

**SINGULARITY**  
**12 Precepts for**  
**Transcendental Living**

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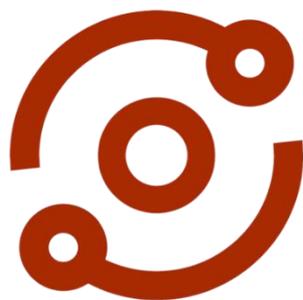
**Luis Herrera**

# **SINGULARITY**

## ***12 Precepts for Transcendental Living***

**By Luis Herrera**

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I form the light and create darkness.

I make peace and create evil.

I the Lord do all these things.

- Isaiah 45:7

## Precepts for Transcendental Living

1. Banish Duality, the cause of internal division.
  2. Want nothing you don't already have.
3. All solutions come from within, where you are now.
  4. Think peace.
5. Everything that happens is ok. What does not happen was not necessary.
  6. Life is a picnic, not a battlefield.
7. Entrust your life in the hands of divine guidance and provision.
  8. Flow with the current of life, only salmon swim upstream.
  9. Bloom where you're planted.
10. Promotion must come from within before it manifests outwardly.
11. The path of Humility travels the highest roads.
  12. Adopt Singularity, the eternal solution.

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### **Banish Duality, the cause of internal division.**

Singularity as referenced throughout this book is the opposite of Duality. By Duality I mean the opposite ends of one thing. To illustrate, night is the opposite of day, however my approach argues that instead of being dual notions, they together make the halves of a single day, hence, are singular and non-dual entities. Sun and moon alternate ruling over the same sky. Boiling and freezing are opposite ends of the spectrum, yet H<sub>2</sub>O is the constant so there is a unifying force which is the element itself and so is also singular. Feminine and Masculine combine to create life. Without either one there is nothing; from the two is created the one, which is their offspring. Male and female are singular. Opposite ends combine into a whole, and so Duality itself is an illusion.

Just as a plot of land must be cleared and tilled before serving as fertile planting soil for a crop, the destructive notion of Duality must be uprooted from your mind before transcendental life can take root in its place. This is a simple transformation, but it is not easy. It is difficult because the world is designed to thrive on Duality, conflict and competition. Us versus Them, Red Shirts versus Blue Shirts, our Party versus the Enemy Party. Examples are endless. This way of thinking must be discarded as a non-negotiable first step on our road to achieving peace and self-actualization. Whoever can master this notion can master anything else she puts her mind to.

Discarding Duality from our life is essential because holding on to this world view necessarily causes

schisms within ourselves, and this dichotomy, by definition, precludes wholeness and peace. In plain language: if we set ourselves up as judge to declare good and evil in others, we must necessarily have good and evil within ourselves. This is an ill way to live because if we judge anything, we're naturally inclined to judge everything.

It should be clear that ceasing to judge is not the same as losing all discernment or otherwise casting away our morals and values. You can be a moral and principled person who does not judge. Indeed, I would argue it's impossible to be one otherwise. You can hold yourself up to a certain standard without looking down your nose at those who choose a different lifestyle. The importance in doing so is that all your thoughts and actions towards another are innately a reflection of how you feel about yourself. If someone else is cast in our mind as an abject failure, it is only because we too are guilty of this. If someone else is dimwitted and slow, that's because we may be, also.

The human spirit is so comprised that all thoughts and judgments we pronounce over others invariably anoint our own head. Seeing this and accepting it as a universal truth goes a long way at freeing us from the tyranny and prison house of guilt, shame and inferiority in which we incarcerate ourselves. The trap of Duality is the ever-present appeal to our ego that if that person is different than me, by default I am better. If we banish Duality to the point that I can see myself clearly in the face of any other, then judgment and condemnation will not be forthcoming if for the simple fact that selfishly speaking, we are loathe to judge ourselves!

Admittedly, to ask this of you is to ask more than the majority of people are willing to do. This is why transcendental living, although simple, is not easy. Most of us prefer to cling to our petty biases and

discriminations. We have pet vices and pet peeves that we relish in pointing out to ourselves and others. The twelve precepts outlined in this book are the result of 40 years of living by mostly violating the precepts rather than honoring them, therefore what you read is the fruit of a hard-fought labor. Anything and everything that is right in my life is the happy and inevitable consequence of having adhered to one or more of the precepts, even if unwittingly. I thank God I have reached a point in my life where I am now conscious of the precepts and can live the remainder of my days purposely abiding by them and reaping their abundant rewards. My prayer is that by reading this book, the same may be true of you.

A natural parting point for many here will be the tenets of their professed religious doctrine. “Not so!” I can hear them say, “Duality is a fact of life! There is very clear right and very clear wrong, and nothing you can say will make me see otherwise.” To which I can only respond, “The 9/11 terrorists fought on the side of God, with the promise of 72 virgins awaiting them at the end of their heroic sacrifice. They *too* were fighting the devil and his minions in a dualistic world.” And this, precisely, is the schizophrenic break caused by the mind consumed with Duality. Your religion is not holier. Your God is not more righteous. What’s more, we have to stop looking for heaven on the other side of death. Not that we won’t find it there, but that we must not wait till death to bring it about. This book intends to show us how to transform this imperfect world into a little slice of heaven for ourselves in the here and now.

Religious organizations form a sense of community that largely defines itself by its exclusion from other groups. This is universally the case. Now, it is not my intention to instruct all my readers to abandon their lifelong religious traditions and identities in order to live transcendentally. However you are being asked to cease judging those outside that tradition as somehow

less worthy of blessing, enlightenment, wealth, wisdom, or whatever other boon is derived from being associated with it. It is a simple ask, but not an easy one. The challenge for the reader will be to remain appreciative and respectful of their particular tradition (or lack thereof) while at the same time openminded enough to accept that it is only one of many acceptable paths to spirituality and soul nourishment. As a fair caution, any who are inflexible in this matter may not learn as much from this book as it otherwise has to offer.

It should be clear by now what is meant by ‘Duality.’ Namely, the tendency and conditioning to constantly split the world and everything in it into two categories (hence, *dual*); good and evil, right and wrong, correct and incorrect, holy and unholy, rich and poor, etcetera. It is funny to me, that before embarking on this project I had fallen pretty deep into the net of dualistic thinking, particularly with regard to money. Having recently picked up *Think and Grow Rich*, the timeless self-improvement classic by Napoleon Hill for the second time (I first read it in my early twenties), and as I meditated on it more and more, I noticed a duality inherent in it and have consequently set about to bring it into singularity. Here’s what I mean.

The book brilliantly portrays the unconquerable power of the mind to bring about every reality one maintains in it for a prolonged period of time. Focus on wealth and you’ll attract wealth. Focus on influence and power and you will have both in abundance. The flip side of that coin is that dwelling on poverty, lack or hardship will *just as effectively* bring these into your life as well. The trendy and popular “Law of Attraction” concept is sometimes erroneously attributed to the 2006 book and subsequent film *The Secret*, where in fact that publication is but a watered-down repackaging of concepts Hill had crystalized in writing roughly a century

before. This is not to say that Hill himself was the innovator of the concept, he was just the most instrumental in bringing it to light and publicizing it to the modern mind.

The precepts as outlined in this work have much to thank for Mr. Hill's insightful writing in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however are herewith approached from the viewpoint of singularity, versus duality. I don't believe anybody alive today can truly be poor unless they are poor in mind and spirit. As of the writing of this book, the author has made a salary of little over \$19,000 per year for nearly four years, but the author is not *poor*. Poverty is a condition of the mind and of the spirit. You are poor if you see yourself that way, which applies just as verily to seeing yourself as rich. By this I do not mean, nor am I prescribing to adopt certain fantasies and illusions to make your life easier, but in truth, *how* you see things plays an imperative role in how things actually *become* for you.

The argument here is that riches cannot be measured in dollars and cents (nor in bitcoin or ether, for cryptocurrency enthusiasts), nor diamonds, silver, pearls, real estate, stock certificates and holdings, or gold. Wealth, as referred to in this book, is strictly measured by the wealth and quality of one's mind and the health of their bodies and hearts. What good is it to have ten million dollars in the bank, but a broken, unhappy home or chronic health issues due to unrelenting pressures and stress? Is a happy and healthy sixty-year-old that earns "poverty-level" wages not richer than the twenty-year-old Hollywood actress that hates her life and daily succumbs to people and situations she would rather live without? You be the judge. Therefore by all means *Think and Grow Rich* – only be careful in your definition and identifying what is meant by 'riches.' In truth, you may be much wealthier than you ever imagined.

The mind that banishes duality can celebrate the interconnectedness in all things. It will be harder for people to irritate you because you will see more of yourself in them and subsequently become more patient. Minor offenses and slights will run like water off a duck's back. If you find yourself growing impatient or irritable it will be simpler to stand back in a spirit of love and understanding to accept the differences that make us unique and complimentary beings. Yes, personal tastes, experiences and preferences remain. But by refusing to see others as separate entities from you, you will necessarily cease to have opposition. If there is no opposition there is nothing to fight against. You are then free to begin collaborating with forces that used to work against you.

Think about the impact such a shift in thinking can have on teamwork in your family life or place of business. The singular individual will not distinguish between themselves and their colleagues, and is therefore naturally able to highlight the talent, efforts and contributions of their teammates. Such an attitude, especially coming from a place of genuine integrity, cannot help but be acknowledged and reciprocated by those with whom we work. The result is that cosmic-level karma kicks into full effect, and sooner than we might expect we'll find others singing *our* praises unprovoked. There is nothing that spreads quicker or more efficiently than word of mouth, and what others say about you tends to ring truer than anything you can say about yourself.

This negative injunction ("do not") to banish duality is a necessary prerequisite to living transcendentally. The mind that remains mired in it will not be able to free itself to the point of enjoying the life they would otherwise deserve. Having lived most of my adulthood as a considerably serious bible scholar, I have faced tremendous challenges letting go of Duality, if for the simple reason that the writing, as beautiful,

enigmatic and timeless as it is, relishes the thoughts of good and evil, light and darkness, us and them. Such extremist thinking actually had me ill for a period in my twenties and even into my thirties. I have since, thank God, been cured of all such thinking. This is not moral relativism. Of course I understand that there are certain times and places for some things, as there are others for which there should never be a time or place. However I have decided that whether or not any of that is good or bad is not for me to judge. In a word, if there is a Cosmic Almighty Judge of the universe, it's certainly not me. Therefore I will stop acting the part.

That's what I mean in banishing duality. It is not that light and dark, justice and corruption, holy and evil cease to exist. It is just that I no longer dwell on these things because there is nothing in it for me but heartache and internal division by doing so. I will not be solving the problems of pain and injustice in the world, and neither will you, therefore do yourself (and everyone around you) a favor and give up the task. It is a Sisyphus-like undertaking that is bound to prove the same exercise in futility. The twelfth and final precept in this book is to *Adopt Singularity, the eternal solution*, which is the positive injunction ("do") and opposite of this first precept. The needle comes around full circle. The ten precepts in between act as steps on a stairway to heaven, if you will, that can only be reached if faithfully adhered to.

