

The Sacred Voyage

the pilgrimage to the soul



e-book

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FOREWORD

A few years ago, by pure 'coincidence', I discovered a method that healed me from serious psychological and physical illnesses. I ingested plants and mushrooms with healing powers a few times and miraculously transformed from being sick, depressive, and motionless to being healthy, high-spirited, and inspired. I discovered who I really am and what my calling in life is. I opened up to the gift of Clear Perception and received more and more knowledge and information to channel (via automatic writing). This way, I could use my own healing process to develop an accessible method for helping others with their developmental and healing processes. I stopped working and retreated from 'daily life,' threw out my radio and TV, and canceled all my subscriptions to newspapers and magazines. My connection to a higher source, as I call the channel by which I receive my information, is razor thin, and I could not deal with any distractions. I felt above all that I had made a discovery that could be of vital importance to myself and my loved ones. I began to guide others in their own process of achieving strength, insight and healing and quickly realized that the method which I was following wasn't just a powerful tool for my own development; other people were also being magically healed. People with years of chronic fatigue, burn-outs, depression, eating disorders and many other ailments saw their illnesses disappear like clouds on a sunny day, and could welcome true health into their lives for the first time in years. We experienced the power of the four to eight-hour sessions as if we had made a pilgrimage to a sacred place, and so I called her: "*The Sacred Voyage, the pilgrimage to the soul.*"

In this book, you will not find any scientific evidence for the magical phenomena that I describe. Nor will you encounter a ready-made method which describes everything that is in store for you. The method of the Sacred Voyage only gives you a key to the door of another dimension. Behind this door is where magic rules, the universal life-force that has given a soul to everything which lives. Magic is the language of the soul, which only children can speak. Find the Child in your heart and unlock the dark secrets that obscure your soul. Follow the instructions of the Sacred Voyage and have a safe experience of the magical world of your soul. Learn to heal yourself from diseases and discover how you can become healthy. Find your calling, your place in the world and

rediscover your soul. Live every second as if it's your last so that when your time comes, you can look back with a great smile and see a life that was truly yours. If you are looking for soul mates to make the Voyage with then announce yourself on the forum at www.thesacredvoyage.com. If you want to ask me a question you can send an email to info@thesacredvoyage.com.

May Light and love enlighten your path!

Lars Faber

PS: As I will show in several parts of this book, I believe there isn't enough of a balance between masculine and feminine energies in our world. To return some of this uneasy balance, I often choose to use the female form, so that when I write 'she' it can also be read as 'he.'

PART 1

INTRODUCTION

1 The Sacred Temple

No matter how far you have wandered, no matter how lost you are, know that the way home is never more than an hour away. No matter how much you have deviated or have failed in your own eyes, the Sacred Temple is always open for she who wishes to enter her with love in her heart. To find her, you need to do nothing more than loosen the reins, like a horseman who can't find his way home anymore and lets his horse find its own way back to its stable. This is how we begin the journey to the temple where our soul resides, the Sacred Temple. The temple is protected from those with evil intentions or profane thoughts: for them it simply doesn't exist, and the path is hidden. Only those with the Child in their heart can carry the Light and find the Temple. The Gate shall open for them. That is the magic spell that keeps the Temple pure for the pilgrim on a quest for mercy. Mercy is to be found in every sign of our inspiration. It is a beacon of Light in the eternal darkness. Of everything that frightens us, we fear most that which is inevitable: death. It is our Sacred task to face our fear and to choose death as our companion. In the end it is her who gives beauty and happiness to our lives and who can charge every second with purpose and meaning. Only we can decide whether we push her aside or embrace her, loathe her or love her. If we decide to welcome death, we choose life. With this we take responsibility to truly live every second of our life, and to paint on the canvas of eternity that death gives us. Whoever chooses death as her companion sees in her not an enemy who must be fought off, but a horse that can be ridden. A horse that has her stable in the temple of the soul, the Sacred Temple. Whoever visits her in their lifetime, will fear death no more.

The Sacred Voyage is the story of the pilgrimage that you can make in search of inspiration. It is the Voyage that leads to the depths of our emotions, which lie stored in our being and which are aching to be released so that they can bring us to life. It is the story of the Voyage that liberates our Inner Child from the dark dungeons of our subconscious to which we have banished her. It is the story of the Godliness inside us which we can awaken and bring into our lives. Above all, it is a story of inspiration: the rediscovery of our soul. In this book I will show where we have lost her and how we can find her again. Living with your heart and your soul, that is what this book is about.

The method which I propose is to plow up the field of our emotions. Talking about what has happened to us might bring us momentary relief, but it doesn't help us to till the soil of our feelings so that it can become fertile again. To penetrate the depth of our emotional experiences we have to approach her actively. I know of two powerful methods to do this, Holotropic breathing (emotional breathwork), and the use of healing plants and mushrooms, also known as entheogenic sacraments. The first, breathwork, is perfect for digging deep and finding the emotional blockages, and for making sure that our old angers, fears, sadness and joy can still be expressed, and flow out over our field of emotions and make it fertile. The second, the use of healing plants and mushrooms, is seen as an extension of the breathwork, the difference being that under the influence of entheogenic sacraments the plow will go even deeper. Furthermore, a breathing session can be interrupted, but if we make the Voyage with a sacrament, we give ourselves up completely to whatever happens for several hours. This surrender is what can heal us so deeply. I recommend using Ayahuasca, the sacred plant from the Amazon, as a sacrament, or the magic mushroom from Mexico. These sacraments are characterized by a special ability to confront us with everything that lives inside us, and to reveal our place in the world. The inner Voyage of one or two hours (of breathwork) to eight hours (of Ayahuasca) is what this book is about. The method that I have developed is mainly about the intent, the mindset of the Traveler and her Voyage, and the circumstances in which the Voyage ideally takes place. When we are well prepared, mindful of the surroundings in which we make the Voyage, lovingly submitted to a Guide or else to the guidance of someone we care about, and completely surrendered to the Voyage, a world awaits us in which miracles are more the rule than the exception.

With the method for the Voyage I will describe how you can magically heal from serious illnesses on a cellular level, how you can rediscover your calling, and how you can develop paranormal gifts like Clear Perception (feeling, hearing, seeing and knowing). Those are the small gifts which are waiting for us when we get to work and rediscover our inspiration, embrace our Inner Child, and awaken the God inside.

Searching through Dutch literature, I could find very little to explain the unusual phenomena of the Sacred Dimension. What was it that was making these unbelievable experiences and healings possible? A friend of mine was making a translation of a Spanish text, in which the life story of Maria Sabina, the healer, was beginning to take shape. I received his first translation, and, reading it, my heart skipped a beat out of sheer joy: this world famous shaman was using magic mushrooms to find the origins of illnesses and to heal them, and with great success. I read:

'But I have never seen the devil, or at least, there where I go I go beyond the realms of death. I dive beneath it and go down. I can search there in the shadows and the silence. That way I get to where the illnesses are breeding, underneath the rocks and the mud. Other times I rose up high, high above the mountains and the clouds. That's where I want to be. That's where I see God and Benito Juárez. That's where I see the good people. That's where everything is known. Everything about everybody, because there, everything is finished. I hear voices. They speak to me. It is the voice of the mushroom. The God that lives in them, enters my body. I surrender my body and my voice to the niños santos (the Sacred Children).'

I was deeply impressed by the words of the illiterate shaman from Mexico. I found that I recognized so much in life and her rich experience with the healing powers of magic mushrooms. Still, it was not yet exactly what I was looking for. After all, I and other people I knew had been healed after we took magic herbs and mushrooms *ourselves*, without the presence of a shaman. My search continued, and I ended up with the American author Myron Stolaroff, who gave me a document called 'The Secret Chief'.¹ Myron had drawn up the life story of the Secret Chief, as Leo Zeff was lovingly called (he had to work in secret in the US, because of the threat of a life sentence in prison). A hero who, despite the ridiculous 'war on drugs', was happily pursuing the secret

treatment of thousands of people. Purely because he felt that what he was doing was good for humanity, no matter what the law said. And with the same spectacular results that I myself had experienced. Finally, this was a recognition and vindication of my own 'dis-discovery'. The Secret Chief claimed that breakthroughs were possible with people who had been in therapy for twenty years, even with just one session. I tried to verify this bold claim with a few Dutch psychologists, but received absolutely no cooperation. In fact, the professional healers had absolutely no interest in the astonishing results that I nor other people had achieved. They thought what I was doing was dangerous and unpredictable. Myron advised me to immerse myself in the work of Stanislav Grof, who, according to him, was the most important psychologist of the twentieth century after Freud. However, there seemed to be no books by Grof in any Dutch bookstores; as a matter of fact, it turned out there were no Dutch translations of any of his important writings at all. Armed with an unflinching perseverance and an English dictionary I discovered that Grof had dedicated the greater part of his life to the researching of altered states of consciousness and their applications in a therapeutic setting. To me, the most important thing is that Grof supports the idea that through entheogenic substances (and Holotropic breathing, Chapter 24 – Breath- and Bodywork), major psychological breakthroughs are possible, often starting in the first session, in which early childhood events, memories of birth, and even transpersonal experiences (such as previous lives) can be experienced.²³ This of course in contrast to the standard therapies, which can take years and often leave very little to show for themselves. I honestly wonder why there is so little interest in this incredibly promising field of therapy. In Holland, it seems as if we don't get much further than patching up the symptoms or sweating it out. Just look at the sickening approach that psychiatrists have towards their clients, using antidepressants instead of choosing to reach the actual core of a clients' illness and helping to heal them. What kind of a strange world do we live in where we choose an uninspired life over that of a life lived through the heart and the soul?

In the second part of this book I will try to give answers to this urgent question from several different perspectives, together with the unambiguous message to you to search for your own inspiration. You will notice in this book that I enjoy a joke here and there, but I am strictly serious about this. With the Sacred Voyage I am providing you with an extremely powerful method to search for your own soul. With that, I am

putting the responsibility into your hands. 'Responsibility,' the giving of a response, begs the question: are you truly prepared to stand by yourself? We live in an age where 'blaming someone else' reflects our 'consumer culture after the American example,' where you can hold the manufacturer of your microwave accountable for the death of your cat if you've tried to dry it off in one of them. Of course I can add a bit of small print, like so many authors do, with the notice that I am not responsible for the use of this method. But I want to go a step further than that. I want to ask you only to use the method of the Sacred Voyage if you really want to take responsibility for yourself. Because that is the first step on the road to recovery, as I will show you in the chapter about magical healing on a cellular level. Affirm your birthright, the right to lay claim to your own life. I want to help you through the deepest darkness to rediscover your soul. I can show you how to do that, but you decide for yourself if and when you're ready. Okay?

It's better not to make a Voyage if you are pregnant. The enormous emotional traumas that can surface could cause a miscarriage. In general you could say that for those who have a weak heart or a disposition towards psychosis, making a Voyage would not be wise. On the other hand, these same ailments might be healed by finding the cause and bringing it into the Light. Medical and psychological guidance would be greatly beneficial here, but as I already showed, these institutions just don't want to actually heal you. Herbs and mushrooms cannot be patented and therefore cost almost nothing. We shouldn't expect any approval of them from the world of pharmaceuticals, who are the main sponsors of the medical industry. We have to rely on ourselves when it comes to our own healing. It's up to us, together with those who care about us. This is why I have developed the Sacred Voyage, not as a clinical model, but as a method that you can follow yourself with a loving friend. You can take turns guiding each other in the search for your soul. You should preferably not make the Voyage alone. The healing power of the Sacred Voyage lies in the phenomenon of letting go, of total surrender. You can achieve that with a guide, someone who can guide your consciousness and watch over you. This is where I part ways with Grof, who has written his method from the point of view of psychiatry and professional guidance. The Sacred Voyage takes her back to where I believe she really belongs: back to yourself, with the responsibility for your own development. And, secondly, back to each

other. Part of the cause of your illness, whether it be psychological or physical, is the cold, detached society we live in. Guiding each other through the experience of emotions and the processing of old pains is a beautiful path towards healing. The pill that can heal every sickness is called love. If you take responsibility for your own life, and for finding your inspiration, you can discover the true meaning of love in the Sacred Dimension. Perhaps there will come a time when medical science embraces the soul, and we can go to the loving professionals who really care about our fate in order to make a Sacred Voyage. Just as the Secret Chief Leo Zeff and Stan Grof helped thousands of people with mind expanding substances on their path to wholeness. For now, the signs point in the opposite direction. We will have to walk the path to our soul by our own strength, with love for each other, and with the right knowledge and preparations. I have written this book to help you do just that.

2 Rediscovering Your True Strength

The Sacred Voyage is about the search for a healthy body and mind, for spirituality, and for vitality. The search for the strength that was given to each of us at birth, and which so many of us have lost over the years. Primitive societies think of health as an abundance of energy, and of illness as the absence thereof. Borrowing this view of life, we can see for ourselves whether or not we are living in abundance. If the answer is 'not', and you do not have an abundance of energy in your life, then you are not living from your own strength. It might be time to do something about it. Do you agree?

I myself, in any case, came to this simple conclusion about five years ago when I was emotionally and physically burned out, my marriage was falling apart, and my own company was failing before it had even been fully set up. In short, my life had come to a halt. I was definitely not experiencing an abundance of energy, rather the opposite. I was drained, heavily depressed, exhausted. And that while, statistically speaking, I hadn't even lived out the first half of my life yet! I felt tired, burned out, decimated. After I had spent enough time wallowing in my own unhappiness and self-pity, I made the decision to start living. I decided to get to the bottom of the causes of my tiredness and my lack of energy, and to find out how I could reverse that process. This became a search for my soul, which I later would call the Sacred Voyage.

I did sports, ate healthy food, rested well, and went from doctor to doctor. No matter what I tried, the abundance of energy never came. My body remained tired and heavy and, above all, sick. I was plagued by heavy pains in my back, and the muscles in my shoulders and neck felt like a roll of barbed wire, cramping up at the slightest bit of stress. My intention to start living was thwarted by my body, which just didn't want to cooperate. It was as if it were carrying a terrible secret which it had to share with me first.

Eventually, by 'coincidence', I came in touch with magic mushrooms from Mexico, and with Ayahuasca, the sacred drink from the Amazon. Until then, as with so many people in our society, I had been dismissive of consciousness change, but my best friend Diana convinced me to try them anyway. It ended up being the greatest turning point of my life. The

holy sacraments brought to Light what I had always hidden from myself: my own emotions! The depression and the lack of energy which I had been experiencing had been nothing other than the total lack of emotions. The misfortunes in my life, on top of the old traumas of my childhood which I had stored away in my mind, had doled out a fatal blow. The emotions came out, one by one, during the Sacred Voyage. Living through the old pain, sadness, fear, and anger, instead of just surviving it, became the decisive factor in my life. With each session I regained my life energy. Meanwhile, I had begun to guide others in making the Sacred Voyage. I was miraculously healed from several illnesses and left the chronic fatigue far behind me. The people I guided achieved the same wonderful results. I refined the method of the Sacred Voyage and began to read literature that could explain the miraculous results. It turned out that some research had already been done in the United States, but most of it was about forty years old. The 'war on drugs' and government regulations have made it impossible for Americans to do research into the promising qualities of entheogenic substances. No matter how shocking the results with entheogenic substances may be, the American government is intractable and is determined to have its policies copied throughout the world. Even the powerful African root Iboga is illegal, while this entheogen has been shown and proven to be effective in kicking the habit in all sorts of addictions.⁴ After just one Ibogaine treatment, the most addicted – those who can't live without heroine, and who resort to stealing to afford their daily 'shot' – can quit their addiction for more than half a year. And, importantly, without the side effects which normally come with going cold turkey. Iboga gives these people their souls back; and still the Americans are firm in maintaining their ban. That ought to get you thinking.

The method which I have developed, on the basis of my own experience and those of others, proved to have several important similarities to those of American pioneers such as Stan Grof. The most important question I asked was: how can I develop the safest possible method, in which the Voyager can make the utmost of their use of a holy sacrament such as magic mushrooms or Ayahuasca?

Together with my Voyage companions, I experimented with these sacraments in different settings and discovered which elements had positive or negative influences on our Voyage. (I describe this in detail

in Part III - Preparation). The core of the method of the Sacred Voyage is being in a safe environment, guided by a Loving Guide (an intimate friend) while intending to search for healing, power and/or insight with the help of a natural entheogenic sacrament (such as Ayahuasca or magic mushrooms) which gives entry to the Sacred Dimension. The Sacred Dimension is the dimension that you enter in ecstasy, where you give up your conscious thoughts and surrender to the experience itself. I call the consciousness that you open in the process Sacred, or Higher Consciousness, because it gives entry to the Godliness inside us ("Entheogen," the umbrella term for this kind of mind-expanding substances, also means: "to reveal the God inside").

The total surrender to the experience is what makes the deep healing of the Sacred Voyage possible. It's not about the taking of a substance. The substance is the catalyst for our own process. All we have to do is allow whatever appears to appear. In our Voyages we get the chance to see, express, process, and heal our unfinished business – such as traumas – from the past. All we have to do is give up control for a while so that that which we have been repressing our whole lives has a chance to reveal itself. That is what truly heals, that is what gives us true strength, inner strength. The entheogenic sacrament helps us and forges a bond with our soul. But it does not heal us. We have to make that possible for ourselves, by letting our emotions rise up and giving them room. That is the true healing power which the Voyage promises!

We can experience what I'm describing here when we surrender ourselves to our breathing. When we start to breathe 'chaotically', quickly and intensely, and keep this up for some time, we can enter the same state of being as with an entheogenic sacrament, although it is a bit less deep and it doesn't last quite as long. This special form of breathwork can be a great transition for those to whom the entheogenic Voyage is too big of a step. By breathing in this way our unconscious is accessed, and it ensures that the emotions which are stored in our bodies can be released. All we have to do is to welcome them and to express them. To surrender to the experience and shout, cry, tremble, and laugh. Whatever appears, let it out and make room in yourself. Your strength begins in that space!

Whether we use breathwork or an entheogenic sacrament to open ourselves to Sacred Consciousness, the method I recommend is the

same. It is to bring to Light our emotions and free ourselves from old pains and to surrender completely to the experience. Maybe you're ashamed to do that. That wouldn't be so strange; it's how we were raised! I felt deeply ashamed about my emotions, and just facing that shame was so incredibly liberating! Existential shame, the fear to live, is what makes us so ill. The fear to really laugh, to cry, to shout in rage and to tremble in fear, that is what makes us ill. If you plan to really live, then you have to make the decision to conquer your shame today. If we do that together now, things will get a lot lighter already. Then we at least won't have to be ashamed of each other and can move on together to find our true strength. You have to find a soul mate for your Voyage, someone who you don't feel any shame around, and who doesn't feel any around you either. That is another important measure of the Sacred Voyage, the Loving Guide. Somebody who really cares about you and who you care about in turn. Voyage together; it's much more fun, more instructive, and it's actually safer than doing it alone. The Sacred Voyage can only be entered fully with a Guide, so that you can surrender yourself completely to the experience. The Guide can be a therapist if you wish, but I don't believe it's necessary. As long as you feel safe together and you both understand what the goal of the Voyage is – facing your own emotions! If this isn't your intention (or mindset), it's better not to enter the Sacred Dimension. You could be greatly disappointed. The breathwork or the use of an entheogenic sacrament softens you up and makes you receptive to your own realm of feeling. Of course you can choose to suppress it, but that takes a whole lot of strength, and, to put it mildly, it isn't much fun. Those who consciously intend to welcome all emotions, however, will experience the softening up as yet another blessing!

I can imagine that you've gotten curious by now about the actual method of the Sacred Voyage. I will conquer my own shame and share an experience of my own that I had last year with Ayahuasca. But first a note about my intent, my mindset at the time. I was already far along the path to health and abundant energy, but there was an important factor that was getting in the way of true health. I smoked. And not too little: I smoked about thirty to fifty cigarettes a day. I had already made dozens of attempts to quit, but I could never keep it up for longer than three months. I decided to ask the 'plant-teacher' Ayahuasca for help. I knew that the nicotine addiction had been carved right into my cells. My

mother smoked while she was pregnant with me, so you could say that I had been spoon fed on smoking. First I decided that I would challenge my addiction. I rented a bungalow in the woods and had myself dropped off there without cigarettes and with a big pot of soup. I would fast for a week with only vegetable soup to feed me (see Chapter 34 – Detoxing your cells). After this week I would drink Ayahuasca. During the week I floated somewhere between heaven and hell, between dying and being reborn. Half of my system was thirsting for nicotine and the other half was ecstatic that I wasn't taking that poison anymore. My sleeping rhythm switched from being a night person to a morning person. For the first time in my life I was getting up before sunrise. Heaps of energy were being freed up inside me, together with a well of emotion, which surfaced as sorrow. I couldn't quite grasp it, but I allowed it, just as I allowed the fear that was holding me in its grip and the anger that would occasionally arise. I took my shamanic drum and beat it and yelled profanities and curses in wordless words. Years of pain and frustration flowed out. My excess energy was spent on yoga and jogging. And still I wasn't released from the nicotine monster. I had asked my partner Tanja and my best friend Diana to Guide me on the Saturday that I would be back home. And once I was home we made it happen, and I went on a Sacred Voyage with Ayahuasca.

I started preparing the brew of the gods in the early morning. First I ground up all the components and then boiled them, boiled them for hours. Put white clothes on. The ritual opens me up and makes me a little sad. Finally I stop and think to myself. The brew is ready and I have installed myself in my Voyage room, which has been beautifully decorated with the colors that I saw during my previous Voyage. There are Arabian pillows, fabrics and inspiring paintings. I feel at home here. Tanja puts me at ease and takes care of me. I drink the first cup of the brew and feel a wave of nausea. Tanja hands me a little bucket and within fifteen minutes I throw up several times. Since I have been fasting, there is little to throw up with the brew. It's more like I'm spitting out old feelings that don't belong to me, or, at least, that's what it feels like. A few minutes later my heart chakra opens and I enter an ocean of love and rest. The voice of Ayahuasca, the prehistoric Goddess, speaks to me. She tells me how proud 'they' are of me, that I've taken an important step towards myself by quitting smoking. She praises me and the fact that I've taken such good care of myself lately. The tears flow down my cheeks

like an endless waterfall. This is the motherly love that I have been yearning for my entire life.

This vision lasts for about an hour and I feel myself merged with the Goddess. Then I feel that the effects of the brew are decreasing and a goofy figure appears in front of me. He introduces himself as the notary of the village and he wants to award me with a badge. Normally, he says, you have to perform a heroic act to deserve this, but you I'm just going to give it to. I hesitate and don't accept the badge, but I ask him – what kind of heroic act does he mean? 'To really look at yourself', he says. 'Do you dare to take a second cup?'

I decide to drink the second cup of Ayahuasca and this one might be even nastier than the first. I try to hold it in but my urge to vomit is greater. All the rubbish straight out of my body! I give myself up to the brew, the prehistoric Goddess has given me so much love, I completely trust the experience. Diana takes Tanja's place and is immediately confronted with the situation when I try to answer the impulse of my body to stand up. Later on I read in her notes: 'I don't know what you are carrying with you Lars, but it is literally weighing down on your shoulders'. It's so heavy I practically cave in from the weight, as if I'm Atlas holding the world on my neck. I throw the burden from my shoulders and stand up straight. Then, as if I'd never done anything else in my life, I started singing and dancing ancient Indian songs. I can assure you that I had never done it before, but it's great! I get taken deeper and deeper into a strange world that I accompany with my song and dance. Then I lose consciousness for a moment, and when I come to again I experience a Light that is so clear and so intense that I can't even describe it. The Light cleanses every cell of my body, making me feel like a bug on a light bulb. My body twists and squirms while the Light, the love, penetrates the very core of my being. As if my cells are receiving a spring cleaning. Later I hear from my upstairs neighbor that he felt and saw the intense energy for several hours. When the Light is 'done' with me, it says goodbye and leaves me with a thin strand of thread that leads back to her. As if I'll be connected to this incredible energy from now on. That's how it felt. And that's how it still feels. From this day on I haven't touched another cigarette, and I feel that I won't need one ever again. I have restored my link to the Source of Life and no longer need to sedate and destroy myself.

The Sacred Voyage can heal you from your addictions, eating disorders, sleeping disorders, burn-outs, depressions, and all possible illnesses – even the most serious ones. The most important thing is your own intent to get healed, the intent to give your emotions a warm welcome and to open yourself up to the fragile child that you are behind all the armor and the masks. Conquer your shame and your fear and meet yourself with your eyes open. Let out the yell from deep within and heal yourself. That is the path of the Voyage, the path to your true strength. The path to who you are meant to be. I myself am a few years along my own path and am grateful for the wonderful insights that I've received by making many Sacred Voyages. I have learned to open myself to my 'inner world', and to the parts of myself that were hurt and which needed my attention and love so badly. That's how I started the long way home, to health and healing of deep emotional wounds. Finally I experienced the abundant energy that I had been yearning for. I could even devote myself to explosive sports again like surfing and snowboarding. Sports which require a perfect condition and control of the body. I now measure my 'well-being' by the condition of my body. When I experience flow, the ecstatic energy that Mihali Csikszentmihalyi describes in his book *Flow*,⁵ I feel happy and at one with myself and the world. The flow of inspiration, of making or listening to beautiful music, of inspired work or sports, of friendship and love. The flow that is made possible by cleaning up in the dark side of our unconscious, and by bringing our vulnerable side into the Light. That is the path that I want to show you in this book, the Sacred Voyage. A path that has helped many on their search for flow and inspiration, and, above all, the path to yourself. When you start to learn how to express your inner world, and the emotions that have been locked up deep inside, your outer world automatically changes along with it. You stand stronger in your life. If you learn to conquer your fear and your shame, to express your anger, to shed your tears and to show your joy, you automatically attract the right people. And you dare to choose the work that truly fits with you, and you start to really take good care of yourself. Your emotions are the deepest expression of who you really are. They are a symbolic representation of your heart. Heal your heart and come to life!

As a little extra, the Sacred Voyaging has given me and others a certain degree of paranormal abilities. Large parts of this book have been written in what is called 'automatic writing', which is done by not

thinking, tuning in to a higher knowledge, and writing down without filtering. In Part VI, Clear Perception, I show you how to open yourself up to your own clairvoyance, a gift that we all possess and can all develop. The Sacred Voyage has proven to be an important catalyst in the development of paranormal abilities.

These abilities can be a great support in finding and walking your unique life path. It's also a precious aid in helping to heal yourself and others. See it as a bonus, a gift for your love, your courage and trust, and for the trouble you've taken to make yourself vulnerable, to free your emotions and to allow yourself to truly live! Viva!

The first part of this book is an introduction into the world of the Sacred Voyage.

In the second part of this book, 'Perspectives', I want to introduce you to different perspectives and contemplations about the Sacred Voyage and its place in life.

The third part, 'Sacred Voyage – Preparation', is about the preparations you can make before starting your Voyage.

The fourth part, 'Sacred Voyage', deals with the various states of consciousness that you might encounter on your Voyages so as to give you a frame of reference.

The fifth part deals with a specific application of the Voyage: magical healing on a cellular level.

The sixth and final part is about the uses of paranormal abilities and Clear Perception: clearvoyance, feeling, hearing, and knowing.

PART II

PERSPECTIVES

3 The Secret Club

When I was still very young, my parents were regularly confronted by my friends' distressed parents asking 'what had I done to them this time' and 'what had I gotten their sweet little kids into now'. I knew pretty early on that the well-behaved and conditioned world wasn't for me. 'There's gotta be more to life than working, eating, watching TV, sleeping, and working', I often thought to myself. In any case, the rebel in me has never been able to surrender itself to this fatally boring game of life. And to be honest, I hope to have found an equal in you! How great would the world be if we could all be kids again. Every day would be a party and we could just have wild fun. Wild, right? Except there's nothing wild in our normal lives; you just have to be in your car, in the bus or train during rush hour, and look around you to see that having fun isn't 'normal'. Having fun is a luxury. Having fun is something you do in secret and most of the time we need to drink or do drugs before we can even let go a little. I want to take you now to the little person that's hidden deep (or less than deep) within you. That joyful, funny, and high-spirited being that lives beneath your surface appearance. That little guy or gal inside you who perhaps used to think, 'I'll never be like them'. And, 'Growing up is stupid, grownups are stupid'. The unrestrained and unadulterated little person to whom the world was a playground, waiting to be discovered and conquered. The person that thought that it could become anything it wanted to be. That still believed in fairy tales. What's going through your mind as you read this? 'Don't be so childish, fairy tales are for little kids'? If that's what you're thinking, I invite you to park that thought for a while. You can take it on again at any moment, because it's what we've all been taught to believe. It's the harsh lie that has been drummed into all of our heads. It seems as if the world in its current appearance is a hike that has to be walked with disappointment. As if you simply must become disappointed somewhere along the way. The forces that are pulling on you and asking you to conform are so incredibly intense that almost nobody escapes them. I'll tell you why that is. When you're young you're mostly Light. You haven't developed the strength yet to manifest yourself. Your ideas, your desires, your plans are all Light. Your plans! As a child you were full of plans. Just think about

when you were little, all the great things you could do with only a little bit of money. You could buy an endless amount of candy and toys. In your mind you had already spent the money a thousand times, and that alone gave you so much enjoyment. Of course you could be smart and save it. Save it! Yeah right, that's what grownups do. Kids spend! Back to the Light where you came from. There was a time when you were only Light, Heavenly Light that had a desire to manifest itself. Your soul wanted to experience, instead of Being Alone. You desired to make contact. You wanted to feel. To taste. To experience. From that desire you started to vibrate. That high vibration, which came out of your own Light, slowed down a fraction, and changed your reality. You chose to become human and you searched for a place where you could gain experience. The pleasure of your parents' orgasm expressed your wish to become alive. The miracle of creation took place and you manifested as a little human. If you've already stopped believing in fairy tales and belong to the barren army of scientists, then at least try to envision the miracle of creation! Like everyone else, you used to be one single cell. You divided yourself, and again, and again an infinite amount of times. You did this by making use of the path that has been created for you and for creatures like you. With that you are life itself, and creation. Think of it as a highway. You travel on it, but you are not the highway itself. A lot of people confuse this idea. As a created form, you chose to become a human, but you are not *it*. Are you still here? You are Light. You are an idea that manifested itself in the Divine Plan. You are life, and not the form that you have chosen for yourself. It is temporary, and therefore precious. Back to the little being inside you that I spoke about before. For this being the world is a riveting place full of possibilities. Except you don't know yet how to explore and make use of it! You came from Light, from higher vibrations, and are now going to learn how to manifest yourself in lower vibration. With power. And power knows very different laws, laws that you still have to learn. Your parents were given the task to raise you. They're supposed to teach you how to convert your Light into power. To do that, you need faith. Safety, security. Love, patience. Patience, endless patience. If you're very lucky, you are raised. That is to say, you get raised as God's Child. You deserve that, just like everyone else. Most of us meet another fate, however, which is that we are kept small. We don't learn to transform Light into strength, we don't learn that the world is a place of abundance. We follow a standard program that will brainwash us during the first twenty

years of life, and, above all, it will focus on our shortcomings. Grades are printed to show how good we are at being brainwashed. The miracle of our humanity is that we are only at full consciousness once we're fully grown. We are not born complete; we transform. As long as nothing gets in our way and we are raised well, we grow while holding onto our Light and we obtain strength. We are now going to learn how we can create and manifest. At least, that's how it ought to be. But most of us are taught that we are human, and so we 'unlearn' our wonder. I don't know if you can follow me this far. That's not to say that I'm underestimating you. What I want to say is that we are getting heavy. Our vibration is getting too heavy, we are getting too earthly. It comes down to this; the Light and elf-like being that you really are, is deformed by education, discouragement, and disappointment, into the human being that almost all of us have become. That is not a judgment or an insult, it's an observation. If we stay too Light we can't ground ourselves, but if we become too heavy, we can't imagine or create anymore. We can only walk the standard, well-worn path. We can't believe in fairy tales anymore because we've been disappointed too often. I sincerely hope that you haven't been so disappointed in life that you have sacrificed your imagination to your disappointment and pain. The truth is that life is a fairytale in which anything is possible. You only have to learn how! To learn that, you have to become young again. Fairy tales remind us of this. It's a kind of spell that you can only see if you believe in it. It's not for nothing that Peter Pan never wants to grow up. Anything is possible in Never Never Land, as long as you believe in it. And with that I don't mean the trick on which many popular methods for achieving 'success' are based, the 'if I think that I'm successful, then I'll become it.' What is success? If you can answer that question from your inner child's heart, you're doing okay. Most of us, however, see success as an achievement of our adult existence. But that interpretation is fatal! If we focus on that form of worldly success we'll turn away even farther from our true being. Success of the standard variety freezes us into the world of matter. First, we'll have to return to our Childhood, we'll have to learn to be young again. Back to the uninhibited being that we used to be. Back to Light. Back to life, away from our programming. Life *is* a game, and the 'grown ups' have decided for us that we have to follow their rules. Just try and escape it! And yet it is possible, as long as you return to the Light. When you become Light again, you start to remember. When you remember and you wash out your brainwashing you learn that the world

of matter is an illusion. It has been created by frustrated adults who have nothing to gain from you if you are an uninhibited Light being. You have no choice, you have to join in on their adult game. So they think! I'm still that naughty boy I used to be. Or at least, I'm him again. For a while I played along with the grownups. I had an important job, lots of money and respect and I was excellently disguised. And I was totally dying. Thank God I came to the insight that it was all just a game and that I can not only change the rules, but that I myself am the rules. Yep! That's the secret. Every living creature is their own game, including the game rules. It's a game, a game that you can play along with or not. It's an illusion, a very scary and realistic one, but it's an illusion. Whoever has been in the Sacred Dimension penetrates it and from then on can determine their own rules. If you have been behind the scenes of creation, then you have seen our true nature with your own eyes. If you know our true potential it's pretty easy to see that we're making a big mess together. If we say that the characteristics of the soul are joy and beauty, dare I say that our society has lost its soul? I can openly tell you that I have serious doubts about putting these parts in my book. What if I don't get taken seriously? Or that my socially critical and naughty side has a negative impact on my serious and honest side, the one that speaks when I talk about the method of the Voyage. What if I get labeled again as the boy who gets people to do bad and naughty things? That everyone has to get on 'drugs', as the dimwits will say of the method of the Voyage. What if? Who cares what if? I'm probably the main enemy of all those proper parents who have planned out the future of their proper children and have plotted out a course to the perfect spot in society for their offspring. But if I'm the natural enemy of everything that is conditioned, then let me also be the natural friend of our neglected and authentic being, our secret side, our soul. Above all, seek out who you really are on the inside. That is my message, if you're still unsure about it. It's the message that's packaged into fairy tales. Innocent tales that parents tell their children and which hide the message: find out who you really are, stay young forever and don't go along with the grownups. What do you think all those magic potions are made of? Witches have been making the Voyage for thousands of years already to make their magic flights, as symbolized by the broom they fly on. Princesses who kiss frogs? We've known from recent researches that certain types of toads produce entheogenic substances. Storytellers have known this much longer than us. Children's stories are full of references to magic potions that make you stronger and

that release the curse that's been placed upon you. Deep in our hearts we believe in the magic of fairy tales. Because it really exists. Whoever visits the wondrous world of the Sacred Dimension can witness that there is much more to life than the prefab society that we've built. Have you ever noticed that fairy tale structures like castles, cathedrals and the like aren't being built any more? The only things we build are hideous monstrosities where entire tribes spend their whole lives glued to computer screens, trapped in a form of slavery? That is what grownups have made of the world, not to mention the nature and wildlife that they are murdering and the wars they're waging. That's what happens when you ban the Child from your heart. The world becomes a dull and grayish place that can be and does get exploited. Let me be the enemy of whoever silently agrees with the established order and wants to keep it the way it is. Let anarchy rule until heart and soul have claimed their rightful throne. Let the Child conquer our hearts and make us realize that we are more than puppets. Let beauty and joy be our answers to our own changeability that is now obsessing us. That is the promise that lies in the Voyage. The promise to guide every pilgrim to their soul and to let it awaken. The Sacred Voyage awakens our secret self. Our hidden side, about which the fantasy author Clive Barker⁶ has said: 'Secretly we're all elves, we are each a Jekyll and a Hyde. Every person has a secret self, a fantasy self. We let him out when we're alone and making music and dancing, with or without clothes. Whenever we feel safe. What I do is to say: just let go.' I'd like to go a step further than Barker and say: 'find your secret self'. Find your heart, embrace your soul, and live out your true calling. That is my message. It may go against everything we've come to think of as 'normal', but 'normal' might as well be a synonym for sick or even 'doomed'. If we don't regain our soul, and if our current life of consumerism continues to be what determines our values, we won't have a world left to live in. We will forget who we are and we won't be able to remember at all who we're supposed to be. Voyaging into the Sacred Dimension and discovering who you are meant to be is already a difficult task. I want to warn you about that. Because once you've awoken, you can't fall asleep again. You will go from being a bench player to being the star, and that role comes with a lot of responsibility. Still, I find it hard to imagine that anyone would voluntarily choose to sleep through life in a supporting role where the opening shot is symbolized by a tombstone that reads: 'here lies an average person. His life was boring and bland, just like this tombstone: *He didn't know any*

better'. Somebody once started the saying, 'Live fast, die young'. I've forgotten what exactly he meant by this, but I still like the message. I choose not to restrict myself in my writing and to be the messenger of the soul. Look for her! And when you regain her, take her into your arms and never let her go again. Let others enjoy your beauty and be happy in your presence. Isn't that what life is about? Become the director *and* the star of your own movie again and turn it into a spectacle you'll never forget. Let it be a movie full of love, magic, adventure, and beauty. Voyage into the Sacred Dimension and release your secret self from the dark dungeons of your unconscious. Bring her into the Light, into your life. Discover who you are meant to be and become the creator of life, the bearer of Light. Become a member of the 'Secret Club of awakened souls' and fulfill your calling. No matter how dark the night may be, it's your birthright to shine out. If you can withstand the shame, the disgrace, and the ridicule of the established order, you will be rewarded with a life that's worth living. Heroes aren't born; heroes awaken. Whoever loves the world, whoever loves themselves, awaken! It is time. Become your own hero and free your soul. The world needs you. Build up your strength and discover that you now have the gift of manifesting anything you can think of. Forget your disappointments. Those are from a time when you weren't up to strength yet. Make the world colorful and bright, let Light shine on your path and turn your life into a fairy tale. This way, when your time to return to the Light finally comes, you can meet death with your head up high and with a smile on your face. And you can already start to think about what kind of beautiful things you want to manifest in your next lives. Life is eternal. Make something of it. Live each day as if it's your last. Live! If we come to life and embrace the magic of our true, vulnerable, and childlike nature, we can perform miracles. The Sacred Voyage is such a wondrous path that it speaks to the imagination of us grownups. The miracles we perform in the Sacred Dimension are as real as life and can be of vital importance to us. We can learn to heal ourselves magically down to the cellular level, and we can learn clear perception – two gifts that are highly useful in a world gone mad. Two gifts that can prevent our soul from being smothered and lost in obscurity. Viva!

4 **Inspiration**

The method of the Sacred Voyage originates in one of the oldest known methods of healing, which is also a psychological model: shamanism. In the archaic societies of most primitive peoples the shaman, or seer/healer, filled and still fills the role of spiritual protector of his community. The healing techniques of shamanism still have an unprecedented power. The healers in our community are usually less thorough in their work. The shaman knows the members of his tribe from birth, and is often occupied throughout the night with just one healing. Our doctors know us through the basic data that's available on their computer screens. On average they take a minute or ten to hear our complaints and to write out a receipt that relieves our symptoms. Or they send us on to a specialist who knows even less about us. For the welfare of our soul we're sent somewhere else altogether, to a psychologist or a psychiatrist, who may be working on us for a very long time, but who generally books very little results. The treatments are usually directed at our mind and not at our heart, our emotions or our soul; our spirituality. This way we can wander for years in our Western No Mans' Land between body and mind without ever getting healed. Where has our soul gone? No matter how hard our smartest scientists tried, they could never demonstrate the feeble concept of the soul. And so they have banned it from our understanding to the realm of myths, where, to be true, she's probably better off. This after all is the realm where our soul is waiting to be rediscovered, the realm of our imagination, our creativity, our vision. Our current scientific methods will never be able to find the soul. Obsessed with evidence, we're like a dog that's trying to catch it's own tail. We're never going to catch it. Inspiration is something each person has to experience for themselves. Just listen to a masterpiece by Chopin, or read a poem by Rumi. Look into the eyes of a laughing baby and see: see that the soul is so clearly obvious that you'd almost have to be blind not to see it. You only have to know where to look. Our science is like the endearing young boy who presses his nose up against the mirror and says that he can't see himself. The soul cannot be dissected or proven; the soul can only be experienced, experienced as the whole of our perception. Try and penetrate the 'soul' of a Kahlil Gibran story. Or try and isolate the smell of spring. Our soul is the being or the thing that perceives all these things in their entirety and gives them a special meaning. It's not our individual or collective senses. Our soul is both

equal to that and beyond it. She is the experience itself and the 'experiencer' at the same time, *and* the experiencer of the experiencer. Our soul is the perfect mirror that catches a glimpse of itself in beauty and joy.

But how can it be that our Sacred observer behind our observer, our soul, can leave us altogether or even partially? She doesn't really leave us at all. What does happen is that our soul isn't fed or felt any more. When she can't mirror herself any more in beauty and joy she will pull back, waiting for more inspirational times. It could also be that we've had traumatic experiences in which our emotions, the messengers of our heart, weren't given the space they needed. If we swallow our own emotions, we create baggage and blockages that prevent our souls' energy from flowing freely. Our soul can no longer feed us with beauty and joy because we no longer allow her to. In turn, our soul will lose her energy because she lives by the grace of sharing beauty and joy. The process which lets our traumas cut us off from beauty and joy, from our soul, is a very natural process. We get angry, sacred, or sad, up until the moment that our emotion makes the move to the outside. When it makes the 'gestalt'. If we give the bad experience a place this way, we can move on with our lives. Our life is enriched and the tears that flow will purify and polish our soul so that she can reflect even brighter. So how can it be that so many of us repress our emotions and banish our soul forever? How can it be that so many of us accept lives where there is no beauty or joy to be found, where we're trapped in jobs and relationships that are destroying our souls? The larger part of the answer can be found in our childhood. Most of us have been raised to repress our true feelings, such as anger, fear, and sadness, and to substitute it with a more desired behavior. Alice Miller,⁷ in her autobiography, shows how 'black pedagogy' works, the hurtful methods of raising a child that have been thought of as beneficial for thousands of years. She also shows how the baton of hurt gets passed on from parent to child, generation to generation. If you yourself were raised with sternness and the denial of your emotions, there's a big chance that you will raise your children in the same way. And that is what has made it so that we live in a world filled with a countless number of wounded souls. Souls that often aren't even aware that they are wandering aimlessly because the core of their wound dates from a time, during early childhood or even earlier, when they didn't have a developed consciousness yet. Add to this the fact that our medical sciences are focussed on fighting symptoms and you have a

pretty clear explanation of today's world. Take a good look around you when you're walking down the street. Look for joy and beauty, the main qualities of the soul. Our soul has withdrawn itself en masse. The time has come to bring her back! There is only one but: we can only do this for ourselves. 'To change the world, begin with yourself' is completely in line with this perspective. We can only live in a better world if we ourselves rediscover our inspiration. Everybody is going to have to heal their own emotional wounds. This is why I also call the Sacred Voyage the 'pilgrimage to the soul', because you make the Voyage alone. There's a big chance that you didn't grow up in a society with a shaman who knows you through and through and who will dive into the underworld for you to retrieve your soul. You have to rely on yourself to do this. What shamans call the underworld is known as the collective unconscious to Westerners. This is the pool where we, with the help of the Sacred Voyage, take a deep dive to regain our inspiration. Our soul returns to us as pieces of our personality, as childhood memories, as pain and sadness, as contact with other souls, and maybe even as the ultimate connection to the world-soul, the Source of Life. In this dimension we can learn to process our pain, sadness and anger and transform them into Light. From this point on it is our responsibility not to lose our own soul. The foundation for that are our emotions. If all our emotions get enough space, we will heal and stay healthy. Emotions are the roadsigns of our wellbeing. All we have to do is give them the space they need. We can use joy and beauty as a compass for our inspiration. If these qualities are the main determinants of our lives, then we are inspired.

5 **The Secret Marriage**

In the myths, fairy tales, and legends of the fantasy genre we regularly meet the themes of belief and magic. Belief, in the sense of trust or faith in a higher plan, and being led by a strength from deep inside that grows throughout the quest; and magic in the sense of our conscious intent to transform, as well as manifesting miracles. It's no accident that our fantasies, our collective unconscious, or whatever we want to call the Source of our shared imagination, is filled with magic and belief. The hero in the story always has to withstand the greatest challenges, follow his heart, and, in defiance of all the expectations and opinions of those around him, he has to fulfill his mission. Our unconscious is vibrating in recognition because at this level, the Child's level of thinking and feeling, our Inner Knowing, we are aware of the fact that we are missing something. Something that comes into the Light through our fantasy and imagination. This something that we're missing is the Secret Marriage, the marriage between the God and the Goddess.

How many of us really believe and have faith in the Godliness deep inside us? Many of us have either embraced the major dogmas of the world or completely banished them, and in both cases have lost the true contact with our Godliness.

How many of us have welcomed magic into our lives? Who still knows the ancient rituals for predicting the future or for healing the sick? Who can still communicate telepathically and make contact with the souls in the kingdom of the beyond?

There are definitely people who have true belief glowing deep inside them, or who have integrated magic into their lives. Two thousand years of dominance by the Christian church, however, has caused the Sacred Marriage to be as good as banned. The big boys in the church see magic as the work of the devil himself, making it a sin. What these gentlemen have 'forgotten' to tell for centuries is that they have created the 'devil' themselves to convert frightened people to the organized religion. Throughout the course of history we have seen that those who held different ideas, like the Cathars, witches, and shamans, have been eradicated. This way the Sacred Marriage was lost, the marriage between the God and the Goddess. What was left was even less than a marriage of convenience, a world under the guardianship of men who ruled 'in the name of God'. We can see the result of that world, divided from true belief and magic, with our own eyes every day. The world we experience

is soulless. It is our noble task to give her back her soul. This is where the quest, the search for the Holy Grail, and everybody's unique hero's or heroine's journey towards the Truth begins. The Truth of the world, the Truth of your soul.

When we love the Godliness in ourselves we automatically embrace what the rulers of the world have been calling the devil. Witches and magicians have always understood that the devil is nothing more than your own shadow, your own dark side. The farther you place it from yourself or project it onto others, the scarier it gets and the faster you have to run away from it. And the sooner you will embrace a belief that protects you from that horrible devil who's hot on your heels. If these people promise you that you will be delivered from this angry mister devil, and that you'll go to heaven if you are well behaved and you listen to them, then the choice seems an easy one to make. Seems, because the people of the church forgot to tell you that if you banish the shadow from your own heart, you will start looking for it in others. And that the world will then turn into a dangerous place that's only safe as long as you are good and you keep believing. True faith doesn't come from fear, it comes from love. That is what the great prophet Jesus Christ proclaimed. To become like a Child, to discover your own Kingdom, to awaken the Godliness in yourself, and to live in love. To live in love, to live in harmony, is nothing other than embracing your own dark side. When you start to love it, the endless treadmill of hurt, Karma, and revenge will stop. That is everybody's role as a hero.

So far we have been busy blaming others for the unrest and trouble in the world. When we start to understand that there are no guilty ones, but only victims, we can learn to take responsibility for ourselves. Doing nothing is also an act! When we let our voice be drowned out by the majority, we silently agree with her chosen song. It is up to us to start singing our own song. Or to sing it with others, a song that appeals to us and that calls out our soul. When we call to our soul and awaken the Godliness inside us, we can transform ourselves. Transform from frightened believers, or sober unbelievers, into the awakened. When we are awakened and have enlightened our darkness, we can practice magic and perform miracles. We can complete the Secret Marriage between heart and soul, God and Goddess, man and woman, belief and magic. One cannot go without the other, and vice versa. Magic without belief and love becomes a soulless ritual, and belief without magic becomes

powerless. When we fulfill the prophecy from our collective unconscious, we all become Creators. Creators who transform the power of darkness into clear and radiant Light. The Philosopher's Stone is within us and is waiting to be discovered, so that she can lend her eternal youth to those who have discovered her and can change the symbolic lead into gold. In other words, those of us who can melt our own darkness, our fear, anger and sadness, and transform them into Light, love, beauty, and joy.

But how do we set up the Secret Marriage? How do we bring belief and magic into our lives? In his beautiful novel dotted with wisdom, *The Alchemist*, Paulo Coelho⁸ uses the Arabic word 'Maktub'. Maktub means 'it is written'. If it is meant to be, it will happen. This of course doesn't mean that everything has been predetermined. If you feel drawn to the world of magic and the awakening of the Godliness in yourself, the paths that lead to them will be revealed to you as if it were meant to be. You practice magic from the heart. And you awaken your Godliness with your soul. The Secret Marriage is called into being through this alliance, and it is the unique path of your life. Follow your heart. You too will encounter seemingly unbeatable challenges on your path, and there will be few who can truly understand you. That is the path of the hero, of the warrior. Heroes, as the saying goes, aren't born or chosen, heroes grow into their roles and live their own legend.

6 Your Birthright

One of the functions of our ego is to connect us to the here and now. We do that by way of the so-called reality check. With the information that is entering our senses, we check who we are and where we are. However, much of our observation is out of date. To keep things simple we leave most of the reality checks behind and just assume that we are who we are and that we are where we are. This changes our world from being three-dimensional and dynamic into a flat, unchanging plane. Everything we observe looks like everything else because we aren't really observing anymore, but assuming. We miss the wonder of the Child to whom everything is new and fresh. Our world is flat and predictable. The reality check, which once served to give direction to our personality and to our life, has changed into a claustrophobic painting that has imprisoned us. The children's movie *Erik, or The Little Book of Insects*, wasn't inspired by a quote from one of my heroes, Leonardo da Vinci, for nothing. Hundreds of years ago he already wrote the striking words:

'we are all outcasts, living inside the frame of a strange painting. Whoever knows this lives big. The rest are insects'.

But what is holding us back from living a grand lifestyle? Living a great and involved life, in the words of the poet H. Marsman? What makes us want to reduce reality to a predictable soap opera, a farce that we want to play out neatly and safely right until the end? One of the answers is found in our childhood. The development of our personality follows a number of characteristic stages. If we are raised with love and freedom, then those who are raising us are trusting us to explore the world on our own, and giving us a safe nest to return to. We learn to make contact with reality according to the way we perceive it, and we withdraw when it doesn't meet our expectations. Then we explore and retreat into an 'end-less' learning process. Through our own perception we create a map, a mental road map of reality. Ideal parents teach us how to explore the world by example, and then let us try for ourselves. Falling down and getting up again, they are always around to catch us when things go wrong, and to give us courage and strength when we manage to stand on our own feet. Again and again, they help us to see that the clothes of our perception are on too tight, and that there is more to the world than we can see, hear, taste, feel and smell. They help us expand our range of

experience and to find our place in it. Raising, in other words, is literally making someone big, just like Leonardo da Vinci wrote. We grow big by constantly growing beyond our limits and by forming a new perception of reality. This way we can easily keep growing our whole lives, as long as we have the faith to let go of our old 'self' for a while and to embrace the self we could become. Or the self we should be already. This faith is stamped out of most of us at an early age, and we are actually kept small instead of raised to grow up. Parents who have had limited childhoods themselves are usually missing the ability to give their own children the space they need. Or they give their children space but they are missing the gift of trust and safety. Let's say we've had incredible luck and were raised by parents who raised us instead of keeping us small, so that we could grow. Even then, before we could discover who we are or could become, we were squeezed into the next mold. Our entire educational system is based on charting the world from a predetermined point of view. We were taught which point of view to have. Grades told us how well we were developing in this point of view, and through a conscious manipulation and discouragement of our inborn curiosity they spent years working on our image of reality. It may have seemed as if our inner map was getting bigger, but it was actually being flattened and compressed from three dimensions to two. This is where our early childhood greatly determined our further development; if we received love and trust in our first years, felt safe enough to form our own view of reality, and had a safe home in which to share our discoveries, then it is possible that we could process the unending mush of information and keep it separate from our own perception. But how old were we really, how mature were we, to resist the relentless brainwashing? Who could stay standing in a world where adults encourage us, if not punish us, to see the same world through their lens? Our minds were shaped, kneaded, and baked into form before we even realized we *had* a mind and that once it's fixed into place, it's fixed. Stuck. Especially if we missed the security in our early childhood to go out and discover things for ourselves. In that case the world is often too frightening to keep investigating for the rest of our lives and it's better to stick to the accepted views of reality. Once we've formed a particular view of reality, we go out and look for confirmation of that view. We search for companions who see the world the same way, and, luckily, there are enough of them, because many of us have enjoyed the exact same kind of childhood and education. We form institutions and institutionalized

schools, because the generations that come after us have to be drawn through the same system so that they don't disturb our peaceful image of reality. We know what the world looks like and they must learn to see it too. If they see it differently we'll just say that they'll get nowhere in life or that they are simply wrong. After all, we have the power to break their resistance, socially, economically, and legally. Everyone must go along with the way we have classified the world. Otherwise the establishment, the order into which we have organized the world, will be disturbed. We have laws, rules, governments, civil servants, scientists, teachers, in short, our entire carefully designed society to prevent just that. We call it democracy, where everybody is free to behave as they wish, as long as it conforms to the norm. Everyone knows what will happen to them if they rise above the norm and see what's going on there. Just imagine, what if we observe that the world looks very different from how our schoolbooks told us it looks? Then every conservative human, those of us who want to conserve life instead of living it, have a problem. Then we have to investigate reality after all. And that is terrifying, literally terrifying, because if we never learned as kids how to shift our boundaries and make a new determination of our reality, then we have no choice but to hold on to the image we have. Every other image, every new bit of information is a threat. That is why the established order, the conservative fellow human beings, are so horrified of the Sacred Voyage, of the expanding of our consciousness, of the taking of an entheogenic substance. The Voyage takes us right through our own self-made boundaries. We consciously let go of this control, our education, our indoctrination, our map of reality and dive into the depths of other realities to expand our world and to bring it to life. This is where the role of the Loving Guide comes in. As a Voyager we return to being as small and vulnerable as a newly born baby for a while. The Guide takes on the role of the Universal Parent, who encourages us to investigate and to form our own view of what we are experiencing. He or she stands guard over our body and makes sure we don't harm ourselves, and encourages us to discover that caring nourishment within. That is one of the secrets of the Voyage.

I am also going to explain to you why we often experience a spontaneous regression, where we transform back into being a child. Entheogenic substances, at first, tend to confuse us. Our senses no longer do what they always do; we hear sounds in strange, distorted ways, we smell incredibly strong smells, we see through fuzzy lenses or with extremely

sharp vision. Our senses are confused by the entheogen, which forces us to investigate and discover what is real at that very moment. Because the substance releases so much old, pent up energy, our senses can end up taking us for a ride. If we surrender to this, we can experience a great amount of pleasure. This wakes up the Child inside us. With the sentence, 'don't be so childish', we have learned to become mature in the other reality. But in this reality, the world *is* childish! She is strange, crazy, weird, everything is upside down and inside out. But she is also new, frightening, and threatening. Once we've really got our Voyage going, our senses completely fool us and we can't rely on them anymore. Our ears can smell, see, and maybe even touch, and the Sacred music that is being played for us is changing everything into a fairy tale landscape with her sounds. The more we dare to explore, the more fun this world becomes. Our Guide can invite and encourage us to do so. It could also be that we're just not ready to explore yet, but are terrified of all the new possibilities. It could also be that it makes us enormously sad, because we suddenly realize that we have been so limited for so long, and that we have been cramped up all those years. Or, we realize that as a child we were never allowed to explore the world on our own. That cramp can come to life and start moving, which sets all the pent up energy in motion. If we surrender, give up the mature-adult-control, and totally let ourselves go, we get to learn what we could have learned as kids: that the world is a playground, waiting to be explored at our own pace. The Sacred Voyage is child's play. And therefore it is healing at a level that cannot be explained to grown ups. This is the basic reason why we can heal in the Sacred Dimension from everything that limits us in our normal reality. From everything we do to block our energy and make ourselves ill. If we learn that the regression into a childlike state heals us and returns to us the strength, energy, imagination and magic to heal ourselves, we can learn to let go of our control. This is why it is so important to make our Voyage in a safe, warm, and trusted environment with a loving friend as a Guide. In this dimension, you can discover what has been hidden from you for so long. The one you are meant to be. Here you can make contact with all the hidden sides of yourself, and see what an incredible creature you are in all your glory. Here you can discover what only a child's eyes can see: that you are inspired. It is your Inner Child that has the ability to see souls. If you allow it and let go of your inner control, you can transform into a very young version of yourself. Let this side of yourself conduct you on your Voyage. Your youthful

side already knows its way through the Sacred Dimension. What I am describing here is no suggestion or way of thinking: as soon as you give up control in the Sacred Dimension, your younger 'you' can reveal itself. This is the magic that is waiting for all of us on the other side. This is the reward that is waiting for us if we go searching for our soul. Strict believers often associate magic with the work of the devil. In the Sacred Dimension you can learn from your own experience why these people are usually so old and bitter: because magic is the work of our Child, the Child that they shut themselves off from so long ago. Whoever banishes the Child from their heart will shrivel up and dry. Or, as Jesus Christ said so beautifully, and what I will keep referring back to: 'whoever does not carry the Child in his heart, cannot enter the Kingdom of God'. Finding our Child is one of the first tasks of the Voyage. Our Child is the true Guide to our soul. Learn to trust her magical gifts. And when you have found it, carry her deep in your heart, even when you leave the Sacred Dimension. Or *especially* when you leave her, and you return to normal reality. With the Child in your heart you can take the magic of the Sacred Dimension and integrate it into your own life. Carrying the Child in your heart is one of the first steps to take towards healing and discovering who you really are or are meant to be. With the Child in your heart the universe will react to you and support you in your development. That is the magical protection and guidance of the Child within you. Discover it, and enrich your life. Become BIG, the way Leonardo meant it and stay youthful forever. That is who you are meant to be! The choice is yours, every moment of your stay on Earth: live or die. The more we do our best to push aside our Child side, the less energy we have to live. This is the tragedy that has befallen many of us and which has caused many of us to become ill. The most painful thing may be that our greatest fear turns out to be true: we get old and lonely in a strange, cold world, and are once again treated as: right, as children. In our old age, once we run out of energy to push aside our repressions, the unfinished and banished energies still manage to rise up. The energies that could have given us a lust for life, joy, and beauty, now turn against us and cause us to lose our minds. This is one of the scary scenarios that the repressing of our feelings can lead to, if we haven't succumbed to cancer or a heart attack already. It is really up to us to choose for life or to slowly languish away and to die. If we choose for life, we choose to feel all our emotions, pain and pleasure. We consciously explore the pain that is preventing us from breathing, and we really live it, we feel through it, instead of repressing

her and merely surviving. No matter how well our survival mechanisms may have worked at one time, they don't grow with us, and instead begin to form an ever-tightening corset that takes away our breath and hinders our growth. It's never too late to start discovering who you really are and who you are meant to be. Every step you take towards yourself grants new life. Every emotion that you allow to manifest inside yourself, every emotion that you let out allows you to catch your breath and create the space to grow and to develop the strength you need to confront that which is standing between you and your true self. The Sacred Voyage is only an aid, a path like other paths, which can help you on your holy quest. The real work starts in your heart, where the intent is born to heal yourself, to care for your greatest vulnerabilities, to make space for yourself instead of merely surviving, to take the risk of becoming happy and: to start living. This also opens us to the risk of being hurt and of failing. But as others have said before, it is better to die trying than to die because you never bothered to try at all. Take an example from the turtle. People say it gets so old because of its tough armored body. But it only gets ahead by making itself vulnerable and sticking its head out. Dying is the beautiful fate that has been set aside for all of us and it is what makes life fair and just. How we spend our days between birth and death is up to us. And that brings us to the next subject: calling.

