



Chapter I

What to Expect

Aude aliquid dignum. (*Dare something worthy.*)

—Latin motto, sixteenth century

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What would you dare to do if you couldn't lose? What would you dare to be if you were guaranteed unconditional success? What would you dare to have if there were absolutely no limits? What would you dare?

It's time to dare something worthy. Welcome to *The Awakening Course*. Whether you're an avid follower of my message or are new to my personal development regimen, congratulations. By taking this first step, you have opened your life to limitless possibilities.

Where you are right now can be a painful place. I've been there. I have relatives who are still there. I'm doing my best to help them by teaching them what I've learned over the past 20 to 30 years. This is material that I've learned the hard way. When I was homeless, I would go to the library and read books. *The Magic of Believing* by Claude Bristol was amazingly influential in my life, and I read other books such as *Think and Grow Rich*. Thank God for the library. The abundance, the wisdom is right there. I would listen to audio programs like the ones I borrowed from the library as I drove around in Houston, where I was living, where a lot of this took place, where

a lot of my first transformations took place. I would make it my “university on wheels,” and I would listen and grow and ask myself questions.

This, Too, Shall Pass

What I want you to realize is that where you are right now is temporary. Where you are right now is just what’s happening in your current reality. The temporary will change; your current reality will change. When you awaken, when you go through these various stages of awakening, you will leave the pain behind, you will leave the struggle behind. Most of the pain and most of the struggle is from this first stage that people fall into. We all go through it. Most people stay in it forever. They stay in it until they die.

There Is Another Way

It takes most people something like this program to awaken them to teach them that there’s another way to live their lives. I know that maybe you’re thinking about paying your bills. I know that maybe you’re thinking, “How will I pay the rent next month?” I know that maybe you’re thinking about your health or somebody who’s close to you who has health problems. There is another way to go through all of this. There is another way to resolve these problems. The good news is that I’m delivering this to you personally in *The Awakening Course*.

Well, you might be curious about what my life was like on the streets, and I’ve never really talked about it in depth. In fact, I never even owned it for the longest time, meaning that, yes, it did happen; yes, I did live on the streets in Dallas, and it was probably around 1976, 1977, 1978, somewhere in there. For the longest time,

I pushed it out of my mind. For the longest time, it never happened in my awareness. But as life went on and people asked me about my history, I'd begin to talk about it, and I found that, though it was uncomfortable for me, it was inspiring for them. So I'll take a moment and touch on that.

I had saved my money and given it all to a company that promised to get work for me overseas. We were building oil and gas pipelines in other countries, in Alaska, places like that, and I had given my money to a company that would make resumes and send out letters, company that promised to get me work. So, I was in Dallas; I had turned over virtually everything I had but some pocket change so I could eat until the job came in, and that company went out of business. It went bankrupt. When I went to find the owner, he had committed suicide, and I was left with no resources. I had gone to Dallas with nothing. I had surrendered all the money I had. I did not have a job. I did not have a car. I did not know anybody. I was in a very rinky-dink apartment in a dangerous area, and I ended up with nothing, sleeping on the steps of a post office. If you've ever seen the movie, *Pursuit of Happyness* with Will Smith, it describes a character who is well-meaning and hardworking, but who makes a few mistakes and, very quickly, is sleeping in a church, sleeping in a toilet stall, sleeping in a bus station. I was doing all of that. I remember sleeping on the steps of the post office because I had a post office box, as I remember, and I kept hoping that a check would come in for something that I had written.

I don't remember everything about that time, because it was very dark and very traumatic psychologically. I did manage, somehow, someway, to leave and get to Houston, and honest to God, I don't remember right now how I did it. I could've hitchhiked. I could've managed to get on a bus somehow. I don't really remember, but I left Dallas, and that wound of being homeless in Dallas stayed with me for at least a decade. I would go back a couple of times for one reason or another, always reluctantly, and something bad would happen.

I remember driving there one time, and as soon as I crossed the Dallas city limits on the highway, a cop pulled me over and gave me a ticket. It was almost as though my mind-set had been lodged in that time and place with this negative charge and that I had to do a lot of cleaning out mentally and becoming more aware, and, as I did, it's no longer a concern. I can go back to Dallas with no problem. I can talk about it as I am with you right now.