Duality is built into the fabric of society and hardwired into our brains by cultural heredity. As a happy coincidence (can there ever truly be such a thing?) I currently have Pink Floyd's *Division Bell* 1994 concert playing on the other screen of my PC. The symbol for this album and tour is a circular screen that plays images overhead as the band jams out their timeless tunes. You see everything is connected. We are all connected. The mind that accepts this completely and consistently will

inherit an interconnected world. It will be adept at making connections between seemingly unrelated things, and all the wiser for it. Artists and poets over the ages have made these associations and materialized them in their work, which is why they enjoy the immortal status so few are fortunate enough to attain.

Therefore come on this journey with me. Keep an open mind. Banish Duality and prepare to drink in the nectar of enlightenment. And above all else, please do away with any notion or philosophy that tells you that the path to peace and enlightenment is to “get out of your own mind and disregard your thoughts.” The reason such philosophies sound like metaphysical voodoo is because they are. Could a mind that was not thinking even write such a phrase as “empty all thoughts?” Thinking was required to write it. Therefore it is utter hypocrisy and new age mumbo jumbo to say peace is acquired by vanquishing thoughts or silencing your mind. I suspect the reason such notions are sold in the first place is to keep their proponents in demand.

If I can convince you the path to fulfillment requires superhuman effort and can only be reached by the privileged few, then you will pay what I ask so as to stay a contender for transcendence. Truly, learning to stop thinking will require infinite guidance and teaching, which certainly helps keep such ‘teachers’ in business. My mission is different. My mission is to help you discover your own thinking prowess to the point that it becomes unnecessary to even finish this short book. The path to peace and fulfillment is *directly interconnected with your thinking*. To reach Nirvana we must first divorce the idea of a divided world and so learn to adopt the unity of mind and soul that keeps our life in wholesome order.

All that you touch  
And all that you see  
All that you taste  
All you feel  
And all that you love  
And all that you hate  
All you distrust  
All you save  
And all that you give  
And all that you deal  
And all that you buy  
Beg, borrow or steal  
And all you create  
And all you destroy  
And all that you do  
And all that you say  
And all that you eat  
And everyone you meet  
And all that you slight  
And everyone you fight  
And all that is now  
And all that is gone  
And all that's to come  
And everything under the sun is in tune  
But the sun is eclipsed by the moon

- Pink Floyd's *Eclipse* from 1973 album *Dark Side of the Moon*

### **Want nothing you don't already have.**

This is a very contradictory notion to hold in the third decade of the twenty-first century. It seems today all anybody cares about is having 'more.' More money, more followers, more influence, more fitness, more sponsorships, a bigger house, a faster car, a younger, better-looking spouse. It's everywhere, our obsession with newer, better, bigger, faster. It is an illness of our Western culture. Ambition is marketed as a desirable trait and esteemed an admirable quality of those who will 'leave their mark' in the world.

To lack ambition is seen as the unpardonable sin of the defeated, lazy and slothful, who only consume and do not contribute to society. We value creative types, tycoons, go-getters, disrupters, influencers, billionaires (the word 'millionaire' has fallen out of style). The world of social media sets up as its Greek-style gods and goddesses people that are famous for no particular talent except their shameless attention-getting exploits and self-promoting stunts. Lavishly spending money one does not have and has not earned on luxurious trifles and vain excesses has become a worldwide obsession. Fame, followers and notoriety used to be hard-won based on skill, devotion, dedication and commitment to an art or craft. It has long-since been turned into a commodity to be purchased by the highest bidder. Fame for its own sake, unattached to skill or accomplishments is the lovechild of social media and celebrity culture. It is officially the age of vanity and excess.

So to preach "want nothing you don't already have," is not only seemingly ludicrous, but is borderline sinful in this society. To suffer want is to be imprisoned

by desires and compulsions. A truly free person is free first and foremost *from want*.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

- Psalm 23:1

When this precept first hit home I felt the tremendous relief of a prisoner who had been released from captivity. To *want nothing* is to be satisfied with what you have. What you have been given. What you have already earned for yourself. Of course it'd be nice to earn more money, have a newer car, a bigger house, a more powerful and autonomous career, more luxurious vacations. Sure it'd be nice! But it is not *necessary*. The person who lives transcendently understands this deeply.

Culture today is so concerned with self-importance and 'impressive-sounding titles,' that no one is encouraged to *simply be* anymore. I cannot say that I am a husband, father, writer, provider. I must have several titles: cofounder of this, president of that, disrupter, influencer, chief. The world is so vain that our economy is largely defined by its ability to create wants and needs where non existed before. It is a wizard, ever-creating new desires that it then turns around and promises to fulfill, at a price, of course. The person content to laze away long hours on a Sunday beneath the cool shade of a green tree, alternating between reading a good book, light snacking and impromptu naps is not the ideal customer and target consumer of most corporations today. The modern economy is designed to profit handsomely off our insecurities. Insecurities created by the very companies that sell themselves as the solution to the same.

Perpetual youth advocates target aging men and women. Success coaches pitch the unemployed person

snacking on potato chips and watching television at 10 am on a Tuesday. Pharmaceutical companies sell stress and anxiety, then offer the solution through costly pills. Most doctors and health industry companies are in the business of managing illness, versus actually promoting health. A healthy, un-needy person makes for a poor health industry customer. No pills to sell, no expensive operations or therapies, no weight loss regimens or dietary supplements to peddle. The happily married couple spells bankruptcy to divorce lawyers and dating services. Someone satisfied to whip up a tuna sandwich defeats the fancy dining facility. In a word, satisfaction does not sell. Only want sells. Therefore only want and dissatisfaction are promoted.

And so to *want not* is to rise above the realm of lowly mortals who spend a large portion of their day (and so their life) dwelling on the hole in the doughnut. When you look around you with a feeling of contentment, satisfaction, gratitude and appreciation you extinguish the gods of vanity and dissatisfaction in one fell swoop. Ceaselessly wanting what you do not have is a recipe for enslavement and disaster. Modern business knows this and makes it their sole reason for existing – to fan the flames of your insecurities and unmet desires. Too fat? Too old? Too poor? Too ugly? Too undesirable? Too outdated? Too worried? Too ill? We have the solution for that! – It screams at you from flat screens, magazines, billboards and handheld devices everywhere. You must only pay this small fee or monthly subscription, and you can kiss all your worries and cares goodbye. That is of course, until you swipe onto the next advertisement that exploits a different insecurity or weakness.

The person who wants not also fears not. For what is ‘want,’ except for the incessant fear of missing out on things you truly do not need? Do yourself a favor and keep this important fact in mind – our entire modern economy is built on dissatisfaction and quite literally

banks on your insecurities and unmet desires. She who wants not fears not, and so is impervious to the insidious nature of a culture based on the dissatisfaction of the masses. True freedom from want and desire are yours for the taking, but aside from writings such as these (written with the good of the audience in mind), you will not likely be offered a solution but at a price. And this price is usually a perpetuity of reliance upon quick fixes and remedies that only mask the symptoms all the while secretly *creating* the very illness they claim to address.

Certainly, I understand wanting to improve your personal, spiritual, amorous and financial situation. There is such a thing as 'healthy ambition.' The first book I ever published, back in 2016, is called *Creative Power* and is all about tapping into our divine, creative forces to bring about the lives of our dreams. I'm not an ascetic monk living on less than \$20 dollars a day and do *work* for a living. I like nice things. We do take fancy vacations at times. My point is not to espouse defeatism or otherwise sing the praises of asceticism or deep renunciation. Do pay your electricity bill. Do not disconnect your internet. However, learn when you have had enough. To want not is to be satisfied and at peace with what is yours, your lot in life. Sure, we've worked hard to be where we're at. At some point sacrifice, toil and ambition came into the mix or we never would have married, bought that house, had that child, accomplished such and such an endeavor in our profession.

The basic and hardwired human trait of wanting to work to better our condition is not what I am referring to as detrimental. This is a *healthy* sense of dissatisfaction. Absolute passivity would render the need to write this book useless. Why write anything, when I can simply lay back, relax, and let the good times roll? However we humans need to create. We need to find expression for the longings of our soul. Take up that pen,

paintbrush, pencil or chisel. Tap away at that keyboard. Pick up that instrument. But do it because you have a primal drive that motivates you to do so. I can't *not* write. It would be a sin to me. I was thinking about this on my drive home from work, yesterday. Radiohead offshoot band *The Smile* debuted their first album which I listened to in the car. I could not help but think, *these people write songs, play music and produce albums because they cannot not do it. They have to and can't help it. And they should. For them not to do it would be a sin.* The music flows from within them naturally, with a divinity not unlike Michelangelo's painting of the Sistine Chapel. It would have been a sin for Michelangelo not to paint or sculpt. He was born to do it.

I was born to write. As a youth I embraced guitar playing, surfing, skateboarding, hiking, among other pastimes and hobbies. I did rather well at them. However at heart, I am a writer. The guitar gathers dust. The surfboard has long been sold. A skateboard is a death threat. But the blank sheet of paper is a welcome respite from the world. Words flow through me more than they come from me, and myself and the world are better off for it. So in wanting not I wish it to be clear, I am not advocating for extreme passivity or inaction. I mean do, but do because you have to do. For some, perhaps, amassing material wealth is something they are simply hardwired to do. In that case, they too *should* pursue their calling. But to want and amass because that's what we're expected to do, or because we don't want to fall behind the rest, this is a fool's errand.

The words of the Sage, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

Vanity of vanities, saith the Sage, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?

One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever.

The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.

The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.

All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.

All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.

Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.

There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.

I the Sage was king over Israel in Jerusalem.

And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith.

I have seen all the works that are done under the sun;  
and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and  
that which is wanting cannot be numbered.

I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am  
come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom  
than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem:  
yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and  
knowledge.

And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know  
madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation  
of spirit.

For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that  
increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

- Ecclesiastes 1

### **All solutions come from within, where you are now.**

There is a common fallacy prevalent in the world this day. A fallacy perhaps, older than time itself. Whether myth or biography, the book of Genesis catalogs one of the most famous examples of this, as Eve reaches out to eat the forbidden fruit (an outside solution to an internal need).

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

- Genesis 3:6

The idea is not to debate whether these are factual events. What cannot be denied, however, is that they form the pillars to what is perhaps the most pervasive myth in Western society. Notice that Eve lusted for the fruit because it was “good for food, pleasant to the eyes and a tree to be *desired* to make one wise.” Let me ask you, cannot the same be said for countless so-called solutions and philosophies in this modern age?

We are caught up in the pageantry of life. We wish to exude power, influence, health, beauty, wealth: to be the walking pictures of youth, success and prosperity. Photoshop makes things so easy (now commonly referred to as ‘filters’). Social media makes the pageantry so palatable, instant and accessible. We *can* purchase the solution, the cure, the remedy, the fix. There are tried and

true formulas and mentalities for success. Again, the idea here is not to knock self-improvement and people striving to lead a better, more peaceful and prosperous life. The point we wish here to make, however, *is that all solutions already exist inside you and come from within.*

As a personal example, I cannot tell you how many books I have bought and read in this short life of mine, but it's easily in the thousands. With a considerable amount of interest, I can get through a relatively 'thick' book within 10 days, with a full work week in between. I have read up on countless topics in fiction novels but mostly, I'm drawn to philosophy and non-fiction. I suppose you can say that *I am a seeker*. I have prowled the pages of the bible over many years, like a hungry wolf – looking to satiate the thirst for the meaning of life. As enriching and enlightening as all this reading has been, I am saddened to report that I have yet to read the book where I come up to the last page and declare in triumph, "Aha! That was it! That was the book I've been looking for. Now I can rest in peace, because I know the meaning of life." It just hasn't happened. And it never will.

