential, you will be led to discover and learn particular ones.

“The foods you eat can either raise or drain your energy also. Overeating puts a stress on the body and drains energy, as does eating in a hurried or agitated frame of

mind. The most energy is obtained if the food is prepared mindfully and lovingly, is eaten in a harmonious and relaxed setting, with a sense of gratitude and awareness, and is well chewed until almost liquid so the saliva's ptyalin enzyme can convert the carbohydrates to glucose for energy. The food itself is best if processed very little. Refined and fatty foods provide little sustenance and can actually drain energy, so it is best to avoid and limit the intake of products made with white rice, white sugar, white flour, hydrogenated or fractionated oils, chemicals, or preservatives. Organically grown whole grains and legumes, and fresh fruits and vegetables, as locally grown as possible, are best. Living foods, raw or moderately cooked, provide an abundance of enzymes, proteins, and easily available energy, and cleanse the body as they are utilized. As you well know, dead foods and foods of death, including all flesh foods such as beef, chicken, pork, fish, and shellfish, as well as foods containing any eggs, dairy products, or honey, pollute the body and mind with vibrations of killing, theft, manipulation, and abuse, and they inevitably reduce and distort energy. You certainly understand this, or you'd never have gotten this far. Carbonated beverages and chlorinated water ultimately sap energy as well, as do black tea, coffee, alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, and both commercial and non-commercial drugs, and would best be avoided, as far as possible.

“Besides healthy and vitalizing food habits, healthy elimination is essential for building energy. Following the above food guidelines will automatically create clear, healthy blood and reduce any strain on the liver, kidneys, and bowels, and create a beneficial alkaline, as opposed to a toxic acidic, condition in the body-mind. Decaying fecal matter releases toxins and so regular elimination is also essential, at least daily and preferably more often. An excellent idea is to train the body by going to the toilet upon arising every morning. If the elimination is slow in coming, gently massaging the abdomen in a clockwise direction may be helpful, as is assuming the natural posture of squatting instead of sitting. Putting your feet up on a footstool while sitting on the toilet is one way to do this. With practice, you will soon have regular morning eliminations, which is an energy-building way to begin the day.

“Another important factor in building energy is to live in beauty, generate beauty, and notice beauty, as closely to nature as possible. The chronic noise of machines tends to disturb and drain life energy, as does being in most modern buildings. There are many

reasons for this enervation: the unnatural box motif that is endlessly repeated everywhere; the electromagnetic fields produced by electricity that permeate buildings and neighborhoods; the artificial and confining angles and shapes of living spaces, and the enormous heights these often are from the earth; the toxic materials that are used, which contribute to high levels of indoor air pollution; the lifeless, chlorinated water in faucets, tubs, and pools, the deadening of the air caused by pollution, air conditioning, heating, and other ion-depleting factors; the grating noises and artificial smells that permeate these environments; the unnatural light and absence of real unfiltered sunlight and real darkness in these environments; and the staleness and lack of beauty which often characterize them.

“The silence and subtle sounds of nature and wildlife are truly food for your spirit and are a precious resource to be rediscovered, protected and enjoyed. Allowing your eyes and all your senses to experience the endless variety and beauty of nature is guaranteed to uplift your energy. Art and music that spring from deep reverence for life, from joy and love, and from communion with nature, are healing and energizing, radiating positive energy and beauty into man-made environments. Acoustic music, being born directly of the elements of the earth, can generate more energy than electronic music. Living spaces that are alive, with gardens, organic shapes, plenty of light and fresh air and water, that are harmonious, serene, creative, beautiful, and uplifting will tend to build the energy levels of those who are blessed by dwelling within them.