It's Only a Story, After All

But the experience was one that, in many ways, made me stronger; in many ways, it has given me a story that has inspired maybe thousands of people. It's possibly inspiring you right now. I would not want to do it again, but I am grateful that I went through it and survived. In many ways, it was a very horrible time. Again, it's part of my makeup and part of my history and part of my past.

In the movie, *The Secret*, there's a scene where all of the different teachers are asked what their life was like: One was in a street gang; I say, "I was homeless"; somebody else had a different hard-luck story; and the next person had yet another tale to tell. Then they cut to Jack Canfield, one of my favorite people in the world, who says, "That's all? So what? We all have a story of some sort. You have a story. I have a story." Part of mine was that I was, indeed, homeless at one point, but I also transcended it.

I'm also in a very different place today. When I look at my life at 30 years ago, being homeless, and today, having a car collection and a country estate and a luxury lifestyle and being a movie star with the movies I'm in and a best-selling author, part of my brain just goes bonkers because it's trying to absorb, "How did *that* person become *this* person?" And that person, the homeless one, became this luxurious one because of an awakening. That's why this material is so important, and that's why I want to share it with you. What

I've learned is practical, spiritual, inspiring, financially rewarding, romantically rewarding, and rewarding in just about every way that you can name. The transformation has been deep and permanent, but it did start with a little blip on the radar where I was homeless at one point.

Well, don't think for a minute that you have to become homeless in order to become awakened. You start wherever you are. Part of what I'm saying here is that you have your own story and that each of us has some past experience that we're growing from, we're growing through, and we're awakening from. You don't have to backpedal; you don't have to become homeless; you don't have to go into debt; you don't have to go into poverty. If you've already experienced all of that, that's all part of your experience. That's simply it. You will transcend it. You will awaken from it. But I'm not asking you in any way, shape, or form to go backward. I'm asking you to go forward, and to go forward through these stages of awakening. That's what I'm taking you through in this material.

Now, I have no idea whether you've already read my earlier books or whether you've heard my audios or seen my DVDs or movies. I have no idea. But what I want you to know is that I'm going to cover the basics and go beyond them. If, for example, you are a fan of my work and you've listened to *The Missing Secret* and you've read *The Attractor Factor* and you've seen the movie *The Secret* (and on and on), it doesn't matter, because what I'm going to be saying in *The Awakening Course* is something I've never, ever talked about before. Again, I'm going to take you from Ground Zero. I'm going to walk you through the basics of awakening. I'm going to describe the four stages of awakening, and the fourth stage of awakening is something I've never talked about before for a very good reason—I didn't know about it.

I have been sharing my own life journey with everybody through my books, my audios, my courses, my movie appearances; I mean,

it's still happening. As I grow, as I evolve, as I awaken, as I become more conscious, as I transcend the problems in my own life, I go out and share that with the world, and I'm sharing it as a service to you. If you already know my work, great; if you don't, that's fine, too. Because I'm going to cover all of the basics that are in my materials, but we're also going to go beyond that, so fasten your seatbelt—we're going to have a great time.

It's All Good When You Look Deeper

Why am I doing this now? Why here? Why now? Why is all of this happening right now?

When you look around in the world (especially if you pay attention to the media, which I do *not* recommend), you're probably already thinking, "Oh, Lord. Look what's happening here. There are earth changes going on. There are predictions of doom and gloom." And maybe you're looking at your own life and you're shaky and you're wondering, "How am I going to pay my bills? How am I going to take care of my family? Is my job stable? What's going to happen next? Are we going to run out of gas? Are we going to run out of oil? Are we going to run out of climate control? I mean, just what is happening here?"

I'm going to say something fairly shocking. I'm going to say that it's all happening for the highest good of all concerned. That, actually, these challenges are causing us to look deeply within ourselves to come up with creative solutions, to awaken from the very thing that caused the problems, to transcend everything, and to create a better world, a better place, a better life.

