



LIVING
*from
the* SOUL

THE 7 SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES
OF RALPH WALDO EMERSON

SAM TORODE

LIVING FROM THE SOUL

by Sam Torode

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The secret of life is the soul.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

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FOREWORD

What do you do when your world falls apart?

Where can you find peace in the midst of uncertainty?

Who can you turn to for guidance?

THese are among the questions Ralph Waldo Emerson faced at the age of thirty.

His beloved wife Ellen had died from tuberculosis in February, 1831, after only eighteen months of marriage. Emerson was a Christian minister, like his father and grandfather before him. But in the months after Ellen's death, his beliefs began to change, diverging from traditional Christianity. No longer comfortable repeating the rites and creeds of the past, he resigned from the pastorate.

In December, 1832, Emerson was an unemployed former minister with no fallback plan. Suddenly, he decided to set sail for Europe. Now he was at sea—both figuratively and literally.

During his ten-month tour, Emerson spent time in Malta, Italy, France, England, and Scotland. He attended lectures by the leading scientists of the day and met eminent authors including Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Thomas Carlyle, and William Wordsworth. Visiting the Garden of Plants and Cabinet of Natural History in Paris, he had an epiphany of the interrelatedness of all life.

The trip proved a turning point in Emerson's life. In the midst of despair, he grasped onto life. "That which I cannot yet declare has been my angel from childhood until now," he wrote in his journal on the voyage home.

It has inspired me with hope. It cannot be defeated with my defeats. It is the glory that shall be revealed; it is the open secret of the universe . . . I believe in this life. I believe it continues. As long as I am here, I plainly read my duties as writ with a pencil of fire. They speak not of death. They are woven of immortal thread.

What did he mean by this guiding "angel"? What was the "open secret of the universe"?

The soul.



LIKE most of us, Emerson had been taught to think of the soul as an immortal spirit placed inside each of us by God, which can be either saved or damned. But as his faith evolved during these tumultuous years, culminating in his pilgrimage abroad, Emerson came to a very different understanding.

Through meditation and experience, Emerson came to see his soul as a part of the universal consciousness. The “oversoul,” he believed, is the very ground of existence, out of which all things—energy, matter, life—come into being.

We cannot define the soul, he insisted, only evoke it with metaphor and poetry. Emerson likened the soul to the sun—too bright to be gazed upon directly, yet by it we see all things. He also pictured it as a vast ocean, with our individual souls being waves upon it, emerging for a time and then returning to the whole.

Individuality, in Emerson’s view, is secondary to unity. Each of us is inseparable from all people, all plants and animals, the Earth, our solar system, and the entire cosmos. And we each carry the universe inside ourselves, just as each wave carries the ocean.

The soul cannot be intellectually grasped or scientifically examined, Emerson insisted; it can only be felt, loved, and enjoyed. Through our individual souls, we

have direct access to the universal soul—God.

For this reason, he concluded, “God must be sought within, not without.” Religious institutions and authorities, at their best, can only serve as signposts to a personal communion with the divine. At their worst, they are obstacles that keep us from finding and following our own inner light.

There are no such things as “lost souls,” in Emerson’s view; only people who have forgotten their connection to soul. And that connection can be rediscovered and nurtured by looking within.



UPON his return, Emerson settled outside Boston in the small town of Concord, where he would live for the rest of his life. And he began a new career—lecturer. Drawing on all he’d learned in Europe and England, he spoke to eager audiences about science, philosophy, and culture.

He also began writing a book inspired by his epiphany in Paris. More than twenty years before Charles Darwin published *On the Origin of Species*, Emerson conceived of life as a single tapestry, with the simplest forms evolving into the most complex. He encapsulated this vision in the epigraph of his first book, *Nature* (1836):

*A subtle chain of countless rings
 The next unto the farthest brings;
 The eye reads omens where it goes,
 And speaks all languages the rose;
 And, striving to be man, the worm
 Mounts through all the spires of form.*

Unlike Darwin, however, Emerson saw nature as the manifestation of spirit. The universal soul is the fundamental, eternal reality, expressing itself in the realm of matter and time through ever-changing physical forms.

Following his life transformation, Emerson was still a preacher at heart. But instead of taking the Bible as his starting point, he proclaimed the “divine word” as revealed in all of nature and human culture.



LET’S return to September of 1833, when Emerson set out from Liverpool, bound for Boston. By day, he walked the deck of the ship and gazed out at the vast sea, which seemed to him a metaphor for the oversoul. By night, he recorded his insights and explorations in his journal. Having been for ten months immersed in the arts and ideas of Europe and England, he was ready to state his own convictions.

In his journal entry for September 8, 1833, shortly after embarking, Emerson spelled out “the error of the religionists”—those who cling to tradition, authority, and dogma of any theological stripe: they rely on secondhand revelation, while ignoring or deriding the soul, which is our direct connection to the divine.

Emerson then elucidated his new ideas—which, he asserted, were actually some of humanity’s oldest. In succinct sentences, he laid out seven core principles. Paraphrased, they are:

1. TRUST YOURSELF

*All that you need for growth and guidance
in life is already present inside you.*

2. AS YOU SOW, YOU WILL REAP

*Your thoughts and actions shape your character,
and your character determines your destiny.*

**3. NOTHING OUTSIDE YOU
CAN HARM YOU**

*Circumstances and events don’t matter
as much as what you do with them.*

4. THE UNIVERSE IS INSIDE YOU

*The world around you is a reflection
of the world within you.*

5. IDENTIFY WITH THE INFINITE

*Center your identity on the soul
and your life's purpose will unfold.*

6. LIVE IN THE PRESENT

*The present moment is your point of power.
Eternity is now.*

7. SEEK GOD WITHIN

The highest revelation is the divinity of the soul.