7 **Calling**

If I could suggest a destination for the Sacred Voyage, then it would be this: 'discovering who we are meant to be'. I am implying with this that we have collectively lost the way, that we have left our true path far behind us. It is our responsibility as individuals to find it back again. Society as a whole is a reflection of our collective wandering. It is our Sacred task to stop being led astray and to walk our own path. The clues to following our personal path are easy to follow. They are characterized by joy and beauty. If your life possesses these qualities, then you are on the path. It's that simple. Most religious and spiritual doctrines teach us that we're not worthy and that above all, we have to work hard and do our best in trying to be someone. I advise you to do the opposite. Stop doing your best. The main feature of walking your life's true path, of following your calling, is that everything goes smoothly and easily and that things reveal themselves to you along the way. Take water for example. It gracefully and elegantly courses along the path of least resistance. It always manages to reach its destination. Sometimes flowing through the smallest cracks, or steadily drip-dripping, then welling up into an enormous tidal wave, but always with the ease and beauty that makes her so special. If we learn to be like water we can learn to tune in to our soul again. It's no accident that our soul is often pictured by poets and philosophers as a placid and mirror-like mountain lake. If we are quiet and mindful we can find in her the blueprint that lies at the source of our being. In our increasingly hectic lives, where we have less and less time for ourselves, the surface becomes harsh, polluted, and stubborn, so that it no longer mirrors or reflects, and we cannot see ourselves any more. We lose the guide, the thread that marks our way through the maze of life. Most of us lost our way long, long ago. This has become visible in our collective state of being 'lost'. From the very beginning we have been drilled to ignore ourselves and to focus our attention on our thinking, on gathering information. Since childhood we have been learning how to focus our attention away from our soul, instead of towards her. The television is an ideal method for teaching this. We collectively tune in to receive the 'nonsense' channel. This hypnosis machine is just as enslaving as it is socializing: we now have something to talk about together! We don't have to talk about ourselves and our own experiences any more, but we can talk about the shared experience of the program we all watched. We are spoon-fed the

conviction that a second hand life is just fine. Once we have left school and become used to the eight hour work day, usually without fresh air or sunlight, the television is the last lifeline, the illusion of the reality of the real world. At least it gives us the feeling that we are still alive. I don't mean to insult anyone with this depressing worldview, nor to disapprove of their way of life. I only want to show that many of us, myself included, have lost track of our life, of our soul, at a very young age. To rediscover our soul we will have to make a return flight to the age when she was still at our side. Our soul is the only one who can show us who we are really meant to be. Every person is unique in this sense, with their own qualities and their own life path.

In what condition is your calling? Do you know who you're meant to be? Do you listen to your soul, or does her whispering get lost in your daily business? Or are you doing your best, hoping that tomorrow will reveal your path to you? Speaking for myself, I have wandered for a long time. It took thirty years of my life to realize which stray path I had been walking, or rather, that I had been going from stray path to stray path. Much earlier in my life I had been seeking and I understood that I wasn't walking my path. Spiritual traditions mostly taught me that I wasn't doing my best yet, that I wasn't meditating enough or being still enough. Or that I still had too many earthly feelings or desires. The list of advices that you can get for having a spiritual and 'happy' life is endless. But what I learned from being led astray is that the truth can only be found in my own heart. Just as your truth lies only in your own heart, no matter how tempting it is to look for it elsewhere. This is why the Sacred Voyage is aimed at giving you the possibility of unveiling and 'discovering' who you are meant to be for yourself, instead of telling you.

But who or what is preventing us from discovering who we are meant to be then? If the answer is so obvious, why aren't we catching on? It is mostly because of our dominant ego, with his Inner Critic at the forefront, who prevents us from discovering the truth about ourselves. Driven by fear, and fed by a lifetime of being separated from our core, most of us probably wouldn't even recognize who we are meant to be. Thankfully the urge to discover who we really are often stays strong, and then it stays with us all our lives, even if we often have to get seriously ill or near death before we start searching. Or we have to get so disappointed in life that we dare to ask the question: 'is this really all there is?'. We have to be prepared to give up our dominant ego. Trying

harder to do our best is useless and it only leads to giving our dominant sides more power, so that we end up even further away from our destination. We have to loosen the reigns. The same way a horse rider loosens the reigns when he has lost his way: his horse knows the way back to the stable. You can also see it in the metaphor of a car: to go faster, we first have to put the gear in 'neutral' first. Driving only in one gear gets noisy and giving it more gas doesn't help. It can even destroy the engine. If hard work and putting in the extra effort doesn't help, if we decide to loosen the reigns and come to our senses by putting the car in 'neutral', how can we discover when we have found our calling? When are we walking our path, and what is our blueprint? The answer is simple and, to the frustration of our ego, cannot be manipulated. We know when we have found our calling when our heart rejoices! Joy is the key characteristic of our calling, of the true path that our soul wants to walk. Follow the features of your soul, of joy, and you are walking your path. At the same time, stop immediately with whatever is not giving you joy. As radical as that may sound, it restores order to your soul right away. Whether it's about work, relationships or whatever aspect of your life, let joy be your guide. I know that discipline, hard work and, acting as if you are happy are virtues in our Western culture, but these are characteristics of the ego, not of the soul. Joy and beauty cannot be confused, and we are the only ones who can judge it. Only we know what brings us joy and ecstasy, and that is the unique path of our soul, our calling, our blueprint.

Let me give an example that's close to home for me, of my wife and partner Tanja. She had been searching her whole life for her destiny and no matter how hard she tried, she couldn't find it. She had learned from her upbringing to always give her hundred percent in everything. This made her a very cherished employee who delivered outstanding results. However, she had a burnout twice in a row. She needed months to recuperate, only to return to the way of doing work that she was used to. She switched employers, found another job and burned out again. I met her just before this scenario was about to repeat itself for the third time. We were both in the same stage of life, making a lot of money from jobs that gave us no satisfaction. During tea breaks and lunch we philosophized together about how great it would be to live our dreams. Sadly, she had to admit that she didn't have any. She was a bit jealous that I had at least found my dreams, and so she made the decision to find

her own as well. But no matter how she tried, she couldn't do it. She took a few courses, including massage techniques, but that didn't give her what she needed either. She was so removed from her source that her calling wouldn't reveal itself to her, no matter how hard she tried. We started a relationship and moved in together almost right away, it felt that good. This way Tanja came into contact with the Sacred Voyages that I was making and with Loving Guidance. It took months before she opened herself to this. Her orthodox upbringing was holding her back. When she had witnessed a few Voyages that others were making, and had seen the incredible results, the ice finally broke. She felt intuitively that the Voyage would help her too, even though she felt a resistance to it. She started to realize that her dislike was actually a sign of her overprotective upbringing and that she had wandered off from her life's path. She decided to go and discover her soul. The first Voyage she made she was confronted with the ties that were suffocating her and preventing her from truly living. She felt a huge snake wrapped tight around her chest, a frightening vision that was hindering her breathing. I saw her struggling and I saw her strength when she pushed off the snake, the symbol of her too tightly wound straitjacket, with a loud 'I can do it myself'. This phenomenon repeated itself three more times, after which she was free. Only now did she realize what had been stopping her from living and breathing free all those years. It would take months before she could process all the impressions and consequences of this Voyage, but the results were obvious: Tanja became freer and freer. She stopped doing the work that was making her so unhappy and sold her house, which gave her the financial means to stay at home for a while and discover what it was she really wanted to do in life. She started to prepare herself for another Voyage. She asked the question to the magic mushrooms: 'will you show me who I am?'. The Sacred Children, as the mushrooms are also known, made it clear to her pretty quickly what she was destined to do. Tanja had cramps in her stomach and her belly swelled up to the size of a football. Moaning and groaning, she put her hands to her belly and with a soft voice she acknowledged that she had understood the message: with tears in her eyes she said, 'I have wanted to be a mother since I was a child'. A wall of sorrow came tumbling down and all her pain and frustration came loose. How had she overlooked her deepest wish, her true dream? She had always known that she wanted to be a mother. She just hadn't dared to dream it, let alone live it. There was no room for a child, because like any modern woman she had to study

and find a good job. She had tried to get pregnant for years but it hadn't been granted to her yet. After finding out that Tanja wanted to be a mother so badly, I had my sperm tested. I had wanted children for years too, but my previous relationship hadn't brought any kids for me either. The tests indicated the reason: my seed had virtually no chance of surviving. We accepted this and decided that there were more than enough fun things that we could do and discover together. That is, until a few months later, when out of nowhere we were faced with a miracle: Tanja is pregnant. Her dream is going to be fulfilled after all. How this is possible and why is not important. Miracles don't lend themselves to explanation. The only thing I know is that once you have found your soul and you follow her, life turns out to be full of pleasant surprises. The life to which you have been 'called' is now typified by joy, beauty, and inspiration, and it bestows a great deal of life energy.

8 **Becoming One**

One of the questions that keeps coming to my mind is the following: am I - are we - capable of becoming one with our soul? If we rediscover her, will we have the willpower to integrate her into our being and to live accordingly? These are of course questions which we can only answer for ourselves. It may be of help to look at what exactly we are rediscovering here. Our soul comes to life in the whole of our personality, in the totality of who we are. As children of our current world we learn pretty quickly, however, and in a harsh way, that certain parts of our personality are less than desirable. As humans we have an infallible sense for adapting to the greater whole. This sense helps us when we're young and in need of others for survival. Few of us, however, come to see that we stay under this spell our entire lives, let alone know how to break through it. And it seems perfectly logical when you realize that we learn most of our adaptations before we have even developed our consciousness. They are, as it were, burned right into our system. It has become natural for us to miss or even suppress different parts of ourselves. After all, we don't even know what we're missing.

During our Voyaging we can be confronted with these missing and wounded parts of ourselves. We can learn to make contact with these sides of ourselves which we thought were lost forever. And we can start to realize that they are a part of us, and that they want to be seen by ourselves and by others. It's not just our dominant, 'desired' sides that need love and attention, but rather those vulnerable, tender sides which we should be taking responsibility for. That is the path of the Sacred Voyage. During the Voyage we learn from our Inner Teachers how to heal ourselves. In our daily lives we can start to apply those lessons. Even though the Voyage itself already calls forth incredible amounts of mental and emotional energy, and is therefore incredibly healing, it is our own intent, the intent to really care for all of our aspects, which heals us. Intent is the key word. Maktub! Without the intent to heal, our attempts to heal are useless. I will return later to the subject of the healing aspect of the Voyage, but there is a question that is still nudging me on the subject of becoming one. Where does the Voyage take us once our mental and emotional blocks have been healed and we have become one? It is a question that invites further investigation. In general we can say that whatever mental and emotional energy we have balled up inside

will be discharged during our Voyages. That which is most important for us, and which we are ready for, will be the first to discharge, and so on. Again the question arises, what happens when the energy discharges and we are united with our soul? I don't have the only true answer to this, but I have been able to catch a glimpse of it in myself and in others. The possibilities in our Sacred Consciousness, our oneness consciousness, are literally unprecedented. Telepathy, astral travel, communicating with the souls of the deceased, visiting past lives, experiencing mystical oneness, the Union Mystica; these are merely names for a handful of experiences that are possible in Sacred Consciousness. I will explain more about this in part IV – Sacred Voyage and in Part V – Magical Healing. I'm not doing this to put the focus on the spectacular aspects of the Voyage, even though I can't deny that they exist and that they are really stimulating. I am doing this above all to make a sketch of all the things you might experience in the Sacred Dimensions. It is probably easier to surrender yourself to the experience if you have a broad frame of reference. I can assure you that some of the possible experiences are so impressive that they are difficult to fit into our existing frame of mind, and can quickly be shoved off into the realm of fantasy by doubting Thomases. I hope however that you will be allowed to investigate the possibilities of Sacred Consciousness for yourself. I say 'allowed' because we are guests in this dimension. Our soul determines which experience is important to our healing and growth. Our ego is not in charge on the 'other side'. Attempts to enter the other reality through the ego are punished in the form of a lesson in humility. That is also one of the main reasons why science can't do much with entheogenic substances. The results do not lend themselves to repetition or quantification and emphasize the uniqueness of our humanity, of our soul. Let us leave science, which is in essence a product of our ego and our thinking, at home when we enter the Sacred dimensions. There are unprecedented possibilities laying in wait for us in our personal voyages of discovery, as long as we behave as if we were guests at someone else's table. The healing process of body and soul, the paranormal experiences, the awakening of the Godliness in ourselves, and the connectedness with the entire universe; all this has fascinated me for years and has made me a spiritually wealthy person. I honestly hope that the Sacred Voyage makes this experience possible for kindred spirits and helps them in their growth and their healing process. I realize that the Voyage isn't for everyone. Not everyone is capable of surrendering the control of the ego,

even if it's just for a moment. For those who can and who wish it, there is a treasure chest full of possibilities ready and waiting that make life more than worth the effort. And as far as I'm concerned, they provide enough evidence that we are more than the modern slaves which we are or are still becoming in our current society. The Voyage reminds us of who we are meant to be, instead of emphasizing who we should be like our society does. I honestly hope that you get to experience the transformation that brings you closer to yourself, closer to your own soul. I have been allowed to witness this process up close with a few of my closest friends, a process for which I have no words, other than that it gives my life purpose and a glow which I wouldn't trade for any amount of gold.

9 Inner Teacher

'Teachers accomplish nothing as long as the inner teacher isn't teaching you. The point is to open the book of your heart' (Vivekananda).

Of the many sides that you can discover in yourself, the most important to quickly embrace with your heart is the Inner Teacher or Inner Voice. How many of us follow religious or spiritual teachers outside of ourselves? How many of us follow the instructions of others to know what and how to be? The goal of the Sacred Voyage is to discover who you really are. As cliché as it may sound, there is only one person who really knows who you are and that is you. Every time we seek wisdom outside ourselves, and thereby disqualify our own wisdom, our Inner Teacher, our Source of Wisdom, gets weaker. The Sacred Voyage is therefore focused on waking the Inner Teacher in yourself. My intention is to teach you a method that awakens the wisdom within yourself, rather than casting my own wisdoms over you. Dogmas, belief systems and spiritual paths are abundant, and we can spend a whole lifetime wandering astray from the spirit. The mind likes to be led by the experience of others, and it chooses safety over discovering things for itself. This is not to say that I mean you should drop your belief or tradition. Quite the opposite. Whatever is in your heart will stay there; the Sacred Voyage will only contribute to that. What I want to invite you to do is to start your own investigation. I share my experiences with you to give you a sketch of the landscape of possibilities, instead of limitations. If I should pass on my own wisdoms, I would do that in the form of a paradox to set you onto the path of the Inner Teacher: *'Don't let yourself be told what to believe'* (Watch out, if you follow this advice you are already letting yourself be told what to believe. Even if you don't follow it, it's the same story. Don't you just love paradoxes?!)

How do you find and recognize the Inner Teacher? First of all, the Master finds you. You never have to look for him or her, he or she is always there. Most of the time we don't listen to it because we're too busy with our ego. And yet you've heard the voice often enough. Just think about a relationship that ended catastrophically, or a job that you had better not accepted. The Master spoke to you, that much is certain, but did you listen? The Master is therefore not explicitly bound to our Sacred Consciousness, even though she manifests herself most clearly

there. In Sacred Consciousness we can't get around the Master, because she is a reflection of our soul, who gains great strength in the Sacred dimension. How do you recognize her? Even though the Masters in the Sacred dimension are incredibly powerful, they will never misuse their strength or wisdom. They have the very best intentions. They aren't bound to your soul for nothing. The true Master manifests in humility. Even though they seem to have all the knowledge of the universe, she will never force it upon you: she'll sooner offer it to you carefully. You will recognize the Master immediately and if you get to meet her she will be so sympathetic that you will *want* to learn from her! Often times you will even discover that there are multiple masters inside you, each with their own wisdoms and areas of expertise. My experience is that if you unite and seek counsel from these Inner Guru's you won't need any more second hand wisdoms. At the most you'll be looking for some inspiration.

You can practice meeting your teachers during a meditation if you like. If you have a problem that seems unresolvable, close your eyes and imagine yourself as an eighty year old wise man or woman. Tell them the problem and ask them what advice they would give to you, their younger selves. Follow the advice!

I remember very clearly the first meeting I had with one of my Teachers. During a Voyage I had a vision of a hatch in the ceiling which I then passed through. After that there was a wooden spiral staircase that ended up in the attic. When I got to the top I discovered a gray little man who became extremely enthusiastic when he saw me, scattering books and documents all around in his wild excitement. He introduced himself as the 'Mad Genius' and thanked me for finally visiting him in the attic. He asked me if I wanted a demonstration of his abilities. 'Please,' I answered. 'Then I will take the wheel for a moment, if I may,' he said, and I gave him permission. What happened next is difficult to say, but my friend Aadriaan told me this. He said later that I had been spouting poetry in Old Dutch for half an hour and that I had revealed Aad's complete life story, including a couple of things that I could never have known. 'That wasn't me, that was the Mad Genius,' I told Aad. 'Of course,' Aad answered, sober as always and a little bit unnerved. From the attic I heard a funny, crackly voice call out: 'where else did you think you got those puns and paradoxes from?'. From that day on I embraced

the Madman in my heart and his creativity became mine. Everything fell into place, and I suddenly understood the puns that often come into my mind spontaneously when I wake up in the morning. Seemingly out of nowhere they came in, and the only thing I had to do was pay attention to them and write them down. That's how I learned the way of 'Clear Perception', in the same way I'm writing this book. I spend no time thinking about sentence structure, grammar or even content. I let my fingers write or pass over the keyboard before I can even think. That way I know for sure that what I'm writing is straight from my soul and not from my ego. Some Teachers or Guides are only with you for a while, to give you a particular lesson. Others stay with you for ever. Help is always there, waiting for anyone who is open to it and who can put aside their ego from time to time. If you open yourself up to help, and learn to surrender, you will be amazed at all the wisdom that lives inside you. It's up to you to open the trap door to the attic!

10 The Disowned Selves

The Inner Teacher is often quite easy to integrate into our being because we usually desire her presence. Once we learn to be quiet inside ourselves and concentrate on our inner dialogs, more sides and aspects of ourselves will probably introduce themselves to us. Hal and Sidra Stone⁹ have made a wonderful contribution in their books by describing the negative inner sides that we incorporate. The Inner Critic is one of those self-destructive personalities, just like the bouncer and the perfectionist. These aspects of ourselves usually appear while we are tired or in critical situations, such as when we have to deliver an important performance. I share the opinion of the Stones that these voices have settled into our consciousness during our youth. They helped us adapt to the social environment so that we could survive. The voices inside us helped us to fulfill the wishes and demands of our elders and they made sure we could meet their expectations so that we would receive the necessary attention and love. They helped us to prevent our greatest fear, the fear of a dependent child, from materializing: the fear of being an outcast. We learned to recognize the social norms, laws and patterns, to anticipate accordingly, and played the game in such a way as to satisfy all our needs. We learned to either accept the rules or reject them, go along with them or go against them. From this game we developed all sorts of sub-personalities that were crucial to our survival. The Inner Critic, for example, who can be depicted more abstractly as the fear of failure, is the one who brings you down a notch before someone else gets the chance to. A lot of people identify with these learned voices, or they don't even see that these survival strategies from our youths still determine our lives. Because they helped you survive in the past, they have become incredibly powerful. Just think of all the voices inside you that prevent you from doing something dangerous, from having fun, being exuberant or successful: all of them personalities that came in handy, but that are now preventing you from living fully. A lot of people spend their whole lives fighting their inner demons, as they often tend to see it, and usually don't realize that they're fighting their own shadows. Just as Don Quixote fights with imaginary enemies which turn out to be windmills. How many of us don't want to get rid of our fear of failure, or of other sides that are undesired and need to be eliminated? A lot of methods, such as the popular neuro-linguistic programming and other contemporary spiritual methods, are keen to take advantage of our desire

to be someone other than who we really are. They teach us that if we want it bad enough, we can really become or be someone else. Superficially, this works great. But it doesn't work when a situation becomes critical and we have to rely entirely on ourselves. It will often become clear in such situations that the thin layer of varnish which the aforementioned methods can apply to our characters will crack open and reveal our critical sides again, and they will be stronger than ever before. They are often extra angry or frustrated because you've been trying to sweep them under the carpet to get rid of them. And that while they've always been ready to protect you! Wait a minute. If that is really the intention and the function of our self-destructive sides, then they are actually favorable to our being. And they will appear to be favorable once we go into dialog with them, and once we start to learn what kind of message they are bringing. They are, almost without exception, parts of ourselves that want to protect us from pain or sadness and that do so all too rigidly. This makes them push aside your authentic sides, because this used to be the safest thing to do. Not because they don't want to see them. No, they do it to protect your vulnerable sides, just like in the past when you couldn't do that yourself yet. They learned how to survive in times of war but they never got the signal that the war is over. You are the one who can still give that signal. By consciously taking all those different sides of yourself into your care, including the 'negative' sides. By giving them a voice instead of suppressing them, and by going into dialog with them. By seeking out your most vulnerable sides and taking these under your protection and care, so that they don't have to be pushed aside by your Inner Critic. That is the wonderful process of becoming mature, of becoming one. Making sure that all your sides receive their due attention and that they can express themselves in life, in situations, and in relationships. That is the Royal Road to fulfillment. With both the vulnerable, authentic sides that belong to your soul and the dominant, powerful sides of your ego on your side, you can move through life in a miraculous way, both goal oriented and graceful at the same time. In freedom, free and with clear boundaries. This way you can discover what is truly good and important for you much quicker, and you can make easier distinctions and choices between them. At the same time, you don't have to project those repressed sides onto others any more, which can make your relationships more satisfying and pure. In short, the path to becoming one is more than worth it. Everything you discover and learn about yourself stays with you, because, as opposed to the tricks that

more superficial methods try to teach us, it's really yours. I can no longer beat around the bush, and have to tell you upfront now that I am a great supporter of the process of becoming one which I have sketched out above. I see it as our right to become who we are meant to be, instead of what our family, friends, culture or society expect from us. We live in a world that is made up mostly of clones. It seems to make life organized and safe, because once you have found the right shoes to fill, you never have to be insecure or ashamed again. Teach yourself to adapt, behave in the ways that the masses approve of, become successful in the way that you're environment considers successful and become a stranger to yourself. That is the price that we are all paying for the killing and burying of our authenticity. It's not for nothing that the illnesses of a wealthy society, such as depression, insomnia, addiction, chronic fatigue and many, many others have become the norm. I take a clear and above all an un-nuanced stance on this: they are the price we pay for the denial of our identity, of who we are meant to be. Living inside a suit of armor and behind a mask makes us sick. While we are reasonably safe, we can't move freely nor breathe openly, and that is what is making us ill. We become estranged from ourselves. Worse yet, if we maintain the denial of who we really are, we begin our own deaths. Our soul has been given the task of giving us life energy, so that we can express her through our lives. If we ignore the Sacred task and just play games with our lives, she won't give us any more energy and we will become sick, dull, tired: dying. That is the fate of the power of our ego. The power of the ego is incredible and it is reflected in the current situation of our world. As above, so below, Hermes Trismegistus taught us, and so it goes for our own ego. What we do on the small level with ourselves, we do on a large scale with the world. But how can we break the force of the ego? How can we get our inauthentic side to loosen its iron grip and let us catch our breaths, and find out who we really are? In most cases, we won't give up the dominance of the ego, its additional advantages, and its material manifestations until it is almost too late. Whoever is building up their power believes it will never end. The ego will only reflect on itself once it realizes that the game it's playing is a deadly game, and that its own health or even existence is at stake. Self-preservation is one of our species' built-in programs which is stronger than the need for power. But to heal itself our ego will have to do something that seems like self-destruction: the ego will have to surrender itself. It will have to surrender its power willingly to give more room to the rightful source of life: the

soul. Also, our ego will have to keep providing space to the more vulnerable aspects of our being which are bound to the soul. This permanent symbiosis is the only way to genuinely heal. Tricks and games don't work on this level, because our soul only reacts to the truly meant intention to heal. She isn't the observer behind the observer for nothing. The Sacred Voyage is essentially an ideal method to discover our disowned selves. Some therapeutic techniques, such as Gestalt therapy or the Voice Dialog method of the Stone family, are also appropriate for this task. One characteristic of our disowned selves is that we are irritated by the kind of behavior of other people that confronts us with the selves we have disowned in ourselves. For example, an elderly person can easily get annoyed by someone who is acting irresponsibly or childishly. He is annoyed because it is one of his own disowned selves, a side he doesn't allow himself to express. Childish behavior will annoy him because at that moment he has to use extra energy to repress his own subconscious or disowned selves. If this person goes on to criticize or prevent the other from behaving childishly, he imposes his projection on the other. This is something which happens a lot between therapists and their clients. We don't run that risk during the Journey, because the process isn't taking place between a therapist and a client but entirely within the Voyager themselves. There is, however, the danger that the Guide of the Voyage will impose his own projections, but the role of the Guide is much smaller than that of a therapist. Being conscious of our role as Guide and the possibility that we might be projecting our repressed feelings onto the Voyager already helps a lot. What we have in mind with the Sacred Voyage is that the Voyager can make contact with their own repressed sides and feelings. He or she is definitely not waiting for the limitations of the Guides' ego to manifest themselves. Because this is the ultimate goal of the Sacred Voyage; in a grand and imposing way, the entheogenic substance temporarily cancels out the Voyagers' ego. This is often experienced as an extremely confusing situation, and that is exactly what is intended. The entheogenic substance works together with the soul and will create an experience that is so confusing - and sometimes even frightening - that the ego breaks and surrenders itself. Once in charge the soul can free our repressed and authentic sides and energize them. We will often spontaneously transform into one of those vulnerable sides. Whatever happens, no matter how frightening and endless the experience may seem, there is often something beautiful waiting for you at the other side. As long as you keep this in the back of

your mind, you can encourage your ego to surrender, which basically means that *you* are giving up control, relaxing, and letting go. Surrender yourself to the experience, to your soul, and let yourself be dragged wherever she wants to take you. If you surrender to your soul you will get to see sides of yourself that were long gone, or that you never even knew existed. Time and again you will be moved in the depths of your soul by the reunion with these long lost sides of yourself. Now that you are enjoying the safety, protection, and magic of the sacred bond between the entheogenic substance and your soul, the most vulnerable sides will dare to reveal themselves to you. Usually this will be your Inner Child. This utterly vulnerable side of yourself has been with you all along. Your child side is often the greatest victim of your Inner Critic. And this while the Critic only wanted to protect your Child! He will now have to learn how to give your Child side more space. For those who are unfamiliar with the Inner Child phenomenon, this experience can take a little getting used to. When I first encountered my vulnerable side, during my first Voyage, I had no idea what to do with it. I had never heard of the concept, let alone of the actual little soul that was now standing in front of me. My first reaction was to do what I usually did: act tough, deny it, walk away. Unfortunately, or rather fortunately, that doesn't work in the Sacred dimension, and I was taught how to care for my Child. I discovered that all of my lust for life, my creativity, joy, imagination, intimacy, etc, all of my finest emotions belonged to this vulnerable side. It's not so crazy to think that you begin your own death if you push this side away, is it? Your Inner Child is your Source of Life, or at least, your connection to it. She symbolizes the lust for life, or the elixir of Life which the alchemists were looking for. As long as you embrace the Child in your heart and keep it there, you will live. Jesus Christ said it so well: 'He who does not have the Child in his heart will not enter the Kingdom of God'. Our Child makes us immortal. Repairing the bond with this little friend leads to healing. It is the most powerful and deep-going method for healing that you can imagine. The ego will often call us crazy at this point, but once our 'operating system', that which our ego basically is, realizes the wonderful gifts that our Inner Child has, it won't be able to do anything other than support the Child. Meeting the Inner Child, by the way, is not exclusive to the Voyage. There are countless therapeutic options. But during our Voyaging the meeting takes place spontaneously, without the intervention of a therapist.

In the Sacred dimension you may encounter your Magic Child, that part of yourself which has helped you through all the difficult times. Experience her unending positivity and happiness and warm strength. Embrace her deep down in your heart and ask her to help you embrace your vulnerable Inner Child into your heart and your life.

Another frequent encounter in the Sacred dimension is with the Daimon, or guardian angel.¹⁰ This is the force that you have been carrying with you since birth, your Shepherd. Plato already described the Daimon more than 2000 years ago. It's the force within that makes sure that you find your calling and that you follow it. When I discovered my Daimon I finally understood which part of me had been making sure that I was always so rebellious. The part which got me sent out of class or fired from countless jobs. Psychology often explains this rebellious personality as a reaction to the rules, but the opposite is true: I actually wanted to follow the rules. But there was something or someone inside me that made me say or do the wrong thing, so that I ended up breaking the rules anyway and having to face the consequences. I now understand that it was my Daimon, who was using his demonic powers to try and get me on the path of my calling. It used to take him little effort to break the strength of my ego and get me to do the naughtiest things, like a kind of Little Rascal. As the years passed my ego gained in strength and my Daimon disappeared into the background. That is, until I started Voyaging and I liberated my old friend and gave him new life. Now when he rebels and keeps me off of a dead-end path, or when he pushes me into an unexpected and new direction, I follow him blindly knowing that he can see far ahead along my proper path. This in contrast to the limited vision of my ego, which is usually just looking for safety and certainty. If I would listen only to my ego, I wouldn't get to experience much in my life. This is not to say that I live without ego: quite the opposite. My ego exists to make daily decisions, to manifest and survive in the here and now, just as it is meant to do. That is where its strength lies and where it feels pleasure in its unending thought processes.

We have already mentioned that one of the goals of the Sacred Voyage is to discover the repressed or disowned parts of ourselves and to integrate them into our being and our daily lives. To accomplish this, we work with two energies: the energies that have tended to hold us back and the

energies that have tended to help us forwards. Both energies are represented by various aspects of ourselves, and the trick is to learn to balance them. To learn how to get those energies that hold us back to slowly start moving again. We are often held back by pain and sadness. Processing these can take days, months or even years. The simple rule here is: it takes as long as it takes. Some of us, myself included, get to a point where we think: 'and now I've been sad long enough'. This doesn't help our processing of the emotion. It takes as long as it takes. Every day it gets a little lighter, even if it doesn't always feel that way. Take the time to process these things and to give them space. The Voyage creates an opening through which old pain and sadness can be allowed in. Make sure that you work together with your ego and that you give yourself enough time to heal, no matter how long it takes. Better to spend a lifetime looking for the path and coming home, than spending an eternity being lost, right? Furthermore, the Voyage lets us awaken the forces that have helped us along, like the Magic Child and the Daimon. Both sources of energy help us to heal and to come to life. During our Voyage we discover for ourselves what has been blocking us and what has been supporting us. There is nobody who knows this better than our own soul.

Apart from the disowned selves which we can meet in the Sacred dimension, there is a colorful multitude of helpers, guides, light beings, and god knows what other kinds of beings for us to meet. The Sacred Dimension is still mostly undiscovered territory, Terra Incognita, which makes every description of her more limiting than enriching. The possibilities are literally unrestricted and unlimited. It's possible to communicate with the souls of others. Telepathic and experienced Voyagers can even communicate with the souls of those who have passed away. In the Sacred dimension you will know right away when something that you're experiencing is a part of yourself or some outside energy. It's as if we have a special sense for this. Another possibility in this dimension is that of temporary transformation. For example, you can temporarily become a fantasy character or relive a past life. What happens to me a lot of the time when I find my Inner Child in the Sacred dimension is that I transform into an Elf. Apparently my Child is crazy about Elves, because it happens a lot. The strangest beings that I have experienced until now in the Sacred Dimension are two Light beings. During my very first Voyage I met them as I walked through what was my house at the time. Flash, flash, they were terrified and when I heard

my Child ask them why they were afraid they answered: 'we are afraid of the man in the gray suit'. Flash, and they were gone! Only afterwards did I understand that they were afraid of me. I used to wear a gray office suit in those days. Years later I met them again. During a Voyage I went off by myself and went to the toilet. Flash, flash, there were those miniature lights again, reddish pink with yellow, flashing by me. I could hear them again telepathically. 'He was pretty irritable again today, wasn't he?' one of them said. 'Yes, but he did quit his job for us, to make music'. '*What*', I said telepathically, 'making music? I stopped working so I could write!' 'Oh yeah', one of the creatures said and flash, they were gone. Only after the Voyage did I remember them from my first Voyage, and I had a warm feeling inside knowing that they dared to be around me now. I had grown over the years. And I had been pretty irritable that day when everything was going wrong in my studio. A technical difficulty was preventing me from making music. I still have no idea what kind of beings these are. They seem to be involved in my life but they are so subtle that I just can't place them.

In any case, there is more than enough waiting to be discovered in the Sacred Dimension. Just about everything you were told was fable when you were a kid comes to life here, and with each discovery you learn more about life. And above all, you learn that life is more than worth the effort. The funny thing is that I am now 'watching' myself write this. The distanced, serious man in the gray suit has been transformed into the man with the Child in his heart. I don't care as much anymore what people think about that, and I can tell you that I really enjoy feeling this free. I know that my method of the Sacred Voyage is going to raise question marks here and there, but light beings? Your Honor, I swear to you that I really saw them! I can prove to you that they exist. But first you have to embrace the Child in your heart, otherwise you won't be able to see them..!

11 **Energy Bodies**

At one time in our beginning we were created, or maybe even awoken, by the masculine Power and the feminine Light. When our ancestors made love and melted together into one the separation between opposites was, for a moment, broken, and the magical Circle of Energy was formed. The Circle is the symbol of eternity, and through the union of your parents the Portal was opened through which you could manifest yourself in this world. This way your soul could settle into the Circle of Energy which was manifested by the melting together of Power and Light. The fact that you are alive is all the evidence you need to realize that your nature is a Godly nature. With the life force that your parents offered you and the strength of your soul you started your development into a human being. One single cell from your mother and one single cell from your father provided the blueprint for you to grow and share in life. At some point in history our ancestors learned the perfect way to adapt to the Earth on which they were growing, and the survival code of that species was miraculously stored in that one single cell, forming the basis for our existence. But what are we exactly? Are we the first two cells, the expression of the love of our parents, an impressive feat of biology, or are we the beings that inspire the miracle of creation? Who or what are we really?

First let's take a look at what energy is. There are countless forms of energy and our sciences are kept quite busy by them. Every few years our understanding of it changes and we have to chivalrously admit to our previous misunderstanding. Of course we discovered in the last century that the smallest particles contain the greatest force, as evidenced by atomic energy. Quantum physics chipped in by showing that solid matter in Newtonian terms doesn't exist and that everything is energy. However, the form of energy that I am talking about is 'life energy'. The energy of inspired beings. To understand the concept of our life energy we don't need any complex theories. We only need to understand the first spark that brought us to life, the union, the exchange of the masculine and the feminine. That is the magical way in which our energy has started to flow. It's so simple that we can easily forget it. We understand everything about electricity, how to store it and to let it flow again, and yet there are only a few who truly understand the concept of life energy. Instead of being precise observers we have become masters of interpretation. In our continued development from cell to complete

human being our energy system has also become more complex. Logically so, because we had to develop into a species that could survive on this planet. By the time we leave our mother's belly and are born, we are complex beings made up of many different energy systems. And still, in all our complexity, we are still expressions of energy that flow from the giving masculine side to the receptive feminine side. This basic concept is reflected in all our aspects. All of our systems are based on tension and release, feeding and burning, moving and resting. Understanding our basic systems doesn't require us to be scholars, it only requires observation of ourselves. Observation doesn't require thought, but it does let you feel. And that is exactly where the mess has started. Most of us never learned how to feel and to trust our feelings. Let's see if we can still unravel this mess. Let's assume, for simplicity's sake, that we are made up of at least four bodies: the physical, the emotional, the mental, and the spiritual body. That is who we are, or at least, who we appear to be as 'humans'. The four bodies form one whole, sustaining the Circle of Energy. As long as we feed the Circle, we are alive. Each of the four bodies has her own unique characteristics and should be fed accordingly. However, for the last couple of thousand years, we have been identifying mostly with our mental bodies. This has isolated us from the unity, the Circle of Energy. To illustrate this we can take a look at the most powerful form of energy that we can generate, our sexual energy. This creative energy is clearly observable in our entire body and can start to flow in any of our energy bodies. Sexual energy is the ultimate expression of our desire to become one, the mystical key to life. It's no accident that procreation has been built into our being so carefully. It is the basic expression of who we are. That is, until we started to identify with our minds and reject the body as unclean. Emotions became undesirable expressions that needed to be suppressed, and our spiritual connection was from then on administered for us by officials, like the Earthly account managers of God. This way we ruptured the Circle of Energy. Isolated from our soul and banished from our source we started to wander aimlessly and we called our wanderings 'culture'. Every new member of the tribe was then brainwashed into the same culture. And so we pass on to our children not the Circle of Energy, but the circle of seclusion. Secluded from ourselves, secluded from others. Just take the example of sexual energy again. There is no more turbulent, Earthlier form of energy than this one, the one which we have pulled so deeply into the realm of taboo and charged with negativity. It is mostly because

of two thousand years of Church influence that the Circle has been broken and that our powerful life energy, the churning waterfall, has been dammed up into a cultivated little pond. We are taught that even our thoughts about sex can be unclean. We taught ourselves to become estranged from our bodies and her needs and learned to be ashamed. Shame is nothing other than fear. We have become afraid of our bodies. We became frightened of our 'unclean' thoughts. We became frightened of our emotions. If you add all this together, and the fact that we were raised in a culture which considers this 'normal', and you realize that our consciousness is formed by the way in which we are raised, it isn't hard to see why so many of us in our current age are lost. Separated from the Source of Life, locked up in our minds, afraid of every emotion and estranged from our bodies, and yearning for life energy. This is the bleak image that comes up when we look at mankind today. Secluded from its being and its needs. No idea which foods will really feed him. Rising up and leaving before dawn to his workplace, with air conditioning and no direct sunlight, coming home at night in sheer exhaustion, and zoning out in front of the TV with a microwave meal. Is that who we are meant to be? 'Have we finally found our true calling?' I ask myself, with a hint of sarcasm. It is time to wake up. Time to begin the journey home, while we still can. Time to discover what really fulfills us and gives us life energy, instead of following the prefabricated programs that provide a false 'free choice' (as long as you do it the way others do), our so highly esteemed Western way of thinking. In all honesty, however, we don't have any freedom of choice. Just try and step out of the roller coaster! The Sacred Voyage is a path that can help you to awaken. In the Sacred Dimension we can observe with incredible clarity our own lives as they are, without the filter of interpretation that we have been taught. The entheogenic sacrament that we take to do this helps us to get the energy in all of our bodies flowing again.

Let's put the concept of 'anger' under the microscope. Everybody knows it, but who can deal with it? Everybody needs a healthy dose of aggression to get moving (the word literally means 'to move towards'). Our society however is doubled over from the pent up anger. Witness the events in the news. Our own observation of, for example, traffic or a busy super market doesn't paint a better picture either: we are wound tight with anger. Anger is, after sexual energy, one of the most powerful energies available to us and therefore one of the most destructive and possibly even deadly energies to have to suppress. And that while

directed anger helps us to indicate our boundaries and to tell others who we are. But just as with sexual energy, there is a curse on expressing anger. How many times did you hear as a child: 'don't you dare be angry'. Again, it was organized religion which decided that anger was the number one sin, and thus extremely undesirable. She reasoned that if you just pretend that the emotion isn't there, you could or even should forgive the other. Forgiveness was therefore made a virtue and an exemplary form of behavior, while anger was sent to the shadows. Life energy number two removed from our system. Modern thinkers like Louise Hay¹¹ and the authors of *A Course in Miracles*¹² still preach the message of forgiveness, albeit in a modern variation. And thereby they put us on a confused path again of estrangement from ourselves: we aren't angry for no reason, are we? As long as we condemn our emotional bodies, our life energy will not be able to flow. Worse yet, if we manipulate our minds, we will become even more estranged from our true feelings and they will fester beneath the skin. If our life energy can not flow, if we hold our true feelings inside, we become ill. We are then unable to demonstrate our healthy boundaries to each other and end up living on a time bomb. This bomb either implodes and hurts ourselves, or it explodes and hurts others, as in the case of extreme violence. To really undo ourselves of old anger, we have to let it out or 'beat the rug' as Riet Okken¹³ calls it in her book *The Liberating Power of Emotions*. When we release our anger this way, she can no longer poison us or our relationships, and we can be truly freed of her. After this, once the forest fire of anger has run its course, forgiveness almost automatically follows as the natural state.

Our emotions are the royal messengers of our true needs and they are not to be feared. They are there to be heard and to be seen, by ourselves and by our surroundings. They tell us and our loved ones who we are and they establish healthy boundaries. If we decide mentally to forgive, we only put out the exterior flames, but the inner embers will slowly burn us up, waiting for a new opportunity to set us ablaze. To prevent our hearts from attacking us, or from bottling up our emotions and getting cancer or a nervous breakdown, we need to discharge. This is one of the functions of our emotional body, the passing through of energy. If we don't discharge her, she stays stored in our bodies, as Alice Miller¹⁴ shows us in her book *The Body Never Lies*. Our pain, anger, sadness, shame, repressed lust, and every other emotion stays in our body as long as we suppress them. If we give them space they will flow, and our life energy can get moving again. This is what happens when we make the Sacred

Voyage. From our mental body, our minds, we can find the will to give up on our self-destructive, learned patterns of behavior and allow ourselves to heal. With our minds we focus on our healing. It is not the mind itself which takes care of healing, as popular thinkers would have us believe, it is the mind that no longer stands in the way of healing which helps us to heal! Healthiness is, after all, our natural state of being. And so there are dozens of other feelings and emotions that are in the sphere of taboo as anger and sexuality, and which you can liberate during the Voyage: shame, sadness, fear, but also joy and pleasure. The only thing you have to do is welcome them and make room for them, to bring them into the Light. That is all that these feelings and emotions need in order to get your life energy in motion. No more suppression, but liberation! If you learn to give space to these feelings and emotions during and after your Voyaging, the pressure and stress of your 'normal' life will naturally decrease. You will be able to give more and more space to your feelings. The result of this can be and probably will be that your body will restore itself. When the tension can move on, you are no longer standing in the way of your own healing and your body can perform its natural task; namely, being healthy. I am convinced that we can heal all our known illnesses, whether of the mind or of the body. As soon as we remove an obstacle in the Circle, the flow of energy will continue again. Usually we have blockages in all of our bodies, and so the Sacred Voyage is directed at working on all four bodies at once. With the right sustenance, rest, breathing, effort, and play, we open up our bodies. Yoga and meditation puts our body and mind in balance and focuses them on the soul. By surrendering ourselves to the entheogenic sacrament we receive an extra impulse which gets our rigid energies going. The only thing we have to do is to surrender ourselves to the experience and to not suppress the healing of our being. During our Voyages we can discharge and release, after which the 'here and now' is for us to discover. We can discover how to feed our different bodies, how we can keep our energies flowing. Which foods feed us and give our bodies energy, how much should we drink, which people fit with us and respect our being, what type of work gives us energy, where do we like to live, and how can we get enough money (new energy)? These are only a few of the questions which can arise once you start to restore the Circle of Energy. The questions arise by themselves, as do the answers if you give them space. Bring them to Light and come to life! Discover your true nature!

If we become more sensitive and start to realize that we are not just a ghost in the machine, or a robot operator as science has been telling us for so long, we can start to perceive the layers of our inner life. These layers, as we saw before, extend to at least four layers of energy, our energy bodies.

At the lowest vibrations is our *physical body*, our body and everything that belongs to it. Our *emotional body*, symbolized by our heart, binds the energies of the higher vibrations to the physical body and makes sure that we can step into action or not. Take the concept of 'danger' as an example. Emotional energy, the mental energy that is translated into the body, can paralyze us or make us extra strong. It can make us titillate with pleasure or it can make us uncaring and as cold as ice. Our emotional body is mostly reacting to the outside world as we perceive her with our minds, our *mental body*, which in turn is fed by our five senses, with which she builds our image of the world. With our senses we form a field of consciousness, from which our psyche forms an idea of reality. This field of perception, adjusted with a number of learned assumptions, forms our view of reality. The standard assumptions are also called memories, which are observations and instructions which we have stored in our minds to make our lives easier. With an incredible amount of assumptions in our brains we no longer have to invent the wheel every step of the way, but we can behave according to what we have experienced and observed before. This counts for everything that we observe and feel. It is inside *and* outside of us, and our consciousness extends to where it is. This idea is rather opposed to what our sciences generally assume, which is that we perceive with our brains. By directly experiencing how you perceive, you can determine if the world is a picture with smells and sounds in your brains, or something that stretches off outside of you. If you hear sounds, do you hear them in your brain or outside yourself? If you smell a scent, is it all around you, or are you only noticing it in your own head? The memories of our mental consciousness are indeed stored in our brains, just like our capacity to think, learn, and act. They help simplify our complex reality with the help of experience, so that we can make quicker judgments about how to act. The result of the development of our minds is that we can only perceive that which we have learned to perceive. One of the skills we

learn during our Voyages is to clear out our consciousness and our perception. This way we are able to tune in to other realities.

Apart from our physical, emotional, and mental bodies we also have a *spiritual body*. With this we can tune in to the morphogenetic field, the field of consciousness of our entire species (Sheldrake), also known as the collective unconscious (Jung). From this field, our higher consciousness, we can receive guidance and entry to universal wisdom. It gives us entry to the knowledge of who we are meant to be. Beyond this field of consciousness is the beginning of the force which we could call the One, the All, God, or the higher power. Here I call her the Source of Life, because I do not wish to confuse her with any religions. After all, we all came from the same Source and we receive our life energy from her, whether we believe in her or not.

<i>Four energy bodies</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>
Physical body	Body	Pain or pleasure
Emotional body	Heart	Fear, anger, sadness, joy
Mental body	Mind	Thoughts, un(conscious)
Spiritual body	Soul	Perception

Our energy bodies are in continuous resonance with each other and their surroundings. The more freely the energy can flow in our bodies, the more we are capable of feeling connected to the greater reality. We experience this as joy, pleasure, or, to stay in the vibration metaphor: as harmony. When we live according to our own blueprint and calling we are optimally attuned to what life has in store for us. The universal soul, or the Source of Life, can give us optimal energy because we are completely open to her. If we open ourselves and tune in to joy and beauty, to our soul, she will automatically tune in to the Source of Life. If we tune in to our soul, the energy of our different bodies will start flowing by themselves. Therefore, we can automatically encounter the blockages that prevent her from flowing so that we can deal with them. How different is this from the way our mental and physical health care systems work. They acknowledge, at best, two of the four bodies, our physical body first and our mental body second. Even with just these two, they often see them as independent systems that need to be treated in isolation from each other.

If we were to live according to our nature, which is no more and no less than our birthright, we would be healthy, energetic, and fulfilled beings. That is who we are basically meant to be. However, we have developed ourselves into a degenerated species. I don't mean that as an insult, but as a simple observation. For example, we are one of the few mammals who can't produce vitamin C in their bodies. There was a time in our evolution where we allowed a virus into our system. That virus, that disease, resides in our minds, in our thinking. Just about all of us are infected, as it has been with us for thousands of years. The virus is in the way we give meaning to our own perception. We call it 'culture' or 'civilized behavior', and that's exactly what it is. It automatically defines what it is not: nature. In other words, there was a moment in our history where the virus sneaked up on our species as a whole and where we started to behave unnaturally. I keep calling it a virus because the source of this behavior lies before our own awakening into consciousness. The compromising of the reality of our perception, and therefore of our truth, stems from our education and not our nature, and is therefore a virus. It makes us ill from the inside out, without us even realizing it. I can't point out the virus, because it is all around. I could give it an all-encompassing name and call it: "not living according to your nature". That is after all what it is, which is why so many of us are ill. We can look at all those illnesses under the limited and infected lens of our microscopes, but it will only create more disease. Our indoctrination prevents our healing. To be healed from any illness we have to go deeper, beyond the domains where the illness rules! If you are familiar with computers you could try out the following metaphor: the virus is in the kernel (the core of the computer). In other words, you can keep installing new programs and operating systems, but the virus will keep on manifesting itself.

Let's take a look at how it could get this far. Those familiar with Alice Miller's work know that 'black pedagogy', or harmful upbringing, is passed on from parent to child for generations, perhaps even for thousands of years. Whoever is hurt in their childhood will most likely pass this hurt on. Whoever doesn't learn to carry their hurt and to process the pain will definitely pass it on to others in their environment, and later on to their own children. That is the baton of suffering which gets passed on. This baton is usually bound to the limiting norms and values that parents experienced in their own youths. As kids we are, after all, dependent on the upbringing and the worldviews of our parents: they

show us what the world looks like. And that is how they pass on the virus. They teach us, together with other educators, that the world of direct experience is wrong. It begins with the direct experience of our own stimuli. In our society we learn during our upbringing that our primary stimuli, such as hunger, sleepiness, thirst and the urge to urinate or defecate have to be suppressed. We have to get used to the patterns that our teachers teach us, instead of listening to our own stimuli. Not much later we have to learn the same trick with our emotions. We learn to 'behave' and to suppress anger, fear, sadness, and joy. Because that's the right thing to do. Because we've always done it that way. Because we have to. We either learn to know a God who is described in a book as someone who punishes or rewards and who we simply have to assume really exists, or we are raised as atheists. Then we are obligated to let ourselves be brainwashed for twenty to twenty five years with information from books, as opposed to the information from our own perceptions. *That*, roughly put, is our virus. It is difficult to trace where it came from, since we collectively decided that it was normal a long time ago. We could take the bible, or organized religion as one of the earliest sources of our virus. We no longer had to perceive and explore for ourselves, as there was now a book which told us how we should live. Better yet, there were men, mostly men, who would interpret the book for us and to whom we should from now on start listening. There still is a man like that in power, who has roughly one billion people listening to him. Carl Jung once said that organized religion is the best way to make sure that you don't come into contact with God yourself. What remains is a human being who is not in contact with his Godhood, nor with his own emotions, nor with his body, and who is trapped in his own head, from where the whole world appears to be a threatening place because he or she never had the chance to discover it for themselves. It is not the world in which we live which threatens us, *we* threaten *ourselves*. We are our own dungeons, our own nooses, without even realizing it.

I challenge you to undo yourself of your self-made restraints and to free yourself. Go on a Voyage and discover who you are meant to be. Claim your birthright and start feeling what you are meant to feel, instead of what you were taught to feel. Life becomes so much richer and healthier if you restore your balance. Tune in to your soul and heal your energy bodies. Care for and feed your physical body, liberate and nourish your emotional body, purify your mental body and consecrate your spiritual body. That is the path of the Sacred Voyage. It may be a path that is

opposed to what we think is right, but it is not opposed to what we feel is right. It is the path of our soul, of who we are meant to be.

There is a question that I often hear about this: but should I be using an entheogenic substance for that, isn't that unnatural?

I could write a book to answer that, but I usually answer with another question instead: 'what are you willing to do to rediscover your soul?' Knowing and perceiving that we have collectively lost the way in our world, that we are so sick, how could you find the way back otherwise? The question why you would need a substance to rediscover your soul is, to my experience, a resistance put up by the ego, which is afraid to lose its power. As far as I'm concerned, the ego has been in power long enough in our world, and it is time for the soul. It is time for joy and beauty. With each new generation there seems to be another chance to create a different world. The new generation will be different and is rebellious. The older generations, as always, will say that they are headed nowhere. But the indoctrination of our world is so great, so present, that they are definitely headed somewhere: they will also learn to adapt and to sacrifice their souls to the state, no matter how inspired they were. This sad fate befell the hippies, who preached love and peace. Values which weren't welcome in our society. So should we just adapt and disappear in the gray masses? I don't think so! Live your life, discover who you are meant to be and become it, rather than becoming another empty clone. Live through joy and beauty, live through your soul.

The painful part of rediscovering your soul is probably the fact that the world in which you are living isn't ready for it. Once you have awakened, you cannot go back to sleep. That is the consequence. Still, I think and I feel that living without your soul is an endlessly poorer life, no matter which world you live in. If you rediscover your soul, you automatically receive the strength and the energy to withstand the challenge of living in a world that isn't ready for you yet. If there are any accurate metaphors in the bible, it would be her idea of 'hell', which I believe should be interpreted as: living without a soul. When you have rediscovered your soul, cherish her and let her shine. That is what she was created to do. Cherish her and use her for what she was meant to do: to live. Be frugal with your birthright and never give it away again. Your soul is eternal, don't lose her but let her Sacred energy give you life. Live!

If we awaken from our deep dreamless sleep and discover that we are free beings, we can let our energy flow. There is no standard recipe for accomplishing that. There is a unique path for each individual human to walk. Each of our four energy bodies needs sustenance and each person's need is different. Body, heart, mind and soul require energy to stay in motion and to stay fit. We all know the image of the bodybuilder who has only managed to connect to their physical body, or that of the philosopher who is trapped in the world of thought. Or of the guru who has isolated himself high upon a mountain and merely wants to be a soul. All of these are extreme examples of what it means to be trapped in *one* of our bodies, and of manifesting ourselves in the world from that dimension alone or trying to withdraw from the world all together. When we make a Sacred Voyage, we bring our energy into motion on all four levels. Better yet, you don't even have to read all of the theory that I have described here. Giving yourself to the experience is enough. Your being instinctively recognizes the flow of energies. Most of us, however, have long forgotten to listen to our instincts and live through our mental bodies, through the mind. The description that I am giving is therefore addressed to the mind, to the ego. Our egos will first have to be convinced that the experience which awaits them will have a positive influence. A wise mind knows that it has to give space to the other bodies from time to time, both to be fed by and to feed the others. The mind will have to make space for both higher and lower vibrations or it will become ill. Basically then, what I am asking with the method of the Voyage is for a well considered sacrifice of the mind. Our ego will have to learn that it can make itself small, so that the entire being to which it belongs can reach its full potential. Even though the mind, the ego, or whatever we call our operating system has been considered to be redundant by many spiritual traditions, and often is trained away by them, I believe that getting rid of it is one of the biggest mistakes these traditions make. Our consciousness isn't there for nothing. Of course it has been damaged, as I have amply shown in this book, but it is still what we have become. Simply distancing ourselves from who we have become, who we are, is impossible. Transcending into a higher vibration is also complete nonsense and can lead you astray once more. There is nothing to transcend. We are as we are, ego and all. As soon as we accept this simple fact and embrace it, we can learn to love ourselves and all our shortcomings. An oak tree doesn't have to transcend into a rain cloud does it? Everything has its place in this world as it is. We are humans,

beautiful for our vulnerabilities and limitations, and we are all looking for some kind of enlightenment. We have all lost touch with that searching and have accepted the material world as the only reality. We have learned answers since we were young and have forgotten how to ask questions. It is said that a question carries more gunpowder in it than a thousand answers. When we learn to ask questions and to be quiet, we will get real answers. Out of the silence, out of the nothingness, arises the all.

An Inner Teacher once gave me a test, spoken like an oracle during a Sacred Voyage:

*'Out of Nothing comes the One, out of Something comes all the Rest
Tell me honestly, do you want to become one, or do you want to change?'*

I instinctively chose to become one, after which the Guide dropped his serious expression and smiled at me. She explained what my mind had failed to understand, but which my being had already known, that becoming one means uniting with myself and the universe, out of the silence behind my thoughts. Change is a mental game and is directed only at the world of appearances. I suddenly understood through a deep knowing that becoming one also means that I can welcome all of my different sides, even the sides that I dislike or even despise. In the Sacred Dimension you meet all of your different sides, and the sooner you embrace the banished ones in your arms into the family of 'I's', the sooner you become one, Light and powerful.

During a Voyage the energy in all of your bodies starts to move. Your body (*physical body*) will make her own movements, stretches, and bends. Your breathing is an excellent measure of what is happening in your body. You can also feel sick and you may even have to throw up. Dizziness and headaches can also occur. A tingling sensation in different body parts are also very normal. Our bodies become resonators of what is happening inside us. To give space to all these energies, it is important to follow the different movements that your body indicates. If you have to go to the bathroom, do that. If you have to throw up, do it until your body indicates that it's ready. Follow her. If you want to scream, scream, in God's name! Yell at the top of your lungs. Cry. Laugh. Follow your body and live!

The same goes for our hearts (*emotional body*). Our heart expresses itself or hides itself through four basic emotions, which add a refining value to our life experiences. It is our emotions which make us 'intelligent'. By following our feelings, the motions of our emotions, we can learn to avoid pain and seek out pleasure. Our emotions are the guide to the ocean of contentedness. If our physical bodies only know the values of pain and pleasure, our emotional body, symbolized by the heart and the inner organs, knows fear, anger, sadness, and joy. The purer we can experience our emotions in the here and now, the better our compass works and the more energized and lively our hearts can be.

Our minds (*mental body*), however, are filled from childhood onwards with information about the world, without having the accompanying experience to that information. Television, for that matter, is a clear symbol of the corruption of our consciousness. Entire tribes tune in to the same channel and live second-hand lives. It's a modern version of Plato's cave allegory: our minds seem to be intelligent, but they are easily fooled. We are hypnotized by the shadows from the TV, mistaking them for reality, or we seek comfort in its illusion because of a lack of experience in our own lives. Never before were we all so well educated, nor was information so readily available. And still we have never been so mentally impoverished as we are now. In the Sacred Dimension we learn to tune in to our own channels again, to our own inner television. Images and visions reveal to us who we are, and, just as importantly, how we can let our energy flow again. Our mind is still the captain of our ship, and it determines the course to be sailed. If the captain learns how to awaken from his dark dreams, opens his eyes, and learns how to navigate the ship, he also learns that the ship needs fuel, supplies, water, maintenance and a map. As smart as he is, he will start to take care of these tasks. He will learn to put a riff in the sail during a storm, and that it is better to rest in a safe harbor during bad weather. And yet he will continue to go out and experience new adventures. Lying still in the harbor will rot his ship. If 'captain Mind' awakens, he will become a true leader of the crew, without having to interfere with the journey unless the ship is in danger or has to intervene in some situation. He trusts the ship, his body, and the first mate, his heart, to determine the course and to navigate by the stars, by the soul.

Finally, the soul (*spiritual body*) will reveal itself during our Voyages as a Shining star, by which the other bodies can navigate. Without

inspiration life has no real value. It may seem for the time being that we are safe and successful, but after a while it will become obvious that we are playing along in one of the infinite games that our minds can play on us. If our minds are not awakened and are blocked by their own games, the Light energy of our soul can not reach us. If we confuse material things, or power, or the lack thereof with happiness or unhappiness, we are in the clutches of our mind. It's not that material or power are bad in and of themselves, it's our fixation, our separation from the true Source of Life which is making us sick. The recipe for an inspired life is, as we've said before, deceptively simple: it is marked by beauty and joy. The soul can only manifest itself through the instruction of our mind, the emotions and the love in our heart, and the pleasure of our body. Only when all of our bodies are tuned in to each other do we enter into the loving harmony that makes our inner being visible and gives her her place in the world.

To do this, and I might be repeating myself here, you don't need to make a Sacred Voyage. The art of tuning in to our energy bodies and finding happiness is within all of us. The Voyage does, however, allow us to get the energies going again and to balance them if we have gotten stuck in one or the other. When the pain and the bottled up emotions in our bodies are released, we can move again, and cherish and feed our physical body. If we open up our heart, we have space to love ourselves and others again. If we expand our mind, we get a greater perspective on the world and we can tune in to the endless Circle of Energy to make our dreams come true. If we rediscover our soul, we rediscover our dreams, and we can find out that life is more than worth living, if we only have that little bit more energy. This way we set our energy bodies in motion with the desires of our soul, and we feed ourselves and reach out from strength towards the Light.

If we have dived down deep enough to discover the origins of our illnesses and addictions, we can often discover that they relate not just to one, but to each of the four energy bodies. By gathering our strength and learning to reach out again towards the Light, we can transcend our limits and heal ourselves. We were born to be radiant with health. That goes for all of us, no matter which destructive beliefs we have let into our minds over time. Being healed from those beliefs, which are rooted so deeply in ourselves and our societies, takes courage and love. The

courage to stand up and to vomit up the lies that we accepted as true, and to make space for the truth that gives you a healthy heart. To return to being the vulnerable little being that you once were, which learned to adjust itself, and which was hard on itself and others in order to survive. Once you have gathered the courage and the strength to unite yourself, to heal yourself, realize then that from the moment you made the conscious decision, you already called out to your soul. The conscious intent of your mind is enough to do that. If you have awakened the intent in your mind, your heart, and your body as one, your soul will reveal itself. It is the true promise of our humanity.

If you undertake the Voyage out of the desire to be healed from addiction or disease, help will come from unexpected places. The path to healing will reveal itself to you as long as you recognize the path. Your body will release the built-up charge, your heart will let your unexpressed emotions flow out, and your mind will learn to let go. Relaxed, floating along with the experience, releasing all control. If you learn to reach this state of being, almost anything is possible. If there is enough life energy left in you, you will be healed. That is the promise of the Voyage. Liberate the strength that is locked up in your body. Everything that you are suppressing will turn against you and make you ill. Release her, embrace your strength and reach out to the Light. Live!