At first glance, it might seem like that's not what's happening and that it doesn't seem possible, but here's just one example: Paul Zane Pilzer, who was an economic adviser to several different

presidents, pointed out that in the 1970s, when we went through the oil and gas crisis and it really looked like we would run out of oil and gas and there were long lines at gas stations, the “crisis” (and I intentionally use quotation marks) was actually a stimulus, because engineers invented new ways of digging deeper to find more oil and gas, so we were able to supply ourselves for decades more. (I grew up during that period and remember that people could only buy gas on certain days if their license plate was an odd or an even number. They were very unusual times.) So, what looked like an unsolvable problem was actually a challenge that called for a creative solution.

Well, the same thing is going on in your life right now. It’s a positive stimulus if you are sitting there wondering, “How am I going to pay the bills? How am I going to take care of my health and my family? What’s going to happen to my job?” It’s a good thing. It’s making you look in a new direction. It’s making you look within yourself. It’s making you think more creatively. And it’s making you more open. Perhaps if you weren’t feeling what you’re feeling right now, you never would have invested in *The Awakening Course*, so you never would have been brought here. You might have happily and maybe mindlessly just gone about your merry way and never had an opportunity to grow, never had an opportunity to awaken, so I see that what’s going on is actually good.

Yes, it may be uncomfortable, but uncomfortable doesn’t mean bad. Uncomfortable simply means you’re doing something you haven’t done before, so it feels like putting on a new pair of shoes. Very often, you get blisters, even though a new pair of shoes is something good for you; however, your skin will heal, it will actually toughen, you will grow from it, and you’ll be walking around with new shoes in a new life, feeling much more optimistic and abundant and looking forward to the future. That’s the promise of what looks like a challenge.

Stop Struggling—There’s an Easier Way

Well, if you look at your life, most likely you’ve been working a little too hard, and that’s because you have been—and maybe I’m making a new word here—“efforting” through your life, meaning that you’ve been struggling through your life, that you’ve been fighting through your life. I actually remember that, in high school and college, I admired a lot of the authors like Jack London and Ernest Hemingway, because it was one man against the world; I admired that because that’s how I felt. It was just Joe Vitale against planet Earth, which is how most of us lead our lives. We’re coming from a particular mind-set that says, if anything’s going to get done, I’m going to have to work at it and struggle at it, and I’m going to have to deprive myself of certain things, and I’m going to have to just really fight my way through life. Well, that’s a belief that creates the very reality that the belief is fueling. In other words, if you *believe* that you have to struggle to get anywhere, you will create struggle to get anywhere. If you *believe* that you have to suffer to get anywhere, you will suffer to get anywhere.

Let me give you a very clearheaded example. I told you about being homeless at one point. What awakened me to how I created that in my own life was the insight that I was modeling my life after authors who were self-destructive. Jack London allegedly committed suicide. Ernest Hemingway committed suicide. I admired these authors to the extent that I thought I had to lead the same kind of life as them because that was the curriculum. So I was going down a very self-destructive path. I was fighting with life. I was making sure that I was unhappy. I was making sure that I was struggling. I was making sure that I was miserable. I finally realized I was doing that because of a belief—the belief that, in order for me to be a successful author, which was my goal, I had to suffer like they did. I was an alcoholic; I was suicidal; I was melancholy. I was going down the same road those people had gone, until one day I awakened to the idea that

I could model their writing styles, but I didn't necessarily have to model their lifestyle. When I realized *that*, I began to find authors who were happy and productive and prosperous. When I found *that*, I began to create a new reality for myself. So, what I'm suggesting—and, again, it may be hard to understand when you first hear this—is the idea that you are struggling needlessly. You have been struggling in the past. It has served you well. You've learned. You've grown. You've gotten stronger from doing that. But at this point, you can let that go. I'm going to show you an easier way. I'm going to show you the escalator. I'm going to show you how to awaken from what has created the struggle in the past so that you can have the wealth, the success, the romance, the abundance, all of what you want without the struggle. You won't have to be “efforting” your life. You can be flowing your life.

You might be wondering where these beliefs are within you. They're not typically in your conscious mind. They're in your unconscious mind.