These were the principles that led Emerson through his darkest years and would continue to guide him to the end of his days. In this brief summary of his philosophy, he provided a touchstone for his entire life's work.



I was first exposed to Emerson in high school, and studied him in college. But my personal kinship with Emerson deepened beginning in 2008, when I edited and designed an illustrated edition of *Nature*.

At that time, in my early thirties, I was going through a transformation similar to Emerson's: I lost my first wife to divorce; I shed the traditional religious beliefs I'd held my entire life; and I stopped writing essays and books for the Christian magazines and publishing companies who had sustained me financially for a decade. Learning that Emerson had faced the same challenges made me feel a special bond with him, and I found comfort and hope in his life and writings.

Another connection to Emerson appeared when I learned that I'm related to his closest companion, Henry David Thoreau. Both the Torode and Thoreau families originated on the Isle of Guernsey (one of the Channel Islands between England and France), and at one time shared the same name—Thorold—until the spellings diverged. I was happy to claim Henry Thoreau as a cousin, however distant.

Reading a little Emerson each morning calmed my unsettled mind. Some other books I found especially helpful during that season were the *Manual* of Epictetus, the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, the *Tao Te Ching* of Lao Tzu, and *Pathways to Bliss* by Joseph Campbell.

Inspired by these works, I went on to write and my publish my own contemporary-language paraphrases of the *Manual*, the *Meditations*, the *Tao Te Ching*, and—

most recently—a selection of Emerson’s lectures, under the title *Everyday Emerson*.

This book, *Living from the Soul*, is an extended riff on Emerson’s September 8, 1833, journal entry. (The original text is included in the appendix.) I fleshed out Emerson’s principles into chapters using material paraphrased from an array of Emerson’s essays, lectures, sermons, and journal entries. While most of phrasings are my own, the ideas are all Emerson’s.

I’ve supplemented Emerson’s thoughts with resonant quotes from others, including Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius (Stoic philosophers who influenced Emerson); Lao Tzu, the Buddha, Vasistha, and the *Upanishads* (because Emerson was one of the first Americans to study Eastern religions and philosophies); Henry David Thoreau; Elbert Hubbard (a devotee of Emerson’s and proponent of the Arts & Crafts movement in America); and Joseph Campbell (the great twentieth-century scholar of mythology and the world’s religions).



FOR most of my life, I identified with the physical and mental aspects of myself, and worked to develop them. (Even the religion of my youth was mostly a matter of the mind, as I strived to intellectually assent

to the right doctrines.) But in the past two years, I've come to value spirituality—nurturing my connection to the soul—as the foundation of everything else.

Spirituality transcends what can be spoken or argued. I won't try to convince you that the soul exists; you have to experience it for yourself.

This book is only a map, and the map is not the territory. The inward journey, the quest to connect with your soul and live outward from that sure center, can only be undertaken by you.

—SAM TORODE

INTRODUCTION

*The Immensity
of the Soul*



The mind sees, hears, listens, sifts, weighs, and decides. Beyond this, there is something in us that sees the mind and watches its workings. That something is the soul.

The soul is the highest conception of excellence and truth we can bring forth. And from seeing what one soul is, we can imagine what all souls may be—and thus we reach God, who is the Universal Soul.

ELBERT HUBBARD



MANY profess a belief in the soul, but few appreciate its immensity.

A soul isn't something that you have, like arm or a leg. It's more accurate to say that your soul *has you*. The soul is the very ground of your being.

The soul isn't an organ like the heart or brain; it is the power which animates your organs. It isn't a function like memory, calculation, or comparison; it is the intelligence which makes use of these functions. It isn't

a faculty like reason or willpower; it is the light which guides your faculties—if you let it.

All sin consists in thinking and acting at odds with the soul. All goodness consists in letting the soul express itself through you.

The soul shines for everyone. There's a common wisdom of humanity shared by all people, in all places, at all times. The young and the uneducated have as much access to this wisdom as the oldest and most learned.

You are wiser than you know. There's a reservoir of insight within you, just waiting to be tapped. Awaken to the immensity of the soul, and it will illuminate your path.



The light that shines above the heavens and above this world, the light that shines in the highest world, beyond which there are no others—that is the light that shines in your heart.

THE UPANISHADS



THERE'S a profound difference between following a religion and living from the soul. Those who rely on church leaders, ancient texts, and other authorities for guidance in life do not realize the depth and

dependability of their own inner resources. Instead of consulting their soul's moral compass, they cling to rules and regulations passed down through the ages, which are always incomplete and imperfect.

While people argue over which religion has the right rules, the infinite law of the universe—which governs everything in existence—goes on working, silent and unnoticed. This power, which brings all things into being and guides their development, is ignored or considered irrelevant to the questions we humans face.

Are we not children of the universe? Are we alone left without guidance?

The infinite law lives within in each of us. It is life itself. When you turn inward and connect to the soul, you have direct access to it.



In Chinese philosophy, the infinite law is called the Tao (“the Way”). As Lao Tzu describes it, the Tao can be glimpsed but never grasped. We might name it, but must never confuse a mere name with the reality it represents.