The idea is not to discourage you, but to encourage. You see my friend, the solution to all your problems already exists *within you*. A great book will not help you 'land your soulmate / dream job / dream body / billionaire lifestyle, or even the perfect soul,' for the spiritually inclined. Instead all good books (as is my hope, like the one you're reading now), serve as *guideposts* at best. They are mile markers, helping you decipher where you are along the path. That's not to say that there aren't true professionals out there with golden advice to dispense, there are. But no single book, seminar, school, educational major, professor, guru or teacher, can possibly show you all you need to master life and succeed at your calling. In fact books, seminars and

programs that even remotely hint at being the solution to these things invariably disappoint more than satisfy.

You hold in your hands *Singularity: 12 Precepts for Transcendental Living* which I realize, is a lofty title that may sound as if it promises the answer to life. Well let me disavow you from that erroneous notion once and for all – this book is not the solution. However, it may serve as a handy guidepost for the person already walking their path. And friends, we're all walking the path – from the moment the delivery doctor spansk our behind to make sure we were born with a healthy set of lungs, to the moment a loved one closes our eyelids shut because the spirit that animated our body has returned to the place from which it came.

Living transcendently is not the same as 'having the answers to life.' What this means to me, the intention with which this book is written, is to help you identify **the God within yourself**. Religion is a guidepost, but not the answer. Philosophy is a guidepost, not the answer. People that over-identify with one group or tribe for ideological reasons invariably meet with disappointment because there will *always* be some tenets they internally oppose and disagree with. Yet they ignore their inner voice in order to 'fit in with the rest.' Man is a social animal and excommunication from the tribe has been tantamount to extinction of our lineage since our days as hunters and gatherers. There is a real fear of being left out that has been hardwired into our nervous system from time immemorial. I understand this need and am still – if to a lesser extent – ruled by it somewhat. It would be disingenuous to deny this. Yet by living transcendently I have learned to acknowledge, welcome and accept *the space between myself and my tribe*. I invite you to do the same.

Learning to listen to **the God within**, I can trust my inner voice more because there is a message spoken there, uniquely for me, that will never be printed on the

pages of the Bible, or the Koran, or the Tao Te Ching, or any other book for that matter. There's never been another Luis Fernando Herrera born at 11 am on a Wednesday morning in San Jose, Costa Rica, on September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1981. And guess what? That window is closed! There will *never* be another one of *me* again. Now fill in the blank for your birth location, country, time and name and declare this same thing of yourself. There's only one YOU, and that window has also permanently been closed! Others may have your name, but not your identity. They may share your birth date and hospital, but not your parents. They may share your parents, but not your name. Do you see what I'm getting at here? Therefore how can a 'one-size fits all' religion, education or philosophy possibly answer the question to *your* meaning of life? There is no *the* meaning of life, because there is no *the* life. There are infinite lives, for which infinite meanings must be furnished.

Hence the importance of learning to trust *yourself*, your inner voice, conscience – **the God *within***. This is why (admittedly somewhat ironically, as I'm only too aware), my social media posts encourage people to *dump* social media. I encourage you to listen to yourself for a change. Turn off that podcast. As well-meaning as that audiobook is, it is merely someone else's opinion of what is good for *your* life. I realize the same may be said of this book, so you know what? Please put this book down now and look for a cool, shady patch of ground in your garden. Shut off the phone. Turn off the music and all distractions. Kill the television and streaming services. Listen to the God within. She has the solution you seek, crave, need. I can't tell you what is best for your life. Oprah can't tell you. Neither can YouTube, Facebook or LinkedIn. Prosperity prophets don't know what is best for your life. Religious leaders and spiritual gurus have their own agenda. Doubt this? Ask to be included in a board meeting of your local church,

synagogue or mosque. They are run like for-profit business entities because (aside from the fact that they benefit from tax exemption) they truly are! Ask to be included as a fly-on-the-wall, as a tithing ‘shareholder’ in the enterprise, and you’ll see them breaking out spreadsheets, pie and bar graphs with pivot tables and glidepaths talking about month-to-date tithing numbers, seat occupancy, headcount growth and attrition! The monthly number of baptisms and communions are KPIs to them. They will pay top dollar for a preacher who can “keep butts in the seats,” not unlike commercial arenas, professional sports teams and Broadway.

Therefore, can the preacher tell you what is best for *your life*? What God demands of *your days*? All solutions come from within, where you are now. If you are still reading this chapter, I hope it is only after having shelved-it for a week and taking internal inventory. And believe me, I understand it is frightening to carry this level of burden and responsibility. If the rabbi can’t tell you how to live your life, that means all credit for success and failure lies solely with you. It’s scary to have that type of accountability. But my friend, has this ever not been the case? Ironically, in most ‘rites of passage’ ceremonies, universally celebrated around the time a youth reaches adolescence, the common thread – regardless of culture – is that now the youth is responsible for her own life, decisions, blessings and sin. Parents are absolved around the ages of 10 – 13, normally. So even these religions, cultures and philosophies that would deign tell us how to live say, “You’re on your own now kid. If you go to heaven, congrats! If you wind up in hell, that’s on you. Your life is your own.”

In short, your voice is more important than you know. You understand much more than you let on or even admit to yourself. Stop looking outside for the answers. Stop looking without. All solutions come from within, where you are now. Few guides, books or teachers

will admit this, because that means maybe you can cut back on investing in their prescriptions and services. Disinterested teachers and guides are rare, few and far in between. They're out there, but not in abundance. As for me, I work for a living. I do not depend on book sales to feed, clothe and shelter myself and my loved ones. I'm not a 'for-hire' consultant. I'm just a fellow traveler on the road, happy to be of service if and when needed. I don't know what's best for you. Neither does your spouse, spiritual guide, guidance counselor or professor. At best we serve the role of guidepost saying, "You are here." But as to where you should end up, where you must go and the path to take to get there, my friend, for that you must consult the God within. And no, you will not find the answer printed on the pages *of any book*. Therefore congratulations! My condolences. And good luck. You're on your own.

### **Think peace.**

To achieve a sustained, uninterrupted feeling of peace has got to be, whether or not openly acknowledged, the ultimate goal of every human being. If we are honest with ourselves and each other, we'll admit that almost everything we do, every action we undertake is done with the sole objective of achieving a moment's peace. Commonly referred to in psychology circles as the "pleasure and pain principle," all life strives to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. Simpler still, it is "striving for peace."

So, *why peace?* What's the big deal?

My friend, we work hard, most of us, to have enough money, right? Why do we need 'enough money?' So that we can afford housing, clothing and nourishment. Why? Because to be naked, hungry and exposed to the elements generates the opposite of peace. Why do overachievers virtually kill themselves in pursuit of their next, big goal? Because they are certain that when they reach it, they will have *a moment's peace*. Validation = I am good enough = peace. Yet this is not the best way to go about it because it is so fleeting in nature. If we define peace as "finally receiving what we're after," then there will always be another unfilled want keeping us from enjoying peace.

When you *think peace* you leave unfulfilled desires behind. You reflect on the fact that you are *already satisfied*. No, you may not be rich. But you are not destitute, either. There is food in the refrigerator. There is clothing on your body. You are either full or can count on the fact that your next meal is just a few short moments away. Sure, you're busy, but not overwhelmed.

Hey, you were unoccupied enough to steal away and read this book! The trap of worry and preoccupation is the insidious habit of always dwelling on that one (or two, or three) remote challenges that you know are awaiting you just around the bend. “How can I relax now,” you may ask, “when tomorrow morning I have that big meeting with such and such, and my presentation isn’t near ready?”

I am human. I too fall prey to this type of thinking now and then – although I’m happy to report; much less frequently than before. You see, I’ve discovered a secret. Most things that we view as being of life and death importance, most worldly concerns that cause us to fret and worry, *are highly overrated*. Very few situations are truly life and death. Sure problems, cares and concerns arise, but *nothing* is here to stay. That presentation you’re losing sleep over? You’re likely better prepared than you know, and your audience isn’t a tenth as particular and exacting as you believe they are. Most people are just happy that you show up and give it your best. People are, on the whole, much more worried with how they come off before others, than they are judging or thinking of you. It is a proven fact that in any meeting, presentation or encounter, people most often spend 80% of their time thinking about how they’ll respond to you (if not daydreaming or blocking you out entirely), and only 20% actually listening to what you have to say! In fact likely – yes, this is funny *and* sad – you’ve only retained about 20% of what you’ve read in this paragraph (go ahead, it’s ok to laugh at yourself. I do it too. Now I’ll wait for you to reread).

I have decided not to allow tomorrow’s concerns to be today’s peace-stealers. Yes, prepare. Study. Research. Rehearse. Do your best. But if and when you have done what you can, you have effectively bought yourself the right to disregard your cares because – and this too is a proven fact – worrying can only make things

worse. Today's frenetic world is quick to shame people out of a peaceful state. "How can you relax?" It demands, "Look at the rate of inflation! The war overseas! The cost of living and health care! There's deadly violence in our schools and shopping centers! The wrong party is in control of the government! How can you sit there and take a load off? There's work to do! We must organize, we must take action, we must move! Don't just sit and relax! Inaction makes you complicit in all the world's evil."

Ouch. I feel guilty already. And trust me, I get it. I know that horrible and catastrophic things happen entirely too often. I grieve too. It would be inhuman not to. However, to put things in perspective and based on May 2022 numbers: daily 316 victims suffer the impacts of gun violence in the USA with 33% being lethally wounded.\* That is equal to 115,419 victims annually, for a total of 0.035% based on a population of 330 million. In simple terms, roughly 3.5 out of 10,000 people will suffer gun violence in the USA this year with one being a fatality. Yes, these are atrocious numbers. However, they are nowhere near as endemic as social and mainstream media would have you believe. They and all such organizations are in the business of selling *sensationalism*, not facts. And to take the argument further, numbers in America are statistically higher than in other developed nations of the world.

\*[Source: <https://www.teamenough.org/gun-violence-statistics>]

But I have news for you, my friend. You're not here to save the world, and neither am I. We are here to discover our purpose and live out our calling in our own unique way. Your radius of influence may not go beyond your house cat, the mailman and next door neighbor. But if that is where you are needed, if that's where you can best serve the world, then that is where you should be. Do not allow yourself to be shamed for "not doing enough." For not contributing enough money, time, resources, social

media posts, phone calls – whatever. Your mission is to be the best version of yourself right where you're planted. Now if you *feel* your calling is to be an epic game-changing agent, and a force to be reckoned with in the world, then by all means knock yourself out and go for it. But make sure the voice calling you to action comes from within your heart and soul, and is not merely the brainwashing of social media or the intended effect of mainstream media programing.

“Good question? How can I be sure?”

I thought you'd never ask. You cannot know if you have not taken the time to study your own mind – away from the din of the crowd. You may need to unplug for a good 7, 21 or 63 days; no social media. No TV news. No newspapers or blogs. No podcasts or channel subscriptions. No streaming services. A few good books. But hopefully not even that. Just be. Be yourself *by* yourself. Some good music, maybe. Lots of fresh air and nature. Make a date. Pencil it in your calendar if necessary: 4-6pm this Friday, I will spend 2 hours alone, outdoors, without a cellphone or any other electronic device. Possibly a good print book (so you can pause, reflect on what you're reading and simply use a leaf as bookmark). Be yourself, think your own thoughts and breathe in the air.