“Relationships can also build or drain your energy. A common mistake people make is to try to manipulate other people to get their energy. There are many different ways this is done, and they all result from non-meditative awareness. Without developing meditative inner silence, which requires a high energy level and an intuitive understanding that you are never fundamentally separate from others, it is unlikely that you will be able to avoid the energy draining practice of manipulation. One common way people squander precious energy is in playing the role of victim, being the one who is chronically sick, or accident-prone, or confused, or just barely able to cope. By this manipulation of giving away their own energy, such people can unconsciously sponge attention and energy from others. Another energy-depleting role is being the one who is domineering, aggressive, dangerous, or abusive, and manipulating others through fear

and in this way stealing their energy and attention. Another style is trying to please everyone and always make a good impression on others, thus manipulating them into giving energy. This is related to the habit pattern of forsaking one's own dreams and aspirations to please other people or to fit in. Another energy manipulating role is to be emotionally distant, so others must come begging, so to speak, hoping you're available. This is a way of sucking their energy and attention.

“The irony, of course, is that all of these unconscious ego strategies to accumulate energy by feeding on the energy of others lead, ultimately, to a drain on one's own energy, and can be draining on others as well, if they resonate at the same level. They can be addictive, creating vicious circles that spin through the cultural web of relations, as people unconsciously adopt different energy-manipulating strategies and compete for the limited amount of available attention, endlessly craving more recognition, approval, and love, and never being truly satisfied. This frustration leads to conflict and further competition. Through meditation and building your own energy as we've been teaching, you can break free of these energy-draining patterns. The more you cultivate your connection with the infinite source of all energy, the less you'll be concerned with trying to get energy, attention, approval, and love from others. The manipulation game will automatically lose its appeal as its claws release you and you practice living in harmony with universal energy and allowing it to flow through your life more freely. As you do this, you'll be able to transmit energy to others as love, service, and support, and not be drained yourself, but in fact be invigorated by this.

“The main training for becoming able to transcend these destructive relationship strategies, besides meditation and energy cultivation practices, is living a highly ethical life. The law of cause and effect is fundamental to all relationships. You are called to treat others as you would like to be treated, and this refers to humans, animals, biosphere communities, and future generations. As your circle of caring grows, your energy field will expand. Thoughts, words, and deeds that are harmful towards others, or manipulative of them, or that discount the inherent worth and dignity of others, will always lower your energy.

“There are five main precepts or rules of spiritual life that help with this, and they have inner and outer purposes. Their outer purpose is to bring more harmony and peace

to relationships, and thus to the world. Their inner purpose is to help you act in ways that don't drain your energy and that don't interfere with your spiritual path and your development of intuition. It is essential to take these precepts seriously if you want to free yourself successfully from addictive and frustrating relationships, become more conscious, heal your woundedness, and awaken your intuitive potential. Integrity and compassion are essential liberating forces in living an intuitive life, and the precepts encourage these forces. Eventually, as higher levels of consciousness and energy are maintained, the precepts become effortlessly and automatically fulfilled because they are natural to spiritually mature people, but in the beginning they must be mindfully practiced because the values of the culture you live in also live in you, and many of these values violate these precepts in important ways. The five precepts are:

“1. ‘Not to kill but to cherish all life.’ This is the principle of *ahimsa* or harmlessness, and is the fundamental precept from which the others spring. It is to refrain from killing or injuring other people and sentient creatures by any action of the body, speech, or thought. It emphasizes cultivating an attitude of cherishing and protecting all life. As you go deeper into meditation, the wall between yourself and others will begin to dissolve and you will naturally become less narrowly self-interested. In the meantime, following this precept is a vital discipline that tames your mind and allows you to increase your energy level. Any attack on or neglect of another always weakens you. Internalizing this precept creates a field of compassion and power around you, giving your words and actions weight with other people. It builds coherence between your highest aspirations and your actual daily life. The outer meaning of this precept involves, among other things, avoiding working for or investing in businesses that profit from harm to people or animals, avoiding animal-based food or clothing and animal-tested products since these cause animals to be killed and harmed, and in one's life refraining from attacking, criticizing, injuring or blaming others. The inner meaning is to cherish the seed of spiritual liberation that lies at the heart of all creatures, to see the highest potential in others, and to work for peace and freedom for all beings by cultivating the precious sprout of enlightenment within yourself. The deep inner meaning of this precept is to cherish and awaken to the present moment and its beauty and power, and not kill it by indulging in harmful or self-centered thoughts.