I realize that for some of us this method may come to late. As sad as it is, we all have a limited time to live and a limited amount of life energy available to us. Death is unavoidable for all of us. At best, we can fend her off and focus on making an optimal use of the time between two eternities, as Pascal described it. If it is your time to cross over, even the Voyage can't help you to survive. The will to live comes from deep within and is waiting to be set free. If you have no will to live anymore, and a body that has been neglected, then you need to learn how to die. In that case, the Voyage can help prepare you for death, for the transition to the next stage. She can help you look upon yourself, to process your fears, your sadness, and your anger, and to prepare you for a joyful transition. Dying is a beautiful process, a walk that we all must take. When we have restored our Circle of Energy and have made contact with our souls, we can die joyfully. During our Voyage we learn step by step how to allow our emotions to be expressed, and to face our fears and to live through it all. Every Voyage that we make prepares us a little bit

more for that which is unavoidable: our deaths. Every Voyage that we make emphasizes again that we want to live every second we have left and enjoy life to the fullest. I strongly recommend the Sacred Voyage to anybody who is seriously ill, either as a path towards miraculous healing or as a support in the dying process. Not as a false promise or as misplaced hope. If our time has come, our time has come and nothing can keep us here any more. I know in my heart and my soul that the Voyage can make life here and now so much more beautiful, as long as we give ourselves the chance to tap in to our life energy. If our time has come, she can support us in a joyful transition without fear, anger, or sadness. Living with heart and soul, and, when the time has come, dying with heart and soul: that is what the Sacred Voyage prepares us for.

12 Quest

‘Scared to death of death? Not on your life!’

The Tibetan Book of the Dead¹⁵ or the ‘Book of Liberation through Understanding the In-Between State’,¹⁶ as it is really called, gives us important insights into death and the stages after death. Buddhist monks have been turning inwards for centuries and have made a map of the stages beyond death, know as bardo or the in-between state. The Dharma or teaching is handed over through reincarnations. Lama’s have been able to restore their memories of what they experienced while dead and have put it into a handbook for those who are dying. Every day for seven weeks the dying person is read to from the Book of the Dead. It is made clear to him that that which is appearing to him are projections from his own mind. If he understands this and recognizes the projections of his own mind, he is instantly liberated. Then the dying person can make the definitive step ‘over’ to the other side and stops his unending series of incarnations. If the dying person lets himself be seduced by the projections that he gets to see and believes them to be true, the unending series of hallucinations continues. The first stage of bardo that a deceased person is confronted with is the bright white Light. This Light shines with a pureness of a diamond and it entrances the deceased. He is, as it were, sucked in by the Light. The Light is a projection of his own soul. If he recognizes this, he can let it go. If not, then he faces the next challenge. The next day he gets a visit from mostly friendly Gods and Goddesses. Here too the visions are projections of his psyche. The visions will keep on coming and if he doesn’t recognize them as projections of his own psyche, they will turn into wrathful Gods and Goddesses. The images that the deceased sees, the visions that he experiences, are terrifying. He realizes that he can no longer return to his body and that he is hanging in between two worlds. He watches his friends and loved ones mourn, but can no longer communicate with them or manifest in any way. The reading of the text of the Book of Liberation makes him take note of this and tries to get him to cross over to the other side. Now all doubt, fear, sadness, and anger break loose. Nobody is left to lean on, nobody to support him, just ultimate loneliness and defeat. Here too, if the deceased recognizes these feelings as his own, that they are his own projections, he can liberate himself. The aim of the Book of Liberation is to receive clarity. Clarity about the Self, about the soul, and

to learn to let go of the projections of the ego. If the deceased can't manage to do this within forty nine days, he will incarnate again.

We, as Westerners, do not have to take on Buddhist teachings specifically in order to feel instinctively that the Book of Liberation contains much truth. Most of us who hear about the Book for the first time and understand what it implies are, to put it mildly, shocked. It tells us so clearly what awaits us without having to be judgmental or religious about it. It puts all the responsibility on us and the choices we have made in our lives. There is no God who judges us and sends us to Hell or Heaven, we ourselves are God and Goddess and we have the responsibility over our own heaven and hell.

The first stage of bardo, the heavenly white Light, is often seen in the reports of Westerners who have had a near death experience. Many of them described the Light that is often seen during a Sacred Voyage. The Light has comforted many of us in the sense that once we die, heaven will open, and our loved ones who have died before us will be waiting there for us and everything will be okay. The Tibetan perspective, however, says that we are holding on to a fantasy, and that we believe in something that is only partly true. The people who returned from the dead and reported seeing the white Light have only seen the first bardo phase and, perhaps wrongly, believed it to be the whole truth. I myself tend to believe both versions. I have seen the white Light myself. It is there. But what comes after it? The mystery will probably never be revealed by us living ones. What we can do is to take the wisdom of the dying and the incarnated to better prepare ourselves for the inevitable: our own dying process. Better yet, if we live with 'death on our shoulder', as shamans call it, we will be more likely to embrace truthfulness in our lives and to stop playing games. If we live with 'death on our shoulders', we will not waste time in making our dreams come true and to live every moment in the service of love, joy, and beauty. If we really acknowledged our mortality and started to realize how lucky we are to live in this incarnation, a world of possibilities would be opened to us. A world that is currently hidden behind false certainties. If we stop masking death behind a thin layer of ointment, we can embrace her as the most certain thing in our lives.

We can become more and more conscious of the trauma that our births have left us with. Stanislaw Grof's work in particular shows the impact of

birth on the forming of our consciousness. Thanks to his experience as a psychiatrist, and the guiding of thousands of sessions with psychedelic substances, he has been able to describe the different stages of birth and the birthing process. More about this later (Chapter 30 – The map of the Sacred Voyage).

When we relive our birth traumas and process them, we can start to feel which trauma awaits us the next time we are helpless and overwhelmed again. We can start to know what it feels like to die and to be dead, separated from our bodies. It is commonly known that in our consumer society, dying is shunned as one of the greatest taboos. Our medical sciences are focused on the extending of life and, apart from the possible lawsuits that they have to face if they fail, the dying person is a stain on their records. The dying person is the proof of failure, of our mortality, of that which may be what we hate and fear the most: our weakness and mortality. For this reason a dying person is taken to the sterile environment of a hospital as quickly as possible. Away from us, away from their loved ones, to the world of professional distance. Most of us have no idea what to do with someone who is dying. Scared of our emotions, scared of those of the other. Medical science masks that inability to connect with jargon, rank, and protocol. Self-determination? Dying has become something for which only those who have ‘studied’ can and may act. The prison for the elderly in which most of us will end up if we have saved enough money is already no joke. It is a perfect way to practice estrangement and alienation. Ultimately, the suffering in a hospital bed takes its toll as well. There is a big chance that we will have lost the clarity which we need in order to hear in the bardo years before we actually die.

As we grow old, many of us will end up as victims of the vulnerabilities which we have suppressed during our lifetime. Clarity will then become childishness, an energy that is still untouched by time and is waiting to be expressed. That is probably not what Jesus meant when he said: ‘we have to become as children again’. Totally confused, childish, weakened and drugged, we struggle towards our deaths. It isn’t death itself, but this degrading process which we should fear from the bottom of our hearts! Once we are finally dead our remains are removed as quickly as possible. No death around us, that brings bad luck! Away with that drama. The deceased is dressed up in a good suit and we pretend that nothing happened. We keep a stiff upper lip. Instead of giving the deceased advice, like the Tibetans do, about withstanding the different

stages of death and letting go, we speak at the funeral about how we miss the person and how great they were. We do the opposite by holding the dead here as long as possible in our emotions, so that they have an even harder time letting go. This is the reality of our dying process, the result of our ignorance. We don't know what's coming when we close our eyes for the last time, so we just decide to close our eyes to the possibilities. We are terrified, and mask this by sticking our heads in the sand, thinking: 'if I pretend it isn't there, it isn't there'. And we prevent ourselves from really learning how to deal with the greatest test of our earthly lives: our deaths. The 'moment suprême', the 'Grand Finale', for which we had a lifetime to prepare. And what do we say? 'I didn't know'. That excuse never worked in school, at least not for me, and it definitely won't work now in the face of death. In our adaptable world we can get away with everything except for death. And why should we want to get away with it? Why should we want to be cryogenically frozen, waiting for a better time in which to be revived? Better times await us after death. As the Dalai Lama has said so well, our body is subject to wear and tear, and once it's worn out, we die and get a new one. As long as we can and dare to let go of our limited egos. If we can give up the projections of our limited egos, we can rediscover our Godly nature and unite with it.

The Book of Liberation is written from a Buddhist point of view, and whoever really wants to understand it has to be, at the very least, deeply interested or initiated into their teachings. I have already promised that the Sacred Voyage will not create any new dogmas. However, the descriptions of religious experiences are perfectly useful as additions to the stories of our own Voyages, because they show remarkable similarities. Perhaps the most obvious similarity between the Sacred Voyage and the Book of Liberation is the concept of surrender. Buddhists regard the visions in bardo as projections of the self. Their message is to surrender. The Book of Liberation prepares the dying for what awaits him on the either side, in bardo. Materialistically oriented Western thinkers see death as a destroyer, as the great Nothing, or, in the best case scenario, as the savior. Buddhists believe that life continues, and that we reincarnate eternally until we liberate ourselves. Whether that is true or not is a matter of belief, just like believing in Nothingness or in heaven and hell is. Bardo, however, the in-between state, is not a matter of belief. Those who know the books of Moody¹⁷ or Kübler-

Ross,¹⁸ and have read their reports of hundreds of near-death experiences, have an idea of what is waiting for us on the other side. Even then, it takes a lot of imagination until we get to witness it for ourselves. The In-Between state, however, is entirely open to experience during our Sacred Voyages. The color patterns, the visions, the demons, gods, and goddesses: all of them form a part of the landscape of the Sacred Voyage. As I have written before, and will write many more times: if we get to know the path through this potentially confusing landscape, and if we learn to face our demons and our Deities and understand that they are projections of our own selves, we can learn to surrender to the highest power, the Deity that lives within us. And we receive in our lives a gift that will stay with us for the rest of our existence: we lose our fear of death and attain a lust for life instead. Those of us who have explored and survived the realms of bardo know from experience what the secret of life is. It is a secret that cannot be repeated, because there are no words to describe her. And yet everybody who sees it will recognize it. Because it is our home, our natural state of being. In this life, and perhaps in our previous lives as well, we have wandered off from our origin to the point that we might not even recognize the truth of our lives even if it revealed itself to us. In the In-Between State or the Sacred Dimension we get the opportunity to see her with our own eyes and to accept her after all. In the In-Between State we can be confronted with all our fears, pains, and other unprocessed emotions. We will have to work through those before letting them go, so that we can (re)discover our pure truth. Those are the lessons of the Book of the Dead, that is the method of the Voyage. In it we have a simple choice: a lifetime of suppressing our truth and dying with our heads hung low, or to voluntarily face our tormentors, to free ourselves of them, and to meet death with our heads raised high. I emphasize again that to make this choice you don't need any belief, conviction, or anything like that. The Sacred Voyage takes us through the bardo and beyond, and sometimes even beyond death itself. It is my conviction that anybody who has seen and experienced it for themselves is much better prepared to choose their beliefs on the basis of their own experience, and then to base their further choices in life on that.

The Book of Liberation and the Sacred Voyage share the same purpose: to prepare us for the inevitable. To free us from our projections and to embrace our true selves. I align myself with the primordial religions in

believing that we had better come to terms with death and see it as a companion on our life journey. It is the finite aspect of life that gives it its meaning. Just think of a computer game or an action movie in which the hero is invincible: there's not much fun to be had there. Our mortality determines our greatness. We can live life to the fullest, especially when we have caught a glimpse of what awaits us on the other side. Whoever learns to see through her own projections in this life and to liberate herself from it, and who manages to live through her own emotions, is free. Free in this life to manifest and fulfill what her path brings her. Free to accept death mercifully and to face it with open arms. Free to make the conscious choice to get everything from life that it has to give and in turn to give all that she has got. Free to gather Strength and, when the time has come, to let go and become Light. That is the greatness to which we are meant to belong. The Sacred Voyage is one of the wonderful side passages that we can take in this life. It is by no means our destination, but it is a great way to find our destination. When my imagination gets the better of me I compare life to a Quest, like the computer games where you have to learn, experience, gain strength, and play. Quests have to be explored, you have to train your 'Character' (the player with which you play in the game), give him the right armor, and earn energy by withstanding all sorts of challenges and solving riddles to advance in the game. To finish the game your character has to be strong and smart, the same combination that we need during our own lives. The Sacred Voyage is comparable to the Quest in the sense that it can make us powerful and Light, and that it can prepare us for the inevitable 'Game Over'. Only we can experience for ourselves that 'Enter' is enough to start over. If we learn how to die in this life, we can rise out of our ashes like a phoenix and live forever. Even in our own lifetimes we can die many times, or 'die a thousand deaths'. At the very least we can die an ego-death, as it is also known in the shamanic realm. Here we encounter a symbolic death which can feel just as real as actually dying. During this transition, which can occur spontaneously during a Voyage, we die ritually and shed our ego. What is left is our true Self, the person who we are meant to be. In our ritual rebirth we can choose which roles, masks and armors we want to retain from our damaged ego. We are no longer the possession of the ego, our ego is now at the service of our soul.

I have written several times already that it is our birthright to live according to our heart and soul, and you may even get annoyed that I will keep writing that it is our destiny to become who we are meant to be. I want to add to this that it is our birthright to determine how we want to die. If we take death out of the realm of taboo, and embrace her as our most trustworthy companion, we can guide each other in our deaths. In the Light of death we can finally feel how much we truly love each other and how precious our time together is. And when the time comes, we can say goodbye in a heartfelt and loving way. Just like Aldous and Laura Huxley did so touchingly when they had to say goodbye. Aldous Huxley dedicated his life to living consciously and managed to maintain that clarity on his deathbed. He let his dear wife know that he wanted an entheogenic sacrament to guide him on his deathbed, so that he could see her in full awareness. His wife gives him his last sacrament and he enters a peaceful slumber. Laura holds him in her arms and softly whispers that he can let go and step into the Light. Unendingly she whispers these and other helpful words in the dying process, and helps him to let himself float freely on the flowing stream that has come for him. 'You are going to the greatest beauty, to the Greatest Love and it is easy, so easy and you are doing so well.' When it gets too much for her and her emotions overpower her, she withdraws for a few minutes and cries. Then she returns to him, holds him, and whispers the liberating words: 'You can let go now, go on to the Light'.¹⁹

In her gripping story Laura Huxley shows what Loving Guidance is. It is the skill that we can learn for ourselves so that we can truly Guide something along the path of Voyaging or dying. The skill of love, of truly and honestly being there for another. Keeping in mind our own feelings, and our own abilities, to present our services to those who need our love so very badly, the love of letting go comfortably. To me, Laura Huxley represents the feminine love that we need so badly in our society or maybe even in our world. Tibetans also miss this quality. No matter how beautiful and intelligent their teaching is, it is not soft or feminine. The founders and carriers of the Buddhist teaching are mostly males. If we learn to combine the masculine energy of ritual and intellect with the feminine energy of feeling, of compassion, tenderness and soft embrace, we can become immortal, as in the prophecy of the Secret Marriage. The greatest secret that even the Book of the Dead doesn't reveal, the best kept secret that is hidden in the disregarded feminine energy is: love.

Whoever dies with love in his heart has nothing to fear on the other side. The Sacred Voyage, in that sense, counts as a wonderful way to practice for the inevitable. During our Voyaging we pass through all the bardo stages that the Tibetans have miraculously been able to describe. We can train ourselves, just like in the computer game Quest, to master certain skills regarding death which are of life and death importance! We can learn to see our projections as our own, because in this dimension there is nothing left to project our images onto. If we don't learn how to deal with our twisted inner images and to see them as our own, we definitely won't be able to when we die. We can learn to let go and fully submit to our highest power. We can learn to trust. We can learn to let our ego die. And we can learn, like a phoenix, to arise out of our own ashes. But most of all we can learn the power of love, the love for ourselves and the love for all living things. We can discover that we might still have blockages in that area. It is my belief that you can better discover that now, while you still have a life ahead of you. In the Sacred Voyage you can discover what you are missing or where your blockages are. In that dimension you can ask for help in the here and now, or at a later moment. Help from your Guides or Teachers in the Sacred Dimension, help from loved ones, friends, or a therapist or a healer in the here and now. Love is the panacea. If we are closed off to love, we are handed over to the cold hell that awaits us in death. Not the hell of the bible, but that cold and barren plane of loneliness where we are eternally stranded. Love is the compass that we can take with us to cross over. Sow her and harvest her in abundance. I want to end this chapter with a paradox that can set you onto the path of love. *'You can only take that with you which you have already given away.'* Viva!

13 Awakening

If you choose to awaken, you choose to embrace in your heart the vulnerable Child that you once were and still are deep inside. It makes no sense to welcome your soul on the one hand and to throw out the ego on the other. Our ego is us; it's who we have become. We cannot change or neutralize ourselves, but we can transform ourselves. This begins with acceptance, acceptance of who we are now. This way we create space for the damaged child inside us. Embracing the Child in your heart automatically means that you will also encounter and have to process all the pain and sadness of the past before you will be able to free yourself from them. This is the only path to truly awaken. There are no other choices. On the other hand, those who have finally awakened are free to choose whatever path they want. Being awakened means no longer being tortured by pain and sadness from the past, but being totally alive in the here and now. Suppressed and painful experiences from the past have a tendency to get stuck in our bodies, so that our energy can no longer flow. It's as if they are still asking for our attention and recognition, waiting to be able to pass on the message for which they were called into existence. The process of awakening, the unconditional choice for ourselves and our souls, makes sure that this energy can still flow and that the message can reach us. That way we can learn to keep our emotions in motion. Our artificial lake of emotions is released and transformed into a fresh mountain stream.

The first time I transformed into the six year old boy that I once was during a Voyage, I had no idea what was happening to me. I only understood what was going on when I heard myself say to my Guide: 'I can't understand you, I'm only six'. Much later I read in the wonderful book *Escape from Safety* by Richard Bach²⁰ about his own encounter with his Inner Child. The whole idea was new to me, but a lot of things started to fall into place. The subject really excited me and I read everything I could get my hands on. I came across the vulnerable Child, as psychologists call it. Still, I couldn't explain my experience through any literature, because there it is described how the vulnerable Child is a part of you, a part that you can communicate with and that you can embrace into your heart. What I experienced wasn't just a regression, but a complete transformation, just as I would experience many more times during other Voyages. There is so much that psychologists could learn if

they only made a Voyage to explore their own mental worlds! Or if they could help their clients to transform and process their traumas which are hidden and trapped deep beneath the surface. In any case, because of the remarkable transformations I started to gain interest in the child that I had been and who was still inside me. But I still couldn't remember much about the past. It was all a gray, flat, and impenetrable plane. I realized that while I had labeled it as a 'happy' childhood, I couldn't honestly say that I remembered much of that happiness. Later on I understood that this was because of all the unprocessed pain and sadness, and the suppressing of these feelings. I didn't dare to face my own past at all. Dismissing the well-meant counsel of family and friends to 'leave the past in the past', I continued my self-investigation. I had to, because I couldn't let the little guy who I kept transforming into sit out in the cold again. I made a decision in my heart: I would make sure that he was never abandoned again. From now on I would always be there for the little guy that hid deep inside me and who wants to live and be seen so badly. More and more fragments of my youth came back to me, and a terrible secret became clear. I had had a happy start, and was conceived and received with love. During my vulnerable years, however, all of my parents' attention went to my younger and very demanding twin siblings. I couldn't manage to manifest myself as an independent little human, I was still too young for that. School wasn't working and I was trapped between two worlds. I wasn't safe at home or at school either. I started playing hooky and being rebellious. When I realized that this was still not making me more visible, I became unmanageable. I wanted so badly to be seen. I call it a terrible secret because I had manipulated my childhood memories to such an extent as to think that I had been happy. And therefore I had blamed my rebelliousness on my unadapted, bad attitude and personality. I had to be bad, otherwise my parents would have paid attention to me, right? This is also known as 'magical thinking', I later learned. It is the thought process through which a child creates its sense of reality. How could I have known that many kids are 'bad' so that they can discover their own boundaries? The first thing I had to do was to get rid of the heavy feelings of guilt which had been messing with me for years. I slowly started to realize that I couldn't have done anything about it, that I had only been a child and had missed the attention and guidance that I had needed so badly. This was the first step towards my awakening, the realization that I am fine just the way I am. This way it became safer and more fun for my Inner child to be in my

heart every day. I still have lots of pain and sadness to process, and lots of disappointments to make up for, but he trusts me to do so more and more. And he is more patient as well. Not all at once; we still have a whole life ahead of us. I have learned that spiritual awakening is not some vague theoretical concept, but a tangible and fragile emotional process. If we learn to see and embrace our most vulnerable sides, we can heal all our wounds. If we bring our pain and sadness into the Light, we can unite with our little and vulnerable Self and we can become who we are meant to be. That is our destiny. If we awaken we can start a Voyage and look for her. She is waiting to be found.

The angel that threw me a life vest at just the right moment was Alice Miller²¹. I learned from her works that the body never lies, but that it stores the truth of our lives. It is like a silent witness waiting to be heard. She made me aware of the fact that many therapists project their own traumas and are in no condition to heal others, as I had already seen for myself. Most of all, she taught me that it is good to focus on myself and to face and process my pain and sadness. I learned to express the anger that I carried deep inside me. All that old pain is slowly making way for love and new life energy. The breathwork I mentioned earlier, and the expressing of the anger that arises from it by using a carpet beater, which I learned from Nourriet Okken in France, has also helped to liberate me. This Light point work, as Nourriet calls it, makes for a wonderful combination with Sacred Voyaging and brings very different sides of myself into view. Because of that space I can now see the traumas of my own parents much clearer. Not like I did in the past, when I thought their pains were much heavier than mine, and I did everything I could to make them happy. As if I had to make up for what they had never been given. I have now learned to leave their pain and sadness with them: it is theirs, and they are responsible for it, just as I am responsible for my own pain. We are all responsible for our own happiness and our own pain, as difficult as it may be to realize that sometimes. My friendships and relationships were often tarnished with the same guilt pangs that I felt towards my parents. Now that I am independent, and care for my own emotional state, I no longer have to carry that guilt and can simply feel my relationships just the way they are.

I understand now that our humanity, our birthright, is to let our emotions flow, whether they be old or new, ecstatic or abhorrent. Anger is perhaps

the most shunned and tabooed emotion there is. We have to suppress our emotions, and our moral values, fed by our Christian upbringing, plead for forgiveness as if it were a virtue that has to be enforced. I am learning now that this is equal to suppressing our true emotions. Anger is a powerful signal which, as soon as we feel it, has to be taken seriously and has to be expressed as soon as possible. It tells us who we are and where our boundaries are. By expressing our anger she discharges and loses her deadly strength, which would otherwise turn against us. If we express her we give other people the chance to get to know us and to keep our boundaries in mind. This way we create a situation where true safety and intimacy can arise. If you use your anger to show the other that 'here is my boundary, and you have crossed it', and the other recognizes your boundary, a secureness arises which binds us much stronger than the fake and superficial relationships that typify our times. If we are so terrified of each other's emotions, how are we ever going to feel at ease around each other? If we learn to explore each other's boundaries and to acknowledge anger as one of those boundaries, forgiveness follows automatically. Not as a virtue, but as a natural consequence. If we don't learn how to express our anger but keep her bottled up inside, she enters the domain of our traumatized Inner Child. Here there is no difference between now and the past, so that we build up an emotional tension that at any unreasonable moment could lash out like a hurricane. That is, unless she can still give up her power as a warning storm. Awakening is the undoing of our built up anger, by expressing ourselves honestly and thereby making way for love and peace.

If we learn how to express our emotions, our friendships will automatically be purified. We will attract those people who really belong with us and are sympathetic to us. Often times we will start by losing people around us. A lot of people have a fixed picture of us and prefer to keep us in that role. Plato was on to something two thousand years ago when he said: *'protect me from my friends, I can take care of my enemies on my own.'* If you awaken, understand that your environment may not grow along with you. It can very well be that your growth comes at a price, and that you could end up going at it alone for a while. But don't be discouraged, because this is merely a sign that you are in fact growing.

Whoever awakens and embraces the Child in her heart taps in to an unprecedented amount of energy. It is enough to make life more than worth it. On the other hand, those who fall asleep are unconsciously surrendering to entropy, the natural decay that destroys everything that isn't keeping itself lively and youthful. Awakening is of paramount importance. Our soul needs Light to stay young and to stay alive. Feed yours and awaken! Care for your Child and give it a warm welcome in your home. The greatest fear of your child is that it will be abandoned (again). Only you can make sure that it never happens (again). Welcome your Child and comfort it, carry all the pain and sadness that it carries with it. You are mature and can carry it much better than your little one. The love and life energy that you receive in return for your heroic deed will be just as great, and can easily wash away all the pain, sadness, shame, bitterness, pride, and loneliness in your heart. Whoever takes the Child into their heart will never be lonely again. That is the promise of awakening. The promise of the Light.

14 **Inner Compass**

Do you have any idea at which moment we decided to start cultivating our feelings? To deny our feelings and to suppress them and to replace them by 'keeping up appearances', a more socially desirable type of behavior? Almost every religious and spiritual tradition preaches some sort of social self-mutilation. When did this misery begin? I suspect that we have to go very far back in time to answer that question. While I am a fan of traditions and of our cultural heritage, I still love nature a lot more. I can enjoy a Japanese garden with her perfectly sculpted paths, her predictable character and development. But I prefer the wild growth of nature with its boisterous and surprising twists and turns. It is perhaps no coincidence that Taoism is the foundation of the Japanese art of gardening, which is one of the dogmas that teaches us above all to be steady. She recommends that we carefully trim down those feelings that grow too big. This way she kneads and forms us, generation after generation, just like many other major dogmas. It is no different whether we talk about Hinduism, Buddhism, or Christianity. Is it any surprise that all these teachings, without exception, have been called into life by men?²² Is it shocking to note that all these teachings are interpreted, written down, and institutionalized by men, but this time by the type of men that have withdrawn themselves from the world and live an artificially religious life: the monks? These are men who live ascetic lives and who think clipping the wings of their emotions is healthy. In other words, there has been a time in our development in which a select group of men, who were estranged from life itself, decided that having a rich emotional life and expressing it was a problem that stood between them and the worship of God. Probably because they had decided for themselves that particular feelings, especially sexuality and anger, were improper. Many of our ways of expressing emotions are, after all, dependent on mental or physical contact. And that is not very practical for an emotion-shy monk, whether Taoist, Buddhist, or Christian, who has sworn to deny all bodily contact for the greater glory of his Deity. Breaking this self-imposed restriction results in one of the most painful of all emotions: shame. This emotion is felt in two different ways: vicarious shame, the shame that we feel when someone else brings up our sense of guilt, so that we are ashamed for them and for ourselves, and existential shame, the shame for ourselves, the shame to fully live our lives. Brothers in all countries, make sure that you never have to be

ashamed again, and fight crime with crime: cast off your shame in battle, so that you no longer have to feel shame for your own suppressed feelings. Everyone who behaves inappropriately will have to be ashamed of themselves and do penance from now on, because the Deity or the teaching that you yourself have written demands it. Seem unrealistic? I'd like to hear a better explanation of how it's possible that so many spiritual teachings are *so* wonderful and pure at heart and yet are *so* incredibly ugly and restrictive in their enactment.

I am not so much interested in improving the world all by myself as in stimulating you to investigate the truthfulness of our world. And to realize what kind of world you awaken to when you rediscover your soul. It was no accident that you lost her once, or lost parts of her, as with just about everyone in our society. Our soul, as I argued before, needs sustenance, life energy. She exchanges energy with the outside world through our thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Exactly those emotions which are so threatened by the world in which we live, the flattened emotionless world, in which 'act normal and you will be crazy enough' is the credo. If we would just begin to feed our souls and to turn around our maddening narrow-mindedness into:

'act crazy, and you will be normal enough!'

This at least would be a good beginning. Reality is usually quite different, and our souls have withdrawn themselves behind a thick armor of social certainty and desirability. Like chameleons, we adapt to society. At least, that's how we were taught. But if we continue to live this way, we will be doomed to loneliness, and we will never be able to make real contact. We won't be able to breathe because our masks confine us. We won't let any Light shine on our true face, on our being, on our souls. We will never experience true intimacy because it requires vulnerability and authenticity. These are two qualities that we will never experience from behind our artificial masks, which force us to keep distance, the natural enemy of intimacy. Our authentic feelings, such as love, shame, anger, sadness, and joy, determine how close we can get to each other, how close we allow each other to get. If we do not learn how to feel, we will be like monks, who voluntarily castrate themselves from their feelings. Except that our castration is not voluntary, but the result of years of religious indoctrination, which has made a deep impact on our society

and which has robbed us of our true face. If you are unprepared for the cold reality which I am depicting for you, the chance is great that when you make the Sacred Voyage and rediscover your soul, this glorious reunion will last only a short while. Great thinkers and Voyagers such as Terence McKenna and Aldous Huxley struggled with this dilemma. 'How can I retain my soul in a world that doesn't seem to be ready for it?', I loosely interpret this dilemma. How you engage this question I leave entirely up to you. Perhaps it is comforting to know that there are many others awakening just like you, and who, just like you and I, desire to breathe, to express themselves, and to show their true selves. Nelson Mandela, in his famous inauguration speech, wrote that you do not help the world by making yourself small. I invite you to reveal yourself in all your glory *and* in all your vulnerability. Invite others to do the same and ask them to come out of their shells. Show them the right example! We have been living in darkness long enough. Show yourself! Make real contact!

But what is this 'making contact' really? I believe it means nothing more than: 'reaching out to the world', in contradiction to: 'pulling back from the world'. When I write that we are trapped in our armor and hidden behind our masks, I mean to say that we have pulled back from the world and have holed ourselves up in trenches so that we are incapable of making real contact, soul to soul. Making contact, reaching out, is essential for feeding our soul and for giving it the chance to breathe. Most of us are much too frightened of having our heads torn off if we stick them out too far, and so we live tucked away in the shadows. But as we said, the soul lives off contact. Without contact there is no inspiration. But how exactly does this work? Every living being, from the smallest one-celled organism to the largest mammal, every inspired animal, every living being, uses the same mechanism to make contact and to manifest itself in the world. Every being knows two basic emotions that are linked to bodily consciousness: pain and pleasure. Every other emotion is a derivative of these primordial emotions, which we could call our basic instinct. Pleasure lets us reach out to the world, because we want to enrich our experience with it. Pain is something we usually try to avoid and if we experience it, we pull back, just like the little boy who wants to feel the warmth of the stove but then gets too close. More developed animals have become more intelligent, which in essence is nothing more than a refining of the basic instinct. Fear, for

example, alerts us to the threat of pain, and love shows us the chance of pleasure. With this insight we are able to judge what will give us pain or pleasure, coupled with our earlier memories and experiences. Many of us, however, have been made or have become so afraid and insecure since our youths that we barely dare to reach out. We have had so much pain and so many setbacks, without learning how to deal with them, that we no longer dare to make contact through love but anxiously hold on to what we already know. If we don't dare to experience love because we are afraid of pain, we will never really be able to experience pleasure either. Pleasure is the highest state of ecstasy in our being, the state of being in which we feel safe, cherished, fulfilled, and satisfied. It is only in this state of being that we can experience the full dimensions of our souls and feel united with everything and everyone. Again, it was the monks and the other churchly personnel of the world's religions who prohibited pleasure. Pleasure is like drowning in love: our most beautiful sides come to the fore and there is enough space for our less beautiful sides. Pleasure makes us titillate with joy and lets us radiate clear Light, which can have a very infectious effect on others. Others, of course, who allow themselves to experience pleasure, because those who have closed themselves off to pleasure will only feel annoyed at the sight of someone else's joy. Just like any of our banished sides of which we are reminded can make us feel annoyed. Annoyance, which we will automatically project onto the person who reminds us of our banished sides. Others, however, who have opened themselves up to their own experience of pleasure, can catch a glimpse of our soul. The whole world seems to vibrate along with our most natural state of being, the state which we can spend a lifetime searching for, in which she cheers when she has found it: pleasure! If we observe nature with open eyes on a warm, sultry day, for example, we can see this soulfulness all around. All of nature buzzes with pleasure. Beings that are what they are meant to be, are visibly graceful, charming, and enjoying themselves, like the birds that roar with laughter in the warm sun. Lock a bird of paradise up in a cage, however, and she will never again feel joy and will lose her beautiful feathers. She will lose her exuberance, another infectious characteristic of the soul. Aren't we all birds of paradise, who keep themselves locked up in a golden cage of security and predictability? While the door is set ajar, we choose to live a life of captivity, shut off from nature, our playground full of infectious pleasure. Shut off from our nature, our true nature. Exuberant and joyful, isn't that our true nature? In any case, it is the

energy that our soul needs to express itself in us, to manifest in us. It is the energy that we break loose when we make our Sacred Voyage. Soul energy, which we can breathe in with huge gulps at a time, to be reminded just for a moment why we are here and who we are meant to be. What we learn on our Voyages is to feel what we really feel and to unlearn our tendency of manipulating our emotions. The world is to us as we experience her to be. To truly experience her we can awaken our instinct and start to feel our deepest and most primordial emotions, pain and pleasure. Pain and its accompanying suffering make us explore and tolerate the darkness as an unmistakable part of ourselves. Pleasure sends us into the Light and lights up all of our darkness, all of our pain. In an eternal dance, pain and pleasure, Light and darkness are bound to each other, forming the hidden mystery and dynamic that shapes our lives. When we begin to experience pain and pleasure, we are doing nothing more than answering the call that is hidden deep within us: the call to live.

How can it be that we lose our inner compass, the contact with our primordial emotions of pain and pleasure? The answer can again be found in our childhood. We are taught very early on not to trust our basic instinct. Pain, we are often taught, is something that we shouldn't pay any attention to, that we shouldn't be so touchy, that we should harden ourselves to it. Pleasure is something we as children trade in for discipline and effort, instead of the lazing around and relaxing that we need if we want to experience pleasure. Even before we have fully developed our consciousness, our inner compass has been rendered useless, and so we meander without any direction over the ocean of life. Most of us are properly raised, in the sense that we learn to bottle up and cut short any emotions such as joy, sadness, anger, fear, love, and lust. We are taught not to stamp our feet, not to be rude, not to be ecstatic, cry, be afraid, or shout. In short, everything that our nature tells us that we are is weeded out by our upbringing. At school we learn how to sit still and concentrate for hours, with concentration, discipline, regularity, and order. Year after year this pattern is stamped into us, just as long as it takes for us to start thinking that this is who we are meant to be, adjusted and conditioned. If we are raised in this way, a sad consequence awaits us: we will never feel at home. For those who have managed to safely develop their instinct and their emotionality, the world is a playground waiting to be discovered. And it is full of opportunities and

challenges. For them home is everywhere, because they have the skills needed to manifest themselves in the world, and they can rely on their inner compass, which gives trustworthy predictions about whether a situation will bring pain or pleasure. On the basis of these premonitions such people will usually make the right decisions and take the path that is right for them, the path that fits their nature. Whoever is missing this compass will hardly feel at home anywhere, because the world is a threatening, dangerous, and unsafe place. Only their own home might still be a safe haven, where only a few intimate friends may enter. Without our inner compass we continually attract the wrong people and situations, so that we get even more confirmation of our idea that the world is not a safe place and that we will have to withdraw ourselves even further into our bunkers. Faith Popcorn once started a trend by calling this ‘Cocooning’. The question put to us is: will we ever fly away? Safety, security, and averageness are the key words to an uninspired life. Slowly but surely the life energy will withdraw itself. If the protective armor gets too tight and our muscles are no longer reached by enough blood, the body will become hard and rigid in answer to our inability to reach out. But how in heavens name do you awaken from this nightmare? After all, the seed of this dream lies far ahead of our conscious ‘being’. Indoctrination and habit-forming behavior have done the rest. Perhaps you will awaken eventually if you realize that you are missing something? When you are burning out because of relationships, work, and health, like I did a few years ago? All of these issues which we take for granted; attracting the right kind of people, the right food, exercise, work. You might be able to take them for granted if your instinct worked properly, but it leads to a drama if you have to do it without. When you realize that you are missing ‘something’, you can start searching. Searching means sticking your head out of the pack, into the world to make contact. The Sacred Voyage for that matter is a wonderful aid in our search for who we are meant to be. Wonderful and honest because it brings us back to our childhood and even before then, far beyond the period in which we were indoctrinated, back to our unformed selves. I cannot emphasize this enough: this is the reason why we surrender ourselves to an entheogenic substance and enter the Sacred Dimension. To rediscover our pure self. We surrender ourselves to ourselves, to our truth, because in the Sacred Dimension we cannot fool anybody. Least of all ourselves. Truth reigns in the Sacred Dimension. The only question that we have to ask ourselves here is whether we can

look straight into our own eyes or not and honestly face that which our souls have to tell us. In the Sacred Dimension there is no law, no culture, no upbringing, no rules, no adjusted behavior or false identity. Here the World soul reigns. You could even call the Sacred Dimension the pilgrimage place of the soul. Here we are initiated into the knowledge of who we really are.

Let us take another step back in time and see how our inner life develops while we are still babies. The more we learn about this, the more we are able to discover what we are missing and how to look for it. Our basic instinct is primarily geared towards survival. To survive we have a few basic necessities to fulfill, along with the help of our parents and nurturers, because as babies we cannot do them ourselves yet. We are entirely dependent on the goodwill of our nurturers. Our world consists of safety, love, food, defecation, sleep, waking, and discovery. Primary functions such as our nervous system and the circulatory system develop into autonomous functions with their own intelligences. However, we have to discover our basic necessities for ourselves *and* indicate them to our caretakers, which is quite a task. Luckily, nature has made sure that our defenselessness has made our caretakers melt with love and concern for us. That is, as long as they allow for their instincts. Our crying is the signal to our caretakers that we need something. Especially the mother will know instinctively what the baby needs. But how often isn't it the case that parents get desperate from the crying? That the baby's needs are seen as a burden in the ever-busier lives of so many of us? Not too long ago the rule was to completely ignore the crying of a baby, because otherwise it would only be spoiled by our attention. Luckily most of us know better now, but it forces us to think about our own (mis)education. Especially when you consider the work of Alice Miller. She teaches us that the traumas of our parents are passed on to their kids, from generation to generation. We call this relay race 'upbringing', but what our parents often passed on were their own needs and traumas. Apart from our needs as babies for sleep, food, and care, we had (and still have!) an insatiable hunger for warmth and love. In our mother's bellies we were surrounded by everything we needed and more: we felt love and connectedness. We didn't know any difference between me and you. We were one with everything. Once outside, this ecstasy was no longer quite as likely and we had to learn how to stop the pain and restore our sense of pleasure. Once outside the womb there is an enormity of information

coming at us, an unending disruption of all our senses. Those first months we can do nothing else than undergo the sensations of that scary, constantly threatening world. Hopefully there are loving and caring parents who comfort us and put us at ease. In this stage we learn that to experience pleasure, we need safety, security, and love; and that if these are missing, it hurts. If our needs are not met or insufficiently met in this stage, we can spend an entire lifetime trying to satisfy our needs and desires (the core of every addiction). Or we have made a decision never to be hurt again and that we no longer need love and security. In other words, the most essential developments in our bodily and social instincts take place in a time when we still have to develop our conscious minds. Our basic self-perceptions and worldviews are created here, such as the security or insecurity about whether or not we will be able to fulfill our needs and desires. Whether or not we think that love, security, and sympathy are worth giving and receiving. Whether or not we can explore and investigate for ourselves. Whether or not we can experience pain and pleasure and so discover our own boundaries. Furthermore, in this stage the seed is planted for how we will raise our own kids later on. As our foundation is formed, so shall we form it for our own children. Everything we have received, whether positive or negative, will be passed on to our children if we do not dive into the depths and find out who we are meant to be. Because while our early upbringing is a form into which we are fitted whether we like it or not, it is not our blueprint. It is not who we are meant to be. It is who we have become in light of the circumstances. The baton of traumas gets passed on from parent to child until someone breaks the curse. Until someone cuts through the seemingly unending story of cause and effect by seeking out who they are really meant to be. The Royal Road to this destination is the awakening of our instincts by experiencing and processing our old emotional traumas. Then we can learn to re-experience pleasure and pain as a Child and to rediscover the world from that foundation. Ready for another paradox?

‘We have to go on a Voyage in order to finally come home again.’

We need our voyages of discovery to awaken and test our instincts. Go on a Voyage, dive into the World Soul, dive down to the bottom and discover the treasures that are buried there and waiting to be found by you. The treasures of your soul. The magical Sacred Dimension contains

all the strength and Light that you need to rediscover your soul, to heal the wounds that you received in your earliest youth. The Voyage is often painful and emotional, that's for sure. But to whomever wants to escape the endless story of traumas that are passed on from parent to child in the name of love, the Sacred Voyage is a true pilgrimage to the place known as the 'soul'. She is the place where the endless story of traumas is resolved.

15 The Deity Awakens

One of the goals of the Sacred Voyage is our spiritual awakening, the awakening of the Deity within us. When we ritually die and are reborn, we create space for godliness in our lives. To many of us, religion has become a bitter pill to swallow, something which could make a word like godliness fall on deaf ears. Still, I am going to use it, because I believe we can shake off the negativity that has clouded it and discover that the core is never tainted, but is waiting to be discovered and to be lived. Philip said that *'if a pearl is thrown into the mud, her value is not diminished; and if she is cleaned, her value does not increase'*. Whoever has murdered and pillaged in the name of religion, has merely tainted themselves.

I have had a lifelong love-hate relationship with religion. I have always felt that there is 'more'. That there is a Deity who is omnipresent. However, I knew as a child that it was not the God that is presented to us by the Christian church. I knew that the biblical God was created by frustrated men. As a child I already saw through the illusion, as so many of us have. God was already deep in my heart and could not be mean and ruthless as the Christians would have us believe. I believed and still believe in the goodness in man. In contradiction to Christianity, which believes that man is born in sin. Sin which first needs to be washed away. Children who die before being baptized go straight to hell. Who comes up with something like that?

Recently I witnessed a communion. My wife Tanja, who had been brainwashed by Catholic teachings as a child, was dozing off, but for me it was the first time that I heard exactly what seven year old kids are told by the Church. The mass began with a song about all the 'sins' that children had committed, from not listening to their teachers to the doing of whatever they liked. After that came the story of the lamb that walked away from the flock and was brought back by Jesus. Jesus, so said that priest, loved this lamb most of all because the rest could save themselves. He would do anything to bring this lost sheep back to the flock. Early on, very early on, we are taught to disappear into the masses and to adjust to the rest of the group. Not going along with this means being cast out from the group.

I became very confused. When I received a vision of Jesus Christ during a Voyage a few years ago, I felt what I had already felt during my childhood. This man is my teacher, he has such an incredibly bright Light. I immediately understood his message, which he offered me without forcing it on me. I had just finished a three hour long ride through all the death and corruption of the world, and the only message that the prophet radiated was: now you know why you can open your heart to love. I accepted his gift with both hands, and while I had never in my life been able to accept someone as an authority, I went down on my knees and prayed in thanks. I had no idea how to do that, or whether I was doing it correctly or not, but to be honest I didn't care at the moment. I had received one of the most important lessons of my life. By balancing myself between hate, anger, pain, and loneliness, and by confronting all the suffering of the world, I was reborn.

Now, a few years later, I can finally understand this experience as well as the indignation that I had felt since I was a child. On the one hand, I had been raised without a religion and would most likely go to hell. At least, that's what my friends always told me. And on the other hand, I had always had God, or rather Jesus, in my heart. It had already been clear to me when I had made a piece of jewelry for my Bible study teacher, who had been bullied out of our public school. My heart broke and I made a little cross out of jade for her, after which she broke down in tears and told me that it was an act of Jesus Christ, of mercy. I had been one of the kids who had caused her to become so stressed. Still, I couldn't accept her kind words; I couldn't understand them. What mercy? I had just felt sorry for her. I can understand these experiences now because I have read the gospel of Thomas. Things are falling into place. I now understand in my heart the message that Jesus Christ brought us. The message of love, which is more real than ever and which is put in such a different light by the gospel of Thomas than it is by the doctrines of the Church. In that sense it doesn't matter if you adhere to the institutionalized version or not. Whether you go to church or not, the influence of this big mean man's club is deeply rooted right around the globe. Our laws and rules are based on Christian norms and values, just like many of our means of interaction. Modern crusader bombs are still being thrown over our enemies in the name of God. To the Christian Church, we are all lambs who need to follow and obey. Not to follow our hearts, but the church fathers, who believe they know what is good for us

in God's name. How differently does the meaning of religion come out in the Light of the treasure uncovered in Nag Hammadi, which was discovered at such a crucial moment after the great darkness of the Second World War.

Take the story of the wandering lamb as an example. In the gospel of Thomas, Jesus says that he loves this lamb the most. What he doesn't say, and what the Catholic Church has made of it, is that he wants to bring it back to the flock. He loves it the most because it is a loner, someone who *doesn't* conform to the group. Someone who is looking for their own path in life. And so I go from one surprise to the next while reading the book *Digging for Treasure in Nag Hammadi*, by Bram Moerland.²³ Surprise in the sense of 'coming home'. The Church has done everything possible to snub out this gnostic knowledge, this living knowledge. The Cathars, the only people who could pass on the gnostic knowledge, were massacred in the thirteenth century by order of the pope. All Christian texts which might reveal the truth about Jesus Christ were banned and burned. Except for the Nag Hammadi texts, which were discovered in 1945 and brought the gospel of Thomas back into the light again.

Studying these texts, a lot of things become clear to me. They present a Jesus Christ who wants us to undo ourselves of our conformity, to take off our blinders and learn to see. I can certainly understand why the Church didn't want these texts to be made public, and why such a noble people as the Cathars had to be exterminated. The gospel of Thomas undermines everything, *everything* that is preached by the Church. Its ideas stand directly in opposition to what the Christian church would have us believe. According to Jesus Christ we are pure beings, and we are not born in sin. We have been born on this Earth in order to find the kingdom, which is not somewhere far away, at the end of time or in the afterlife, but right here and now. If we only undo ourselves of our indoctrinations, our illusions, our fear of standing out. The Christ that is shown in these texts is the Christ who revealed himself to me in my vision, and is the force that I have felt by me ever since I was a little child. It is the strength for which I have yearned my entire life. And perhaps the most wonderful part of it is that this strength is inside me. That is the true message of Jesus Christ. I have already mentioned the famous saying that: 'whoever doesn't become as a child, cannot enter the

Kingdom of God'. The reference to the child in our hearts can be found again in the gospel of Thomas:

'A man, old in days, will not hesitate to ask a small child, seven days old, about the place of life, and he will live.'

Moerland refers here to the Jewish community to which Jesus belonged, which circumcised little boys on the eighth day. Whoever wasn't circumcised was to be banished. With this esoteric reference to the time before the eighth day, Jesus is saying that we have to look for our origins within ourselves. Or, as I often say in this book: to look for *whom we are really meant to be*.

Another reference to the source that we are looking for in our Sacred Voyage, the Voyage to our soul, is the following:

'Let him who seeks continue seeking until he finds. When he finds he will become troubled. When he becomes troubled, he will be astonished and he will be king over the All.'

Those who have made the Voyage and have rediscovered their soul will understand this occult text in heart and soul. First of all, we have to start searching. How many of us have stopped searching in our lives, and have accepted the illusion of reality that is presented to us as real reality? How many of us aren't trapped in self-made shackles in the darkness of a self-made dungeon? The first step that Jesus showed us is to start searching. We go on a Voyage so that we can find something. When we find it, we will be dismayed. We will discover that the lives we have lived until now were only an illusion, a story. Shaken to the core, we can start to make our lives truthful and we can live in accordance with our hearts instead of living how we have been taught to live. If we have started on the path towards our hearts, and have returned to being the unblemished Child, we can learn to live in wonder and amazement again. The Kingdom will then reveal itself to us, not somewhere far away and after this life, but here and now. Because our vision is expanded it will reveal the Kingdom to us. There is another clue in the following text:

*'When you are naked without being ashamed,
and you pick up your clothes and place them under your feet*

*like little children, and you tread on them,
then you will not be afraid.'*

Being naked refers to who we are meant to be, to our origins. Taking off our clothes means letting go of our convictions and beliefs. In this state we no longer have to be ashamed and we have nothing left to fear. Furthermore:

*'If you do not fast as regards the world,
you will not find the kingdom'.*

This again is a reference to the letting go of your convictions. It means letting go of what you believe is true, of what you believe is real. Here Jesus emphasizes the following:

*'Whoever drinks from my mouth
will become like me
and I myself shall become he'.*

How many clues do we need to know that the Deity lives inside us? The Christ that I met in my vision is one of equality. Not one who sits on high, or is institutionalized, but a human being who loves from his heart. Someone who I am still connected to at the soul level. There are definitely moments when that bond is paper thin and I feel like I am in the seemingly endless darkness again. My learning process won't let the darkness disappear, but it does let me know faster and faster when I am straying from my path. I am not yet the King of my All. I am often dismayed and regularly amazed, and am on my way to unlocking my Kingdom and sharing it with others. Okay, one more then, another reference to the quest that we are all meant to make, in search of who we are meant to be:

*'If you see your mirror image,
You find pleasure in it.
But if you see your original face*

*Which was there before you,
And which never dies, nor is ever created,
How much joy will you feel then!'*

If there is still any doubt about following your own path instead of that of the masses, Jesus says decidedly:

*'Blessed are the solitary,
because you will discover the Kingdom'.*

In gnostic mythology we find another important clue that is of use in the Sacred Dimension. It strongly resembles the phenomenon of 'surrender' which helps us through the Voyage. In his book, Moerland tells us about the myth of the Ascension. 'On his way to heaven, man has to pass by several planets. At each planet he will meet an Archon who will try to prevent his passage. To keep going, he has to take off one of the garments of the soul. If he succeeds in passing all the Archons like this, he will finally be able to realize his divine origin in the core of his naked being.'

The resemblance to both the bardo state in Tibetan Buddhism and the Sacred Voyage is so striking that it can hardly be brought down to coincidence. The lesson is clear: whatever we come across in the other dimension, do not fight it, but surrender yourself instead. Stand naked and make yourself small. That is how we find the way home again, the way to who we are meant to be.

An important way to build up the truthfulness of our lives is the following clue from Zarathustra. It refers to the Light that shines in each person, the essence of being true to yourself:

*'Tell no lies,
Do not do what you hate doing'.*

Moerland translates the sentence 'Do not do what you hate doing' into our times by writing: 'Take your inner protests seriously, trust your own intuition of truthfulness'.

To be honest, I have long doubted whether or not to address any religious topics in this book. I know that this can turn people off, just as I get turned off by other people forcing their religious values on me. However, the views of Jesus Christ seem so pure to me, so free of forceful rules and values and so full of truly good intentions, that I would regret not printing these passages in my book. In spite of all the readers who have developed allergies to everything that hints of religion. I believe that we desperately need the strength, the love, the Light of Jesus Christ in our lonely journey to our souls. The torments that are waiting for us on the other side, in the Sacred Dimension, can seem unbearable at times. Do realize however that it is our own baggage, and that we have a choice whether or not to seek it out and live through its pain, or to keep on dragging it with us our entire lives. In the latter case we will live in exile, incapable of becoming naked and experiencing our own beauty, our souls. To be naked, to take off our masks, to become who we are meant to be, requires us to confront our excess baggage, our pain. It means struggling past all of our shame, fear, sadness, anger, and, most of all, our loneliness. In the Sacred Dimension it means that we regularly seem to be stuck for an 'eternity' on the Highlands of Loneliness. There where all hope seems lost and where there are no smells or colors, not a morsel of happiness or anything else except for a cold, barren emptiness. If you are trapped there and you have a bit of the love of Christ in your heart, the chance that you will withstand the barren Highlands and surrender yourself to the Emptiness, so that you can move on, is endlessly greater. Gnostic teachings speak of 'the source of living water' which can only be found in the desert. We know the desert in the Sacred Dimension as the Highlands where the cold and discouraging Nothingness reigns. This Nothingness is the representation of everything that we are running away from in our lives, the big black hole that is threatening to swallow us whole. The Source of Life lies beyond the Highlands, and you will have to traverse them in order to surrender yourself to the suffocating Emptiness, which will suck all the hope from your heart. There in the Highlands you can meet Christ. If you are small and naked as a child and you are open to his blessing. If you are ready to become who you are meant to be, surrender yourself and remove your soul's garments. Let yourself be swallowed up by the Nothingness and

be reborn. You will die to be born again with love in your heart, a spark which will last your entire lifetime. This spark is symbolized by the person of Jesus Christ, but he is in fact just one of her infinite manifestations. She is immortal love. It is this pure love which transformed the 'doubting Thomas' which I once was into the man I am now, fulfilled and full of love for everything that lives. I am more certain than ever that my childhood intuition was right, and that the Church is holding up an illusion. It is to us to claim our own right to exist and to open our hearts to true love: to the belief in the Deity that lives inside us. The belief in our own Kingdoms. Guard the temple carefully and keep her sacred! She is the gateway to our souls. It is not just the eternal Nothingness, the Highlands of Loneliness that await us and through which we must pass. Her polar opposite can also be experienced in the Sacred Dimension. We can achieve ecstasy and feel connected to all life. Mystics call this experience the Union Mystica, the mystical oneness. This experience is often accompanied by a blinding Light that lights up all the corners of our being and fills them with love. If we learn to carry this Light we will never have to fear loneliness again. In our current lives which are left to us, permanent enlightenment may not be an option, and it may not even be desirable. After all, we didn't choose our current forms, living and learning in this dimension, for nothing. We will have to learn to balance between the extremes of ultimate oneness with all life and complete loneliness.

Carlos Castaneda²⁴ describes this process as walking along a cliff. We cannot change our final destination, but we can deflect it. This is the balancing between darkness and Light, the Sacred path that we choose when we awaken. Dark are the forces which pull us back into our old patterns of self-destruction. Light is the energy that makes us live. Awakening the Deity in ourselves means becoming an active player in the game of balance. That, as far as I'm concerned, is the new religion, in which we don't let ourselves get trapped in dogmas and self-imposed rules. It's a religion that is characterized by a total absence of power and hierarchy. A religion in which we, as complete equals, walk our life paths alone but can consciously choose to share it with other soul mates. Because walking the walk together can be so much more pleasant. And still we find the strength and the courage to walk our own paths. If we all walk our own paths, we no longer have to keep losing energy by trying to outdo each other. If we take off our masks, we become unfathomably deep mirrors again instead of superficial paintings. This form of religion

teaches us to reach out again to the higher and teaches us to purify our own mirrors, so that the other can see him or herself reflected in us. Or, as Jesus humorously put it in the gospel of Thomas, we will first have to remove the beam in our own eye before we can see the mote in our brother's eye.

Seek and find in your own heart. Be troubled, be amazed. Become king of your own Kingdom. Become who you are meant to be!

Or as Jesus said:

*'Everyone who finds the interpretation of
These words will not experience death'.*

Interpretation is not found by believing and by thinking about it, as the message may suggest. The interpretation is found by opening and following your heart and your soul. That is the message that Jesus Christ left us. It is the truthful path to the ones who we are meant to be.

16 The Dark Night of the Soul

One of the themes which takes up an important place in both mysticism and the Sacred Voyage is the so-called dark night of the soul, the suffering from which Enlightenment arises. Is it a coincidence that the universe is ninety five percent dark matter, matter which is so dense that no light can enter it? We are born in darkness, the womb in which we are cherished, both in a biological and a metaphysical sense. Our destination lies in darkness. Darkness is the canvas on which our lives are played out. And yet darkness is probably that which we fear most in the West. The symbolical darkness, our dark side, just as much as physical darkness. We light up the night with our electricity. We avoid our own inner darkness with constant distractions, work, care, stress, social contacts, medicines and antidepressants, drugs like alcohol, sugar, caffeine, marijuana, or stronger. Internet and television offer us a tempting and constant distraction from what is going on inside us. Running away from ourselves is an accepted and highly ranked social phenomenon. It is sooner the (game) rule than the exception. The question put to you and me is: do we, do you, do I go along with it?

Of course I can only answer this question for myself, and as you may have expected I answer with a straightforward ‘no’. I have learned these last few years that the only way to truly grow is when I seek out the darkness and the silence. Silence through meditation or prayer, darkness by really looking at what is going on in my deepest self. I have learned that I can only carry more Light when I have accepted my own darkness. When I try to run away from her, I will project her onto others. When I embrace her, she will light up. The teachings of Meister Eckhart and other mystics are still up to date; in fact, they might be more up to date than ever before. Descend into your own darkness, be still and live through whatever lives deep inside you: this could be a popular translation of the ancient mystical message, which we can also find in Buddhism.

It will therefore come as no surprise to you that the ‘dark night of the soul’ is a dominant theme of the Sacred Voyage. Until now we have spoken mostly about Light. Let us now focus on the condition that makes Light possible: Darkness. What prevents us from descending deep into the darkness? Or rather, what is that darkness? We are all connected to

each other in darkness, we are all equal. New Age gurus preached to us about connecting to each other in Light, but in so doing they denied our true bond. We retire to darkness when we sleep, when we die. Darkness is our soul: we can only receive Light because we are dark, just as our pupil is dark, or the lens of a camera.²⁵ Why do we flee our basically wonderful darkness? The answer, I believe, is relatively simple. We hide away our fears and other negative aspects in our dark side, we banish them to our unconscious, where they get to sit somewhere between us and our souls, our pure darkness, as something ‘dangerous and unpredictable’. Because we no longer feel comfortable in our own darkness, in our own true nature, we will never again feel safe and connected to others but feel isolated and lonely. Could that be why so many of us suffer from sleep disorders? Could that be the reason why we keep hating each other and point out each other’s shortcomings? When we descend into the darkness we will inevitably come across our own shortcomings, our pain and old emotions, our dark sides and characteristics, our loneliness and isolation, and our fears. The dark night of the soul awaits us all. However, unlike many of us have assumed, it is not a threat. She awaits us as our salvation. When our dark side becomes truly dark again, we no longer have to fear her. When we purify our darkness and welcome the old, banished sides of ourselves, when we open up the locked rooms and confront what’s inside, our darkness will again become the womb that it is, the universe in which our soul finds a safe and warm home. Where our soul finds connection with all that lives. Where she can receive Light instead of projecting darkness. If we stop staring into the sun and descend into the darkness we will experience the true beauty that defines us all. We will live, instead of running away from life. The Sacred Voyage is one of the paths that can take you straight into the darkness. It is not a path that will ease your pain, it is a path that will bring your pain into the Light. It will heal you, as long as you have the courage to confront your own darkness. That is the challenge that awaits us all, regardless of our past, regardless of our background. If you know the destination, the darkness, you will better understand the symbolism and the rituals that mark the Voyage. The white clothing, the Loving Guides, the meditation, the incense, the music, etc: all of them are there to light up the path to your darkness and to give you love and Light, to give you the courage to enter the darkness. If we descend step by step and free our old emotions and our banished sides, we can heal from all the aches and illnesses that plague us. That is

the promise of the Voyage, the promise of the mystics, the promise of life itself. Through the darkness, through the dark night of the soul. When you begin your Voyage you should darken your room, close the curtains, close your eyes, and if it still isn't dark enough, put on some eye patches. Turn your focus inwards and await the revelations. Face them honestly. Welcome whatever happens. Free yourself! Live and feel safe in the darkness to which you will inevitably return.

