

Finding the Lost Heart:

A New Path to Growth, Love, and Wisdom

By

Glenn Berger, Ph. D.

Pity the man who has lost his path and does not follow it, and has lost his heart and does not go out and recover it. When people's dogs and chicks are lost, they go out and look for them, but when people's hearts, or original nature, are lost they do not go out and look for them. The principle of self-cultivation consists in nothing but trying to find the lost heart.

-- Mencius

"You're a goose," said the giant; "where my heart is, you will never come."
"Well," said the Princess; "but for all that, 'twould be such a pleasure to know where it really lies."

Then the poor Giant could hold out no longer, but was forced to say-
"Far, far, away in a lake lies an island; on that island stands a church; in that church is a well; in that well swims a duck; in that duck there is an egg; and in that egg there lies my heart. . ."

-- The Giant Who Had No Heart in his Body

The heart is where I am whatever I am.

-- St. Augustine

"Fool," said my Muse to me, "look in thy heart and write."

--Sidney

Excerpt Contents

About this Book	Page 4
Introduction: How I Found My Heart	Page 12
An Action Plan for Finding Your Heart	Page 25
Chapter One	Page 30
Chapter Eleven	Page 62

About this Book

Everyone has problems.

Whether we wake in the middle of the night in a panic over money troubles, or can't find someone to love; whether we find ourselves in the grip of an addiction, or don't know our purpose in life, we all struggle with the distance between who we are, and who we would like to be, between the life we have, and the life we imagine.

We not only battle personally with our addictions, fears, failures, and loneliness, but we watch in confusion as our economic leaders steal billions and bring ruin on themselves and society, politicians end stellar futures with meaningless sexual escapades, and the most creative among us destroy their talents before their time.

Our inability to act with prudence has consequences for all of society. While we drown in debt, our economy is bipolar, manic one moment and depressed the next. With drug and alcohol use rampant and obesity out of control, our health care system is at a breaking point. Chronic planet-wide issues like global warming and the energy crisis are denied or avoided. More than 3 billion people around the world are malnourished when we could feed every person on this planet for a fraction of the cost of our last war.

People everywhere are searching for an answer. We try to cure the human condition with drugs: over 30 million Americans alone take psychotropic medications. Self-help is a ten billion dollar industry and growing, despite the fact that diets, secrets, and quick fixes

have failed to heal us. Billions search for relief from their anxieties in the certainties of fundamentalist religions or the panaceas of the New Age, but neither have made mankind courageous, peaceful, or fulfilled.

Wanting to help myself and my clients, and to do my part in *tikkun olam*, or fixing the broken world, I have devoted my life to finding the common root cause to human suffering. Through a lifetime of experience and tireless research, I unearthed the hidden answer to this universal dilemma when I discovered the writings of the Chinese sage Mencius (pronounced MEN-shus). Confucius' greatest disciple, Mencius was considered by many to be the wisest man who ever lived. His writings were studied by every Asian student for over 1000 years. Though he wrote 2300 years ago, when I first read his words it was as if he was speaking directly to the core of my being. He said:

Pity the man who has lost his path and does not follow it and has lost his heart and does not go out and recover it. When people's dogs and chicks are lost, they go out and look for them. But when people's hearts – or original nature – are lost, they do not go out and look for them. The principle of self-cultivation consists in nothing but trying to find the lost heart.

Mencius tells us that we have pain and problems because we have lost touch with the most precious gift given to us by a bountiful and generous universe: our *hearts*. We are not bad, primitive, helpless, or broken. Our source of goodness is within us – it is simply out of reach.

We who have lost our hearts have become, as theologian/philosopher Paul Tillich said, "estranged from our essential nature." Our essential, or original, nature is to be wise,

strong, passionate, creative, and loving. The heart is the home of our best potentials, that which we are meant to be. We all have everything we need within us to have all we desire. Like the acorn is meant to be the mighty oak, we are meant to be happy and fulfilled. To get all we want in life and to heal the world, we need to find our hearts.

This answer, which is as old as human thought, is now being validated by cutting-edge scientific research. What we are learning is that we are all genetically endowed to make good decisions based on reason and feeling, to act on those decisions, and to do what is best for ourselves and others. Our prime evolutionary purpose on this planet is to love.

Mencius said that foolishness, fear, and unhappiness are not our fate, but rather, the result of having lost touch with our heart, our innate capacities for good. If we can reconnect with our source and free our natural abilities for growth, we will become what the universe intends us to be.

What do we need to do to find the lost heart? The great truths of humanity have always been communicated through our heritage of myths, fairy tales, and art. Whatever their source, these tales all contain a similar hidden message. When we listen with our hearts, we find that there is one story behind all stories. What this story tells us is that in order to find our hearts we must each *live our own tale of search and discovery*. We each need to travel down the yellow brick road, slay the dragons, find the golden fleece. What we seek to find is what Aristotle called our *entelechy*, that which we are meant to be. In order to create a life of true fulfillment, authentic intimacy, and deep spirituality, we must devote ourselves to finding our hearts. We do this by living a life of self-cultivation.

By showing us that the answer comes from *living a story* or *following a way*, we learn that the solution won't come from a quick fix, three easy steps, or a weekend workshop. We must participate in a process of *becoming*. This is a project of a lifetime. What the stories tell us is that the road is difficult and long, but if we follow it we are sure to win the treasure. In the end we marry the prince or princess and become king or queen.

By following the journey of the pilgrims of the heart who have travelled this road before us, *Finding the Lost Heart* reveals the stages of this adventure. The structure of the book follows the path we need to take to find the heart. It travels with the reader through this story of the loss of our original nature, the arduous journey of searching for that which has been lost, and the glorious rediscovery of the treasure within.

Finding the Lost Heart gives you all you need to live a life of self-cultivation. It does so by providing an understanding of what it means to have a lost heart. It reveals the way we came to lose our hearts in the first place. It offers a vision of what the heart is so you know what you are aiming toward. It tells you the steps you need to follow in order to end your needless suffering, realize your true nature, and fulfill your deepest desires. It shows you the way to find your lost heart.

- **Part One: The Tale of the Lost Heart** helps us make sense of our suffering. It names and describes the syndrome that underlies most of the life problems that we struggle with: having a lost heart. With compassionate understanding, it recognizes and illuminates the nature, symptoms, and consequences of this condition. We learn that the purpose of the problems in

our lives is to make us aware that we are living out of harmony with our own universal nature.

- **Part Two: What Is the Heart?** defines our aim. By drawing on the great wisdom of humankind to unveil what the heart is, we discover that we have everything within us that we need to be all we want to be. The heart is the home of our strength, wisdom, passion, creativity, goodness, and love. Comprehending what the heart is provides us with a glorious vision of the life we can have if we find our heart.
- In **Part Three: How We Lose the Heart**, using the psychological theories of attachment, shame, and trauma, along with the latest scientific research on brain development, the book reveals how we have lost the heart in the first place. We now understand that our natural abilities for success, health, and happiness develop through *relationship*. Just like the acorn needs proper sunlight, soil, and water to become the tree, to grow optimally we need proper emotional nourishment from the important people in our life as we grow up. When we do not receive this, our brains and nervous systems do not develop as they are meant to. We lose our hearts through the wounds we suffer growing up in a lost-hearted world.
- With this understanding, we are finally ready to follow the directions of the stories on how to find the heart and become everything we are meant to be.

Part Four: Finding the Lost Heart reveals the necessary steps of self-

cultivation to finding the lost heart. We learn that we need to take an holistic approach to finding our authentic being. We do this by working on ourselves in every way and committing to doing this daily for the rest of our lives. We must heal the traumas and conditionings of the past; transcend patterns of thinking, reacting, and behaving in order to master the present; and visualize and take the necessary steps to create a better future. Through living out this path or way, we discover our unique and individual nature. We, as individuals and in relation to others, in our work, in our culture and society, and as residents on Earth, have chance and hope. Though the road is long and arduous, if we dedicate our lives to following the universal truths of Mencius' path of self-cultivation, we will reach our joyous destination.

The tales, client examples, and discussion in each chapter will help readers understand the book's concepts and see the way toward finding their own path. In addition, each part of the book ends with "The Dwarf's Advice and the Watchman's Questions," a set of exercises that provides a concrete action plan for embarking on the journey of finding one's heart.

As readers will learn, the essence of finding one's heart can be distilled into these five basic steps, along with the actions required to successfully execute them:

1. Embark on a journey of self-discovery
2. Invent your future
3. Heal your past
4. Master your present
5. Receive the rewards of finding your heart

Despite the enormity of the problems we face, both in our own lives, in our relationships, and in the world, *Finding the Lost Heart* provides an optimistic vision. As a result of the work of innumerable individuals since the dawn of time, we now understand how to promote the realization of our greatest potentials. This book makes its contribution to the advance of humanity by making this knowledge accessible.

What sets *Finding the Lost Heart* apart from other books in the self-help category is that it does *not* promise instant solutions. What it offers instead is the *best* method for getting all we want in life, finding true fulfillment, and doing all we can to fix a broken world. Interested readers will be able to follow up on the introductory exercises in the book by participating in an ongoing program of self-cultivation. As this will not be a one-time fix or instant cure, but an engagement in a lifetime commitment to a process of self-discovery and growth, readers will return to read the many books on related themes to follow.

Through the use of effective branding and marketing methods, the book's message and method will be one key piece of a comprehensive business structure, which already includes an active web presence. Synergistically, this will lead to strong book sales for years to come.

Whether the reader is looking for love, success, meaning, health, parenting excellence, or fulfillment, living out this story of searching for and finding the lost heart is the way to achieve all of these things.

As we find our hearts, we liberate the human spirit. Not only will this path bring us personal fulfillment, but by living a life of self-cultivation, we turn the cycle of lost-heartedness around. We will no longer proliferate our wounds; instead, healing will be passed down through the generations. A natural spiritual development occurs when we find our hearts. We become passionate about, and find purpose in, nurturing ever-widening webs of relationships, from loved ones and family members to humanity and the planet as a whole.

As Mencius tells us, when we find our hearts, we heal the world.

Introduction:

How I Found My Heart

My first encounter with the infinite came when I was two years old. I grew up a few blocks from the Atlantic Ocean in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn. I remember being at the beach and burying my shovel in the sand. When I tried to dig it up with my hands, it was as if I had stuck my hands into the cosmos. I could not find the shovel. The beach had become the Great All into which my shovel had fallen.

As a grown-up, I came to understand that at a very young age I had lost something far more important than that shovel. I had suffered a loss of connection to an essential part of myself.

My uncle had a fix-it shop called Ralph's Reliable Repairs on Brighton 6th Street, just a block from the ocean. I used to love being in his store, which was filled with oscilloscopes, antique cylinder record players, and big old vacuum tubes in red-and-black boxes with lightning bolts printed on them. The ocean seemed to attract eccentrics, and my uncle had an affinity for "civilization's discontents." For years we repeated stories about the odd people who came into his shop, like the man who walked in and said, "I'm Paul Stone and I walk alone," or the guy who would use the phone to call his girlfriend, Marilyn Monroe.

Perhaps this sparked my interest in things psychological. Or maybe it was because

when I was five years old, despite the strong protests of my stubborn, frightened father, my mother took me to a child therapist. I was an anxious, sickly child. Having had lots of stomach troubles, I missed toilet training. The wise therapist asked me to stay in the waiting room. It turned out that it was my mom who needed the therapy. Her mother had died when she was a child and she had to work through her guilt that she was responsible for her mother's death. She did. Things with our family got better, and my problem went away.

As a precocious child, by ten I was reading books like *Dibs in Search of Self*, from my much older brother's college psychology course. Throughout the years, the psychology section was the first I went to in the bookstore.

Growing up in the '70s, it wasn't at all unusual to be smoking pot at thirteen. By the year I turned fifteen, my father was dead of bone cancer. I spent the following summer taking a weekly trip on LSD.

Before my dad died, sitting in his wheelchair, he cried that he'd never done anything with his life except have kids. I wouldn't let that happen to me, I vowed. Along with psychology, I was also passionate about music. And that was a far cooler interest. Within months of graduating high school I'd gotten myself apprenticed to Phil Ramone, perhaps the greatest living engineer and producer of pop and jazz records, at New York's prestigious A & R Recording Studios. That environment certainly did nothing to curb my drug use. On my first day in the studio while observing Paul Simon's session for the song, "Loves Me Like a Rock," I did cocaine.

