

Authentic Spiritual Growth

Spiritual Practices for
an Awakened Consciousness:
The Journey to a Healthy Life

DICK RAUSCHER



STONYHILL
A Stonyhill Publication

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ISBN-13: 978-1491054567

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INTRODUCTION

Are you spiritually awake and growing to your full evolutionary potential?

A spiritually awakened consciousness has incorporated the spiritual disciplines needed to live in the present moment, and is on the path to becoming the most evolved "self" possible. A "self" that is striving to become the person they were born to become; a person called to embrace his or her own unique gifts and manifest their deepest life purpose.

A person who is spiritually awakened has the ability to accept the reality of what is and the courage to intentionally explore and challenge the many ego beliefs, assumptions, certainties, and expectations that they have consciously and unconsciously accumulated over the course of their life.

The goal of all spiritual awakening is growth in self-awareness; learning to tame the primitive ego by transforming one's self beyond the certainties of their ego's opinions and beliefs into an emptiness of ego that the world's great spiritual teachers describe as the ability to "not know".

A religious person is taught to believe. A spiritually awakened person lives life in the knowledge that all of one's accumulated beliefs are only relative metaphors and concepts the ego uses to talk *about* reality. A person who is spiritually awakened strives to *experience* reality.

The ego believes, the soul experiences, and the pure observing consciousness of our authentic self observes and then uses silence to contemplate on what it "sees". A spiritually awakened person learns to "*see*" the reality of "what is" and when they share what they "*see*", they use the language of metaphor and story. The spiritual journey is a journey into silence and contemplation.

The insights and spiritual practices offered in this book are designed to change the way you "*see*" the world and how you

think, not change what you believe. They are offered to help the reader move beyond the illusions of ego and embrace a deeper knowing that brings resonance between our intellect and the wisdom of our heart energy.

Dick Rauscher
Redmond, Oregon 2013

Stonyhill Nuggets Are Seeds That Will Change the Way You “See” the world.

Readers have asked “Why do I write the Stonyhill Nugget week after week?” The answer is simple. We assume that “growing up” means we mature and evolve our consciousness, but the reality is, most of us simply pour concrete on the reality distorting beliefs and illusions we collected or adopted in childhood.

We tend to *see* and then reinforce what we *already know about the world*.

Personal unhappiness, unhealthy relationships, lack of success, depression, lack of meaning, spiritual bankruptcy, and hopelessness are what happen *when we distort or ignore reality*. Stated simply, human suffering and unhappiness is created in the mind.

Every Stonyhill Nugget is about awakening from the unconscious primitive ego consciousness of childhood to that of a more enlightened adult, observing ego consciousness. Every Stonyhill Nugget is about awakening our consciousness and learning to embrace reality.

I write the Nuggets because I wish I’d had access to the kind of material contained in the Stonyhill Nuggets when I was younger. The idea *seeds*, memes, and spiritual practices contained in each Nugget article could have saved me years of searching for meaning and purpose in my life.

Like so many, I unknowingly wasted much of my early life energy searching for deeper meaning and happiness in all the wrong places. I had very little self-awareness, no clue what a mystic was, and spirituality meant being “religious”.

Awakening meant getting up in the morning.

A Short Version of the Early Years

Like most people in their early twenties I had no clue about the challenging journey ahead of me.

My goal was to be a millionaire by the time I was thirty. So I rolled up my sleeves, earned a Bachelor’s degree in Electrical Engineering, and began to look for meaning and financial “success” in the corporate world. At thirty I was doing well

financially but I was a long ways from becoming a successful or happy millionaire.

I eventually gave up the treadmill corporate life, opened a Pizza shop, wrote as a stringer for a local newspaper, and even tried full time homesteading for five years. From homesteading I moved on to earn a Masters of Divinity from Colgate Rochester Seminary, was ordained as an Elder in the United Methodist Church, got my NYS license as a Mental Health Counselor, and worked in private practice as a Pastoral Counselor.

So Why Am I Sharing This with You

I'm not sharing my journey to boast about my accomplishments. I'm sharing this with you so you don't waste time looking for meaning and happiness in all the wrong places like I did.

For years I assumed that meaning, happiness, and success in life would come only after I had achieved a "specific" goal of some kind. I believed spiritual enlightenment came from sitting on a meditation cushion for twenty years, awakening my consciousness meant getting a PhD. and success would be the payoff for hard work.

Despite all the hard work I invested in during those early years, I had the gnawing feeling that something important was missing in my life.

Today I know from experience that authentic spiritual growth and meaning are not found in the outer world, they require the courage to journey inward... into the unconscious shadows of our primitive ego and the psyche our unconscious inner-child.

