

INTRODUCTION

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Inner Awakening

The outward freedom that we shall attain will only be in exact proportion to the inward freedom to which we have grown at a given moment.

MAHATMA GANDHI

THROUGHOUT HISTORY, PROPHETS, SAINTS, and sages have helped people cross the great river within, from insecurity and suffering to love, serenity, and joy. If we discover how to truly look into ourselves, these transcendent teachers said, we can find grace and beauty within and around us. Then we can help others do the same. This beautiful dream of finding our own enlightenment and helping others find theirs has been a driving force for many great souls.

Cultivating a clear mind and a warm heart, as part of the path to realizing that dream, is an ancient ideal. A healthy blend of intellect and feeling is more useful than either one alone. Following the path of the heart has been compared to listening to a message that can be understood only on an intuitive level. Revered by many as a sacred path, it can degenerate when common sense, reason, and attentive awareness are ignored. On the other hand, following a path of the mind that ignores the heart's voice often leads to equally grave mistakes. The balanced approach that you will find in this book leads to a sense of wholeness and empowerment that integrates both sides of your being: the mindful and logical side, and the feeling and intuitive side.

Meant for people in every walk of life, from any religious background or

none, *Matrix Meditations* offers a systematic, tested series of processes that can lead you toward greater composure, self-mastery, and enjoyment of life. Our cellular map of conscious existence, the Matrix of Consciousness, helps strengthen inner resources that lead to outer fulfillment through multiple, proven methods. Putting it into regular practice will inspire a heartfelt journey through previously unexplored potentials and possibilities.

Eastern and Western ideas have influenced each other since ancient days. These pages offer a carefully crafted integration of methods and insights from East and West. In Asia, meditation is a very old practice. Until about fifty years ago, deep contemplation was the only kind of meditation that most people in Europe and America had heard of. Now Eastern techniques for clearing and focusing your mind are becoming widely known. The blend of these methods with Western philosophy and psychology offered here creates a rich montage of methods that dance in dynamic interplay. Some meditations in these pages may feel austere, like Japanese calligraphy in a few brush strokes of black and white. Others may feel brightly colored and sensuous, like Gauguin's tropical paintings, in which the people, plants, and aromas of the tropics almost leap out from the canvas.

A unique framework for reflection on life's questions, problems, and possibilities, the Matrix will help you tap into your inner sage and find more harmony and adventure, too—even in a troubled world. Its goal is to teach you how to become inwardly more perceptive and outwardly the captain of your own destiny. As you become more adept at listening to your inner voice, you'll find it easier to choose consciously and wisely. This book will guide you through a carefully structured, step-by-step program for training your own attention and educating your own emotions. You will also receive gentle guidance in reflecting deeply on each of the many sides of the multifaceted gem that is your life.

The dynamic meditation program presented in the Matrix of Consciousness is self-paced. You can move through it as slowly or as quickly as you like. We have deemed it "dynamic" because you can continuously integrate its methods into the life you are leading now. To obtain its benefits, you don't have to retreat from the world, sit in a mountain cave, or follow a guru. (On the other hand, if you want to sit in a cave or follow a guru, that's just fine, too.)

From start to finish, this is a book for both thinking and doing. Every cell includes insights to stimulate your mind and inform your emotions, and a description of how to actually perform a specific practice. Certain cells

build on skills presented in earlier ones, while others stand on their own. There are four kinds of practices:

Mindfulness meditation involves noticing what's going on inside or outside yourself. It sharpens your awareness of whatever is occurring in your mind, emotions, body, and environment.

Concentrative meditation shows you how to focus and control your attention more effectively. It develops your ability to pay attention and to keep your attention where you want it.

Adventures in awareness offer ways of taking what you learn in meditation into your daily life, along with intriguing explorations that can only be done as you move through your world.

Contemplative meditation helps you examine how you are handling various aspects of your life, using methods that are more penetrating than our usual forms of thinking.

Some of these practices may change your life or inspire you to set out on a great adventure. Still others may allow you to find tiny but beautiful mini-adventures that open doors to a transcendent realm of the spirit, in which everyday events become special and the ordinary becomes extraordinary.

This book offers an unusual entryway to a deep consideration of your relationship to the world. Mind and world are intimately connected. As Plutarch, the historian of ancient Greece, put it, "What we achieve inwardly will change outer reality." The Matrix of Consciousness shows you how to set out on a personal meditative journey that can inspire the dreamer within you and help you realize your dreams. Your own mind has the alchemical power to turn the mundane into gold.

Abraham Lincoln once remarked, "Books serve to show a man that those original thoughts of his aren't very new at all." In that spirit, we acknowledge that some of the reflections included here can be traced all the way back to the I Ching, written by Fu Xi and King Wen before the founding of the Zhou Dynasty in 1066 BCE,¹ and to the even older Vedas of India. From those and other ancient beginnings, we've drawn on insights and methods from around the world to provide effective tools for inner work. We've also added some new methods of our own, to offer you proven tools that can multiply the power of your mind.

This book can be an ongoing resource. You can turn to it to help you get through difficult situations or to make the most of the moment. You may

find that the Matrix of Consciousness and its dynamic meditations become steadfast friends that help you navigate through both the calm and turbulent waters of the river of life. Forces of light and darkness, of sunshine and shadow, can become harmonious allies in accelerating the evolution and liberation of your soul's true spirit.