At 23 I married a brilliant poet who was in grad school at Princeton. She influenced

me to retire at the ripe old age of 25 and spend some time catching up on the things I'd missed, having started working in the studio when I was still practically a kid. We'd move to the country, where I would study music, learn to drive, do yoga, read Plato, cook.

On our first day in our new home, my wife and I went for a hike in the woods. After years of not leaving the city, she was thrilled to be in the forest. She was rhapsodic about the trees and nature. I felt nothing positive. Instead, I felt this strange depression, recognizing that something was missing for me. I got my first inkling that despite my tremendous success, I had lost something vital along the way. Without the amplifying effects of pot and coke, nothing made much of an impression on me. I knew that I didn't have much of an interest in doing much of anything especially good, either. Nothing seemed that important. I felt a dull ache and shock.

I began to search. I wasn't sure for what -- maybe god, the spirit, myself -- something to make me feel alive and connected again. But it would be a long 12 years before I would find it.

There was no denying that I was deeply lost after the death of my mother a few years later. I had no energy or enthusiasm. The world seemed a meaningless place. Things that I had formerly been passionate about, like music, held no interest for me.

I searched the world over, looking for freedom from my emotional bondage, but wherever I went, my pain followed like a shadow. Standing by the shores of a river on the island of Viti Levu in the Fiji islands, a land with no roads or electricity, I watched a strong

young woman standing on a rock singing, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"

I could not sing. I was not part of this world. I felt a stranger wherever I went.

As part of my search, I landed on the small Greek island of Patmos. Two thousand years ago on that rock in the Aegean Sea, St. John looked at a crack in the ceiling of a cave and received the revelation that became the last book of the New Testament. I sat in that same cave waiting for my own cosmic connection. Instead of a divine voice, I heard a cigarette-smoking tourist flirting loudly with a guard. All I felt was annoyed. I decided I would never find God, and returned to the house by the Mediterranean Sea where I was staying.

That night I had a Big Dream. In one scene I stood in a tower looking out four windows in the cardinal directions with a strange but familiar woman. When I awoke I had a powerful new feeling. I didn't know what the dream meant, but it was clear that I had received an important message. I knew it was my task to decipher that secret communication. I felt enormously excited and immediately wrote the dream down, covering several pages. Then I burst outside my small whitewashed house.

The house was on the lip of a hill overlooking a valley filled with oregano bushes and olive trees. The smell of the herb sweetened the air. At the far end of the valley was a small bay that glistened with the waters of the Mediterranean. I looked across that sea and saw the hills of Turkey in the mist. Swallows swooped down into the valley. I heard the gentle clanking of bells and the occasional bleat of a sheep that grazed on the slopes around the

bay. As the giant red sun rose in the sky, the sunlight began to illuminate the tiny white monasteries that dotted the scrubby, rough island. I thought I remembered something, but the memory eluded my grasp.

Though this powerful moment stayed with me, I remained ignorant of the meaning of the dream. More years would have to pass before the promise in that feeling would come to fruition.

Thirty-five years after I lost my shovel to infinity, my crisis came to a head. In the middle of it, two friends took me out for a birthday dinner at a Spanish cafe in the West Village of New York City. I stared into my paella. I felt myself swirling around, just one more piece of sausage in a chaotic stew. My friend Abby was jabbering about how, at the ripe old age of 23, she had just published a novel. She'd blown into New York less than a year before and was already one-fourth of the town's most notorious performance quartet. She tossed back her beet red hair and laughed, but I didn't think much of anything was funny. Laurie, on the other hand, looked worse than I felt. She lay unconscious, her head sprawled on the white tablecloth, deep in a migraine.

This is some way to celebrate my 37th birthday, I thought. Clearly, my best days were behind me. My drawer was filled with rejection letters from every record label in America for the singing group I was producing. I had just failed in resurrecting my fourteen-year marriage, which I had screwed up over the previous few years with a string of infidelities.

I was relegated to composing jingles for toy commercials. Now that was something to have engraved on my tombstone: *Brainwashed small children into buying plastic for a living.*

My hair was just about done with the tortuously painful process of falling out. I had been the “wunderkind,” the “child prodigy” once, but now I was just Uncle Glenn, smiling at my young friends’ successes, but grimacing underneath. I felt like J. Alfred Prufrock from the poem by T. S. Eliot:

And indeed there will be time
To wonder, ‘Do I dare?’ and, ‘Do I dare?’
Time to turn back and descend the stair,
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair-
(They will say: ‘How his hair is growing thin!’)

I looked up from my paella. I looked at Laurie: her mouth was open and she looked rather green. In her normal, lucid moments, Laurie bore an uncanny resemblance to my mother when she had been in her twenties. I was sure she was a reincarnation. Looking at her reminded me that I was an orphan, without connection to a single family member, as both of my parents had died and I had lost contact with the few other family members I had. I recalled a song lyric I had written:

All the love that’s gone forever
I don’t understand
how it slipped through my hands

“I’m lost,” I mumbled to my friends. “What should I do?”

Laurie opened her eyes, raised her head, and said, “Go to Ellis Island.”

The next day, on a crisp October New York morning, under a cloudless sky the color of sapphires against gold and ruby leaves, I went down to the seaport, bought a ticket, and walked on the boat that swung past the Statue of Liberty on its way to Ellis Island.

At sixteen, without a dime in his pocket, my grandfather, a Russian Jew, had come to America through Ellis Island, the port of embarkation for many immigrants to the United States in the early 1900s. Nearly a century later, as the ferry sailed through New York Harbor, I imagined I saw Manhattan as my grandfather had seen it the day he arrived in America.

I leaned against the ship. Children, with the sun gleaming on their faces, played and screamed noisily around me but they seemed as remote from me as my own innocent past. Something gave way deep inside. I could no longer defend against my feelings of powerlessness, hopelessness, and grief for all the love I had lost and destroyed. Tears streamed down my cheeks. The front that I was strong, in control, powerful and all put together came crashing down. I plummeted into emptiness, suddenly facing a void.

Landing on Ellis Island, I walked through the halls where countless immigrants had made their way into this country. As I heard old folk songs my mother had sung to me as a child, old feelings half-buried in the rubble of my life began to stir.

Reaching the sea wall, I read the names inscribed there, of all the travelers who had passed through this door into freedom. I found my grandfather's name: Chaim Pollack. Wiping back tears, I looked up into the heavens and asked, "Grandfather, what should I do?"

As though the voice spoke from the center of my being, the answer came — one that Jewish elders have been giving since the beginning of time:

"Devote your life to study, and *tikkun*, fixing the broken world."

How could I, a flawed man who had hurt so many, help to heal the world? How could I devote my life to study? I had bills to pay, clothes to buy, places to go, people to meet.

Again I heard my grandfather's voice: "I traveled across the sea knowing full well that I would never reap the rewards of my journey. I knew that I would not enter the Promised Land. But I came for you, for the promise of my grandchildren. My hope lay in you. If I gave up my home, and made my way around the world to start a new life, I am certain you can find the time, the money, and the way to do what I have commanded you to do."

I knew that I wanted to change. Was I finally ready? As the Talmud said, If not now, when?

Humbled, I left the island.

When I returned to New York, everything was transformed. The city of dreams glowed with the primal vibration of life. Everywhere I looked, I saw meaning and beauty. My senses were all amplified and enriched. I felt love for all that I saw. I felt my grandfather's inspiring hand gently on my back, whispering in my ear that it was time to fulfill my destiny -- I *could* do it. Anything seemed possible, and the world was filled with promise. I found myself extraordinarily happy.

But how would I realize my grandfather's call? I passed a man selling used books off a table on lower Fifth Avenue. In a moment of surrender, I asked him what I needed to read. He handed me a book called *Psychology and Religion* by Carl Jung. When I opened it my world stopped. There, in this book, fully explained, were the images from my Big Dream: the tower, the four windows, the mysterious, familiar woman that Jung named *anima*.

What had until that moment seemed inscrutable became perfectly obvious. My interest in psychology, born in childhood, had never waned. I had been in therapy several times through the years and was well versed in the classic tomes. I had denied this passion for a lifetime. No more. I would do the work of healing the world through healing myself and others. I would go back to school and become a psychotherapist.

Carl Jung (1875–1961) was a Swiss psychologist who worked closely alongside Sigmund Freud, the inventor of psychoanalysis. Eventually, Jung split with Freud and forged his own path. He called the common images that were in my dream and in his book archetypes, and he believed they were reflections of potentials within us all. It was as if we each have within us a blueprint that is both unique and universal. If we can access those plans we can discover our life's purpose.

Discovering the works of Jung brought me to the doorway I was looking for. In order to learn the art of psychotherapy that would be my path to healing, I returned to school. I studied the inherited wisdom of humankind as it was revealed in myth. Myth led me to explore fairy tales, ritual, and anthropology. I discovered that I was not alone in the forest. People had been searching as I was since the beginning of time. I learned that each of us is destined to participate in an eternal quest for our true selves. It is the song of conscious existence. It is the universe asking itself, "Why?"

One night, trapped alone in a house in the country, I discovered a pack of Tarot cards, and a book that went along with them explaining their symbols. I was thrilled to find that the cards conveyed the very same ideas that I was learning about in my other studies. I

began to see how everything was connected, that whatever the source, myths, stories, and ancient philosophies all contained a similar hidden message. I grasped that my story was *the* story; that there was a pattern of human development that could be known--and mastered.

I intuited that there was a root cause beneath the many kinds of problems that people struggled with. If I could pinpoint this cause and the pattern underlying it, maybe I could figure out its solution.

After many years of schooling I got my degrees, completed my training, and realized my dream of becoming a psychotherapist. Now many lost wanderers, seekers like myself, found their way into my office. When I looked at my clients I saw them struggling to find the meaning in their lives, just as the ancient masters did, and just as I had struggled to in my own.

I tried to address their concerns with whatever tools I had, and never ceased from searching for more effective and efficient methods. Ultimately I discovered that these traditional pathways did not solve the great dilemma. I began to recognize that when my clients got better, it wasn't because of some technique I had learned but was the result of a mysterious inner process that I could not define.

The panaceas of the self-help industry did not provide all the answers. Although the information found here was often sound, there was something that tended to prevent people from following its good advice. In addition, I did not believe that current psychological jargon captured my own, or the human, experience. There was something

deeper that was going on that could only be conveyed in the language of symbol. I began to talk to clients about Dante's trip into the underworld and Cat-Skin's putting her dress of diamonds into a walnut shell. Clients resonated with these tales more than with telling them they had "avoidant personality disorder."

Whether they were seeking money, love, sex, or a thinner body, I began to recognize that no technique was going to bring these people what they wanted. I had learned from my own experience, and from the wisdom I gleaned wherever I looked, that for fundamental transformation to occur, something far more profound was required.

Having relentlessly searched for the answers to these questions since that time, I finally found the unifying idea that made sense of all I had learned when I discovered the writings of a Chinese philosopher named Mencius. He said: "The principle of self-cultivation consists in nothing but trying to find the lost heart."

Once I grasped the true meaning of Mencius' words, I became driven to bring this vital message to the world. Here, I believed, was the solution to the problems people faced in their personal lives, their relationships, in our culture, and in our politics. Here was a way for us to do our part in making ourselves, our relationships, and our world better. Here was the universal answer to the question of how we get what we *truly* want out of life.

Getting this message out became so important to me that I became willing to do just about anything to make that happen. I began waking at 5 AM seven days a week to work on this book. I wrote on the commuter train going to work at 7 in the morning, and at 9 at night coming home.

Wanting to make the most compelling case for my discovery, I continued my research. Inspired by trailblazers like Joseph Campbell, Otto Rank, Sir George Frazer, and Clarissa Pinkola-Estes, I read myths, fairy tales, philosophies, and literature from far-reaching cultures and times: Egyptian, Babylonian, Chinese, Indian, Hebrew, Greek, Roman, Teutonic, Medieval, Romantic, and modern. I studied the great films, from Chaplin to *Finding Nemo*. And I culled the casework of the hundreds of clients that I have worked with over the past fifteen years.

I researched cutting-edge psychological theories, including works on, most significantly, attachment, starting with John Bowlby, the work of Bessel VanDer Kolk and Francine Shapiro on trauma, and the works of John Bradshaw, Fossum and Mason, and Kaufman on shame. I have been deeply influenced by the Gestalt work of Fritz Perls, and by the relational work of Harville Hendrix, who I have studied with personally. I researched the paradigm-shifting work of people like Allan Schore in neuroscience, which validates what the wise of ancient times understood.