“2. ‘Not to take what is not given, but to respect the things of others.’ Flowing naturally from the first precept, the outer meaning here is to refrain from taking the property, life, time, or life-energy of others if it is not freely given directly to you. This precept emphasizes an attitude of respect for others, and especially encourages not discounting in your own mind the harmful effects that your negative actions, words, and thoughts have on others. The inner meaning is to avoid subtly attempting to steal the energy of others by manipulating them for attention or approval through all the methods discussed earlier. The deep inner meaning is to live totally in the fullness of each moment, and to give generously of your energy, attention, and resources in service to whatever raises your own consciousness and, equally, the consciousness of your community.

“3. ‘Not to engage in sexual misconduct, but to practice purity of mind and self-restraint.’ Breaking this precept, or any precept, always brings suffering to oneself and to others. It is not that any of the actions prohibited by the precepts are evil in any cosmic sense; it is simply that they invariably increase suffering, drain your energy, contract your spiritual field, and enmesh you more deeply in the delusion of separateness and the greed, anger, fear, and grief that spring from this delusion. This precept again refers to any action of body, speech, or mind that sees another as an object for your own self-gratification. This is always degrading to others and to you. To use or abuse others sexually, because it is so intimate, is especially violating to them and energy-draining to you. On the inner level, this precept enjoins purity of mind, recognizing all beings as fundamentally infinite, mysterious, spiritual, and with inherent integrity and boundless value. To devalue or harm others or use the vehicle of others or yourself for mere transitory pleasure is a violation of the dignity and sanctity of life. The deep inner meaning of this precept is to awaken to the truth of interbeing that rejoices in the freedom and autonomy of others, and gives openly with no shred of grasping self-interest.

“4. ‘Not to lie but to speak the truth.’ This precept is enormously powerful and wide-ranging, and includes avoiding not just telling falsehoods or exaggerations, but any kind of deceitful action, word, or thought, as well as hypocrisy, fraud, and the gaining of unscrupulous advantage. Because the first precept is fundamental, telling the truth with intent to harm others is a violation and will drain your energy. The inner spirit of this

precept is cultivating an attitude of straightforwardness and humility. It springs from and fosters fearlessness, and becomes more automatic as your practice of inner silence deepens and you let go of the manipulating egocentric stance that is so habitual in modern culture. The deep inner meaning of this precept is not to lie, internally or externally, by seeing others and yourself as material objects, but to speak the truth, thus awakening to and expressing the truth of the universal interconnectedness of all life, and the oneness of all beings with the infinite source of life.

“5. ‘Not to use or cause others to use liquors or drugs that confuse or weaken the mind, but to keep the mind clear.’ This precept reminds you how important your own mind is. On the path of spiritual growth, your mind is your greatest ally, the precious vehicle through which you will transcend illusions and suffering and attain intuitive wisdom. Your mind has an infinite potential, and can create both the deepest hells and the highest heavens. Therefore it is essential to protect and purify your mind, and cultivate clarity and stability in your attention. Alcohol and drugs of all types are harmful; they are outside agents that modify your mind and ultimately distract you from your path. Besides avoiding the obvious drugs such as tobacco, caffeine, alcohol, cocaine, heroin, and mind-altering and ‘mood-enhancing’ commercial drugs like Ritalin, Prozac, Valium, and so forth, it is advisable also to avoid the more ‘spiritual’ and shamanic drugs like marijuana, peyote, psilocybin, ayahuasca, LSD, Ecstasy, and so forth. While you may think the experience of altered mental states and insights that these substances allow is helpful on your path, it is doubtful that they can ever confer true spiritual maturity. If you have not developed the inner purity through meditation and right action that would allow these states and insights to develop within you organically, then they are ultimately of little value. These plants and chemicals allow you admittance to a show by sneaking you through the back door, but since you have not paid the entrance price through inner development, you really are not prepared to understand or properly embrace what you are shown. You are frightened, or thrilled, or exalted, or receive revelations on the workings of the universe, but you are always in some way deluded because you lack the inner maturity to understand what you have experienced. This is unavoidable. Your ego will add these experiences to its tale of being special, and your tail of tales will keep you stuck