States" of Spiritual Awareness Lead to Awakened and Sustainable Structures Called "Stages" of Enlightenment

As my journey into self-awareness deepened, I experienced brief glimpses of my primitive ego and the conditioned habit patterns that had been unconsciously controlling my life. Over time those brief experiences or *states of higher awareness* began to slowly awaken my consciousness.

As I learned to pay attention to the energy I was sending into the world, I grew in self-awareness and was able to experience those *states* or glimpses of a deeper reality and a deeper *knowing* more often. I was growing.

Each brief awakening on the journey toward self-awareness not only led to increasingly higher *states* of consciousness or spiritual

awareness, they began to weaken the hold my unconscious ego had on my life.

It was in those brief moments of *presence*, where I stepped out of my head into the silence that rests beyond ego, which I began to more intentionally experience the deeper reality that surrounds all of us.

I began to *see* the world in a very different way. I was awakening to the awareness that there was a far larger reality, or context for life, than my ego *self* could have ever imagined.

I had grown to a new *stage* or sustainable structure of consciousness. The future was calling and there was no turning back.

Here are a Few of the Insights Learned in the Wilderness

Today I *know* authentic spiritual growth is not based on religious *beliefs*; it is the result of an internal journey; an awakening that happens one experience at a time; one day at a time. We experience it only when;

- we make the commitment to intentionally grow in self-awareness,
- we drop our narcissistic self-focus on personal growth and the desires of our own ego,
- we learn to “*see*” the world through the contemplative, non-dual eyes of a spiritual mystic,
- we are willing to drop our narcissism and embrace an emptiness of ego called “not knowing”,
- we let go of judgmental dualistic either/or thinking,
- we learn to accept and embrace *all* of reality, the good *and* the bad, with an open heart, and
- we begin to actually experience the interconnected unity of all of creation.

Spiritual awakening is rarely the result of one extra-ordinary spiritual experience or one brilliant religious flash of light that suddenly changes who we are. It comes to us when we have the courage to intentionally shine the light of our consciousness into the shadows of our unconscious psyche and openly embrace what we find there.

Over time, I learned to *see* and eventually *accept* the presence of my unconscious inner child’s primitive ego and the negative energy I was sending into the world. My spiritual awakening

deepened as I learned to tame the reactive, emotional *dragon energy* of my inner-child's unconscious primitive ego.

Meaning Comes from Seeing Life from a Larger Context than Our Local Ego

I began to realize the deeper meaning I had been searching for wasn't about *my own* enlightenment; it was about the enlightenment and the collective future of our human species.

Finding a primary purpose and meaning in life was about awakening to a *larger context*; finding a context and meaning for my life *beyond "self"-achievement, "self"-improvement, and even beyond my own "self"-enlightenment.*

How could I understand those around me if I didn't have the courage to understand myself? For me that larger context was awakening to an *evolutionary* consciousness and a growing sense of urgency that the future of our human species would depend entirely on the successful maturation and evolution of our collective human consciousness.

When I awakened to this larger evolutionary context for life I "*knew*" that the evolution of our collective human consciousness is both dependent on, and begins with, our own personal growth in consciousness; that the future of our human species will ultimately depend on the ability and success of each of us to evolve our own individual consciousness.

- I *saw* the danger for our collective future in our ego's narcissistic self-absorption.
- I *saw* the danger for our collective future in our ego's use of dualistic thinking.
- I *saw* the danger for our collective future in our collective ego's lack of self-awareness.
- I began to *see* that authentic spiritual growth and the ability to offer unconditional compassion to the world would depend entirely on my own ability to accept the reality of *what is* and let go of my either/or, dualistic thinking that had me judgmentally resisting those things my ego didn't agree with.

The need to work *with* evolution by changing the way we think, intentionally awakening and evolving our human consciousness, and collectively embracing reality is becoming an urgent concern for our species. We are running out of time to effectively address the problems that face our world.

It was my awakening to these realities, and the need I felt to add my voice to the evolutionary growth of our collective human consciousness that led to writing and publishing the weekly Stonyhill Nuggets for our growing Stonyhill community.

Stonyhill Nuggets Contain “Seeds of Consciousness” That Have the Power to Change Your Life: From an Unconscious Primitive Ego to an Awakened Consciousness

Each Nugget is an everyday spiritual practice that has the power to help you “*see*” deeper into the larger context that we call reality. Each Nugget is a seed of consciousness; an idea or insight that will help you to *see* your *ego-self*, the *primitive ego* of your inner-child, and the *world* around you in a very different way.

If you are willing to intentionally incorporate these spiritual practices into your life, and into the relationships you have with others, you will begin to grow in self-awareness and become more present or awakened to the reality of the present moment. Your ability to pay attention to “what is” will increase.