17 **Living with Heart and Soul**

When we rediscover our soul and learn to integrate and give space to the missing parts of ourselves, and when we discover our calling and our blueprint for life - that which we are meant to be - only then can we really have a lust for life *and* give life meaning. Living without inspiration is like wandering around an endless maze where we are caught in an endless trap of cause and effect, just like a programmed computer that has no free will. Trapped in situations that we ourselves have created, endlessly repeating patterns, destructive relationships, draining and unsatisfying jobs. Where do we make an end to this seemingly unending cycle? Nowhere, as far as I'm concerned! Cutting through the circle will not bring any solutions, only a change in circumstances, or a new favorite pastime for our programmed little egos. If, then...If I only had a better job, a bigger house, more free time, then I would... This level of thinking, or 'first order thinking', will keep us trapped for ever. We are looking, as Watzlawick²⁶ has so neatly worded it, for a solution of the second order. Rediscovering our souls is one such second order solution. If we want to see over the walls of the maze and see through the game, which is what second order thinking implies, we need the grandeur of our soul. The first order, playing along with the game, means accepting or rejecting the rules of our Earthly existence. When I was little, I thought that by breaking the rules, I wasn't playing along with them. Now I realize, thanks in part to the insights of the school of Transactional Analysis,²⁷ that breaking the rules is still playing along with the game. We can easily get caught in this game for a lifetime. Whether we accept or reject the rules, we're still playing the game. In this scenario we usually only wake up once we haven't been on the ball for some time, when we're already old and tired, full of 'if only I had's' and with no one around us to listen to our good advice. After all, we never listened either. Playing in the first order means playing along with someone else's game, a game that you can never win. Earthly rewards seem attractive, but it's just like with the 'boiled frog theory': throw a frog in hot water and he will jump out right away. Throw him in cold water and slowly warm it up and he will feel comfortable, until it's too late and he gets cooked. So it is with us when we wallow in a first order game, comfortable but uninspired, until we reach our boiling point. Let us jump out before we burn and make a jump into the second order. What does that mean? Second order thinking, in this sense, means not

adjusting yourself to, nor throwing away the game rules, but living without them. Away with security, away with predictability, away with games for our egos. And 'hello soul'! How can our soul awaken in us if we don't give them space? Rest assured, to welcome our soul we don't need to make space. That would be first order thinking again, thinking that by changing our circumstances we can rediscover our soul. Are you catching on? The game rules of the second order are: there are no rules. If we rediscover our soul, our lives will change by themselves, forming and unfolding in accordance with our soul. Whoever makes the pilgrimage to the soul, the Sacred Voyage, has to prepare themselves for the possibility that life will never be the same. Or in other words, that life can never be of the first order again. When we find our inspiration again, it means in the second order that our soul has found us! From that moment on we will be able to feel what is truly good for us, regardless of the rules or thoughts that others have about it. We will probably attract different friends and relationships because we will discover that many of our old acquaintances bound us to the first order game. Some friends can grow with us, others will grow apart. Accept this without judgment; it is how it is in the second order. Many religious and spiritual traditions preach love for our neighbors, and forgiveness. With our soul on our side we will discover that we no longer need these first order rules. Whoever resonates with our soul will automatically become a part of our destiny. Now we can start a journey of exploration, now we can see each day as a new playground. With our inspired soul we can discover the beauty and joy that is set aside for us in work, relationships, and in ourselves. One characteristic of our inspiration is the answer to the question whether or not we would like to live forever. If you have been rediscovered by your soul, the answer can be none other than an unequivocal 'yes', one that vibrates throughout your being. Paradoxically enough it may be that the Earthly mystical rule of the first order does apply; the rule that we first must become of what we are *not* meant to be before we can discover who we *are* meant to be. Whoever has lived through this first order rule and has left it behind, can begin the long journey home. The journey to inspiration.

Shall I serve up another paradox? All right then!

'There is but one rule: there are no rules!'

Above all, living with heart and soul means becoming vulnerable again. Beauty is contained in vulnerability, beauty which doesn't serve anything but the soul itself and the inspiration of others. Who would you rather be, the fragile and colorful butterfly that flutters from flower to flower, or the tough and armored beetle who lives out its days rolling balls of manure? Living from your heart and soul also means that life becomes unpredictable again. Welcome this opposite of our artificial 'security' with open arms; she is one of the characteristics of an inspired and blessed life.

If we rediscover our soul, give her space, and integrate her in our lives – in short, if we live according to our soul – then we start to vibrate differently. We start to resonate with the Source of Life, the World Soul. We will experience that resonance with the universe as being 'guided' or 'protected'. If we resonate with the bigger picture and make our own unique contribution to that whole, we enter into a new order: harmony. We can observe her directly when we listen to music. Harmony is not a random or mathematical jumble of sounds or tones or vibrations. It is the arrangement of the underlying universal order, which, while it may not always be obvious to us, is always available. Isn't it a miracle that we are capable of hearing harmony, to see, to smell, to feel, to taste: to live? This is also one of the characteristics of an inspired life. Our most natural path is to follow our soul and to bring this one into agreement, into harmony, with the World soul. This path I call the Sacred path, which doesn't automatically mean the smoothened path. However, the Sacred path is often characterized by the fact that walking it calls up very little resistance. If you combine that with the other characteristics of inspiration, you could say that the path which brings you joy and beauty – and which takes little effort – is the path of your soul. It takes little effort in the sense that the universe gives you what you truly need at just the right moment, according to the Law of Abundance. If something takes a lot of effort, and you experience lots of setbacks, and it brings you little joy, you can be quite sure that you are not walking the path that your soul has in mind. Because of our upbringing, with the discipline, perseverance, and winner's mentality that characterizes our society, we

often stubbornly keep going, uninspired and unhappy, until sickness forces us to make other choices. We are constantly receiving signs from the path of joy and beauty, the path that can make us happy. Walking this path takes courage and faith. Courage is not the absence of fear, but the clear knowledge that there is something more important than our fear. Our fear often comes from our little ego, which has become fearful from all the disappointments in the past, and therefore tries to avoid new challenges or confrontations with old situations. It is our little Child who is afraid and looking for safety. That is why, to follow our soul, we will first have to embrace the Child in our heart and start a dialog about our fears, so that we can judge whether or not those fears are realistic, and make our decisions accordingly. If we make little steps forwards, steps which match the speed of our Child so that we can overcome more and more small fears, we can eventually start to make bigger steps and build up our confidence. Then we can have more and more trust in the universe, trust that she will support us and give us what we need on our path. The only thing we have to do is follow the signs and interpret them with our heart. When we are increasingly in harmony with the World Soul, such 'coincidental' signs will cross our paths more and more often. Coincidence in the sense of synchronicity, as Carl Jung described it. Let's fire a paradox at it:

'Coincidence doesn't exist, coincidentally!'.

If meaningful coincidences are lacking in your life, you are most likely not living through your soul, or you are not tuned in to the signs. If so, just accept this. Let your thinking and your willpower go, let go of whatever you have grabbed on to, and ask yourself how you can live more in tune with your soul. Your soul is a sprightly creature which can leave you just as quickly as it has found you. Living with your soul means therefore that you have learn to watch and listen for the signs. The difficulty here is that you can practically never be in direct communication with your own soul; you can only experience her. Experiencing, giving life to experience, is a life skill that we are taught to forget early on in our lifetimes. At school we are taught discipline and perseverance, which costs us our ability to relax and to daydream. Our soul stays with us as long as we feed her with dreams and deeds and energy. She is our trusty companion when we tune in to the World Soul, when we follow our calling and walk the Sacred path with love in our

heart. Our soul brightens up when we embrace our inner Child in our heart and open ourselves to fairy tales and adventures. She will grant us the strength to overcome our fears and to enter into new and exciting challenges. Our soul wants to express itself in our life, and it loves new challenges and unexpected twists. She is like fire, always potentially there in anything that can serve as fuel. But without a magical spark, she will not ignite. If we try to catch her in a jar or keep her tied down, she will inevitably go out or die. Living with heart and soul means being in the service of our soul, the representative of our inner godliness. Being at the service of and subservient to our soul is the most beautiful gift we can ever give ourselves: only the soul has the purity to judge what is truly good for us, and as soon as we learn to make ourselves small and vulnerable she will richly reward us with beauty and joy. Pay close attention to the signals that your soul sends you, because they are the compass that will bring you home.

18 **Consciousness**

In order to observe ourselves we can start by making a big picture of who we think we are. What is our consciousness? What makes us unique with regards to others, and in what sense do we compare? Drawing up an inner map could easily take a lifetime, without ever getting the idea that we have fully mapped ourselves. When someone asked me a few years ago what the purpose of my life was, I answered: 'getting to know everything there is to know about myself'. That goal still stands and I never get tired of it. It has turned out to be a wonderful life goal: it is close enough to use it as a guide, and yet far enough, like a shining star, to never reach her.

But what is our consciousness? Can we even answer that question, knowing that we are part of the answer? The Secret Chief, Leo Zeff, made a nice description of consciousness. He described our consciousness as a round stage, with a curtain all around it. While the curtain is practically shut, there is still a small crack through which we, standing on the stage, can look out on the world. That is our consciousness. The reality that we can experience is reduced to a small crack. We would probably get squashed if we were exposed to all the information coming at us. But is that really true? The fact that we can know that our perception of the world is filtered and incomplete is already quite a feat of consciousness, isn't it? What would our world look like if we could open the curtain a little further? If our senses could see more colors, savor more taste, hear more sounds? Or if we could taste colors and see sounds? Are we capable of expanding our limited consciousness? Is it even meant for that, or is it limited for a reason? Would we go mad if we expanded our limits, as many have claimed? These are questions which are definitely worth examining, especially if we realize that the opposite is much more likely to be true: that we would sooner go mad with boredom if we kept our consciousness within fixed limits. Science limits its understanding of consciousness to our brain activity. Rupert Sheldrake, in his book 'The Seventh Sense',²⁸ shows that it is science which is seriously limiting us here. Consciousness, according to Sheldrake, is something that stretches us out far beyond us, as far as we can see or even farther. He says that science has localized our sense of sight in the brains. The eyes receive an image and that is projected into the brain. Sheldrake emphasizes that there has

never been substantial evidence to prove this, but rather that it is a false assumption. According to him, we project ourselves outwards onto the world, and then receive images in response. I thought it was quite a bold claim when I read it, but when I did his thought experiment, in which you try to experience where the letters are that you are reading, I had to admit: they are not in my head. I can see the letters about fifty centimeters outside my head, just as you are experiencing them outside yourself right now. It may seem like a trivial discovery, because it seems so very logical to project our consciousness outwards. That, after all, is how we experience the world. But for science things aren't so obvious. And so a simple experiment shows us how our science can make us think in seriously strange ways. Above all, it teaches us that consciousness is something that we can experience ourselves. If such a simple experiment calls up such a twisted self-image in the sciences, how can we ever proceed with our questions about consciousness? For simplicity's sake I am going to assume that we should not turn to the world of science to answer these questions. I believe that a discipline which has scraped the soul right out of its profession, just because it could not determine its physical location, is poorly equipped to ask discerning questions, let alone answer them. As far as I'm concerned it is up to us, using our own perception, enthusiasm, and urge to explore. We will have to start our own investigation again, instead of leaving it to an army of corporate and government sponsored people who rarely aim to enrich our mental capacities. I don't know about you, but to me this is unacceptable. I want to explore and to feed my soul with that which it desires: inspiration. Not the worn down paths that our consumer society prescribes us, and with which we have been brainwashed since childhood, but original, authentic inspiration. I look forwards to a time when the majority of mankind will realize that our consciousness is the greatest thing which makes us human. A time when we tell stories again about our own voyages of discovery, instead of regurgitating the stories we've seen on television. Are we capable of refusing the conformity that is being shoved down our throats, and of choosing our birthright, our soul, instead? Can we expand our consciousness and reach out to our blueprint? Can we become who we are meant to be, instead of the lame ducks that we've been made into? I hope so. No doubt there are people to whom the material pleasures of this world are more important than an expanded consciousness. They will do their utmost to prevent others from escaping the ready-made culture into which we are squeezed. But the pressure from within is

greater, many times greater than any force that tries to repress her. The soul does not let itself stay trapped or curbed and is destined to live out her magnificence, consumer society or not. We can fool ourselves some of the time, but not for ever. Sooner or later everyone reaches a moment of reflection in their lives. That is the justness of life itself, the honesty of our soul's greatest companion: Death. Only with death at our heels can we honestly decide what is right for us. Place the trends and the seeming security of our Western consumerism next to the inevitable judge called Death, and sooner or later all illusions will disappear. That is not some kind of threat; it's actually a kind of comfort. It is every individual's responsibility to realize who they are, and Death simply doesn't accept any excuses. It is our responsibility to awaken or else to become like Pinocchio's friends, who chose to stay in the amusement park and turned into donkeys. You can hardly say on your deathbed, 'yeah, but I didn't know...' and then rattle off a list of excuses. After all, you are talking to yourself: you yourself were there when you ignored or neglected the signs, and chose a seemingly safe and secure life on the beaten track instead. Or not, if you chose adventure. In any case, Death doesn't care. It's your soul that cares: after all, she is the one to whom you are responsible. Only you know. Nobody else does. And you still have an eternity to get in the clear with yourself! How long do you think it took your soul to manifest itself from high vibrations into a material body? Her desire to live and to experience was so great that she performed one of the greatest miracles: she came to life. And now you are alive! So why not aim high and get as much out of life as there is to get?

You are alive, and you also have a growing consciousness. Otherwise you wouldn't be reading this book. You can't shut down any more because your soul has long since been awakened. Whether my words bring up anger or sympathy doesn't matter; it has been awakened. If there is anything that I wish for you, and for every human on our planet Earth, then it is that you awaken your soul and live out her dreams, live out the life you are meant to live. Let that be my role in life, as guide to the realms of expanded consciousness, to who we are meant to be. Perhaps also as enemy of the ego to many people, but I hope for some at least as a friend of their soul.

How can it be that we accept a world whose soul has been gutted, where lies rule and where our hearts have become mere spectators, watching in

fear and submission? However, awakening the soul is not a bloody revolution. That is a characteristic of our overgrown egos. Awakening the soul is a peaceful, joyful, infectious, and wonderful process. I will try to contain the whole process in one simple paradox:

'Coming home for the first time'.

No matter how strange this sentence may seem, the answer is concealed in its paradox: our soul knows where our home is, while our ego can easily let us wander around for a lifetime. Joy and beauty are qualities which can only be recognized by our soul. That is our protection against further wanderings. It is up to us to leave our wanderings behind and to follow the signs of the soul. To begin with, this means that we can let go of a lot of the things that are stopping us from coming home. Whether that be a job that doesn't satisfy us but wears us out, or relationships or friendships that know no joy or beauty, we should stop immediately with creating more and more misery. That is what kills our soul, and we can stop it at any moment. Regardless of whether we've been working somewhere for twenty years, or been in a relationship for just as long: if she isn't fruitful or enlivened you should stop immediately. There is no better moment than now; better yet, there is only one right moment, and that is now. After all, now is always here. So you can always decide to follow your soul. The signs are always there. They will never leave, even though they may become less clear over the years. But they will never leave. Seek counsel in your heart; she knows when you've missed the signs. She will show them to you on your deathbed, just moments before Death presents itself. If you learn to tune in to it you won't have to wait quite that long, because she will reveal to you what you need to know right now in order to set course for coming home. Decide for yourself when the time is right. I will never say that work or a relationship is holding you back from your soul. They are both wonderful opportunities for expressing yourself and your soul. However, if you are caught in a web of suffocating ties, and are no longer experiencing any beauty or joy, the time has come to tune in to your soul. As a wonderful saying goes, you can try to undo the knot before cutting through it. If this doesn't work – and only you can be the judge of this – then you should always choose for yourself. Follow the signs and make your choice. Follow joy, seek beauty, and let your soul speak. She will bring you

home. She is your home. Be conscious of being alive, every second of every day. Waste no time. Play the game while it's still your turn.

19 **Sacred Consciousness**

To support the imagery of this book, as well as to lay a foundation for the safe exploration of our consciousness, I am introducing the concept of 'Sacred Consciousness' as distinct from other forms of consciousness. I take our basic state of consciousness to be our 'normal', or 'everyday' consciousness. This is the state of consciousness from which we manifest the world around us, and from which we live, eat, drink, and work. It is our guarding consciousness. At night we all enter sleeping consciousness together, and in several stages of sleep we go even deeper down into dream consciousness. The deepest state of sleep is accompanied by quick movements of the eye, or R.E.M. (Rapid Eye Movement). It is generally assumed that we use our deep sleep to process the impressions we have gathered in daily consciousness and to rest. The quality of our sleep is a major determinant of the quality of our life. Is it a sign from above that so many of us suffer from sleep deprivation these days? In any case, sleeping consciousness gives us a pretty good reference for Sacred Consciousness, because we have to surrender ourselves to our deepest being in both states. And then of course there are more exotic forms of consciousness, such as the 'altered' states or 'shamanic' states of consciousness. One of the characteristics of these forms of consciousness is that the person enters a state of trance or ecstasy.

The form of consciousness that I use as a guide through the Sacred Voyage differs from all other known forms of consciousness. I believe we have no reference for what I call Sacred Consciousness, so I will have to make a start at trying to describe her myself. The first characteristic of Sacred Consciousness is complete ecstasy. Reaching this ecstasy is often tied to the use of an entheogenic substance, but this is not necessarily the case. Certain types of breathing, like pranayama, Holotropic, or emotional breathwork, or the processing of deep emotions, can also lead to Sacred Consciousness. The most important characteristic of Sacred Consciousness is that we completely surrender ourselves to the experience that arises. Complete surrender. If we give up our normal thought process and surrender to the experience itself, we arrive at what I call 'the other side'. Here any further definition is impossible, because the experience is always unique to the inner world of every person that experiences her. When we surrender our conscious

control, we arrive at our true being, the inner Deity and our soul. Our Loving Guide forms the bridge back to our normal waking consciousness, and thanks to the trust that we can place in her, we can make the crossing to 'the other side', where healing and blessing await us.

One concept that I definitely do not want to confuse Sacred Consciousness with is the popular concept of 'tripping'. Tripping implies the exploration of the mind, usually for its spectacular effects and for the kick it provides. I do not judge tripping, because I believe that everyone is free to fill their experience in any way they want. And yet I make a clear distinction between Sacred Consciousness and the psychedelic trip. I accentuate this difference by speaking of 'Voyaging' when I'm speaking in the context of the Sacred Voyage. I do this mainly because of the negative connotations that the general use of the word 'tripping' has begotten. It implies an irresponsible and irrational way of using drugs; or at least, that is the image that the public has been given of it. The tripper is believed to enter into a state of madness and hallucination, which in both popular understanding and in psychiatry is still known as going crazy. Incidents with hallucinogenic substances in the last century have given words like 'psychedelic' and 'tripping' a lasting and negative meaning. I believe that this is only partly correct, and that it mostly indicates our collective fear of losing control. The dangers of taking psychedelic substances, of tripping, are in no way comparable to the taking of heavily addictive substances such as alcohol, coffee, sugar, or cigarettes.

Apart from the connotation that goes with the concept of 'tripping' I have a very different reason to make a distinction between the different forms of consciousness, their methods, and their goals. This is because, unlike in a spectacular psychedelic trip, we enter Sacred Consciousness not for fun but to seek strength, insight, and/or healing. We surrender ourselves to our highest power, or whatever we call it. I will often refer to the Deity within yourself, the soul, or the Source, because this fits with my own imagery. Naturally it is up to you to choose your own words for your own imagery.

What makes the Sacred Voyage different from a psychedelic trip? The name already says something about this. I compare a trip to 'sightseeing'.

The outcome of a trip is always unknown; sometimes beautiful, sometimes terrifying, and other times spectacular or boring. The psychonaut, as the serious tripper is also known, explores his mind and other realms to discover places that are closed off to others. He expands his consciousness. With the Sacred Voyage we also pass through spectacular realms within ourselves. However, we don't enter the unconscious with the goal of traveling through and looking at the temples. We enter her with the goal of entering the temple. In the ancient mystical traditions of the world, our body is seen as the 'temple that seats the soul'. This is the temple that we enter. We enter this temple by taking an entheogenic substance, which I prefer to call a sacrament. Sacrament means 'holy secret'. In this sense 'holy', as far as I'm concerned, doesn't refer to a religious context, but to the intent of the heart of the person taking the sacrament. The intent, also known as the 'mindset' or 'set' determines to a great extent how the Voyage will go. Imagine that there is a temple where your god lives. This god rules over darkness and light, over life itself, and you are allowed to visit his temple when, for example, your life is going nowhere. You can ask this god for strength, insight, or healing. How would you enter this temple? Knowing that this god only welcomes you if you enter the temple with respect and with love, as a pilgrim who ends his thousand mile journey of tests, challenges, and suffering by going down on his knees, giving thanks, and surrendering to what he considers to be the highest power? As I wrote earlier, I am not going to introduce a new religious doctrine. I am too averse to that. But the 'respectful pilgrim' is a mental attitude that we need to learn if we want to enter Sacred Consciousness. If we enter the Sacred Dimension with a desire to be entertained, we could be sorely disappointed. As most trippers know, the 'bad trip' is always lying in wait. This can be a very terrifying experience, in which the profane user gets a major spanking and a lesson in respectful use of the substance that he is using, the way in which he is using it, and the circumstances in which he is using it.

The most important factor in the experience of a bad trip is the phenomenon of surrender. The entheogenic substance that we take calls out to our soul and lets a world of emotional experience break loose. People who trip often do it alone or with a group of similar minded people, often with the purpose of maintaining a measure of control. Maintaining this control can be the very cause of a bad trip, and can lead

to mental suffering and even to serious psychosis. Especially amongst very young adventurers, I often see the attitude of being tough and being able to 'handle' anything in the trip. Apart from often missing a reference for understanding what they can experience in the Sacred Dimension (Chapter 30 – The Map to the Sacred Voyage), they often miss the intimacy with their friends to express the emotions that they are feeling during a trip. Shame, fear, pent up anger, and sadness can change into a monster that turns against them and causes paranoia, which can sometimes result in psychosis. What could have been a wonderful liberation from suppressed emotions will then end up as a nightmare without equal. I therefore emphasize strongly that everyone who takes an entheogenic substance be well-prepared and start their Voyage with the attitude of a respectful pilgrim with the intent to explore, open, and express their emotional world (Chapter 21 – Set and Setting). Let yourself be Lovingly Guided (Chapter 22 – Loving Guide) so that you can let loose the reigns of control. Whoever heeds this advice needs not fear a bad trip, but can take maximum profit from the wonders that are possible in the Sacred Dimension. With this book I describe a method that helps you thoroughly prepare yourself for the pilgrimage to your soul. I honestly hope that each of us takes the opportunity to expand their consciousness and rediscover their soul, under the safest circumstances possible, so that the miracle of the Voyage can truly manifest itself. This way the experience will be a dream that you'll never forget, instead of a nightmare that will always pursue you. Taking responsibility for yourself is nothing other than blessing yourself. You are worth it!

PART III SACRED VOYAGE — PREPARATION

20 Preparation

When somebody asks me why there is so much preparation to be done before making a Sacred Voyage, I turn around the question and ask: 'What are you willing to do to rediscover your inspiration?' Taking an entheogenic substance is not a guarantee that you will have an inspired experience. I often hear that unprepared Voyages have either no effect, or that Voyagers stay closed, or that it ends up being an intensely wild journey with such a flood of information and images that the Voyager can scarcely recount what happened. Terence McKenna, guru in the realm of entheogenic substances, described this experience in three poignant sentences:

'Load Universe into cannon. Aim at brain. Fire'.

If our doors of perception are opened, we will not be able to close them willingly during the working of the entheogenic substance. You might be grateful for this if you were well prepared for the experience. By the way, I am not saying that you can't or shouldn't use any entheogenic substances outside of the setting of the Sacred Voyage. It is especially this urge to experiment which, totally unplanned, often leads people into the Sacred Dimension. What I have in mind is creating a safe way to do it for those who are consciously seeking the dimension. The necessary preparations greatly increase the chances of a successful Voyage (as well as the rediscovery of our inspiration). I will give you a few suggestions of which I know that they can help you to tune in to your inner world. That, primarily, is what will give us a safe journey. Tuning in to our inner world, however, is something totally different than controlling her, which is what we learn in many schools of meditation, for example by focusing on our breathing. It might be a great technique, but we don't need her for the Voyage, and she will only get in the way of our Voyage's destination. Tuning in is nothing more than observing what is going on inside us. Registering it, and nothing more. This way we

become the 'knowing witness' of our own inner world. The tips and suggestions that I will give are meant to open you to the Sacred Dimension.

We have to attune our four energy bodies (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual) before we start our Voyage. Let's begin with our most Earthly body, our physical body. If our body is pure, she will serve as a sounding board for the finer bodies. This way we can refine our field of consciousness. I recommend that you start eating Light at least a week before you start. That should say 'light', of course, but I just wanted to check if you're still with me. Light, light food. I'm no health freak or anything, but I have discovered that the way we feed ourselves in the West is far from healthy. On a purely physical level you can see that we eat too much fat, too much sugar, too much refined foods, and so on. One of the pleasant side effects of rediscovering your soul is that you pretty much automatically start to learn what really feeds you on a physical, emotional, mental, and a spiritual level. There is a logic behind this, because when you're inspired you know that your age is something you still have, not something that you are (how old are you becomes: how much time do I still have to live). You want to be healthy because you feel the lust for life from the inside, instead of her being imposed from the outside. Later on in this book I give some suggestions for an adjusted diet (Part V – Magical Healing). If you eat lighter, your hardened armor will become softer and you will feel more sensitive. This is how you purify yourself on a physical level, preparing your body to become the temple that receives the Deity in yourself. In other countries believers make offerings to their Gods. We make offerings by purifying our temples, our bodies, and making them sacred. She isn't called 'the temple of the soul' for nothing. If, at the very least, we fast on the day of our Voyage, our body has much less rubbish to clean up. This way we can use our Voyage much more effectively, and have fewer side effects such as nausea and dizziness. Entheogenic substances purify our body, and if we help them a little, energy can flow much better in all our bodies. We do ourselves a great favor.

We should also drink at least one and a half to three liters of water every day. Water is one of the most extraordinary elements, without which life on Earth would be impossible. You've probably read somewhere that our bodies are made up of more than seventy percent water, and that water

plays an incredibly important role in clearing out the toxins and poisons in our bodies. So, to add to our preparation, let's help our bodies by giving them an abundance of purifying water.

You should also prepare by taking in fresh air every day of the week of your preparations. Go for a walk in nature, in a park, a forest, or on the beach. Our breath is our life, and it is a bridge between our physical and our more refined energy bodies. Breathe deeply and consciously from your stomach and your chest. Breathe slowly and when you breathe in, hold it in for about two to three seconds. Then breathe out very slowly. You can practice this in a walking meditation by breathing at the same speed in which you're walking. For example, breathe in for ten steps, hold in for three, and then breathe out another ten steps. Slowly but surely you can increase the amount of steps and coast into a very healthy meditation.

Furthermore:

- Go to bed early for a week and try to rest as much as possible.
- Leave your alarm clock off and try to wake up at the moment that you want to wake up through your own Inner Alarm clock. The only thing you have to do is to tell yourself to wake up at the intended hour. This way you can greatly increase the quality of your life. Did you know that in some cultures it is prohibited to wake up a shaman? Those people know that it is unhealthy to be disturbed in your sleep. When you wake up on your own you are well rested and also better able to remember your dreams. If you're scared that you won't wake up on time for work, then you're probably not doing work that inspires you. Time for a voyage!
- Don't put on your watch during the week of preparation. Get used to timelessness.
- Take a hot shower or bath of at least half an hour every morning and/or evening during your preparation.
- Try to spend at least half an hour every day being quiet and focused on your inner world. Try to observe what is going on within. If you become

very quiet, you can even try to observe yourself observing (Chapter 41 – Third Eye). If you have trouble sitting still, then begin by focusing on your breathing. Don't change your breathing, just follow it through your nose, throat, lungs, and back out again. This way you automatically turn your focus inwards. You don't have to control your thoughts or send them away or be exaggeratedly concentrated. Welcome each thought, see her and then let her go.

- If you want to have visions, then turn your radio and television off for a week. In the 1950's, Aldus Huxley wrote in *Heaven and Hell*²⁹ that all our senses are overloaded. The magnitude of information that we receive nowadays tells us a lot, but it is also the killer of our 'third eye' (Chapter 41 – Third Eye). Beautiful visions can be revealed to us in the Sacred Dimension, and I don't just mean the wonderful colors and patterns (transport moments) that are often reported. Visions are complete revelations. In order to receive them, your temple should be clean and empty.

- Remember your dreams. Your unconscious is already in motion and is going to give you messages in your dreams. Speak to it, just like with the inner alarm clock, before you go to bed. Ask yourself to please remember your own dreams. Decide that you will be able to remember them when you wake up. Put a pen and paper ready by your bed so that when you wake up, you can immediately write down the images and the stories. Try to focus on the feelings and emotions that the dream is trying to carry across from the unconscious. A useful method is to identify with all the characters in your dream and to see them as parts of yourself, or your unconscious self. What message are they conveying?

- Leave the newspapers and magazines and other worldly news for what it is. In this week, let your inner world bring you news.

- While it would be great to keep this up forever, I recommend you do some yoga, breathing, and meditation exercises at least on the day of your sacred Voyage.

- For at least one week take at least 3000 mg of vitamin C every day (Part V – Magical Healing. If you are Voyaging with magic mushrooms,

then don't take any vitamin C on the day of the Voyage itself. This reduces the experience).

- Minimize your intake of sugar, caffeine, black tea, alcohol, nicotine, chocolate, and other drugs. They all cloud our experience. Many of these substances limit our finer perceptions. If you want to engage your finer spiritual energy body, then you should minimize your consumption of these substances as much as possible. If you have already found your inspiration, this shouldn't be too much trouble. Speaking for myself, I was once addicted to all the goods in that list, but now have absolutely no need for any of them. Realize that it is only for one week. Also, you don't *have* to do any of these things in order to undergo a Sacred Voyage. Be honest with yourself when you answer the question: 'what are you willing to do in order to rediscover your soul?'. Maybe you're not sure yet what you're looking for, and so you're not willing to do everything it takes. Whatever the case, your own mindset, your intention, will ultimately determine the difference between opening up or staying closed. Addictions are a way of suppressing your emotions. If you want to go on a Voyage and you are doing it in order to heal, realize that learning to feel is an important part of the process. I have no opinion on addictions in the sense of whether they are good or bad. I only look at them from the point of view of how they help or hinder our healing process. In this sense the suppressing of your emotions is probably not going to help. Try to put aside your addictions for a week, or, if that is too difficult, then at least for a day. If you can keep it up for a week or even for a few hours you will become irritable. This is a sign that you are opening up. Don't be frightened, but embrace the feeling. Be kind to yourself. You are granting yourself the chance to reach into the depth of your own soul. You can be proud of every step you take towards that goal, even if it doesn't work out on the first try. It's the intent in your heart that counts.

21 **Set and Setting**

The word 'set' (from 'mindset') is used in most professional literature to describe the mental condition of the user of a particular substance, his familiarity with the substance, and his familiarity with its effects. Motivation, attitude towards life, experience, and personality also play a role. Setting refers more to the circumstances in which the substance is taken, such as when it is used for therapeutic, recreational, or self-exploration purposes.

From this point of view I can state that making a Sacred Voyage is not equal to taking an entheogenic substance. It is also not the same as self-exploration, therapeutic counseling or recreation. Making a Sacred Voyage is a distinct form of consciousness expansion, one of the goals of which is to rediscover our soul. This means that we will have to redefine set and setting. The literature available to us on this topic is written by psychonauts and psychiatrists, who have delivered a wealth of information to those who trip or take psychedelic substances in a psychiatric or a therapeutic environment. While psychedelic substances were for a while noted as the ideal way to explore the human psyche, they have been all but banished in the last thirty years. The how and why of this development is I think beyond the scope of this book, but I do see it as a sign of the condition of our society as a whole. She seems to be uninspired. Whether you take (world) politics, life on the streets, or the living conditions of the average person as a reference point, you can see the same image everywhere: we are missing our soul. In answer to this our society becomes stricter. This is clearly visible in the way we deal with mental disease and mental health in general. It is visible in the way we interact with each other. But do we let others decide what is good for us? Psychiatrists and psychologists, who are the ones who should know what is good for us, are standing with their backs against the wall: they are no longer able to get us or to keep us healthy, if they ever were in the first place. Moreover, professional organizations almost always exclude the use of consciousness expanding substances in their therapies.

Western man is quickly losing himself to his own prosperity, falling apart while nobody seems to be able to help him. Psychedelic research has been blocked and prohibited in the United States for decades, taking away the chance of reaching true insight into ourselves. And this while

Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States, once stated that if people allowed their government to decide which food and medicines they should use, their bodies would stand to suffer. Just like the souls of those who live under tyranny.³⁰ Luckily we here are living in the free Netherlands, where by and large we can still decide for ourselves what is good for us. How long that will be the case, as members of the European Union, is unknown. But for now we are enjoying a considerable amount of freedom, especially with regards to the use of entheogenic substances. Not that we are actually making use of this freedom, and exploring and publicizing the numerous possibilities through pioneering research. Science is not making use of the opportunity. It seems to be more interested in which antidepressants it should prescribe in order to jump start our uninspired population. At the time of this writing there are over half a million people in the Netherlands addicted to this drug in sheep's clothing. As it appears right now, this is only an indication of what is to come. Add to that the hundreds of thousands of hash users and the hundreds of thousands of alcoholics and the vague sketch that I made of our uninspired population becomes clearer. Should we just wait and see what our soulless governments do, and patiently watch as we are led like lemmings to the edge of sanity? I don't think so. I don't feel so. I know that it is our own responsibility to choose for ourselves and our own soul, no matter what a society or a government thinks about it. That, in any case, is where the method of the Sacred Voyage leads us: to our soul.

The method has been developed so that we can safely and harmoniously seek out who we are truly meant to be. It stands apart from the therapeutic and psychiatric practices which, like society itself, have been wandering astray for years. We stand alone, alone except for a good friend who will Guide us and who we in turn can Guide. This way we claim the responsibility to find and protect our own soul. This is the set and setting in which we do our work. Knowing that we awaken in a society which is most likely unprepared for our soul. It is no accident that we lost her in the first place. The Sacred Voyage is there for those who wish to take that risk instead of waiting to see what another decides is good for them. The Sacred Voyage offers a wonderful method to discover who we really are and are meant to be, to whomever has a taste for adventure and who wants to live according to their own mind. It is our birthright to become who we are meant to be, to go out and explore

and to come home with the greatest treasure that we can find our lives: our soul. The Sacred Voyage can take you there, given that you follow the signs and make all the right preparations. Whoever wants to discover for recreational purposes is free to do so but is not following the path of the Sacred Voyage. I am making a conscious distinction here because I want to protect our method from sensationalists. The Sacred Voyage has nothing to do with sensation, other than the sensation of healing yourself, living through old pain and emotion, letting your energy blockages go and ultimately rediscovering your soul. Being unprepared for your Voyage is like going into the mountains without a guide. It can be a nice walk, but it can also end in disaster. Again, I am recommending that if you make a Voyage you do so fully prepared, with a loving Guide and the method that I describe. And most of all, I recommend that you surrender yourself to the power of the entheogenic sacrament and your soul. You should not see the method as a way to escape reality, as we often do when we use alcohol, hash, medicine, or drugs. The Sacred Voyage and the use of entheogenic substances as a sacrament are aimed at putting you squarely on your own feet. This is also how entheogens differ from other substances that we call drugs in our society. They reveal our reality with an unparalleled clarity, instead of letting us escape it. If we rediscover our soul, we rediscover our lust for life, and we will want to manifest ourselves in the here and now, on Earth, instead of wanting to escape her. Neither I nor the current health care system can judge who can make the Voyage or has the right mindset for it. A health care system that not too long ago attended to its patients by sending electricity through their brains, as well as surgically removing parts of the brain, and now has switched over to antidepressants, is simply not (yet) capable in my point of view. The responsibility for the Voyage is entirely on us, as individuals, no matter the label that the health care system puts on us. If we make the decision to search for our soul with full consciousness, and then make the proper preparations in the right circumstances to do so, then it is to us to make that Voyage, no matter what others may think. I hope that there will eventually be professional Guidance for those who have serious mental issues and who want to find their soul. I know that there are risks involved with taking entheogenic substances. And yet I dare to fully recommend the Voyage to anyone who has enough fortitude and has found her place in this world. A life without a soul is endlessly more risky and dangerous. But that is for each of us to judge.

What are the risks of the Sacred Voyage? The greatest risk is that it can turn your life completely upside down. A lot of things are let loose in our voyage and that can confuse us. It can confuse us for a while when we rediscover ourselves, because we have suddenly realized what we have been doing to ourselves until then. These circumstances, such as a stale work environment, relationships, and friendships, the way in which we live or have set up our lives: we can't change all of that at once, and that can mean a very painful confrontation with reality. It is especially difficult to awaken in a society that is aimed at turning us into well-behaved clones. That is the biggest risk of the Voyage. Be fully aware of it, let it be a part of your mindset, and make a well-informed decision to go in search of your soul. My perspective is that it is more than worth all the risks and the pain, no matter how confusing it may and can be. Rediscovering your soul, winning back your life, claiming your birthright to become who you are meant to be; all that, in my experience, is what really makes life worth living. If you choose to look for your soul, really make that decision consciously and follow my method and her suggestions. That will give you the best chance for a smooth landing. How you integrate your inspiration into your life after that is up to you: it is your gift.

Another risk is present for those who are psychotic or have a predisposition to psychosis. These people have not yet found their place in the world and have too little fortitude, or 'ego strength', as it is also called. The Voyage could do wonders for them, freeing all the stored up emotions that are bothering them so much as to distort their perception of reality. However, these people need lengthy guidance and medical care and it is still the question whether we are prepared for that or not. Is psychiatry able to help people heal from deep psychological wounds? As of yet I believe that this branch of sports relies too much on addictive medicines which bring patients even farther away from their home, their soul. In a social sense it may help these people get along a little better, but is that truly the measure of healthiness?

Voyaging can also be dangerous for other groups such as those with heart disease or epilepsy. Generally speaking I recommend against Voyaging for those people who cannot face their own emotions. Which at the same time reveals the source of their illness... Pregnant women should not make a Voyage either. It is dangerous for the unborn child

because you might have premature labor pains, and there is a chance of having a miscarriage. Furthermore, the baby has no choice in the matter and that is exactly one of the requirements for the making of a Voyage: free choice.

I would love to end this part by telling you that you had best confer with your doctor or psychiatrist about making a Sacred Voyage. I wouldn't mind doing that formally, but I also understand that it would be a waste of time. There is hardly an established doctor or psychiatrist who would acknowledge the importance of the Voyage! In that sense we are on our own. No institutes, researchers, specialists, or any established organization will support our search for our soul. No health service will reimburse the Voyage. No doctor will prescribe a recipe of mushroom soup or Ayahuasca. No psychiatrist who will Lovingly Guide your search for the soul. It is up to you, it is your own responsibility to go in search for your soul. There is almost no one who will support you, except for the Voyagers who can recognize their own experience in yours. The only thing you can do in our soulless world is to trust your own intuition. Have faith in your own experience. Doubt everything you have learned until now and trust your own perception and experience. Let's throw another paradox at it:

'I doubt everything. And I even doubt that!'

Take responsibility for yourself and decide for yourself what's good for you. The Sacred Voyage is not an institutionalized method, it is each Voyager's own highly personal and unique experience. The directions that I give are only meant to ensure a safe Voyage, not to give her a certain meaning. Even if I give directions, which I do when I use a word like 'soul', it is still up to each of us to experience that word in a certain way. That is exactly why I use words like 'heart' and 'soul', because deep down we all know what we mean with them, and yet we can still give them our own personal experience. They are not meaningless and empty concepts, mostly because science has willfully struck them from its jargon and has therefore not yet managed to spoil them. Thankfully! Let us pick them up and give them the meaning they deserve: our own meaning. Let's go back to a time in which we still shared our personal experiences first hand, when there was still so much to discover. Those who walk the path of the soul quickly realize that there is still so much

left to discover. Too much for one human lifetime, which again makes our life-time something that lies ahead of us, instead of something we leave behind. How long do we still have, how long do you have? Our life-time becomes precious; pick the day, 'carpe diem', becomes our motto. If we are truly inspired, every day that we are allowed to live becomes a priceless gift. Boredom and routine are signs of an uninspired life and form a clear indication of the need for action. If our energy stands still, we automatically become vulnerable to entropy, to natural decay. Energy has to flow. Standing water starts to rot. Flowing water lives and contains and *gives* energy. We can let our energy flow, as long as we live.

Back to our mindset. Each person should determine for themselves how to arrange their lives, whether they want to go down in gray routine or shine and glow with adventure. Similarly, each one of us should decide for ourselves when and how they want to make their Sacred Voyage. As long as it is never decided under pressure or without knowledge of the consequences. I see it as a crime to give an entheogenic substance to an unprepared person. Every person who begins the Voyage has to do so from their conscious intent, the intent to rediscover their soul. Only then can we enjoy the protection that we need in the Sacred Dimension. If we enter her profanely or without respect, there will be many unpleasant surprises waiting for us on the other side, because we are not under protection. If we trip for fun or without protection, we open ourselves to all the influences of the spirit world. If we go on our Voyage with the intent of rediscovering our soul, we will always enjoy holy protection which screens out foreign influences. Everything that we need to see is from ourselves. That is also how our Voyage differs from a shamanic trance journey: we do not go into battle with spirits and demons, because they don't exist in our Sacred Dimension. Everything that we encounter here, angelic or demonic, is us, and it is waiting to be embraced and integrated within ourselves. That is the Voyage. The Voyage is a matter of initiation and dedication. Initiation into the knowledge and rituals and practices for making the Voyage Sacred or holy. Dedication to truly become one with yourself and to embrace your own inner life. I can give you the initiation in the form of knowledge of the methods of the Sacred Voyage. While there is a considerable amount of occult knowledge in between the lines (just try and crack the paradoxes!), the information is clear enough to follow literally. Dedication is entirely up to you, the

dedication to yourself. Read with your heart and interpret my words through the way in which you experience them. That way you will definitely follow your feelings and do what is good for you. Only make the Voyage if it really feels good for you. Don't do it to force something out of yourself. You will only rediscover your soul if you really open yourself to it. Open your heart and make yourself small. Forcing yourself is not an act of love, and love is the only intent that your soul recognizes. Don't ever force or surprise another or yourself. See the Voyage as a roller coaster ride: if you get on consciously, knowing that there will be an end to your crazy ride, you can surrender yourself to the experience and probably even enjoy it. Only get on out of free will and with knowledge of the consequences. Acting tough, wanting to belong, forcing yourself: all untrue intentions are punished in the Sacred Dimension.

A few other conditions that belong to a proper mindset are: surrendering yourself unconditionally to the substance and the experience. Know that the Voyage will take four to eight hours and that you can't step out of it. Go into this dimension willingly or don't do it at all. You can't stop it, and that is part of the intent. Next to that is the fact that during the Voyage you hand over the responsibility for the safety of your body to your Loving Guide. Never make a Voyage alone, without a Guide. Don't Voyage together with another person who isn't a Guide, but make sure that one of you is sober.

Your careful preparations, the care and attention of a Loving Guide, a safe and trusted environment, Sacred music to guide your Voyage, the protocol of guiding, the opening rituals: altogether these make up an intricate part of the Voyage. The Voyage is a balanced experience in the sense that the more you meet the basic requirements, the greater the chance that you will reach her destination, the rediscovery and experience of your soul. The requirements aren't there to limit your experience or to force some kind of method onto you; quite the opposite, they are there to give you the deepest experience possible. And to make sure that the experience can continue and persist. I have plenty of examples of people who took an entheogenic substance in an unsafe environment, with the wrong people, in the wrong mood, so that they ended up closing off again because their soul didn't feel safe. I can't even recommend the relatively safe setting of the Santo Daime church before

starting a Sacred Voyage. Even in this environment you can't really open yourself up completely, and you have to keep to the songs and the rituals as the information on their website³¹ suggests. This could be a wonderful experience. But in the context of this book I recommend choosing a safe setting. Whoever is advanced enough in processing their emotions and is looking for a religious context with wonderful rituals, this church can be a great meeting place to experience an Ayahuasca ritual together.

If you are a beginning Voyager, I suggest choosing the safest possible setting, your own home. I have spoken to dozens of people who caught a glimpse of their soul during a Voyage but for whom the setting wasn't quite safe enough for them to truly surrender to the experience. The soul often appears to us in the form of our most vulnerable Inner Child. We are responsible for her and for giving her a warm welcome. See it as your Inner Deity, your highest power, or however you want to call the extraordinary being who is the foundation of our creation, and that it is paying you a visit. Make sure that she feels that she is worth being invited in by you. She can feel your intent, your desire to become one with her. Make sure you can receive her with peace and love. Make sure that there is enough space to process all the pain and sadness that stands between you and your soul. This means that you give space to all your emotions, to crying, screaming, laughing, cursing, and whispering, if you need to. The last thing you want to do here is have to worry about others around you. You have to feel secure and have permission to let yourself go completely. This is bringing whatever shows itself into the Light. And with it you can give closure to unfinished business from the past, and you allow your old wounds to heal. Provide a setting for yourself in which this is possible.

The last requirement to think of before starting your Voyage is your desire to heal yourself on an emotional and spiritual level. In the Sacred Dimension which we will visit, all the pain and loneliness can come forward so that you can process her and carry her like an adult. Right now our vulnerable or traumatized Child is carrying our suppressed feelings for us, and that is exactly why we have lost our soul. If we free our Child and carry our pain ourselves, we invite our soul to return and to bring back our lust for life. If we embrace the Child in our heart, we live again. Concentrate on yourself, your history, your pain, and your sadness. Prepare yourself by reading the books of John Bradshaw, Alice

Miller, or Nourriet Okken. Invite your Inner Child to show themselves, and ask your Guide to prepare themselves in the same manner. If you take turns Guiding each other you won't have to feel ashamed in front of each other: you are both going through the same deep and healing process, so that you can support each other, trust each other, and encourage each other. The bond that you are creating with your Guide by giving each other the permission and the security to do this allows you to heal on a cellular level. You can finally let go of your ancient pains. This is one of the most important ingredients of the magic recipe of the Sacred Voyage. Whoever makes their Voyage with this conscious intent, the intent to embrace their vulnerable Child and to free their soul, enjoys the protection of their highest power, their Deity. This is the Sacred Voyage.

The ideal mindset & setting for the Sacred Voyage

The ideal **mindset** for making the Sacred Voyage could look sort of like this. Use it to see where you stand right now.

- *You want to search for your soul.*
- *You want to and you can open yourself up to everything that reveals itself during the Voyage.*
- *You are looking for strength, insight, and healing.*
- *You are adventurous and curious.*
- *You dare to confront your own dark side.*
- *You are prepared to put aside your judgments for a while.*
- *You have enough mental resilience to keep yourself standing in life.*
- *You are prepared to make yourself small and vulnerable.*
- *You are prepared to open yourself to your emotions.*

Many of the aforementioned themes will only become clear once you make the Voyage yourself. The point here is that you get some kind of idea of the intent with which you can safely make your Voyage into the Sacred Dimension.

The ideal **setting** could look something like this:

- *You are Voyaging in a beautiful, quiet, safe, and warm environment (for an example, take a look at my attic on www.thesacredvoyage.com/!)*
- *The room is blinded with only a few candles for light.*
- *There is enough fresh air.*
- *You will not be disturbed here but can let yourself go unconditionally.*
- *You let yourself be lovingly guided by a close friend.*
- *You have chosen beautiful music to accompany your Voyage.*
- *You have made the right preparations, as described in this chapter.*
- *You do some Yoga and meditation exercises beforehand.*
- *You perform some of the rituals as described in the next chapters beforehand.*
- *You have opened up your consciousness by asking the right question and have, if necessary, sought counsel from an oracle to activate your unconscious.*

22 Loving Guidance

The whole environment in which we make our Voyage, the way in which we prepare for it, the love with which we approach ourselves: all this determines the outcome of our Voyage and whether or not we can and will reach our destination. The attitude that helps us do this is that of 'bringing everything into the Light'. In the Sacred Dimension we can learn to face our most painful feelings and bring them to Light (express them). Only in the Light can they lose their destructive and controlling function, and transform into helpful energy. This is one of the most important processes that can lead us to healing and which can even be helpful in our 'normal' state of consciousness. After all, we don't need an entheogenic substance in order to be human, or to express and experience our feelings and emotions. However, in the Sacred Dimension we get extra help to do this. By entering the Sacred Dimension we activate all the forces that will help us to bring to Light all of our pain *and* our joy. We enjoy the protection of our own Deity and an entire army of helpers, guides, and teachers. As long as we create the right conditions for the experience to manifest itself. A peaceful and inspiring environment is a precondition, just as the intent, the 'mindset' to walk the path of healing, as you have read in the previous chapter. Learning to open ourselves to Light is an exercise that can open us to healing. Bringing to Light is nothing other than liberating that which is bothering you in your unconscious, bringing it to the surface, and expressing it. Cry if you want to cry, yell if you want to yell, hit a pillow with your fists or with a carpet beater if you're furiously angry, and hold in your breath if you are scared and trembling. Let that which is being played out within come out.

The main task of your Loving Guide, next to taking care of and watching over your body, is to recognize you. Recognition is nothing other than acknowledging what she hears and what she sees. Bringing into the Light by the Voyager and the recognition of the Guide are not just any tricks to make the Voyage more comfortable. It is the core of the path to healing of everything that hurts us inside. It requires true, honest friendship, love, and closeness. Our illnesses arise in us when we lack these things. In the Sacred Dimension we have the opportunity to make a quantum leap in healing. Our Guide doesn't have to be a therapist, psychologist, or a psychiatrist. Quite the opposite, if we want to heal at

this level, every form of advice, analysis, or well-meant help will only get in our way. We don't have to be forced or provoked, we just have to bring to Light all that which is going on and let our Loving Guide recognize it. Our Guide only has to recognize us and thereby acknowledge our existence. It is so simple and so agreeable to our true nature. This way we free ourselves from the destructive shame that keeps our emotions in check and which is making us ill. This way of interacting with each other is based on who we are meant to be. We are creatures who want to be seen and heard, and who want to share true closeness. Closeness comes into being when we dare to make ourselves vulnerable and allow the other in closer. When the other acknowledges our existence, we can experience deep joy and Light. We feel at ease with people who recognize our being. And vice versa, we can make others feel at ease by recognizing them. This doesn't mean that we have to agree with them on everything. On the contrary: we are ourselves and we have our own unique identity. Recognition only means acknowledging what you see and what you hear. If someone recognizes you, this means:

'I think you are okay the way you are'. 'You can drop your defense mechanisms and your armor, just be yourself or who you are meant to be'.

Recognizing or validating consists of three important principals, which are equally important for all people, no matter their background or their culture. Guiding with love is nothing other than recognizing that:

- Every human being is precious and wants to be seen as being precious.³²

- Our feelings and emotions and those of the person whom we are Guiding are important.

- The person whom we are Guiding needs our honest involvement.

Many of us have learned that certain norms of interaction with other people, such as politeness, distance, and other protocols are equal to friendship, safety, and intimacy. The opposite is true: they are the masks behind which we spy at each other. Always afraid of being unmasked,

we try to avoid true intimacy or Light. Light and love, which we need so much in order to live. Many of our friendships and relationships are based on a mutual trade system that seems like intimacy. We promise each other that we won't mention what we really see, and instead play a game in the name of love. And yet this kind of relationship is hardly fulfilling, and in the long run can tire us, no matter how much energy they may have provided at the beginning. It does seem nice to be thought of as beautiful, well-groomed, tough, intelligent, or friendly. If this is the only repertoire in our relationships, they will end up stifling us because the other banished and vulnerable parts of ourselves won't be able to come to Light. Real intimacy only comes about when we no longer have to be ashamed of who we are, or keep having to show the same side of ourselves. Real intimacy happens when we show our vulnerabilities. It is this intimacy that makes our lives worthwhile, and which make us truly alive. If we learn to take off our deadly masks, we can breathe again.

The Loving Guide has sometimes been confused with the (baby)'Sitter', as the guide is usually called in the psychedelic tradition. And we do have some of the same tasks: both take care of us and help us when we are having a difficult time. The big difference is in their approach. A Sitter is someone who comforts the tripper during difficult moments in the trip, shifts her attention, or gives a counteracting substance to weaken or even end the trip. Sometimes the Sitter is a stranger to us who is keeping watch over a group of trippers. The basic difference is clearly visible here: the Loving Guide is always someone who is close to our heart and with whom we can and want to share true intimacy. At least, that is the intent of both the Voyager and the Guide. Because they take turns Voyaging and Guiding, there is no one-way traffic, but a healthy flow of energy. This way both can learn to receive Light (bringing to the Light) and to give Light (recognition). The Loving Guide won't try to bring the Voyager onto a different path by steering their thoughts or feelings. She will only try to help the Voyager face that which is confronting them, and to invite them to surrender to the process. She will try and give them the confidence to completely reveal themselves and let themselves go. The Voyager can accept this confidence, and from this firm bond they can keep Voyaging further. She can let herself be washed over by whatever is tormenting her inside, instead of running away from it. If making this bond between the Voyager and the Guide is working, she becomes an affectionate bond. And something else comes into being.

Something which is indispensable in each person's life: Affectionate trust.

From this trust, which many of us have missed for years, we can shine Light on our deepest darkness and heal from everything which has been afflicting us. After all, most illnesses develop because of our isolation from others, because of the lack of true intimacy and the recognition of our existence. Affectionate trust teaches us the true quality of life, and it is an experience that comes with pain and joy. We will discover that much of what flies under the flag of friendship or love is nothing but a concealed fear: the fear to live. If we go through this process it is to be expected that we hold those loves and friendships which don't seem to satisfy us to the Light, and that we invite them to open up. Some of the people around us will grow because of this, others may reject it. If we choose Light, and for showing ourselves for who we really are, then the people who really fit with us will automatically feel invited to show themselves as well. This is a natural process of becoming one. The only thing we have to do is to not stand in its way, but let it follow its natural path. If we let ourselves and our true feelings show, we may end up having less people who we 'click' with at first. That is a logical result of showing ourselves. Not everybody is waiting for that to happen. Many of those around us will want to keep us to the unspoken agreements and cultural protocols that we once made together, the ones that tell us how to show ourselves and how to behave. Those agreements rarely tell us that we can develop into the ones we are meant to be. There simply happen to be people who have decided that they never can or will discover that in their lifetimes. They would have to make themselves vulnerable to do that, and not everyone dares or wants to. Your own search can threaten them by reflecting back their frozen self-image. If that is the case, be conscious of the fact that friendship and love are basically free. They should be Light and should always be experienced from our free will. You do not owe each other anything, no matter what others think. Use your free will to choose the people around you, the ones that feed you, the ones that invite you to develop yourself into who you are meant to be, and who stimulate you to keep showing more of yourself, of your dark and your light sides. Invite them in turn to show themselves to you and recognize them and what you see. That is the Circle of Love that keeps the Light alive, and which forms the foundation of Loving Guidance.

Guiding a Voyager with love, a good friend or girlfriend, can be a heavy and wonderful task. You give someone your unconditional care, attention, and support if they ask for it. You stand back when the other can stand on their own feet again. I often hear the comment that guiding people is something that therapists should do. But in my experience that is not necessarily true. If we take the word 'therapist' literally (those who point the way to healing) then we can easily see why we often don't need a therapist at all: the soul of the Voyager herself will point the way to her healing. Most therapists have their own range of methods and their own image of humanity. However, only we ourselves know what is good for us in the Sacred Dimension. This doesn't mean that a therapist can't learn to empty themselves completely and take on the role of a Guide. The only thing that the Guide should do to intervene is to mirror (tell what you see), recognize (acknowledge what the other is showing), encourage, comfort, question, and in extreme cases: the giving of a subtle hint. Or, in the case of a physical threat, or if there is a potentially dangerous situation for the Voyager or her environment, then the Guide can softly direct Voyager to safer waters. These may seem like small gestures, but in the Sacred Dimension they are enormous suggestions. By consciously keeping to the background, we prevent ourselves from directing the experience of the Voyager and thereby keeping her away from her soul.

As Guides we can learn to make ourselves humble and small, and to avail ourselves completely to someone else's healing process without directly intervening. This is Loving Guidance. It will definitely be difficult. Many of us are used to making ourselves feel 'important' by directing and advising others. By learning how to Guide, however, we learn how to be there for one another. We are going to help the Voyager discover their soul, or actually, we are going to make it possible for her to Voyage. We are the temporary replacement of her control functions, which dominate the left brain, so that the Voyager can completely let go. If we let ourselves be Guided then we have to make sure that our friend understands this and is involved with our process, so that we can expect Loving Guidance without direct intervention.

When you are a Guide for someone for the first time, realize that you can give your friend a wonderful gift. Many have never before experienced that someone watched over them, recognized them, and encouraged

them, and this experience in itself is already quite healing. It is the pure love and friendship which can take us from the darkest darkness to the purest Light.

Perhaps the greatest task for the Guide is to temporarily let go of the image you have formed of your friend. The image that you have of someone, the way in which you perceive them, is often your own projection. And it is often fine within the context of your friendship. But during the Voyage these projections can be oppressive. The Voyager will reveal different sides of herself, good and not so good sides, and it is your task to stay empty of projections but full of love and attention to what is, not to what you have stored in your memory. I realize that this is no easy task, and that it is a challenge to everyone, beginner or experienced. Whoever we choose for our Guide, ask them to give us the space to show all our sides, no matter if they fit the image that the Guide has of us or not, or if they are even something they like or not. Often times we go through very sad, angry, or unpleasant sides of ourselves in the early part of the Voyage, which can be very confusing to both the Voyager and the Guide. Whatever happens, ask your Guide ahead of time to recognize you lovingly. That is true love, that is the Sacred task which we as Guides are to fulfill.

Realize that you as a Guide are responsible for the Voyager during two (breathwork) to perhaps eight hours (Ayahuasca and other entheogens). Never abandon her and be aware that her consciousness is extremely sensitive, endlessly more sensitive than normal. I often compare the sensitivity of the Voyager with that of an utterly vulnerable new born child. The art of Guiding is to know how to approach this sensitivity, to be there at the right moments to offer our shoulder for comfort, and at other times to withdraw again. If you want to offer the Voyager something, such as comfort or a suggestion, always ask them if they need it first. The Voyager almost always has Guidance from her Inner Voice or Inner Healer, if not from other guides or teachers. Always tune in to this as a Guide so that you don't cross over the path that the soul has paved for the Voyager. Don't try to take over any of the pain from the Voyager, or to take her away from it or to ease it: she can and has to go through it herself in this dimension, no matter how painful it may seem if you are keeping watch on the other side. Realize that the Voyager who looks up her own pain is often receiving help in the Sacred Dimension, help that stays with her as long as she needs it, even after the Voyage. Teach the Voyager to look for that help and to have faith in it, rather

than taking on the role of a social worker yourself. This doesn't mean that a comforting arm can't perform miracles at the right moment, just as a show of compassion, a heartfelt smile, or a tear can. These are all gestures that the Voyager can acknowledge in their 'being'. As long as you don't draw them away from their sadness, which is what our so-called 'comforting' usually is for. As long as you see them as they are, and acknowledge that which you see. Follow your intuition and respond from your heart. This is what helps the other in difficult times. Be a mirror from your own direct perception: 'I see that you are sad', perhaps adding an encouragement: 'Let it be' or 'Give it space', if you see that the Voyager is blocking it. If you utter such words with love in your heart, you can perform miracles. You invite the other to show themselves, and help them get past their oppressive boundaries. Here again the advice is to follow your intuition, and not to impose yourself on them but to make yourself subordinate to your perceptions. If you perceive that the Voyager has truly passed through her struggle, has faced her sadness, is now carrying it herself, and could use some support, then offer a shoulder. If she accepts, you can acknowledge her with words like: 'You can just be yourself', 'Let yourself be carried for a bit', or 'You can let go now'. The purer you are, in the sense of 'free of projection', the clearer you can perceive, and the better able you are to judge when the Voyager needs you. This is the magnificent process of Guiding. If you make yourself subordinate to the energy that you perceive, humble and small, you can create a magical bond between yourself and the Voyager. For just a while you get to be in the role of Universal parent, father or mother, who brings forth healing out of pure, unconditional love. As soon as you take on the subservient energy of a Guide, you can feel how wonderful it is to truly be there for someone else. Subservient does not mean that your own feelings are undesired. Guidance is the ultimate exercise in making contact: first making contact with yourself and your feelings, giving yourself enough space for that, and then reaching out to the other. Follow that same path when you touch the other, by first feeling how you yourself are feeling. Only then can you truly support an other, and at the same time support your own fulfillment.

The energy that is freed up in a Voyage can often be so great that it allows you to Voyage along for a while and receive your own visions. Sometimes a telepathic bond is created between you and the Voyager which transcends anything we can imagine. If you sense that you want to

have some distance for a while from the Voyager, or that you want to withdraw into yourself, whisper that you are going to give her some more space and that you are there if she needs you. Careful, organic movements and words help the Voyager to stay in their own story and not to get trapped by the suffocating process of 'thinking'. The art of Guiding is to create a warm, safe, and intimate environment for the other. The Voyager can then completely surrender themselves and be extremely vulnerable, which is one of the most healing experiences there is. This allows us to return to our earliest consciousness and free up the painful energies that have often been lying there for a lifetime. It's no surprise that we often get images of our earliest childhood, or even before that, in this stage of the Voyage. I will give you an example from one of my own Voyages, when I was being Guided by my best friend Diana:

I once made a Voyage with magic truffles, and very little happened. For about two hours I felt no effect, so I decided to take a nap. When I woke up again, I was in some thick, brown fluid. Air bubbles passed by from time to time. My eyes were open, and a mild panic came over me. Where was I? Later on I relaxed a bit and realized that I was in the womb. It was warm and comfortable, and when I relaxed completely I came into a feeling of total ecstasy. This ecstasy lasted for a few hours, during which I lay bunched up like a fetus. My Guide Diana did nothing but hold me and gently caress me. This safeness and protection were new to me, and when I recovered from this heart warming experience I felt like a different person. I had felt the Universal Love of a mother for her child, and had nestled myself in its security. While I sometimes collide with my mother's ego, I learned at the deepest level how much warmth and love she felt for me during her pregnancy, and with how much love I had been brought into the world.