What have I learned?

When we explore myths, fairy tales, and rituals, we discover a preponderance of images, themes, and plots that reveal that peoples from all times and places have sung the epic of creation, the tragedy of loss, and a noble adventure of rediscovery. They reveal a universal human process of development that is possible for each of us. As the child in myth is called on a quest to become a hero, we, too, are called to a great journey. In order to find fulfillment, we need to follow the path set forth in these models.

When we embark on an adventure of self-discovery like those described in tales and ritual, we see that our lives are part of a story much larger than our individual selves. We come to know that our lives are purposeful and our acts sacred. We experience our personal path as a reflection of a tale that is eternal and transcendent. As we come to understand that in our journey we walk in the footsteps of the gods, our lives become infused with meaning. To create and live out our story in an authentic way is a sacred quest.

The purpose of existence, in part, is to pass the torch, to carry the tale, to sing the song anew. By adding our story to the Great Story, we, as the great psychological explorer Carl Jung put it, “dream the myth onwards.”

In order to follow my grandfather’s instruction, I have sought to practice the most rigorous scholarship. I have travelled into the dark and frightening pathways of my own soul. Initiated into the mysteries, I have led hundreds through the labyrinth of self-discovery. Having completed the impossible tasks, slayed the dragon, and journeyed through the cave, I have seized the treasure. I have brought back the boon to humankind to share what I have won. The result is this book, *Finding the Lost Heart*.

The Dwarf's Advice and the Watchman's Questions:

An Action Plan for Finding Your Heart

Are you ready to do all you can to live the life you've always wanted? As the good sage Mencius tells us, the way to realize our potentials and to be all we are meant to be is to find our heart. And the way to find our heart is by committing ourselves to a lifetime of self-cultivation. This means working in some small way every day on yourself and your growth. By reading this book you have taken a step toward that commitment. You should feel good about that. This choice is going to be good for you, your loved ones, and the world.

Realizing your potentials does require regular effort, in the same way that we need to exercise our bodies regularly to stay in good shape. I will help you on your journey by providing you with some simple exercises along the way. Putting in this work will not always be easy, but the rewards will be worth it. I encourage you to follow through on these exercises and to have this be the beginning of some good new habits in your life.

The Advice of the Little Ugly Dwarf

Like in many fairy tales, in the story *The Water of Life*, the son of a king sets out on adventure to save the king and his kingdom. When the prince has gone some way he comes to a deep valley, overhung with rocks and woods. As he looks around, he sees standing above him on one of the rocks a little ugly dwarf with a sugarloaf cap and a scarlet cloak.

The dwarf calls to him and says, 'Prince, whither so fast?'

And the Prince says, 'I am going in search of the Water of Life. . .'

'Do you know where it is to be found?' asks the dwarf.

'No,' says the Prince.

'Then as you have spoken kindly, and are wise enough to seek for advice, I will tell you how and where to go.'

In these tales it is the adventurer who takes the advice of the little ugly dwarf who finds the revitalizing treasure. Like the heroes in our tales, at the end of each chapter, the dwarf will offer you advice. By following these simple suggestions, you, too, will find what you are looking for.

The Watchman's Questions

In the story *The Devil's Three Golden Hairs*, in order to win riches and the Princess, a "child of fortune" must answer three questions posed by the watchman at the city gates: *Why doesn't wine flow from our master's fountain? Why does our tree no longer bear golden fruit? Why can't the ferryman ever stop rowing the ferry boat back and forth across the river?*

The child needs to get his answers from a sleeping wizard. What this means is that for us to recover the gold that is our essential nature, our hearts, we must look within our depths and answer mysterious questions. At the end of each chapter, the watchman will pose several questions that can help you on your journey of finding your lost heart.

In order to receive the benefits of the dwarf's help, and gain the boons from the watchman's queries, all you need to do is follow the instructions, do what is suggested, and answer the questions. For this to work, you just need to be honest – with yourself. There are certain sections where there is a suggestion for other people to provide answers to some of the questions. Sometimes others see us differently than we see ourselves and that outside perspective from someone close can help us see ourselves more accurately.

Some questions will require a simple yes or no answer. For others, the answers may not be so clear, and may require deeper thought. Finally, some questions, which speak in the language of symbol, require you to use your imagination. For these questions, let your mind wander and do not be so concerned with getting the right or wrong answer. Let your intuition guide you and allow yourself to feel your way into the answers. You might want to take a walk in the woods or sit staring at the ocean as you contemplate such questions as, "What is the part in your center where nothing grows?"

Though following through on these exercises does take time and effort, and some may bring up difficult feelings, many of them can be fun. The more heart you put into these exercises, the more rewarding and enjoyable the process will be.

The advice and questions in *Part One: The Tale of the Lost Heart* introduce you to the **HeartSearch Process**. This uncovering process helps you determine if you have a lost heart and, if so, how this manifests in your life.

The advice and questions in *Part Two: What is the Heart* introduces the **HeartPath Process**. Through the use of tools like the Golden Goal Wheel, this discovery process will help you create a vision of who you would like to be and what your life will look like when you have found your heart.

The advice and questions in *Part Three: How We Lose the Heart* introduces the **HeartHeal Process**. In this recovery process, you will be given the tools to understand how your wounding led to the loss of your heart and as well as tools you can use toward healing.

The advice and questions in *Part Four: Finding the Lost Heart* will get you started on your **HeartFind Process**. These exercises will help you complete the impossible tasks so that you can get the things you want in life and become the person you are meant to be.

The exercises suggested here are only one part of a comprehensive program of finding your heart. The complete program I offer is the most effective method that I know of to get you the life you want and to help you to be the person you want to be. The entire program provides you with a complete portrait of who you are in the present moment; it

defines your strengths and problems; it maps out goals for the future; it provides a way for you to heal the wounds of the past that limit you; it provides you with a plan for how to master the present and realize your dreams for the future.

Embarking on this adventure of a lifetime can make the difference in setting you on a path of transformation to realizing your life goals. Though the road is long, this process gives you great results in the shortest time possible. If you are interested in the complete program, please visit my website at: www.GlennBerger.com/FTLH.

Chapter One

The Spellbound Heart

TIN MAN

It's empty. The tinsmith forgot to give me a heart.

DOROTHY AND SCARECROW

No heart?

TIN MAN

No heart.

DOROTHY

Oh —

TIN MAN

All hollow. Oh —

(singing)

When a man's an empty kettle
He should be on his mettle,
And yet I'm torn apart.
Just because I'm presumin'
That I could be kind-a human
If I only had a heart.

— *The Wizard of Oz*

The first time Paul walked into my psychotherapy office, I was struck by his beauty. He was in the peak of his youth, 26 years old. He had curly blonde hair and a wide, sensual mouth. He smiled with a little too much confidence. He puffed out his chest and shook my hand. I could sense nervousness and vulnerability beneath his proud presentation.

“I don’t really know why I’m here,” he started. “My life is great. I’ve got lots of friends. I can party every night. I’m wildly successful. I’ve got a new CD coming out in a month. I’ve already made more money than most of my friends ever will.”

“Then what has led you to my door?” I asked.

“I’m worried.” He stretched his body out in the chair and broke eye contact. “I don’t know what it is exactly. My mom took a bunch of pills and ended up in the hospital. My sister’s all screwed up. I broke up with my girlfriend about six months ago, and I can’t seem to let it go. Maybe I party a little too much. I’m not sure.”

He sat up, and wrinkled his face. “Something’s. . .missing.”

I knew that Paul would have to travel a great distance to truly comprehend what that “something missing” was. It had taken me many years of searching to find the answer for myself.

I stumbled upon the solution when I discovered the writings of Mencius. He was a Chinese philosopher who was considered by many to be the wisest sage to have ever lived.

Though he wrote 2300 years ago, when I first read his words it was as if he was speaking directly to the core of my being. He said,

Pity the man who has lost his path and does not follow it, and has lost his heart and does not go out and recover it. When people's dogs and chicks are lost they go out and look for them, but when people's hearts—or original nature—are lost, they do not go out and look for them. The principle of self-cultivation consists in nothing but trying to find the lost heart.

That which we search for is nothing outside of us. It is within. What Paul had lost was the most precious gift given to us by a bountiful and generous universe: our heart. We who have lost our hearts have become, as theologian/philosopher Paul Tillich said, "estranged from our essential nature."

As we wander in our somnolent state, as if lost in a dream, we stumble in confusion. We know something is wrong, but we don't know what it is.

In the Grimms fairy tale *The Devil with the Three Golden Hairs*, a gatekeeper asks the hero of the tale, "Why has the market fountain, which once flowed with wine, run dry?"

Another asks, "Why have the golden apples stopped growing on our tree?"

"Why am I doomed to travel back and forth across the river and never set free?" asks a ferryman.

In order to escape being murdered by the king, the hero needs to answer these questions. He not only escapes his dreaded fate, but ends up winning the kingdom. But at first he is daunted by the riddles he must solve.

When I have watched my clients trying to solve such conundrums in their own

lives, they usually discover that the answers are not easily found. Opening their eyes from slumber, their vision remains obscured by sleep. Their mind's limitations stop them from fully grasping the nature of their problems and suffering. Nothing makes sense. They are bewildered.

When we find ourselves in such a predicament, our first task is to understand what it means to have a lost heart. The doorway of symbol, myths, fairy tales, and stories provides a means for entering this paradoxical world of mirrors that can help us solve the strange puzzles of our life.

Tales like *The Devil with the Three Golden Hairs* have resonated for people across the centuries. This is because they speak to something in the center of our being, our heart. When we stop trying to follow the plots of these stories with our thinking minds, and allow our hearts to feel their way into the images one at a time, their hidden messages emerge. We begin to see that these symbols reflect problems not only in our personal lives, but throughout our world. We comprehend the truth in these images and tales deep within us, though we may not be able to put the reasons why into words.

The Wasteland in Our Center

In the fairy tale *Maid Lena*, there sits a wasteland in the middle of a farm. Each blade of wheat is so beaten down, it looks as if it can never recover or lift itself up again. Each year the farmers plant in the dead ground, and each year on midsummer's eve, the new growth is destroyed.

For some of us, our heart is so lost, and our apparatus for awareness so benumbed, we don't even realize we have a barren center, like the wasteland in *Maid Lena*. What is most precious about us has slipped from our grasp, and we haven't even noticed. As Mencius said,

When people's dogs and chicks are lost they go out and look for them, but when people's hearts, or original nature, are lost, they do not go out and look for them.

Sometimes we make excuses and play the victim, finding the cause of our distress in others. My client Paul, for example, didn't understand why his ex-lover got so upset when he passed out drunk at her birthday party.

This is the most dangerous phase of having a lost heart: we don't *know* that we don't know. Thus we are at risk of never living the life we are meant to live.

Paul came to see me directly from court after being arrested for writing graffiti on a bridge high above the city. The judge told him that as long as he didn't get into trouble for the next six months, he could have his record expunged, but if he was caught and brought in again during that time, he would be charged with a felony.

When I asked Paul what he was going to do, he told me that he wasn't going to worry about life anymore. He certainly wasn't going to stop doing graffiti; he just would no longer get caught.

Paul had missed some important meetings with his recording company. When they postponed the release of his CD, he blamed a world that didn't understand the profundity of what he was doing.

In *Maid Lena*, after many years where nothing grew in the center of their land, the perplexed farmers finally sought the cause of the destruction. Like the farmers, things started to get so bad for Paul that he finally had to admit that something in his life was not working. He decided that it might be worth figuring out what that thing was.

He finally began to open up to me.

"I get drunk every weekend, and when I'm drunk, I start doing cocaine," he told me. "I'm the one who desperately tries to get more at 5 in the morning. Even my loser friends are starting to worry about me."

"During the week, I stay up all night cruising internet porn. I know I'm wasting time but I can't stop, no matter how I try."

"My label is threatening to drop me. I don't even know if I want to do music anymore. I can't really figure out what to do with my life."

When I asked him what he would *like* to do, he said sheepishly, "Something good, I guess. I'd like to be in love. But it's not happening."

He was quiet for a moment. Then he said, "Why would I hurt myself like this?"