The Missing Secret

In a program called *The Missing Secret*, I said that the missing secret is the idea that you have to get clear of the beliefs within your own mind before you start to see the results in the outer world. What I'm very excited about is that in this book I'm going to show you how to find those limiting beliefs and change those limiting beliefs. Perhaps you are concerned that, “Oh, I've been creating this struggle in my life, but I don't know why I'm creating it, because I'm not a writer; I wasn't modeling myself after Ernest Hemingway or Jack London like you were, but you were doing something.” There is a belief that's active in your mind that is creating the reality you have. I'm going to help you find that belief, clear that belief, so you are free of that belief, and the really exciting thing about all of this is, once you're free of that belief, you change the entire world—because the belief

wasn't active only *within* you. Because it was active within you, it extended into the universe itself, and the universe rearranged itself to make that belief true.

Again, when you first hear all of this, it might seem a little bizarre, but stick with me. By reading and applying *The Awakening Course*, you will get to the understanding that you are creating your own reality, and we're actually going to go past even that in the fourth stage of awakening. But, for now, don't worry about any of this. If you have been struggling, that's fine because the good news is, the struggle is over.

You Can “Take It to the Bank”

Now, I'm also excited to tell you that I'm going to be giving you a lot of practical tools, exercises, even a couple of meditations. All of this is to help make your life easier. All of this is to help clear those beliefs that might be holding you back a little bit. All of this is to help you awaken. I'm a very practical, savvy, level-headed fellow. I am an entrepreneur. I want to see results. I want to see results in your life. So this isn't some sort of feel-good program, some kind of wifty mumbo jumbo. This is a very much a “take-it-to-the-bank” program. I want you to try these techniques, try the meditations, listen to what I have to say about beliefs. Go through the four steps in *The Awakening Course* and then see where you are, because where you are now is not where you're going to be at the end of this program. Where you are now is temporary. Where you're going is eternal. Stick with me.

Fear Will Only Stop You if You Let It

The number one thing you're going to have to watch for as you go through this program (and, actually, going through life itself) is the whole element of fear. Fear is everywhere. As I look around, I notice

that it seems like the whole planet is up in arms and everybody's afraid of everything and everybody. And, if you listen to the media (which, again, I do *not* recommend), it always focuses on the fear and gives you reasons to be afraid. However, if you don't pay attention to it, you don't have those reasons, which is pretty interesting. Fear will stop you if you let it.

I'm not asking you to hold your breath and stand in front of a train or a bus or a car, but I am asking you to take a moment to see if you are being fearful of simple change. A lot of people don't want to change because they are comfortable where they are. They look around, and where they are right now feels like it's okay. It's comfortable. I might be in debt, I might not like my job, I might be in a relationship I don't care for, and I might have a bad back, but it's okay—it's the known. Well, it may be time for you to get a little uncomfortable and to awaken from all of that so you can have more. If you sit there in fear saying, "I want to stay where I am," you will stay where you are, so again, there's a difference between leaving your comfort zone and actually going into the fear mode. Fear is going to stop you. Fear is what stops most people from taking action. I've found in my career that there's the fear of failure and the fear of success, and some people have both of them.

Transcend Your Fear

What I'm talking about is transcending fear. What I'm talking about is inviting you to dare something worthy in your life by focusing on what you want, and, as you focus on what you want, you might be called to do a few things you've never done before, but it doesn't mean that you should be afraid of them. The uneasy feeling that you have is *only* because you're doing something new. It's not a signal to stop. It's not a signal to fall into fear. It is a sign that you are doing something new and that you should just be alert as you go ahead

and do it. That's what I'm asking you to do in this program—as one famous book says, I'm asking you to “feel the fear and do it anyway.” Feel the discomfort and do it anyway. Stick with me, because I promise an awakening, and it all begins here, now, today.