*The Tao that can be understood
is not the eternal, cosmic Tao,
just as an idea that can be expressed in words
is not the infinite idea.*

*And yet this ineffable Tao
is the source of all spirit and matter;
expressing itself,
it is the mother of all created things.*

LAO T ZU



WE intuitively discern what is beautiful, good, and true. Our inner compass unfailingly points to that magnetic north.

The reason you are drawn to beauty, goodness, and truth—in nature, art, and other people—is because these qualities belong to the soul. They were already present within you before you ever saw them outside yourself. To the extent that you're connected with the soul, you'll naturally pursue these qualities and display them in your life.

You may be fooled by outward appearances for a time, but in the end only that which is true and good is rightly called beautiful.

Beauty, truth and goodness are ultimately one and the same . They are different aspects of the All.



*When beauty is only a masquerade,
it is actually ugliness.
Just as goodness, if it is not sincere,
is not really goodness.*

LAO T'ZU



THE world's religions represent humanity's attempts, in different times and places, to take the infinite law of the universe and encapsulate it in stories and rituals. Each sect holds its own fragmentary version of the law. But in the hands of a genuine prophet or teacher, sectarianism falls away and truth shines forth in all its beauty.

This is why, though their religions conflict with each other on many doctrines, the great saints of all faiths say essentially the same things. All proclaim the same virtues: love, kindness, courage, moderation, justice, diligence, patience, mercy, and humility.

If we imagine that truth hinges on the words of some great teacher or divine being, we weaken its power. The deepest truths are self-evident; they stand on their own and need no arguments to prop them up.

A truth is not praiseworthy because of the teacher who spoke it. Rather, teachers are praiseworthy to the extent that their words resonate with what we, in our hearts, know to be true.



The remark of a child is to be accepted, if it accords with reason. But the remark of even Brahma himself, creator of the world, is to be rejected like a piece of straw if it does not accord with reason.

VASISTHA



PRINCIPLE I

Trust Yourself



*All that you need for growth and guidance
in life is already present inside you.*

There's nothing you can do that's more important than being fulfilled. You become a sign, a signal, transparent to transcendence. In this way, you live and become a realization of your own personal myth.

JOSEPH CAMPBELL



As you mature, you grow to fill a particular niche in the world. This process is guided by the soul, as it expresses itself through your nature, character, and talents. It cannot be forced; it works only when you're free to pursue your own interests and abilities.

The purpose of education is to remove all obstacles in the unfolding of each child's innate genius. Education is the drawing out of the soul.

Alas, this is seldom the case in practice. When young people are forced into existing occupations and institutions, instead of being set free to create a world of

their own, the result is a tremendous loss of energy and integrity.



I would not have anyone adopt my mode of living for my sake. I would have each person be careful to find out and pursue his or her own way.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU



THESE comes a point when you must take yourself for your portion, for better or worse, richer or poorer. It doesn't do any good to envy others who seem smarter, better, or more talented. Focus on cultivating your own garden. It may seem a pitiful little plot, but with love and labor it will produce a bountiful harvest.

Discover what you're good at and love doing. Do nothing that you cannot do wholeheartedly. Find a vocation that you can truly put your heart and soul into.

Many people think of work as an obstacle to the spiritual life—as if spirituality were something separate from our daily activities. But if you listen to your soul's voice and follow its calling, work becomes an opportunity to sharpen your skills, strengthen your character, and gain wisdom.



You must enter the Forest Adventurous at its darkest point, where there is no path. Where there's a path, it is someone else's path. Each human being is a unique phenomenon. The idea is to find your own pathway to bliss.

JOSEPH CAMPBELL



THE soul equips us each with a compass that points to our proper path. In matters of morality, we call this “conscience”; in matters of intellect, “genius”; in matters of vocation, “talent.”

Follow your inner calling, listen to the whisper heard by you alone, and do the work you are inspired to do. Remember—nothing great can be accomplished without enthusiasm.

Happy is the artist or laborer who finds satisfaction in the work itself. Are you successful? Look to your work alone for the answer—not to your press notices or bank account.

If you love your vocation and seek to improve your craft for its own sake, eventually your work will be recognized. Authenticity is the key. Pour your whole self into your work, and your work will shine.

Self-trust is the first key to success. The second is focus—concentration of energy. And the third key is a positive, forward-looking attitude.

Positivity is creative; negativity is destructive. Instead of spending your time and energy cursing and fighting the things you don't like, praise and pursue the things you do.

Nature favors progress. Things that try to stand still are swept away or crushed in the current. If you wish to succeed, ride the wave of evolution—don't resist it.



A mighty tree grows from a tiny seed.

A pagoda of nine stories is built from small bricks.

A journey of three thousand miles begins with one step.

LAO TZU



YOU might be thinking, “Sure, self-trust is fitting for brilliant, original minds—but most of us are better off following orders and playing it safe.”

The truth is, each of us *is* an original mind, with a genius all our own. You are a unique expression of the infinite, creative intelligence of the universe. If you're

unaware of the powers within you, it's only because you haven't begun to exercise them.

Meditate and listen carefully to your conscience; when you have a conviction about something, think, speak, and act upon it; then you will begin to cut your own path in the world.

Self-trust doesn't mean inflating your ego, acting selfishly, or harming others. It means trusting in the soul to guide your way.