This is paradise restored. *This is peace.*

Whether or not you're religious you need to acknowledge the fact that **not even those we regard as world saviors have been able to save the world.** Jesus did his best, yet here we are. Mohammad did his best, yet here we are. Buddha did his best, yet here we are. Lincoln, Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr... all did their best, yet here we are. I am not denying these were epic lives that have impacted the course of history, birthing cultural, religious and political revolutions, because clearly they have. But the fact remains; they have

all failed miserably at “saving the world.” Therefore with all due respect my friend, who are *we* to even try?

Defeatism? No. Reality. Let yourself off the hook, God already has. We do ourselves so much harm when we take up the mantle of Messiah. Messiah complex is a real and unfortunately prevalent symptom of today’s society. Who *doesn’t* have a Messiah complex? We want to save the dolphins, or the rainforest, the refugees or the economy itself. We are not able to. No one is fit to carry the world’s burden on their shoulders. Do what you can, when you can, within reason, where you are located now. With the tools, resources and contacts you have now. With the time and energy you can donate now. Do not overextend yourself. Don’t nail yourself to the cross. We don’t need you to. There is a deliciously twisted irony in the person that is so egotistical and self-important as to believe that if not for them, the world would be in perfect shambles. They parade around as self-sacrificing “servants of the Lord,” while driven deep inside by the demons of pride, vanity and ambition. The sin of arrogance due to self-piety is so common it’s almost laughable. The bible itself cautions, “Be not overly righteous, nor overly wise: why should you destroy yourself?” (Ecclesiastes 7:16). And to close with a golden seal verse 20 asserts, “For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin.”

So think peace. The right help will go to the right people from the right place, whether or not you lift a finger. Yes, your contributions make a difference. Your life is not meaningless. *The things you do matter*. But beware the deceptiveness of Messiah complex. Make a difference when you can, with what you can, where you can. But do not overextend. You are already enough. You don’t need to justify your existence. Enjoy the peace you’ve been given this day. You’re blessed to enjoy this bit of quiet time, this nice meal, this refreshing shower, this warm bed. There *is* wealth and abundance in the

universe. All needs and wants may not always be met instantly, but that's not *your problem*.

If there is an almighty God of the universe, then model yourself after God and just relax. You don't see miraculous cures for all the ills and evils of the world, do you? Almighty God could eliminate them with the wink of an eye, but chooses not to. Therefore let *yourself* down from that cross. Have peace. Today I give you permission to simply be and let go of all worries and concerns. Tell whoever is trying to guilt-trip you that I said it was alright. God wants you to have peace. The world and all of existence is inherently good. Peace is the default, not the exception. Abundance triumphs over lack and want. Enjoy the wholeness it brings. Relish in all that is yours today, including health and prosperity. Let go of the guilt. Think peace.

### **Everything that happens is ok. What does not happen was not necessary.**

This is a very “Zen” attitude to have, I am aware, in a Western, action-dominated society that tells you constantly to “recreate life in your image.” Passivity is bad. Proactivity good. The all-pervasive *call to action* encompasses us about on all sides. We are indoctrinated to *not* accept what happens as being ok. Today I am here to supply a much needed breath of fresh air: everything that happens is ok. What does not happen was not necessary.

So how can I be so certain? Why so Hakuna Matata? It must be confessed that this attitude, this all-important precept, can only be adopted by the person that has *faith*. Faith in what? That’s up to you. But faith is indispensable in order to lead a peaceful, trouble-free existence. It takes a certain level of humility (the eleventh precept) to accept that the world does not revolve around our person. It is a tragic relief to realize that had we never been born, the world would pretty much march on according to plan anyway. Now, I could reason that it would not be the same for my son, for he wouldn’t be here. But in reverence of spirit I reply, “Nevi’s soul would have come through another set of parents if not by me, and nothing could have held back his existence, as it was ordained by God.”

The same, by the way, is true of your soul and of mine. There is a delicate balance in accepting our cosmic irrelevance even as we embrace the fact that we’re divinely-ordained beings. But wait, how can it be both ways? We’re either important or we’re not. It’s black or

it's white. Or is it? Nothing is truly black or white. It's all just infinite shadings and variations of the limitless, undefinable colors of the rainbow; the full spectrum of light. If you had not been born to bless us with your presence, someone else, entirely unique but just as deserving, would have married your spouse, had your children and lived in your house. Of course there would be differences, but the key components would remain in place. It's a shocking and sobering thought, but humility will teach you to accept it.

The flip side here is that *you are unique and irreplaceable*. The fact that you exist means that Divinity deemed *you* necessary for the universe. No one is here by happenstance. By the same token, the things that transpire and are deemed "bad, negative or evil" are *also* necessary and acceptable before God. See my friend, we must let go of that deeply-ingrained pride that tempts, at every occasion, to set us up as divine judges of the earth, humanity and all the cosmos. Remember that these twelve precepts for transcendental living build atop one another and must be followed in order, like a stepladder, and the very foundation and cornerstone in chapter one was to *Banish Duality, the cause of internal division*. We can't have it both ways. We can't say, "God knows best," and then turn around and object, "except for this, this and that situation. What's up with that? That's just evil!"

If God is almighty, then the devil is completely useless and ineffectual. If the devil exerts even an ounce of power or influence, that is an ounce that Eternal, Omnipotent God has relinquished, thereby nullifying his omnipotence. If God is Omnipotent and there is evil, death, destruction and suffering in the world, then God is either directly liable or in the least *allows* it to go on, thereby incurring guilt. If God's will is to prevent all evil but does not, then God is not *omnipotent*. This debate has fueled the imaginations of philosophers and spilled the ink of countless writers and poets over the ages.

The traditional Western theological answer to this conundrum is the following: The cause lies in the marriage of free will and original sin. God blessed humanity with self-will, and because of it and the *Fall of Adam*, mankind occasionally chooses evil over good. God respects mankind's choices, even if these occasionally result in destruction, loss of life, suffering and injustice. Eventually paradise will be restored and justice will be meted out, either in the next life or on the new earth.

In this explanation, the resolution to all our perplexing problems and life's contradictions are conveniently put off to be answered far down the road, at a time and place far, far away. Often, the people who cling to this theology secretly relish in the impending doom of "the sinner," while at the same time greedily looking forward to their own eternal paradise. This is for *me*, not for *you* – they reason – and this thinking gives them a false sense of peace. I say 'false' because humans are hardwired to be empathetic, and it is impossible to have true, lasting and internal peace with the thought that a fellow creature is excluded from the same blessings, forever.

So to tie these concepts together in a fine pink ribbon; if any man is to preach, let us preach humility. When confessing, let us confess ignorance and bow low before the vast, incomprehensible nature of life, eternity and existence itself. It takes profound meekness to accept that which transpires in this life. To refrain from labeling anything as either "good or bad, a blessing or a curse." This is dualistic thinking, which as previously discussed, causes internal division and schisms in our community. And I am not naïve, I can hear the objections clearly, "Easy for you to say, Luis. Your family is whole, healthy and complete. You have not suffered loss." To which I will admit, "You're right, good friend. I am and have been supernaturally blessed. I am not pretending to write these words from the vantage point of a Job, per se."

In my 2021 release of [\*Teddy Newman's Heaven\*](#), I dealt candidly with the themes of death, injustice, premature separation of family, unfinished business, unfulfilled dreams, martyrdom, eternity, the hereafter, among other topics. Without spoiling it for you, I can say in that novel I ascribe to the “solution is awaiting us down the road” philosophy. It is *faith based*. I don't pretend to have all the answers, no one does. But like a true philosopher, *it is my place to question*. To be on the hot pursuit of relentless and merciless inquiry. To follow the investigation as far as it leads, wherever it leads, for as long as there is breath in this body of mine. In the bible, Jacob the shepherd becomes “*Israel*, because you have struggled with God and with man, and have prevailed,” Genesis 32:28. Israel struggles with, strives against and challenges both God and man. We are here to push back, to fight, to question, to hold accountable. *Why God, why?* This is the cry of all flesh and blood creation.

Now it would be disingenuous to pretend that life is *only* suffering and injustice. On the whole, things go right much more often than they go wrong. Our bodies, the government, mechanics, chemistry and mental sciences function properly rather than misfire as a matter of course. Ninety-nine point nine, nine, nine times out of a hundred, the airplane that goes up into the sky and travels hundreds or thousands of miles over land and sea lands *safely* without so much as a scratch. If we were to take inventory of the millions of functions that our cells execute flawlessly, all 86,400 seconds of the day, we would stand in awe at the engineering marvel that is the human body. How is it that we don't have to command our hair and nails to grow, or coerce our intestines to digest and process our food? Why don't we have to force our lungs to filter oxygen and our heart to pump blood throughout every organ? Who programmed the skin to grow back and heal after a scrape or cut? How does it

know when to stop growing? How do bones know to work together perfectly to form the structure of the body, arranging themselves always in the right order at the right place?

See my friends? There *is* divine engineering at work here. We need to recapture our sense of awe and wonder, that childlike *unknowing*. What we apply to the flawless clockwork of creation we must apply to the people, places and events that surround us, as well. There *is* a Supreme Power in control. No, *you* are not that Supreme Power. Everything that happens is ok. What does not happen was not necessary.

Didn't get that promotion? It wasn't for you. Missed the bus, train or flight? You weren't supposed to be on it. Lost your job because you missed the appointment? God has something better for you. The comedian Jerry Seinfeld had a surprisingly honest episode on his sitcom in which as he put it, he was "Even Steven." He asserted that no matter what happened in his life, either good or bad, things always balanced out in the end. Therefore, nothing that happened could ultimately be labeled good or bad, because it all evened itself out beautifully. His good friend Elaine, upon hearing his thesis, asked him for a \$20 bill. He gave it to her and she immediately proceeded to toss it out the window. He looked at her inquisitively and asked, "What was *that* all about?" "Let's see if it comes back to you," she replied with wily smile. "You know you could have tossed a *pencil* out the window and seen if *that* comes back," he retorted. Sure enough, a few moments later he put on an old jacket and serendipitously found a \$20 bill tucked away in one of its pockets.

Let's be more like Seinfeld, let's be *Even Stevens*. The universe is astonishingly fair, supremely loving and infallibly reliable, *most of the time*. Let's not dwell on the exception and make it the rule. If necessary and as touched upon in other chapters of this book, please do

away with commercial media in all its forms. They do not have your best interest in mind. They have only corporate profits in mind, and the higher and more prolonged the sense of alarm and urgency they can produce among the masses, the greater the executive bonuses and stock dividends. Don't be a pawn in another man's game. Be the starring hero of your own life. And remember, everything that happens is ok. And what does not happen was not necessary.

## **Life is a picnic, not a battlefield.**

Often depicted as a never-ending struggle between life and death; we are told that only the fittest survive, that it's a world of ruthless competition where the weak and unsuspecting are gobbled up alive. The meek and innocent don't have what it takes to make it out there because of naïveté and inexperience. In order to thrive we must be calculating, ambitious and live by a take-no-prisoners approach of self-preservation; winning at all costs. There may be some truth in these statements, but even so, they are largely exaggerated. The truth is that to the *transcendentalist* life is a picnic, not a battlefield.