When people come into therapy, what they are usually aware of are their problems. But this still leaves them a great distance from knowing why they act the way they do. And figuring out the answer turns out to be harder than they expect.

As Paul put it, "I don't know what I'm working on."

In ancient legend, an oracle commanded the people of Phrygia to make the next person who entered their town in a wagon their king. Just then, Gordius entered the town in a wagon. He was proclaimed king. He dedicated his wagon to the god of the oracle, and tied it with a knot that no one could undo. It was said that the person who untied this notorious Gordian knot would become the ruler over all of Asia. Though many tried to unravel the knot, for many centuries no one could.

Just like all those seekers who could not untie the complex knot, discovering the answer to the question of the source of our troubles is fraught with difficulties. We find ourselves confronted with seemingly insoluble dilemmas. Like the puzzles of old, when we try to free ourselves from the ties that keep us trapped, we find ourselves caught in magical binds.

Life's difficulties have something to tell us. But their code is inscrutable. What secret message are they trying to reveal?

The Tower: Problems

One way to find understanding for the meaning of our travails is to search out our legacy of ancient wisdom. And one place to look is in the Tarot.

When most of us think of the Tarot, we imagine a person at a fair who looks at the cards and "amazes us" by telling us things about ourselves that we already know. Yet the

Tarot is not some newfangled hocus pocus. Its tradition goes back at least 500 years.

Though the cards first appeared in renaissance Europe, the concepts have their roots in the esoteric wisdom of ancient Egypt. The symbols on the cards provide a complex means for discovering the inner workings of the heart and the nature of the universe.

There is a card in the Tarot deck called "The Tower," which shows a tall tower being struck by lightning. Smoke and flames spew from the windows, and the unlucky inhabitants leap from them. The image is eerily reminiscent of the events that struck New York City on September 11, 2001.

One interpretation of this card speaks to the hidden purpose of the problems in our lives. It tells us that events will conspire, either inside or outside of us, to bring our attention to the reality that we are living out of harmony with nature, with *our* nature. It is the universe's way of saying, "Wake up! Pay attention!"

Paul did not see that the condition of his life reflected the universe working its mysterious ways: it always finds the means to awaken us to our lost condition.

Like Paul, we might wake in the middle of the night gripped with terror, or find ourselves smoking pot every day rather than achieving our aims. Perhaps we can't get out of bed in the morning, or we are lonely and can't seem to forge loving relationships. We face a reversal of fortune; a setback in our lives.

Whether the event is some catastrophe that appears to happen to us from the outside, or an inner *angst*, its manifestation, suffering, points to a deeper loss, a loss we may not initially recognize.

Fairy tales and myths are rife with such “tower events.”

In the Biblical tale of Job, Satan makes a deal with God. He aims to prove that if you cause a man enough suffering, he will give up on God. Job is beset with catastrophic difficulties. He loses his riches and is rejected by his loved ones. Hope crushed, he is alienated from humanity. The voices in his head torment him.

Job’s peers argue that we are all sinners, and that the wicked always suffer God’s punishment. But Job protests the injustice that he, who has lived a righteous life, is suffering terribly, while the wicked live prosperous lives.

When we suffer, trapped in depression, lost without love, riven by anxiety, we, too, want to know why we are being tormented by the universe for no apparent cause. But if we look beyond the surface, we see that more often than not these tower experiences do have a purpose. They tell us that, as Mencius would put it, we are living out of harmony with the **Heavenly Mandate**.

The Heavenly Mandate represents the laws in the universe. These are the principles of nature, and human nature. The heart is the place within us where these laws reside. When we fall out of touch with our hearts, we are unable to live according to the principles of our own nature. Having a lost heart means we are living out of alignment with these laws. When we do not live in harmony with the Heavenly Mandate, our lives end up reflecting this unfortunate fact. We have problems. We may ignore the symptoms, or cover them over with surface success, but our inner emptiness will usually make itself known in the end in spiritual suffering, and, in particular forms of failure in our lives.

Job's friends mistakenly believe our suffering comes from wickedness. But we are not bad; we are merely lost. Our trouble comes from our distance from that home of the ultimate life force: our heart.

The consequences of living out of alignment with the Heavenly Mandate are obvious to the outside observer, though living according to the principles of the universe is barely imaginable to those with a lost heart.

Paul told me what had been going on in his family. His mother, Emily, grew up in a family with an abusive alcoholic father and a mother who was afraid to leave the house. She married a man who also ended up drinking, couldn't keep a job, and was obese. He was diagnosed with diabetes.

She paid as little heed to her children's problems as to her husband's and her own. Her daughter had troubles that turned out to go far deeper than anyone realized. Although she was exceedingly bright, she couldn't get her work done in college. Because she never admitted to having a problem, she received no help for it and was ultimately forced to drop out. It turned out that she suffered from bulimia. She would binge eat and force herself to throw up. This bright girl with such promise was reduced to working as a baby sitter.

Emily ignored Paul's problems as well. He had issues with focusing and as a teenager had an addiction to pharmaceutical drugs.

Emily used work to cope with—and escape—her own problems. She ran her own business and worked 70 hours a week. Though she made a good living, she was always under financial stress. She and her husband consistently lived beyond their means.

Relatives and friends told her that the only way to deal with her failing children and alcoholic husband was to address her own issues. As she began to suffer from panic attacks, she agreed to take action, but she never followed through.

Then the economy collapsed. She spent the family savings trying to keep the business going, but eventually it failed. They could no longer pay the mortgage. Their house was at risk of foreclosure.

One cold winter night, Paul's mom took too many pills and had to be brought to the intensive care unit. Yet, lying in a hospital bed, she still denied having any problems!

Not recognizing the tower experiences she was being put through, Paul's mom insisted that all she wanted was to "fix" her family. She did not realize the extent to which these events were occurring because she and her family were living out of harmony with universal law, with the mandate of heaven. Anyone could have foreseen all that had already happened to them. And unless she made a fundamental shift, her and her family's future would be equally —tragically— predictable.

Whatever the form of our suffering —whether it is a vague sense of dissatisfaction or a total anguish of being— we tend to ignore it, but do so at our peril. The bells ring. We hear the clanking of chains. The sound gets closer and closer. Despite the danger foretold when things go wrong in our lives, we try to minimize the experience, saying the problem will pass, or it's just a matter of luck or chance. Yet even as we deny impending doom, the ghost of dreadful consequence looms before us, demanding our attention. Until we

recognize that the maze we find ourselves in is a call to confront the truth of our lives, living will continue to bring us suffering.

“What do you want with me?” we ask when the ghost enters our room.

“Much!” the voice answers.

Though at first Paul was not consciously aware of the reason why, in his heart, he sought out therapy to save himself from the centrifugal force of this disaster. Though Paul’s mom refused to get help, he listened to the still voice of his aching heart, and on his own, he found me.

Bound Round the Heart: Spellbound

Now, faithful Henry had suffered such care and pain when his master was turned into a frog, that he had been obliged to wear three iron bands over his heart, to keep it from breaking with trouble and anxiety.

—The Frog Prince

The problems in our lives are symptomatic of the loss of the center of our existence — our polestar, our reason for being, around which the rest of our life revolves. This innermost purpose is the core vision out of which all of our actions emanate. Without this orienting point, we are left directionless.

Stories use the symbol of being spellbound to represent this condition. We may fall into a dreamless sleep for a hundred years, like Briar Rose when she was pricked by the spindle of a spinning wheel. Or like Paul:

“I do all this stuff, and everyone thinks I’m so successful, but really I’m just an empty shell. I’m frozen, and I feel like I’ve been here forever.”

We become accursed of the gods. There are innumerable tales that tell of humans who are transformed into lowly animals. In Greek mythology, Artemis’s favorite nymph, Callisto, excites the jealousy of the goddess Hera and soon discovers to her horror that she has been changed into a bear. Watching her arms cover with black hair, her beauty cede to ugly jaws, her voice become a scary growl, she bemoans her fate, begging the gods for mercy.

To be bewitched in this way can mean that we lack an awareness of what we are feeling in our bodies, and so we lose access to a significant source of understanding about ourselves and the world around us.

In this trance we cannot assess our experiences. We may feel a lack of connection to the very Earth we walk on. When we search inside for a secure sense of knowing, we come up empty. We feel helpless, at the mercy of forces we don’t understand.

“I don’t know what I want to do with my life,” Paul went on. “I feel confused, and I have no idea what’s going on in my body. All I know is that I can’t stop the relentless chatter in my head. I worry over every word and act. I’m just lazy and stupid. No one can — or should — love me.”

Life makes one great demand on us: that we choose. But when we are under a curse, we are rendered immobile. Weakened without our heart, we fret and avoid. We

make the wrong choices. We choose *not* to choose. And we are left with the saddened voice of the heart, which tells us we are guilty of never having fulfilled our potential to fully *be*.

In the Norwegian fairy tale *The Giant Who Had No Heart In His Body*, heroes try to conquer an ogre, but when the giant casts his eyes on them, they all turn to stone.

I don't know how to put my life together. I've always been looking for a way out of this. I can't find a way out. I feel like stone. There's no hope for me. I'm empty. I'm totally spaced and exhausted. I'm a loser stuck in the vortex.

Sleeping in the Worthless Moorland

In Greek myth, the priapic god Apollo chases the chaste nymph Daphne. The more she runs, the more entrancing he finds her, and the more desperate his desire. But the greater his ardor, the more afraid she grows. When Apollo tries to kiss her, her warm flesh grows hard and unyielding: she is transformed into an immobile tree. Afraid of authentic closeness, Daphne loses her humanity.

An inability to sustain intimate relationships can be one symptom of being under the spell of the lost heart.

When we run from Apollo's famous command to "know thyself," we lose connection to what gives us free-flowing energy and life. We become stuck in the ground, unable to move. Like Daphne fleeing the god, we refuse the call of the divine from within, the voice of the lost heart.

“If I commit myself, I’ll be trapped forever. Married people don’t have sex. I’ll end up at home having to give up my career, miserable in the suburbs with baby spitup on me. And I’ll always think, *Isn’t there somebody better out there?* I’m never excited by the women who want me.”

Paul was frightened of all he’d lose if he chose to commit himself to his girlfriend. But by not making a choice, he never stuck with any relationship, and so ended up with nothing. For all his efforts to escape, he came to realize he was actually stuck in one place.

Cursed by the loss of our hearts, we turn into animals, plants, or stone. We feel apart, alienated from others, unable to relate to the world, incapable of connecting.

“When I broke up with Elsa,” Paul said, “I realized that I had never been open with her, I’d never been honest, I never revealed myself. She never got to know who I really am. I was too afraid that if she saw the real me, she would hate me. But because we never showed ourselves to each other, our relationship never happened. Now it’s too late, and I’m all alone, and she will never know me.”

When we are estranged from our essential being, we cannot show our true self to another person. As a result, we are left lonely, needy, and frightened by the depth of our neediness.

In the story *Maid Lena*, the farmer’s youngest son, Esben, loves to sleep in that tract of barren, worthless moorland that lies in the center of the farm. A poor do-nothing sort of fellow who never has a word to say, he sits over the fire and rakes up the ashes, or moons about like one in a dream.

Like Esben, we may notice we are spellbound through a lack of passion, enthusiasm, or motivation. We may feel anxious, unmoored, afraid. We may not know our aim in life. We may not even recognize our own needs, or be able to say what is important to us. *I'm out of touch with myself. I can't trust my gut. I can't protect myself. I never thought about whether I was being loved or not. I have no idea what you mean when you ask me what I want. I've always done what other people tell me to do.*

In the Japanese fairy tale *The Sparrow with the Slit Tongue*, a man saves a sparrow from a threatening raven by putting it in a cage. But the little bird is still not safe. The man's wife, a spiteful woman, hates the little bird because her husband loves it. Not daring to kill the bird, she slits its tongue instead. Having lost its power to sing, the frightened bird flies from the house, becoming lost in the depths of the dark forest.

Without a sense of inner knowing, we are voiceless, like the bird with the slit tongue. Like the bird in this story, we open our mouths, with beauty in our hearts, but as in a dream, no sound comes out. We have lost our tongue, our voice, our song.

Unable to speak our mind, we are like the hero in the story *Perceval*, who brings ruin on the kingdom by not asking the right question at the right time.