*If you advance confidently in the direction of your dreams,
and endeavor to live the life which you imagine, you will
meet with a success unexpected in common hours.*

HENRY DAVID THOREAU



PRINCIPLE 2

*As You Sow,
You Will Reap*



*Your thoughts and actions shape your character,
and your character determines your destiny.*

We are not punished for our sins, but by them.

ELBERT HUBBARD



IT'S commonly supposed that there is no justice in this world. The wicked appear to prosper, while the good suffer. If justice is ever to be attained, it will be in the next life.

From the soul's perspective, however, there is a perfect justice at work throughout the universe. Silently but surely, every crime is punished and every virtue is rewarded.

Every action has a twofold reaction: internal and external. The internal reaction—the effect upon a person's character—happens immediately. The external reaction—the effect that's visible to the outside world—happens eventually. It may take years for an external reaction to take effect, but the law of cause and effect is never broken.

The true rewards for virtue and punishments for evil are hidden within us. The internal effects are primary; outward manifestations—riches or ruin, praise or blame—are secondary.

When you do something good, you are the one who benefits most. When you give to the needy, you enrich your heart with generosity. When you reign in your appetites, you grow in self-control.

When you forgive someone who wronged you, does your forgiveness cleanse *their* heart and free *their* mind? No, it cleanses your own heart of bitterness, and frees your own mind of resentment.

The opposite is also true: when you do something wrong, you harm yourself. Cheat someone, and you cheat yourself. Slander someone, and you sully your own name. Refuse to help someone in need, and your own heart shrinks.



*Those who steal from others impoverish themselves;
those who give to others become rich.*

*Those who fight do not win;
those who win do not fight.*

This is the way of the Tao.

LAO TZU



EVERY thought, word, and deed accrues to form your character. In the soul's economy, nothing is lost. The moment you do good, it's rewarded by an elevation of character; and the moment you do wrong, it's punished by a degradation of the same.

As you sow, you will reap—this is the foundation of all morality.

It extends to society, too. As you are, so you associate. Virtuous people attract other virtuous people; the wicked attract the wicked. Here in this world, as the results of our choices accumulate, we ascend to heaven or descend into hell.



Your life is shaped by your mind.

You become what you think.

Suffering follows evil thoughts

as the plow follows the ox;

Joy follows pure thoughts

as a shadow that never departs.

THE BUDDHA



PRINCIPLE 3

*Nothing Outside You
Can Harm You*



*Circumstances and events don't matter
as much as what you do with them.*

Lameness may strike your leg, but not your resolve. Sickness may weaken your body, but not your determination. Nothing can steal your peace of mind—unless you let it.

Each time an obstacle arises, remind yourself of this truth. When you understand that outside events do not touch your deepest self, you can use any circumstance to your benefit. Trust fate and trust yourself.

EPICETUS



NEVER underestimate the power of your free will. You live in a world of your own creation, which you build day by day.

Thoughts inspire actions; actions form habits; habits shape your life. A cheerful or cantankerous attitude expresses itself in a smile or frown; held long enough, it will become etched on your face.

When it comes to character, all is cause and effect. Luck and circumstance have nothing to do with it.

If you change your dominant thought patterns, changes in your outward life will soon follow. You'll attract new situations, surroundings, friends, and opportunities that resonate with your mentality.

Circumstances are neutral. It's how you respond to them that determines whether they do you good or ill. We've all seen examples of people living in the harshest of circumstances—poverty, war, disease—yet whose souls shine forth with power and grace.

Take responsibility for your life, and you'll gain the power to change it. Be patient and content in all circumstances, and you'll find unshakable peace.



No one can hurt me but myself, for no one else can make me forsake the good and embrace the bad.

MARCUS AURELIUS



IF nothing outside us can harm us, how is it that we're all vulnerable to disease, disaster, and death? No amount of virtue can save us from these events.

The answer is that these things only affect the external, impermanent, ever-changing aspects of ourselves. They do not touch the soul.

In fact, an apparent evil is a blessing in disguise if it spurs us on to learning and growth. Those who rest on the cushion of advantage fall asleep; it's when we're pushed, challenged, or even defeated, that we're motivated to improve.

Loss of honesty, loss of generosity, loss of self-control—these are the real disasters in life, which degrade your character and disconnect you from your soul. And only you can bring them upon yourself.



They may kill me, but they cannot hurt me.

SOCRATES



PRINCIPLE 4

*The Universe
Is Inside You*



*The world around you is a reflection
of the world within you.*

*Find tongues in trees, books in running brooks,
sermons in stones, and good in every thing.*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



NATURE is the mirror of the soul. There's a direct correspondence between our interior and exterior worlds, between the soul and all that our eyes can see.

This is demonstrated in language, where spiritual concepts are represented by natural facts. Knowledge is *light*, ignorance is *darkness*, romantic love is a *flower*, inspiration is a *spark*. A noble person is a *lion*; a sly one a *fox*; an innocent one a *sheep*; a foolish one an *ass*; a resolute one a *rock*. *Heart*, *brain*, and *gut* refer to our emotions, thoughts, and instincts, respectively.

These metaphors aren't the fancies of a few poets—they're consistent across cultures. As we trace human

language back to its origins, it becomes more and more pictorial, until at last it's all pictures.

The proverbs of all nations use images from nature to make truths tangible. "The early bird gets the worm"; "A rolling stone gathers no moss"; "Make hay while the sun shines"; "Birds of a feather flock together"; "The straw that broke the camel's back"; and so on.