Let others stumble and trip over themselves chasing trophies, validation and recognition from the world. Let them fight and wrangle for the spotlight and applause. In my experience I have seen that quite ironically, it is usually the calm and humble individual that comes out on top. *They win by not caring to win.* Their work is done from the heart, because there is a need to fill and because they go about their business with love, care and a sense of duty. The organic nature of this work, done for its own sake, is always felt and acknowledged by colleague and client alike, and the craftsman is in greater demand for it.

I'm in no competition with any other writer. Both me and her, me and him are artists going about our craft in our own ways. The world loves rankings and bestseller lists. The commercial, monetary aspect of all endeavors is what's primarily discussed. Few care about the nuance and intricacies of the art, the writing itself. But a true artist does not "write for the market." To sample and copy *what sells* may secure financial success for some,

but the true artist creates because they are driven to at a primordial level. They create what heart and soul dictate, not necessarily what trends on the New York Times. There's nothing wrong with profiting from one's craft, but naked profit alone should not be the motivating factor behind the work. When a piece is wrought with profit as sole impetus, the work suffers a tasteless, mass-produced quality that is evident to all but the least experienced and discerning.

In its truest optimal form, life is a beautiful journey – at times peppered with pain, loss and strife – but nevertheless a happy and joyful endeavor. When it comes to career and personal vocation, transcendental living focuses on performing work that is aligned with one's natural inclinations, strengths and talents. Knowing this intuitively, how many of us waste precious years and even decades resembling a fish trying to ride a bicycle? We toil away at companies and positions we are ill-fitted for at an atomic level. We do it for the sake of stability, over-evaluating economic considerations while completely disregarding emotional and spiritual ones.

We need to step back and be honest with ourselves. How much of what we do, how many hours do we consecrate to people and activities we would be lightyears away from if possible? The average work week consists of 45 hours, give or take ten. There are 168 total hours in a natural week. This means that wholly 27% – nearly a third of life (if we add in commuting and preparation time) – is devoted to our profession or vocation. Honest question my friend; shouldn't a third of our life, with the other two thirds equally divided between sleep and free time, be devoted to a work and craft that is amenable and in harmony with the very make up of our soul? And believe me, I understand this is easier said than done. We love to think of ourselves as sacrificing on behalf of family (*remember Messiah complex?*) But to the person that truly asserts

themselves, this does not have to be an either/or proposition. You can choose to live a both/and existence. Life is a picnic, not a battlefield.

In Taoism exists the concept of *Wu Wei*, loosely translated as *the art of doing more by doing less*, or *effortless action*. It's an interesting theory to say the least, the gist of it being that we often interfere and provoke trouble in life by our incessant engagement, proactivity and compulsion to micromanage. The solution, argues Wu Wei, will often come about of its own accord at its own ideal time, if we're just smart enough to be quiet, wait patiently and stay out of our own way. It's devilishly simple and even *sinful* when gauged by the frenetically-paced ethos of Western civilization. Wu Wei would advise us *not* to send that email, *refrain* from giving feedback, voicing our opinion or otherwise *contribute* to rectifying or influencing any particular situation. It's a wild concept, is it not? Do more, do it all and do it *well* *by doing nothing*.

If this seems like a contrarian, backward way to approach work and life, let me assure you that its irreverent counter-intuitiveness is precisely what will set you apart from the crowds greasing the bearings, stuffing gloves and otherwise stacking the odds in a vain attempt to win. Effortless action is the way of nature. It's how the seasons come and go, how rivers flow to the sea, how countless generations of humans, animals and plant life adhere to the cycles of birth, growth, maturity and death, daily. When we fight, push, tug and pull against this Wu Wei, against this uniform flow in life and nature, the best we can accomplish is burn precious energy while often bringing about the very dreaded result we hoped to avoid in the first place.

This is why we should not resist the aging process. This is why we should not resist *change* period. Not resisting is not the same as 'speeding along,' which is also

forceful action that works against the flow of life. Wu Wei turns dusk to night, night to dawn, dawn to light and back to dusk again. It accomplishes everything by seeking to accomplish nothing. The moon, sun and heavenly constellations have no managers keeping them on tight time schedules. They govern themselves by being ungovernable. The waves of the sea form, crest and break without the aid of an aquatic engineer giving them a blueprint or mapping out their trajectory. Lions do not consult with a dietician before pouncing their next meal. The rooster has no alarm clock telling him when the dawn is ripe for his call. A fallen branch does not protest that its life was cut short, screaming ‘foul’ until it hits the ground. Stoically and in silence, it simply returns to the dust from whence it came. This is *Wu Wei*. This is *effortless action*. Life itself, in order to prosper, should be lived with this attitude. The transcendental life that comes to this realization may be enjoyed as a picnic, not endured as a battlefield.

I said in my heart, “Come now, I will test you with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure,” but surely, this also was vanity. I said of laughter — “Madness!” and of mirth, “What does it accomplish?” I searched in my heart how to gratify my flesh with wine, while guiding my heart with wisdom, and laying ahold of folly, till I might see what was good for the sons of men to do under heaven all the days of their lives.

I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted vineyards. I made gardens and orchards, and I planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. I made myself pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove. I acquired male and female servants, and had servants born in my house. Yes, I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me. I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the

provinces. I acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, and musical instruments of all kinds.

So I became great and excelled more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me.

Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them.  
I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure,  
For my heart rejoiced in all my labor;  
And this was my reward from all my labor.  
Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done  
And on the labor in which I had toiled;  
And indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind.  
There was no profit under the sun.

Then I turned myself to consider wisdom  
And madness and folly;  
For what can the man do who succeeds the king?—  
Only what he has already done.  
Then I saw that wisdom excels folly  
As light excels darkness.  
The wise man's eyes are in his head,  
But the fool walks in darkness.  
Yet I myself perceived  
That the same event happens to them all.

So I said in my heart,  
“As it happens to the fool,  
It also happens to me,  
And why was I then more wise?”  
Then I said in my heart,  
“This also is vanity.”  
For there is no more remembrance of the wise  
Than of the fool forever,  
Since all that now is will be forgotten  
In the days to come.  
And how does a wise man die?  
As the fool!

Therefore I despised life because the work that was done under the sun was distressing to me, for all is vanity and grasping for the wind.

Then I despised all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me. And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will rule over all my labor in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This also is vanity. Therefore I turned my heart and despaired of all the labor in which I had toiled under the sun. For there is a man whose labor is with wisdom, knowledge, and skill; yet he must leave his heritage to a man who has not labored for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun? For all his days are sorrowful, and his work burdensome; even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity.

Nothing is better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God. For who can eat, or who can have enjoyment, more than I? For God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man who is good in His sight; but to the sinner He gives the work of gathering and collecting, that he may give to him who is good before God. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind.

- Ecclesiastes 2

**Entrust your life in the hands of divine guidance and provision.**

*The Queen is on the seat of the throne.* Who is this Queen? What throne am I referring to? Why is she 'on the seat?' To me this little proverb or precept stands as metaphor for a deep spiritual truth: God is in control of the universe and thereby, our very lives. So why do I substitute 'The Queen' for 'God?' Because, my friends, for the better part of forty years I pictured the Almighty strictly as a powerful, magnificent King and Ruler, a very much yang-centered deity. God is masculine, has a long white beard, thick forearms and straps a sword to his leather belt. Right? Because that's largely the God portrayed in the Judeo-Christian scriptures.

Well with years and (I'd like to think) some wisdom, my vision of God has expanded beyond the dictates of that ancient manuscript. God is also very much the maternal, life giving and sustaining yin energy that lovingly nurtures her children, which is all of creation. If you get a chance to read my latest novel, [\*Teddy Newman's Heaven\*](#), you'll see that this is one of the major premises of that book as well. For the seventh precept of this book I have boiled it down to its most relatable, universal and non-sectarian language: **entrust your life in the hands of divine guidance and provision, because it never fails.**

As these words are written I'm in the process of a major career change. In the first chapter it was mentioned how for a little over four years I had been earning a salary of about \$19,000 annually, stating that this relatively low

income did not place me in the category of ‘poor’ because truly I am rich, and to classify any individual as rich or poor strictly on the metric of annual income is ludicrous. With that said, since the closing of the last chapter I have signed a contract at a different company that has offered me *exactly twice* the salary I have been making in recent years.

The opportunity came about through a mutual acquaintance of the hiring manager who casually recommended me for a position he was looking to fill. I updated and sent in my CV, receiving a reply for an interview the following day, like clockwork. Things never happen that fast when you’re looking for them to. Sure enough the interview was a success as the candidate and position are a match, and there was natural chemistry between myself and the hiring manager to boot. So what’s the takeaway here?

I believe the takeaway can be illustrated by another real life example. About six weeks before this happened, I applied to two different companies. For the first one I kept missing the call when the recruiter phoned me, and she never answered when I called her back. That opportunity fell through the cracks rather quickly. And for the second, the recruiter told me I’d be earning exactly what I was earning at my current job, so leaving made no sense as there was no upside, but a large potential downside.

For this new position that I have accepted and virtually fell into my lap, there are of course risks and uncertainties as well. The difference is that the financial reward and fringe benefits make the risk worthwhile, and the work is in sales of which I have a long track record of success, minimizing downside exposure. In summation, when it’s work you like, understand, have a proclivity for and the organization is solid and generously compensates its stakeholders, the absolute risk shrinks in comparison to potential upside. There is no such thing

as a risk-free job offer or career change. However if you have taken the time to silence your racing thoughts and truly reflect on what the heart is telling you, meditating over a period of days, weeks and months (as I have in the time leading up to this development – in order to write this book), you will find that the universe unfolds precisely as it should when it should, not a day sooner or later.

After carefully weighing risks and rewards, the pros and cons of any situation or opportunity, there comes a time to proverbially “pull the trigger” on your decision and commit. And it’d be great, wouldn’t it, to have a crystal ball or magic mirror? Then we could consult with it as follows,

*Magic mirror on the wall,  
Will I rise,  
Or will I fall?*

*Show me four years down the line,  
With this decision,  
At this time!*

Yet alas, the mirror eludes us! As does its infallible counsel. There simply is no way to ‘know for sure.’ We must be adults and make tough calls on our own, then prepare to deal with the consequences and rewards of each decision. What I wish to argue in this chapter is that we need not be alone in the process. *The Queen is on the seat of the throne.* Whether you realize it or not there is an All-knowing, Faultless, Guiding Hand behind the seemingly random happenings, situations and circumstances of our lives. In the divine calendar God may have inscribed me for exactly four years and three months at my last company, and maybe twice as long for the next one. Catch up with me in about nine years and

I'll tell you how it went. But it's not nine years from now. It's today. It's always *today*.

Because regardless of what we plan, hope or wish for, every day we arise is still only *today*. It will always be *today*. Tomorrow is an illusion and yesterday a dim memory. Only today counts, and it is *today* that life-altering decisions are made and acted upon. This never-ending process (you'll be making important, daily decisions until the day you die) is much more palatable and peaceful if you know that the Queen is on the seat of the throne, and therefore you can entrust your life in the hands of divine guidance and provision, because it never fails.