"It was you, unfortunate man," Perceval is told by the King's Consort, "who saw that the time and the place were right for speech, and yet you remained mute. If you had asked, the rich King, who is now sore troubled, would have been wholly cured of his wound and would have held his land in peace."

With a spellbound heart, we may find ourselves unable to identify or act on our

essential values. This is because we cannot discern between good and bad. Unable to trust our own experience to help us decide what to do, we lose touch with the inner moral compass that should be our sure guide to action. As a result, we may act in opposition to our most deeply held beliefs.

When we do not live up to our ideals, we feel a lack of worth. This triggers a self-defeating cycle: when we don't value ourselves, our behavior often ends up being self-destructive. We find ourselves living in shame, feeling broken, powerless. We hate ourselves.

In this state, we may not even recognize the right choice.

As Paul said, "I could stay at home and take care of my bastard father who needs my help, and deal with my self-absorbed ex who is pressuring me to get back with her, or I could go to the beach in South America and have an affair with a woman who barely speaks English. Which would you choose?"

Entranced by instant gratification, we live by impulse. Though we may sense prudence somewhere within us, we cannot access this virtue to guide our lives. We live without the developed capacity to live according to the laws of the heart, laws that—though they exact sacrifice—provide us with the only true path to lifelong happiness and fulfillment.

This distance from our essential core leads us to forsake the singular moment in endless eternity to be a self. Instead, we choose, with or without our knowing it, not to live.

To be under a spell means we lose the ability to *be*: to live out our knowing, our intellect, our emotions, our passion, our creativity, our ambition, our beliefs, our sense of justice, our outrage, our sexuality, our sensitivity, our care, our spirituality, our love.

Once we pay this extreme price, we live in fear of the consequences of having sacrificed these parts of our lives. We fear the guilt we will feel if we recognize the harm we have done to ourselves and the remorse we will feel for a wasted life. We avoid at all costs the emptiness and loneliness that lurks within, which is the natural result of being cut off from our spiritual connectedness to the All.

When we are bewitched, we cannot clearly think, feel, or act. Without clear thinking, we believe we know what we don't, and we don't trust the knowledge we do have. Without connection to our emotional self, we fear ghosts, yet we trust things that are dangerous for us. Without the ability to access our aggression, we impulsively harm ourselves, but hesitate to act for our good. We think like we are asleep, we behave like trapped animals, we feel like stone.

Many of us have achieved enormous material comfort, and yet multitudes suffer from a lack of self-respect and a sense of alienation from the community, living frightened, narrow, and unhappy lives. Just like individuals are in a time of crisis, the world around us, too, is lost, and our culture bewitched.

We live in a time of muffled protest, of drugged complacency, of lockstep conformism. Frightened of bugaboos like economic calamity, terror brought by the veiled

enemy, calumny for an original thought, we sit and stare like cows as we are forced lies, manipulations, misrepresentations, and diversions.

Hypnotized, we are afraid of opening our mouths, afraid we'll lose that job, bring on the derision of our drunken friends, get yelled at by our spouses, get cut off by our parents. We don't protest. We don't even notice what is happening around us. We tweet and text, watch "American Idol," surrender to Internet porn. We don't complain, or criticize, or rebel. We don't say, "The emperor is naked — and he needs to go to the gym!"

Our world is scarred by intolerance, violence, poverty, and fear. Overcoming our political and social problems seems insurmountable. Our economy is bipolar: manic one moment, depressed the next. Our sense of helplessness, purposeless, and lack of power fuel our depression, anxiety, obsessions, compulsions, addictions, phobias, and self-destructive behavior. Drug-, alcohol- and nicotine-use is epidemic. Obesity, eating disorders, and diabetes are rampant. Child abuse, sexual abuse, domestic violence, and divorce are woefully prevalent in our families. Children are failing to learn, and are increasingly diagnosed with emotional disorders. Our jails are filled to overflowing. Doctors prescribe psychotropic pharmaceuticals like candy. People are searching—but few among us even know what to search for.

We see "lost-heartedness" wherever we look. The problems we face throughout our lives—whether in our relationships, in our families, in our culture, in our economy, in our work, in our politics, or in our environment—are all rooted in the same barren ground.

Cursed from the Earth: Exile, Loss, and Lament

Save me, God,
for the water has risen to my neck.
I have sunk in deep mud, and there is no footing;
I have come into deep waters, and a flood sweeps over me.
I am weary from my crying; my throat is parched.
My eyes fail, looking for my God.

—*Psalm 69*

Hansel said to Gretel, “We will find our way,” but they did not find it.

—*Hansel and Gretel*

Having a lost heart means that we have lost access to our eternal wealth: the best within us, our divine purpose, our ideal self.

In countless tales, this is symbolized by the loss of one’s most prized possessions. In *Beauty and the Beast*, “Their father, who had until this moment prospered in all ways, suddenly lost every ship he had upon the sea, either by dint of pirates, shipwreck, or fire. . .from great wealth he fell into the direst poverty. . .”

The father losing his worldly goods reflects a spiritual impoverishment that diminishes his vital energies. His loss of harmony with the ruling principles of the universe leads to an inability to manifest, to be fruitful, to succeed. The loss on the outside reflects an internal impoverishment, his loss of heart.

When we have a lost heart, we risk treating our life as if it is insignificant, a plaything, a toy. In *The Frog Prince*, the princess drops her golden ball into a well. Such cavalier treatment of the golden ball symbolizes how we live our lives without passionate

commitment. In this state, we do not grasp that such mindless treatment inevitably leads to dire consequences. The King's daughter followed the ball with her eyes as it sank, but the well was deep, so deep that the bottom could not be seen. As the tale says,

Then she began to weep, and she wept and wept as if she could never be comforted.

And in the midst of her weeping she heard a voice saying to her, "What ails you, King's daughter? Your tears would melt a heart of stone."

"I weep because my golden ball has fallen into the well."

Only when our golden center falls out of our hands do we despair its loss.

In the Chinese tale *The Magic Brocade*, a widow sees a picture of a beautiful land where she wishes to go. Since she cannot find a way to get there, she begins weaving a brocade of it. After years of tireless effort, she succeeds in replicating the land of her dreams. But when she lays it out for her son to see, a magical wind comes and blows the brocade away. Seeing her life's work gone, the widow faints.

As we watch our dreams slip from our grasp, and we realize that we cannot enter the beautiful land that is the home of the self, like the widow, our first response is likely to be shock.

The widow tells her son that she cannot live without the magic brocade. Vowing to bring it back, the son searches to the east for weeks, but cannot find it.

After the sting of the first blow fades, we feel a dull ache, a tormenting longing. Barely aware of what is truly gone, yet sensing an infinite void within, we are convinced we cannot live without recovering what has disappeared. This sets us on a search for what has flown away.

All stories of the quest—whether the search is for the magic brocade, the Holy Grail, the Golden Fleece, or the vital god who has been lost in the dark underworld—can be likened to the search for the heavenly palace that lives within us. In the ancient Indian tradition that heralds from texts like *The Upanishads*, spiritual treatises written in Sanskrit around 2800 years ago, the search is for the home of *atman*, the true Self, which we find in the heart.

In one set of tales, told in many variations all over the world, the lost thing is the heart itself, understood to be the source of our life that makes us who we are. The protagonists in these stories know that if they can find this precious object, they can destroy the oppressive evil giant, have dominion over the realm, and possess the jewels in the castle.

But the ogre keeps the heart deeply buried, and finding it seems an insurmountable challenge.

“You’re a goose,” said the Giant; “where my heart is, you will never come.”

As these tales show, humans have always intuitively understood the meaning of a hidden heart. We live in longing and frustration, knowing that all that is best and true about us somehow eludes our grasp. Our lives become ones of perpetual seeking.

We find that we are, as Milton put it in *Paradise Lost*:

As far removed from God and light of heaven,
As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole.

The very title of Milton's epic—*Paradise Lost*—perfectly captures the experience of having a lost heart. It is as if we come from, and belong in, paradise, but have been exiled from our place of origin.

The circumstances of Paul's life become more dire. He loses his recording contract and cannot get another one. He only realizes the consequences of his lost-heartedness when the die is already cast.

"I've just taken a bomb and blown up my relationship and my career. Last night, I found myself lying on the floor in tears. I can sort of remember a time that I believed in something, that I wanted to be good. Where did that person go? How did I lose myself?"

In the Dark Wood

When the man in *The Bird with the Slit Tongue* returns home to discover his beloved bird gone, he goes into the woods to find it. The man searches for the bird day after day, looking up in the trees, listening for the familiar song, only to return in the evening in despair. After endless wandering, he gives up hope of ever seeing his dear little companion again.

Like the man who searches the darkest forest for his bird, we seek the object of our deepest devotion, the fountain of our love, but we cannot find it. It is there, yet somehow beyond our grasp.

We may only realize something is missing when we find ourselves in a place of dread, trapped in a nightmare from which there is no waking, our life the realization of our

greatest fears. Like Dante in *The Inferno*, we are lost in the dark wood, with no idea how we got there:

For the straightforward pathway had been lost.
I cannot well repeat how there I entered,
So full was I of slumber at the moment
In which I had abandoned the true way.

Lost in the forest, we find ourselves in the realm of the lost heart. Drawn to search for our place of connection to the wellspring of life, we hope against hope that the way out will be clear. Yet we soon discover we are blocked at every pass.

I've ruined everything. What is left for me but regret?

Jolted to find ourselves ensnared in a web with no end, we discover that underneath the surface manifestations of our problems we are troubled by what philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson called “a deeper unsoundness.” Only then do we begin to grasp how lost we are, and how difficult the journey home will be.

In *Beauty and the Beast*, the father, who had fallen from great wealth to direst poverty by dint of terrible misfortune, heard that one of his ships had survived all catastrophes and had returned to port full of treasure. He set off on the long journey to recover his wealth. Unfortunately, by the time he arrived, all his goods had been taken by others. After months of effort, he found himself as poor as when he started. On his journey back, exhausted and desperate to return home, the snow and bitter frost made it impossible for him to continue. Trapped in the freezing wood, he was kept awake by the howling of wolves. In the morning, he found the snow had covered every track; he was lost.

Our first unprepared attempts to recover what has been lost often lead us deeper into trouble. After immeasurable time away from our infinite source, the path back to the center within the center is obscured by darkness, entangled with musty roots, choked with thorns. The howling winds, the bitter cold, the dark and pathless wood, are all the places we find ourselves in when we begin the search for the lost heart.

As Milton put it in a timeless quotation from *Paradise Lost*, we are trapped in the nightmares created by our own psychology:

Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy forever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail, Infernal world!
And thou, profoundest Hell,
Receive thy new possessour! one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time:
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.

The consequences of the loss of our core and not being able to find it casts a pall over our existence. The world may appear to provide no satisfaction. We suffer pain, fear, and bitterness. We see only what is wrong with everything. The sunlit world and the beauty of the stars have no impact on us when we find ourselves in this place. Without a connection to our source, we lack the ability to find the sacred in our world. Even truth, beauty, and goodness can leave us cold, confused, empty. We believe that no matter what we do, it will all be useless, pathetic. Being itself cannot be approached with strength and power. In Goethe's masterwork, *Faust*, the protagonist gives a clear description of this condition:

I am too old just to play,
Too young to keep living without wishes.
What more can the world give? You must do without,
Must do without! That is the eternal song.
In terror I awake each morning,
I could weep bitter tears to see the day:
The day that in its course
Not one wish will fulfill for me, not one!
That goes on finding fault till it has spoiled
Even the faintest promise of a pleasure—
That weighs down all that my soul creates
And, worse, when the night sinks over me
And I stretch myself in anguish on my bed,
There, too, no rest is given, I am scared with nightmares.
Being is a burden,
Death longed for, Life detestable.

The distance between what Faust imagines his life could be and the reality of his existence makes his life a torment. He lives with the longing for his heart but he can't find it anywhere. He is consumed with the dread that he will never be able to get what he truly wants: to realize, what Aristotle called, his *entelechy*, to be what he is intrinsically meant to become.

Once we look closely at the realities of our lives, we see the distance between how we *ought to* live and how we *do* live. Estranged from what we know we truly are, we feel alienated from our present way of being. We look at ourselves with judgment and disappointment.

I know what I need to do; why can't I do it?

Searching for the light, we find darkness. Like in Goethe's *Faust*, we hear a voice from the realm of emptiness, and come to know what it is we have lost.