Likewise, the axioms of physics correspond to spiritual truths. "Every action causes an equal and opposite reaction"; "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts"; "An object at rest will stay at rest until a force acts upon it"; "The smallest weight can lift the heaviest using leverage." These propositions apply to our lives as much as they apply to inanimate objects.

Everything in nature can be read as an allegory for something spiritual, moral, or mental. What is a farm, but a silent scripture? The wheat and the chaff, the sun and the rain, the bees and the locusts, springtime and harvest—all are sacred symbols. "As you sow, you shall reap," the fields proclaim.

By exploring the world around us, we learn who we are. Each new experience we have, and each new fact we learn, broadens our mental and spiritual horizons. The more we study nature, the better we know ourselves.

Scientific discoveries shine new light on the infinite law of the universe, which brought all things into being and lives in us. Any religion that is afraid of science forfeits its mission to pursue truth and, in so doing, dishonors God.



The laws of time and space are in us—we carry those laws within our own heads—and anything we can see or know anywhere will involve those laws. What is the universe? Space. Out of space came a coagulation that became a nebula, and out of that nebula, millions of galaxies, and within one constellation of galaxies, a sun, with our little planet circling it. Then out of the earth came us, the eyes and the consciousness and the ears and the breathing of life itself. We're earth's children, and, since the earth itself came out of space, is it any wonder that the laws of space live in us? There's a wonderful accord between the interior and exterior worlds.

JOSEPH CAMPBELL



THE physical world is a realm of duality: north and south, hot and cold, dark and light, strength and weakness, good and evil, truth and falsehood, ugliness and beauty. Each quality depends on its opposite;

without one, you couldn't possibly know the other.

But underneath the seas of our lives, which alternate between storm and calm, ebb and flow, lies the unfathomable abyss of pure being. This is the soul. It has no limits or counter-balances. It transcends all categories, swallows all opposites. It simply is.

All of nature emerges from this one source.

In the physical world, with its countless separate beings, inequalities are inevitable. When it comes to anything you can measure, some individuals will have more and others have less.

But seen from the soul's perspective, inequalities melt in an ocean of unconditional love. The distinction between *yours* and *mine* vanishes. We are all one.

This was the perspective of Jesus when he said, "I am in the Father, and the Father is in me. You are in me, and I am in you."



Cosmic consciousness alone exists now and ever. That consciousness reflected in itself appears to be creation.

VASISTHA



DOES the vastness of the universe make you feel insignificant? The microscope has yet to find a part of nature that's unmiraculous by virtue of being too small.

The whole universe is represented in each of its parts. Everything in nature contains all the powers of nature—including you.

You belong to a family that includes every plant and animal on Earth. All evolved from the first living cell; all follow the same laws of organization and development; and all are animated by the same life force.

The same power that brought the universe into being is manifest in every particle. This is the true meaning of divine omnipresence—God is everywhere.



*There is Being that encompasses all,
and it existed before earth or the universe.
Calm, indeed, and immaterial;
it is singular and changeless.*

*All creation flows from it and returns to it.
It is the world's mother.
I cannot define it, but I will call it Tao.*

*Humanity is the child of the Earth;
The Earth is the child of the universe;
The universe is the child of the Tao.*

*The Tao has no mother,
but is mother of all.*

LAO TZU



PRINCIPLE 5

*Identify with
the Infinite*



*Center your identity on the soul
and your life's purpose will unfold.*

*When one is convinced that the infinite self alone is real,
one goes beyond sorrow.*

VASISTHA



W_HO are you?
When asked this question, you're likely to reply with a conglomeration of things, such as your name, age, family, nationality, religion, personality type, occupation, income, accomplishments, hobbies, likes and dislikes, and so on.

These are all things that you *have*. But *who* has these things? Who are you, really?

There are two senses of the word "self." One is limited, the other infinite. If you identify yourself as a physical being with certain attributes and attainments, you are identifying with your limited, fragmentary self.

But if you identify yourself as a spiritual being—as soul incarnate in a physical body—you are identifying with your infinite, whole self.

Most people think too little of themselves. This might come as a surprise, because it's commonly said of materially-minded people that they “think too much of themselves.” But the truth is the opposite: they think of their bodies, clothes, money, possessions, status—everything *but* themselves.

It's not possible to think too highly of your infinite self.

If you identify primarily with your limited self, your happiness will be at the mercy of your physical, mental, and material circumstances, which are always in flux.

But you are not your body. You are not your mind. You are a soul who *has* a body and a mind. Center your identity on this infinite self, and you'll discover lasting peace and joy. When you observe the storms of life from the soul's perspective, you'll no longer be tossed about and overwhelmed by them.

Your attributes and abilities are things you have; they don't define you. But when you use them as means of expressing your soul in this world, you'll reach your full potential.

This is living from the soul.



Think of electric lights in a room. What is important—is it the illumination, or is it the bulbs? The bulbs are only vehicles of the light.

With what do you identify yourself, finally? With the body, or with the consciousness?

When you have identified yourself with the consciousness, the body is secondary. You are ready to be grateful to the body and to love it for having brought you to this realization, but it is only the vehicle.

That which was not born and will not die came into manifestation through your body, and this same thing is in the bodies of others. This the awakening of the heart, of compassion. It transforms relationships from combat with other people into identification with them.