As with other themes, concepts and precepts in this book, this is largely impossible if you lack faith. So lovingly I remind you that it's ok to have faith in *Life Itself*. If God, or your religion's definition of God, has let you down, it's ok to let go of it. God exists independent of ourselves, yet paradoxically, is mostly created in our heart, mind and soul. So give yourself permission to recreate your God. Make her a beautiful, loving, caring, wise, all-powerful Queen. Make her an adoring Mother. Make him a tender Spouse. Make him a sheltering and providing Grandfather. I promise you that God being God, will not be offended if placed in a dress, or if given a long white beard and a sword. God is beyond our petty and trivial descriptions and imaginings of who God is. God, being God, knows that for us to try to get into its thoughts is much like asking a common garden ant to analyze the brain of a human being. It would be just as ridiculous for us to take offense at an ant's interpretation and conception of who we are, as it would for God to be offended by our innate rigidity and naïveté with regard to itself.

Go forth *boldly* in life. Consult your inner guide when it comes to making life-altering decisions. Sleep on it. What

does your subconscious tell you? What is your primordial gut reaction when considering a certain road or viability? Are you naturally excited and optimistic? Or does the thought stir up your stomach and make it sour? We are much wiser than we think. We don't have to reach the level of a sage or guru to trust ourselves. What's more, we needn't even seek out such individuals. A recurring theme of this book *is to leave all books behind*. Trust no expert. Unsubscribe from all channels, mailing lists, services, platforms and podcasts. Entertain all advice as if it were spoken by the town drunkard after a three-day binge, with the proverbial grain of salt.

There is no greater force for evil, disappointment and unfulfillment in this life than genuinely ill-fitting advice given with the best of intentions. Listening to others is the fastest way to ensure your own voice is drowned out. If this book is about *nothing else*, I wish it to be about learning to leave all influences out of *your* life. Disregard what the studies, experts and statisticians say. Nevermind the best advice of friends, family and colleagues. Only you know what's best for you. Though admittedly, if you have made it a practice to silence your inner voice, it will take some discipline and rededication to tap into it once again.

Listen to yourself. You are wiser than you know and always remember, **the Queen is on the seat of the throne**. You are not alone in this. You are loved, guided, protected. Your God will not let you down. Learn to trust Her. A tender mother, a loving, all-knowing Queen. And of course, if you prefer, our traditional Father and King. Be God as it may, be God what God is, it has your best interest at heart. Bear this in mind always, go forth trustingly, and watch your life develop in new and exciting ways as never before imagined. Allow yourself to dream once more and know that you are never alone. God is on the throne.

Would you scale the highest heaven,  
    Would you pierce the lowest hell;  
Live in dreams of constant beauty,  
    Or in the basest thinking dwell.

For your thoughts are heaven above you,  
    And your thoughts are hell below;  
Bliss is not, except in thinking,  
    Torment naught but thought can know.

Worlds would vanish but for thinking,  
    Glory is not but in dreams;  
And the Drama of the ages,  
    From the Thought Eternal streams.

Dignity and shame and sorrow,  
    Pain and anguish, love and hate;  
Are but maskings of the mighty,  
    Pulsing Thought that governs Fate.

As the colors of the rainbow,  
    Makes the one uncolored beam;  
So the universal changes,  
    Make the One Eternal Dream.

And the Dream is all within you,  
    And the Dreamer waiteth long;  
For the Morning to awake him,  
    To the living thought and strong.

That shall make the ideal real,  
    Make to vanish dreams of hell;  
In the highest, holiest heaven,  
    Where the pure and perfect dwell.

Evil is the thought that thinks it,  
    Good, the thought that makes it so;  
Light and darkness, sin and pureness,  
    Likewise out of thinking grow.

Dwell in thought upon the Grandest,  
    And the Grandest you shall see;  
Fix your mind upon the Highest,  
    And the Highest you shall be.

- James Allen, *From Poverty to Power* published in  
1901

**Flow with the current of life, only  
salmon swim upstream.**

It takes a strong and mighty person to be brave and self-assured enough to *not* fight the current of their life. It should be clarified, that flowing with the current is not the same as mindlessly *drifting* without a goal, vision or compass. The current is an unyielding force that drags everything it comes in contact with, and to fight against it is foolish. This is the surest way to drain all vital forces and drown in the process. However if you learn to flow with it, letting its powerful and effortless force take you in the right direction, you can harness this current and make it do your bidding.

If we will but listen carefully, we'll see that Life is not shy about speaking, and unprompted instructs us in the way of our best interest. Often poor decisions, negative consequences and catastrophes are the result of *disregarding* that still small voice that waits so earnestly and patiently for us to pay heed. Throughout *Singularity* I have reinforced the importance of learning to trust yourself and let your life be directed internally, by strength of will, trusting Wisdom to see you through to peace and prosperity. There is an undoubted flow to the current of our lives, and it takes but stillness, calm and simplicity of mind to detect it. Like a mellow brook, if we remain quiet we can hear it bubbling over rocks and sand alike, gently concentrating its power to flow in a single direction.

It is the same with us. We needn't guess, fuss and fume about our personal situation, family life, amorous affairs, financial situation or career choices. Listening to

the current ensures that we remain in step with it, thereby confidently moving forward, knowing it is impossible to falter. It is not viable to reach this level of Zen-like knowing, peace and understanding if our lives are out of balance and untranquil. Tranquility flees if our mind is not at ease. And an uneasy mind is the breeding ground for pain, illness and poverty of every level. Disquietude is the enemy of progress, growth and success. And torment is the opposite of stillness. In short, stillness of heart, body and mind means tranquility, tranquility is peace, and peace is the pathway to health, happiness and wealth. It is impossible to flow and be still if we are all in a huff, swimming against the current. Therefore learn to flow with the current of life, for only salmon swim upstream.

Allow me to further elucidate what is meant by “flowing with the current.” As is often the case, we find ourselves at a fork in the road. We could go left or we could go right. Each path leads to different ends, though admittedly could also converge after circumventing an island of sorts. However that we can never know for sure, so it is safer to assume the paths are mutually exclusive, leading to distinct destinations. By stilling ourselves from within and *truly observing*, we’ll find that one path is always more amenable than the other, even if at first, after only a cursory glance, both seem equally pleasant or unpleasant, as the case may be. This calls for self-mastery and quietude of mind and soul. Which is why, as I’ve often alluded to throughout this book, it is so important to shut off the never-ending stream of chatter, noise and distraction that is so readily delivered via television, radio and social media, among other importunate means.

You cannot listen to yourself if you are busy entertaining *everybody else’s* thoughts. You cannot be sure that a thought or idea originated with you if all day long you consume the thoughts, ideas and opinions of

other people. Again, that is not to say that others may not have some valuable insights to help you on your way. Yet there is a fine line between helpful insight and manipulative coercion. If you are being perpetually drowned out by external voices, this distinction is nearly impossible to make. The sole reason is that many people on this planet operate with a self-serving agenda, including the occasional friend, colleague, relative, loved one, advisor or counselor. To illustrate, psychiatric professionals that truly seek to heal their patient by teaching them self-reliance and mental fortitude would work themselves out of a job after each initial encounter. Self-preservation teaches them to insidiously instill codependence and debilitating thoughts in the minds of their patients, rather than fortitude and self-edifying thoughts. This is not to cast judgment on the therapists, but merely *to call a spade a spade*.

Conversely, my mission as an author is that you would never *need* to read my books, but rather that you *choose* to because they carry you off to pleasant places within your mind. Thereby my writing would serve as a garnish to your already teeming plate of self-love, confidence, peace, self-realization and quietude, rather than the main course itself. I feel all true artists, doctors, poets, professors, priests, prophets and philosophers act and create with a similar drive and motivation, rather than the ego-centered ambition of securing for themselves an inexhaustible marketplace through codependence. If ever there was a dividing line between villains and heroes, this may be it. Listening intently to the flowing river of your life will teach you that there is a time and a place to every major event and just as truthfully, to every *uneventful* season. Go with the flow, for this is the height of wisdom. Only fools fight against the current, invariably paying the price in dissipated energy, frustration and a misspent life full of heartache, friction and disappointment.

To everything there is a season,  
A time for every purpose under heaven:

A time to be born,  
And a time to die;

A time to plant,  
And a time to pluck what is planted;

A time to kill,  
And a time to heal;

A time to break down,  
And a time to build up;

A time to weep,  
And a time to laugh;

A time to mourn,  
And a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones,  
And a time to gather stones;

A time to embrace,  
And a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to gain,  
And a time to lose;

A time to keep,  
And a time to throw away;

A time to tear,  
And a time to sew;

A time to keep silence,  
And a time to speak;

A time to love,  
And a time to hate;

A time of war,  
And a time of peace.

What profit has the worker from that in which he labors? I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied. He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

I know that nothing is better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives, and that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor – it is the gift of God.

I know that whatever God does,  
It shall be forever.

Nothing can be added to it,  
And nothing taken from it.

God does it, that men should fear before Him.

That which is has already been,  
And what is to be has already been;  
And God requires an account of what is past.

Moreover I saw under the sun:

In the place of judgment,  
Wickedness was there;

And in the place of righteousness,  
Iniquity was there.

I said in my heart,

“God shall judge the righteous and the wicked,

For there is a time for every purpose and for every work.”

I said in my heart, concerning the condition of the sons of men, “God tests them, that they may see that they themselves are like animals.” For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all is vanity. All go to one place. All are from the dust, and all to dust return. Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, whether it goes upward? And the spirit of the animals, whether it goes downward? So I perceived that nothing is better than that a man should rejoice in his own works, for that is his heritage. For who can bring him to see what will happen after him?

- Ecclesiastes 3

## **Bloom where you're planted.**

Blessed is the one;  
Who does not walk in step with the wicked,  
Or stand in the way that sinners take,  
Or sit in the company of mockers.  
But whose delight is in the law of the Lord,  
And who meditates on his law day and night.  
That person is like a tree planted by streams of water;  
Which yields its fruit in season,  
And whose leaf does not wither—  
Whatever they do *prosper*.

- Psalm 1:1-3

To bloom where you're planted is to prosper in whichever place or situation you are currently in life, at every stage and in every transition. From this broader perspective, it is possible to thrive and blossom in the face of adversity, instability and change. Though admittedly, the person who “blooms” will be a master at achieving peace, love, tranquility and success – inevitably resulting in calm, secure and stable living conditions. This ninth precept ties in very closely with the following one, which is *Promotion must come from within before it manifests outwardly*. And there's a sound, scientific reason behind this.

So much suffering, pain and hardship is self-wrought by our inability to be still and *patiently and methodically* work through personal and professional challenges, obstacles and setbacks. Especially with younger generations, who have been literally brought up

to believe *everything* is cheap, disposable and easily replaced, there is little room in modern thought for loyalty, persistence, tenacity, commitment and stick-to-it-iveness. Newer generations are raised to see life in terms of the 2 and 3 minute YouTube video clip, strictly for mindless entertainment, completely devoid of morality, life lessons or instructional value. God forbid actually picking up a book or novel without colorful illustrations and more than 50 pages of solid print.