Mephistopheles: And *your* heart—how are things with it?
Gretchen: My peace is gone,
My heart is sore,
I never find it.
I never find it.

Having watched our magic brocade fly away, our golden ball fall into the well, we hope for something to ground us, something to believe in, something from which we can decide, choose, act. We grasp at straw after straw, only to discover that each thing we try leaves us wanting, no matter how deep or profound.

I tried Buddhism but I didn't have the patience to chant. Maybe I'll go to film school. But I don't know why I should. I'll probably just get bored.

Because the thing we search for cannot be found outside us, no external solution cures our ills: the disease is within.

Our needs feel insatiable, because we are looking in the wrong place to satisfy them. The further we travel, the more lost we become. As the way becomes more tangled, dark, and blocked, and we face the blackness of the empty void, our hope of finding a way out gives way to terror.

I missed my time. There is no one there for me. I'm going to be alone forever.

We discover that exile is now our fate; we are left longing for what has been taken away, wondering how to recover it. Exile and the search for home are universal symbols that haunt not only our stories but our dreams and songs: "I was a stranger in a strange land," is sung in "By the Rivers of Babylon" from Psalm 137.

Exiled from our home, having lost our most valuable possession, we sense that we are cursed from the earth, a fugitive and vagabond. We fear that this is more than we can bear.

I'm being punished by the universe.

We see before us a shrouded figure that simply points. We are filled with foreboding.

What if I never find what I am looking for?

Tales of exiled characters who never return home reflect this worst outcome. *The Flying Dutchman* tells of a ghost ship that can never go home, doomed to sail the oceans forever. Usually spotted from afar, sometimes seen to be glowing with ghostly light, this phantom ship is considered by seafarers to be a portent of doom. Not knowing how to recover our light, our hope, our self, our heart, our secret dread is that we will be cursed forever.

The danger of having a lost heart is grave. But if we listen closely, we can hear the heart's distant echo, its plaintive call.

As in the quest for the Holy Grail, the land waits near death for the healing words of the hero. Like in the fairy tale of *Briar Rose*, the whole world has gone asleep, and waits for a kiss to bring it back to life. Despite the difficulty the search goes on.

“Yet for all that,” said the Princess, “it would be such a pleasure to know where your heart really lies.”

Then the poor Giant could hold out no longer, but said,

“Far, far away in a lake lies an island; on that island stands a church; in that church is a well; in that well swims a duck; in that duck there is an egg, and in that egg there lies my heart.”

In the morning early, while it was still gray dawn, the Giant strode off to the wood.

“Now I must set off too,” said Boots; “if I only knew how to find the way.”

Paul held his face in his hands. He looked up. With tear-filled eyes, he nodded and said, “Now I know why I’m here.”

The HeartSearch Process

The first step in solving your problems and creating the life you want is to follow the dictum of the Delphic Oracle who said, *know thyself*. The exercises in this book teach you to do this by helping you learn about the most interesting subject in the world: you. The way to begin this process is to uncover the root cause of your difficulties. As you have just read, it is my belief that the basis of most people's problems is that they have a lost heart. The exercises in this section, the HeartSearch Process, will help you find out if you suffer from this syndrome. There is no one definitive question, test, or score to determine if this is the case. The discovery begins with exploring the question. With time and attention the answer will become clear to you.

As has been revealed in this chapter, one of the problems of having a lost heart is that we are spellbound. Part of what this means is that we may be unaware of our own condition, and may have a difficult time grasping the nature of our struggles. Completing these exercises will help lift the fog of confusion that you may be in, and help you clarify the nature of your difficulties. Give the process time. You may need to revisit some of these questions and suggestions more than once. Do not expect to have the perfect answers the first time around. Be attentive to what resonates for you, to what feels true. Let your heart be your guide. If you have trouble answering or following through, put the book down for a while and come back to it again. If you find yourself confused, consider that to be a good sign. It means something unknown is coming to your awareness. It may be the first stirrings of your lost heart emerging out of its long exile.

The Dwarf's Advice

- Watch the film *Groundhog Day*.
What do you think this movie is about? How are you like the lead character, Phil Connors, played by Bill Murray?
- Listen to the U2 song "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For."
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0X7QGCmIZl0>) Can you relate? What does this song mean to you?
- Read the fairy tale *Beauty and the Beast*.
(<http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/beautybeast/index.html>) How are you like the character of the father? How are you like Beauty? How are you like the beast? Which character do you relate to the most?
- Take a moment to sit in a comfortable place and close your eyes. Scan with your awareness through the inside of your body. What are you aware of? Notice what you are feeling. Do you know where your emotions are in your body?
- Take a walk in nature. What do you feel? Anxiety? Joy? Numbness? Anger? Sadness? Excitement?

The Watchman's Questions

- What drew you to this book?
- Do you feel stuck? How?
- Do you have problems in your life that you can't seem to solve? What are they?
- Do you have dreams or goals that you have never fulfilled? What are they?
- Do you have a hard time knowing what you want? Give an example.
- Do you have difficulty making decisions? Give an example.
- Do you have a hard time defining your purpose in life?
- Do you have bad habits, or addictions, that you can't conquer? What are they?

- Are you dissatisfied with your relationship life? Why?
- Are you dissatisfied with your work life? Why?
- Are you dissatisfied with your financial life? Why?
- Are you dissatisfied with your physical well-being? Why?
- Are you dissatisfied with your body? Why?
- Are you dissatisfied with your sex life? Why?
- Are you suffering with emotional problems that you can't seem to solve? How?
- Do you feel like something is missing? Please describe.
- Do you feel "lost in the dark wood?" In what way?
- Is there "a place in the center of your being where nothing will grow?" Give an example.
- Do you find yourself "going back and forth on the river and never able to reach your destination?" Give an example.
- Do you feel "spellbound?" If so, in what way?
- Do you feel like you have "lost your true home?" If so, in what way?

Chapter Eleven

The Finding Is in the Seeking

Several years ago, I spent six months providing psychotherapy for inmates at the local county jail. Most were drug addicts; all of them had a heart. I had a close relationship with one wise felon, whom I will call Chris. I could see through Chris's orange prison suit that he had a huge stiff back from too much working out at the prison gym. Due to his struggle with heroin, he had been in and out of jail five times in the last twenty years. Chris had warm open hands and feeling eyes. He was an Imam, and the younger prisoners would come to him for guidance. My breath caught when he showed me the picture on his prison card, taken when he had just been brought in, still strung out on junk, with wild, violent eyes. I thought, *I wouldn't want to meet this guy on the outside.*

Chris and I would sit in a public space next to the nurse's station. We faced each other across a table that was clamped to the floor. A sickly green light leaked through the dirty windows that were behind bars. An old milk carton never moved from the floor next to us. It was noisy, and an unsympathetic guard hovered nearby.

In spite of the inhibiting conditions, we were getting into heavy work. During one session, in order to illuminate a point, I asked Chris if he had any interest in fairy tales. Surprised, he said that, in fact, he did.

He told me that whenever he was out of jail, he had to watch *The Wizard of Oz* every time it was on TV. (His girlfriend would laugh at him for this.) He had an interpretation of the story. And I, equally surprised, asked him to tell me what it was.

He said that we are all on a quest. We're all on the yellow brick road because we don't believe that we have a brain, or courage, or heart. We're all looking for the wizard, for something outside of ourselves that will give us the thing that we believe is missing. Toto is there to pull back the curtain, to reveal that there is no thing out there that will save you, nobody who is going to give you that thing that you believe you don't have. But what the wizard does do, when he is revealed, is show you that everything you need is already within you. The scarecrow is brilliant, the tin-man compassionate, and the lion brave. And all Dorothy needs to do to get home is click her heels. They just don't realize the reality. The heart is lost to us but is within us all the time. As Dorothy said, we can't lose our heart's desire unless it has always been within us:

If I ever go looking for my heart's desire again, I won't look any further than my own backyard. Because if it isn't there, I never really lost it to begin with! Is that right?

I was captivated by Chris's interpretation. I told him he knew the secret truth that the Chinese sage Mencius had captured thousands of years ago when he said,

The principle of self-cultivation consists in nothing but trying to find the lost heart.

When we say that we have a lost heart, it does not mean that it is gone forever. The lost heart *can* be found. It is kept, as the tales tell "in the bottom of a well, where no one can

come." When we put our heart in hiding it means that we hide essential aspects of ourselves. We have lost contact with our vital center, the home of our wisdom, courage, and faith in ourselves.

Chris's smile disappeared and the rigid block of his monolithic chest heaved. From across the table, he looked into my eyes and past them. I could see them well with tears. I sat, waiting.

He said, "The thing I don't understand, Glenn, is why Dorothy had to go through all that...shit...only to figure out that all she needed to do to get home was click her heels."

I didn't have an answer then, but I promised Chris that together, we would figure it out.

The Search Is Long and Difficult

In our great heritage of myth and fairy tales that illuminate the story of human self-discovery, the journey often takes the adventurer to a castle, mountain, island, or garden where he finds the treasure and the princess. All of these images symbolize that we will find what we long for in a sacred, central place. This center is within us. It is our heart. This is what we want to find, because it is the home of our treasure.

Whether the process is being described in the biblical story of the Jews wandering in the desert for forty years in their search for the Promised Land or Odysseus's ten-year

return to his home in Ithaca, this journey of the heart, the search for our center, is long and difficult. As Mircea Eliade, the Romanian philosopher and religious scholar, put it:

The road is arduous, fraught with perils, because it is, in fact, a rite of the passage from the profane to the sacred. Yesterday's profane and illusory experience gives place to a new life that is real, enduring and effective.

In order to succeed in finding the heart we must endure the long road filled with trials. To change in a way that goes to the core of our being, we need to do daily work over a lifetime. This is the path of the heart that leads us to find meaning and purpose. It gives us the tools for acting authentically. It develops our ability to guide and direct our lives in accordance with our moral knowing. It provides us with the power to become an effective and helpful citizen in the world. When we fully embrace this way of living, we have the means for achieving all of our goals.

When we free our natural capacities for growth, the self emerges throughout life. The transformations that occur along the way are like a flower, where after the petals unfold, the full bloom and center are revealed. It is like a caterpillar emerging from its chrysalis, wholly transformed into a butterfly. The heart is already there; it just needs to be revealed.

The Path of Devotion

No singular method will solve our problems and bring us what we want in life. Instead, we must learn a new attitude of heart and approach to living.

In order for us to realize our hearts and become what we are meant to be requires the development of a new kind of spirituality. We need what in Sanskrit is called a *Bhakti Marga*, a path of devotion. This is not a devotion to some supernatural being, but rather, to those things that are close at hand. We devote ourselves, first and foremost, to the rediscovery of our own hearts. It is only when we put this at the center of our lives that we have the possibility of truly flourishing. This devotion, this commitment to working on, discovering, and realizing our heart over a lifetime, is what Mencius meant by self-cultivation.

This notion heralds back to the wisdom of Shankara, an 8th-century Indian philosopher who deeply influenced the development of Hinduism. In his masterwork, "The Crest Jewel of Wisdom," he said:

Chief among the causes of Freedom is devotion, the intentness of the soul on its own nature. Or devotion may be called intentness on the reality of the Self.

In the Parsifal legend, the young hero finally brings the king to health and the kingdom back to life simply by asking the right question, "Where is the holy grail?" All we have to do to bring ourselves back to health is to ceaselessly ask the question, "Where is the heart?"

In order to realize our destinies we need to align ourselves with the Heavenly Mandate. When we are in harmony with these laws we are happy and fulfilled, our relationships and families are harmonious, and our society is peaceful and prosperous.

Devoting ourselves to a lifetime of searching for the heart is the way to learn about

this natural, universal law, because the heart is where these laws reside within us. This devotional act brings us closer to the essence of the cosmos.

The goal is not some end point, or even some final success. The goal is an immersion in the process itself. The finding is in the seeking. It is this devotion which leads to the finding of the heart, because devotion is the authentic condition of the heart, where devotion means an ultimate commitment of love.

This striving for the core within us that lives in harmony with the universe, is what nourishes our Ch'i, the lived embodiment of universal energy. It is what gives us strength, courage, and self-confidence.

Just as in the tale where Lily had to search the world over to find the lost and enchanted prince, to find the lost heart we need to say, "As far as the wind blows, and so long as the cock crows, I will journey on, till I find it once again."