This is the healing process of the Sacred Voyage, healing at the level of the heart. What is more beautiful than making such an experience possible for someone by being a Loving Guide? Isn't that one of the most beautiful gifts we can give each other?

As a Guide we take over one of the important functions of the Voyager's ego, the control over the left brain, also known as the reality check. We often lose control in the Sacred Dimension, and we forget who we are

and where we are. Our Guide can reassure us and remind us who we are and that we are making a Sacred Voyage. And that it is good to let go of control, to just surrender completely to the experience. Transactional Analysis has a concept called Permission, Protection, and Potency, the three P's that we can use as a model when we Guide someone. The point here is to help the Voyager do things that they want to do, but cannot yet or don't yet dare to do. Overcoming shame, speaking out certain feelings, and expressing emotions are some examples. As a Guide we give the Voyager our unconditional Permission and support to express themselves, we offer them Protection by guaranteeing their safety so that they can let themselves go, we give them the strength (Potency) to persevere, and our unconditional support.³³

Whoever is looking for the right mentality as a Guide can take to heart this poem by Saint Francis. The Saint gives a wonderful account of what Loving Guidance is:

Prayer for Healers – St. Francis

*LORD,
make me an instrument of your peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope
where there is darkness, light
where there is sadness, joy*

*O divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.³⁴*

23 **Musica Maestro!**

One of the most important ingredients for a successful Voyage is the accompanying music. The right music can bring us into our own depths and call out our soul. In the method of the Sacred Voyage we use tranquil, loving, warm, and spiritual music. Music that is made with heart and soul and which is recognized by our soul. This kind of music forms the canvas on which we paint our Voyage. It is as if the music forms our experience. But that is not exactly what happens: instead, it gives her color. The right music, music that feeds our soul, gives us a beautiful foundation and the confidence to let go of our control even more, and lets us drift along with its guiding sounds. Music can bring us back to long forgotten times and bring up memories and emotions that we can then reintegrate into our being. Heavenly, emotionally charged music helps us live through our own emotions. Music that has been made with heart and soul has an essence which can penetrate us with love, and can therefore awaken our soul. One of the most famous Guides of entheogenic Voyaging, Leo Zeff – aka The Secret Chief – put it like this: ‘music is the thing that gets them there’. Inspired music represents the essence of our soul: beauty and joy. Inspired music is above all an experience, an experience that brings out our emotions: compassion, love, strength, harmony.

We are mostly looking for harmonious music, music that fits with our heightened state of consciousness, with Sacred Consciousness. It doesn’t have to be music that we would normally listen to. Depending on what you normally listen to, I would say that it usually isn’t anywhere close to what we listen to in our daily lives. Music is often used as a kind of wallpaper, muzak, or elevator music. A lot of the time we aren’t even aware that there is music on, and we use her in the background for work or for relaxation. Of course, we can also consciously enjoy listening to music like pop, jazz, or classical. We can head bang to heavy metal or dance the night to house music. All of these different genres are linked to a specific type of experience, or the lack thereof (such as with musical wallpaper).

For the Sacred Voyage we are looking for exactly the opposite of these well-worn paths. We are looking for the quiet paths, the side roads and the byways. No top-forty music, but unknown, emotionally charged

music. Music that moves you, makes you sad, gives you strength, or makes you happy: music that brings you to life. If you have never made a Voyage, and want to know what the music in the Sacred Dimension can do with you, imagine the funeral of a dear friend or family member and the exact moment that their favorite song is played. There is a big chance that this experience moved you to the core, and that is exactly what music can do with and for us. Our soul is a string that is struck by the music, and in its vibration is either deeply moved, brought into ecstasy, or given complete peacefulness. These are feelings which in the Sacred Dimension appear to be very close to each other. During the Voyage the music becomes like a sacrament, something which encourages us to let go of our control even more and to go deeper into ourselves. This means that the music of the Voyage fulfills a different purpose than that of the shamanic drum during a trance journey. The drum helps the shaman enter a state of ecstasy, and at the same time makes sure that he maintains contact with the daily reality. The music which we prefer helps us to completely let go the bond with daily reality and surrender to the experience instead.

Our Voyage has a few characteristic stages, stages that are more or less experienced in the same way by most people. On average, a Sacred Voyage takes somewhere between four and eight hours. Sometimes it's longer, sometimes it's shorter. The first hour of our Voyage is usually characterized by confusion, discomfort, and resistance. The entheogenic substance is usually at its most potent from the second to the fifth hour. After this the effect gradually diminishes, depending on the substance, the dosage, and the user. I am describing the general characteristics here, so remember that they can end up being quite different for each individual. When you have made several Voyages you can usually get a pretty good picture of how Voyaging is for you. With these global data and our own experience, we can choose the music that fits and even put it in a certain order.

I myself always choose an opening song with a strong spiritual charge. My consciousness, or that of another if I'm Guiding, knows then that it is going on a Voyage. I always accompany the first stage, which is characterized by resistance, with restful, loving, guiding music. Instrumental songs specked here and there with nature sounds. No rhythms, but dreamy, ethereal sounds which invite us to let go. The first

hour we can often be irritated by the music because we experience a great tension within ourselves, and then project it outwards. 'New Age' music is pretty good for this stage, but when choosing it make sure you have a critical ear: there is a lot of bad quality music in this genre. A few ethereal synthesizer sounds as a foundation and you can easily fill up a New Age CD. And you can just as easily be irritated by this kind of 'music'. Listen ahead of time to the quality of the performance, her intention, and the sound quality. You are extremely sensitive in Sacred Consciousness, and your hearing improves enormously. You simply cannot ignore when it is inauthentic music, or technically inferior music, especially because this can have negative consequences for the Voyage. Your conscious choice of music will pay itself back here twofold.

When the Voyage is in full swing, starting from about two hours in, we can put on some music with more 'character'. Not music that we normally listen to, but music that surprises us and speaks to our imagination. Literally so, because in this stage of the Voyage the music can call up awe inspiring images. We literally get swallowed up by the music. Make sure that it is still serene music, but give it some more character with, for example, more inspiring and powerful melodies. In this stage of the Voyage, when the Voyager starts to feel comfortable, the Guide can put on some more stimulating and rhythmic music. Music from across the world can help the Voyager receive different visions and to temporarily leave his earthly 'being' behind. Native chanting and drumming, African drums, Celtic music: music that doesn't bring us back to our daily consciousness. Music that tells a fantastic story and that is made with heart and soul. I personally love film scores because they are made to support imagery. There is a lot of beautifully orchestrated and performed music that calls up wonderful images, even if you listen to it from your normal consciousness. She becomes magical in Sacred Consciousness and reveals a fantasy world. As a Guide you should pay special attention to the Voyager's reactions: as long as she is in her own story, you've chosen the right music.

From the fourth to the eighth hour the intensity of the experience can gradually diminish, so that the Voyager enters another stage, the stage of return and integration of the experience. She has usually gone through the toughest moments by now and has processed a lot of emotional energy. The last stage of the Voyage often feels like a heavenly ecstasy,

and sometimes a bit sad or tired. To guide this stage of the Voyage we choose quiet, heavenly music. Etheric female voices or choirs, combinations of synthesizer sounds and real instruments. Music which brings us into rapture and in restfulness and harmony helps us to enjoy this stage of the Voyage and to slowly begin the return Voyage.

Sometimes I DJ with vinyl records in a dance hall, and the trick is to feel what the people want, what the 'vibe' is. As a Guide of the Voyage we have a similar role: our choice of music helps to color the progression of the Voyage. Make sure you agree ahead of time what kind of music you'll be playing. A sign from the Voyager that they don't like the music in their current stage should be enough to get the Guide to put something else on or even to turn the music off for a while. Sometimes silence is an excellent companion to the Voyage.

Technological possibilities have grown immensely over the years. First of all, we can compile and burn our own Cd's, so that we can put our favorite songs in order. The arrival of MP3 players like the I-pod means that we can program the music for the entire Voyage. If you work with an MP3 format make sure that you write the song files into high quality copies. The lower quality files miss parts of the audio spectrum, which can be extremely counterproductive for a Voyage.

The only thing left to say about this is that everything which I've written is just a rough guideline, and is certainly not meant to limit your own experience in any way. Determine for yourself how you can optimize your experience and explore the Sacred Dimension in your own way. There is still so much undiscovered land to be explored!

24 **Breath- and Bodywork**

More and more people are learning skills in different forms of healing, such as shamanism, aura reading and healing, and Reiki. Next to that there are more people among us who are practicing yoga and meditation. Making a Sacred Voyage or Guiding it doesn't require your acquaintance with such forms of healing or awakening. It does make Voyaging easier, because you are already used to focusing your attention on your inner processes. Turning our attention within is an art that we can all learn, and everything that helps to do it is welcome. In my experience, once people start Voyaging, they automatically find a need for more development and discovery of what lives within them. If and how you do that is up to each of us. As long as the methods we practice expand our perception instead of diminishing it, we are on the right path! The Sacred Voyage, in this sense, can be perfectly combined with the paths of many different forms of therapy and healing. It forms a wonderful acceleration and deepening of our process. You can also discover that processing your old emotions almost automatically means that you become more peaceful on the inside. The Voyage supports us in our ability to meditate (to come in to our center). The other way around doesn't work, waiting for all our stuck emotions to be brought to Light. Whoever wants to meditate in this state of being is torturing themselves. When we try to meditate while actually being full of stored up pain, we play the same role as our teachers and parents who encouraged us to be quiet and disciplined, just as the Eastern disciplines still preach to us. Have you ever wondered why the suicide rate in Japan is so absurdly high? Breathwork, the freeing of emotions, is much more effective here. It automatically creates restfulness from within, and is usually much more authentic than the appearance of being impervious which is so reminiscent of our youthful survival strategies, and which so many spiritual disciplines preach. Follow your own heart and feel what fits best with you.

Let us take a look at how we can expand our role as Voyager or as Guide with breath- and bodywork. We'll start with breathing itself. Breathing, as each of us gets to experience for ourselves, is our most vital function. We can easily go without food for a few weeks, or go without drinking for a few days, but we can't go without oxygen for more than a few minutes. Breathing is living. Yoga teaches us above all to breathe right

with breathing instructions or Pranayama. We'll leave these techniques for what they are with regards to the Sacred Voyage, because we are actually trying to let go of control. Many Yogic exercises are aimed at controlling our emotions. However, its traditions have passed down a very handy breathing technique for the Voyage, the so-called Bastrika. In the Western world we also call this way of breathing hyperventilating. Stan Grof has developed a method that is related on many points to the Sacred Voyage, a method which he calls Holotropic breathing.³⁵ Whatever we call it, this way of breathing is familiar to all of us; it's how we breathe when we experience powerful emotions. When we are frightened, our fear cuts off our breathing. When we are furious, we yell or gasp for air. When we're sad, we are often short on breath. When we experience joy we choke with laughter. Emotions do all kinds of things to our breathing. Breathtaking! And the other way around, our breathing does all kinds of things to our emotions. Here we find a well-kept secret, one which the yogi's have kept for us.

During our Voyaging with an entheogenic substance, the trick is to let our breathing be natural and then to follow her. This way we learn to observe what is going on inside us. However, we can also make our Voyage without an entheogenic sacrament, by using chaotic, superficial, and quick breathing. This way we pump a lot of oxygen into our blood, making us a little dizzy, and perhaps even making us feel like we are going to faint. This method doesn't push away our emotions, but actually looks them up. It builds up pressure beneath that which wants to manifest itself. This intensive breathing also builds up an enormous amount of Prana, or Ki, in our body, depending on how long we continue breathing (breathing sessions on average are around one and a half to two hours long). If you apply this method, you are greatly helping your emotional body, and are allowing the emotions to be released. Often times these are different emotions which conflict with each other, like fear, anger, and sadness. This manifests itself by, for example, being ashamed of your anger, afraid of your sadness, sad about your fear; in short, a knot of emotion. As long as you keep your consciousness burdened with these emotions, they will keep on tormenting you from within. If you realize that these emotions are usually just a sign that you are experiencing pain deep down in your inner world, pain which is linked to certain memories, then you can learn to give those emotions space so that they can complete their outward journey. It can feel like

you're going insane, as if there is no end to all the raging feelings. Living through them and truly feeling them is the way to healing. It takes courage to give all those feelings the space they need, but once you've gotten through them, you can feel enormously liberated. This experience can make it all the more easy the next time that you let yourself go and make space in yourself.

It is our Guides' task to make us aware of our breathing and, if necessary, to ask us to keep breathing and to stimulate us to give space to the feeling that wants to manifest itself. Simple sentences like: 'you can let go now' or 'give it some space' will help with this and can help the Voyager get past her fear and shame. If you can see that the Voyager is still struggling with her own emotions, you can invite her to start faster or 'chaotic' breathing again. Show that you support the Voyager in her process, and then leave the initiative to her again. She will have to face her pain on her own strength and learn to give it space. That, in the end, is the first step on the road to healing: the inner decision to be healed. Only once we give our inner life enough space do we create space for our soul to find its way back and to express itself in our emotional life. Once the emotional burden has been released, our breathing will automatically become 'normal' again. Until that moment we can keep breathing in the chaotic 'Bastrika' and therefore release all the tension on the surface. A major outburst like that is usually followed by a mystical experience, the uniting of our soul with the whole world, feelings of ultimate love and other barely describable manifestations. This is the reward that we get for facing our pain and making space for expressing her. Furthermore, we often get messages and insights which help us with our healing process after bringing the pain and the sadness to Light.

Living through the pain is the only way to true healing, no matter what popular therapeutic and spiritual methods might try to make us believe. Of course our ego would like to believe that if we want to be happy, all we have to do is think that we're happy and it will happen. It sells. You can spend many years entertaining yourself with books and trainings and in the end still have to undergo the process that lies at the foundation of your healing: feeling all your old pain. And thereby creating space for new life. The space to breathe. If we give our emotions space and give priority to the messages that they bring us, we can also listen to the message that the yogis bring us: by breathing deeper, holding in our

breath for three seconds and then calmly breathing out again, we increase our energy and we greatly improve the quality of our life. We usually only use about thirty to seventy percent of our lung capacity, so that our energy levels stay low.

For the Voyage it's not so much about learning different breathing techniques as about being able to clear the emotional energies from our belly, chest, throat, back, head, arms, legs, or any other body part. Once we let those energies go, we create space in ourselves and pranayama becomes a joyful practice. Use your breath wisely and let her help you to improve your quality of life.

Aside from the work of Stan Grof, I have also learned a lot from Nourriet Okken. I was allowed to stay at her beautiful estate Monepiat in France for a Lightpoint week. I learned from her that emotions shouldn't just be brought to Light, but that they have to be brought to the right address. First you breathe strongly and build up the tension. Then enter the vulnerable child's consciousness, and relive the things that have been bothering you all your life. Then, with a carpet beater, take out your anger on the cause of your pain by beating a pillow. It really frees you! Nourriet's book is called 'The Liberating Power of Emotions'. I recognized my own ideas in a lot of her work, and when I read that this psychotherapist – who has more than thirty years of experience in increasing the depth and speed of her own growth has been using Ayahuasca for more than ten years – I made the decision to learn about 'emotional management' from her. Admittedly, it feels quite strange to be hyperventilating with five other people while being accompanied by speakers blasting opera music, then to transform into a little kid and scream, puke, go crazy with a carpet beater and to cry. The most important thing, in any case, is that I learned to get my bottled up emotions moving. I learned from Nourriet that a simple finger in my throat and the related act of throwing up are a miraculous relief from nauseating emotions. The fact that nothing but air usually comes up doesn't matter; what matters is the movement from inside to outside. When you Voyage, buy yourself a bucket, a carpet beater, and some tissues. But the most important investment is in your 'thinking'. That is where you make the decision to give yourself the space to bring all your emotions to Light and to express them.

As Guides we can apply body work when the Voyager is physically getting into a rut and is in need of our help. When our emotional energy is released, enormous forces are released which our bodies can barely contain. It's usually our unconscious tendency to control these forces instead of letting them flow which causes blockages. If you are familiar with one of the forms of healing or bodywork, then you can use your techniques to help the Voyager get their energy in motion. Sometimes encouragement is enough, but sometimes we need to use our hands to undo blockages or to give some of our own energy. Always ask the Voyager for permission first, and approach her carefully. Realize that her Inner Teachers are already at work with her, and do not block that path by distracting the Voyager or by leading her away from her process. The main rule is not to use any energies that can interfere with the process. In order to release tension, it often has to be increased first. Invite the Voyager to increase the tension and to exaggerate. Applied bodywork can help with that, by supplying the area in question with extra tension with your hands. Invite the Voyager to do the same and to increase the tension in that area, so that she can eventually release it.

There is still a lot to be discovered, that much is certain. For the beginning Voyagers and Guides I would recommend limiting breathwork and bodywork to that which seems intuitively necessary in the moment. If you get more experienced together and get to know the way through the Sacred Dimension, you can of course keep exploring with your own approach. The Voyage is a diving board to other dimensions, not a limiting framework. It is a diving board with a safety net, and the safety net is the method itself. As long as we, as Guides, are at the service of the Voyager, and the Voyager surrenders to the process of emotional release, we are Voyaging safely. This should be our first priority. Once we are on the way to healing, we can enter the Sacred Dimension for other reasons, such as for shamanism or for healing others. But let us begin by thinking of ourselves, before we begin to help others. That is not egoism, but self-preservation, and the healthiest way to become a powerful human being. And as you may know, it is usually the most powerful people who become powerful healers!

Breathwork as preparation for the big Voyage

Breathwork is an excellent way to prepare for a Sacred Voyage with an entheogenic substance. Think of it as a miniature Sacred Voyage. The suggested set and setting, as with Loving Guidance, are the same. The choice of music that I describe below is a little different, with an emphasis on evocative music; music that can help us with emotional breakthroughs. Instead of taking an entheogenic sacrament, we are now using something that is freely available to us in limitless amounts: oxygen. By breathing faster and deeper, and breathing in more than out, and if we surrender to the experience by daring to let go, we automatically enter Sacred Consciousness. During the one to two hour session we keep breathing in a heightened tempo until we feel an emotional breakthrough coming on. Then our unconscious usually takes over and breathes for us. Once we have experienced the breakthrough, have expressed our emotions, and have more or less returned to waking consciousness, we can continue again with the deeper, quicker breathing, so that we can continue with our liberation process. We don't have to go looking for specific emotions. They are there stored away in our bodies, waiting to be freed. We only have to give space to them and their expression, without filtering the experience.

Do not underestimate the power of this ancient breathing technique. It can release an incredible force. You should preferably do it together with someone with whom you regularly take turns Guiding, or participate in a group session led by experienced guides.

We can also apply breathwork when we make or Guide a Sacred Voyage with an entheogenic sacrament. If we are blocked and haven't reached 'the other side', the Sacred Dimension, for some time, or if we get stuck in the fear of facing ourselves, we can breathe faster and deeper so that the experience becomes possible after all. Be modest in your use of this technique, because the combination of the entheogen and the powerful breathing can double the impact and create an extraordinarily intense experience.

Music and Breathwork

One of the powerful foundations on which Holotropic breathing is based is the use of evocative music. Sessions usually last from one to two hours. It is common to begin a session with stimulating music that gets

the breathers – sometimes from five to twenty in number – to get their accelerated breathing going. Once the process has been started and heavy emotions are coming to Light, a transition is made to powerful, supporting music. The intense choir music of composers such as Carmina Burana or Carl Orff, Native American songs, powerful orchestral music; anything to support the intensity of the emotions and to make sure that the participants feel open enough to express them. In the last stage of integration, once the heaviest emotions have passed, a transition can be made to music that touches the soul, music that is serene and inspiring.

25 The Art of Divination

Divination, or soothsaying, is an excellent technique for loosening up our consciousness and tuning in to the Sacred Dimension. Divination is not just catching a glimpse of the future; it is mostly the expanding of our boundaries and the seeking out of possibilities beyond what we already know. One of the accompanying aspects of this practice is that we often get to see the events that are going to play out in the future ahead of time, also known as prognostication or divination. There are many ways to practice divination. We can seek counsel from psychics, witches, or wiccans, but we can also do it ourselves. We can use a pendulum, or the clouds. Something that may be easier to start with is working with oracle cards. The Tarot cards are perhaps the most famous. The origins of this ancient oracular game are unknown. The Tarot is full of occult meaning and it tells us a lot about who we are, what we can grow towards, and what is getting in our way. Her Chinese counterpart, the I-Ching, or *Book of Changes*,³⁶ is based in Taoism and is equally brimming with magic and occult messages. The origins of this book are also unknown. Whether you believe in them or not, both of these oracles are full of esoteric wisdom. If you consult one of them, the following rule is in order: the more specific and directed your question is to you and your immediate environment, the clearer the answer will be. Asking the right question is an art, because you can learn to tune in to the Field (Chapter 40 – The Field). This Field stretches out far beyond your body. You have to tune in very well so that you don't get a flooded by a chaos of information. In Chapter 39, on Clear Perception, you will read more about the phenomenon of tuning in. You can ask the oracle to make things clear for you, such as: 'why is this or that happening to me, or what can I learn from this situation'. You can also ask which direction you should take, what is blocking you, and how best to proceed in a certain situation. Make the question specific to that situation and a surprise will await you. Asking the question is itself a magical process. It means that you are already indicating that you take your own development and the Field seriously, so that it becomes 'charged' or 'potent' enough to work. Taking this energy seriously is the foundation for learning how to divine, no matter what technique you use. It is the same technique that we are going to use to enter Sacred Consciousness. Here we also ask our higher power if it is willing to help us and give us insight into ourselves. The Source which we tune in to is the same

whether we are working with the I-Ching, the Tarot, or simply tuning in to ourselves. It is our attitude, making ourselves small and learning how to receive, which determines how easy it is for us to get new information from the past, the present, or the future. Nowadays there are several different oracular games that work very intuitively, for which you don't need any prior knowledge, and which can give you a lot of insight into yourself and your place in the world. An example of such a game is the Shamanic Oracle, the Bird Oracle, the Elfish Oracle, and the Inner Child Oracle. Especially the last two resonate inside us and awaken our Inner Child, which is an excellent preparation for a Voyage. If you are going on a Voyage you can consult one of these oracles, so that you will already be well attuned to your own inner process.

26 The Right Question

There is an old wisdom that goes like this: 'the right question has more gunpowder in it than a thousand answers'. If we enter our Sacred Consciousness and put ourselves into the here and now, we can be in constant awe of the world. Awe is nothing more than giving our childlike side the space to wonder what is happening around it in the world. The opposite of awe is the adult way of being 'certain', in the sense that we no longer question things but believe that we already have all the answers. 'Being certain' is statically perceived information, which cannot move anymore; and like anything that is standing still, it is vulnerable to natural decay. In order to keep perceiving our world with awe, we have to keep giving up our worldview and make space for a new one. Take this childlike paradox to heart and start walking on the path of awe:

'I'm certain that I don't know anything for certain!'

Earlier on I already showed that this way of perceiving is linked to our Inner Child: if we learn that letting go and exploring is safe and trusted and even fun, we can loosen our rigid hold on reality and start to experiment. We can expand our consciousness and our field of perception and focus on direct observation. We can use our childlike awe to see the world as a great new playground that is vibrating with unexplored possibilities. We can also turn our awe inwards and explore ourselves. As soon as we start to wonder and to question, our energy gets into motion. As children we often learned the opposite. How often were our questions brushed off with: 'you'll learn that when you're older?' or 'you're too young for that', or worse, with answers that we had to take for granted but that made absolutely no sense? As children, our consciousness is still unrestricted. We dare to ask the Big Questions, without asking for a directly fitting answer. This way we could probably live just fine with the fact that we don't know what awaits us after death, even though we were curious about it. In contrast to the world of adults, which cannot prove that we are reborn, that we transform, or that we continue living, and therefore just stops asking questions altogether. Or stops asking the right questions. The right question, when put in a childishly simple and curious way, could be: what happens to us when we die? Asking this question with the intent to go exploring and actually learning the answer brings a whole truckload of energy into motion. Just

like the questions: 'what is my heart', 'do I have a soul', 'where do I go when I sleep', 'is there life beyond this planet', and above all, 'who am I?'. This last question turns our energy inwards. With this question, the contours of our consciousness become clearer, and while this question may never be fully answered, she brings an endless stream of energy into motion. The question 'who am I' is compared in Zen Buddhism to looking at a river. The river seems to be the same river all the time, but every time you refresh your field of view, you are looking at new water. The same is true for our consciousness. She is like an endless river that is coursing through its weaving banks. She starts up in the mountains, where the spring melts the snow, and ends up in the big oceans, where she unites with all the other rivers. We can look at the river in endlessly different ways, but we can never truly capture her essence. Every time we look, she is different. And still she is familiar enough to determine that she is the same.

When you make your Voyage, you can prepare yourself by taking counsel and asking yourself what truly occupies your mind, what you want to discover about yourself and your place in the world. Open yourself up to the answer, and the right question will come to you as if by magic. The right question, whether you ask it of an oracle like the I-Ching, or of yourself and your unconscious, usually starts with how, what, or which. How can I get more out of life? How can I get to know myself better? What do I need to do to discover my path? Which people are helping me on my path? Which job should I take? Once you learn how to ask questions again, the world will become one great vibrating answer. 'Whoever asks, gets ignored', is one of the mindless expressions of Dutch culture. Even though you may have learned otherwise, just remember: questions are free! Are you ready for the answers? I end this chapter with a saying from the world of magic:

'Be careful what you ask for, you might get it!'

More than anything else, entering alternate states of consciousness is something that we should do in full awareness and with free will. This way, the different worlds or dimensions stay separate from each other and we can open and close the portals as we see fit. Shamans Voyage through their magical trance journeys with the accompaniment of a drum or a rattle. It marks the transition to the under or the upper world. During the trance journey the sonorous beat of the drum forms the connection to the here and now. If the drum starts beating faster near the end of the Voyage, it is the sign for the shaman to return and to transform his dual consciousness into one consciousness, and to return to his body in the here and now. The drum is a ritual instrument which clearly delimits the different states of consciousness. Other states of consciousness that reveal themselves to us spontaneously are day dreams, or falling asleep and entering dream consciousness.

The transition to other realities or dimensions is best marked with rituals. We can use ancient rituals from religious or mystical traditions, or we can work with our own set of rituals. Existing rituals are often more powerful, because they already form a field of consciousness, or morphic resonance, as Rupert Sheldrake calls it. However, it could also be that certain customs call up bad memories and therefore work contrarily. Decide for yourself what feels right. To get into the 'right mood', resonating with Sacred Consciousness, I will give you a number of suggestions of rituals that I use myself when I Voyage or when I Guide someone else's Voyage. I always start with playing music, esoteric music that stimulates my higher consciousness. By tuning in to this kind of music I automatically enter a meditative state of being. I also work with a set of ritual instruments such as the Tibetan bell, singing bowls, Shantis, rainmakers, rattles, and drums. By playing these instruments or listening to them, I bring myself and others into a different vibration. More so than with recorded music, the instruments bring special vibrations into the air. Electrical lighting is switched off, the curtains are closed, and I turn on some candles. To clear the space and purify its energy, I light a coal and place some dried sage on it, which gives off a pleasant, extraordinary scent. Depending on my needs I might burn some incense with it as well. I pick out a precious stone that I will keep with me during the Voyage, or that I will give to the Voyager that I am

Guiding. Rose quartz for the heart, amethyst for wisdom and insight, rock crystal for purity, and turquoise for protection. There are hundreds of stones that can help us to get specific energies flowing or to block them.

In order to tune in to my intuitive self and to slow down the thinking process, I consult an oracle. That can be an oracle book, or an angel card, a Tarot spread or I-Ching. It is not so much the oracle that gives its mystical power to us, even though the concept of morphic resonance applies here as well. It is mostly the power that you put into it yourself. By asking the oracle 'how' or 'why' questions, you tune into the Field of unlimited possibilities and you open yourself up to new insights. The more specific the question is the clearer and more detailed the answer will be. Finish your ritual with a meditation in which you tune in to the cosmos. Open yourself up to receive. If you follow this ritual or others and make it to your liking, you will see that at the end of it you are already in an altered state of consciousness, just by tuning in and by opening yourself up. This way you determine when the door to the other dimensions opens and shuts again. If you want to leave this state of consciousness, close with an end ritual, such as by playing the ritual instruments again, playing some more 'Earthly' music, turning off the candles, opening the curtains, and coming back at your own pace.

If you make the Sacred Voyage with the help of an entheogenic substance, the return may take a few hours. Stay calm and wait for the substance to do its work. You will know when you have both feet on the ground again, just like you can feel when you are waking up from a deep sleep. I recommend against using a closing ritual here, because the entheogenic substance only lets you go once it has finished its job. When you are fully returned, you can still finish with a closing ritual or you can ask your Guide to do one for you.

I emphasize again that the big difference between non-ordinary or shamanic consciousness and Sacred Consciousness is that the shaman can return from non-ordinary consciousness by willpower alone, but that we can only leave Sacred Consciousness once the link between the entheogenic substance and our soul has run its course. It is just this 'obligatory' nature – we cannot leave it – that makes it necessary to use powerful rituals to protect us from our recklessness, willpower, or wrong

intentions (such as embarrassing yourself, for example). Entering the Sacred Dimension against our will can be an aggravating experience that will last from four to eight hours. With the rituals that we perform we indicate that it is our conscious intent to awaken the Deity within ourselves and to call out to our soul. This way we make our experience 'Sacred'. If we ourselves Voyage there are a few other rituals that can help us. An elaborate shower or bath is an excellent preparation for cleansing ourselves. If we have thoroughly cleaned and purified ourselves, we can put on some white clothes to indicate the goal of our Voyage: the Sacred Dimension. Most of us associate 'white' with spiritual purity, the good, wisdom, or the eternal. With our white clothing we give our experience direction, or rather, we make ourselves accessible. Accessible to our soul. White contains all the colors of the spectrum. White symbolizes the holy Light that binds us to the Source of Life. Our soul functions as a prism which, when pure, smooth, and polished, can capture and express every color that the Source of Life sends out. White clothing helps us to tune in to the Light, the power of love that will help us through the heaviest and most painful moments of the Voyage. Without love and Light, we would be hopelessly lost in the Sacred Dimension. Without shores in sight, we would wander aimlessly. With our ritually white clothing we reveal the true nature of our intent: we are ready to open ourselves to our soul, to receive the Light, and to pass it on. In other words, only use this ritual if it fits with your deepest intent. Ask your Guide if she wants to guide you in white clothes as well.

Memories

When you start your Voyage, make sure you have a few childhood pictures of yourself at different ages. Collect some pictures of your parents (then and now) and of other important people in your life (then and now). Secret Chief Leo Zeff made his clients put these pictures in a meaningful order and then look at them during their Voyage. I have used this method many times and the results are amazing. Often times a whole era in your life comes to life again, and important events and memories come to mind along with the accompanying emotions so that you can live through them after all. This way you can finish the incomplete gestalt, the movement towards the outside, and free yourself of your pain.

You can do the same with music, by collecting music that fit with you at a particular moment in your life. Music that brought you a message at the time, music with a particular charge. She can help to transport you back to a time from which you still have emotions left over, emotions that need to be lived through and cleaned up.

28 **Entheogenic Sacraments**

Entheogenic, or mind-expanding substances, have been playing an extremely important role in the development of our species since the beginning of time. In his wonderful book *The Food of the Gods*,³⁷ Terence McKenna describes quite convincingly that we humans have learned our skills, such as communicating with words, by using magic mushrooms. The development of speech, according to the author, coincides with the time that humans started holding cattle. And it is cattle which produces the manure on which magic mushrooms love to grow. Whether it concerns the Vedic, Shamanic, or Eleusinian traditions: all of them made use of the entheogenic plants and mushrooms. The expanding of our mind is intimately connected to our humanity, and it has formed us into the most powerful species on Earth, a species that is conscious of her own ancestry. A species that can destroy itself and all other life forms by hitting a single button.

Let me give you a shortened introduction to the history of the mind-expanding substances that are available to us Voyagers. For more detailed information I will have to suggest other sources, because this is not a book about mind-expanding substances but about how we can use them in an especially beneficial way. I am convinced that all of the substances that I recommend to you are exceptionally safe to use, given that they are used in the right conditions and in the right amount. If we take the use of mind-expanding substances out of the realm of shadows and provide good information to the public about the types, the dosage, set, and setting, then there don't have to be any accidents. Accidents always happen out of ignorance. In order to expand the mind in a magic way you need knowledge and experience, just as you do when driving a car. You have to train and grow into that as well. You wouldn't want to see millions of drivers without licenses on the road! The same goes for consciousness expansion. The right knowledge and insight into the substance and the processes that it can beget in you can greatly influence the outcome. Your image of it is essential. As an example I will again take the method of the Sacred Voyage. The Voyage is aimed at taking you all the way, under the influence of an entheogenic sacrament, without conscious direction and with a total loss of control. Our Western image of this is that you aren't human any more without control. A doctor would declare you to be 'mentally ill' and might try to bring you

around with some antidote. And this while you are Voyaging in order to lose control and surrender yourself to the Deity within. In other words, we do not yet have a proper image of it in our society, which looks upon it as 'scary' or 'strange'. Shamans know better, and they know the power of ecstasy. The ecstasy that brings us back to our source.

Prepare yourself, read about the power and the potencies of the substances, let yourself be Guided by someone with the same or with more knowledge and experience than you about the consequences of the Voyage, and make sure that you do it in the right circumstances (setting). Make sure that you are given enough space, as Voyager or as Guide, to experience that which comes to light, no matter how strange or unreal it may seem. What entheogenic substances teach you is always good for your development, regardless of the sometimes unusual, even terrifying or bizarre ways in which they express themselves. Let yourself be carried along by the ecstasy, enjoy the ride, and with the curiosity of a Child, discover your true nature, who you are meant to be. Play as if you are playing a computer game, a quest, where everything that you can imagine is possible. Let yourself be guided by ecstasy!

Ayahuasca (Yage, Daime)

Uses in the Sacred Voyage: *“Awaken the Goddess within yourself. Seek out Light and healing. Healing from every conceivable mental and physical illness and addiction, purify the four energy bodies, open the third eye, telepathic contact, clairvoyance, feeling of oneness. In contact with the world of souls. Ayahuasca awakens a predominantly feminine energy”.*

Ayahuasca is the umbrella term for the brew that is also known as 'the little death'. It literally means the 'vine of the soul', named for the jungle plant that constitutes one of the most important ingredients of the brew. There are dozens of different names, and just as many different ingredients, ways of preparation, and rituals. I could write a whole book about the divine drink from the Amazon alone. But I will limit myself to the information that I believe is useful or necessary for a Sacred Voyage which is done with the help of Ayahuasca.

Ayahuasca is one of the most powerful entheogens known to man. Her qualities are born from the two-fold interaction of the brew, which consists of two (or more) components. It has to contain, at the very least, a plant or seeds that contain MAO-inhibitors, and a plant that contains DMT. This is the Banisteriopsis Caapi, which can also be substituted by an equally harmal-alkaloid Peganum Harmala (Syrian Rue). The first component of the brew, with the MAO-inhibiting function, ensures that the second component can take effect and induce visions. She does this by temporarily breaking down certain enzymes in the stomach. The second component, the DMT-containing plant, is either the Psychotria Viridis or the Mimosa Hostilis. Shamans discovered the miraculous combination of these two components thousands of years ago. Still, it is a mystery how they came to discover it.

The heart is the core of who we are as human beings. It is the nodal point that connects the lower chakras, which define us as individuals, and the upper chakras, which bind us with others and with all life forms. Our own personal identity versus the formless connection to others, with the heart as the epic center.

Our heart knows only one substance which truly feeds her and that is love. Giving and receiving love in abundance, that is what makes our

hearts rejoice. Recent research has shown that our greatest fear is not to be loved by those people who are most important in our environment.³⁸ Having our hearts be isolated from those around us is what makes us sick and afraid. Ayahuasca can open the heart like no other. Full of love, it shows us how we close ourselves off to love, and it invites us to open ourselves up instead.

In the context of the Sacred Voyage, it is important for us to know that Ayahuasca is active in all energy bodies. The drink of the gods magically purifies the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual bodies. That is what makes her so powerful. This brew has the potential to heal the strongest illnesses and addictions, as can be read in countless witness testimonies.³⁹⁴⁰ I myself have been cured of my persistent addiction to cigarettes with the help of the 'vine of the soul' (Chapter 38 – Free from Addictions).

The sacred brew Ayahuasca is also called a 'plant teacher'. It is also represented as a Goddess with her own voice, who brings you to the source of your illness or addiction and – if you are open to it, in a mild manner, and if you are not willing to listen, in a harsh manner – what you are doing to yourself. Drinking the brew often leads to vomiting and diarrhea. It's as if the brew is coursing through your veins and removing everything that is impure and undesired. Sometimes this is experienced as the negativity that you tolerate from others, which then has to come out, other times it's your own feelings that you've suppressed and locked away in your body. Ayahuasca gets them all moving again, that much is certain!

Nowadays, Ayahuasca is regularly used in a religious context. The experience is often directed through a predominantly Christian setting, such as the Santo Daime movement and the União do Vegetal. The origin of the drink and her meaning, however, can be traced back much further than contemporary movements attribute to her. We can find these origins in shamanism. Awakening the Inner Deity is one of the many potential outcomes of drinking this divine brew. Miraculous healings, clairvoyance, and telepathic contact with living or deceased souls are other possibilities that can be unlocked with Ayahuasca. The setting of the Santo Daime, for example, is a great way to unlock religious feelings and to develop a sense of community. In a beautiful and safe ritual there

is much singing and dancing. In my experience, this is also its limitation. For those who enter the Sacred Dimension for healing from old traumas, I recommend the setting of the Voyage, where you can totally surrender yourself to the emerging process. Singing and dancing, I believe, are distractions from the process, just like you can distract a hurt child by shoving a toy into their hands. Away from the pain, away from the sadness. To heal in the deepest levels of your being you will have to live through those feelings and express them, so that you can finally leave them behind. Ayahuasca offers you the chance to do that, so choose wisely how you will use her. I would like to add that singing, dancing, and the energy of a group of committed people such as in Santo Daime can also have a healing effect. Listen to your own needs and open yourself to the experience that you need on your path.

Precautions

It is very important when you drink Ayahuasca that you fast ahead of time. The MAO-inhibitors require an adjusted diet that has been followed for at least three days. The combined effect of certain antidepressants and other emotion-suppressing drugs has to be avoided at all costs, as they can be life threatening. There is also a long list of other substances which can cause problems such as nausea and headaches.⁴¹

Dangerous substances:

- soporifics (sleep-inducers)
- narcotics
- migraine and allergy medicines
- antidepressants that contain selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI's), such as the weed Kanna (*Sceletium tortuosum*) and the medicines paroxetine (Seroxat), fluoxetine (Prozac), citalopram (Cipramil), fluvoxamine (Fevarin) and sertraline (Zoloft).
- cocaine
- mescaline cactus (Peyote and San Pedro)
- amphetamine (speed)
- MDMA (XTC)
- alcohol
- ephedra/ephedrine (Xtenzion, Ultra Boost, Superstacker, Ephedra Supercaps, etc.)
- pseudo-ephedrine
- macromerine
- phentermine

Substances that can cause nausea or headaches:

- processed dairy products (yogurt, sour cream, butter milk);
- old cheese, farmhouse cheese, or other unpasteurized cheeses (soft curd cheese and young cheese are permitted);
- dried and fermented sausage (salami, cervelat, corned beef, liver, etc.);
- meat, fish, and eggs that aren't fresh;
- sour herring and fish dried with salt;
- meat extracts;
- yeast products such as Marmite (bread is permitted);
- sauerkraut;
- fruit (figs, bananas, pineapple, avocados, raisins, prunes, and raspberry);
- peanuts and other nuts;
- broad beans, sugar peas, soy beans, lentils, etc.;
- soy sauce;
- LSA (morning glory and Hawaiian baby woodrose seeds);
- MDA-related herbs (sweet calamus, nutmeg);
- chocolate;
- caffeine products (coffee, tea, cola, energy drinks, etc.);
- guarana;
- ginseng;
- St. John's Wort;
- nose sprays (Vicks Sine, Prevalin, or Otrivin);
- other MAO-inhibitors.

Recommended diet:

A diet of steamed fish, rice, whole grains, fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, sesame seeds, almonds, bread, popcorn, soup, carrot juice, salads with light dressings, onions, garlic, and herbs. A few days of fasting with juice or vegetable soup is also a good preparation, and helps open you up to the experience that awaits you.

Dosage

Preparing Ayahuasca is an adventure all by itself, where you can easily imagine yourself to be a modern witch or wizard. You can make the brew of the gods yourself from the two components that you can buy in 'smartshops' in the Netherlands. Three grams of Syrian Rue or thirty grams of Banisteriopsis Caapi should be a good starting point for one person. For the second component, take thirty grams of Psychotria Viridis or nine grams of Mimosa Hostilis.⁴²

Use and Preparation

- It is important to use pure water (distilled or filtered) because the presence of too many minerals can diminish the effectiveness of the brew.
- The PH- value has to be around 4 or 5 so that the alkaloids can dissolve better. Ascorbic acid such as ground up vitamin C pills or lemon juice will do the trick.
- It is also important that the plants are ground up as finely as possible and then boiled for a few hours.
- Pour out the excess water and save it separately from the plant material.
- Add more water to the plant material and let it boil for a few more hours.
- Repeat the process until the new water no longer changes color when it boils.
- Add up all the water and let it boil down to a drinkable amount.⁴³

Effects and duration

Drinking Ayahuasca is often accompanied by nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Here the advice, again, is to follow your body. You can greatly reduce the nausea by following the dietary suggestions I provided. In any case, fasting on the day of drinking Ayahuasca will prevent a lot of misery. Take the brew in one or more stages. The first glass usually has a mild effect, because the MAO-inhibitor hasn't fully opened your body's receptivity yet. Often, the first effects are rather Ecstasy-like. You can start to sweat a lot, your stomach rumbles, in short, lots of things start to happen in your body. Ayahuasca cleans you out from the outside, and if

something has got to go it's got to go. Don't try to stop it. The effects of the first glass of Ayahuasca can get more intense after about an hour, causing colorful visions and hallucinations. Once the effects wear down, you can take a second glass. After this the Voyage can really get going, because you have already been partially cleansed and you are more open to whatever will emerge from inside. In this stage you will usually work through all of the traumas of your early youth, birth, or even previous lives. At this depth you can make real growth and healing possible, as long as you can stick with the emotions that come up. Welcome them, experience them, and express them, bring them to the Light. This way the energy will keep flowing and you won't be overwhelmed. The intensity of the Voyage can last for a few hours, and usually starts to diminish after about four hours, after which, depending on the type of Voyage you've made, you will return to a dream-like ecstasy and can recover from the Voyage you've just completed. Usually, the Voyage ends after about eight hours, and, while feeling a bit drowsy, tired, and full of love, you can recuperate from your adventure.

At the end of the ride, when the effects have passed their peak, the Ayahuasca Voyage can be extended by smoking pure marijuana. Understand that this can cause the effects of the Voyage to return with full intensity.

Follow Up

A Voyage with Ayahuasca can be very draining. It is highly recommended that you get a good rest and process everything that has happened to you. Putting your experience to paper, or making a mandala drawing or a collage can help you to integrate the lessons that you were given.

Risks

The risks of taking Ayahuasca in a Sacred Voyage-setting are minimal, as long as you keep to the dietary suggestions. The combination of certain medicines with the use of MAO-inhibitors can be fatal, so be very careful with that (or, you can see it as another reason not to use such 'medicines' any more). For the rest, Ayahuasca is an act of charity for the body, and it is extremely healthy for regular use as an ultimate

purifier of the four energy bodies. The chance of overdosing with Ayahuasca is very small, because our body spits out what it doesn't need. The chances of addiction are also minimal, because the experience of a Voyage with Ayahuasca can be *so* intense, that you'll want to spend some time recovering. Sometimes even half a year or longer. On the other hand, regular use can do little harm if you know your place in the world and have a well-developed ego so as not to disappear into a pretty fantasy world. After all, Ayahuasca is a substance for losing your addictions!

Magic Mushrooms (Shrooms, Niños Santos)

Uses in the Sacred Voyage: *“Awaken the God within yourself. Embrace the vulnerable Inner Child. Seek strength and healing. Wondrous fantasy worlds and spectacular transformations. Discover hidden esoteric knowledge. Learn the hidden secrets of life. Heal depression, burn-out, chronic fatigue and other energy crises. Heal yourself with the masculine earth energy of the magic mushroom”.*

The term magic mushrooms (also lovingly known as 'shrooms') usually connotes all different kinds of psilocybe mushroom. In reference to the Sacred Voyage I will point out the Mexican mushroom (Psilocybe Cubensis) and the Philosopher's Stone (Psilocybe Tampanensis), because these are both relatively easy to acquire in most smartshops. Their quality is usually excellent and dependably constant. There are many more entheogenic mushroom species, such as the Liberty Cap (Psilocybe Semilanceata), which grows in the wild in the Netherlands, but I will not be discussing them. Most people have trouble distinguishing different types of wild mushroom, which can of course be dangerous. Furthermore, the Mexican and the Philosophers Stone (which is actually a kind of truffle) are much easier to dose correctly. Mushrooms, in contrast to the feminine and heavenly Ayahuasca, is more masculine and Earthly (which does not mean that you can't have heavenly experiences with them!)

Precautions

Prepare yourself for the Voyage with magic mushrooms with the guidelines described in Part III. Fasting on the day of your Voyage, and eating light foods in the days before will have a positive effect on your Voyage. You will be more receptive to the experience. While magic mushrooms are popularly known as shrooms, as if they were innocent, friendly fairytale fruits, I advise you not to underestimate the effect of the Niños Santos (In Mazatec Spanish: 'the Holy Children'). The sweet and lovely effects can easily be reversed and become demonic, depending on your own mental condition (Chapter 21 – Set and Setting).

Dosage

With Mexican mushrooms you need fifteen grams of fresh mushrooms for a mild experience and thirty grams for an intense experience. If you have dried mushrooms then the amount should be one tenth of this. With truffles, or the Philosopher's Stone, eight grams will provide a mild experience and sixteen grams will give an intense experience.⁴⁴ Understand that these are average amounts, and that the effects can vary enormously depending on your earlier experiences (or lack thereof), your intent and mindset, and your own sensitivity to the substance. I once experienced that while Guiding a group of friends on their Sacred Voyage, I was convinced to eat a spoonful of the delicious soup. That single bite was enough for a heavy four hour Voyage! The same thing once happened to me with the Philosopher's Stone, which is considered to be a very mild entheogen. Just a few truffles and I was sucked deep into a fairytale world of elves! If you are going to Voyage with magic mushrooms, be prepared for surprises. Paradox?

'Expect the unexpected'!

Use and Preparation

You can eat the mushrooms raw and fresh or make a tea or soup with them (fifteen minutes slowly bringing it to a boil).

Effects and Duration

The effects of magic mushrooms usually begin with a certain kind of nausea and dizziness. This, as with most entheogenic substances, indicates the transition to another state of consciousness. Depending on several different factors, including the ones I described above, this stage can last from half an hour to an hour. After this the effects can become stronger, such as seeing colorful mandalas (Chapter 30 – The Map of the Sacred Voyage/ Transport Moments). Note that this is not an exact science. Sometimes the Voyage takes on full proportions within minutes of consuming the substance. And sometimes the Voyager experiences nothing at all! On average, the Voyage begins to really get going after about an hour, with effects lasting up to four or six hours. After this the strength of the visions and hallucinations gradually diminishes, after which the slightly drowsy Voyager is standing on both feet again.

Enriched by a beautiful experience or returned from a wild trip through the figurative roller coaster. In any case, it is a learning experience!

In order to make the Voyage more powerful, you can drink a tea made of Syrian Rue (*Peganum Harmala*) about an hour before eating the mushrooms. Note that the effects of the Voyage can be drastically more powerful and that they cannot be stopped during the Voyage. Normally speaking you can put the brakes on a mushroom Voyage by taking vitamin C or sugar (even though I advise against it in the framework of this book and the living through of your emotions, instead of escaping them). Combining the experience with this tea will almost certainly mean that you cannot run away from the experience. Heed the cautions with taking MAO-inhibitors (described above under 'Ayahuasca'). The effect of combining Syrian Rue with magic mushrooms is that the Voyage goes even deeper and awakens even more masculine energy.

The magic mushroom Voyage can be extended near the end of the ride, when the peak has been reached, by smoking pure marijuana. Take note that the effects of the Voyage can return in full intensity. Often times the intensity of the Voyage is also experienced a little differently, appearing less colorful and more philosophical.

Follow Up

In spite of the pleasantness that is ascribed to mushrooms, their effects can be pretty fierce and can really turn the world of the Voyager upside down. Take the time to let the lessons of the Little Helpers fall into place. Drink lots of water during and after your Voyage in order to cleanse your liver.

Risks

As mentioned before, the greatest risk with using magic mushrooms is in underestimating their effects. Some smartshops advertise their shrooms and truffles as if they were party drugs, but I can't really go along with this approach. The setting at a party is usually not safe, especially if the user is being confronted with his own dark sides and becomes paranoid. Psychosis and heavy depression are lurking around the corner, especially because it often concerns young users who do not yet have any reference

for the sometimes horrific material that is experienced. Mushrooms in themselves are not addictive, but at the same time can form a temporary escape from reality for some people. The effects are greatly diminished in regular use, and the Voyager usually needs a month or more to fully integrate and process the experiences of a Voyage.

Salvia Divinorum

Another entheogen that is definitely worth mentioning for our Voyages is Salvia Divinorum, or Diviner's Sage. This herb is legally available at smartshops and it is one of the most potent entheogens. The advantage of this substance is that the Voyage only takes about fifteen to thirty minutes. The downside is that the effects can be so strong that the Voyager has no idea what just happened to him. Salvia is often used by shamans as an initiatory sacrament. We can use it with the necessary respect when we can't or don't want to make a Voyage of several hours with mushrooms or Ayahuasca but still want to sniff around in the Sacred Dimension. Be warned: strong stuff!

29 **On the Voyage**

You have made the necessary preparations, have a beautiful and quiet place to make your Voyage, and have a Loving Guide to take care of you. You have prepared a question for which you honestly want to discover an answer, and have tuned in to your Voyage by meditating. You have consulted an oracle and have performed some rituals in order to make your space Sacred. You have magically enriched your drink or soup with an entheogenic substance. What now?

There is little else you can do to prepare for what awaits you. You have prepared yourself to the utmost and it is now time to open yourself up to whatever comes and to let go. Listen to the inspiring music that your Guide has put on and let yourself drift along with it. That is the best way to give your unconscious the space it needs. Don't try to speak anymore, except if you need something. Descending in consciousness, they call this, turning your attention inwards. It is quite normal that after taking your entheogenically enriched sacrament you might become nauseous, dizzy, or nervous, or all of this at the same time. This may last up to an hour. Don't panic, but stick with the experience. Feel what it's like to be nauseous. Often when you stick with it, you can sense that you are actually afraid. Insecure about what's coming. Recognize your feelings and give them space. Everything is free to be there, even your fear and your insecurity. Tell your Guide that you are afraid, and in so doing bring it to Light. Everything can be brought to Light. Your consciousness is now preparing itself to go to the 'other side'. Sacred Consciousness asks you to give up your control and to go with the flow. Trust your soul. All feelings of unpleasantness, panic, and paranoia are related to your resistance to letting go. Remember that you've chosen a path with only one direction: letting go! There is no way back now. The next few hours you will be under the influence of an entheogenic substance. Letting go is the only clue that will help you. Let Light and love shine on your path. Everything else will only hold you back. Let yourself drift along with the music, with the experience, close your eyes, and stay with the images that appear to you. You are on a Voyage and you have given yourself the opportunity to heal, to discover who you really are. Let go and feel that everything is possible in this strange world into which you have fallen. Everything you can imagine. Stop bracing yourself and let this colorful world wash over you. Experience

her and come to life on the other side, on the side where your unharmed child consciousness is waiting to be embraced by you. Become one with yourself and enjoy. You are on a Voyage, a Voyage to yourself. In the next chapter, The Map of the Sacred Voyage, I will give you some examples of the worlds that can be opened to you.

PART IV

SACRED VOYAGE

30 The Map of the Sacred Voyage

One of the most important goals of the Voyage, as I have written before, is the rediscovery of our soul. Whether we are on a path for healing, to find our calling, or to find out who we really are, all of these goals are linked to the soul. If we rediscover her and win her back for ourselves, healing and finding our calling will follow automatically. We could spend our lives overcoming every single problem that comes onto our path; or, we can dive directly to the bottom. In the deepest darkness, at the bottom of the well, we can rediscover her. That is where we will find the treasures that we seek: strength, insight, and healing. John Bradshaw⁴⁵ wrote a beautiful story that illustrates this concept. A man was locked in a cave with just enough food for one week. He was told that it was possible to escape from the cave. In the cave lay a heap of stones. High above that was a point of light. He spent the week hauling stones and building up the pile. In the end he died of exhaustion, hunger, and thirst. If he had gone exploring, he would have discovered that behind the stones, in the dark, was a passageway that led deep through the earth and finally came out into the open. This story illustrates how many of us actually live, trying to escape from our own self-made prisons. Are we like the mosquitoes and the moths who, in the middle of the night, fly into the lamp and burn up? Or are we like the fireflies, who make their own light and for whom the night is a friend in which to forage gracefully?

The Sacred Voyage continues into the dark of the night, through the shadow that most of us fear more than life and death itself. The monsters and demons that live in the shadow of our unconscious are our own creations, and we have trapped them there ourselves. The deeper we send them into the darkness, the more powerful and frightening they become. I won't deny that the demonic forces inside us can be terrifying. And I will definitely not deny that these dark forces are actually our allies. No matter how frightened we are of them, no matter how afraid we actually are of ourselves, our dark demons are the Keepers of our soul. The Sacred Voyage leads us either directly or with a detour through the shadow, and it lets us meet the forces that have been protecting us our

whole lives and which are waiting to be brought to Light so that they can rejoin us again. Even though these supernatural forces can frighten us at first, which, of course, is their job – a job that they can only leave once we approach them with love in our heart. That, after all, is what the Keepers of our soul have been waiting a lifetime for. They are waiting and keeping until we embrace ourselves with love. Until we make ourselves as small as a Child, and let them deliver the message that they are carrying inside them. It may seem as if they are trying to overpower us, terrify us, or even kill us. Whatever it is, accept it calmly and lovingly. Every resistance against whatever intention the Keeper has is resistance to our own soul and our healing and our oneness. Let the Keeper spend its fury and deliver its terrible message. No matter how painful the message, it is for you. As soon as you accept her and carry her yourself, the Keeper dissolves and hands over his power and energy to you. Only true love for yourself, the love for your own darkness, brings healing. That is the promise of your soul.

Those who study the available literature on psychedelic substances, read trip reports, or hear stories from psychonauts, will learn about the torments that can be played out in the deepest darkness of our being. The accepted opinion about the withstanding of this torment is that we must seek distraction or that we have to wait it out. I often hear and read the word 'handling' in the sense of 'it was a heavy experience but I could still handle it'. This makes the tripper the courageous thrill seeker who dares to venture into the dangerous areas of himself and can give a heroic account of his experience. Often times trippers go off alone or in a group, which can lead to exciting situations. While I can look this approach as if it were adventurous boy's literature, it is not without risks. If we trip alone or in a group, the chances are great that we will indeed have to 'handle' the situation and keep it under control. Keeping those mental forces that we have willingly called up under control can lead to greater, even uncontrollable or permanent fears, which in some cases can lead to depression, psychosis, or suicide. I realize that these risks increase the courage that the trip requires and the challenge that it presents. Sort of like the jumpers on the Pier at the Dutch coastal town of Scheveningen, who jumped into the sea from twenty meters high. When the local papers announced the death of one of the jumpers, the amount of jumpers increased by a factor of ten. And yet; freedom leads to

happiness. Each of us should be able to determine for ourselves what is good for us.

However, I distance myself and the method of the Voyage from the reckless and profane way of entering other dimensions. I find it too risky and definitely advise against it for those who have no experience yet. If we stick to the method of the Voyage and make our preparations, the chances of a positive result are much higher and the risks of any danger are much smaller. We cannot rule out danger. Just as we cannot rule out the chances of having an accident when we step into a car. Or rule out the possibility that we might die, even if we want to live. Entering Sacred Consciousness with the help of an entheogenic substance has its risks. Risks that are greatly diminished when we learn about the effects of the substance on our being. I cannot emphasize it enough: surrendering ourselves to whatever comes, no matter how ugly, endless, amazing, nasty, or repulsive, that is the way to healing. This is only the shadow side. We can also experience pure love, desire, pleasure, empathy, clarity, purity, warmth, and other heavenly feelings. The same thing goes for these feelings; we can and we have to go through them. We are not the ones, at least, not in our conscious ego, who determine what we experience or are allowed to experience in this dimension. We are guests in a strange land where our own soul determines what we will or will not experience. As far as that goes we have little to say in the Sacred Dimension. I therefore believe that entering her for a daredevil ride is an unnecessary risk. This doesn't take away from the fact that many trippers get to see the depth of their soul, surrender themselves to the experience, and are healed or at least have a wonderful experience. Every tripper, however, will recognize that these awesome experiences could only take place once they had given up control. The amazing thing is that no matter how we enter the other dimension, whether profanely, for kicks, or Sacredly, for healing and insight, we can have the same kind of experiences. In other words, the Sacred Voyage is not so much the taking of the substance as it is the way we deal with the challenges that the Voyage offers us. I will therefore draw out a map of my experiences and those of other Voyagers, so that it becomes easier for you and your Guide to recognize whereabouts you are in Sacred Consciousness. I want to repeat my recommendation, which I will keep repeating because it is so very important: undergo it, whatever it is. Undergo ultimate loneliness, undergo eternal boredom, undergo all the pain and sadness in yourself or all the pain and sadness of the world,

undergo the highest state of euphoria, of total love, undergo mystical unity, the Union Mystica and undergo it even if nothing happens at all.

I want to take this last occurrence as a starting point for exploring the different experiences that are possible in other dimensions. The map that I will draw out is only a collection of anecdotal material and is nowhere near complete. There is a multitude of unexplored experiences, so if you like you can just use the material in this book as inspiration. Stan Grof has developed a very impressive cartography of altered states of consciousness. He divides these into sensory, motor, biographical, perinatal, and transpersonal experiences. The danger of giving very detailed names to our experiences is that we end up confusing the map for the Voyage itself. That is why in this book I have chosen not to speak of 'perinatal birth matrices' and 'COEX systems', but of the emotional experience and the meaning that it can have for us when we have such an experience. I find it important to make this distinction here because it is a part of our process: it is not so much about learning what to call the things that happen to us as it is about bringing to Light (expressing the emotions) that which we experience. Emotions speak their own universal language and are experienced by people of different backgrounds, religions, or cultures in the same way. It is our systems of meaning which divide us. Expressing emotions and keeping their meaning as close to ourselves as possible, describing them in our own words instead of intellectualized and impersonal words, is an important part of our healing process. This is how we make an intimate bridge to each other, by truly sharing instead of 'talking about' it. This doesn't mean that Grof's work has nothing to offer us: it is full of very interesting and groundbreaking information. When necessary, I will borrow from his theories. For the rest you can immerse yourself in his English-language publications.

What you will experience during the Sacred Voyage is mostly connected to set and setting (Chapter 21 – Set and Setting). In terms of mindset I can point to your own sensitivity to new experiences, and the degree to which you are open to yourself. Being calm and relaxed or tense and stressed makes a world of difference. The setting in which you make the Voyage is also a great factor in determining whether or not you can let yourself go (in a trusted and safe environment) or not (in a strange, threatening environment).