in the gate that you learned about on the Lost Island of Understanding. Drugs do little to contribute to intuitive living.

“The inner meaning of this fifth precept is that attempted shortcuts only lead to further trouble: addictions. The drug substance can be anything that removes you from the immediate experience of life, and so, for many in modern culture television is a powerful and destructive drug that insinuates itself into your mind and disturbs and distracts you. It is also a prime outlet for the voice of corporate powers whose bottom line values are fundamentally contrary to all these precepts, and would chain you more deeply in delusion. Much of your culture’s entertainment and spectator sports are also drugs of distraction that drain your energy, and certain relationships are as well. Many of your compulsive habits are distracting drugs if you look honestly. Watch yourself closely and you will discover the truth. Through this hard work, your intuition is fed and will grow and flourish. The deep inner meaning of this precept is not to indulge in the wine of delusion: to stop wandering the world in a drunken stupor, and awaken to the wholeness that you are, the infinite beauty, light, and love that you are, the freedom, joy, and compassion that you truly are!

“By investing your time and attention in cultivating your energy, deepening your practice of inner silence, and living these precepts, you will inevitably purify your mind; revelations, powers, and insights will automatically ripen within you in their right timing. You can only reap the fruits of the seeds you actually sow. Nothing else can be harvested, and you will never outflank this eternal universal principle. The precepts are guidelines that simply reflect this karmic principle, and through mindfulness of them, you will cultivate the most precious garden: the garden of your own heart. The beauty of the flowers it can bring forth is beyond your dreams. From whatever seeds you cultivate, you will reap your harvest.

“Ironically, that reward will always be misery if you violate the spirit of these five precepts. Cultivating anger or insensitivity brings harm to others and conflict, pain, strife, and hatred to yourself. Cultivating greed and jealousy leads to stealing from others, and lack, limitation, and discontentedness to yourself. Cultivating sexual craving and making objects of others brings fear, emptiness, and abuse to them and to yourself. Cultivating deceit and manipulateness sows seeds of distrust and fear, and brings uneasiness,

hatred, and pain to yourself. Cultivating a mind that looks for freedom through easy escapes from the trouble you have caused, or unearned shortcuts through outer substances, causes further suffering to others and only enslaves you more deeply to your delusion. By cultivating the integrity, kindness, impeccability, sensitivity, and healthy self-restraint that the precepts indicate, you plant seeds of empowerment, freedom, joy, abundance, wisdom, and inner peace. There is no shortcut to the Other Shore. Your journey itself is the sacred shortcut, as long as it takes!

“You see, the very ground that these precepts spring from is your true nature. The basic moral goodness, compassion, and intuitive wisdom that are fundamental in you, the seed of divinity within you, is the basis for the principle of non-injury to others. The divine is in you as the ocean is in the wave. Your true nature is really the matrix of all life, and connects you intimately and deeply with all living beings. There is within you an essential revulsion toward harming and manipulating others needlessly, and this must be uncovered and become the core of all your relationships. This is the essence of the first precept of non-injury, and all the other precepts are extensions of it. As you awaken to your own true nature, you will realize more deeply that to harm, or steal from, or objectify, or deceive another is to dull your own sensibility, bringing more suffering to yourself and the world, and contradicting the universal inviolability and sacredness of life. Since the first precept is primary, breaking the others is only appropriate if it is directly serving the first precept, sparing injury to others. This precept applies to all creatures. To willfully kill, confine, or injure any human or animal, or to cause another to do so, is a violation of the first precept, and will disturb and drain your energy and harm your spiritual development, as well as all your relationships with others. Anything that furthers your own indifference to the suffering of others is damaging to your awakening.