Inventory Your Fears

List the things that you're afraid of. Just go ahead and list anything and everything. There's something therapeutic about just writing them down. When you get them out of your system, in many ways they dissolve, because you look at them on paper and you realize, “Oh, that's not so scary after all.” Taking inventory of the fears is a way of cleaning house. So empty your mind of your concerns, write down any and all fears. This is not something you have to show me. You don't have to show it to anybody. It's for your eyes only, so it's a very safe exercise. Write down all of your fears and just take a deep breath as you're doing it. Just let them go. You might even look at each one of the fears and ask yourself, “Do I really fear that?” It's okay to say yes and it's okay to say no, but breathe through it as you are listing them because you may find that a lot of them dissolve simply by taking the inventory of them. Go ahead, pause and do that now.

I mentioned earlier about the power of the unconscious mind, so when you start to write down your fears, you may not at first have many. But because you focused on this and you've called them from your mind, they'll start bubbling up from your unconscious. That's actually a good thing. Don't be afraid of that. Just start writing down your fears. As you write down one fear, another one may surface. As you write down that one, another may surface. There may be tangential fears to any of the ones you've listed.

You might even take a breather after you've written down as many as you can think of, whether it's 5 or 50. Take a deep breath, wait, and say, “Is there anything else I'm afraid of?” Go ahead and write

down whatever comes up. Again, trust yourself, trust your unconscious mind. It'll bubble up as it feels safe to do so, so just make a nice, safe place for you to list your fears, because we're going to let them all go.

Mine Your Fear for Buried Treasure

I've created a Miracles Coaching program to help people awaken, to help them achieve their dreams, and to help them overcome their fears. But let me tell you a story, a true story, about what happened to me at one point. A long time ago, I wrote a book called *Spiritual Marketing*. And, in many ways, this was a dangerous booklet. It was dangerous because I represented a lot of conservative companies: American Marketing Association had published one of my books; American Management Association had published another of my books; Nightingale-Conant had published one of my audio programs. These companies were very conservative, and I wondered what in the world they'd think of me if I came out with *Spiritual Marketing*, which was a metaphysical, otherworldly kind of approach to doing business. So I just published the book as a little pamphlet, which I would hand out here and there, in addition to giving it to my sister, for whom I wrote it. I was trying to help her get through her fears and become more aware and awake and to achieve some of her dreams.

I gave one to Bob Proctor at one of his "Science of Getting Rich" workshops. It was in Denver, probably around 1999. I gave it to him as a gift. I never expected him to tell anybody about it, but he stood on stage in front of 250 people and told them that there was a celebrity in the room, and as he read off all the titles, I knew he was talking about me. I stood up and took a bow. Then he said, "And Joe has written a new book, an unpublished book, and a book everybody is going to want. It's called *Spiritual Marketing*." Well, I was

a nervous wreck thinking, “Oh, they’re going to hang me at this point. They’re going to take me out and torch me.” But instead, 250 people rushed me, all of whom wanted the book. I was awash in 160 business cards from these people. There was a publisher among them who said he wanted to publish the book. And I said, “Why? You haven’t even seen the book.” He said, “Well, you’re obviously an author. You’ve been published before. You must know how to write. Bob Proctor has read the book and he likes it.” He said, “I’ll publish it sight unseen.”

Well, the short story is that I was terrified of letting that book go out, but because I was pushed a little bit by Bob Proctor in 1999 or thereabouts, that book became a best seller. It was reincarnated into my book, *The Attractor Factor*. I rewrote it, expanded it, and retitled it. A big publisher picked it up. Because of *The Attractor Factor*, I ended up in the movie *The Secret*. Rhonda Byrne, who was the creator of *The Secret*, called me after reading *The Attractor Factor*, said she had this idea for a movie, and asked if I would be interested in a role in it if she got the money together and the script and all of that. Well, I didn’t know her from anybody else. I didn’t know if she’d actually do this or not, but she did. Of course, the rest is history because *The Secret* has been an epidemic. It has just awakened the planet on at least a Stage Two level, and it’s put me on *Larry King* twice and *Donny Deutsch*. It also paved the way for my appearance in four other movies and, of course, in the book version of *The Secret*. It’s led to other book deals for me. I could go on and on. There was a whole domino effect from the release of *Spiritual Marketing*, but I was afraid. I was afraid to release it. Somebody had to encourage me . . . and I’m a great believer in encouraging people. That’s something I want to talk about with you, because I’m here to encourage you to go for your dream. I’m here to encourage you to dare something worthy. I’m here to encourage you to awaken. Bob Proctor encouraged me and embarrassed me in front of 250 people, but I learned that, very often, when you face your fears, your wealth, your

success, your romance—the things, the materials, that you’re actually looking for—are right behind what you fear. This is why it’s so important to face your fears. Behind them is treasure.