JOSEPH CAMPBELL



CULTIVATE your connection to spirit. Meditate on the unfathomable depths of your soul, and its union with the Source.

Your soul is part of the universal soul, which is serene, whole, and perfect. It is an endless ocean of light, upon which our souls arise as waves.

We're all part of this universal soul, yet it is far greater than any human incarnation or expression. Shakespeare's plays and Michelangelo's sculptures—as magnificent as they are—only hint at the beauty and wisdom of the oceanic soul that inspired them.



If you focus on the task at hand, shed all distractions, and follow reason with steadfast determination, the divine spark within you will burst into flame.

Nurture this inner light, keep it pure, and be ready to return it to its Source when your time is done.

Expect nothing, fear nothing, speak truly, and act heroically. No one can stop you.

MARCUS AURELIUS



WHAT is the purpose of your life? Keep on living, and your life will be its own answer. Life is a story in hieroglyphs, able to be understood only in hindsight. Action comes before understanding.

Living from the soul means thinking, speaking, and acting in accordance with your truth.

When you connect with the soul and allow it to shine through all that you say and do, you'll become fully and truly *yourself*.

When you speak from the soul, your voice will be as authentic as the murmur of the brook and the rustle of the corn. And when you act from the soul, your behavior will be consistent with your convictions.

Put your body and mind in service of the soul, and you'll live your purpose in this world.



To those who identify with the body, the body is a source of suffering; but to the enlightened, the body is regarded as a vehicle of wisdom and a source of infinite delight.

VASISTHA



PRINCIPLE 6

Live in the Present



The present moment is your point of power.

Eternity is now.

The present moment is all the time we ever have. The longest life and the shortest converge on this same point. No matter how many years stretch behind or in front of us, the present moment remains the same.

MARCUS AURELIUS



WHAT good does it do you to dwell on yesterday or worry about tomorrow? It only unsettles your mind, frays your nerves, upsets your stomach, and depresses your spirits.

To dissolve worry, shift your attention to the present moment.

The past is but a memory; the future is but a dream. *Now* is the only time that you can think, feel, and act. The present moment is your connection to life, your point of power.

Concentrate on whatever task is before you. There is your duty, your excellence, your only concern.

If your body is in pain this moment, or your mind is suffering, remember that your soul remains at peace. When you identify with the soul, all fear departs.

Even death is nothing to the soul. If you remain engaged in worthy thoughts and actions to the end, you will die like a soldier in the heat of battle who never feels the wound.

Your earthly existence is temporary, but if you live from the soul you'll experience eternity in the present moment.



Eternity is not future or past. Eternity is a dimension of now. It is a dimension of the human spirit—which is eternal. Find that eternal dimension within yourself, and you will ride through time and throughout the whole length of your days.

JOSEPH CAMPBELL



WHERE is heaven? Is it far beyond the stars?
No, it is very near.

In religious language, things said to be “above” are metaphors for what is actually *within* us.

Wherever there is love, there is heaven. Wherever there is truth, beauty, justice, mercy, and hope, there is heaven.

The virtues have nothing to do with time or death. They are immortal. To the extent that you cultivate them in your heart and put them into action, you are in heaven. Right here, right now.



God culminates in the present moment, and will never be more divine in the lapse of all the ages.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU



WHAT awaits us beyond this life is a mystery. But just as living well today is the best preparation for tomorrow, living well in this life is the best preparation for any life to come.

Follow the promptings of your soul and fill your days with love, laughter, and meaningful labor. The reason to live a good and virtuous life is not to avoid punishment or earn a reward in the afterlife. Living well is its own reason. Virtue is its own reward.

Someday your physical body will die. Your flaws and failings will pass away, too. But all the love, truth, and

goodness within you can never die.

Everything about you—your body, mind, attributes, possessions—is subject to change and decay, except for those things that belong to the soul. So ground your identity in your capacity for love, truth, and goodness. May your soul shine brighter and brighter, until the mortal portion of you is paltry by comparison.

To the extent that God lives within you, you are immortal.



The things most people value and pursue in this life are passing away. All their striving, acquiring, and fighting—it's as pointless as dogs chasing each other.

What is of lasting value? Goodness, faithfulness, justice, and truth.

MARCUS AURELIUS



PRINCIPLE 7

Seek God Within



*The highest revelation is
the divinity of the soul.*

At whose behest does the mind think? Who bids the body live? Who makes the tongue speak? Who is that effulgent Being that directs the eye to form color and the ear to sound?

The Self is the ear of the ear, eye of the eye, mind of the mind, speech of speech. Give up the false identification of the Self with the senses and the mind, and know the Self to be divine.

THE UPANISHADS



THERE is something in you that's higher and better than your mortal self. This something speaks the truth with authority. It will never lead you astray. Nothing can harm it, no matter how badly your body may be hurt. Its principles are in unison with the laws of nature. And it lives not just in you, but in everyone.

The soul is the presence of God within you. It is the divine portal of which Jesus said, “Knock and the door will be opened. Seek and you will find.” It is the doorway to Heaven, inviting you to experience eternity here and now.



*What would it profit you to gain the whole world,
but lose your soul?*

JESUS



JESUS of Nazareth was one of humanity’s true prophets. Drawn by its beauty, he looked upon the mystery of the soul with open eyes. He lived in harmony with the soul and grounded his identity in its depths.