Last but not least is the entheogenic sacrament itself. The golden rule here is that everybody reacts differently. It is generally accepted that the substance is a catalyst for whatever is present in your unconscious. The substance has no effect on its own, but it sets certain process into motion. In the case of the chemical LSD this is probably true. The most interesting research has been done with this substance. Substances like Ayahuasca and magic mushrooms, which we use for our Voyages, do have their own potency or charge. Some call them 'plant teachers', others compare them to gods or goddesses. More about this in (Chapter 28 – Entheogenic Sacraments). How much you need of a certain substance to enter Sacred Consciousness is different for each of us. There are people who are totally unresponsive to some substances, and there are other people – myself included – who need only a bit to get the full monty. Experience alone has the power to convert knowledge into wisdom. So prepare yourself well by reading about the substance you wish to use and research what and how it will work for you.

A Map of the Sacred Voyage

Ego

I often present myself in this book as a friend of the soul, and but not so much of the ego. However, you shouldn't think of me as an enemy of the ego. Quite the opposite. We are in great need of our ego in order to stay alive in this world. We have, after all, come here to learn and to experience, and we need our ego to do that. I think that the challenge is in expanding our consciousness and our ego strength and that having the complement of our soul's strength is a blessing for our true beauty. Only expressing the soul makes us vague and unadjusted to life on Earth, so that we want to just float upwards and away. Only expressing ego makes us greedy and afraid, and disconnects us from the magical link with everything and everybody, including ourselves, which we feel when we are whole. The connection between soul and ego, between feeling and being, is therefore the key word if not the magic word. If we can teach our dominant ego that it doesn't have to be afraid of all the feelings that are churning below the surface, then it no longer has to waste so much energy trying to suppress them and thereby make itself sick. If our ego realizes that what it is afraid of is its own shadow, and that the true pain is in suppressing that fear within ourselves, then it can learn what is truly good for us. If we connect the shortsighted and opportunistic goals of the ego to the eternal depth of our soul, we create a synergy that benefits our entire being, instead of just one of its different parts. The soul gets the experiences for which it yearns and the ego gets the love and connection that it has always missed. In spite of this magical connection, in order to find the necessary balance between both forces, we have to learn to give more space with our conscious thought by turning *off* our conscious thought during our Voyages! If we learn to see the need for this then we can learn to surrender in love to our soul, and receive the lessons and instructions that bring us to our true selves. If we restore our soul we rediscover the compass that our wandering ship needs so badly. Or, as Winnie the Pooh says so eloquently when he's lost his way home: 'if we just stop looking, maybe then we'll find the way back home'. To find our destination, we will have to use our conscious thought to stop looking, and to surrender to the power that our blueprint already contains, the power of our soul. If our soul is wounded, it means that we have learned with our conscious thinking, our ego, that only certain

aspects of ourselves are allowed to be expressed and that the rest stays behind in safer waters. With that, we also leave our compass behind, so that we can easily spend a lifetime living without direction. It is our Sacred task to reassure the mutineering crew and to make a team out of them that can sail the great oceans and withstand all storms. Ships are safe at anchor, it is said, but they are built to sail.

Nothing Happens

One of the most frustrating events that can happen during a Voyage is that 'nothing' happens. The sacrament that you take always needs time to do her work, and the wait for it to begin is always exciting. When will something happen? Or: is anything going to happen? In general, you could say that the less pure you live, the more sensitive you are to the effects of the entheogenic substance. A regular user or addict of coffee, tobacco, sugar, chocolate, tea, alcohol, drugs, lots of food, television, work, and other 'delicacies', is likely to be much less responsive to an entheogenic substance, and will usually need more of the substance to notice its effects. Our pain threshold is a good indicator. Are you able to perceive pain? Are you open to subtle bodily signals, or do you only notice them once they are in an advanced state? Mental or physical blockages also determine the effectiveness of the substance. The more blocked, the more we need of a substance in order to experience her effects. It's comparable to your sensitivity to alcohol: if you can drink a lot before being drunk, then your body is less sensitive. Nevertheless, we cannot completely control whether or not an entheogenic substance will have effect. It could be that all the conditions are ideal and that you are sensitive and receptive to the substance, and still nothing happens. Nothing at all. I can't say anything more sensible about this than that it might not be the right moment for you. The Voyage isn't called 'Sacred' for nothing: if it's time, and you are ready for it, you will automatically get the experience that you need. Having faith in this and following your soul will help to open you up and to tune in to that which is truly good for you. Sometimes our ego tries to enforce a particular experience, or our environment tries to get us to jump into the deep end: have faith that the sacrament will give you what you need. You can read more about the preparation for the Voyage in Part III. If you follow this method and you prepare for the Voyage for at least a week ahead of time, the chances are good that you will be attuned to an optimal experience. Learning to

become aware of your own sensitivity or toughness is an important process in the Sacred Voyage. Accepting yourself as you are and the way you react will open doors for you.

Physical Symptoms

No matter which sacraments we use on your Voyage, we are pretty much guaranteed to experience physical symptoms. Whatever happens, it is important that we follow the natural movements of our body. The first signs that the substance is working are usually clammy hands, a strange sensation in our stomach, faster breathing, and a faster and more intense heart beat. Tightness of the chest and nausea usually follow. We break out in a sweat and get either too hot or too cold. We often get a tingly feeling in our head, as if something is trying to take control of us. That tingling feeling increases its hold over our head and expands further through our body. Sometimes we get acute diarrhea or we have to vomit. Whatever it is, follow the movement. It could be that vomiting removes the active substances from our body, but the healing movement has already been made. Also, if our body indicates that it needs movement or stretches of a certain type, wants to dance, or just sit tight, lie down, and relax: follow her. The physical 'inconveniences' are a part of the Voyage. As soon as you learn to accept them as a part of your purification and healing process, you can start to welcome them. Whatever you feel, turn your attention towards it. The feeling isn't announcing itself for nothing. Every feeling you experience, whether mental or physical, has a message to deliver and is a reflection of our 'being'. Every feeling offers us the chance to penetrate deeper into our consciousness. Direct your focus within and face the discomfort and the pain. This is why I advocate a safe and trusted environment. It will be much easier for you to turn your attention inside and to feel everything that's happening inside you. Shame will play a much smaller part in your own trusted environment, if you dance or throw up for example. The physical discomfort is usually at its peak in the first hour of the Voyage. Every time we descend deeper into ourselves, new physical, emotional, and mental energy is freed up. Our body can react to that with certain movements, such as vibrations or convulsions, fast breathing, or the sensation of the throat being squeezed shut. Our body is usually given a firm going over during the Voyage and all we have to do is to let go of our control and let whatever happens happen. The only thing between between us and our healing in this

dimension is us. Welcome pain and discomfort and try to see that they belong to the healing process. Seen in that light they become allies and the signs of true healing. Be thankful and accept whatever happens to you. Everything that happens to us in this dimension is a gift.

Time and Space

One of the first characteristics that is widely associated with the use of an entheogenic substance is the loss of our sense of time and space. These two characteristics are integral parts of normal consciousness. Our conscious ego constantly uses time and space to perform its reality checks. In Sacred Consciousness, however, our ego has no grip on either of them. One second of Earth time can literally last an eternity in Sacred Consciousness. If you want to have some idea of the concept of 'eternity', try the famous philosophical experiment where you imagine a pigeon that flies over once every hundred years. In her flight, she grazes the tip of the highest mountain. If you can imagine how long it takes before the mountain is completely worn down by this, you have an idea of the concept of eternity.

Alternatively, the whole experience of several hours can be over in what seems like just a few seconds. Perhaps the next paradox will give you some idea of the Sacred Dimension:

'Experiencing eternity for a while'.

Space is no longer three dimensional but has endless dimensions. This is mostly because the boundary between you and the objects you perceive has fallen away. It could also be that you transformed into the object that you are observing. Optical illusion, or hallucination, are terms used to describe this state of being. Your senses are being tricked, or confused. But who would want to be confused? And by whom? If we realize that we can rediscover our soul in this dimension and heal at the level of the soul, as long as we surrender to the experience itself, the answer is easy to find. If we realize that it is our own being that is playing a game with us, and that it is confusing us with the aid of a sacrament, we can loosen our grip and enjoy the tricks that are being played on us. In this state, we can be in awe and amazement again like a Child, like the Child we once were. Nothing is what it seems. If it works, and you feel safe in your trusted environment, you can carefully begin to experiment and discover

what this wonderful world in which you are actually is. You can also crawl away and roll yourself up like a fetus if you prefer, or you can stand up and feel the strange sensations that are passing through your body and see what kind of movements your body can make. Whatever you do, do what you feel is right to do at that moment, and express it. Try to realize that if you lose your sense of time and place, you have entered Sacred Consciousness and you are here to meet your soul. If time and space disappear, it may feel like a fall into the deep end for a while. Surrender yourself to the fall and discover how great it is to float. You are now in a world full of possibilities, all waiting to be discovered. If they are tired of waiting, they will reveal themselves to you on their own. All you have to do is be amazed and go from surprise to surprise, and to let go of all that binds you to the here and now.

Senses

'Our perception is linked to our senses', according to the eminent scientist Albert Einstein. It's a pity that he never made a Voyage, I would have loved to see what kind of grandiose ideas this great genius would have come up with if he had experienced that there is a completely different level of perception. What would happen if someone like Einstein had been able to tune in to the Field (Chapter 40 – The Field) which he himself had discovered? What would have happened if he had entered the Sacred Dimension? First of all, he probably would have admitted openly that his hypothesis about perception was wrong. In the Sacred Dimension we get to know the inner equivalents of our senses. Our inner hearing for example. Just try and play a song in your head. That's not just a memory, you are actually 'hearing' it at that moment. The same goes for the famous thought experiment where you think about a lemon: there is a good chance that you will 'taste' her and that your mouth will start to water. Our senses are already like this in normal states of consciousness. In the Sacred Dimension, they go even further. Both the internal and the external senses get extremely sensitive. I can say from my own experience that I could see the structure of a hair from two meters distance, as if I was looking through a microscope. I was also able to perceive sounds from an incredibly great distance. The shaman Ton van Halderen told me a wonderful story about a Santo Daime ritual he once experienced at Ruigoord near Amsterdam. When he got home in Delft he could still hear the churchgoers singing. Asking about it later,

he found out that the ritual had kept on going, and that people had indeed kept singing. This phenomenon is reported by many Voyagers and is not unusual, even though it can be very impressive and even amusing. It can also be a bother, because it is difficult to limit our increased abilities. More than once I was overwhelmed by my improved sense of smell when my cats started making use of the litter box. The sound of the rolling pebbles and the smells were unbearable, after which, luckily, my senses started to adjust to the situation.

Apart from the improvement of our senses, a process called 'sensory deprivation' takes place. The increased capacity for registering information, both internally and externally, confuses us so that we lose control of the situation. A situation can arise called synesthesia: our ears can see pictures, our eyes can feel, our hands can smell. The possibilities are nearly endless. If we let ourselves be carried away by this trickery of the senses, we slowly transform from perceiving to experiencing. A world that would have baffled Einstein can be unfolded when we turn our attention inwards. Our experience of this world is beyond the senses. It's as if all our senses have gathered together and united into one single sense. We are transformed into the observer behind our observer, the soul. The core of our being is behind the wheel, and we can now experience what it wishes to show us. A lot of what is revealed to us in this world can not be retold. First of all, because we do not (yet) have the words or the understanding to fit the experience. And secondly, because the mega-sense that we seem to have in this dimension has nothing to gain from our Earthly experience. It is bound to the universal soul, and it speaks that same language. In the best case scenario, a feeling from this experience still lingers, a feeling that will conjure a smile on our face for the rest of our lives. We are the only ones who are the witnesses of the indescribable worlds that we have visited, worlds that most people will respond to with a commiserating look. Yeah, right!

Transport Moments

Another characteristic effect of the entheogenic substance is the forming of multi-colored patterns. These are often reported by Voyagers to be diamond-shaped, snake-like, Eastern mandala patterns and kaleidoscopic effects. A lot of people think that these are hallucinations, but hallucinations only occur when we have no idea who we are anymore or have forgotten that we are under the influence of a substance. I want to

introduce a new name for these multi-colored patterns, and suggest we call them 'transport moments'. For some trippers, the whole point of the trip is to see these colorful patterns. This is also known as 'spacing'. This name is certainly not misplaced, because that's literally what happens to us: we are transported into 'space', the space of our consciousness. If we know that we are in between two experiences and that we are being transported by our own consciousness, it is easier for us to surrender to that movement. The colors and patterns can be overwhelming, depending on the effects of the substance, leading to what looks like an information overdose. It can also feel like a roller coaster that is cruising at light speed through the galaxy, or like a merry-go-round that's gone berserk. The more intense the experience, the farther we are being transported into the depths of ourselves. For those who Voyages profanely, this is often the start of a 'bad trip', or an experience that is too strong and too negative. Terence McKenna describe this experience with the famous words: 'Load universe into cannon. Aim at brain. Fire!' If we Voyage Sacredly and are here for healing, we will always find the strength to withstand this ordeal. We know that we are being transported deep into ourselves, there where we want to go. We did not come here for a pleasant journey and some spectacular images, we can here for our soul. The more relaxed we are, and the more we allow this seemingly unbearable stream of information to go through us, the sooner we will arrive at our destination. This is the stage in which our Guide can help to encourage us to relax, to let go, and to let us drift along with the endless stream. All resistance leads to suffering, which is a metaphor for the suffering that we impose on ourselves in our own lives. It is essential that we learn to let go, and we are now in a unique situation to learn. It helps to realize that the experience is temporary, and that the strength of the substance will gradually diminish. Waiting at the check out line in a store can seem like an eternity in our normal consciousness, but when the cashier says: 'I'll be with you in a moment', the experience becomes much more tolerable and transient. No matter how strong the effects of the substance, the transport moment is not the goal. It will stop as soon as the Voyager releases control and lets himself float freely. After that, the transport will turn into an amazing experience that you can enjoy, as if you are riding in an intergalactic roller coaster. If you want a taste of what things can look like in the Sacred Dimension, I recommend that you watch the movie Blueberry.

Sacred Dimension

Once we experience the transport moments, we know that we have arrived in the Sacred Dimension. There can be no doubt that we are undergoing an extraordinary experience. Once we have arrived here – and that can take anywhere from ten minutes to a few hours of 'Earth time' – our consciousness quakes with excitement. What awaits us? This mental excitement usually translates into our body as tension in our stomach. If you look closely, you can feel that next to the fear there is also curiosity, depending on how safe you feel. The Sacred Dimension is characterized by the absence of our ego (considered here to be 'conscious thought'). Our feelings dominate here, and in this dimension we feel strange sensations and energies. All sorts of things happen here without our conscious control, and we can go from one surprise to the next. Here we can become aware of the most terrible emotions and experience the most heavenly ecstasy. These feelings are often accompanied by transformations, visions, or hallucinations. One characteristic of the Sacred Dimension is that we feel the presence of our Inner Deity. In this dimension we enjoy a special protection, because we have given up all our ego strength and given space to our Inner Deity, Guides, Teachers, and everything that offers us protection to come and protect us. Everyone who enters the Sacred Dimension with love and respect in their heart will enjoy this special protection. It is this protection which allows us to make the Voyage and withstand the many revelations. We are now completely open and are as vulnerable as a new born child. It is this vulnerability which awakens our inborn protection. Because we have a Loving Guide who watches over our physical body, and because we give up the control over our perception, we enter into the magical Sacred protection that allows us to explore ourselves into the deepest, darkest corners. It is the same magical Guardian Angel that watches over you when you sleep, who makes sure that your heart keeps beating and that you keep breathing. That angel is with you now, here in the Sacred Dimension. Perhaps you feel like a little child who doesn't dare to go up to her dark room alone. With the protection of her loving parents, she does dare. You now have that same protection from every power that you hold within you. She is many times stronger than the protection we could receive from others, because she is our own and she is in direct contact with our own highest power, the Deity inside us. Once safely arrived in the Sacred Dimension, nothing can harm us anymore.

Birth

When we undertake the Voyage and descend into what often seems like 'our darkness', we get the chance to revisit and process our old emotions. Emotions that we couldn't handle at the time when they arose, and had to suppress. This way we suppressed all the feelings that we now experience as 'dark' within ourselves, where they are still waiting for the time when we *are* ready for them. If we liberate them and live through them and bring them to Light, we often initiate an overwhelming stream of energy that can spontaneously heal us from whatever may have been tormenting us for years. Memories and emotions from our youth can come back and demand our attention, after which we can let them go and let the jammed up energy flow. The processing of our old emotions, together with the renewed energy that is released, brings back memories as well. We can relive our birth through the Voyage, and process the traumas that we incurred as helpless babies. We can also end up way before the birth, in the womb. This can be a wonderful, healing experience, but sometimes also a hellish, traumatic, or claustrophobic experience. It depends entirely on how your experience in the womb was. Whatever experience you get to relive, it seems that in nearly every case the reliving and processing of the stages of birth is extremely healing. Stanislav Grof has dedicated a large section of his work to researching the different stages of birth and their effects on the development of a human being. If you want to know more about this you can immerse yourself in his wonderful books. The important thing for us to know is that when you make the Voyage, and you end up in a situation that looks like one of the birth stages – such as feeling like you're in the womb (in which case you often roll up into a fetal position) – and you experience oceanic love, or other feelings of total love and peacefulness that are associated with being in the womb, that you remember to undergo the experience and stick with it. In the case of this first example it may be easy, because it can feel ecstatic. However, if you feel that you are trapped forever or stuck and want to work your way out, that you will suffocate, or that you are claustrophobic and want to get out: realize that you have ended up in one of the stages of birth and that you are reliving the old trauma. If your Guide recognizes this she can comfort you and lovingly help you through this difficult and painful phase, which at first may seem endless. Grof makes a distinction

between four birth stages, which he calls perinatal stages. Stage one is the pregnancy stage, in which we feel like we are one with our mother. The second stage is the birth stage, in which the womb presses down on us but we cannot get out yet. In stage three we are pushed out and are trapped, wrestling centimeter by centimeter through the birth canal, but the cervix isn't fully open yet. Stage four begins once we are outside and start to breathe on our own. We can relive all of these stages in the Sacred Dimension. For the map of the Sacred Voyage it is important now that you know that you can re-experience your entire birth process and that it is good to submit yourself to the experience. If you want to roll up like a fetus, follow the impulse. If you want to kick and scream, or hit a pillow, then do it. Following these kinds of physical energies ensures that you will liberate yourself. No matter how difficult the process is, accept it. At the end of the process you will usually be awaited by ecstatic joy, a peak experience in the sense of Abraham Maslow's description, an experience that can have an enormous influence on the rest of your life (read more about this under the heading 'ecstasy or peak experience'). This way, by reliving old traumas and pains, we clear out everything that stands between us and our soul. We release the old energy that has been stuck inside us and let her flow again, so that the total energy at our disposal is much greater. Our body is freed of the energy that we lock inside her, so that it becomes more flexible and healthy.

Quite often our whole life has been shaped around a theme from our birth, such getting stuck or not getting any oxygen. Fighting for our lives or giving up prematurely are some of the more prevalent themes. Again it is the eminent scientist Stanislav Grof who has understood the importance of these themes and has published on them. He discovered that we often repeat our birth traumas subconsciously, and that our life is patterned after these traumas. He calls these patterns COEX-systems. I am not going to go into the theory behind this, but Grof does make a good case that reliving traumas from your birth and childhood can give your life a totally different and predominantly positive turn. We are always seeking out or avoiding particular situations on the basis of certain repressed traumas, and can now change these patterns when we relive the traumas. This could also support and explain the claim made by Secret Chief Leo Zeff, who on the basis of his experience with

thousands of Voyagers claims that a session with an entheogenic substance can be just as healing as years of therapy.

Do you understand why our Loving Guide is so important to us during our Voyage? She can judge whether we have entered our baby consciousness and offer us the warmth that we need to relive that trauma. She can put on soft and loving music for us, hold us, and hug us. This way we can relive our original trauma, as adults, and free ourselves from an enormous burden.

The Deity Within

The word 'entheogen' means: 'generating the divine within'. I realize that by using this word, supplemented by terms like 'sacrament', 'Sacred', and so on, that I am breaking my promise not to put a new system of meaning on this experience. I realize that if I or somebody else claims that by experiencing the Voyage there is a great chance that the Deity within will reveal itself, this can lead to a new system of meaning. Hans Plomp, author of mind expanding literature, once told me that he had been criticized when he started to write about the revelation of the Deity within. The criticism from the old guard was that the Netherlands had only just stopped being a society defined by religious identity, and that it had no need for any new dogmas. Our semi-liberal and sober attitude seems to be a release from all the overly rigid religious belief structures, but it has the unintended side-effect of throwing out the Baby with the bathwater. The unquestioning assumption that what others considered to be true a few thousand years ago is still true for us, is more and more seen as a restrictive belief. In that sense it is great that we have removed our chains. Who can imagine good sir priest coming to the door to say that it's about time for your next baby to be conceived? The secularization of society gives us the space to investigate truth for ourselves again, space that we are in dire need of and which we can surely make a claim to.

When we go on a Voyage, every system of meaning is actually too much baggage. Our own experience is what really counts, and whoever enters the Sacred Dimension will discover that this world is not easily trapped in meaning. Anecdotal accounts are about as far as descriptions can go. When I suggest the term 'Inner Deity', I do not mean our institutional,

Biblical God, although it's fine if you feel bound to him yourself. Just as it is fine whether that be Buddha, Allah, Krishna, or any other Deity. The Inner Deity is therefore without label and open to whatever way each individual experiences her. If I didn't describe and name this force, an inexperienced Voyager might be overwhelmed by the confrontation with the power that they have called over themselves by using the entheogenic sacrament. What we can learn from the world of religion and what we can make thankful use of, is her wealth of symbols, the turning inwards of our attention (prayer), the making of a sacred space (church, cemetery), the rituals and practices, story telling, and above all: the realization that there is something more than our own consciousness. One by one, these are themes that can be incredibly enriching to our existence, and they beg to be investigated and expanded by us instead of being controlled by some Earthly masculine power that holds them as privileges of the few.

If we free ourselves from our chains and our blinders, our life becomes exciting again and worth the effort of investigating further. This is also one of the underlying thoughts behind the Sacred Voyage. Hopefully, it will offer you enough support to go out and investigate for yourself while giving you enough space to experience it for yourself. We are at the cusp of a completely new relationship with god, a relationship to the Deity within ourselves. If we experience this Deity directly instead of placing it outside of ourselves, we start to feel and experience our connection to the eternal. From this awareness, we can feel and experience that we are one with all life forms. When the Deity within has been revealed, our life gets a radically different quality. Our greatest fear, eternal banishment and loneliness, symbolized by and feared as Death, disappears when we know ourselves to be connected to heart and soul. That is not a new system of meaning or a desired result, but the unique story that many have lived by discovering the Deity within. It is the truth of our own life that is waiting to be discovered and to be lived. It is our destination, we were born for it. It is what eventually will return our soul to us: feeling the inspiration in our own life, with our own unique destination, and feeling intimately linked to everything that is.

The Great Void

One of the inner realms that users of entheogenic substances, both trippers and Voyagers, fear the most, is the Great Void. The no-man's-land where our inner world crumbles into oblivion and where there is no color, smell, or any other input for the senses. She is not the 'Nothing' of the mystical traditions, also known as the 'silence between our thoughts'. The Great Void is distinct from the 'Nothing' in that it is dominated by a heavy and sorrowful atmosphere, as well as the terrifying feeling that we are trapped here forever. There seems to be no exit from the Void, which makes us feel helpless and hopeless. The Great Void is directly opposite to the experience of the inner Deity. In the Great Void there is no link to any other life form whatsoever. Feelings are limited to an endless gloom and heavily depressive thoughts. In the land of the Void, the paths of the tripper and the Voyager go their separate ways. You see, there are several ways out of the Void. For the trippers there are two. The first one is to make contact with the ego and to try to realize that the trip is temporary, and, while it may seem to the tripper that he is eternally stuck in this Void, it will take no longer than eight hours. This can be a very heartening thought in the Void! What the tripper can also try to do, which often works quite well, is to think positive thoughts. Think of nice moments in life, of loved ones. Of what Neuro-linguistic brainwashers call 'anchor points'. Out of the arid no-man's-land, away from the Void, away from that which hasn't shown itself for nothing!

The method of the Voyage suggests a different path, although it is of course up to each Voyager and their inner strength whether or not they choose this path. If you have enough inner strength, you can surrender yourself to the Great Void. You intuitively accept that you are trapped here forever, shut off from love, care, and comfort, shut off from life itself. The gray, ugly, and bleak emptiness is the only thing that will remain, not only for the rest of this life, but for eternity. This is not a mind trick or a thought experiment, but a decision made from the soul, by the strength of the soul. It is nearly impossible to think in the Void, and trying it will send us into panic. We want to get out as soon as possible. If we manage to give up our resistance and to empty ourselves completely, we descend into the Void and become one with it. If we can withstand that, a miracle will happen: we are reborn, this time without the greatest fear that mankind has. The fear of death. If we freely choose to go into the Void without love or comfort and to stay there, we send a magical signal out to our soul, which will free us from this unending sorrow. I repeat again, this not a trick or a game. The intent of our heart

is the only thing that counts in this fringe area. If we have the intent to rediscover our soul and to heal, we can withstand the terrors of the Void and voluntarily relinquish our ego. This is a deed at the level of the soul, recognized and acknowledged by the soul. Sometimes we are only small and humble enough after we have withstood the Void. Only when we have survived the eternal hurt and misery of the Void (which in religious context is also represented as hell) can we understand how badly in need we are of love, warmth, and understanding, of joy, and beauty. Only then can we understand what our soul means to us, and that we have to be sparing with it. Making this painful pilgrimage often leads us beyond the realms of Death, so that we lose our fear of it completely. The result of this is that from now on we can learn to see and follow our own needs as well as those of others. We can abandon every situation that is not good for our soul – soul-numbing work, restrictive relationships, unhealthy habits, in short, everything that harms us – and choose unconditionally for life. We know now from our own experience what the Void, the great absence of our soul, will do to us. This is one of the most incredible experiences that a human being can live through, and it has the same power as other 'wake-up calls' like fatal diseases, accidents, or near death experiences. If we withstand the Great Void, the rest of our life will probably stand in relation to the search for our soul, the collecting of all the lost parts of it, and the optimal way of living according to heart and soul. Whoever has gone through this experience can do no different. If there was any doubt about what 'hell' was then it has now been put to rest. Living without a soul, here and now on this Earth or beyond, is the true hell. The pilgrimage of the soul, the Sacred Voyage, goes through hell and back. It is up to you to find your soul and return with it. If you are trapped in the Void, remember in your heart that it is good to stay here and to surrender yourself to this endless loneliness, the Void. Embrace her and heal.

Fear and Being Afraid

There is a Dutch folk saying which says that 'fear is a poor advisor', a wisdom which from the point of view of the ego is definitely true. Fear prevents us from fully going through certain experiences. Fear is our protection against pain, it is the emotion that makes us intelligent. This in contrast to, for example, a gold fish, which forgets everything after three seconds and whose fishbowl is somehow 'new' again every time.

Fear works together with our memory which remembers the things that hurt us or threatened us. Our system also contains a few pre-programmed fears that aid in our self preservation, fears that are attuned to our bodily limits. We do not jump from rock to rock on a mountain like a mountain goat does, because we have 'fear of heights'. Our self-preservation prevents such behavior because it is fed by fear. In practice then, fear has a clear and useful task. Calling fear a poor advisor is therefore nonsense. What *is* a poor advisor is the ally of fear, 'being afraid'. Being afraid is a learned behavior, something which can seriously get in our way and paralyze our breathing. A good example of this learned behavior is my own fear of spiders. In the jungles of Costa Rica, where I wrote most of this book, I am terribly afraid of tarantulas, even though they are extremely rare and are hardly ever spotted. On the other hand, I'm not at all worried about the malaria mosquito, against which I have not had a vaccine and which is a real threat to my life. As a kid I wasn't at all afraid of spiders, I actually thought they were kind of funny. I only started to develop a phobia when I found out that both my parents were terrified of eight legged critters. It helps to make a clear distinction between fear and being afraid. Especially when you know that they both play a big role during the Voyage; but you probably guessed that already. In the Sacred Dimension we can rid ourselves of many of our fears. In that sense, we can turn around the concept of 'fear as a poor advisor' and think of it as an excellent indicator of where we should go. If we are afraid of something in the Sacred Dimension, and want to get away from it, there is a good chance that we should in fact go towards it. The essence of the method of the Voyage is that we do not have to be afraid. The care for our health and body is in the hands of our loving Guide, so that we can let go and undergo the experience. We 'know' subconsciously that we are being cared for and that there is no danger, so that there can be no actual fear. There is only our being afraid. We are confronted with obstacles that we have incorporated during our life and which have become part of our system, our 'being'. These can be small obstacles, such as my fear of spiders, but also big obstacles that form into mental illnesses and prevent us from living. Big or small, in the Sacred Dimension we get the opportunity to face them and to live through them. Until now they have survived inside us. It is up to us to face what comes out and to accept it and embrace it with love. It takes courage and inner strength to face that which we are afraid of, but mostly it takes surrender. Our soul wants to give us a message, one from which

we have been running away all our lives, because we confuse her with the inborn and useful fear. Being afraid is rarely useful, and it paralyzes us. It prevents us from seeing who we really are, who we are meant to be. It clouds our vision and casts a fog over our life which prevents us from truly living. As a pilgrim on a Voyage, it is your Sacred task to face and embrace everything that you are afraid of. Terrifying demons may appear to you. You can even face death. All the ways of being afraid that you know in your normal life can present themselves to you here: it is up to you to welcome them. A few years ago I earned a living by working as an interim manager. I knew for a long time that this wasn't what I wanted to do, and I only kept going because it payed well and gave me a feeling of security and safety. I was afraid that I would come up short. I was afraid of losing my security, and above all, I was afraid of my contractor, who had threatened me twice with canceling my contract. And he meant it. I really hadn't been doing my best. After all, the job had nothing to do with my calling, which I hadn't even discovered yet at that time. I was living in fear out of my little ego. During a Voyage I met this contractor as if he were really there with me. I wanted to run away from the bully, but no matter how hard I tried, he kept on appearing. That is, until I gave up resisting, turned around, and embraced the man. In my vision, he suddenly relaxed and had a very human and vulnerable face. I was no longer afraid of him, nor of losing my contract. The result of this extraordinary act was that in normal reality, the deck had been completely reshuffled. My contractors' attitude was transformed, and he helped me to successfully complete the assignment. In the end we built up a special bond, one which the rest of the organization could not explain. There were people who had made bets amongst themselves to see how long I would last working for this seemingly heartless and ruthless manager. The result was quite different than most people had expected, and I built up a comfortable relationship that remained intact until the assignment was complete.

During other Voyages I faced the unfounded fear of coming up short and I learned bit by bit to relinquish my insecurities. Finally, I managed to radically alter my course. The Sacred Voyage is not a method to harshly confront yourself and to will away your shortcomings. These are 'egoistic' motives. You get to face that which you are ready to face. When you learn to trust your own inner strength and the protection that you are under in this dimension, you can face everything that appears

here and surrender yourself to anything that seems to threaten you. Many people think it is the influence of the entheogenic substance which gives us extra strength during the Voyage, and that the fear will come back once the substance has run its course. But this is an assumption based on ignorance. It is your own inner strength which you are building up during the Voyage, and which you take with you *after* the Voyage as well when the substance is out of your system. Everything that you live through instead of just surviving in this dimension will truly disappear. It will no longer be an obstacle to you, even in the everyday dimension to which you will return. As long as you lovingly accept who you are and whatever shows itself to you. Use your fear or rather your 'being afraid' as an adviser, and let him warn you about your inner torments so that you can surrender to them. That is the way to our salvation, the way to a free and vibrant life.

Shame

One form of fear which can be a serious obstacle to our being and doing is shame. We're burdened with this suffocating emotion since our early childhood. We learn to be ashamed of our body, our person, our expressions, our family, our accomplishments, our sexuality. Perhaps the worst form of shame is existential shame, the fear of living. The source of this deeply rooted form of shame is the shaming of our emotionality. If we, as children, were shamed by our nurturers and other important people in our lives when we cried, laughed, were afraid, or angry, then we developed a fear of feeling and expressing our emotions. Many of us know this form of shame, which often disguises itself as modesty (which would suit us better...), mild shyness or extreme fear of failure. If we are ashamed of our feelings and of expressing them, then we can definitely be confronted by them during our Voyages. In answer to the oppression of shame we have learned to control ourselves and our emotions, which in the long run has had a suffocating effect on us. It literally takes our breath away. We will almost certainly be confronted with this fear when we Voyage. We will have to learn to let loose the reigns, because once we have used an entheogenic sacrament, our emotions will start to manifest themselves. The emotional energy that we have stored inside ourselves will want to work its way out, often in the shape of uncontrollable laughter (also known as the 'laughing kick'), heavy tears, shouting with rage, or trembling with fear. This last one, fear, is as it

were the key factor in the existence of shame. We stay well clear of everything that we are ashamed of. There is only one remedy for shame, and that is Light. When we learn to define our shame and to make it visible, she looses her destructive hold on us. Learning to express her and to show her to others will free us from our self-imposed chains, and it will open the doors of our suffocating dungeon. If, during your Voyage, you struggle with shame, share this with your Guide. If she is truly Guiding you with Love, then she will acknowledge you for it. Sharing the pain lightens the burden on everyone. Shame can not tolerate the daylight, especially when you realize that your parents, the kids that made fun of you, the teachers or anyone else who shamed you, passed their own shame on to you. When you learn to see that it is their own inability to feel which they were putting on your shoulders, the shame suddenly gets a whole new meaning and loses its deadly sting.⁴⁶ Choose a Guide with whom you can share these feelings, so that you won't have to go back into the darkness of shame again when it arises. Loving Guidance is acknowledging that which arises and bringing to Light that which has hidden itself in the shadows. By looking at it together with love, the shame can transform into what it wanted all along, before it was damaged: the expression of your feelings. Einstein convincingly showed us that we cannot destroy energy. We can, however, transform her. Water can condense into vapor, or form ice crystals. Ice is the solid form of water, just as the ice in our emotional world is seemingly solid and impenetrable. If we learn to bring her to Light, to express her, we sublimate her and she transforms into flowing energy, into a life giving feeling, like water. Together with spring, which brings life back to the land, she can make our emotional landscape fertile again. That is the liberating, transformative, and healing power of our emotions. If we find the courage to carry our shame, to name it, and to bring it into the Light, we can find the way to way we are meant to be.

Panic and Paranoia

It is not difficult to start panicking in the Sacred Dimension. Fear and being afraid are often directed at a certain unpleasant experience that we are trying to avoid. Panic is a feeling of total fear, like we are being flooded by it. Panic is the urge to free our heart from the clasp of fear that surrounds it. Paranoia, or insanity, is the extension of panic. It is the result of letting go our ego, which makes us small and vulnerable. Our

panic is often set in motion by our fear of expressing our emotions. In the case of paranoia, the environment in which we find ourselves becomes extremely frightening and threatening. Even our most cherished Loving Guide can suddenly seem like a monster who wants to hurt us. She can even seem demonic. It is good for both the Voyager and the Guide to realize that this situation can occur, and that it is far from uncommon. It occurs regularly, and is in fact very normal. We are looking for the edge of our own safety zone, and the Voyage can really stretch it. We let go the safe and trusted armor of our ego and become extremely vulnerable. That is why I plead for the method of the Voyage, with its serene, safe environment and a Loving Guide who can support the Voyager in this painful process.

When I guided my dear friend Diana on her first Voyage, I transformed in her eyes into a monster, even with all my good intentions. Dark hairs started to appear all over the comforting arm that I had put around her shoulders. Her experience became utterly terrifying. I didn't react to her projection, but kept on lovingly comforting her. After a while her perception changed, and she had a vision in which an old wise man took her by the hand and led her to the Light. At the end of the tunnel she had passed through her panic and paranoia, and a wave of peace and love came over her. Here I could let her go, and she could explore for herself what the world looks like without all the suffocating fear that was always lurking inside her. This fear ended up being a fear of men. Now that this fear had seen the daylight, it became much lighter for her, and she could once again let people and especially men into her life again.

Themes like trust and safety are common elements in our Voyages. What we learn in this dimension is to purify our feelings, our intuition, our intelligence, and our instinct. Of course there are things in the world which we should fear, or which we could be afraid of. This primordial emotion protects us in dangerous situations and makes sure that we aren't hurt. It allows us to act or to retreat. If we clarify our intentions and face our fears, we can decide for ourselves which ones to keep and which ones to transform. Fear, after all, is the healthy shadow of our soul. She is basically telling us that life is worth living and that we are afraid of losing our happiness. If we embrace the messenger instead of seeing her as a bad adviser, we can make her care and attention a part of our own strengths, and we can rely on her in frightening times. Just like a splinter can interrupt a thousand mile pilgrimage, fear and paranoia can end our pilgrimage to the soul. Bring the fear to Light and share her with your

Guide. When you bring her to Light, she will often transform into the original trauma that has founded your fear and give you the opportunity to face it after all, to process it, and to be healed of it once and for all.

Death and Rebirth

Death, to many of us, whether consciously or unconsciously, is the most terrifying thing that can happen to us. This fear can be a measure of how much we value our life on Earth, and can be a motivation for getting everything that we can out of life. On the other hand, the fear of dying can get so out of proportion that it paralyzes us and prevents us from living and breathing. This fear is not entirely unjustified, because in our culture Death is the great unknown. Somehow or other we have taken the greatest certainty in our lives, the fact that we will die some day, and tucked it away while doing everything we can not to be reminded of it. Death has become our greatest taboo. Care and support for the terminally ill is rarely present; most people don't want to be confronted with the monster of Death up close and personal. Instead, we focus on the power we seem to have over life. Our rituals are directed at helping the bereaved to process their sorrow. A long period of mourning is also not done. In our culture, there is something like a three week limit on sorrow, after which we expect it to be gone. But what about the person who is dying? Those who are dying are usually confronted with their greatest fear: loneliness and banishment. Often housed in the foreign environment of a hospital or a home for the elderly, surrounded by nurses instead of by friends, family, and loved ones. Wearing down, losing their mental abilities, and losing their human decency. Because we push Death and the dying so far away from ourselves, she has lost her place in our lives. We have consigned her to the foggy dimension of our unconscious, where she takes on frightful proportions. If we learned the true nature of Death, we would have a lifetime to prepare for it. We would give much more importance to consciousness expansion, mental abilities, and meditation, and would have a much greater chance of being well prepared for Death, instead of trying to escape him as long as possible so that we end up lacking the inner strength to make the transition and get eternally stuck between dimensions. Confused, uninspired, stranded. This is the worst case scenario that awaits us, and somewhere inside we feel it coming. The question is: do we want to feel it? We'd much rather send it on to a fantasy world. Just as I did when I

channeled this information (Chapter 43 – Magic Gifts). Religion has frightened us for so long with its threat of hell and damnation. She used our deeply rooted fear in order to convert us to the rules of the Bible, and for centuries left us living blindly. We let ourselves be led like sheep, which robbed us of the opportunity to explore for ourselves. This made us even less prepared for the inevitable. Whoever believes in biblical fairy tales will end up cheated on the other side. It is not belief which leads us to the others side, but the love in our heart. Together with the Light of our soul. This is not a new dogma, but an easily researched wisdom for Voyagers. Whoever makes the Voyage can go beyond the realms of Death and will therefore be confronted with the same circumstances as those who are really dying. Whoever makes the Voyage gets a fantastic opportunity to train themselves in that which they fear most inside: passing on. No matter what, Death as a physical end of our Earthly being is inevitable. Even yogis who reportedly can live for hundreds of years, eventually choose to pass on. Why shouldn't we prepare ourselves for this as much as possible?

Many of the themes that we can and probably will meet during our Voyages are about Death. With great regularity, voyagers report having visions where they die, drown, choke, or are killed in a gruesome manner. Some encounter a symbolic shamanic death in the Sacred Dimension. In real as life visions their bodies are taken apart and thrown into a heap. The Voyager dies a symbolic death, which, as I can relate from my own experience, is hardly a pleasant feeling. And yet of all the experiences that we can have in the Sacred Dimension, the initiation by way of symbolic death may be the most powerful and impressive there is. Everything in us resists what is coming. If we learn to surrender we get one of the most powerful initiations that we can get in our lives: Death. Through this experience, we liberate ourselves from our most deeply rooted fear, the fear that dominates the collective unconscious of Western man: Death. Because we undo ourselves of this fear, we no longer have to run away but can be at peace. Once we know that we can find our own way on the other side, and are comforted by this knowledge, we regain confidence in ourselves and in life. We want to live again, to live without fear of the inevitable (Chapter 12 – Quest).

Blockages

As we saw earlier, fear and shame have taught us to keep our emotions locked inside ever since we were children. Our emotionality and expressiveness are blocked from an early age, which also blocks the way to strength and Light. Blockages begin in our mental body, in our thinking. As I showed earlier, our sense of shame makes us choose to suppress certain types of behavior. This makes it impossible for our emotional body to vent and release itself. The outward motion of our emotions is blocked and, as we saw before, energy can only be transformed, not destroyed. Instead of following her liberating motion outwards to the Light, her natural motion, she now moves inwards, where our strength turns against us and traps itself in our body. Many people think of our energy bodies as if they were theoretical, but everyone can feel the effects of blocked energy. She literally constricts our breathing. We can feel her as muscular tension, acidosis, or local hardening of our body. Our language is full of expressions that describe this 'in-motional' instead of our emotional process: 'keeping a stiff upper lip, keep your chin up, carrying the world on your shoulders'. That is what happens when we retain our primary feelings. When we trap our energy in our body, she cannot flow, so that we become heavier. But how do we handle these blockages? By not wanting to handle them! Wanting to get rid of blockages is usually not a sign of wanting to become healthy, but of wanting to be more in control of ourselves. If we only take care of the symptoms of our blockages, we will fall into a new series of blockages and frustrations: the underlying patterns of emotional energy won't just disappear. This is also one of the causes of the yo-yo effect with people who try to lose weight without looking at the underlying cause of their weight problem. If we start at the other end, with the limiting behavior through which we suppress our emotions, and learn to let our energy flow again, then our body can often take on her natural form automatically. We can learn to penetrate to the core of our being and restore its health. Of course it helps to learn how to recognize the symptoms of what we do to ourselves. It also helps to lovingly work with those symptoms. Of course it is great to have our muscle tension massaged or to try a healthy diet that supports our body's attempt to lose weight. But it is even better to investigate why we are trapping our energy and not living life at the fullest. If we remove those limitations, we will rediscover our life force, and this will be effortlessly reflected in our body.

What to do if we encounter these blockages during our Voyages? First of all, we can take note of our own mindset and that of our Loving Guide. If we have undertaken a Voyage to confront everything that is holding us back, then it shouldn't be difficult to perceive our own blockages. Feeling and observing are some of the most important skills that we can employ in our search for wholeness. Awareness and sensing of your own muscle tensions, of your own feelings and emotions, your breathing. Awareness without the conscious intent of wanting to change that which you perceive. Let it be what it is. You are going on a Voyage to meet yourself and to get to know yourself. If you want to get to know a friend, you don't try to change him, do you? If you learn how to tune in to your own feelings, to become more sensitive to yourself, you will learn to recognize the subtle signals of your own body. Our emotions are connected to our breathing. When we're afraid, we can 'hardly catch our breath', while anger make us 'breathe fire'. Our breathing tells us what we are feeling at a physical level, and it demonstrates it. As a Guide to the Voyage we can easily recognize where the Voyager is by looking at their breathing. If necessary, we can hold up a mirror to them by saying: 'I can see that you are holding in your breath', or 'have you noticed how fast you are breathing?'. By making the Voyager aware of what is happening, you can help her turn her attention inwards. The same goes for facial expressions and muscle tensions. It is up to the Voyager to become aware of them and to work with them. But as Guides we can help the Voyager if we think they need it. Only begin your Voyage if both the Voyager and the Guide have declared the intent to face whatever arises and to lovingly embrace it. The Voyage offers countless opportunities to get insight into all levels of being and to heal. As long as you open yourself to each other and to yourself, face and acknowledge your fear and shame, and grant each other true healing.

You know now where sicknesses and blockages begin. It is up to each of us to take responsibility for it. This makes the process of Voyaging and Guiding very dynamic. Guiding has much more to it than the 'trip sitting' of psychedelic sessions. Voyager and Guide can draw up a psychological contract in which they give each other permission to lovingly face whatever arises in the Voyage, to embrace it and help it on its way to healing. This psychological contract becomes much stronger if you take turns as Voyager and Guide. As a Guide, you will be confronted with your own limitations, such as fear and shame, while you Guide each other. The trick is to be aware of this, and to still be completely

dedicated to the service of the Voyager. You can look at your own shortcomings later, during your own Voyage, or in a therapy session. The intimacy that you build up with each other will to a large extent determine the healing process. Poisonous shame, as I demonstrated earlier, can only be solved by bringing her to Light. That is to say: by sharing it with each other. That is the Sacred task that has been set aside for you both: carrying your own shame, facing it, bringing it to Light, and sharing it. Daring to face and acknowledge one another's shame. There is no need to go deeper into each other's feelings, or to be exaggeratedly empathic. Just welcome them and acknowledge their right to be there when they arise. If you can do this with each other, you can be truly intimate with each other. Intimacy is the sharing of true feelings, the feelings and emotions as they are, and not as we have learned to have them by twisting them and suppressing them. Getting the knack of this is the true initiation of the Sacred Voyage. Dedication to your own healing process and initiation into her method will allow you to create a setting with a loving friend that can heal both your souls.

Transformation

Another extraordinary event that you can experience in the Sacred Dimension is your temporary transformation. Past lives can be revealed to you, and you can suddenly start to speak in different languages that you never heard of before. Transformation can help you to have insights into yourself and your true nature. Here too we follow the rule that whatever happens, or seems likely to happen, allow it and transform!

Hallucination

Hallucinating, as we said before, is a type of perception in which you have no sense of your own identity. It is fairly 'normal' to see double in the Sacred Dimension, to perceive color patterns or things that are invisible to others. Usually you know that you have taken a substance, and that a particular phenomenon is happening because of it. However, in the case of a hallucination you do not know this anymore, but you live in a completely different reality for a while. Our psychiatric traditions would call this form of consciousness 'insanity', but is it? In the Sacred Dimension, you can see with your own eyes that there are more

dimensions, and that our indoctrinated ways of looking at the world are not sacred but rather limiting.

Visions

A vision is a hallucination with a clear message that you recognize with your soul. It can be brought to you by one of your Inner Guides or Teachers. It can also be sent by a deceased soul or even one of the world teachers, such as Buddha or Christ. In the Sacred Dimension, you can perceive with your soul where the vision came from, and what her message is, through the gift of Clear Perception (Chapter 39 – Clear Perception).

Ecstasy or Peak Experience

When you have undergone a difficult test, you can often be taken by a feeling of ecstasy. Some Voyagers report it as being an Ocean of Love. Others call her the Union Mystica, the unification with the world soul, or a peak experience. However, there is no all-encompassing term for this experience. Nor does there have to be, because when the time has come and you feel yourself connected to the whole world with heart and soul, you only have to let go and drift along on the waves of love. This all fulfilling love is the energy that can rejuvenate and recharge your tired body and mind. Here you can find the energy to heal all of your illnesses. Once you have done the hard part, and plowed over your emotional farmland, you will find the magical energy that can heal you with love and make your field fertile again. You can't get much closer to the creator than this.

Abraham Maslow described this experience as a 'peak experience', and says the following about it:

'These are moments of pure, positive joy, after which every doubt, every fear, every hesitation, every tension, and every weakness was left behind. There was no self-awareness any more, every distance from the world fell away'.⁴⁷

Alexander Shulgin, the grandmaster chemist and spiritual father of several consciousness expanding substances, has designed a scale on

which he can lay out all the different effects that his psychedelics can have on their users. The measurements are on a scale from '-4' (the user experiences no change in consciousness) to +4. Shulgin describes +4, the highest possible human experience that can be described (experiences of +5 or higher are regrettably uncommunicable with other mortals who have not had the experience), along the lines of Maslow's peak experience:

'Extraordinary event and unique in kind, the mystical or religious experience that you will never forget'.

According to Maslow, while the peak experience only lasts a few hours, the healing power it brings is overwhelming. He relates how two of his patients, someone who had been depressed for a long time and had often considered suicide, and another who suffered from acute panic attacks, were both instantly and lastingly healed after having spontaneously experienced something like that (and it only happened to them once).

Maslow continues:

'The few things I had read in my life about mystical experience made me connect them to religion, to visions of the supernatural. And like most scientists, I had only given it a moment's attention and considered it to be nonsense. Maybe they were hallucinations, maybe it was hysteria, it was almost certainly a pathological symptom. But the people who told me of these experiences were not of such a nature, they were the healthiest people you can imagine'.

Maslow's honesty speaks volumes. Here he is, trapped between his powers of perception on the one side and his scientific framework on the other, which lets him do nothing else but to perceive the Divine in man as 'pathological', as diseased. Luckily the human being in the scientist Maslow was stronger than the conditioning he had enjoyed. Even though he never had a peak experience himself, or at least, not as he defined it, he still learned to be open to the people and patients who had. A tribute to this scientist, who prepared the way for talking about the highest possible human experiences (as far as intent goes), the peak experience or Union Mystica. Maslow himself speaks of a 'reconciliation with life' that those who had these peak experiences brought into being. They felt

at one with the world, living from this knowledge and being an active part of it. They were no longer just spectators.

Deepak Chopra on the peak experience:

'Every sudden revelation of a deeper reality carries an enormous power with it. A single experience of it is enough to make life unquestionably worth living'.

Light

I wrote above that you cannot get much closer to the creator. There may be one more step that can bring you closer in the Sacred Dimension, and that is the all-blinding Light. The Light that makes every fiber, every cell of your being vibrate in a harmony that is not of this world. The clear Light is reported in all mystical traditions, and can be seen with our own eyes as Voyagers. This Light comes from the highest power, the Source of Life, or however you wish to call the creator. When you have found the Deity in yourself, you can charge yourself with this brilliant white Light and become a Lightbearer. This Light has the ability to heal every sickness, whether mental or physical. You don't have to seek the Light, it will come to you when the time is right. Process your emotional pains, heal your Inner Child, open yourself to the Deity within and Light will come into your life.

The map will probably remain unfinished forever...

These examples of consciousness change in the Sacred Dimension are just a handful of illustrations of what can await you in the strange reality in which you go to seek your soul. Some experiences can not be expressed in words, and can only be experienced for yourself. The map of the Sacred Voyage is therefore no more than a Buffalo map that Native Americans used to get at the end of their puberty. There were buffaloes on the map, but these were never found on the place that the map indicated. And yet the map gave the Native American enough faith to start on a journey. I hope that my modest map will do the same for you. I have described several highly common alterations of consciousness, which means that when you encounter them, and you recognize them, you can won't have to run away from them. Instead, you will be able to allow them as best as you can, so that the experience can enrich you and heal you.

PART V MAGICAL HEALING

31 Magical Healing at a Cellular Level

There seems to be more and more evidence that aging has to do with our cellular memory. Our body consists of dozens of kinds of cells that are renewed every so often, depending on the type of cell. In this renewal, the newly formed cell 'knows' what form to take and what relationship it has to the rest of the body. It learns this from the dying cell, which right after it dies gives off a signal, a small energy stimulus, and thereby passes on the necessary information. It teaches the new cell how to develop itself within the whole. This could explain why diseases and disabilities in our bodies stay with us, even though the cells in our body are constantly being renewed. To illustrate: the cells in our eyes are renewed every few days. Theoretically, we have 'new' eyes every so often. So why does the aberration we had in our eye still exist? Why doesn't it disappear when our cells are replaced? Looking at this question in this manner indicates that the disease or disability is stored in our cell's memory.

In 1988, Jacques Benveniste⁴⁸ demonstrated the principle of homeopathy. He diluted some medicine with water until the presence of the substance could no longer be detected. The diluted medicine had the same effect as the undiluted medicine, proving that water copies information and can remember it. Could this same principle be at work in our cells, and if so, might we be capable of influencing our cell memory in order to heal at a cellular level?

I'm afraid we won't find the answer amongst our standard Western treatments. In many cases, they are directed mainly at fighting symptoms, at removing the signs that our body gives us, the stimuli that can point us either directly or via a detour to our illness or disability. We often want it like that in the West. We don't want pain, we don't want signals from our body. We are like the harsh, critical parents who treat their body like a troublesome child who's asking for attention and should be quiet now. We have to be tough, stick it out, and suppress the pain. Our illness at first moves into our head, into our thoughts about our illness. Our paradigm is 'mind over matter', where we 'think' that we are in control of our body. But this paradigm is founded on ignorance. Our

body has an intelligence and consciousness that is endlessly more complex and complete than our ability to think. Moreover, when our body decides to get sick, we can think as much as we like, but it won't help a bit. Feeling might. Feeling helps us turn our attention inwards, so that we can try to catch on to the signals that our body sends us. Not like the impatient parent who demands to know what's going on now, but like the pilgrim, who looks at the body as the Sacred Temple in which he gets to stay.

Emoto has made some beautiful pictures of water crystals.⁴⁹ He decided to experiment with words, and pasted notes with expressions on the glasses in which he kept his water. Aggressively charged words led to ugly, disfigured crystals in the water. Words full of harmony and love led to beautiful crystals. If you take a look at these pictures you will have an idea of what the condition of our bodies is like. In order to heal, we have to start by learning to honor the sacredness of our body. It isn't known as the temple of the soul for nothing. This is where we reside in the dimension of lower vibrations. In the dimension that we have chosen to live in, we need our body to manifest ourselves. If we rediscover our souls and follow our calling, we will quickly discover that we need our body and our energies to realize our blueprint. However, many of us live like unresisting slaves, trapped in the endless treadmill of modern Western living. If we wander aimlessly and without soul over the Earth, we needn't be responsible for our own health. We think of our body as a troublesome and stubborn mode of transport, and one that should listen to us. This is where the source of many of our illnesses lies.

Rediscovering our soul can therefore lead us to honoring our body and caring for it. Skeptics sometimes compare the taking of an entheogenic substance to wanting to escape the Earth. The opposite, however, is true: whoever takes an entheogen as a sacrament and makes a Sacred Voyage can learn to realize how precious her time on Earth is and how badly she needs her body to be healthy. When we rediscover our soul, we finally realize how poorly we have treated our body until then.

The first step towards healing is therefore to stop mistreating her and to learn to listen to her, and feel what is going on inside us. Only when we learn how precious our body is and how intelligent it is can we start to cooperate with it. To a certain degree, that is, because our body has many autonomous vital functions. And that's a good thing: you wouldn't want to have to think about breathing all the time, or making your heart beat, or fighting off disease, digesting your food, and a thousand other

functions that take a million instructions per second. That is what our body is doing for us, all on its own. From that point of view our ego is extremely limited. While it may seem otherwise, we can only hold one thought at a time. And yet our autonomous body and our conscious thought can form a wonderful symbiosis. As long as we learn to listen to our body consciousness with our conscious thought. Most of us never learned how to do that. Worse yet, many of us were taught not to listen to our body when we were young. The first step to healing then is to restore our ability to listen to our body. It is 'childishly' simple: if your body indicates that it wants to defecate, then defecate. If you're hungry, eat. If you're tired, sleep. Learn the imprints that you have about your own bodily functions, such as not sleeping during the day, not going to the bathroom outside your home, eating at fixed moments, and so on. Undo yourself of the ideas about your body which were imprinted during childhood and start to listen to it. I believe that illnesses arise when we disrupt our bodily functions, or when they were disrupted during pregnancy or even in past lives. If we continue to deny the signs (which we were taught is the 'healthy' thing to do), and a fixed pattern arises, then the disruption is eventually stored in our cell's memory and becomes a fixed part of our system. This way our body ensures that she will continue existing in her current state. Newly formed cells have to 'know' how we treat our body and what form and condition their neighboring cells are in. All of our cells form an intelligent whole that operates according to how we treat ourselves. They are in constant resonance with each other and their environment. Just think of Emoto's crystals. Once we have programmed our cells to be 'sick', it can be very difficult to change. Especially when we deny the symptoms of our illness and have such a low opinion of our body. We can live a long life with many illnesses in our body without ever knowing it. Our body has an incredible strength and flexibility, and the intelligence to take over certain functions. Think of the smoker who gets to be very old. Many smokers see this as evidence that smoking isn't so bad for the body, but it is actually a sign that our body can sometimes resist incredible mistreatment. Sometimes. But what if we have ignored ourselves so much that our cells turn against us? Usually, we aren't even aware of how we torment ourselves and our bodies. It has become so normal in our culture to eat poorly, to work in an office behind a computer screen for eight hours a day or more, and to come home and poison ourselves with visual information and get too little sleep. And then, after years of

abuse, there is that deadly disease knocking on our door, the alarm bell that indicates that something has to change. Whether we caught the disease back in the womb and have been carrying it with us unconsciously, or whether we have created it through our lifestyle: it is our responsibility to carry her. To begin with, by carefully exploring where the illness lies. If we assume that we have four energy bodies (Chapter 11 – Energy Bodies), then we can feel and experience where our illnesses are manifesting. In our psyche, in our behavior? In our emotions, in our feelings? In our body, where the pain is stored? In our soul, in our belief and faith and connection to or isolation from others? We often sense the pain in our physical body, but its origin often lies in one of the bodies above it. If we do not express our emotions, then we store the painful energy in our body. This is usually a conscious act, like 'staying strong', just as we learned to do when we were children. The cause of our illness is then to be found in our psyche, while the symptoms lie in our body. Cutting into it, which has become the norm in our Western world, will rarely heal us.

The seeds of our illnesses were sometimes planted long before we developed consciousness. Fear and shame often conceal the destructive patterns we learned in our youth, which makes it very painful to see what we are really actually doing to ourselves. It's no surprise that medical science is powerless in front of so many of our problems. Healing is a matter of feeling, of love and respect for yourself, not of science. No matter how well we can dissect and analyze, we will never be able to master the intelligence of our body. And why would we want to? We should trust our body to heal itself once we restore its basic functions. That is, once we create the conditions for healing to happen. And that means, amongst other things, to find the cause of the illness, to face it, and to remove it. Most illnesses and addictions come into being because we didn't receive enough unconditional love during our childhood, which caused blockages in our development. This blocked emotional energy has taken root in the body and is preventing the energy from our various energy bodies from flowing freely. If we find the cause of our illness and remove it, there is a very great chance that in the next cycle of cell renewal, the new cell will receive healthy information. Do not confuse this with 'thinking ourselves better'. Thinking has nothing to do with it. Feeling is the key word. Our emotions are after all the bridge between our mental and physical body, between thought and organism. Therein

lies the key to our healing. Only when the bridge is restored and our emotional energy can flow as a messenger between body and mind, can she restore her contact with the spiritual body: with the indispensable energy of spirit. One cannot function without the other. If there is a point in the cycle where energy is not allowed to flow, then the cycle of energy is broken as a signal that something is the matter. Just as water stops flowing when there is a dam in the river. Our emotions are like our roots in the Earth, which feed us with strength. Our spiritual body is our connection to the Source, which feeds us with Light. It is this circle of energy that provides us with the energy of life, and which we ourselves have broken at some point in time, consciously or unconsciously, and which we can learn to restore again. As long as we learn to be aware of our feelings and to be loving of ourselves. It begins with learning to express our locked up emotions. We are going to have to learn to release everything that we've been storing up for years, no matter how painful that is (as Dr. Simonton discovered, the cancer patients who healed with his method were mostly those who gave room for their own emotions to be expressed). Only then can we complete the circle again and let our energy flow. In order to truly and lastingly heal, we can learn to have insight into our own blockages and why it is that we don't express our emotions. Is it shame? Are we trying to stay strong? Do we think we're not worthy of expressing ourselves? Pitiable, disagreeable, childish? Track down your own self-destructive imprints and bring them to Light. Only when we know why we do not express ourselves, and how we *can* learn to express ourselves, can we truly heal. At a cellular level. We can only reach the cell level once we are completely convinced of our illness, give it up, and transform it into the will to live. That is exactly one of the goals of the Sacred Voyage. That is exactly why we learn in the method of the Voyage to give up our control and to surrender to the endlessly intelligent consciousness of our physical body. In so doing, we sidestep the conditioned and deformed patterns of thinking, and descend directly into our emotional body. Here, every ounce of stored emotional energy that we can handle at that moment can present itself and be released. Emotions can wash over us in a torrent of energy, but as long as we surrender to it and let the tidal waves flow over and through us, nothing will happen to us. One of the most important jobs of the Guide is to encourage us to float along with the stream and not to fight it.