Money Is Good

One of the things I’m excited about sharing with you in this program is the idea that abundance is actually okay. That money is actually good. I have learned that a lot of people push money away. They actually say they want money, but internally, unconsciously, they’re afraid of it. I’m going to be exploring that with you in *The Awakening Course*. I’m going to be helping you with that, because a lot of people will consciously say, “I want a new job,” “I want my book published,” “I want my business to succeed,” “I want to have a lot of money in the bank,” “I want to be debt-free,” “I want to be financially free,” but unconsciously, what do you think they’re saying? “Money is bad. Money is evil. I don’t deserve money. Rich people are snobs. Taxes will consume all my money.” All of these are beliefs and all of these are fears. On a top-level conscious mind, they’re saying, “I want money.” Below the surface, in the unconscious mind, which is the more powerful operating system, they’re saying, “I don’t want money because I’m afraid of it,” and they’re pushing it away. I’ve learned that money is good. I’ve learned that money can actually serve me. It’s just a tool that has no energy in and of itself. We all put energy into acquiring it. You do it. I do it. But money, in and of itself, is pure. It’s paper, it’s coin, it’s whatever value we say it has, but we can use it to accomplish miracles.

Contribute a Happy, Healthy, Wealthy Person to the World

I’ve told people that if they really want to make a difference in the world, if they want the world to be a happier, healthier, wealthier place, then contribute one happy, healthy, wealthy person to it—you.

Spiritual Marketing

Now, I'm known as a spiritual marketer, and, as I mentioned, I wrote a little booklet called *Spiritual Marketing*, which became *The Attractor Factor*, and I believe that the spiritual and material are two sides of the same coin. They're not opposites at all. You don't dismiss either one of them. You need both of them to have an awakened life. You need the spirituality and you need the financial part of it in order to walk through this world. You need the essence, your spirit, within your body, but you also need your body in order to get around in this world that we have today. It's not exclusively one or the other: Both are valued; both are needed; and both are integrated into one unit.

I also talk about things like marketing, yet I won't be teaching you marketing in this course; other programs that I have address that. This book is about awakening, awakening to the life that you would love to have on all levels. But the thing I want to point out is that when I talk to people about marketing, I hear that they often have a negative or bad idea about marketing. That's the old-school approach, where you try to manipulate people to get money from them. I do not believe in that at all. I believe that marketing is sharing your love for your product or service with the people who will most welcome hearing about it. I'm going to say that again because I think that is the profound new definition of marketing as I know it and want it to be in the world: *Marketing is sharing your love for your product or service with the people who most want to hear about it, and who will most welcome it when they do hear about it.*

Love Is the Essence

When I talk about *The Awakening Course*, for example, I'm doing it out of my passion. I'm doing it out of my caring for you. I am doing it out of my love. If this reaches you, and apparently it already has, and you've invested in this book, then you realize that

you're welcoming it. So I've connected to you on a heart level. My heart has reached out to you, and you've invested in this book you're now reading. This is all based in love. Love is what I think marketing, money, life, abundance, romance, and spirituality are all about. Love is the essence for all of this. Love is the essence of *The Awakening Course*. As we go through this together, that will become very, very clear.

Practical Benefits

Okay. Let's summarize what we've been talking about, and let me go over the benefits you're going to be getting from this program.

For one thing, you're going to get out of debt, and that means paying off your credit cards, taking care of your house payments, taking care of your car payments, or anything else that might be holding you in debt right now. It might seem impossible to you right now, but that's based on your current mind-set. As you go through these four stages of awakening, you will see how you can actually pay off your debt. You can see how you can become financially free, and "financially free" actually means free of worries about money, wealth, and finances. Again, this might seem impossible. Stay with me. And if you're okay right now with money, if you already have plenty of it, if you are financially free, if you're debt-free, if you're doing just great with finances, you may not be doing so great in other areas. For example, you might have some issues with romance, with relationships, with the love of your life, maybe even loving yourself. All of this is going to be addressed in this book. You might be dealing with a health issue. There might be somebody in your life who is dealing with a health issue. You might be concerned about aging. You might be concerned about losing weight or gaining weight. We're going to be talking about all of that.