When Jesus said “The Kingdom of God is within you,” he was referring to the soul. In the two thousand years since he walked the earth, Christianity has spread all over the globe—yet the heart of his message, the divinity of the soul, goes unpreached.

Christians worship Jesus as the only incarnation of God. But the divine soul, as Jesus taught, is within all and favors no one.

By elevating the person of Jesus above his message, the message has been lost. And by depicting Christ as a

king who rules by threats of hellfire, Christianity turned the friend of humanity into a despot.

Jesus is a mediator between God and humanity so far as he points us to truth and we put it into practice. "Love your neighbor as yourself"; "Love your enemies"; "Judge not, lest you be judged"; "Forgive, and you will be forgiven"; "Do to others as you would have them do to you;" "Do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will take care of itself."

If the words of Jesus and stories of his life awaken you to the divine soul within and inspire you to transform your life, he will have "saved" you by helping you to save yourself.



When Jesus says, "I am the all," he means, "I have identified myself with the all." When he says, in the Gospel of Thomas, "Split the stick, you will find me there; lift the stone, and there I am," this does not refer to his physical body; it refers instead to that which he is, and you are. And, of course, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." Who is in Heaven? God. Where is God? Within you.

JOSEPH CAMPBELL



WHEN the soul speaks, old things pass away.
Texts and temples fall.

God speaks to us today, in our language, as well as God ever spoke to people in faraway lands in the distant past.

The soul discerns what is true, independent of any tradition, institution, or book. Our religions are storehouses of secondhand insights, useful for inspiration but harmful when substituted for firsthand communion with the divine soul.

To the religiously devout, this may seem like a dangerous, revolutionary idea. But really, the truth of the soul is the oldest of revelations.



*The word unto the prophet spoken
Was writ on tables yet unbroken;
The word by seers or sibyls told,
In groves of oak, or fanes of gold,
Still floats upon the morning wind,
Still whispers to the willing mind.*

RALPH WALDO EMERSON



GOD is found within, not without. That's the message of Jesus and all mystics through the ages.

As long as you keep searching for God outside yourself, you'll never be at peace. But when you look within and find that God is in you—and you are in God—you will know the peace that passes understanding.

Think and feel for yourself. Love and help others. Make your life a clear vessel of the divine soul within, even if up till now you have only glimpsed it enough to know that it exists.

The universal soul encompasses all truths and knows all things. Its power is boundless, because its love is boundless.

Appendix





APPENDIX I

Emerson's Life & Influence

RALPH WALDO EMERSON was born on May 25, 1803, the second son of a beloved and respected Christian minister in Boston. His father died of stomach cancer when Waldo was only seven, leaving the five Emerson brothers to be raised by their mother and aunt.

At age fourteen, Emerson left home for Harvard College, graduating four years later in 1821. After

working as a tutor for three years, he enrolled at Harvard Divinity School with the goal of becoming a pastor like his father and grandfather.

In 1829, at age twenty-five, Emerson was ordained a minister at Boston's Second Church. That same year, he married Ellen Tucker. Just eighteen months later, Ellen died of tuberculosis. Around the same time, Emerson lost his faith in traditional Christianity. Unable to repeat the creeds and rituals of the past, he resigned his pastorate to pursue a firsthand relationship with God.

After losing his wife and leaving the ministry, Emerson sailed to Europe for ten months. He returned with a new sense of vocation: he would be a writer and lecturer, teaching reliance on the light within.

Today we remember Emerson mainly for his essays, but during his lifetime he was renowned as a public speaker. From 1833 to 1877, he delivered over 1,500 lectures. He travelled all over New England and the Midwest, even venturing once to California. He refused to lecture in the Southern slave-owning states.

A supporter of civil rights and women's rights, Emerson was a friend of many abolitionists and early feminists, including Margaret Fuller, whom he hired to

edit his Transcendentalist journal, *The Dial*. Emerson signed the “Declaration of Sentiments” of the first Women’s Rights Convention held at Seneca Falls in 1848, and he spoke at the 1855 convention in Boston.

While lecturing at the Smithsonian Institution in 1862, Emerson met with President Abraham Lincoln and encouraged him to push for an immediate end to slavery. The Emancipation Proclamation was issued the next year.

Among those directly inspired by Emerson were the two greatest American poets of the nineteenth century, Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. At age twenty-three, Whitman attended Emerson’s 1842 lecture on “The Poet” in New York City. Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* (first edition, 1855) was written in answer to Emerson’s call for a new, distinctly American poetry. “I was simmering, simmering, simmering,” Whitman said; “Emerson brought me to a boil.”

Emily Dickinson was given a copy of Emerson’s *Poems* in 1850, when she was twenty. In a letter, she wrote, “Ralph Waldo Emerson has touched the secret spring.” While lecturing at Amherst in 1857, Emerson stayed in the home of Dickinson’s brother and sister-in-law; Emily lived next door, so the two may have met, though there is no record of it.

Emerson also influenced the founding figures of the nature conservation movement, Henry David Thoreau and John Muir. Thoreau first met Emerson at Harvard in 1837, and the two became close companions. In 1845, Thoreau moved to a small cabin on Emerson's property at Walden Pond, which led to the writing of his masterpiece, *Walden*.