“It is only by cultivating compassion, energy, and meditation that you will improve the quality of your relationships. As you might assume, the energy we keep referring to is your spiritual energy. It is possible to have an apparent abundance of physical, or intellectual, or emotional energy without having cultivated compassion and meditation, as you have for so long. But these energies will not be in service to the highest good, and will not endure, if there is not also a high level of spiritual energy. Spiritual energy can command and raise these types of energy enormously, even

miraculously. In fact, without spiritual energy, these other kinds of energy are living on borrowed time.

“If you focus on building moral integrity, spiritual energy, and your capacity for inner silence, you will find your relationships will automatically improve, deepen, and become more rewarding. You can be no more deep, honest, or open with another than you can be with yourself. Through this cultivation, you will become more comfortable with being alone, if that frightens you, or being with others, if that frightens you. You will no longer cling to friendships or intimate relationships to fill an inner longing, and then find your energy being drained by these so-called friendships. By building your inner spiritual energy, you will eventually attract people who have similar values and commitments, and you will resonate deeply together, effortlessly. By freeing others, you free yourself. Your intuition will automatically flower, as will peace and joy, when you live a life dedicated to non-injury and to developing spiritual energy. You will also be helping to build a more enlightened society as you live these five precepts, and you will be nurturing your creative power.

“This brings us to the other major key to increasing your spiritual energy, which is creativity. You will find that creativity and spirituality unfold from intuition. All three arise from inner silence and are doorways into awakening and healing. Cultivating any one automatically cultivates the other two, so that as you develop intuition, for example, you will find that your creativity and spirituality are nourished. Fostering creativity likewise nurtures intuition and spirituality. Healing—regaining your original wholeness—is the inevitable outcome. When you are creative, you are spontaneous, and free from stale habits, fears, preconceptions, and judgments, you allow your body-mind to be the vehicle for energy that is fresh and authentic. Practice creativity in all you do, rejoice in your potentials, and your spiritual energy will flourish like a spring within you.

“There are countless creative avenues your spirit can explore. There is musical creativity, expressing through rhythm, melody, and harmony, using instruments and voice, and using your body, through the timing and coordination of dance, movement, and many forms of athletics. The domain of artistic creativity is equally vast, working with color, space, line, form, and relationship, with rhythm and harmony through painting and sculpture, handcrafts and photography, and in the design of living spaces, clothing,

jewelry, environments, meals, information systems, and countless inventions and innovations. There is also the whole arena of communication, teaching, writing, counseling, poetry, storytelling, drama, film, and community celebration. Life itself is an ongoing, endless splash of creative energy and you are an expression of that infinite creative loving force. It is in your cells to rejoice in creating.

“There are always two factors in creativity. One is practicing the craft and refining technical ability; the other is freeing the spirit within to unleash this craft and ability in new, higher, and more fulfilling and inspiring ways. Whatever your creative medium at a given moment, improving your technical ability through hands-on engagement and practice will build your confidence and spiritual energy, and the power of expression. Even more truly energizing is the practice of creativeness itself. This is the practice of meditation in daily life, living each moment freshly, letting go of chronically habituated patterns of thought and action and living spontaneously, playing with ideas and experimenting with different approaches, toying with things, taking risks, trying out new ways of expressing yourself or relating with the world, relaxing and letting go and expanding the world of possibilities you live in, and increasing the range of potentials you allow yourself.