As a side note, I lost 80-odd pounds and entered seven fitness contests—this after a lifetime of childhood and adult obesity. If I can do it, you can do it, and so can anybody else involved.

The Key Is Happiness

If you're also trying to find happiness, this is a key ingredient in the whole awakening program. Finding happiness, as you're going to find out, is a key to achieving everything you want, and I'm going to explain that, in detail, and show you ways to become happy now. You'll find out that you can be happy no matter what's going on in your life, that you don't have to change the people around you or your job or the things around you in order to find happiness or to be happy now. And don't beat yourself up for wanting worldly things. There's nothing wrong with cars and houses and toys and making a difference in your own personal life. Those are all fun. Those are all worth going for, and, as you go through the stages of awareness and awakening, you'll get to a place where you will automatically, naturally, and lovingly want to make a difference in the world, too. That doesn't mean you have to become another Gandhi. It doesn't mean that you have to starve. It doesn't mean that you have to do anything that's unappealing to you, but there will be something that will come from your heart that will be a natural extension of who you are.

Four Stages of Awareness

As we go through this program, I'll talk about how that has worked in my own life. I still like cars, but I also still want to make a difference in people's lives. For example, I'd like to resolve homelessness, and I've started a movement to end that forever. Wanting cars, fancy rings, or anything else is totally fine—I'll also be helping you go up the four

levels of awareness. Again, I've never talked about the fourth level, so even if you are familiar with me and my work, this is going to be new. This is brand new. And if you aren't familiar with my work, remember, I'm going to take you from kindergarten to first grade and on through to graduate school, on through to the different levels, ending with the fourth level. We will be going through these stages of enlightenment, these stages of awareness, as we go through this book.

Endless Possibilities

Keep in mind that you may want something bigger than what some people consider to be selfish goals. You might actually want world peace; you might actually try to make a difference in the world in some particular area or some particular country. The principles I'm going to be teaching you here are applicable there as well. You can actually achieve virtually anything that you can imagine with this program. I'm going to walk you through all of those steps.

I guess it's worth mentioning right now that this is just you and me. I'm talking to you and, as I'm sitting here and you are sitting there, I'm speaking from my heart. What's coming up from me is partly inspiration, partly divine guidance, partly based on my past education and things that I definitely want to communicate with you, but I don't have a script. I'm ad-libbing this. I'm speaking from my heart to your heart, and that's an essential part of this whole program as well.

To awaken, you want to come from your heart. *Heart, love, happiness*—those are key words, and they'll resurface as you go through this program. So, stay with me as we go through *The Awakening Course*.

Meditation

All of these stages will make a rich difference in your life, beginning right now, because what I'm going to ask you to do next is to

actually do a small meditation. Remember when I asked you to make that list of fears? Look at that list and breathe through it. Just look at your fears, one by one, and take in a deep breath. When you take in your breath, hold it for the count of five and look at your little list, then exhale for the count of three, and then take in another breath. Again, just causally breathing, gently relaxing, as you look at your list of fears. As you look at the list and breathe, you notice that you are becoming less fearful. These fears don't have the charge that they originally did. If you still feel a little uncomfortable about the fears that are on the list, that's okay, I'm not asking you to do anything with the fears themselves. You're simply breathing in, holding it for a small count of five, releasing for a short count of three, and breathing in again.

As you cycle through that for a few minutes, you just ease into your day and you ease into the moment and you ease into this place where you are not afraid. You might notice later that if you run into any of these fears, they actually don't have much intimidation to them. They're lighter. They're easier. You are freer with them. You may, in fact, be free of them. Don't overthink this. Don't overfeel this. Simply enjoy the breathing, the taking in of your list, and the letting go. I'll see you in the next chapter as we continue *The Awakening Course*.