John Muir—the wilderness advocate and founder of the Sierra Club—read Emerson's works and was inspired by them. During Emerson's California sojourn of 1871, the two spent several days together in Yosemite. "Emerson was the most serene, majestic, sequoia-like soul I ever met," Muir recalled. "His smile was as sweet and calm as morning light on mountains. I felt here was a man I had been seeking"

Emerson's influence was also felt in the field of psychology through the work of his godson, William James, author of *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, *Pragmatism*, and many other works. "The matchless eloquence with which Emerson proclaimed the sovereignty of the living individual electrified and emancipated his generation," James said of Emerson. "Posterity will reckon him a prophet. . . . His words are certain to be quoted more and more as time goes on, and to take their place among the Scriptures of humanity."

Emerson died in 1882, at the age of seventy-eight.
On his grave marker is a passage from one of his poems:

*The passive master lent his hand
To the vast soul that o'er him planned.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson's voice reached far and wide,
and continues to reverberate to this day.

APPENDIX II

*Emerson's Original
Journal Entry*

AT SEA. Sunday, September 8 [1833].

I believe that the error of religionists lies in this, that they do not know the extent or the harmony or the depth of their moral nature; that they are clinging to little, positive, verbal, formal versions of the moral law, and very imperfect versions too, while the infinite laws, the laws of the Law, the great circling truths whose only adequate symbol is the material laws, the astronomy, etc., are all unobserved, and sneered at when spoken of, as frigid and insufficient.

This is the journal entry upon which this book is based. For ease of reading, I have inserted multiple paragraph breaks. —ST

I call Calvinism such an imperfect version of the moral law. Unitarianism is another, and every form of Christian and of Pagan faith in the hands of incapable teachers is such a version. On the contrary, in the hands of a true Teacher, the falsehoods, the pitifulnesses, the sectarianisms of each are dropped, and the sublimity and the depth of the Original is penetrated and exhibited to men.

I say also that all that recommends each of these established systems of opinion to men is so much of this Moral Truth as is in them, and by the instructive selection of the preacher is made to shine forth when the system is assailed. And because of this One Bottom it is that the eminent men of each church, Socrates, À Kempis, Fénelon, Butler, Penn, Swedenborg, Channing, think and say the same thing.

But the men of Europe will say, Expound; let us hear what it is that is to convince the faithful and at the same time the philosopher? Let us hear this new thing.

It is very old. It is the old revelation, that perfect beauty is perfect goodness, it is the development of the wonderful congruities of the moral law of human nature. Let me enumerate a few of the remarkable properties of that nature.

A man contains all that is needful to his government within himself. He is made a law unto himself.

All real good or evil that can befall him must be from himself. He only can do himself any good or any harm.

Nothing can be given to him or taken from him but always there is a compensation. Every act puts the agent in a new condition.

There is a correspondence between the human soul and everything that exists in the world; more properly, everything that is known to man. Instead of studying things without the principles of them, all may be penetrated unto within him.

The purpose of life seems to be to acquaint a man with himself.

He is not to live to the future as described to him, but to live to the real future by living in the real present.

The highest revelation is that God is in every man.

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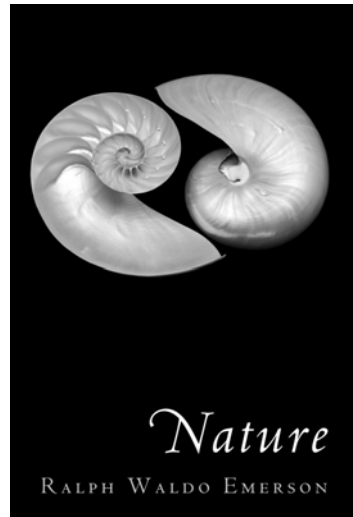
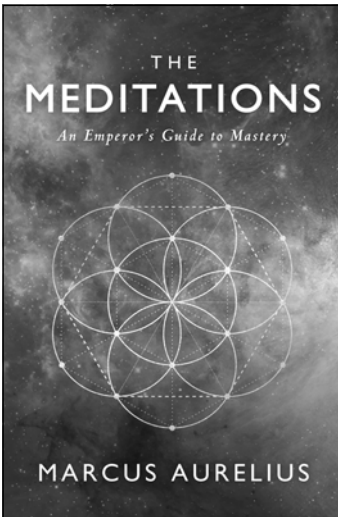
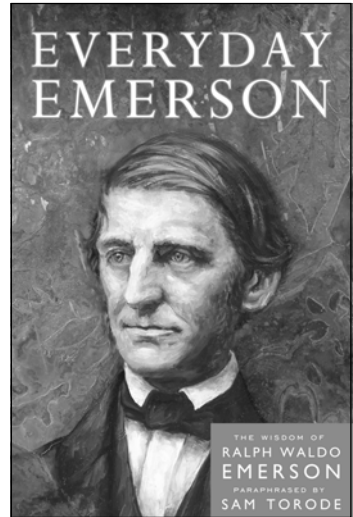
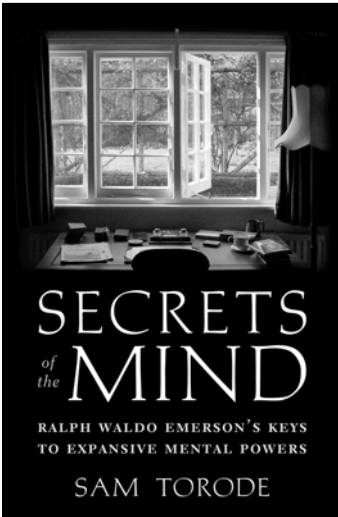
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