Each Nugget will offer you insights and spiritual practices designed to increase your *state* of awareness. Each time you experience those transitory glimpses or higher *states* of spiritual consciousness, those glimpses into a deeper reality will slowly solidify your consciousness from a transitory *state* of awareness into the sustainable, awakened *stage* of a more enlightened spiritual consciousness.

Each Nugget contains;

- *seeds* of consciousness that will slide into your soul, germinate, and be nurtured by the Spirit of the Creator; *the Divine Evolutionary Impulse To “Become”* immanent in you and all of creation,
- *seeds* of consciousness that will awaken the spiritual wings of your pure observing consciousness and lead you into the contemplative presence of silence and the mystical ability to “*see*” the deeper realities of the world and creation,
- *seeds* of consciousness that will break open the *possibilities* embedded in your “life story”; the self-limiting “story” your primitive ego created to strengthen your sense of *self*, your sense of *otherness*, your sense of *separateness*, and your life-limiting ego *boundaries* that were designed to keep you “safe”.

Stonyhill Nuggets Need to be Intentionally Incorporated into Your Life

You don't have to be a "special" spiritual person to become more enlightened. When you have the courage and self-honesty to openly explore the dark shadows of your psyche, you will find that each Nugget has the ability to help you achieve;

- higher *states* of spiritual awareness and
- *experience* the authentic spiritual growth that comes from growth in self-awareness.

The simple daily spiritual practices contained in each Stonyhill Nugget have the power to awaken your consciousness and deepen your understanding of what it means to awaken, live more authentically, and become more fully human.

Please don't take my word that these changes will happen for you. You *are* evolution evolving and becoming. Just incorporate the spiritual practices and insights contained in each Nugget into your life and you will begin to experience these realities for yourself.

Simply reading the Nuggets will not lead to spiritual growth or growth in consciousness. Spiritual practices have to be incorporated into your daily life for them to awaken your consciousness. An enlightened consciousness requires an intentional, life-long commitment to remain awake.

Summary: Seeing Through the Eyes of a Mystic

Awakening, and discovering true meaning in life, comes when we have moved beyond personal ego into *ego emptiness* and not-knowing; when we have learned to see the oneness, unity, and radical interconnectedness of the world through the contemplative, non-dual eyes of the mystic.

Embracing an evolutionary spirituality or perspective on life, and transforming our individual consciousness to enable the evolution of our collective human consciousness, will begin to provide the larger context and deeper spiritual meaning that so many of us hunger for in our lives.

Writing the Stonyhill-Nuggets and sharing some of the insights that have given purpose and meaning to *my* life has become my passion. And interestingly, my concern for the evolutionary future of our human species has brought me happiness. Writing my Nuggets for a community of people committed to growth in self-awareness, the evolution of their individual consciousness, the

evolution of our collective human consciousness, and the evolutionary spirituality of our world is all the “success” I find I need.

The weekly Stonyhill-Nuggets are offered free of charge. It is my hope that as you incorporate them into your day-to-day life they will help you awaken your consciousness and bring you deeper meaning, and a larger context, in which to live your life... a context for your life that is big enough for your soul. It is *my* belief that the primary evolutionary purpose of human life is the awakening our collective consciousness.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Authentic Spiritual Growth

The metaphor of a river is often used when referring to spirituality and authentic spiritual growth. Authentic spiritual growth is like a river. It calls us to a process of ongoing growth and the need to embracing change. We are always in a state of becoming. Authentic spiritual growth says that today we are the same person we were yesterday, but we are also a new person today. We see the world through the lens of a new consciousness.

When we are growing spiritually, this paradox makes sense to us because we are evolving into deeper complexity and greater simplicity. We become more comfortable with the silence. We find ourselves not "knowing" as much today as we did yesterday. Yesterday we had the answers. Today we find ourselves sitting with the questions. We are becoming more comfortable with mystery, the unknown, and with emptiness.

Authentic spiritual growth is learning to blow on the tiny spark or ember of the divine within us until it bursts into flame and we become the person we were created to become. We become more authentic. We become more self-aware, and as our self-awareness grows, we become more compassionate.

Our spiritual growth is authentic because to we are more comfortable with diversity and inclusiveness. We are less judgmental. We do less harm to the earth and to others. We create less conflict and violence in the world. The beliefs we held to so tightly yesterday are softer and less certain today. We are more enlightened than we were yesterday.

We take delight in showing others what compassion "feels" like. We spend less time telling them how to "be" more compassionate. I used to have the answers.

I don't know how to create peace in the world. But today I know how to create less conflict and pain than I did yesterday because I see the world through the lens of a new consciousness today.

As I grow spiritually and become more self-aware, I am beginning to see the beam in my own eye much more clearly. I find myself less concerned with the speck in my neighbor's eye.

I am growing spiritually. I am becoming more authentic.