Don't Pull the Shoots

When Chris first entered therapy, he asked, "How long will therapy take? I don't want to do this forever." I said the same thing when I first entered therapy. I expected to do it for two, maybe three sessions. All these many years later, I am now a therapist. What I have learned is that healing does not come from the 45 minutes of sitting in a room with a therapist, but from the ongoing process of self-discovery that we learn in those sessions.

My answer was, "Yes, you do want to do this forever."

A problem that most of us face when we are trying to achieve something like lose weight or overcome an addiction, is that we want to do the task, get it over with, and go back to the way we've always been.

What I told Chris was that though we long for the magic prescriptive, for conversion without effort, we should be suspicious of instant cures. We need to follow the guidance of the ancient masters who instruct us that things done quickly only bring small advantages. Haste prevents us from doing things thoroughly and achieving great ends. How can we rush becoming a *person*?

Rather, we need to see that accomplishment comes from evolving through a slow, ongoing process.

Our longing for the quick and simple solution, for the magic pill, is indicative of the problem itself. As part of a lost-hearted culture, used to instant results, we lack sensitivity and awareness. We have become inured to subtleties. We do not know when or if we are in alignment with the heavenly mandate. We do not recognize the truth when it is in front of us. We wander, suffering, lost to ourselves, because we have lost the ability to enter experience in depth. Addicted to what is shallow, we end up empty.

We must respect the organic process of growth which operates at its own rate. The sage Confucius said that though we must never let the work out of our mind, we must not, as he put it, "pull the seedlings."

We see in this planting metaphor the source of our understanding of the heavenly mandate.

By repeating an act it takes on symbolic value. When the farmer plants, the fisherman goes out to sea, or the weaver sits at the loom, this activity becomes a meditation. It comes to represent the human condition and the self, and metaphors emerge, revealing essential aspects of truth. This is what the sages referred to as the place “where heaven and earth meet,” where earth symbolizes our daily work and heaven represents the clear light of universal truth.

With the discoveries of agriculture, humankind realized that if we grasp the laws of nature, we can greatly increase our yield. When new growth is not tended or cultivated, nothing grows. As Mencius said, “given the right nourishment there is nothing that will not grow, while deprived of it there is nothing that will not wither away.”

At the same time, the laws are subtle. If we do not follow the cycles of growth, we can get an abundant crop but spoil the land.

When we try to make the process go faster than is natural, we ruin the new shoots as well. Through the law of analogy, these observations of the farmer led to inferences about human nature. We are all-too-often impatient with our rate of growth and end up not getting anywhere. Those who try to take a short-cut through life never reach their destination.

With our focused attention we cultivate the emergence of higher aspects of being. We do not do the changing, but rather, we liberate our inherent capacities for transformation. This is what it means to not pull the shoots.

The Gold from the Underworld

Accessing our source requires loving attention. This giving to our self is a sacred task. As Simone Weil, the 20th-century French philosopher and Christian mystic, said, “Absolutely unmixed attention is prayer.”

There is that which is hidden in the universe. We apprehend surface manifestations, and only with an exploration in depth do the secrets of the heart reveal themselves. Realization comes from immersion. With a process in depth, the more we look, the more beautiful the object of our contemplation becomes. The deeper we dig, the richer the gold that is mined. If we allow ourselves to be fascinated, the heart’s sublime qualities are revealed. Through our involvement in this project, we uncover the heart’s essence and core.

In the story of Psyche and Eros, Psyche must go to the underworld to fetch some of the beauty of the queen of the underworld. If she can return this to the goddess of love, she will be reunited with her lover, Eros. When we take the dangerous journey and plumb our own depths, we find treasure, and this is what connects us to the energetic source of the universe.

The search for our essential truth is vital because it is what brings about the liberation of the human spirit. It is what leads to self-fulfillment. The truth will set you free. This immersion is the solution itself, because in this slowing down, what we gain is not information that instructs us in a technique—which is what we get from the quick, surface experience—nor knowledge for its own sake, but wisdom in how to live our lives.

This slow process of self-discovery and becoming is known as the *Tao*, or the Way. The 16th-century Chinese sage Wang Yang-Ming, who was the greatest of the Neo-Confucian philosophers, said that the way does not exist in space or form. The only way to discover it is to go through a journey within ourselves.

When we travel this long, hard road we become imbued with a beauty that can come no other way. This beauty that emerges through an initiatory process can be likened to the Japanese aesthetic ideal of *wabi-sabi*. *Wabi* means simplicity and imperfection and *Sabi* is the quality that comes with age. It is the richness of patina, of a stone building one thousand years old, of the sound of an instrument whose wood has vibrated for hundreds of years, of ancient words that speak across the eons directly to our center. It is something that cannot be bought, only earned.

The recovery of our hearts must come from within. No method can bring us there. The process is one that goes on forever. Through the daily work of self-cultivation, with effort, overcoming every obstacle is possible. We end the estrangement from ourselves. We return to what we were always meant to be.

Morality: Cultivating the Taste for Goodness

When we penetrate anything with depth, we participate with that thing; we enter into an experience with the object of our devotion. In so doing, we cultivate and develop discrimination, taste. If our object of contemplation is wine, we develop a great sensitivity to the tastes, aromas, textures, and qualities of wine. The heart, Mencius would say, is the

organ that has a taste for goodness. If what we contemplate is our hearts, we gain a refined sense of goodness. Our moral taste is developed. We have the native talent for moral alignment, but this needs to be turned into a subtle skill, which comes through immersion in the problem over protracted periods of time.

The journey of finding the heart is a moral approach. It involves developing our virtues through continuous self-reflection. It is a commitment to realizing the full measure of our love. It involves devoting ourselves to the activities of our day-to-day lives—to our partners, children, work, chores, play, and health.

This concept of self-formation, of cultivating our human essence, is the ideal of our new spirituality. Self-cultivation means that through the absolute investment of our thought, emotion, will, imagination, acts, and love, we form our own character. We have within us, in our hearts, the image of the divine, and we approximate that ideal through our devotion. The spiritual stuff that we are made of, and that we increasingly manifest, is what we truly are.

As the great Chinese sages instructed, the way to find the good is to consistently seek out what is best in our nature and work daily to live it out. As Confucius said, “Is benevolence really far away? No sooner do I desire it than it is here.”

There is no one right method for seeking, and the receiving does not depend on luck. We all have the same innate potentials, and the most ordinary of us can be a sage. What is required is the work to make the best of ourselves. If we desire to find our essential selves,

we will be “drawn to superior virtue.” Our differences are not in our nature, but in the constant training of our hearts.

The Ancestor Guides

How do we find the way? One way is to study the words of those who have traveled the great journey of finding their hearts before us. Open to every source, we recognize the guidance to be found in every enlightened stream. This is a part of the new spirituality that embraces all the insight human culture has to offer.

This inclusive approach speaks in the language of the heart, which is the part of us that comprehends, finds connections, and unifies. This new spirituality which drinks from the oldest streams is one of renewal and regeneration.

These ancient words of wisdom show us the way. They give us the answer, telling us what to do. This book itself is the result of following in this great hermeneutic tradition. Hermeneutics, named for the god Hermes, who was the messenger of the gods, is the act of interpreting ancient and wise texts whose meanings are of infinite depth. It is in the encounter between the ancient text and a contemporary perspective that new facets of truth are revealed. When we devote ourselves to the study of ancient wisdom, this is our conduit to universal truth.

For thousands of years this practice of studying wisdom was considered the heart of education. The purpose of education from the ancient Chinese view is not to train one for a

job, teach technical information, or promote the development of the intellect. Rather, it is moral instruction, a guide for becoming the best possible person.

In China, the works of Mencius were one of four books of profound depth and insight that were the basis of this moral study. Every Chinese student for over a thousand years devoted their lives to their exegesis, or deep understanding. One of the others, which also heralds from texts at least 2,000 years old, was called the *Chung-Yung*, which can be translated as *On the Practice of the Mean*. This work tells us that to self-cultivate, we must understand and realize “integral wholeness.” In order to do this we must,

Study it extensively,
question its meaning precisely,
ponder it with full vigilance,
scrutinize its distinctions with clarity of vision,
practice it in all earnestness.
If there should remain that which has not been studied, or that has been
studied but has not yet led to full mastery, do not desist!

We are not to be held back by failure, or self-perceived limitation. No matter what we have suffered in our lives to this point or what others may have gotten with ease which we cannot seem to achieve, we can succeed. All that is required is the absolute commitment to learn continuously, and apply the lessons in how we live our lives in every moment.

What other men may master in a single try, you yourself must strive to attain
with efforts increased a hundredfold;
and what others may master in ten tries, you must strive to attain a thousand
times over.
For, one whose efforts reach fruition in the mastery of this path,
be he of limited intellectual capacity, he will gain clear understanding;
and be he of weak disposition, he will enjoy great strength.

By meditating on these wisdom texts of old, we maximize the likelihood of discovering ourselves. By contemplating the profound words of the great sages like Mencius, we can see more deeply into the words they wrote. The further we go, the more we will find. We can comprehend their infinite detail. We can perceive their essential workings. The truth will emerge shining vividly, lucidly. Connections will become apparent everywhere. Through great effort, when we truly comprehend the intrinsic order of our natures, knowing what to do becomes simple, and doing it becomes easy. We honor our hearts when we follow this path of deep inquiry.

Study, in and of itself, is central to the answer. We come to penetrating insight into the subtle and profound meaning of the ancient teachings by using the perceptive faculty of the heart. It is the part of us that, as Confucius said, “dives like the fish to the unfathomable depths and soars like the eagle to the heights of the sky.” This means that with the heart we can plumb to the depths of our own nature and come to know ourselves in the center of our being, and we can know our highest purpose and nature as it is found in the fabric of the universe. Through penetrating contemplation we come to know the meaning in our hearts, which leads to a lived embodiment of the words.

These classics are no cold report of philosophy. They tell a personal, individual story of the human adventure of loss and regeneration. The lives of the masters are an example for our own journey of self-discovery.

The earliest writings of each lover of wisdom, or *philosopher*, tell us that they studied even more ancient texts as the way for them to realize their own hearts. Every seeker turned

backwards to mine an earlier source. Even Confucius said that he was not a creator, but a transmitter, and that all wisdom had already been revealed by his day. The writings of each journeyer are the record of what he discovered in his process of self-exploration and his intent is to pass on these discoveries to the next hungry explorer.

We study the paths of our forbears, we contemplate their insights, and we apply the principles to ourselves in a way that makes sense to us. As we revere the advance of wisdom in the master, we honor ourselves by following their example. The stories of these exemplars become models for our own lives.

Going through Hell

In the book of *The Inferno*, when Dante found himself lost in the middle of the dark forest with no way out, he was relieved to see his buddy, Virgil.

“Virge!” Dante said, “I’m so glad to see you, man! How the *hell* do you get outta this place?”

Virgil said, “Exactly.”

Dante looked at him quizzically.

“I have good news and bad news,” Virgil continued. “The good news is that not only can you get out this place, but you can get to Paradise. The bad news is, you have to go through hell to get there.”

The path is not only long, but it is difficult. In a Chinese text that is at least 2,600 years old, called the *Book of History*, it says, “If the medicine doesn't make the head swim, the illness will not be cured.”

We need to go through what is obscure, dark, and difficult, to get to the light. We must be lost, and not know, to find ourselves. We must travel through our own hell, confronting our personal pain, to get to paradise.

Through mastering a challenging goal set by ourselves, we come to an enhanced feeling of power and esteem. As Aristotle put it, “the harder course is always the concern of both art and virtue, because success is better in the face of difficulty.”

It is a ubiquitous theme in fairy tales and myths that it is the hero who sustains the trials and completes the impossible tasks—who finds a gold ring in the bottom of the sea, or steals an apple from the tree of life, or recovers the thousand pearls of the princess—that wins the kingdom.

This requires perseverance and endurance. It is by overcoming obstacle after obstacle that we develop strength and a sure sense of our own capacities and powers.

Mencius agreed:

That is why Heaven, when it is about to place a great burden on a man, always first tests his resolution, exhausts his frame and makes him suffer. Hardship frustrates his efforts so as to shake him from his mental lassitude, toughen his nature and make good his deficiencies. Only then do we learn the lesson that we learn through surviving in adversity. . .

When Dante and Virgil arrived at the gates of hell, above the passageway were written the words “All ye who enter here surrender all hope.” How can it be that to get to paradise we need to surrender hope?

