

# introduction

I have been on a journey of discovering the truths of life since I was seventeen years old. After many twists and turns and stops and starts, I have come to believe that the truths of life are inherently connected with our personal truths and these truths will continuously and ever more clearly reveal themselves when we are willing to face and honor what we find within.

At times in the past I have been attached to what I thought were the truths of life, and there were times when practically everything I had believed in lost its luster, leaving me dispirited and unmotivated. I have finally come to a place in the middle where I feel quite passionately that I know what the truth is for me and what I believe are the keys to a vital, creative, and expressive life. I no longer feel I know the answers for everyone because we are each unique and our roads to integration, happiness, and fulfillment may be different. I do, however, definitely know what has worked powerfully for me and can stand enthusiastically and firmly on this as my truth. I also believe that what has been so effective in enhancing the quality of my life can work for you as well.

This is not to say that things are always rosy in my life, but I have developed a sense of peace and willingness to be with whatever happens, and have found ways to promote and maintain aliveness, spontaneity, and fulfillment. To embark on the journey to this heightened state of living requires that we let go of much of what we have been taught, led, or programmed to believe, both consciously and unconsciously. Although this process of letting go is not always quick and easy, it is rewarding and enriching, and provides fuel for a deeper level of satisfaction than we may believe possible.

We are all creatively expressive beings and without so many of the constraints, rules and judgments that we have learned to live

with, most people would begin to express their creative colorful sides in their personal lives, work, or through various art forms. This expression of creativity could also be used in service to the world. There are many different approaches and facets to living a more fulfilling expressive life, which this book will explore in great detail. But if I were to encapsulate my experience and philosophy into a few words I would say this:

*The more we know our truth and are able to express it responsibly to ourselves and others, the more our lives begin to creatively express who we truly are, rather than some idea of what we should be.*

Our relationships take on a richer, more honest and harmonious dynamic. We begin to be appreciated for who we truly are rather than the roles we play. Our bodies function at a higher level with more constant energy. We feel a sense of creativity moving through much of what we do and our livelihood in the world becomes a joyful expression of who we are, what we believe in, and what we love to do.

You have nothing to lose by giving the ideas and exercises in this book a try—except aspects of your life you are currently dissatisfied with. Personally, my life has changed from what I call “the never satisfied syndrome”—being tired all the time, hating my work, finding fault with many things, having horrible relationships—to a life where I spend most of my time in a state of deep satisfaction and gratitude. Moreover, my life is continually transforming into a joyful creative expression of who I am and am becoming.

These are some of the possible fruits that I offer to you if you are willing to open your eyes, ears, and heart to what might be a whole new outlook on life, or a new twist on old themes. Some of what I propose in the book might sound familiar to you, either because you have already begun to explore other possibilities or because you recognize essential truths when you encounter them.

A deep felt sense of recognition is how I began the journey. It happened thirty years ago. I was seventeen years old, in college and living in an area of Miami, Florida, called Coconut Grove. My fellow students were all trying to outdo each other with fancier cars, clothes, and other possessions. I had smoked some marijuana to be socially acceptable, although when I did I would

sink into depths of depression and self-deprecation. Moving out of my normal mode of existence and state of mind let me see and feel what lay beneath—despair, hopelessness, and a deeply felt sense of brutal aloneness. They were my bottom line, as they are for most of us living in a world of separation from the true essence of love.

I'll never forget the night that changed my life forever. On that particular night I was guided to a yoga class that was being held at night under the moonlit, starry Miami sky, with the sounds of palm fronds blowing in the wind. The class was taught by a man who wore a turban, spoke with a thick east Indian accent, and seemed to be at peace with himself. When the class was over, the feeling of newfound freedom in my body absolutely amazed me and was enhanced by the connection with nature that I had experienced doing yoga postures under the stars. Then the teacher invited us in for a talk in which he mentioned simple, essential truths of life, and applied them to Western lifestyles. I enthusiastically affirmed everything he said, feeling as if I had found home. No doubt this was because he was telling me what deep inside I already knew to be true. I felt elated. To hear somebody speak what felt so right and real after feeling so dissatisfied with everyday life, seemed an absolute miracle. From that day on, I began reading books and taking every class I could on the subject of life. As I read, I remember feeling a sense of recognition, as if I were just being reminded of what deep inside I knew to be true.

I hope this book will be a reminder for you as well, of what you already know, either consciously or deep inside. If you have not been so fortunate as to have someone meet you there, I want to take the opportunity to be your friend and guide who takes you to a world of new possibilities, that with a little focus can literally turn your outer world completely around. It might turn it upside down at times, but I can assure you it is worth the ride. The discovery of this new world does not guarantee that you will never again feel dissatisfaction. But any sense of being a victim will be changed to a state of empowerment; feelings of fear, pain, isolation, or defensiveness in relating to others will be transformed to deeper levels of connectedness, safety, and intimacy; and feelings

of boredom or resignation in daily work will give way to inspiration, creativity, and the desire to make a difference. You will also find that you have the ability to truly be of *service*—bringing your natural gifts and passions forth to the world.

I invite you to embark with me on the *path of truth*—a journey of self-discovery that will lead you to greater creativity, joy, and fulfillment. Though this path has many unknowns, you will also experience many wonderful adventures. Let this book serve as a guidebook for the journey. It is filled with information to assist you in discovering your own insights and contains countless tools to help you open to a new way of being. The tools and exercises contained within have all been tried and tested on myself and countless other individuals. Many of the exercises have been part of workshops and retreats I have led and have consistently brought about powerful results. You can do them alone, though it is helpful to meet with friends and go through them together.

Part I, “Prime Yourself for the Journey,” is an overview of the way to self-discovery and change. It expresses some of the basic concepts from which to embark into more uncharted territory. Part I also provides some of the first tools that plant seeds for change and will help you create a ground of trust with yourself—an important step that prepares you for the deeper work.

Part II, “Discover Your Deeper Self,” takes you farther in your inner travels, to a place where you can come face-to-face with your deeper truths. This section offers ways to more honestly answer the following questions which deepens your self-awareness; What are you feeling? What hidden or old pains are you harboring? How is the pain others are causing you a reflection of yourself? How do you operate, and what are your motives? How hard are you on yourself? What do you believe, and how is it running you? Once your deeper truths are discovered, there are many tools provided to help you release the energy blocked by old ways of being. Freeing this untapped energy will open you up to your more empowered, creative, and expressive self.

Part III, “Express Your Courageous and Creative Self,” is about taking the insights and experiences of your inner truths out into the world. It focuses on creating new, more powerful behaviors and states

of being. It concerns reshaping your life—how you interact with others, how you maintain yourself in the light of your discoveries and truths, what actions you choose to take, and ultimately how you serve. It is about allowing yourself the joy of creative expression.

The most exciting part of this journey is watching things unfold in ways you never dreamed possible. It is truly a marvel and a blessing to experience yourself as a creator expressing on the canvas of your life. As you accept the challenge of opening to the possibilities of a different style of living, you will be blessed with many rewards. I wish you a powerful journey.