The result is that the latest generations are being conditioned (or deconditioned) to solve their issues by simply “blocking, deleting or shutting off” the people, realities and circumstances that they don’t like. Life doesn’t work that way. In life, we must face our circumstances and make concentrated and conscious effort to work through challenges, continually improving living conditions for ourselves via commitment, science and dedication. As is the case with the rest of this book, this experience and lesson I learned the hard way, by violating this precept in search of quick and easy fixes to problems that were being created within me, but whose solutions I always sought elsewhere, in external circumstances. Little wonder that the same problems would come back to haunt me in short order, no matter where I went, what town I chose to live in, who my friends were, how much money I made and what I did for a living!

Wandering aimlessly through life in search of the proverbial fountain of youth, or the elusive genie’s lamp – to solve all your problems – you wind up right back in the mess you had fled from in the first place. This is the *opposite* of blooming where you’re planted. To bloom where you’re planted is to face everything life throws your way with equanimity, composure and an unflagging resolution to come out and come through no matter what. Nothing and no one in this life can properly oppose you, nevermind oppose and derail you for long, when you

have first made up your mind to succeed regardless of conditions and circumstances on the ground. Victory is born in the mind, registers in the heart and culminates in the body; manifesting itself in your actual, physical, mental, financial, external reality. It has always worked this way, it always will.

I will love You, O Lord, my strength.  
The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;  
My God, my strength, in whom I trust;  
My shield and the horn of my salvation,  
My stronghold.  
I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised;  
So shall I be saved from my enemies.

The pangs of death surrounded me,  
And the floods of ungodliness made me afraid.  
The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me;  
The snares of death confronted me.  
In my distress I called upon the Lord,  
And cried out to my God;  
He heard my voice from His temple,  
And my cry came before Him, even to His ears.

He sent from above, He took me;  
He drew me out of many waters.  
He delivered me from my strong enemy,  
From those who hated me,  
For they were too strong for me.  
They confronted me in the day of my calamity,  
But the Lord was my support.  
He also brought me out into a broad place;  
He delivered me because He delighted in me.

With the merciful You show Yourself merciful;  
With the blameless You show Yourself blameless;  
With the pure You show Yourself pure;  
And with the devious You show Yourself shrewd.  
For You will save the humble,

But will bring down haughty looks.

You have also given me the shield of Your salvation;  
Your right hand has held me up,  
Your gentleness has made me great.  
You enlarged the path beneath me,  
So my feet did not slip.

- Psalm 18:1-6, 16-19, 25-27, 35-36

At many times throughout this short life of mine I have reflected upon the words of this beautiful psalm, internalizing and appropriating them for myself, making the prayer my own. There is a subtle and simple magic behind the power of declarations, affirmations and edifying statements. There is undeniable creative force behind language itself, with words alternately being the softest material (think of human breath, harmless ink or even pixels on a screen), while at once the greatest tools or weapons available to all mankind (think of the Constitution, the Bible, or other speeches, words, or treaties that instigate war or create peace, legislate laws and cause disorder). Although not necessarily meant to be taken literally, the bible declares that almighty God spoke the world and universe into existence, for,

By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and  
all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

- Psalm 33:6

Therefore speak eternal, true and edifying words into your life today. Make declarations and bold affirmations of beauty, power, prosperity and peace. Words truly do direct thinking, and thinking directs words; which in turn and beyond all scientific doubt, manifest the

physical reality of life itself. If you're ever tempted to question the undeniable power of words to alter circumstances (often immediately) with a single sentence or even a phrase, try saying something kind to someone who is opposing you. If you want to see their destructive power and potential, hurl a nasty insult at your boss or another person in authority and see how "harmless" words truly are.

The power of life and death are in the tongue,  
And those who love it will eat of its fruit.

- Proverbs 18:21

And so allow yourself to bloom right where you're planted. You needn't anyone else's permission. Shine where you are, with what you're doing and whom you're with. Do not keep wishing, praying and hoping for the situation to change or become 'better.' Instead work to improve your outlook over your circumstances and understand that if you are where you are, it's for a reason. There is someone there you are meant to help. There is something that must be done that only *you* can do. There is a condition only *you* can improve and a problem *you* must solve. And the barebones truth is that we all find ourselves exactly where we deserve to be, whether that situation is good and enviable, or dire and grim. Make peace with this truth. Life is for living, and facing it with fortitude, resolution and truth will achieve for you things that the denier, wisher and daydreamer will never accomplish.

**Promotion must come from within  
before it manifests outwardly.**

I believe it's safe to say that we all want to better our conditions and come out ahead in life. Few can *honestly* say they wish for nothing more either physically, emotionally, spiritually or economically. Growth is the law, not the exception. This is true for plants and animals and especially so when it comes to humanity. Where we err and miss the target is when we put the proverbial cart before the horse, demanding promotion and growth before we're mentally and emotionally prepared to handle it. You see my friends, promotion must come from within before it ever manifests outwardly.

If we've internalized the lesson from the second precept, we will make it a practice to want nothing we don't already have. This applies just as readily to promotion as to all other aspects. When we have put in sufficient time, energy and effort, we'll find that we invariably begin mastering our craft. At this stage the work stands alone and speaks for itself, being unique and distinguishable from that of others, clearly indicating that we've arrived at mastery in our field. The term 'mastery' does not mean there is nothing left to learn, it simply implies a certain level of understanding and achievement reached by the non-negotiable, non-fungible attributes of hard time mixed with dedication; blood, sweat and tears. I do not feel it necessary here to divert on a tangent with examples of past and present masters, as we can all easily enough think of a few to satisfy our inquiring minds. That said, masters are universally recognized and held as such on their own

merits, with their lives' work serving as steadfast monuments to the same.

It is impossible to be genuinely promoted before achieving a degree of mastery in our given field, endeavor or task. People who are overly concerned with “getting ahead” in life, placing it in a higher level of priority than *mastering their craft* exhibit not only a lack of discernment, but worse, betray a fundamental misunderstanding of the basic scientific principles upon which the universe has always operated. You cannot type well until you have first learned to read and write words, you cannot read and write if you have not first mastered the alphabet, you cannot know the alphabet if you have not first studied it – literally – letter by letter. And all of these things put together, mixed in with the primal drive of having something unique and worthwhile to say, must combine before literature of any kind can be written. This is what is meant here by the term *promotion*: the subsequent stages of events that must necessarily come in order, from least to greatest, first to last, as steps on an ascending ladder, before culminating at its absolute zenith and realization.

This is why the process cannot be cheated, circumvented or rushed. It must take its course gradually, organically, at its own perfect time and pace. Therefore, knowing you have indeed reached the requisite level of skill and development, and as sure as the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, you can sit back, have peace and in quiet confidence await the good day of your ascension. The cause for infinite heartache and frustration is the all-too-human drive to rush things along prematurely; to claim big titles, rewards, recognition, positions of power and prestige long before we are ready for them or can be said to *deserve them* with sobriety of mind. As mentioned in previous chapters, we live in a competitive world that is getting faster and more vicious by the day. There is a real sense that she who is

too mellow, too happy to “wait her turn,” may never in fact get it, for she’ll be perpetually overlooked and passed by stealthier, more ambitious and shamelessly self-promoting people. This is a legitimate concern. But as with all other precepts in this brief and humble volume, I am here appealing to counter-intuition, a nobler philosophy and scope of action.

In a society and culture tragically similar to a shouting match, in which only the loudest and most obnoxious seem to get a word in, I advise you to play the part of the silent sage. Don’t be too quick to sing your own praises, you needn’t call special attention to yourself. For if this is your mode of operation you *will* in fact be just another face in an endless sea of self-aggrandizing attention seekers. Take the higher path, choose humility and let your work and deeds speak for themselves. There is an irresistible allure to the person that is strong, calm and quietly confident; who lets their work and actions speak on their behalf. People have a magnetic attraction to the lowly and humble spirit, especially when in their minds, these very people have the greatest reason to boast. Let others recognize you in their own words, on their own time and in their own way. Do not be quick to jump in and correct someone on their mistakes and blunders – although they may appreciate the correction, they are but human and will invariably resent being called out, especially if done before others (which should never, under any circumstances, be done).

Do not boast about tomorrow,  
For you do not know what a day may bring forth.

Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth;  
A stranger, and not your own lips.

- Proverbs 27:1-2

As you may have clearly discerned by now all this book, these twelve precepts build in order, progressively, one atop another, until they bring you to full promotion. Promotion of thought, which leads to beneficial action, ultimately culminating in transcendental living. In the following chapter we'll discover the eleventh precept, *the path of Humility travels the highest roads*, which of course is the natural outflow from this tenth precept. As links in an unbreakable chain, all flow and concatenate together, and you will get the most from your reading if and when the lessons are properly internalized and put to gainful practice.

Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil.

Do not be rash with your mouth,  
And let not your heart utter anything  
Hastily before God.  
For God is in heaven, and you on earth;  
Therefore let your words be few.  
For a dream comes through much activity,  
And a fool's voice is known by his many words.

When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it;  
For He has no pleasure in fools.  
Pay what you have vowed—  
Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.

Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger of God that it was an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands? For in the multitude of dreams and many words there is also vanity. But fear God.

If you see the oppression of the poor, and the violent perversion of justice and righteousness in a province, do not marvel at the matter; for high official watches over high official, and higher officials are over them.

Moreover the profit of the land is for all; even the king is served from the field.

He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver;  
Nor he who loves abundance, with increase.  
This also is vanity.

When goods increase,  
They increase who consume them;  
So what profit have the owners  
Except to see them with their eyes?

The sleep of a laboring man is sweet,  
Whether he eats little or much;  
But the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep.

There is a severe evil which I have seen under the sun:  
Riches kept for their owner to his hurt.  
But those riches perish through misfortune;  
When he begets a son, there is nothing in his hand.  
As he came from his mother's womb,  
Naked shall he return,  
To go as he came;  
And he shall take nothing from his labor  
Which he may carry away in his hand.

And this also is a severe evil—  
Just exactly as he came, so shall he go.  
And what profit has he who has labored for the wind?  
All his days he also eats in darkness,  
And he has much sorrow and sickness and anger.

Here is what I have seen: It is good and fitting for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life

which God gives him; for it is his heritage. As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor — this is the gift of God. For he will not dwell unduly on the days of his life, because God keeps him busy with the joy of his heart.

- Ecclesiastes 5

**The path of Humility travels the highest roads.**

A good name is better than precious ointment,  
And the day of death than the day of one's birth;  
Better to go to the house of mourning  
Than go to the house of feasting,  
For that is the end of all men;  
And the living will take it to heart.  
Sorrow is better than laughter,  
For by a sad countenance the heart is made better.  
The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning,  
But the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.

It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise  
Than for a man to hear the song of fools.  
For like the crackling of thorns under a pot,  
So is the laughter of the fool.  
This also is vanity.  
Surely oppression destroys a wise man's reason,  
And a bribe debases the heart.

The end of a thing is better than its beginning;  
The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.  
Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry,  
For anger rests in the bosom of fools.  
Do not say,  
"Why were the former days better than these?"  
For you do not inquire wisely concerning this.

Wisdom is good with an inheritance,  
And profitable to those who see the sun.  
For wisdom is a defense as money is a defense,  
But the excellence of knowledge is that wisdom gives  
life to those who have it.