“This is encouraged by becoming more flexible in your little daily habits. Mix things up and allow yourself to become more ambidextrous. Open doors, eat, carry things, and hold things with the other hand than you would normally use, and try writing more with your non-dominant hand. Play ping-pong, tennis, and other activities with alternating hands. Take alternative routes to work and errands, and really take notice of the beauty around you, wherever it is. Learn and practice other languages, and try new activities, sports, crafts, and endeavors that give you a different perspective. Intuition is fed by all this, and is nurtured by the ability to step easily outside a self-preoccupied or habit-determined perspective.

“Walk down the street and look through the eyes of others and see the world they see, and you can discover your identity as a child, or elder, or homeless person, or person of another race, class, gender, ethnicity, or even a member of another species. How far can you stretch? Can you resonate with and walk in the world of the old woman, the young tough, the banker, the stray dog or cat, the wild blackbird? As you open to the

fullness of all that you are, and question narrow social assumptions, your compassion for others will grow, your understanding of them will flourish, your energy field will expand, and your intuition will prosper. Practice is in the little leaps. Soon enough you will be able to make longer and bigger leaps. When you are ready, you will fly.

“As your energy builds, and you can leap further to newer perspectives, you will find your sense of humor improving. You will see a bigger and bigger picture, feel within yourself a bigger and bigger heart, and discover humor and irony and joy and meaning in countless places where they were previously undiscovered. And you will also open to greater pathos and to a greater awareness of suffering and misery as your sensitivity and compassion grow. Your branches can only reach high as your roots go deep. The path of meditation and awakening is truly not for the faint of heart! Hypocrisy and a narrowly self-interested perspective must be sacrificed on the altar of compassion and adventure. There are more islands waiting as you journey toward the Other Shore, and they will expand on these themes in ways for which you are not yet prepared. As your energy increases, you will become strong enough to hear, bear, understand and practice their message. For now, we leave you, but we are with you as you continue your journey.

“We leave you with this image for your muse to contemplate: a beautiful grand piano on a stage in a great hall filled with hundreds of eagerly expectant ears, and the musician, seated, launches into the music, but only plays one note. Over and over again, the same note, a B-flat, one note out of the eighty-eight on the keyboard. Alone, isolated, what little power this one note has, what little energy to evoke feeling, meaning, and inspiration! The audience’s attention drifts and becomes perturbed as the musician plays only the same poor B-flat note over and over. People are looking at the exit doors when to their great relief another musician appears and displaces the first at the keyboard. This musician begins with the same ineffectual B-flat note, but moves on, up and down the keyboard, fingers flying as an enormous tide of music pours out of him through the piano and fills the room. The B-flat is now but one among many notes, and yet what power she has, what force! In certain passages, when her unique voice is heard among the others, there is such poignancy, then again, later, such pathos, and then again, such soaring joy! Her energy and power are now fully displayed, and they come from two things: she is true to herself and, too, she is part of something greater than herself and is true to that as

well. Alone, she has little power, but together with the other notes, her potential is limitless. As she sounds her B-flat voice truly and faithfully, and as the other notes do as well, the whole keyboard responds to the musician's touch, and every note contributes to the power and richness of every other note. Together they can build a creation of beauty and feeling that is boundless in its potential. So discover your own note, your unique voice, and contribute it, and you will know the source of all energy, the heart of the music, and the relationship of the notes. Your dance will create a field of freedom that will bless everyone."

As we gaze now into the brilliant and loving eyes of this old gentleman shining before us, we feel energy tingling and rushing through our arms, legs, head, and torso, washing away old internal clogs and barriers. With a gentle and spacious gesture, he touches our forehead and the light around us becomes brighter. Pouring love toward us through his heart and smiling face, he slowly begins fading from us and gradually we find ourselves sitting relaxed on the black sand beach on a warm, velvety night under a sky filled with stars. We hear music, and it begins with a plaintive B-flat note, and we listen deeply as it ebbs and flows its haunting message to our hearts. As it ends, we drift into a deep and restful slumber.

(For a trace of this music from the Lost Island of Energy, please listen to piece number three, "Song of B-flat," on the accompanying compact disc, *Islands of Light*.)