Deeply rooted emotions such as sadness, anger, and shame, and everything that we store up to poison ourselves and make us ill, can be released. While we can visit the realms of our past traumas by, for example, looking at childhood photographs or listening to emotionally charged music (music that we listened to in our youth), our physical and emotional bodies will often release themselves spontaneously. Therapeutic counseling will sometimes work contrarily: our body knows best what's good for us, at our own speed. The role of the Guide is, and I cannot stress this enough, not that of a therapist. The Loving Guide watches over us, cares for us, and encourages us. We find true healing within ourselves when our soul points out the way to healing. Our Guide can speak to us encouragingly, give us a hint, or offer a shoulder for comfort, but it is us, it is our soul which sets the true healing in motion. If the Voyager faces her emotional baggage in this dimension, and releases it, along with which she will often have to process unfinished material from past lives, her stay in the womb, and her early childhood, then a miracle often takes place. The roots of the emotional body are restored and start to feed all the upper bodies, the mental and the spiritual, with strength, so that she can close the circle and attract Light. This in turn lets energy flow again. If she now learns to integrate the experience and the lessons that have been revealed to her by her body, then she can heal. At a cellular level.

I realize that the description I'm giving here is a terrible simplification of what really happens. It is also not necessary to analyze the underlying principles of the Voyage and to understand them intellectually. Our body and our soul instinctively understand what is happening, and react by creating a new balance so that we can walk the path to healing and health. This is also the magical aspect of healing at the cell level. Magic as universal power, the power that inspires living beings. The power that so massively surrounds us, but to which our eyes are shut. The power that has given us life, and that can give us life, healing, and health again. Magic according to the definition of Scott Cunningham:⁵⁰

'Magic is the creation of change by using forces that have not yet been discovered or acknowledged by science'.

It is exactly these forces that we will work with when we enter the Sacred Dimension by Voyaging with the help of an entheogenic sacrament. By using a *magical* sacrament we do indeed enter the realm

where science still has its training wheels on: the realm of *power*, the power of life itself. We can learn to practice magic in this realm and to heal in miraculous (read: to science, inexplicable) ways from any illness or ailment. Practicing magic is acting from our desire instead of acting from our thinking. Magic healing is acting out of our need to be healthy, our desire to live fully. If we walk the path with wrong intentions, the magic will not support us. Quite the opposite. If we practice magic because we think we have been sick long enough, and want to be ready to go back to work on Monday, she will work against us. If, however, we use magic to discover what is making us sick, and we have resolved to integrate the resulting insights into our life, then magic can become an ally of unprecedented ability, an ally that helps us to become healthy. An ally that works together with our soul and that helps us to find inspiration. That is what magic can do for you. An ancient wisdom of witchcraft says that what you give, good or evil, will come back threefold. So use magic wisely!

In the magical Sacred Dimension, everything that we can imagine is possible. The intent of the heart reigns here, not the delusion of our thoughts. And yet it is our mind, our thinking, which can lead us to the Sacred Dimension. Only once our mind learns to see that it is ill, will he be able to start letting go of his resistance. Then he can learn to understand that healing at a cellular level is beyond his power and ability. That he has to learn to surrender himself in order to survive. This is the pact that the ruling ego can make with the soul. For our mental body, or mind, the most important thing is the intent to want to live and heal. I am therefore writing this book more for our conscious ego than for our soul. With the knowledge and experience of our conscious ego, our thinking, we can lead our being, our body and soul, to healing; or, at the very least, we can stop standing in her way. It is possible to make a conscious step towards giving up control for a while, and surrendering ourselves to the experience, which can be terrifying, painful, and extremely emotional. No matter how difficult it is for us to temporarily give up our control, she offers us the chance for true healing. Beyond the realms of our illnesses, beyond our thinking, beyond our symptoms and our blockages. Beyond death, which is nothing more than the transition to another stage, from low Earth vibrations to higher soul vibrations. With the Sacred Voyage we can travel beyond the realms of death to the land of our soul, and we can return with a wealth of experience, lust for life, and, above all, with our soul as our ally. That is the process of true

healing which cannot be described through any pen. It can only be experienced. If we no longer fear death, but see it as our companion, as our natural transition to a higher vibration, then we can welcome our soul and make the utmost of every minute we have left to live. Just like the people who have had a near-death experience, as Moody and Kübbler-Ross have documented extensively. Almost without exception, these people have thrown overboard their fear and reservation to live fully, and have garnered an incredible lust for life on the other side. They live life as if each day is their last. What would you do today, if you knew that this was your last day to live? Would you be able to do and experience everything that you want to do on Earth in this life? Let your soul heal your cells and get ready for a surprise. Your life is much too beautiful to be wasted. It is our birthright to get everything out of it that we can, to be healthy, and to enjoy. Let love flow through your veins and breathe: live!

32 **Method for Magical Healing at a Cellular Level**

The method for magical healing at a cellular level which I will introduce to you is a method that isn't founded in any scientific theory, and I would therefore urge you that you would interpret it accordingly. This is also why I explicitly refer to her as 'magical'. I am neither a physician nor a scientist, and I will never choose to enter one of these professions. Better yet, like my great hero Leonardo da Vinci,⁵¹ I have a healthy mistrust against medical science and her practitioners. A mistrust that is fed by the enormous conflicts of interest that characterize this sector. Research is primarily done or sponsored by pharmaceutical companies who are interested in results that indicate the directions they want to go in, and who get us hooked to our illnesses with expensive medicines. Medicines aren't made in order to help us heal, they are produced to make a whole lot of money. Apart from this, as I have already described, there is the phenomenon of doctors who have less and less time for us and who are out mostly to remove our symptoms and keep us going instead of healing us. When I spoke to a doctor about this sad business not too long ago, she fully recognized it and even acknowledged that she is obligated to work off an enormous list of patients every day. A couple of minutes per patient and it's time for the next one. She indicated to me that she hated having to treat people this way, but that the current medical system gave her no choice in the matter.

The measure of our health seems to be whether or not we are able to work our jobs. In plain words, I think I'm right in saying that our health care system is sick. I won't go any deeper into this claim, she represents a feeling more than a reasoned line of thought. It is based on observation, just as any person who looks upon our health care system with eyes of truth can conclude. Only people with vested interests will probably argue differently. I treat this as a fact, not as an argument that has to be waged. Not because I wouldn't want to go into discussion with an army of representatives of our health care industry, but purely because of the – to me – indisputable following fact:

Your health is your own responsibility.

From this point of view, I am not describing the method of the Voyage as an expert. I describe my method as a fellow human being,

acquaintance, or friend, who is concerned with his own health and has claimed responsibility for it. I am concerned for the health of others and am aware that the way in which I have sought health has brought forth a method which could mean deliverance for many people with serious illnesses and afflictions. I realize that by simply making this statement, I might be calling on the wrath of an all-powerful industry which profits from your illnesses and your dependency on their medicines. But I am willing to take that risk. As long as you consider everything that I write as tips from a friend who is concerned for your health, I am willing to describe a method which has the potential to magically heal you at a cellular level.

The responsibility for using my method is entirely in your hands. Not that I doubt its effectiveness. Quite the opposite. I would love to take the credit for all the miracles that you can perform with the Sacred Voyage, but that wouldn't be honest. The miracles happen because you want them to happen. With the right intent, the intent to be healed from whatever ails you, with your emotional commitment, and with the right knowledge, you can perform miracles, no matter what the pessimistic sourpusses of the medical industry say. Apparently they have never encountered the power of magic, which can forge a very powerful medicine from the bonding of intent, emotion, and knowledge.

As long as you claim responsibility for yourself, just as I once did. That does not mean that you should suddenly stop the treatments you may be following in a hospital or with a personal physician. That is not the way to take responsibility for yourself. Our medical sciences have undoubtedly brought forth a lot of good, and when your life is in danger, you are usually in the right hands with our doctors. However, when you want to truly get and stay healthy, then those same doctors have no idea what to do, for the simple reason that we in the West have no idea what health really means. Representatives of the various pharmaceutical companies push and shove each other to be the first to show that their products have been shown – in self-sponsored research – to make us healthy. And yet the only health these companies are concerned with is that of their market shares. They have no idea what health means to us. Is it a body without shortcomings? A mind that functions optimally? Having a job and being able to support a family? We have no answer ready, which is logical, because there is no answer! Only you can feel for yourself when you are healthy. You feel when you have a clear and calm mind, when your body is in excellent condition, and when you have an

abundance of life energy. There is no norm, no standard measure. You are the standard. The unique standard that was given to you when you were born. You determine whether you surrender that responsibility to others or whether you claim it and carry it yourself. That, in any case, is the mindset I expect from you if you wish to use the method of the Sacred Voyage in order to heal yourself magically at a cellular level and become healthy.

Becoming healthy begins with taking responsibility. Taking responsibility for what you feel, and acting accordingly. Intent, emotion, and knowledge, the ingredients of magic. If you miss one of these three ingredients, you are missing responsibility. Responsibility for standing up for yourself. There is only one fitting question: what is stopping you? I am going to assume for now that you do take responsibility for yourself and that you feel what is good for you. The Sacred Voyage is not a method which you have to believe in ahead of time or simply assume to be true. You never have to do anything! You will be able to feel every step that you take on the path of the Voyage, and you will be able to judge for yourself on the basis of this feeling whether or not the method is of benefit to you. You determine your path on the basis of this feeling. I have no responsibility on this account, nor does anyone else but you. You are the ones pulling your strings.

Right then, I can almost hear you thinking: what does this method of the Voyage consist of? What is so controversial about it? First of all, there is the aforementioned concept of 'responsibility'. In the West, we let our little children get treated by Big Important People In Very White Suits, who have studied in order to know what is good for us. The first step in getting healthy, as we mentioned before, is the claim to our birthright, our responsibility. The second step is the insight that our illness is usually nothing more than a barrier of our own creation to stop ourselves from being healthy! Yes, it might seem a little direct, but this is usually the case, no matter what the graduates of Complicatedology would have us believe. With a bit of responsibility, a bit of knowledge, a lot of emotion, a bit of magic and a whole lot of love for yourself, you can start to discover why you are preventing yourself from being healthy. You can also, like so many others, choose to fight the symptoms, but that is contrary to the method of the Voyage. The path of the Voyage helps you to face the causes of your own illness. This is the magical aspect of the

Voyage, the path of the shaman which you can learn to walk. Facing the cause is one thing, taking responsibility for it is an entirely different story. Your story! That is where your own powers of creation and your own unique life story begin. Furthermore, I have focused the method on a few things which are healthy for everyone, such as detoxing, good diet, and the healing of your cells. If you learn to take responsibility for the self-destructive patterns that you have learned, you will be much less of a hindrance to your own healing. That is basically what we do when we make the Voyage and start on the path towards healing.

What I want to teach you with the methods of the Voyage is that you are going to help your body to heal. That you are supporting her in your healing process, or, at the very least, that you are going to stop getting in her way! Magical healing at a cellular level is healing on a physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual level. Together these four energy bodies, which I have described above, determine our health. They are linked to the basic characteristics of our existence: ‘being, feeling, thinking, and believing’. Our connection to the Earth (physical, being), our heart (emotional, feeling), our mind (mental, thinking), and our soul (spiritual, believing). When you start to apply the method of the Voyage to yourself, you will cleanse these energy bodies, feed them, and heal them. Treating just one body at a time – such as doctors who treat our bodies, therapists who treat our emotions, psychologists who treat our minds, and priests who treat our souls – is not enough. We are going to learn how to work with all four bodies simultaneously. When you learn to work with yourself in this way, and you really start to get know yourself, you will heal in a way that our Western world has hardly any knowledge of. You heal as a human being, as a whole human being. Or rather, you become healthy as a human being. I am confident enough to state that with this way of becoming healthy, you will eventually never need a specific medicine again. The method works for nearly every of the known pathologies. Not on the basis of a medical claim or some sort of miracle drug, but on the basis of the unmistakable fact that we, as human beings, are created healthy, and that if we remember our true nature and live according to it, that there is nothing left standing between us and our health. Your true nature is being healthy. Do you dare to accept the challenge? Do you dare to make the Voyage, dare to take responsibility for your ‘well-being’? Or did you just buy some shares in the pharmaceutical industry?

I realize that there are people who are in an advanced stage of illness, for whom my method or another may come too late. I also realize that there are people who have a disease that as of yet is considered incurable, such as Aids or certain types of cancer. If a body is too far along in the course of an illness, and has begun the process of dying and transitioning to another form of energy, then we usually cannot reverse the process. That is the reality of life on this Earth in a lower vibration.

And yet I strongly believe that people with either an incurable disease or a very serious illness in an advanced stage have a lot to gain from the method of the Sacred Voyage. First of all because it optimally supports the healing process and purifies, feeds, and if possible, heals the various energy bodies. On an emotional level you will encounter many of your emotions and feelings, which will help you to come clean with yourself and your transition process. This physical and emotional enlightenment can be invaluable during the suffering that an incurable disease can bring with it, and she can considerably improve the quality of life that is still left to be lived. I see no good in unnecessarily extending life, even though I know that our society by and large has a different opinion on this. I do see a lot of good in the processing of traumas, traumas that we have dragged along our whole lives and which are often the cause of our illness. When we do get the chance to face these in our dying process and bring them to Light, we can be better prepared for what is coming and then let go. Perhaps the most important thing for people who are crossing over is the connection to the spiritual body, the soul, and from thereon to the world soul. We live in a world where spirituality is largely absent. With the Voyage, we learn to explore inner realms that form a bridge to the world soul. This way we can discover that there is a vulnerable Inner Child inside us, a Child that carries our traumas and our joys. She is the source of our life energy. When we close ourselves off from her, we inevitably set our own dying process in motion. When we embrace the Child in our heart and care for her, she may yet reveal the path to the Deity within. If we succeed in uncovering this path and in experiencing and feeling the Deity within, we can feel in all our being what our true nature is. We can feel connected, connected to all life. When we cross over with this connection, with true spirituality, then death will no longer be such a threatening black hole that tears at our heart. When we come clean with ourselves and cross over with the Child in our heart and the Deity in our being, then the transition can be a natural, familiar, and enriching experience on the path to the unknown.

But we aren't there yet. Let us investigate how we can get everything out of this life that there is to get. How we can get healthy and can live in accordance with our heart and our soul.

33 **Life Energy**

As I showed before, the Sacred Voyage is a wonderful method for tracking down the cause of your illnesses, regardless of their nature. Of course that isn't the whole story yet. Perhaps the method seems radical or strange to you. Both impressions are certainly true. It is radical because the Voyage takes us to the power that is hidden deep within each of us. It is strange because it surprises us and shows us sides of ourselves and the universe to which we belong that we did not know (yet). And still, the making of a Voyage on its own is not enough to heal ourselves. We can pretty much assume that if you live in the West, you don't have the best state of health. Our diet is miserable, our air and water are polluted, our tempo too hasty. Our cells are polluted to the core, and no matter how strange and radical the Voyage may be for us, we will have to dedicate ourselves more to our healing if we really want results. The key words here are *life energy*.

In other cultures, life energy is called prana, chi, or ki. It is the life giving essence that is in everything and which vitalizes us. Think of the oxygenated air after a rainstorm, the clear water of a mountain stream, the juice of an orange ripened in the sun. The sun is our most powerful prana provider, our basic source of chi. When we are healthy, our life energy is reflected in all our energy bodies, in the clarity of our thinking, the purity of our emotions, the power and fitness of our body, and in the faith and belief in the soul. Prana, chi, or ki is the foundation of our health. By making a Sacred Voyage, and using an entheogenic substance in a safe place under Loving Guidance, we cleanse our energy system all at once. We clean up old polluted and trapped energy and let new, fresh energy flow again. However, when we stay stuck in our destructive patterns, we will soon silt up again and lose our regained vitality. Magical healing at a cellular level requires us to take responsibility for our own health, and to choose life. Those who have lung cancer and yet keep on smoking can Voyage as much as they like but they won't heal. The first thing our body needs is our intent to heal. If we are determined to live, then our body will help us to heal. Our intent is not some vague or half-hearted goal, but an attitude to life that we express in the way we live. Assuming that we are free human beings, and that we structure our lives in the way that we want. The basic principle behind this is that we don't owe anything to anyone except ourselves. Our self respect gives us

the opportunity to give and take when and if we can and want to. We are responsible for ourselves and our health. When we take this responsibility and have the intent to live and heal, then we can put a stop to our destructive habits:

- *doing work that fulfills us and gives us joy;*
- *eating healthily;*
- *caring for our body and cherishing it;*
- *breathing fresh air;*
- *relaxing, lazying around, and looking within;*
- *giving our body healthy exercise;*
- *avoiding busy places and activities;*
- *loving ourselves and others.*

This is not a complete list, but a randomly chosen list of intentions that each person can express in their lives in their own way. Let's take a look at the intent to truly live. When we desire to magically heal at a cellular level, and we use our mental power to encourage our cells to heal, and our emotional power to free up energy that is standing in the way of our healing, and we build up our physical strength and fitness, and seek enlightenment with soulpower and love, then we can tap into the energy that we need to heal. At a physical level, however, this is not enough. At the physical level, we need life energy. Our energy reserves are not enough. Our water supply is chemically treated, and it has no natural chi left in it. The prana in our air has been banished by exhaust fumes, and the solar power has escaped our fruit because most of the fruit we buy has never seen daylight. If we even eat fruit, because most of us are addicted to eating food that has never seen the sun out of packages and wrappers, and therefore has no nutritional value at all, only toxic value. We are brainwashed as children by potentially fatal information. We get presents from McDonald's, the great friend of children, and we get to celebrate our birthday there. We are brought up associating happiness

and joy with something that has potentially fatal results: poor eating habits. It's no accident that we comfort ourselves with fatty foods and candy, because we are indoctrinated to do so (yippee, it's my birthday, we get to eat candy and French fries today!). By eating poorly, we rob ourselves of vital energy and the chance to become healthy on our own. We are doing the same thing on a macro scale to the Earth: by cutting down the forests that purify our atmosphere and supply us with oxygen, and poisoning the water, air, and earth, we are taking away her ability to cleanse herself.

Breathing fresh air, drinking a few liters of purified water every day, and a healthy, balanced diet are the first steps to activate our natural healing abilities. Healing is not a matter of pretending to be a doctor. We don't need all those experts. The only thing we have to do in order to heal is to stop getting in our own way. Our body is naturally equipped to heal itself. Help it to do so! I do not mean that doctors are unnecessary. If you break a leg, or have an ear infection, doctors can help you with that. But when it comes to the healing of illnesses, I think the men in the white jackets can step aside and leave it to us and our body to heal. As long as we take responsibility for it. Prana, chi, ki, or whatever you want to call it, is the key. Let it flow richly and heal.

Learn how to breathe consciously and to direct your breathing according to the tensions in your body. Learn how to let prana flow throughout your body by practicing pranayama breathing exercises. Learn yoga techniques to tense and relax your body. Work at making a slender and flexible body, free from stress. Yoga is great for this because it doesn't demand any achievements, nor competition with others. It is focussed on relaxing you and bringing deep inner tranquility. The concentrated tranquility that you need in order to meditate regularly. Hasty and agitated as we Westerners are, we cannot sit still for more than five minutes. By meditating, you learn how to be still and step beyond the endless stream of thoughts to where it is peaceful and empty. Breathing techniques, yoga, and meditation techniques, apart from being excellent practices to gain more vitality, are also great preparations for the Sacred Voyage. Most Voyages take around four to eight hours, and require us to relax and turn our attention inwards. Eastern philosophies teach us this in a sympathetic and pleasant way, that is to say, without linking it to a specific belief system or dogma. Yoga is education without belief. In any

case, whoever wants to seriously explore the depths of the Sacred Dimension in order to magically heal, will benefit from learning the aforementioned Eastern techniques.

What I am describing here is not some prefabricated life path, or a way of saying 'this is how you should do it'. It is a list of suggestions that you can explore for yourself if you wish to walk the path of responsibility and healing. Of course you could immerse yourself in excuses like: 'I don't have time for it', or 'I don't feel like it'. Whether you take it or not, you have the final responsibility! Choose your own path, walk it, and accept the consequences. Of course we have camouflaged our Western world so that it seems as if we don't have any responsibility, and there is always a health care system, doctor, or organization ready to care for us; but when it really comes down to it, it is still us who makes the final payment. What are you prepared to do, and what are you prepared to leave behind?

If you Voyage, you will probably come to discover this for yourself. The Sacred Dimension, where our soul has its heavenly throne, is full of teachers and guides who stand by us and who can teach us how to live healthily to hasten our recovery. This is also why I am not writing down a health manual: being healthy is different for all of us, and begins with your own lust for life, your will to live. If you don't have that yet, no lust for life, then find her! In the Sacred Dimension, you may well be confronted with the reason why you do not yet dare to live fully. Having no life energy or lust for life is not a bad thing in itself, as long as you don't take it for granted. Whoever gives in to the conformity of our culture and who accepts the soulless and empty diet that we are served every day, is literally prey to the world and is doomed to die. I strongly urge that everyone, you and I, claim our right to live with heart and soul, to do work that fulfills us, to lazy about when we feel like it, to feed ourselves with vital food, to lavish our thirst on prana-rich water, and to fill our lungs with chi-rich air. Let us join our hearts with those people who are dear to us, and live with love and lust for life. We don't need anything more than that! If our life energy is flowing, we enter into our natural state of being, and we become who we are meant to be, just like a river follows her natural course when she is fed by enough water. If our life energy is flowing, we are fulfilled, and we can live from our own

center, with heart and soul. Let us take a look at how we can rid the poison from our energy bodies and banish it from our life.

When you are sick, you can be sure of the fact that you are full of poisons. Being sick is nothing more than a signal from your body that it is exhausted. It gets most exhausted from the constant flow of poison that we feed ourselves and our various energy bodies, whether we know it or not. In fact, we are so used to poison, in all of its forms, that we have even become addicted to them. Detoxifying is easier said than done, because poison is so normal and accepted in our lives. Poison, for example, in the form of lies and malice in our relationships. Lying has become a national sport, as is clear in politics and ad campaigns. The figureheads of our Western society lie like their lives depend on it, and then they rarely come through on their promises. Everyone sees it, and we let it happen. Vomit up their rubbish! The same goes for our diet. The mighty multinationals make us believe that alcohol makes us cool or sexy, that chocolate bars give us energy, and they fire thousands of other misleading messages at us. We swallow it all! In the name of our consumer society, who will dismantle the deception? I have liberated myself from the Great Lie in a childish simple way. A few years ago, out of protest, I tossed out my television, followed by my radio and my subscription to several newspapers and magazines. If I need information, I look it up on the internet. Only once I had isolated myself from the ether polluters did it become clear how addicted I was to the poison that they spread day in day out. For two weeks I had withdrawal symptoms; since then, I haven't missed any of them for a moment. At the same time, I regained heaps of free time that I could put to good use exploring what I think is truly important in life. I read hundreds of books in my new free time, books that brought me ever so slightly closer to solving the puzzles of my life. One of those puzzles was: how do I get rid of those vast quantities of poison in my body? How can I get healthy again? The tips and suggestions that I am going to give you next might each be puzzle pieces to you on your own way to healing. Apply them and feel what they do for you. Drop the suggestions that don't do anything for you after you've tried them, and embrace those which empower you on your way to healing. None of the methods that I suggest make use of willpower or perseverance. The methods that I suggest work with loving attention for yourself. And I have personally tested each of the methods that I suggest. The methods are exceedingly cheap in cost and high in return. Moreover, we are not benefiting the medical and pharmaceutical industry, which

might not help their shareholders, but it is extremely healthy for the balance of power in the world. Take advantage of the things you can use on your path to wholeness and healing!

Breathing

I learned about the purifying powers of breathing during my yoga and meditation training. Yogis claim that we only use about thirty to forty percent of our lung capacity, which is enough to survive. But oxygen is the most important element in our nutrition. Without oxygen we wouldn't last five minutes. If we can increase our oxygen intake, we can increase our intake of life energy. Furthermore, our exhalation is just as important to our health because it releases poisons from the body. If we can increase our exhalation, we can increase the amount of waste and poison that we expel from our body. If we, on top of this, can hold our breath in for a few counts, then we can drastically increase the quality of our lives. It's that simple. In order to learn how to breathe well, we need to be lucid and aware. We can keep it up for a while purely through our conscious intent and some discipline, but we will quickly return to our old patterns. Breathing is an autonomic function. Luckily we keep on breathing while we are asleep. If we pay conscious attention to our breathing, we can learn quite a lot about ourselves. If we fill only the top of our lungs, with a superficial breath, then we could be stressed or emotional. By giving our breath space, instead of trying to control her, there is a good chance that the underlying emotions will get enough space to come out and come to Light. Giving ourselves and our emotions enough space, that is what it's all about. If we do this, and we learn to express ourselves, our breathing will automatically become more voluminous and we will get the life energy that we want and need so badly in our healing process. The paradox here is that, through yoga and meditation techniques, we can become conscious of our breathing patterns and of our emotions, but we cannot change her consciously. In fact, if you follow your yoga or meditation teachings too closely then there is a good chance that you are manipulating your emotional experience. You may have a controlled breathing pattern, but not a richer emotional experience. By creating space, real space for breathing as well as for your emotions, then you can grow. By being attentive and giving space to that which wishes to show itself to you. Pay special attention to how you bottle up emotions or breaths. As soon as you catch wind of that process, you can turn it

around. It's no accident that breath and emotions are connected to each other. Both of them give life.

An important step that you can take on the road to your healing is actively practicing yoga, meditation, and breathing techniques. Choose that which fits best with you, and keep feeling whether the techniques you are learning are helping you to become conscious of your feelings. Learn to direct your attention inwards. That is the first and perhaps the most important step on the way to healing. Meditation has nothing to do with withdrawing yourself from the world or leading an ascetic life. Meditation literally means: 'coming into your own center', and that is exactly what you want to learn on the way to health and healing. Coming into the center of your own being, into your consciousness of being conscious. That is where you find the strength and wisdom to heal.

Water

We humans consist of around sixty to eighty percent water, depending on our age and other factors. Without water we can last a few days, but no more than that. And it's no coincidence that our Earth consists of about eighty percent water. You could say that 'water *is* life'. Especially when you realize that water has its own memory, and perhaps even its own consciousness, as both Benveniste and Emoto have shown in their own ways. In order to keep our water levels up, we have to drink a lot. Most of us have learned to memorize the dates of wars in school, but never learned to breathe properly or to drink a lot, which are much more important topics! Our inner waste management system is founded on the use of water, and a lot of it leaves our body as urine or as sweat. When we decide to heal, we decide (in)directly to undo ourselves of poisons. We can help by drinking a lot of water, with a minimum of about one and a half liters a day (six glasses). Spread out over the whole day, between meals (without drinking a half hour before or after a meal, because it impedes digestion). It takes some getting used to and can feel like an enormous task. Especially when your entire system has to get used to it, and it seems like you are in the bathroom peeing the whole day long. Just think of this as a good sign, because your body is expelling poisons and toxins at a higher rate. Nowadays you can buy half liter bottles of mineral water. It has been a great help to my level of discipline to carry one of these bottles with me all day and to refill it

when it is empty. Within a month, it will have become a habit, and you will be 'healthily addicted' to the essence of life. Furthermore, showering and bathing are also very healthy habits that you are welcome to keep up as long as you can. It has been said that Yogis get to be so old because they bathe at least one hour a day..!

Fasting

Another method of getting rid of poisons is fasting. Mystical traditions are familiar with fasting as a part of their purification rituals. For us, fasting is an excellent way to rid ourselves of old and settled poisons that won't budge at all. We can fast by withholding from eating for a day, a few days, or even a whole week. In the latter case, it may be wise to seek the support of a dietitian or a sympathetic doctor. Everyone can fast for a few days on their own. You can limit yourself to drinking a lot of water (a must!), fruit and vegetable juice (juice fasting), or fresh vegetable soup (soup fasting). Allow yourself to rest, sleep, and relax a lot when fasting. Your body will automatically switch over to removing the poisons from your body, and you can feel that as nausea, tiredness, and dizziness. You will probably also feel hunger. If you can tolerate these feelings, and really give them space instead of trying to distract yourself from them, you will often find old, bottled up emotions revealing themselves and being released. Care for yourself and the feelings that come to Light. They are symbols of the poison that is leaving your body. Make fasting one of your regular rituals, with which you can purify yourself from time to time at a moment that feels right to you. You might consider preparing yourself for a fast with an enema. Our intestines are there to transport toxins out of our body, but are often cramped up by our poor diets and our blocked emotions. If we practice colon therapy, the intestines are cleansed in a soft and natural way in less than an hour, which can be a benefit and support to our detoxification. Don't be surprised if an enema brings up very old emotions during or after the procedure. Not only do we often store unwanted emotions in and around our intestines, but many of our earliest suppressed emotions are connected to defecation. Welcome these feelings if they arise, embrace them, and let them be free. That is the Royal Road to healing. Fasting is also an excellent preparation for making a Sacred Voyage.

Sunflower Oil Therapy

The Ukrainian doctor F. Karach⁵² has developed a detoxification cure that is just as simple as it is effective: Sunflower Oil Therapy. Hans Plomp and Gerben Hellinga put me on to this powerful method with their wonderful book '*Uit je bol*' ('*Out of Your Mind*', a must for aspiring Voyagers!), which fits perfectly with our search for detoxification. I have been using the method myself, with extraordinary results. Just like the other suggestions I give here, I recommend that you research this method and experience it for yourself. This is how it works. Buy a bottle of organic, cold-pressed sunflower oil in a health store. In the morning, before eating breakfast, take somewhere between a teaspoon and a tablespoon into your mouth and rinse your mouth with it, between your teeth, and over your tongue. Keep this up for at least a quarter of an hour, and up to half an hour. Then spit out the oil, which most likely has changed from golden yellow to off-white. This is a sign that the oil contains toxins. Dr. Karach strongly recommends that you do not swallow any of the oil. Moreover, he claims that all sorts of infections can quickly be healed with this method. He says he healed himself from fifteen years of blood disease, and that the oil therapy even works with serious illnesses such as cancer. Speaking from my own experience, I can say that the method is exceptionally effective. The first thing you will notice after a single rinsing is that your teeth will be much whiter and cleaner and that your tongue will look much healthier.

Massage and Tea

There are lots of ways to detoxify and there are many methods and substances to help you with it. Drink fennel tea, nettle tea, and green tea, they will be an extra support in the process of detoxification. Saint John's Wort tea is a charity to our entire system, but be careful not to drink it a few days before making a Voyage with Ayahuasca. Furthermore, you can support your detoxification process by getting a massage when you visit the sauna.

The first step towards healing has been taken!

The methods described above are not suggestions that will drastically alter your life, but they are each useful tips in detoxifying your body and getting onto the path towards healing. The reward for your detoxification

will often reveal itself through a younger appearance, a smooth skin, more life energy, and other improvements in your wellbeing. Detoxification is a process that benefits nearly everybody, but is above all a necessity for those who are ill and have the intention to heal at a cellular level. Detoxification is therefore the first tangible intent towards your body, with which you send a signal that you really mean it. That you are going to help your body from now on to deal with the disease and to beat it. Detoxification is the beginning of the process of removing the blockages between you and your health. Now let's take a look at your immunity!

35 **Building Up Your Immunity and Strength**

Detoxifying our body is a continuous process for us Westerners. We are constantly breathing in polluted air, we eat and drink poorly, and we often suffer from stress. Now that we have taken responsibility for the garbage dump which, to put it bluntly, our body has become, we can investigate how to build up our health, our immunity, our strength, and our fitness. Many of us try to do this without a detoxification process, but by doing so we are actually building upon a layer of toxic soil. We have to dig it out first, and then start building! We build by supplying our body with all the essential nutrients that it needs in order to function. As I showed before, we are constantly being lied to about what is good for us. Here too we can go along with it and give up our responsibility, or we can choose for ourselves. In the latter case, which I hope you adhere to, you will begin to feel from now on what is truly sustaining you. You want to heal from that which is making you ill, so you will have to make choices and take responsibility. While I deeply detest the words 'have to', I can't get around them here. I know that we live in a society that profits from keeping its masses 'dumb'. If you want to heal, you are going to have to engage your intelligence. Or, at the very least, your intuition. Feel what is good for you. I know from my own experience how difficult it is. Supermarkets are brimming with foods in attractive packaging which have zero percent nutritional value. Even the fruits and vegetables, which are mostly from greenhouses, have often never seen a single ray of sunlight, and are therefore as good as useless! Next we cook and bake our food and make it totally worthless. Use your own drive to explore and take responsibility for your diet, mentally and physically. That is what I want to impress upon you if you really want to heal. Awaken! Become aware of the garbage that we get served daily and which is labeled healthy. It's a nightmare! Go eat sun food, raw food on which our forefathers survived. Eat grains for breakfast and supplement them with fruit. Make a salad of raw vegetables and eat fish with it. Supplement your diet with Spirulina and other algae-based dietary supplements. Immerse yourself in the world of vitamins and minerals, because our diet has long been short on the building materials we need. Supplement your diet with multivitamins that contain all the necessary substances.

Furthermore, take a minimum of three grams (three thousand mg!) of vitamin C.⁵³⁵⁴ This is a dosage which the two-time Nobel prize winner

Linus Pauling recommended. The fifty milligram dose which our government advises us is almost criminal, and is just enough to keep scurvy at bay. Just like the half hour of exercise that the government suggests. Funny that the lunch break we modern office slaves get is half an hour. Is a brisk walk of half an hour across the concrete courtyard of the office work camp enough movement for one day? It might not come in handy in our labor unions and job negotiations, but we humans need hours of fresh outdoor air and exercise every day! Now back to the most important vitamin. We are one of the few mammals who have degenerated and are incapable of producing our own vitamin C in our bodies. Our diets also haven't contained enough of this essential vitamin for a very long time. Vitamin C is essential in the fight against free radicals, and furthermore, she makes our white blood cells, the defenders against disease, more energetic and therefore more effective. In theory, it is impossible to take too much vitamin C as long as you keep to the method of stomach tolerance. This is how it works: experiment with how much of this vitamin you need, and how much you can take. Take one thousand milligrams every hour. When your stomach and guts start to rumble, you've used too much. Decrease the dosage. If you take too much C, the worst that can happen is some diarrhea. Getting kidney stones from it is a myth and has long been disproved by scientists. In fact, C helps to prevent kidney stones! Furthermore, this vitamin is absolutely crucial in building up our immunity, which is why I am paying so much attention to it here. If you increase the amount you take, you will feel the benefits for yourself.

Science has been trying for years to show that vitamin C has no effect at all, but has had no success. There is no patent to be had on vitamin C, making it very cheap, so it is hardly interesting to the pharmaceutical industry. In any case, my health and energy levels have profited greatly from taking large quantities of C. I have been doing it for years, since long before I heard about Linus Pauling. This health guru, who lived to be ninety three, confirmed what my body already knew: vitamin C is essential and we need great quantities of it. Pauling himself says he used about fifteen grams a day, and in case of illness up to forty grams! Find out for yourself what feels right. Definitely experiment with high doses if you are making a Voyage, and you want to heal at a cellular level from serious or less than serious illnesses, based on your own stomach tolerance. Vitamin C is one of the least poisonous vitamins. If you take too much, it will leave your body through your urine. Why take so much

then? I once read a brilliant explanation for it: our system is leaking like a sieve. We need such high quantities because it leaks right out of us, and we need enough to make sure that our body can absorb it. We can also discover that our body will gradually get used to higher quantities of vitamin C, which is one of the signs that we are truly healing.

Aside from healthy eating and drinking habits, the Yoga, meditation, and breathing exercises I mentioned before also help to build up your immunity and your strength. Add them to your list of healthy habits and choose the path towards healing. And don't forget about nature! Seek out fresh air in the outdoors, in a forest or at the beach, and go for a walk. Embrace these habits and you will see that your health has already improved. In any case, you will already have completed several of the requirements and preparations for making a Sacred Voyage. Better yet, you have already begun it by reading this book, and may have been stimulated by it to take action. No matter what, becoming healthy by any method begins with purifying your body and building up your immunity. Take your health seriously and she will seriously help you. That is the magic recipe!

36 Addressing the Cells

In the previous chapters, we only looked at the physical body, at detoxification, diet, and vitamins. I have claimed that we can heal ourselves from most illnesses by eating a balanced diet and thereby engaging the natural restorative abilities of our body. This effective approach is hardly new. The first 'Western' thinking person who realized that we need the natural healing power of our body in order to heal was the founder of Western medicine, Hypocrates. We see the same holistic approach amongst the original inhabitants of America, the Indians, and in fact amongst nearly all shamanic traditions around the world. Ever since René Descartes unleashed his mechanical vision onto the world, and reduced man to a thinking being in a machine (the body), we have started exploiting both the Earth and our body. We have started to see both as inferior to our powerful ability to think. Four hundred years later, we can see the results of this destructive attitude towards life at both the micro level (for ourselves as individuals) and the macro level (for the world as a whole). We are slowly realizing, through hardship and suffering, that if we destroy our Earth, our natural habitat, we are destroying ourselves. Can we wake up before it's too late?

I know that doom and gloom messages are unpopular, but this is no book in which to skirt around the hard truth. How can we ever be healthy if our drinking water is chemically unhygienic, our air is heavily polluted, we can no longer stay out in the sun because of holes in the ozone layer, and our 'diet' makes us fat and malnourished? This is the reality we live in, the harsh reality that we had better face up to. The reality of living without a soul, of destroying the soul of our Earth and ourselves. Medicine has gone through a similar process and has left the holistic point of view far behind it.

When I was a little boy, I enjoyed building construction kits. If I didn't have one available, I took a rock and whacked it on one of my toy cars. I probably don't have to tell you that I couldn't put it together again after that. This is about how far we have advanced with our medical science. We are perfectly able to take a person apart, to dissect them and to observe them at the level of the cell. But putting her back together again, and letting her live? When will we, with our cheeks flushed in shame, be able to admit our failure, to abandon determinism, and acknowledge that our body has its own magic? That life itself, our inspiration, the spark

that animates us, is something that we should be able to enjoy with pride and respect? Our body has her own wisdom and intelligence, and we can learn a limitless wealth of knowledge from it. But only if we can drop our conceit and make ourselves small and subordinate to creation, and restore her to her rightful place. Only if we rediscover our soul. That is the message that shamans give us and keep giving us. Everything has a soul. Even scientists reluctantly admit that in quantum mechanics, everything that we observe must have a soul, because otherwise it would not keep its form. 'Everything that is, lives', the shamans say. That is the way in which we should treat ourselves, our fellow human beings, plants, animals, and our habitat. With respect for the soul.

If we return to ourselves, to our own healing process, then we need the same attitude. We can ask our body if she wants to heal. We can support her and feed her and exercise and rest her. Respect for ourselves, our inspiration, our body, is what will light the path unto healing. I repeat: being healthy is nothing more than to stop getting in the way of our own healing. Helping our body, our being, to heal, that is what we represent. At a mental level, at the level of our thinking, our consciousness, there is much that we can do. As I described above, our thinking has become dominant over the rest of our being in the last few hundred years. We can hardly stop this movement, because she has advanced too far. However, we can bend her ever so slightly, which is a must if we want to learn to heal ourselves. Earlier, I showed the power of thoughts with the example of Emoto and the water crystals that react to our intent. If water crystals are already so responsive to our emotions and intentions, how do you think your own inspired cells react to our thoughts? In Vedic and shamanic traditions, illness is often seen as a blessing, as an opportunity for growth. We often see illness as something that needs to be fought, and so we fight against ourselves. Like Don Quixote, fighting against our own cells. With the help of the white-clad soldiers we do battle against the symptoms of our disease, against the signals that our own body is giving, against the messages that something is wrong. Antibiotics, antidepressants, anti-life?

Cleve Backster isolated mouth cells and made a live culture from them. He showed that these cells react to the emotions of their 'owner', who was sitting a few meters away looking at various emotional images.⁵⁵ Every cell in our body is committed to us, every cell is an inseparable part of the whole. Every cell reacts to our thinking and feeling: but how committed are we to our cells? What do you do when you are sick or

tired, do you complain about your body? Are you fed up with having to drop all sorts of things in order to let it rest and restore itself? Now that you know what your thoughts and emotions can do, is that enough to bend yourself towards becoming conscious of them? Or is 'self-destruction' so engraved upon your patterns that it has become an automatic behavior? These are questions which can bring you closer to the truth of your illness, or towards your healing. And they are questions that you shouldn't just be asking and answering for yourself. They are questions which need to be asked at a social level. All-powerful health insurance companies, welfare institutions, doctors, health professionals, and psychiatrists determine what is good for other people, and how they should handle their illness or health. It is about time that we claim this power for ourselves and take it back, so that we can determine for ourselves what is good for us. Let the dictatorship of the mind end and disappear, not by revolution, but by renaissance. Rebirth, let us awaken and inspire ourselves. If we awaken and rediscover our inspiration, we can heal. For now, there is more than enough work to do. But let us look first at what we can do for ourselves. A small army of sick people is not enough to start a revolution, let alone a renaissance. To be reborn, to influence other people, we will have to become powerful, and heal ourselves so that we can be an example to others. At a mental level, we can learn to heal ourselves by encouraging our healing. At a physical level, we saw that large quantities of vitamin C supplements make our white blood cells more active and more effective. Our white blood cells are our knights, who fight for our healing and who banish the intruders from our body. They are our noble knights, who we discourage with our negative thoughts and feelings, a process that we need to reverse!

Last century, José Silva started a rage with his Silva Mind Control.⁵⁶ He rediscovered what shamans knew thousands of years before him: that if we enter a state of meditation, our brains begin to work at another frequency (alpha waves). In this relaxed state we can visualize and bring powerful messages to our body. For example, we can envision our white blood cells as bold knights on mighty horses who are going into battle with bacteria and viruses in our body. This way we are helping our healing, instead of the usual opposition that we give it. Furthermore, we visualize the part of our body on which we are 'working' as being healthy. The Silva method has been tried and tested by millions of

people, often with spectacular results. I have been able to learn it and experience its effects for myself.

Shamanic meditation works in more or less the same way, but is possibly even more powerful. Ancient rituals are used, such as the use of a drum which marks the transition to another dimension. Its unfamiliar traditions can put us off, but once we have gotten used to its seemingly strange rituals, we can travel directly into the source of our illnesses and we can learn to support the natural healing power of our body instead of undermining it. Find out for yourself how you react to your illnesses: do you help fight them, or do you support them?

Dr. Simonton has developed his own variation of the shamanic or Silva method, and lets his patients visualize that they are helping their cells heal and that they are expelling intruders from their body. Furthermore, he works with his patients on what may be the most important factor in healing: hope. Hope keeps the warriors who are fighting for your health standing, your immune system and your white blood cells, and it makes them fierce. When we give up hope, we will eventually lose the battle. Dr. Simonton shows his cancer patients videos of people who have beaten the disease, and familiarizes them with hope. Besides that, he underscores the importance of a good diet, and he recommends a specific diet for his patients. He also pays a lot of attention to psychotherapy in his treatments, but not so much on the popular cognitive level (such as in America) as on the emotional level. The results that this doctor, who has been marginalized by the established order, has attained, are so spectacular, that they can no longer be swept under the carpet. His patients have twice the life expectancy, results which have been repeated by several independent scientists. Finally, the quality of life of his patients has drastically increased.

Help yourself heal and learn shamanic meditation. Return to your inner world and learn to visualize. Learn to support your healing. It has worked for thousands of years and can let your mental powers work for you too! Purify your mental body, purify your mind. On www.thesacredvoyage.com you can find several meditations, spoken in Dutch, which can support the process of magical healing at a cellular level.

Emotions

This brings us to the next energy body, the emotional body. In earlier chapters I showed how emotions get locked into our body if we don't express them. Here I am going to focus on the 'bringing to Light' of our emotions. Dr. Simonton is undoubtedly a pioneer who, as far as I'm concerned, deserves a Nobel prize and any other support this stubborn researcher can get for his ground-breaking work. He boldly shows what has been known to therapists for years: the link between our emotions and our health. When is our medical science going to understand this link?

If we hold in our emotions we get sick. It is so logical, and for many of us so obvious. However, to medical science it is a mystery. In our sterile hospitals, we are treated by serious, well spoken and often well trained doctors, and we get prescriptions for well researched medicines or well tested medical operations. But emotions? Researching or even removing the causes of our illnesses? The thought doesn't seem to have crossed the mind of the medical establishment, and it would mean that the 'thinking' being, which doctors in general are, would have to start 'feeling'. He would have to leave his certainties behind, and, just like Simonton, jeopardize his academic status. Giving up his own certainties!? It's unthinkable, and so we hold on tightly to the dissection of bodies, to research, and to evidence. We hold to an academic tug of war, and to beating around the bush! Every shaman can tell you that the suppression of emotions leads to the loss of the soul! Many Western soul doctors or 'psyche-haterists' (psychiatrists) will respond to this loss of soul with soul murder: the prescribing of antidepressants. The last few years in the Netherlands alone, more than half a million of people have gotten addicted, on their doctor's orders. Addicted to suppressing their emotions even further, addicted to the erosion of their inner life, as desired by our society. As long as you can go to work on Monday morning then everything is alright. Sometimes the game is played so dirty that the company physician and the attendant psychiatrist prescribe antidepressants. If the employee refuses, the payment of health insurance is reduced or even stopped. And all this in the name of health!

When we truly desire to be healed, no matter from what disease, we will have to learn how to express our emotions. What water is to our body, our emotions are to our heart and organs: life. I have written in several parts of this book about the importance of emotional liberation. Here I am going to limit myself to emphasizing the importance of a therapy in

which you learn to bring your emotions to Light. Find a therapist or group that teaches you to express yourself, to laugh, to cry, to be fierce or even to hate, to be afraid, and sad. Learn what desire is, learn what love is, and express it. Your emotional health is a measure of your total health. The freer you are in expressing yourself, the healthier you will become. Find a Gestalt therapist to get insight into your patterns of self-destruction, and to learn how to express your true Self. Or, find a Haptotherapist to learn how to feel your body and your physical feelings, or any other type of therapy that fits with you.

The quickest way to emotional health is probably breathwork (Chapter 24 – Breath- and Bodywork). Through quick, superficial, and ‘chaotic’ breathing, we release deep layers of emotion. Here too we see the importance of our breathing. Breathwork can be combined with bodywork like Reiki and other forms of healing. Whichever method you use to awaken and express your emotional experience, remember that you are the pivot point. You are the only one who can open the door and allow yourself to live.

Of course your environment plays an important role too. It has learned to know you in a certain way, and might be surprised to see new sides of you. But isn’t that the challenge of life, to get to know yourself and others to the utmost? Whatever the case, it is your own responsibility to express your emotions in a healthy way. To heal from your disease, to really penetrate to the level of the cell, you are going to have to locate and bring your own emotional blockages to Light, whether alone or with the help of a loving therapist. That is the work that awaits you on the emotional level. It is the work that may cause the most pain and sadness, but it will likely be the greatest source of joy as well. Once you finally start to express everything that has been locked away for years, or even a lifetime, you will give yourself room to truly live. And you will no longer stand in the way of your own healing, because your energy can flow. Here is an extremely simple and effective tip that has been shown to work in practice: avoid people or work that is stressful or negative, and find people or work that makes you happy. The number one stress factor in the world is the fear of not being loved by the important people in your life. The number one happiness factor: being loved by the important people in your life. According to Dr. Simonton, a simple recipe for happiness in life is to find people to whom you can give love and from whom you can receive love. That is taking responsibility for

yourself, for your own happiness, and for your healing, down to the level of your cells.

Here are two exercises that can help you to engage your emotional being. The first one is important for understanding the way you walk through life, and to learn to see where you digressed from your path on a mental level. Write your own life story. Going backwards in time, describe the important events in your life, and use them to make more associations and connections. Try to place yourself into the person you were then, into what you did and did not yet know, and into what you felt. If emotions arise, joyful or painful, relive them. Let them arise, bring them to Light, and then release them. Talk to the youth you were then, give her comfort and love and tell her that you are now here to watch over her.

Some people say that everything that you experience is stored in your being. I certainly believe that. The only thing is, we can't always reach it. Sometimes we have suppressed memories, or we are blocked. We have a fantastic opportunity to discover the truth about our life. We can ask it directly of the youth we were then, our Inner Child.

Here is the second exercise: if you are walking around with specific questions to which you can't find any answers, questions that have to do with your past, or if you want to meet the Child within you, then write your questions on a sheet of paper with your dominant hand (right for right handed people, left for left handed people). Let the question sink in, and then let your not-dominant hand (left for right handed people, and vice versa) answer in automatic writing. You probably won't be used to writing with your non-dominant hand, and only manage some scribbles, but that is exactly the idea! Be surprised by your intuitive and authentic self, your Inner Child. This exercise can also awaken a lot of energy. It can be a reunion with your most vulnerable side, and that can bring a lot of emotions with it. When this happens, regard it as a blessing and cherish your emotions. They give you vitality.

37 The Way to True Health

In the previous chapter, you read about the emotional body and our primary need, the need to love and be loved. More than money, more than power and status, more than safety and security, love is the all-important reason to live. Love *is* life. Love is connectedness, connectedness to ourselves and the important people around us. Love cannot be defined, and yet we all know instinctively when we are loved and when we give true love to someone else. Love is the core of who we are meant to be. If we do not feel loved in our true core, we become ill. Caring for your physical, emotional, and mental body, as I showed you in the previous chapters, is a powerful way to heal yourself from most known diseases. It is the care, the responsibility, the love for yourself, combined with the right knowledge of what feeds your various energy bodies, which leads us onto the path towards healing. Loving is the path towards health. Because let's be honest, what is love actually? I can't state it any better and clearer than the shamans of the native population of Hawaii, the Kahunas. They simply state that health is an abundance of energy (ehuehu), and that illness is the lack thereof (pake). Healing is nothing more than restoring the flow of energy (Lapa'au). The Hawaiian word for 'harmony' (maika'i) can also be translated as: 'a state of high energy', and the word for love (aloha) can also mean 'sharing energy'. In other words, we could call health 'a state of harmonious energy'.⁵⁷

As far as I'm concerned, magical healing at a cellular level goes one step further: namely, the healing of our spiritual body. This means discovering who you are, who you are meant to be, what your goal in life is, and what your unique blueprint is. If you have followed the path that I suggested thus far, you may have noticed what an incredible effect attention and care for yourself have on your sleep, your digestion, your illnesses, and on your health in general. Being healthy demands a certain amount of care and regularity, and it repays your efforts in the form of more lust for life and life energy. However, I find that this is not the end of it. True healing only takes place when we are really changed, when we transform ourselves. Change is usually accompanied by fear, one of those 'annoying' emotions that we don't want to feel (anymore). The health which we have just regained could turn out to be a temporary improvement. Until we truly change, we can easily slide back into our old level of sickness. The discipline that we thrived on turned out to be

based more in willpower than in true love for ourselves. If we don't want to truly transform, then there is a good chance that we are trying to heal in order to reach some goal that lies beyond us. Whatever the case may be, willpower alone is unlikely to get us there in the long term. What we need is *soulpower*.

Soulpower is knowing ourselves to be connected to our lives, to who we are meant to be, to our unique life path, to the people and nature around us, to life itself. When we experience soulpower, and are inspired, we no longer need discipline. We rediscover soulpower when we walk our true path, our life path. When we make choices that resonate with our soul. When we are ill, we are cut off from our soul. Our heart can be disappointed, broken, or embittered. We can feel lonely, stressed, or abandoned, or we can feel like the whole world needs our attention. Whatever the case may be, illness is nothing more than a powerful signal which tells us that something is going wrong, or even completely wrong, and that we are cut off from our inspiration. Usually, we isolate the signal and see it as something external, something we have to fight against. The entire medical culture is based on this perspective, looking at disease as a battle that has to be won. But it is a battle that we can never win, because we will always be the victims. We can easily keep up the game of medical treatments for an entire lifetime without catching even a glimpse of our inspiration, blinded as we are by our own headlights. And by a powerful branch of industry that survives on ferrying us from symptom to symptom. Fear is our primary motivation, fear which we are not allowed to feel and is therefore all the stronger. It is a fear from which we are always on the run.

If we want to rediscover our inspiration, we will have to stop running away and find the courage to overcome our fear. We will have to find the courage to turn ourselves around, and the love to listen to that which is truly aching us. Only once we have dared to pass through the 'dark night of the soul' (Chapter 16 – The Dark Night of the Soul) can we allow the Light inside and bring our soul to life again. As I demonstrated earlier, awakening in our world is not always equally pleasant or easy. Our Western way of life seems directed at suppressing every element of our emotional life. It is no accident that antidepressants, which I think of as a synonym for 'soul murderers', are prescribed en masse by doctors and psychiatrists who are themselves clueless about how to actually heal

their patients. When will they, or better yet, when will WE realize, when will YOU realize that the responsibility for your health lies with you? Back in the 1930's, Aldous Huxley had a remarkably accurate vision of what was in store for humanity. In *A Brave New World*⁶⁸ he wrote the prophetic words:

'Must we surrender our "SELF", our individuality, and take mood enhancing pills in order to be able to deal with literally "everything" in this strange, unnatural world, or should we be prepared to face our fears and phobias, to the point that they become our protectors and help to protect our deepest being from being destroyed and damaged by the repugnant artificiality of the society of the year two thousand?'

The question that Huxley asked almost eighty years ago has turned out to be extremely prescient. It is the same question that I ask you today, in an age to which Huxley's prophecy is addressed: 'do you choose to stay asleep and to conform yourself to a society that is slowly killing the soul? Do you choose to stay sick? Or do you choose to wake up, to face your pain and sadness, to stand up and take responsibility for yourself and your environment, and to heal?'. Do we even have a choice, or am I leaving you no choice, just as the world famous writer-philosopher Huxley did? The sad truth is that we are all consenting to the way it is without even realizing that we have a choice. We have become a silent, ignorant, consenting majority, which only comes into action when the price of oil gets too high. And even this is understood by our economic leaders: they keep increasing the price at small increments so that we keep silently agreeing to pay more. I am not asking you for revolution, I am asking for a renaissance. Your own rebirth!

We can find soulpower in ourselves, in love. In the people around us, in life itself. Hope, belief, and faith, the indicators of the soul's strength, are present within each of us. They are those forces that tie our fate to that of other living beings and the universe. If you can't reach out to your own soulpower any more, and you want to heal magically at the cellular level, then you will have to descend into the darkness of your own soul. This path forms the last and the toughest exercise on the road to healing, the path of the Sacred Voyage.

The Sacred Voyage isn't the only road to the soul. There are many paths, from ancient mystical and spiritual traditions to contemporary insights and lifestyles which can lead to the soul. Sometimes we have to face

death first before we can understand that we are alive. People who have had a bad accident, healed from a fatal illness, or lived through a near-death experience can testify that symbolical death is sometimes necessary in the world in order to truly live. The deep wounds that our upbringing and indoctrination inflicted on us in our youth cannot be healed by therapy in a hundred years, no matter what therapists would have us believe. The same goes for the wounds in our heart. These wear out over time, but their cracks and rifts are left behind to harden our hearts. The Dark Night of the Soul can liberate us from our pain, by reliving our sadness and not just surviving, but bringing our old traumas to Light. Healing in this way is often experienced as a symbolic near-death experience, a ritual death. When we die symbolically and revisit our old traumas, the causes of our diseases die as well. Our emotional pasture can be plowed up and become fertile again, and tears can flow again to water the Earth. Once our Renaissance takes place, we can heal. Healing in our spiritual body, the body that can show us our true nature, our soul, who we are meant to be. The body that holds our blueprint. The body that can connect us to all life. When we heal our spiritual body, we (re)discover the motivation to live. When we rediscover the motivation to live, there is nothing left to stand in the way of our healing, and we can intuitively find the right way to live. We will leave the things that harm us behind. When we rediscover the motivation to live, claiming and taking responsibility for ourselves will be easy.

Are you prepared to enter the Dark Night of the Soul, to relive all the things that have oppressed you for a lifetime, to bring your truth to Light, to die symbolically, and to rediscover your soul? Those are the questions you might ask yourself if you want to heal down to the cellular level, if you want to make the Sacred Voyage, the pilgrimage to the soul. Questions that can awaken your deepest fears, fears from which you have been running your whole life. From which we have all been running together. This is why most of us will only dare to make the Voyage once we have a bad or even deadly disease in our body. If we listen to our illness, she will give us the strength and intuition, the call of the soul, to make the right decision. Confronting your fears takes more than just courage. It requires the love of the people around you, who can support you and Guide you. People who can give your rediscovered heart and soul the room they need to go on the path towards healing. We usually can't make it alone. If you wish to walk the path of healing, then I recommend you find someone who is suffering similarly. Find people

who can support you or lend you a shoulder for comfort, even in the darkest Night. You will have to go through it yourself, that is the only way in which the soul is refined. Just as we pass on, at the end of our life, when our time has come. But you don't have to do any of it alone. Find help, and connect to others through your love. Let us live as if each day is our last. And when that last day has finally come, let us meet death with our heads raised high, with heart and soul, with a smile on our lips, thinking of a life that was lived in truth. But let us primarily use the time that we have left on Earth to rediscover ourselves, to have loving relationships, and to live with heart and soul. There is a beautiful metaphor in which disease is imagined as the speck of dust that forms the basis for the pearl which the oyster will transform it into. The pearl can't get rid of the dust, but it can make sure that it no longer bothers her by turning it into a wonderful part of her body.⁵⁹ If we similarly regard our disease as a substantial part of our life, of who we are meant to be, then we can listen to her well-hidden message and decipher it: sickness is as the pearl, a valuable gift that makes us realize our mortality. Viva!

If you have found the courage to make a Voyage, to heal your spiritual body, and therefore to begin healing yourself at the cellular level, then prepare yourself as I have described in Part III. Find a Loving Guide who wants to Guide you on your Voyage. You have nothing to fear if you travel into the Sacred Dimension in search of power and healing. Surrender yourself to the experience, and find out why you are sick. The only one who can heal you at a cellular level is you!

38 **Free from Addictions**

The principle behind addiction is simple and easy to understand: if we have lost our soul, or parts of it, then we are constantly attempting to avoid our emptiness, our inner Void. The Void is the feeling of being separated from our own soul, and therefore from ourselves and from each other. The Void feels like being completely shut off from love. That is the monster that lurks behind every addiction, whether it be eating too much or too little, addiction to work, smoking, drugs, gambling, or shopping. Whenever the Void appears, we avoid her by using our addictions as an alternate source of comfort. Instead of welcoming the Void as a sign that we are missing something, we enter an endless cycle of suppression and escapism. And if we deal with addiction as if it were a symptom, then a new one will quickly rear its head. This is how a nicotine addiction becomes a food addiction. Or a food addiction becomes a shopping addiction. Or a shopping addiction becomes a work addiction, and so on. Only when we go back to the source of our addictions, and we face the original traumas that have blocked our soul, can we truly free ourselves of addiction, instead of fighting the symptoms that our soul sends us as a signal that something needs to be put right deep inside us.

One of the pleasant side effects of making a Sacred Voyage is that we can often give up our addictions voluntarily. Not out of any sense of willpower, or the suppression of our dominant sides, but from a strength that we gained during our Voyaging: soulpower. It's effortless. How this is possible is difficult to explain, but let me give it a try. I think that I can easily give myself the label of 'expert on the experience of addictions': I have been through just about every conceivable addiction in my life. Every time that I overcame one with the power of my will, another one was waiting just around the corner. I learned it as a youth, and kept doing it as an adult. Growing up, we were strongly advised not to develop a sweet tooth. No surprise here: my first addiction was candy. The same went for computer games. I couldn't get rid of those. Around the time I was twelve I started delivering newspapers, washing cars, and gardening, so that I could finance my candy and computer games addiction. By coincidence, the fast food place where my favorite arcade game stood and the candy store 'The Sweet Tooth' lay right next to each other in the neighborhood where I delivered newspapers. I spent a small

fortune there. And the next addiction soon came into view. My parents had promised me a thousands guilders, the Dutch currency at the time, if I wouldn't smoke until I was eighteen, and I made it alright. I cashed in on the thousand bucks and started smoking after all. What could be so bad that I should stay away from it, even if my parents both stormed off to smoke as soon as dinner was over? They inhaled from their cigarettes with obvious pleasure. Educationists today know that it isn't what we teach our children that makes them learn, it's the example we give them. The seeds of a tenacious addiction were sown early. Later I learned from a friend how to lace the cigarette with marijuana, which was even better at suppressing my hurt feelings. My partner at the time gave me an ultimatum: either I stopped smoking marijuana, or I was out of there. My love for her was great, and I quit my habit of smoking three to five joints a day. Instead, I got back my old sweet tooth, together with a craving for fatty foods, and, since I was in the fast food place anyway, a gambling addiction. I had always looked down upon those 'housewives' who were addicted to those stupid gambling machines which never let you win, and yet here I was addicted to them myself. However, the Void that I was trying to obstruct never left me. Every year I made a few attempts to quit smoking, because I could feel it slowly poisoning my body. But it was no use. Every time I quite through willpower alone, I kept it up for just three months or so. Then came the moment that I was free of addiction. In that silence, without addiction, the Void overwhelmed me. The terrible secret that it was trying to reveal to me was unbearable, and I ran over to the tobacco store to drug myself up with nicotine again. At night some alcohol or a few joints to suppress my feelings, coffee, tea, and sugar in the morning to get going again. I had no idea how to get out of this vicious circle.