The dark passage to paradise requires that we surrender the hope of the easy fix, the one simple solution; that if we just lose ten pounds, or get that boyfriend, or make that money, that this will fill the hole, make the emptiness go away. We hope against hope that we will be saved from having to traverse the cave.

But the tales and myths that reveal the truths of human development tell us that we must travel to the deepest depths of the underworld to receive the prize. In one of the world’s most ancient tales, from Sumeria, the goddess Inanna travels to the underworld. At each step, to enter the dismal place she must remove a piece of jewelry or royal clothing. We, too, must shed our identity and look directly at what frightens us in the murky depths of our being. Then and only then can we find our way to the source, the power, the light, our hearts.

What lurks in our dark recesses may be painful experiences from our past. Chris accepted this brutal truth and so returned with me to the memories of his early childhood. He recalled that as a five-year-old child, he was abandoned by his mother and sent to live with a family in a neighboring state. The old man he lived with was cruel. Chris burned with grief as he remembered that this man kept him locked in a backyard behind a tall metal fence. In his rages he would tie Chris to a tree there and beat him. All at once, as he saw through the eyes of that child looking through the metal of that fence--he saw the bars

that he had been looking through over the last twenty years. Being behind bars had been home for him, and he kept returning to them again and again. He had never taken this dark road back to his past before and so had never made this connection. He hoped that by this singular revelation he would be freed, but this was only the next step. He still had further to go.

We long for an easy return to paradise where, without effort, we will reclaim our original nature. We hope that by some miracle we will be able to rise from our fallen condition. We long for an instant communion with the cosmos, where finding harmony with its laws is natural and automatic. To give up hope is to realize this is not to be. We resent that we have to work to return to this place, to find the heart. We wish it wasn't so—but it is.

The way home is filled with paradox. The gateway to our heart is impenetrable, and yet it is found everywhere. It is as far away as being “east of the sun and west of the moon,” and yet it is right here within our own being. Anyone can make the trip, the heart is there for the seeking, and yet, as Mencius said,

When people's dogs and chicks are lost they go out and look for them, but when their hearts – or original nature – are lost, they do not go out and look for them.

The journey is long and choked with thorns, but all we need to do to get there is click our heels. It is just a matter of a single step. But that one step requires years of developing the courage to traverse an infinite gulf.

Choosing the Humble Inn

In the tale of *The Golden Bird*, a fox tells an adventurer that on his way to the treasure he will come across two inns. He will have to choose in which inn to spend the night. One will be glittery. Inside he will see people dressed elegantly, drinking chocolate martinis, laughing, hooking up. The other will seem humble and pale by comparison. That inn will be quiet, simple, and austere. No guests will be seen, because they will all be getting rest for the long trip to come. The fox tells the youngster not to stay at the glittery inn, despite its allures, but to spend the night at the humble inn. But the fox can tell from the young man's dismissive demeanor that his words will not be heeded. The young man succumbs to the instant reward, goes into the fancy hotel, and is never seen nor heard from again. His younger brother goes in search of him, receives the same message, and he, too, ends up enchanted, frozen, disappeared. Only the youngest son listens to the fox and ends up winning the kingdom. The terrible truth is that two out of three do not listen to the advice of the wise fox.

This story affirms the truth that to find the heart we must not think of comfort, but of virtue. When we live the path of self-cultivation, we put what will take us toward our ultimate aim above what will provide us with immediate gratification. The way to get what we want is often the harder way.

From his position of clear eyed sobriety and through his deep work of self-reflection, Chris saw his years of addiction as insanity. As he began to feel a sense of compassion for what he had suffered, he couldn't imagine hurting himself in that way again. He knew that

in the past when he would be released from jail, when he experienced the enervating obstacles of getting his life together, he would inevitably get what he called “the fuck-its,” and go back to drugs again. But this time he felt wholly changed. He wanted to do the harder thing. He made a commitment that while he was in jail he would go to Narcotics Anonymous meetings every day and to double down on his therapeutic work. He started writing. Then he started taking classes.

The fox is the symbol of the universe giving us its guidance if we should only listen. It tells us that the path of life cares not a whit for our comfort or safety but has its own demands of us.

When we surrender to the flow of life, when we step in rhythm with life’s dance, we gain the force and power of the universe, and this ultimately leads to great abundance. Rather than using our energies to resist the difficult, harder way, our energies are freed for the task with which we are presented. When we stop fighting, we are given everything. The impossible becomes easy. This is the great gift and answer. What is truly precious may look ordinary at first. This is what is offered to us if we travel life’s path. If we stay at the humble inn we receive the new boons, the reinvigoration of life.

If we travel the harder way, a road opens and things are made easy.

In *Beauty and the Beast*, the father, after being lost in the wood, finally made out a track. At the beginning it was rough and slippery and he fell more than once. Eventually, it became easier and led him to an avenue of trees, which ended in a magnificent castle.

The Infinite Reward

We discover that pursuing what is of value to us gives us a sense of worth. This makes us feel like we count for something in this world. There is no miracle to feeling this way and anyone can possess it. It is simply something that comes from the continual practice of developing a free-flowing connection to our heart.

To do this requires a daily return to our source. As Lao-Tzu, the great Chinese exponent of Taoism who wrote over 2,400 years ago, said:

Each separate being in the universe
returns to the common source.
Returning to the source is serenity.
If you don't realize the source,
you stumble in confusion and sorrow.

This return to our original nature was referred to by the Greeks as *enantiodromia*, meaning to flow backward. It is in this turning back that we rediscover the infinite reward we find in the heart.

It is not easy to describe what it feels like when our way of being emerges from our essence, but we recognize it when it occurs. It is a difference in our body, in the way that we feel and in what we think and say. Suddenly the world seems clear and bright. Everything even sounds different!

When we realize this way of being we sense an internal "yes." We are safe within ourselves with little need to be defended or tensely closed off. We can express our needs. We discover the power to be clear and direct without being cruel, sharp, or inconsiderate. We feel good about ourselves. What we express is a reflection of our thoughts and

emotions. We know who we are and what is important to us.

Each time we have this experience it becomes more familiar to us. We remember what it feels like and it becomes easier to access that source later on. This builds up a history of being centered, genuine, and authentic. This way of being increasingly pervades our life. It is by fully immersing ourselves in the process of becoming that we learn to be.

Chris kept in touch with me after we finished our work together. He let me know that he got out of prison and followed the hard, long road. He entered a halfway house, and stayed straight.

I didn't hear from him for a couple of years, and then I got this letter. I knew from our therapy that one of his worst pains was a memory from his early twenties when he and his wife had a child who died a few days after birth. This was when his struggle with drugs first became unmanageable. Here is what he wrote:

"I cannot really take in the experience I had yesterday. Every time I try to, I just get lost in this amazingly light blue feeling of peace. It is a healing color, combined with the soft breeze of summer. Considering that it was somewhere around 88 degrees, I should not have felt so comfortable standing in the sun. The warmth unknotted my muscles and let me breathe deep. It had a "favorite blanket on a winter evening" feel— comfort, not discomfort and distress.

"As I spoke to my dead daughter, Maggie, (my god, it doesn't hurt to type her name today!!!!) I spoke all the words of love that I never was able to before. I told her that she is my beautiful child, that I love her and treasure the part of her that resides in my heart. I

thanked her for aiding me in finding the connection with my higher power that has remained a closed door for so long and acknowledged the awareness that I was at that moment, making my amends to her for not allowing her to be in my life all these years.

“The realization that I have never said that I love my daughter - always saying that I loved her instead - shook me to the core. In not celebrating the love I have for her today, how could I ever expect to move past the hurt and betrayal I felt at her death? I realize today that this was the end of my self-imposed isolation and frozen in time grief. Today I do mourn for the life she could have had, but it is tempered for the first time with gratitude for the life she did have and the fact that her life touched mine.

“My prayers after that were in thanksgiving for the release from blindness and for the healing of my heart enough to feel that love again. I was alone, praying out loud, with tears running down my face and not caring. These were the tears of healing, not of anger or hurt or confusion—those tears bathed my soul and bound up some very old, very stubborn wounds.

“You know me, you know that I don't go to this place very easily or very often. These are still very uncharted waters for me—I burned the raft years ago, I think. I am not used to trusting the spirit to take care of me, but sometimes I get blindsided and have to see it, whether or not I think I can.

“I don't know where my journey is moving toward but I have finally accepted that the path that has taken me to god in the past months is not a fluke. My daughter was there, with my grandparents, leading me to the light.

“Right now I feel unreal in a way. It feels odd, like I'm not all here and I'm watching me go through this. It is all very new and exhilarating, allowing me to breathe deep and celebrate the spirit that for a short time resided in the physical body of my daughter—the spirit I feel, hiding in a corner of my heart today. Amazing!!!! (By the way, this is not me! Or maybe it is!!!!) I really needed someone to share in the wonder that I feel! I love you my brother!

“P. S. Now I understand why I had to go through all of that shit. Because if I hadn't, I wouldn't be where I am today.”

Polishing Jade

Mencius saw the process of cultivation like the cutting and polishing of jade. To be carved and ground like jade refers to the perfection of our individual selves. Each one of us—our essential nature, our entelechy, that which we are meant to be—is a thing of art, beauty, and great value. In order to realize our intrinsic beauty, we need to be cut and polished. We need to be *annealed*, that is, forged and tempered over a great length of time. This is the cultivation that leads to the restoration of the lost heart, a return to one's unfolding process of becoming. That is human nature.

The jade becomes beautiful all at once and the job is finished, but to achieve true humanhood, to find the lost heart, to reveal our beauty, we need continuous cultivation.

A lifetime devotion to working on ourselves, self-discovery, ceaseless study, and ongoing practice, moves us ever closer to wisdom, emotional maturity, self-confidence, courage, creative expression, and the full-flowering of our love. By humbly traveling the

long, hard road through hell, guided by the sure hand of all those who have gone before us, we will come to the place in our lives where the heart, so long searched for, is finally found, now not as the basis of our being, but as its realization.

* * *

As an African-American felon, Chris had a very hard time of it. But whatever the obstacle, he overcame. Eventually, he went to an alternative school where he was able to get his B.A. He followed this with a master's degree, and is now receiving a Ph.D. in counseling. He works with youth offenders.

The HeartFind Process

Now that you have recognized that you have a lost heart, have come to understand what it is that you are searching for, and have engaged in the process of healing the wounds that led you to lose your heart in the first place, you are finally ready to reclaim your glorious birthright, your heart. The advice you will now receive will help you learn how to live a life of self-cultivation. It will show you how to devote yourself to a lifetime of growth and self-discovery. It will contribute to giving you a means for realizing your greatest potentials. By following the dwarf's advice and answering the watchman's questions in this section of the book, the HeartFind Process, you will reap the reward of all your hard work. You will find your heart, and live a full life of joy, love, and true fulfillment.

The Dwarf's Advice

- Make a commitment to another person that you will do something toward your growth and self-cultivation every day.
- Post your daily act of self-cultivation on Twitter.
- Each day for the next week read a few paragraphs from Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay, *Self-Reliance*. (<http://www.emersoncentral.com/selfreliance.htm>) What inspiration can you take from this essay?
- Watch the film *The Wizard of Oz*.
What does this movie tell us about what we need to do to find the lost heart?
- Listen to the Beatles song *All You Need is Love*.
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NzJ2NKp23WU>) What spiritual task does this song suggest?

- Set a challenging goal for yourself. What is it?
- Do something good that is difficult. What will you do?
- Meditate on the phrase, “[The heart] dives like the fish to the unfathomable depths and soars like the eagle to the heights of the sky.” What does this mean to you?
- Imagine yourself finding a path through the wood that leads to a magnificent castle. What do you find there?

The Watchman’s Questions

- Are you willing to say about your search for your heart, “As far as the wind blows, and so long as the cock crows, I will journey on, till I find it once again.”
- What would you have to do differently if you devoted your life to finding your heart? Are you willing to do that?
- What would it mean to you to give up hope of a quick, easy, magical solution?
- What witch do you need to slay to find your way home?
- When you dig deeply within yourself, what treasure do you find?
- What does your heart tell you is the right and good thing to do?
- If you could imagine an ideal way of being, what would that look like?
- When you look into your heart, what good do you find there?
- In what way are you like polished jade: beautiful, enduring, and valuable?