When I first started Voyaging, I caught a glimpse of that which I hadn't dared to look at before. Little by little, I allowed more of it to come into view. In this dimension, I felt myself supported by a strange power which was carefully helping me to face my own painful emotions. I couldn't possibly describe that power, except to say that it was extremely benevolent. I couldn't manage surrendering myself right away and trusting this power. Later on, however, I learned that it had been my own soulpower, which had always been available to me. It was lying just beyond the Void. And now she was calling me into the Void. It was almost unbearable there, and everything was filled with loneliness and

sadness and the feeling that if I stayed here just one second longer I would never be happy again. And yet I stayed there, and discovered what I had been suppressing all this time. After my brothers were born, my parents hardly paid any attention to me anymore. I couldn't understand it, and was soon locked into an unpleasant struggle with myself. I wanted out, out of the Void, which seemed to want to swallow me whole. Out of the distance I heard a female voice whispering: 'let yourself float along with the stream, it's alright. Surrender yourself, you don't have to resist anymore'. I recognized the loving voice of Diana, my best friend, and she gave me the reserves of self-confidence that I needed in order to surrender to the Void. I had always remembered my youth as being a great time, which it in fact had been for a while. But now the whole truth came out. It turned out that I had been imagining it to have been much nicer than it was, just so that I wouldn't have to feel the original pain and loneliness with which I had struggled in my most vulnerable years. I got a crystal clear picture of how it had really been, how I was slowly burning out at school, how I was getting more and more unmanageable and then was punished for it at home. I had always blamed myself and thought of myself as inferior because I was such a difficult child and was always getting into trouble. Now for the first time in my life I could see the truth, and I saw a small and sad boy who lacked guidance in the years that he needed it the most. Better yet, instead of rejecting the boy again, as I had always done before, I embraced him into my heart. I now understood that my parents had come up short in raising me, and that it wasn't my fault. In the Sacred Dimension I made a deep decision: I would never reject, deny, or abandon this boy again. I would protect him and make sure that all his dreams would come true. Something miraculous happened. I transformed into my younger self! In a flash I was thirty years younger, and I was hopping and skipping through the room. I had rediscovered my soul. I had and still have never felt better than I did that evening, what a reunion. When I recovered from the Voyage I decided to read more about the extraordinary reunion I had had that night. I eventually came to the authors John Bradshaw and Alice Miller. I recognized more and more of myself in their books, and started to embrace the traumatized child that I had inside into my heart. I had more and more courage to allow my truth to arise and to face it. And I discovered another strange phenomenon. My parents were divorced and couldn't stand each other. I had to had to twist and contort myself to fit a certain mold, because I had personality traits of both my father and my

mother, but neither of them recognized those traits in me. I had contorted myself in a thousand ways to adapt to their mutual hatred, just to get the love and the attention that I needed so badly to grow up. But what was left of the authentic 'me' in this story? My feelings were slowly coming back to life again, and with all the related sadness that I allowed and released, my heart started to heal again. I began to develop a sense of self esteem, which made it seem like I was awaking from a bad dream: what had I been doing to myself all those years? How could I destroy myself like that? A new energy arose within me, the drive to become healthy. I could feel that smoking was destroying my health, but I couldn't quit it. Worse yet, I was smoking more than ever. Somehow or other I couldn't face all the emotions that were breaking loose. This is when I called in the help of the powerful entheogen Ayahuasca (Chapter 2 – Rediscovering Your True Strength).

Since then I haven't craved a single cigarette, nor have I had the need to suppress my feelings in any other way. The cracks in my heart could now heal, and I had been given the love that I yearned for so badly after all by the Source of Life. I could barely believe my own experience, let alone explain it. I am still reminded mostly of the near death experiences that I read about as a child in the books that Moody wrote. There is no doubt in my mind that the clear Light which I saw on my pilgrimage to my soul came from the highest power. It is there. I have seen it with my own eyes, and felt it burning through my entire being. And the Light has never left me since. It now fills my heart where there was a Void before, and it has helped me to understand my past, instead of turning it into a fantasy. Of course I have developed many more self-destructive patterns in the last thirty years, and these are coming up bit by bit. But I am now experiencing a very loving power that I call soulpower, and which is supporting my ability to look at myself in a truly loving manner, even my shadow sides. I realize now that it is exactly these sides which need my Light and my love. That is also why I now know that willpower alone is not enough when it comes to addictions. She doesn't originate in love, but is a representative of our ego, of the parental forces which have settled into our brains and which want to keep us in line. These forces are always calling up resistance inside us, which creates an endless area of tension which then has to be broken again. Facing addictions is not just the work of our will, but of our heart and soul. With compassion and love, we can learn to give ourselves and each other what we have always missed ourselves. Just like when I got the chance to Guide my best

friend Diana. She ended up facing her food addiction bulimia in the Sacred Dimension. She suffered from this disease for eleven years without having a clue how to be healed from it. In the Sacred Dimension she came face to face with her own loneliness, and was shown what she does to herself when she has another binge attack and the vomiting that follows it. She has now gone more than a year and a half without throwing up her food, and she feels healed from an illness of which many psychiatrists believe you can never heal yourself. Everything is possible in the Sacred Dimension! Not long ago, I Guided her again on a Voyage with the help of Ayahuasca, and she rediscovered her soul. She is growing ever day, step by step towards wholeness. And that in my experience is the beautiful and just part of the Sacred Voyage: whoever truly wants it, whoever seeks insight, strength, and healing, can find it here. Whoever dares to make themselves small and vulnerable and surrender their control for a while has a great reward in store for them: their soul. From that point on you can follow your own path towards wholeness, towards who you are meant to be. From that point on you can feel an invisible thread connecting you to 'the higher', to the guidance that you can receive and which gives all the support and love that every human being needs in their life: the love of her soul. This love can free you from your addictions and it can magically heal you down to the level of your cells.

PART VI

MAGICAL ABILITIES

39 Clear Perception

Earlier in this book I wrote that whoever undertakes the Sacred Voyage has a good chance of opening themselves up to their 'higher' spiritual powers. Skeptics say that this development is unhealthy, because the experience is induced and hasn't been developed in our own natural rhythm. According to them, those abilities should only be developed after years of dedication. Others say that everyone has the potential for these powers. At the very least we can say that it is a great pity that there is nobody who can tell us *how* to develop these powers. Higher powers such as healing others and clear perception are still clouded in a sense of mysticism, which lends the owner of the abilities a special and often powerful position in society. While many healers and seers say that what they can do, we all can do, they are as unlikely to be able to share their secret as a chef or a magician. Healing and clear perception are Big Business, as evidenced by the many and well-visited fairs of the paranormal. The mystification of the abilities has to be maintained, because looking up to someone else's abilities increases their credibility and therefore their market value. Especially when that person seems to have a clear view of our future, even though it is hidden to us. However, these dime-a-dozen psychics rarely get beyond saying: 'I can see something about your grandma', or 'you will develop new interests and make new friends', usually followed by the cliché sentence: 'does that mean anything to you?'. It is not my intention to criticize psychics, quite the opposite. But I do think it's important to know the difference between them. I believe that people who are seeking relief from the pain in their soul, or who are seeking a new life path, should be helped by able and upright seers. Those who want to be assured of love and success are probably better off in the category 'fairground psychics'.

How do you recognize a good and virtuous psychic? Who can distinguish themselves in the spiritual market place, a playing field dominated by hocus-pocus and superstition, where money and status are a serious threat to personal integrity? I believe they are the ones who speak from the heart about what they see. Or what they don't see. 'Yes,' we often hear, 'but what if the psychic sees something that the client isn't ready for?'. 'Speaking from the heart', to me, means that the psychic

speaks from her feeling, from human being to human being. If she sees something that can hurt or cause unnecessary pain to her client, then she will keep it to herself if she follows her heart. A good psychic doesn't ask, but speaks. That is how you can find out whether you are with a capable psychic or with a wily fake who is out to exploit you. As proof of her ability, a capable psychic will usually reveal some things about you which she could not have known otherwise. The more detailed her description, the better you will be able to judge who you are dealing with. A true seer will prove themselves to you, and won't rely on your gullibility. After proving her abilities, when the bond of trust has been made, she can move on to her true art: telling you the images that she is receiving and which are new and unknown to you. Some seers also act as advisers in this stage. I have visited many psychics in my life, usually because I wanted to catch a glimpse of my future, but mostly out of curiosity. Can somebody really see into the future and reveal what is going to happen? There were a few people who more than deserved the title of 'seer'. One of them is Tineke de Caluwé. When I made an appointment with her for a precious stones therapy session, she immediately said when I came in: 'so, you're really cleaning up aren't you?'. A little shocked, I asked her what she meant and she answered: 'you know, that cleaning up in your family and in your circle of friends'. Her bold assertion was like a thunderbolt. How could she ever know that I had let go a few of my 'friends', who only came to me to take my energy? 'You are going to stop giving for a while now, you are going to choose for yourself and they say that this is great'. Who 'they' are she wouldn't tell me, but her message was already the answer to the question which I had wanted to put to her. Tineke muttered some words to her pendulum and so ended up at the Hawkeye, a type of stone that should give me the necessary tranquility and protection. She said that she would rather have given me Turquoise for protection and openness, 'but you know, you can't always have it your way', she mumbled afterwards. I visited her many more times, and I kept testing her abilities. One time I visited her with my wife Tanja. At that time, Tanja was a few weeks pregnant and we were gleefully anticipating the test we were going to perform on Tineke. Right as we came in she started giggling, and she announced to Tanja that there was a baby on the way! To me, the most important characteristic of having psychic powers is honesty and adequacy, in combination with the integrity of the seer, who sometimes also acts as life counselor.

Let us return to the method of the Sacred Voyage. As I wrote before, there is a lot speculation in the New Age that an entheogenic substance awakens the ability or opens the user to it. However, I believe that these speculations are wrong and based on an unfamiliarity with the substance and the process. I think we should look for the link between the cleaning up of mental and emotional blockages and the development of magical abilities. Let's say for a moment that our pain and our sadness, our unprocessed emotions, are stored in our energy bodies (body, heart, mind, and soul) as unfinished 'gestalts'. The essence of a gestalt is that it wants to complete its motion, just like a ball that is thrown upwards 'wants' to come down again. She wants to get rid of her energy, in this case the energy of mass and gravity. So how do we get to these incomplete gestalts which can form blockages in our energy bodies? For example, because we bottle up our emotions when something or somebody is making us angry or sad? Carl Jung pictured the suppression of this energy as the attempt to hold a cork under water, something which costs a lot of energy. However, the cork, just like the unfinished gestalt (the unexpressed emotion), will want to come up. Our perception will be clouded because we are projecting our stored up mental and emotional energy onto the world. She is locked up deep inside, and is trying to find a way out; in this case, in the form of projection. Projection is a sign that we are suppressing emotional energy which is waiting to be released. How can we perceive clearly, when entire aspects of ourselves are repressed? I believe that pure perception is a synonym for 'Clear Perception' (seeing, hearing, feeling, knowing). To develop our ability of clear perception, we will have to clean up our own lens. Or, as William Blake put it:

'If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite'.

The Sacred Voyage will help us to cleanse our mental and emotional energy. During our Voyages, we will automatically encounter our own blockages, and the entheogenic sacrament will help us to live through them. Think of our blockages as a dam behind which water, our unreleased emotional energy, is building up. Standing water gets sick and filthy. Water wants to flow and be healthy. It will look for cracks and holes, and when the pressure gets too great, the dam will break. The

water will flow over in abundance and re-fertilize the dry pastures beyond the dam.

And now back to the folk wisdom, which says that everybody holds these abilities in potential. I think that there is a certain amount of truth to this, except it is different from how superstition and mystification would make it seem. Clear sight, hearing, feeling, and knowing is nothing other than perceiving without projection; true perception is perceiving what 'is' instead of perceiving what we ourselves project onto the world. It is the perception of universal truth. Our perception is muddled, and we have learned since childhood to see through a fuzzy, colored lens. If we learn how to heal our own pain, to let go of our projections, and to clean our own lens, to grind and polish it, then we can learn to perceive clearly. Letting go of our projections means not just emotional, but also mental healing. *'We can learn to take off our robe'*, as Jesus Christ put it. Or: *'in the world, but not of it'*. We can learn, in the words of Blake, to see the world as infinite again, and to shed our burdensome conditioning. We can learn to look at the world as Children again. We can learn to see in wonder and amazement. It's a small step from our childlike wonder to our imagination and creativity, from which we can tune in to the Field of limitless possibilities, the universe where all past, present, and future knowledge is found. If we tune in to the higher in our spiritual consciousness, through the Deity within and thereby to the universe, we can discover that we no longer need a lens at all. We can learn to become conscious of what truly is, instead of what we are used to seeing. I myself have learned how to perceive clearly these last few years. I regularly receive images and insights into future events. Which brings me to another aspect of the abilities: how seriously do you take yourself? I regularly catch myself projecting my hurt inner world on to the outside world, which muddies my vision. By listening closely to my inner dialogs, I find out what is 'clear' and authentic, and what is not. The process that I am describing is that of my dominant sides, which push aside my vulnerable authentic sides. The dominant sides are aspects of my personality that have adapted in order to survive, or which have simply turned themselves against 'the world'. Here's what happens in concrete terms. If I receive an image or a hunch, then it is usually a very subtle signal. If I am not alert, then my dominant sides have already pushed it aside and filtered it out under the guise of: 'act normal, and you will be crazy enough'. To perceive clearly we will have to learn to follow our crazy hunches and to let our intuition and instinct

speaking. The method of the Sacred Voyage lets us get acquainted with our vulnerable sides, sides that we put away and suppressed a long time ago. But it is exactly these oversensitive aspects of ourselves that are connected to the Higher, and which can see, hear, feel, and know clearly! When sad and painful things were done to us in the past, we hid away these parts of ourselves so that they couldn't be hurt anymore and we could survive. However, in so doing we have also isolated ourselves from our youth, our lust for life, and our more refined abilities. Clear perception is nothing more than being authentic and tuning in to higher and finer vibrations. To the morphogenetic field, as Rupert Sheldrake calls it. With the Sacred Voyage, you descend into your unconscious and liberate your frail, talented sides and invite them to rejoin you. This is usually a difficult challenge, because your dominant sides are in power and have no desire to be exposed to vulnerability. Just like a soldier on the battlefield has no need for having his children around him. This is expressed in the denial of our vulnerable sides, conflict, and argument. However, we are all like soldiers who are not aware that we are living in peacetime, and are still in the highest state of alertness, ready to fight or flee, just as we learned when we were growing up. In the Sacred Dimension we go seek strength and Light, inspiration, and the help that allows us to be the whole human being we are meant to be in a normal state of consciousness. We can teach our Inner soldier his peacetime role. If necessary, we will always have access to his aggression and survival instinct. We can teach him to be gentle and to cherish us, to care for us, and if necessary to protect us. He can become the father of our vulnerable and abandoned sides, the father we missed so badly when we needed him. If we teach our Inner Soldier to protect our vulnerable sides, then we will no longer have to be in conflict with others all the time or in search of recognition. If we acknowledge ourselves, we fulfill our deepest wish and we can become one. The process of becoming one is painful and difficult, but it is one of the most beautiful experiences you can have. It goes without saying that your vulnerable sides will be weary of showing too much of themselves at first. They will want to have enough evidence that it is safe to come out, and that they won't get hurt again. Our vulnerable sides want to demonstrate their sadness and be comforted by us and by other important people. Once we have tendered this comfort to our fragile sides, they can become healthy and grow along with us, to eventually become one with us and live joyfully. When we persevere and make the decision to embrace our vulnerable sides in

our heart, and never to let go again, then these sides of ourselves will dare to manifest themselves more and more in us and reveal their Divine nature. That is the true reward that awaits us and which makes all the efforts, the releases, the processing, and the carrying of our pain and sadness more than worth it. The revelation of our Divine nature is one of the goals of the Sacred Voyage. Our own efforts in a 'normal' state of being determine what we get out of these revelations. If we are open to ourselves, to our vulnerable, gifted sides, then there is a good chance that clairvoyance will become our compass. This way our life, our perception, our consciousness, becomes the measure of our development. The purer we become, and the more old traumas we relive, the less we have to project onto the outside world. The more open we are to the fragile sides of our being, the more their gifts will be revealed. A great path to walk, isn't it? It is the path of our heart, the path that takes us to who we are meant to be.

Carlos Castaneda, in *The Teachings of Don Juan*, writes about the path of the heart:⁶⁰

'Anything is one of a million paths. Therefore a warrior must always keep in mind that a path is only a path; if you feel you should not follow it, you must not stay with it under any conditions. But your decision to keep on the path or to leave it must be free of fear or ambition. Look at every path closely and deliberately. A warrior is obligated to ask himself one question: does this path have a heart?

All paths are the same: they lead nowhere. However, you cannot enjoy a path without heart, while a path with heart is easy to walk. It takes a warrior no effort to follow it with joy. It leads to a joyful voyage. As long as you follow it, you are one with it'.

When I went fishing on a holiday trip with some friends, the fish turned out to be on holiday as well. We didn't catch anything all day, until I suddenly heard a tiny little voice inside me telling me which fishing rod would hook a fish, just seconds before it did. It was that of my best friend Diana, who hooked an enormous trout. For a moment I had felt the usual skepticism towards my hunch, but my heart cheered 'you see!' when the rod in question was pulled taught. Life is so endlessly more fun with a few of those Light beings in my heart, who seem to know what life is all about so much better than I do: it's about playing, about

discovery, and about loving! When you decide to welcome the old pain deep into into your heart and to release it, you can discover for yourself how to make contact with the Field of limitless possibilities, the Field that offers you the ability to see, hear, feel, and know clearly. But first let us take a look at what this Field actually is.

During the last fifty years, the theories of our Western science have finally made the long awaited change that was so badly needed before any further growth could take place. Einstein, at the beginning of the last century, put an end to the dominance of the Newtonian perspective of the world as a 'fact' and laid the foundation for quantum physics, which looks at the world and the universe as one fascinating field of energy. At least, at the quantum level, the world of miniature little particles. One of the discoveries which lead to the theory of the Field was that the smallest possible particles were actually made up mostly of empty space. If we look at them properly, these particles are part-time solid matter and part-time vibrations. Furthermore, it seems that the quantum particle can rear its head anywhere, and that the observer plays an important role in where it shows up. The zero-point energy field, the field of infinite possibilities – in short, the Field – contains the present, the future, and the past, and makes a joke out of the concept of space. And yet we see that the world in which we live isn't ready yet for the infinite potential of the Field. We would rather hold on to the measurable and impersonal world of Newton, Descartes, and Darwin for as long as possible. The Field is still too promising for us to even imagine all the unknown possibilities that it conceals. The laws of the Field, or rather, the absence of laws, is true more for the world of quantum particles than for the reality which we normally perceive. Except when we activate our ability to Perceive Clearly, when we can suddenly tune in to the Field, and unlimited potential becomes our playground, a playground that we can enter in the Sacred Dimension.

Mystical traditions have spoken since the beginning of time about the world tree, the Tao, the world soul. Shamans have always claimed that everything that is, is alive. Now our science finally seems ready to acknowledge that everything is connected, and forms a fascinating Field of infinite intelligence. However, the greatest challenge still must be met for the world of science to agree: namely, proving the existence of the Field. On the drawing boards it seemed so real, but what would remain of it in reality? Would quantum physics stay confined to the world of mathematics and models, or could we demonstrate and even experience her existence in the here and now?

It is generally known that if you're not sure what to look for, you probably won't find it. The same goes for the Field. However, with the reckless theories of Einstein in the back of their minds, a number of courageous scientists went in search of answers. Careers would flounder, and as always when we are at the verge of an important mind-expanding discovery, resistance was great. And yet a select group of scientists managed to stay standing in a hostile world and demonstrate that the Field stretches out into our human dimension. Cleve Backster showed that human white blood cells which have been removed from the body stay in contact with us and react to our emotions. With utterly convincing scientific evidence, he also showed that plants react to our intentions. He hooked up a lie detector, on which he was the highest international authority, to his plants. The plants with which he had a bond turned out to react to signals such as the sudden return to his workplace after a meeting. There wasn't a single theoretical framework that allowed for this evidence, and it would easily have been banished to the land of fables if it weren't for quantum physics and the Field. Rupert Sheldrake built upon this work and performed his famous experiments with dogs and their masters, which he monitored individually on video. When the master was called up with a randomly chosen beeper signal to come home, the dog responded immediately. Everyone who has had a pet, myself included, can corroborate this phenomenon. Except we never had a word for it. Sheldrake called it the 'morphic field', operating specifically within a larger 'morphogenetic field'. Carl Jung had theorized the phenomenon of the 'collective unconscious' years before, but now the practical contours of this all-connecting field started to become visible. Mitchell, Puthoff, and Targ, scientists with noteworthy résumés, all provided convincing evidence for remote viewing, precognition, and telepathy.

There is most certainly a Field of infinite intelligence to which we can connect ourselves, and through which we can have access to past and future, a Field where everything seems to exist at once. While these phenomena used to be banished into seedy back rooms and superstitions, now there were eminent scientists showing beyond doubt what psychics have always known: that we are connected, all is one, and we can make contact with this Field. Hundreds of thousands of successful experiments point in the same direction: the Field. We have come to a point where psychic perception and connectedness are more the rule than the exception. Information and intelligence are getting completely new

dimensions. And what to think of the experiments that Benveniste did at the end of the last century? Benveniste, who had been a conservative and highly regarded scientist, was confronted by his assistant with what seemed to be an error. She had diluted an active substance so much that the water in which she had diluted it could hold no more than one single molecule. And yet the heavily diluted substance maintained its active function, to which Benveniste reacted with disgust and requested his assistant to rectify the error. But the errors couldn't be rectified, because they were correct. 'By accident' Benveniste had demonstrated what homeopathy knew all along: that the effect of a diluted substance stays the same, even if there isn't a single molecule left in the water in which the dilution has been done. In fact, by shaking and endlessly diluting the mixture, its effects become stronger. This is yet another important principle of homeopathy, the little sister of our medical science which has been kept at bay.

I myself learned the power of homeopathy when I was fifteen, when, just like my mother, I was plagued by heavy migraine attacks. Sometimes they came in handy, to play hooky for example. But when it was at its worst, the headaches, nausea, and dizziness were intolerable. And I knew from my mother that it would only get worse over time. Not a pleasant prospect, having to spend two days a week lying in a dark room, sick as a dog. Through some friends of friends I ended up seeing a homeopathic physician, in whom I had absolutely no faith. With a wondrous apparatus he measured the resistance in my body, and after two meetings he had prepared a recipe: Sulfur grains, greatly diluted, just like Benveniste's water. My disbelief had no effect on the eventual results: within three months I had been permanently freed of migraines!

Moving back to Benveniste, we can now say that water has a Field memory, in which it imprints the information that the carrier substance has left behind. It takes only a small jump to our own bodies to see the implications of this claim. We humans consist mainly of water, up to about eighty percent. And water turns out to be one great communicating intelligence.

There is a wonderful scene in the movie *Blueberry* where an Indian is guiding a Sacred Voyage. Blueberry travels into the depths of his soul, and from there into what is undoubtedly the Field. Blueberry discovers the source of his soul's pain, and that which he has been walking around with unconsciously and fighting against all his life. As he recuperates

from his Voyage, and looks around in a daze, the Indian says: 'Now you know what your thoughts and feelings are. Be careful with it!' Slowly but surely we enter the realm that is mightily interesting to us Voyagers, the dimensions which shamans have been visiting for tens of thousands of years and which they call the Underworld, now in this context referred to as 'the Field'.

But not until we have made a quick visit to the man who showed us what others have claimed: Emoto. This Japanese scientist developed a way of photographing water crystals. He came to the shocking conclusion that water crystals react to the power of our intentions. If the water was exposed to curse words or threats, it formed into ugly, unhealthy crystals. Harmonious words led to the most beautiful, perfect crystals. Emoto even made a quantum leap by meditating at the side of a heavily polluted lake with several hundred people. The result was a considerable improvement in the quality of its water. To skeptics, this sort of research might be a source of scornful laughter. But as long as we keep in mind that there are still institutions dedicated to denying that the Earth is round, we can comfort ourselves with the knowledge that not everyone is quick to be seduced into having new insights. We humans seem to have a tendency to hold on to that which is safe and already known to us.

Carl Jung's wonderful synchronicity theory shows us that if there is a large enough critical mass in conscious change, that the movement can be altogether changed. Just as Sheldrake showed with his experiments with rats. He let rats find their way through a maze, and discovered that the offspring of these rats were much quicker at finding their way through without having ever been in the maze before. And so the die is being cast in several different disciplines. The question is: are we well enough equipped to undergo the necessary changes in consciousness? Are we prepared to open our limited consciousness and connect with the Field?

In the 1950's, another pioneer in this area, José Silva, discovered the link between Field and man. I followed his study in the early nineties. It was called Silva Mind Control, a name which already got my inner skeptic going. The first three days consisted mostly of certain tricks which later on would show up in neuro-linguistic programming as well. I couldn't be bothered with the tricks for improving my memory, and I was considering whether or not to make use of the 'not happy, your money back' promise. I decided out of honesty to sit out the fourth day, reluctantly. On the fourth day something happened which would change

my life. By lowering my brainwaves to the so-called Alpha level, it would become possible to tune in to the Field, even though it wasn't being called that yet. The test of our ability was as following: each person wrote down on five cards a description of five people whom they were close to, including their most important characteristics and any complaints they might have in their life. The 'clairvoyant' would tune in to their own Alpha waves and describe the person on the first card, which they of course had not seen. I decided to begin the test, so that I could be done with this nonsense. Using the freshly learned meditation technique, I calmed myself down. And I described the person on the card with complete accuracy. And so on with the second, the third, the fourth, and the fifth. My skeptical heart leaped for joy, and was freed for once and for all of its disbelief. I had shown, against my own expectations, that I could communicate telepathically. My feeling of specialness diminished a bit when I found out that the three partners in my group all had a perfect score as well. It turned out anyone can tune in to the Field. There was no question of it being a fraud, because I myself was participating in this simple experiment. And so the fourth day turned out to be a party, because we learned what you can do with this amazing connection to the Field: you can heal yourself and others.

If you keep in mind what Emoto photographed, then it becomes clear that the quality of our thoughts determines our health to a large extent. If we are sick, we either sulk, or we don't take our complaints seriously, or, in worse cases, we remove the symptoms of our disease. While our body is the most brilliant creation and is naturally balanced to be healthy. As children we were programmed with counterintuitive commands like 'quit posing', 'it'll go away by itself', or 'just don't think about it, and it will go away'. We are familiarized with the mechanism of suppression and denial right from the start. And what do we do when such an 'annoying' illness rears its head again? We curse her, because the illness is standing in the way of our happiness. Not knowing that we are delaying our own healing process.

José Silva's work taught me that our health is truly a reflection of who we are and what we are thinking. Later that day we would investigate our own complaints and learn to encourage our line of defense, our white blood cells, through visualization. That is the way to support our health, instead of working against her. I learned later on that the Silva method is similar to shamanism. Shamanism, the oldest known method of healing, shows that our ancestors knew how to fight disease much better than we

do. Cleve Backster's research with white blood cells demonstrates another phenomenon: white blood cells outside of our body still react to our emotions. And that completes the picture. They don't react to our thoughts, but to our emotions! With that, they clarify a very different point of view, namely that emotions are the Royal Messengers of our inner life. Messengers who use the Field in order to communicate.

Do you understand the implications of this discovery? It is our emotions which determine whether we are sick or healthy! Emotions which we often experience as a bother, and which we have learned since childhood not to express, are what determines our health. It is our emotions which encourage our immune system to defend itself. No wonder there is so much disease in our emotionless society! Without feelings, our body is adrift. The Silva method is a great way to learn what the power of our thoughts is. She can help us to successfully confront our symptoms. If we want to deal with the causes of our illnesses, then we will have to dive down deeper into the shadow land of our old, unprocessed emotions.

I realize that it is endlessly more popular to preach the 'mind over matter' principle. Mind over matter works in the world of matter. But when we want to heal magically down to a cellular level, and attain our natural state of being – our health – then our emotions are indispensable to the process. In that sense, the Silva method, with all her wonders, is stuck in popular perceptions such as 'you have to really want it, only then will it work'. This American point of view, as stated, is much more popular, especially because it appeals to our willpower. It confirms the logic we were taught, which says that if you truly want something, you can get it. There is nothing wrong with this thought. In fact, I believe it holds truth at its core. However, it is only true once we have given our emotions enough room. Only when the true intent of our heart and soul has become clear will the mind over matter method be fruitful. Otherwise, we will never be able to focus and direct the power of our thoughts. In other words, we can want all sorts of things with our minds, but in the realm of health it is up to our (suppressed) emotions to decide whether or not and when we will heal.

To begin with, we will have to learn to make ourselves small and vulnerable, as I showed earlier in this book. It is possible that many of us will already dislike this first thought, let alone when they start feeling what it actually means. Only once we are small and vulnerable as a child will we be able to enter the Kingdom. Could Christ have left us a

mystical key, the key to the Field? José Silva had already understood that in order to heal yourself, you have to be relaxed and empty so that you can descend to the Alpha level. The level of consciously directed intent. The Sacred Voyage takes us a level deeper than this, and will inevitably take us into the Theta and Delta levels. These are the brainwaves that we see in deep, dreamless sleep. I wouldn't be surprised if we soon discover that it is at this level, where our conscious mind rests, that magical healing at a cellular level takes place. In the realms around and beyond Death, where we die ritually, just as shamans have done for thousands of years, and rise from the ashes like the metaphorical phoenix. We leave our disease behind in the fire, purified as we are by the endless power and Light of the Field.

I realize that with these claims I have left the realm of science behind and have entered into that of magic. As Scott Cunningham writes about the basic requirements for the successful practice of magic, we first need to have a need for something, an emptiness or critical situation where something must be done immediately. The next requirement is emotion. Emotion is power. When you do not feel emotionally involved with your need, you won't be able to arouse enough power from any source, nor be able to direct the power at your need. Again the importance of our emotions is emphasized, this time to show how we can practice magic successfully. The third requirement is knowledge. This is about the collection of techniques which we use to awaken energy in ourselves. Knowledge such as visualization, the basic principles of ritual, concentration, and the experience that power is real. To emphasize the general picture, Cunningham says: 'If we have fulfilled the requirement of emotion, but not that of knowledge, then we are like the Neanderthal man trying to understand a can opener or a computer'.⁶¹

Armed with need, emotion, and knowledge, we can begin practicing magic. The need and the emotion for healing and clear perception should come from yourself, from a call deep inside you. I can help you with the knowledge, at least in part, with the method of the Voyage for a safe departure and return. That which happens during your Voyage is the magic to which you have submitted yourself. It is the magic of the Field of endless possibilities, where only your soul knows the way. She will safely guide you. That is the magical promise of the Sacred Voyage. It is up to us, the pioneers, to wear down the path. The path where shamans and scientists meet each other in the middle, each from their own perspective, in the Field of infinite potential.

You may be asking yourself whether the Sacred Voyage and the Field might be a little too far fetched. Even though it has been scientifically proven that there is a zero point energy field which contains all possibilities of the universe, we are just beginning to discover the implications of our own perception. Who can handle the thought that energy can be in one, two, or all places at the same time in the Field? At the quantum level, at any rate. Yogis have been teaching themselves how to be in two places at once for hundreds of years, just as shamans have. But whether or not us Westerners can deal with the very possibility, or even the thought that it is possible? Gravity, the once solid and central law that gave the Newtonian worldview the right to exist, also seems to be but a local phenomenon, as astronauts witnessed in the last century. It won't be long now before we discover that the Sacred Dimension and the Field are one and the same. The scientific experiments that I described earlier may provide undeniable evidence, but they do not prove the existence of the Field once and for all. It has turned out that some people can enter the Field temporarily, and others cannot. The results are hard to reproduce on an individual level. Whoever learns the techniques of the Sacred Voyage, and enters the Sacred Dimension, can witness the Field for themselves. In this heightened state of consciousness, the masquerade of our daily perception seems to fall away completely. Dual consciousness, telepathy, instant transformation, clear perception, communicating with dead souls: everything is possible in this dimension. But not from our conscious dimension.

Discovering the Sacred Dimension, the Field, is child's play. Our unadulterated childhood consciousness is the only thing we can take with us when we enter the Field. Our capacity to wonder, to be infatuated, and to play with all the possibilities makes us able to stay standing in this seemingly absurd and overwhelming world where everything is possible. Our conditioned adult consciousness would literally go insane in this multicolored roller coaster of endless possibilities, in which the world creates itself through the power of your intent. This seems to explain why we often have to work through our unprocessed emotions first during our Voyages. The freed up energy leads us to our child consciousness. Whoever tries to hold on to their waking mind will be hopelessly lost on the other side, and is likely to face a wild ride of multicolored, incomprehensible information. Perhaps we can carefully

state that because of our logical, 'cause and effect' way of thinking, we are cut off from our true nature and our childlike capacity to create?

For those to whom the visible and tangible world is the only reality, my claims will seem to be incredible, far fetched, or even threatening. Throughout the ages, voyagers to other dimensions have always been ridiculed or even murdered in vast numbers. We would rather kill our opportunity to escape from our self-imposed prison, than embrace the possibility that we might be co-creators, Divine by nature, and eternal. In the Sacred Dimension, we will inevitably discover the force which has given life to us: love. Whoever travels beyond the boundaries of the known, and who surrenders himself to the powers of the Field, will eventually end up in what is best described as the Ocean of Love. Love experienced as an all-fulfilling, all-blinding Field of Light. Whoever has been here no longer needs scientific theories or empirical evidence: the Source of Life, as the eternal Field of Light is also called, is not a mystically imagined place the way many traditions describe her. She forms the core of who we are, or perhaps of who we are meant to be. Just as the silver heron falls from a great height on its first flight before testing its wings, so will us Voyagers have to fall a great depth in order to cast off our false nature and fly freely in the Sacred Dimension. Whoever has the courage to do this, who dares to remove their blindfold, is awaited by the Field of infinite possibilities and the Source of Life. Here we can rest and remember who we are. Here, for a little while at least, we are at home. A memory which will be engraved deep into our soul, and which will never leave us. Whoever finds the Source, is free.

I have mentioned the term ‘Light’ several times already, but I may have done so without describing exactly what I mean by it. Is it love, or soul energy, or the radiation of the sun which gives us life? She is definitely related to these, but then of a much higher vibration. Light is energy in the Field of infinite possibilities, which connects all souls to each other. She is everywhere at the same time, and unlimited in use. If you want to understand this concept better, think about the explanation that Rupert Sheldrake gives from the perspective of quantum physics. He compares it to radio and TV signals. In theory, you can receive every broadcast signal from around the world at the same time. As long as the receiver is strong enough. This means that all information is present everywhere in the universe at the same time. If you can grasp this, then you can also grasp the concept of ‘Light’. Light is universal love, love of the World Soul which manifests in everything that lives. Light is the creative energy that binds everything together. Everything has a blueprint, and an energy field which gives a certain shape and form to an object, energy, or life form. Light is the connecting factor, the energy which determines that it is exactly this form of life that each manifestation has been given. Light is of an incredibly high vibration, so high that our instruments and senses cannot perceive her. And yet there is a way to tune in to this universal Light. We have all forgotten it, because we have all forgotten how to relax and just daydream, two activities that inspire us. Our natural ability to see Light is stamped out of us during our childhood. Seeing Light is child’s play. In order to learn how to see it, you will have to learn how to be a child again. To embrace the Child deep inside, to learn how to play, to learn how to dream and to lazy about. All of the things which our adult world abhors!

I realize that the bosses of your companies won’t be happy with me, but try and start your day by staring *next* to your screen for half an hour, looking at the clouds and the blue sky. Let your thoughts roam free, and don’t censor anything that comes in. Only if your boss comes in should you censor your activity and pretend to be the model worker by hitting the keyboard a few times, a technique I call ‘*faking and snaking*’. This is a lesson in civil disobedience: you *fake* being the model worker, and in the meantime you *snake* something else. If you like it, expand your activities. If you start to feel a guilty conscience (and you can’t blame me for that..), then ask yourself the following question: ‘have you ever

seen a cat, a dog, a bird, or a fish work for eight hours a day?'. Yes, perhaps ants do, but I don't know if you want to be compared to one of them. There is an old story which tells that ants used to be like us humans, except they forgot their true nature and eventually became what they are now. Unimaginative, hard workers. Is that your fate?

Okay, if civil disobedience is a bit too much for you, then at least try to day dream if you don't already. Go to sleep (not at work!) with the intent to remember your dreams, and put a pen and paper next to your bed. Get to work like a real dream catcher, which means not to use your active thinking at all yet. One single thought can be enough to cancel out all the fine dream energy. Lost forever. So don't do it; don't think. Become a dream fisher, and learn to associate. Catch an image and pull it on board. Once you have caught a few clear pictures and pulled them into your waking consciousness, you can try to pull in the rest of the story through association. Do not think or explain, because then it'll still go 'pop' and disappear! Thought is the killer of the finer energies of the soul. You can write down a few key words, as long as you keep clear associations to your dream.

Don't hold it against me, but in order to manifest in the material world, in the world of low vibrations, we need thought power in the form of a well developed left brain. A wise left brain knows when to be quiet and cooperate with the right, our creative and intuitive side. As Robert Monroe⁶² says, it can enter into 'Hemi-Sync' and tune in to other realities and dimensions. But if you can't daydream or remember your nightly dreams, then seeing Light energy might be too much to ask for you. There is hope, as practice makes perfect, and eventually everyone can see Light energy or Perceive Clearly, because this is a part of our true nature. Except we've ditched her. Time to reinstate her, don't you think?

In order to enter the world of Hemi-Sync, of astral voyaging, of auras and clairvoyance, of morphic fields and visions, we will have to take it a step further and open and train our Third Eye. Our Third Eye, also known as the sixth sense, is potentially present in all of us. Various mystical traditions are very mysterious or complicated about our inner eye, but the reality of it is that it is incredibly simple. Both Robert Monroe and José Silva invented ways of increasing the cooperation between the two brain halves at the end of the last century. Monroe did it with sounds, and Silva with visualizations. Both of them attained the same result: the opening of our Third Eye.

When I was about ten years old, I accidentally discovered that I could open my third eye, and that there was a completely different world which I could receive on my inner flat screen television. Later on I also learned that I could broadcast! And then I forgot both of my gifts again. How can that be?

In *Heaven and Hell*, Aldous Huxley shows that his world was already suffering from visual pollution. Advertisements screamed for attention, and he was writing this at the end of the nineteen fifties! Huxley saw in this a clear link to the decreasing ability of modern people to have visions. It takes little argument to show that the modern human is overloaded with visual information. He looks at an average of three hours of television every day. By tuning in to external visual sources of information, such as computers or televisions, there is a good chance that we will lose the ability to visualize on our internal plasma screen. When I discovered this, I immediately threw my television out! And we haven't even talked about the incredible amount of useless information that we TV-junkies get addicted to so easily (after all, we're spoon fed television from a very young age) and which pollutes our consciousness. Luckily, after a few weeks of rest, it turned out that the damage to my inner vision was minimal. The images returned, and my ability to perceive clearly was restored.

I used the same technique that I discovered by coincidence when I was ten. When I couldn't fall asleep again one night, I started to experiment with several different states of consciousness. I learned by 'meaningful coincidence' how to open and use my Third Eye. This is what happened, one night in 1979.

It was dark in my room, and I was bored. I couldn't sleep, and tried a simple breathing exercise along with visualizing, during which I focused my attention on the incoming and outgoing breath. I always started the exercise with what people call the 'bodyscan' these days, by shifting my attention from my feet to my ankles, knees, and up through the rest of my body and by relaxing each body part in turn. My meditation manual had instructed me above all to do this calmly and with a short pause of three seconds after both inhaling and exhaling. I was mostly interested in the Siddhis, the special powers that Yogis develop through their spiritual efforts. But I didn't really calm down. Until I discovered something peculiar, which I would later call 'the observer behind the observer'. I discovered that I could keep following my breath with my awareness, in and out. At the same time, someone was looking through my closed

eyes, and this while my conscious awareness was focussed on my breathing! My eyes opened in shock, and I was immediately out of the experience again. The book I had borrowed from the library hadn't said anything about this!

Around this time, I was engaged with calling up spirits through the Ouija-board, and I was not comforted by my discovery. The light, which I had switched on in my panic, stayed on for quite a while, until my mother exhorted me to turn it off. Eventually, my curiosity triumphed over my fear, and I repeated the exercise. Eyes closed. Focus on breathing. Who is looking through my eyes, while I am focusing on my breathing? It's a miracle! Too much excitement caused me to lose my concentration again, and I could no longer observe the observer. But the foundation had been laid. Bit by bit, I learned how to stay concentrated by slowing down and deepening my breathing. Sometimes I got dizzy from the amount of oxygen I was getting. I started to feel safer with the observer in the background. I felt that it wasn't some foreign entity which I was dealing with here, but that this 'something' was part of me. Then something magical happened, which announced the next stage. The contours of my two closed eyelids, which I could see as almond-shaped silhouettes in the dusk, started to become one. I discovered that if I looked up a bit through both eyes, a sphere would form. The longer I concentrated on the observer through my own eye, this sphere, the bigger it became. I let my attention drift away from my breathing and concentrated entirely on looking through this eye. For a while I couldn't get further than this experience, until something magical happened again: the sphere that I had formed out of my two eyes started to open! Up and down, the sphere opened, and my field of vision got broader and broader! I lost contact with my body, and in panic I tore myself out of this state of consciousness and returned with a shock. My childhood consciousness was colored by experiences with the spirit world, from which contacts were formed with entities that were more than real. By secretly watching horror movies when my parents were out and my sister was babysitting me, imagination and reality started to melt together. I was very lonely as a child, and I had nobody to talk to about my experiences. Furthermore, I had no framework or reference to understand what I was doing. It remained a mystery. Every night I found the courage to continue with my experiments on consciousness. I followed the same steps. Breathe. Concentrate. Sphere. Open. Open! I was now completely free from my body. I could only just recall a vague memory of it, but

when I concentrated on my body, it was as if it were as small as a molecule, or as big as the universe. I was formless, just a soul and a bit of consciousness. I entered an ocean of calmness and love and experienced peace and connection to the whole cosmos, even though I didn't know that word yet. For months I returned to the Light every night, to the quiet, peaceful place where the world seemed to begin and end. Until the Nothing, the quiet, the Light energy was no longer satisfying; it was too empty, too peaceful. There hadn't been any harmony in my home for years, and I didn't feel good if things were calm. Furthermore, high school was looming, and I would have to struggle to keep my head above water there. Moreover, I had looked up this state of consciousness because of the special powers, the Siddhis, and in my judgment I hadn't attained any of them. Girls and scooters became much more interesting, and without noticing it, I forgot my gift. Years later I discovered the value of my discoveries, the portal into the Field, but I could no longer reach it. I received training in meditation, but could never rediscover the calmness and concentration to open my Portal, my Third Eye. Until I made my first Sacred Voyage. The bond between the entheogenic substance, in this case the magic Mexican mushroom, and my soul purified me profoundly and removed whatever blockages had arisen between me and the experience of my soul. It was an incredibly painful and emotional experience, in which I had the feeling that a dam was being removed. Tears were streaming from my eyes. Tears which I had held in for years, tears that were clouding my clear perception. Once my tears had dried, and I was filled with love, I closed my eyes and was awaited by a wonderful surprise: the sphere had been opened. Not only did I enter an ocean of tranquility and love, where my soul could gather its strength, but visions were being projected onto the sphere from other and totally unfamiliar dimensions. Wonderful fantasy images and entire imaginary worlds appeared to my recently opened Third Eye, and fulfilled my childhood desire to experience miracles, the sign of life that I had desired for so long, the sign that there is more to the world than we can see 'at first sight'.

During subsequent Voyages, various guides availed themselves to my Third Eye. I learned to communicate telepathically, to trace the origins of my illnesses, and to Perceive Clearly. The world opened up in her true appearance. To those who have lost their clear perception, the world of matter is the only world. To those who have developed more refined gifts, there is a Field of unlimited possibilities, the Field where our soul

lives. The Field where our childlike imagination rules, and can create possibilities which we as adults could never understand. And yet they are there, waiting to be explored and discovered. Ready to convince us of what we all know deep inside: we are Light beings, who need Light to live. Whoever listens to the childlike calling to discover what is hidden deep within us, is about to come face to face with a hefty dose of unprocessed emotion as well as the all-blinding Light. The Light of the eternal soul, which resides in us and wants above all to live. Free her and live, that is the path of the Sacred Voyage, the pilgrimage to the soul.

Since the dawn of time, alchemists have been searching for the Philosopher's Stone, the stone that can turn lead into gold. Paulo Coelho, who practiced alchemy himself for years, shows that the true transformation doesn't actually happen in the lead the alchemist works on, but in the alchemist himself. Lead represents the Earthly, our pain and sadness, our anger and fear, which, when we bring it to the Heavenly Light, can transform into gold, which represents our soul. Buddhists use the image of the beautiful lotus flower which has its roots in the mud. True beauty is shaped by the suffering that we as humans go through. It's not just the suffering itself that makes us beautiful, but the way in which we make it a part of ourselves, the way in which we let ourselves be shaped by life. What is more beautiful than a weathered face? There is an infinite spectrum of colors and possibilities in our life. However, our life's masterpiece, our unique path, only shows itself when we 'confess our colors'. When we make our decisions and therefore our irrevocable mistakes. We can only find out who we are by falling and getting up again. And we can only learn who we are meant to be when we make ourselves small and open ourselves up. When we discover our origins, can we also attain the second promise of the Philosopher's Stone: eternal youth?

Perhaps the question here should be: do we want that? Do we want to be eternally young? Or would we rather adapt to the 'ways of the world'. The answer can only be found in your own heart. When I look at our Western culture, I can easily determine that our life paths are neatly plotted out for us for the first twenty years, and are primarily aimed at banishing eternal youth from our hearts. We have to grow up as quickly as possible. With an emphasis on 'have to', because there is no choice. Whoever keeps their children out of school and has other educational plans, goes to prison. Of course we are all intelligent people, and we have learned that education and upbringing are very important to us, but does this answer the question whether we would want to be young forever or not? Whoever dares to answer is entering the world of magic, the dimension where nothing is as it seems. It is the world of fantasy, of creation, of eternal youth. Magic is the language of those who know, which has always been depicted by the Christian Church as the work of the devil. Witches and warlocks who 'knew' were burned in their

thousands during the Middle Ages. But what did they know that was so important that the Church decided to kill them all? What ties them to what happened to the Cathars centuries before? What had they discovered? Perhaps Hermes Trismegistus, ‘thrice great’ Hermes, who was possibly the greatest magician of all time, can answer for us. In the Tabula Smaragdina, the Emerald tablet, he engraved the following sentences, which reveal our true nature:

*‘As above, so below;
And as below, so above,
To accomplish the miracle of the One Thing’.*

In order to accomplish the miracle of the One Thing, we can begin by realizing that we are ourselves of a Godly nature. That is exactly what witches and magicians were engaged in, they were busy discovering their own Divine nature! They worshiped the primordial goddess, Mother Earth, and at the same time, they embraced the masculine God and thereby entered into the Secret Marriage (Chapter 5 – The Secret Marriage). In their nightly voyages flying over the Earth, they discovered their true nature. Organized religion wasn’t too happy with this, because it exists by the grace of our obedience. This movement had to be stopped at all costs, because organized religion exists by the grace of people who are cut off from their own Godliness and give away their power to bring a little Light into their darkness. The male-dominated Church felt threatened by a movement of mostly female individuals, who were uncovering the mystery of life on their own and who were following the revelations of Hermes without needing a Church to tell them how to live. The rest is history, they were massacred in their thousands. But what exactly had witches discovered?

We could just ask them! Those who believe in magic can develop the ability to communicate with the dead. As a child, I learned to open the portal to the other side with a Ouija-board. Luckily, I also learned how to close it. Not so long ago, another entity appeared to me. Her name was Nott and she asked me if she could appear in my story. I usually already write in a state of Clear Knowing, with automatic writing, but this time something different happened; after I had given her permission, she took over for me. This way of communicating is also known as channeling, I later learned. It is very strange, but not unpleasant: my fingers moved

across the keyboard by themselves, without me having or wanting to have any control over it. It just happened! We developed a trusting relationship, and Nott started to teach me ancient wisdom. She explained that ‘flying’, which is how people refer to the nightly voyages of witches, and which is symbolized by the broom, is actually flying *in the mind* (what I call ‘Voyaging’ in this book), with the help of magical potions which the witches had prepared. Highly poisonous plants and herbs were used for the potions and the salves, including species of the Nightshade family (where would that name come from?). Henbane, jimsonweed, and fly agaric mushrooms were used as ingredients for the potion. Nott strongly advised me not to experiment with these, because we now have much better plants and mushrooms at our disposal (Chapter 28 – Entheogenic Sacraments) for our Voyages. Laughing, she added that the recipes in their magic books were embellished with all sorts of nonsense ingredients like dragon’s nails, elf wings, virgin’s blood, and spider legs, in order to discourage their use by laymen. Only the initiated could drink the potion, because the transition to other dimensions would be too great for mere mortals without the right knowledge or intent. During the full moon on a Sabbath, the wise women came together and flew to other dimensions. Devil worship was central to the process as a symbol of embracing the darkness within. She taught me the true meaning of the word magic: the discovery of the Deity within. We are all connected to each other through our Divine Self. The only thing we have to do is to direct ourselves towards each other and to open ourselves, and we can communicate telepathically, she taught me. How else could I have come into contact with her? Nott told me through my pen that modern witches and wiccans and everyone who follows the path of magic can find the way to the Secret Marriage. That is the magical path which she walked hundreds of years before. The time hadn’t come for that yet, she explained to me, because the Light that was called on simultaneously set darkness in motion. *‘The intent wasn’t good back then, there was too much darkness. Too much envy, too much power. Perhaps the times are Lighter now?’*, she suggested mysteriously.

It took a long time before I started to appreciate her cryptic sentences, but we had more than enough time. For about half a year she would visit me from time to time, and I let her teachings and my lessons in the Sacred Voyage take shape in my life. I followed her instructions during my own Voyages, and discovered her truths through my own

experiences, in my heart. I learned that magic is nothing more than the miracle of the Divinity that lives inside us. When we discover our godly nature, miracles are constantly taking place. Miracles on our path that cannot be explained.

In contrast to what the Christianity-based teaching *A Course in Miracles* would have us believe,

‘Miracles are a testament to the truth. They are convincing because they come forth from conviction. Without conviction, they will end up as thoughtless and destructive magic. That is to say, it will be because of an uncreative use of the imagination’.

If the authors could have kept it to the first sentence, then they could have caught a glimpse of what magic is, amongst other things: the uncut and unfiltered truth. The truth that you can only perceive when the Deity within has been awakened. When you have learned to take off your worldly lens and see what truly is, the world of magic will be revealed. Magic is not from the devil, as the Church brothers try to scare into our minds, nor is she destructive, as the *Course in Miracles* claims. She is however ‘thoughtless’, because in contrast to what the scriptural *Course* would have us believe, miracles don’t come forth from our convictions and our thinking. Miracles come forth from our heart and soul. Miracles are those small and great clues to our godly nature, the totally unexpected magic that makes our life so extraordinarily worth it. I plead for the detachment from the thinking mind, and the opening up to the Deity within us, instead of letting it ‘come forth from conviction’ as the *Course* tries to force down our throats in keeping with the two thousand years of Christian domination we have gone through (I am using this expression in reaction to the introduction to the *Course*, which literally prescribes: ‘It is a compulsory course. Only the time at which you do it is free to choose’).

As far as I’m concerned, the last word should be with the children. Ask them what they would rather have, magic, or the conviction of the mind, and listen to their hearts. It’s no accident that Harry Potter is their great hero. Magic is a part of our true nature. Seek her in everything, in your own heart, between the lines, seek her! There are clues everywhere, sometimes literal, sometimes figurative. That is the exciting thing about

magic; for the uninitiated, she doesn't exist, and for the initiated, she makes the world radiate with inspiration. *'Nothing is what it seems'*, Nott kept teaching me. Just as the lotus is a beautiful flower to some people, to others she is a symbol of transformation, and to yet others she is an entheogenic sacrament for their nightly flights. Magic is everywhere, even in the smallest and seemingly 'meaningless' paradox:

'Nothing is nothing'.

43 **Magical Abilities**

Whoever enters the Sacred Dimension and rediscovers her soul in the realms beyond Death, a number of wonderful gifts await which are tied to the reunion with our soul. Western people are mostly concerned with attaining material goods of a low vibration, such as a car, a house, a TV, or material energy expressed in terms of debt: money. Things which, as my grandpa Koos said so accurately, ‘we cannot bring with us when we die’. In the Sacred Dimension we can only attain things of a high vibration. Ideas, imaginations, insights, energies, and abilities.

When you consider that everything that our senses can perceive started as an idea, then these things are at least as interesting as material goods of lower vibrations. Using Sacred Consciousness, we can learn to give room to our imagination and to create. We can give shape to the essential beauty of the dimension of the soul in our lives here and now. The first gift that I received from the Sacred Dimension was ‘color’. My first Voyage opened up my love for bounteous colors, colors to which I felt and still feel drawn like a magnet. My entire home is a warm collection of all sorts of colors that I had never seen before or that I wasn’t open to yet. Colors make me happy. Another thing that has brought color to my life is the second gift received from the Sacred Dimension: music. Music manifests the language of the soul. It is one of the most wonderful creations in a human life. Music cannot be contained by our words, thoughts, or senses. To experience music, we need our soul. I learned to deeply know music in the other reality. I have been playing and composing music my whole life, but I had never realized that the spirit of music is so simple and universal. Minor and major, sad and happy, these are two extremes that form the circle of life and which flow into each other like yin and yang. They are inseparable, and as far as intensity goes, they are each other’s equal. All of this was shown to me in the Sacred Dimension, where music comes from. And that is exactly what can touch us so deeply in a beautiful song: it reminds us of home, far away, of days long since past, of home. I understand now why our soul cheers in joy when she hears serene music. Music is the palette on which our soul paints her stories. With majestic music, we can seduce our soul into revealing itself. It isn’t for nothing that being guided by music that is good for the soul is one of the most important requirements for making the Voyage (Chapter 23 – Music). In almost every Voyage I was

surprised by a gift from my soul, which seemed to be expressing her gratitude for all the pain and sadness which I had faced and relived, so that her energy could flow in me again. The most remarkable present I received is probably the gift of magical perception. As a child I would have loved to have had this gift, because I associated it with magic. However, I can't remember having ever had a single thought or image that predicted the future. Immediately after my initiation, the rediscovery of my soul, the encounter with the Source of Life and the fulfillment of my first Voyage, I received the gift. The first time it manifested, I received an image of two men standing in my house. I ran home and was just in time to drive out the two men who I had seen with my Third Eye. After this I had so many similar experiences that my confidence in my clear perception has grown enormously. From time to time this leads to hilarious situations, when I say what is going to happen out loud, and then it does. What I have learned here is: speak before you think. I have a sturdy Inner Critic who looks at my clear perception with a certain soberness, and can easily snuff out any of its subtle images. With 'speaking before thinking', or 'acting before thinking', I am usually ahead of his criticism, just like the time that I was having a fun night out and wanted to go home early. I gave in to my intuition and got home just on time to find a burning mattress leaned against the front of my house, which would have set it alight if I had been a few minutes later. Together with my intellect, intuition (feeling and knowing), and instinct (body consciousness), my gift is a wonderful and powerful compass for which I am greatly thankful. They are gifts that are lying in wait for everyone in the Sacred Dimension, beyond the pain and sadness in your heart, as a gift for facing and expressing of whatever is troubling you inside and blocking your clarity. The most beautiful gift that one can accept with love in their heart is still: her soul. This beautiful satellite can put us into contact with the entire universe, and liberate us from our deepest fear: loneliness. When we have purified ourselves enough to feel the purity of our soul, then we can learn to tune in to the Source of Life. If we are tuned in to the Source, we can let an abundance of Light flow in for ourselves and for others. Light enlightens the dark, which is nothing other than the absence of light. Every human being carries a beautiful soul, just as every human being carries the gift in their nature. It is up to us to carry the soul and to develop and learn how to use its gifts. If we use her to enlighten others, we can shine even more ourselves. That is the promise of the Lightbearer, as Nott once 'told' me. Use your gifts

with care and love. Use Light for your own needs, and give everything you have too much of to others, that is what keeps our souls fed and alive. We are born to shine, it is written into our souls. There are various wonderful methods to share energy and Light with others, and to help heal, such as shamanism, Reiki, and auric healing. Whichever method you learn to use, sharing energy works in the same way: from inner strength to Light. The stronger you are in yourself, the more healed and resonant you are with the world soul, the purer the energy that you can pass on. However, in the world of spiritual and therapeutic healing, people often get caught up in power and ego. To me, the golden rule applies here: where there is power, there can be no love. Or when trapped in a paradox:

‘True authority call itself into question!’.

True spiritual healing always happens from a basis of equality and love. The true healer is she who helps the other to stand up and invites her to walk next to her, on her own strength. She can teach whoever asks for it a lesson so that they won’t fall again, but the healer will never stop it from happening if it does. She knows that it is each person’s own responsibility. This way she keeps her own energy pure and separate from that of the other, so that she can keep flowing and not get stuck. Power and powerlessness are nothing more than blocked energies. Whoever strives for or rejects power will eventually lose their purity of soul and her gifts. Let us take an example from one of the greatest healers of all time, Jesus Christ. Not the biblical icon, but the man, who performed his healing work out of his heart and soul with complete equality and love, and who to this day is remembered for his purity and love. It is that love which resides in all of us, the inspired love. She is waiting to be discovered and experienced in each of us; that is the second promise of the Lightbearer. The promise of our soul. If we help others to heal, let us remember this promise and help them to discover that love and beauty resides inside them. That is the way to true healing. The way to who we are meant to be.

At the closing of this book, I hope to have made a beginning with describing a path that can help you and others on your search for your soul. The Sacred Voyage offers you a method to discover that you have been taught since childhood to look through a colored, vague, dirty, or distorted lens. As we all have. Those who have been in the Sacred Dimension are witness to their own truth and above all, to their own truthfulness. With each mystery that we unravel, our look on the world and ourselves gets clearer. We learn to polish our lens and to see other more colors through it. We learn to see the world and ourselves as we are, perfect and glorious, small and insignificant. We can even learn how to take off our lens, and instead of seeing, simply be.

When we have processed our emotional traumas, and liberated the strength that was trapped in them, we can live fully in the here and now, without having to project onto our pure perception or being withdrawn into the past or worry about the future. When we liberate ourselves from old pains and embrace our true nature, we become who we are meant to be. The Sacred Temple is, as I wrote in the introduction, never more than an hour away. I was referring cryptically to the path that our own breathing will reveal to us, if we give her the freedom to find the path back home. It is up to us to choose whether we want to wander aimlessly for a lifetime, or voluntarily choose to embrace our old pain, and thereby start the journey home. Always remember that what we fear most and what we keep running away from has already happened! We were ignored as children, unappreciated, not listened to, or abandoned. The Child in you doesn't know that everything that happened to it is in the past. It has remained inside you, afraid, upset, angry, and sad, waiting to be seen, to be liberated, and to be loved. You are now there for yourself to welcome your Child within, to listen to it, to see it, to feel it, to appreciate it, to love it, and to never abandon it again. I think that this answers a question that many will ask, which is why we need an entheogenic substance in our development. The answer is simple: to take off our lens for a moment and discover who is hiding deep inside us, who we are really meant to be. Who are you?

You are a diamond in the making. You are carbon, the same substance that the stars are made of. Is it a coincidence that without carbon there

could be no life on Earth? When you give room to the immense powers that lie within you, and you free them, you can bring all your anger, pain, sadness, and fear to the Light and transform under high pressure from dark carbon into a flawless diamond. You might be rough and hard at the beginning, but as time passes you can grind, facet, and polish yourself. Radiate with beauty and joy, which is what you were meant to do. That is the path of the Sacred Voyage. I wish you love and Light on your path, I wish you a brilliant life!

Namaste¹

Lars Faber

¹

Sanskrit for: 'The Light in me greets the Light in you'.

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