Consider the work of God;  
For who can make straight  
What He has made crooked?  
In the day of prosperity be joyful,  
But in the day of adversity consider:  
Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other,  
So that man can find out nothing  
That will come after him.

I have seen everything in my days of vanity:

There is a just man who perishes in his righteousness,  
And there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in  
wickedness.

Do not be overly righteous,  
Nor be overly wise:  
Why should you destroy yourself?  
Do not be overly wicked,  
Nor be foolish:  
Why should you die before your time?  
It is good that you grasp this,  
And also not remove your hand from the other;  
For he who fears God will escape them all.

Wisdom strengthens the wise  
More than ten rulers of the city.

For there is not a just man on earth who does good  
And does not sin.

Also do not take to heart everything people say,  
Lest you hear your servant cursing you.  
For many times, also, your own heart has known  
That even you have cursed others.

All this I have proved by wisdom.  
I said, "I will be wise."  
But it was far from me.  
As for that which is far off and exceedingly deep,

Who can find it out?  
I applied my heart to know,  
To search and seek out wisdom  
And the reason of things,  
To know the wickedness of folly,  
Even of foolishness and madness.  
And I find more bitter than death  
The woman whose heart is snares and nets,  
Whose hands are fetters.  
He who pleases God shall escape from her,  
But the sinner shall be trapped by her.

“Here is what I have found,” says the Sage,  
“Adding one thing to the other to find out the reason,  
Which my soul still seeks but cannot find:  
One man among a thousand I have not found,  
But a woman among all these have I found.  
Truly, this only have I found:  
That God made man upright,  
But he has sought out many schemes.”

- Ecclesiastes 7

“A good name is better than precious ointment.” Humility teaches you to value yourself properly, neither imbuing yourself with greater importance than is due, or devaluing yourself more than is healthy. A humble outlook naturally appreciates the viewpoints, opinions and experiences of others and the contributions these make in your own life. The humble person is the agile and eager apprentice, never “too learned” to look over the shoulder of their master and gain more insight or acquire a better technique. Humility is an organically attractive trait that wins the favor of friend, family, colleague, client and associate alike.

Taking this in mind, what do you understand by the imperative, “to have a good name?” I feel it’s rather self-explanatory. What comes to mind when people think

of you? What is another's guttural reaction when you are brought up in a conversation of either professional or casual setting? How would your spouse, child, friend, business associate or significant other speak of or describe you? To whom or what would they liken you? An interesting exercise, what would be said at your mock (or actual) eulogy? In my estimation, the person that truly exudes and lives by the principle of humility will have no reason to fear the answers to such questions.

All of the world's greatest teachers, leaders, philosophers, prophets and sages have been – as a rule – humble people. Granted, there are exceptions. However I think we can agree that those who lacked this quality suffered reputational loss that their more humble counterparts never did. To have a good name is to be an integral, upright and loving person. It does not imply perfection, for nobody can fit that bill, but it does speak of the man or woman of above average virtue, dignity and respect. This is a jewel of inestimable worth in a world so terribly caught up in the twin fantasies of easy fame and fortune, greedily grasping after notoriety and recognition achieved by less than honorable means. A good name will open doors for you that not even the powers of heaven would dare close. It is *reputational equity* that truly promotes the individual, regardless of what is printed on their CV.

It is an unquestionable truth that *who* you know is often as or more important than *what* you know, but this law can only be put to work in your advantage if those who know you, know you to be a true, honest and upright person of strong ethic, mature responsibility, dedication and commitment to do your job well. In this the humble person is the consummate professional, as there can hardly be an attribute less professional than being an egotist that never listens because they are too busy spouting off orders and instructions to more learned and better experienced minds. Humility is the crowning

virtue, and one that infallibly confers upon its adherent “a good name.”

“And the day of death than the day of one’s birth.” This is a wonderfully controversial bit of wisdom from Solomon son of David. Why would the day of death be better than the day of birth? When it is our time to go we will have left behind a lifetime of work, experiences and relationships. To the person that led a good, clean life, this is a day of celebration and rejoicing, our labor is now over and we can enter eternal rest in peace and reassurance. Can the same be said of the ‘wicked’ person? Transcendental living teaches us to never view another human being as wicked, no matter how twisted and corrupt they may have been while alive. A person that does evil deeds, harming themselves and others is invariably *mentally ill*, with the inception of that illness often dating back to their formative years. It is an inescapable fact of life that by causing damage to others we damage first and foremost our own self, for singularity teaches that there is nothing we can do to another that does not come back (often multiplied) over our own head.

The quote “evil” person is only to be pitied and prayed for, if anything, for they are the byproduct of ill thinking, usually provoked by early victimhood, maturing into ill deeds which bear their subsequent rotten fruitage. This is not to excuse or trivialize the harm they cause their own victims, but simply to demonstrate that instead of vilifying the mentally ill and painting them as ‘monsters’ with broad brush strokes, we should seek to reform our correctional institutions and introduce the ill to love, support and mental health initiatives that will truly *rehabilitate* them. Corporal punishment (long prison sentences of relative bodily safety included) is tantamount to band-aids over a gunshot wound. The fact that at this stage of the game –

in the third decade of the twenty-first century – we still have not overhauled our correctional facilities, speaks to the reality that as much as we'd like to think of our societies as evolved, humanistic enterprises, we still inhabit the stone age when it comes to ethics, social science, empathy and living by the golden rule.

Therefore the day of death is better than the day of birth, but only for those fortunate souls who have had a positive (if not perfect) upbringing, and were modeled to learn from their mistakes, evolve and seek continuous improvement. As for those who “die in their wickedness,” I will step aside in *humility*, let God be God, and deal with the mentally ill as justly and lovingly as only God can. Yet even then it can be safely said, their suffering is now over and so too – *even for the wicked* – the day of death is better than the day of birth.

Better to go to the house of mourning  
Than go to the house of feasting,  
For that is the end of all men;  
And the living will take it to heart.

Here once again, in humility, Solomon is asking us to reflect on our inevitable end. It is wise and proper and sober to live with an eye toward our finitude on the one hand, and toward eternity on the other. It is welcome to go into “the house of feasting” and make merry with friends. As is often repeated throughout Ecclesiastes, “It is good and fitting for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for it is his heritage.” Yet how peculiar, here in the seventh chapter the Sage asserts, “Better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting.” It is not always a pleasant affair to consider our mortality. There are so many

question marks. Inquiries we'll literally never be able to answer *in this life, before it is too late*. Yet the wise and sober will spend more than average reflecting on their finitude, for in this meditation there is perspective. It is good to reflect on the fact that we will not always be here, as we are, whom we're with, and doing what we feel is commonplace. The very idea of *commonplace* is misleading, for nothing remains still for long in this fluid and ever-changing life.

To embrace transcendence is to accept, welcome and even celebrate the fact that *nothing* is ever the same for long. People grow, age, change, die. New births take their place, new names and faces spring up to consciousness. Places of business come and go. Companies are live, organic beings that continually undergo transformation in the way they do business, the products and services they develop and market, even their branding and image is hardly the same for long, with rare exceptions. Jerry Seinfeld once made a very intelligent and thought-provoking joke. One of his famous *observations*. He said, "Loyalty to any *one* sports team is pretty hard to justify. Because the players are always changing, the team can move to another city. You're actually rooting for the *clothes* when you get right down to it. I mean you are standing and cheering and yelling for your clothes to beat the clothes from another city. Fans will be so in love with a player, but if he goes to another team they boo him. This is the *same* human being in a different shirt, they *hate* him now. 'Boo, different shirt, boo!'"

It's beautifully ironic and true. And it serves to drive home the point we're making in this chapter. The only permanent thing is *impermanence*. It is wise to consider this and take it to heart. Doing so teaches you to never take another day for granted, for you are aware it could very well be your last. This goes quite beyond morbid thinking. The idea is not to agonize, dread and

mourn our eventual demise. The goal is the opposite, we must learn to cherish each day, every waking moment. Go for the hug, express that “I love you.” Go in for the kiss. Hold on to the embrace a few moments longer than you normally would. Savor that meal. Enjoy that refreshment. Order dessert. Go on that hike. Book the vacation. Save up for the trip. Shell out those few extra dollars. Say ‘no’ to those extra shifts, realizing they cut into your family time. Turn down the promotion, if it’ll mean eighty-hour work weeks. Say ‘yes’ to lazing away your Sunday afternoon under a tree with a good book, or snuggled up in bed with a good movie. Learn to realize when you have had enough. See and appreciate when you have done enough. Live every moment with a sense of blessedness and gratitude for the ephemeral passing of time. The clock marches on and never repeats the same second twice. There’s only one today, and it is always irreplaceable. Our time is now. Live it to the max. And always be humble, for the path of Humility travels the highest roads.

### **Adopt Singularity, the eternal solution.**

And so we've done it, my friends. We've arrived at the concluding chapter and final precept, the capstone that wraps up our central thesis on *Singularity*. As you may recall from the first chapter, Duality is the opposite of Singularity, and is the paradigm that most of us, especially in the West, have been raised on. If duality is false and misleading, then singularity is just, accurate and true. The irony does not escape me that in advocating for singularity, I appear to *in fact* be enacting duality by classifying the one as good and the other as bad, in an irreconcilable dichotomy. If so, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that singularity does not negate that there are opposite, if equal, parts to any one object or subject. However what it *does* is tie the opposing ends together into a cohesive whole. Yes, there is a left and a right arm on most people, however these combine at the center to serve a *single* individual. The same can be said for our legs, hands, feet, eyes and ears, etcetera. Singularity does not stubbornly turn a blind eye to the controversy, opposition and conflicts of the world, instead it seeks to *reconcile* these schisms by focusing on the lowest common denominator among the seemingly disperse and disunified parts. If and when we adopt Singularity, we will learn to value it; observe, love and understand the unifying factors shared by all people, places and things and recognize it as the eternal solution it is. Wise King Solomon puts it like this,

I turned and saw under the sun that—

The race is not to the swift,  
Nor the battle to the strong,  
Nor bread to the wise,  
Nor riches to men of understanding,  
Nor favor to men of skill;  
But time and chance happen to them all.  
For man also does not know his time:  
Like fish taken in a cruel net,  
Like birds caught in a snare,  
So the sons of men are snared in an evil time,  
When it falls suddenly upon them.

- Ecclesiastes 9:11-12

Here the principle of singularity is expressed in the line that asserts, “*But time and chance happen to them all.*” You see, the difficult thing is to accept and make peace with the fact that the world is *not* always perfectly just and equitable. Yes, at times evil does appear to “get away with murder.” Yes, at times the good and innocent do suffer gross, unjust, unprovoked and undeserved cruelties. This reality does not make sense to our finite, fleshly minds of limited perspective. There is no “wrapping your head around it.” Friends, we have to learn to be ok with this. We will not have the answers to all our questions in this life. Singularity teaches us to embrace this with open arms. Because at the end of the day, we are one very large family sharing a relatively small tract of land on a singular planet. We need to learn to make this work, because we have only ourselves to blame whenever finger-pointing and divisiveness claims the day. Everything will not make sense to us all the time. Humility instructs us in the way of acceptance, which adopts singularity and ultimately culminates in *peace*, the treasured goal of all life – whether we acknowledge this or not.

There is a vanity which occurs on earth, that there are just men to whom it happens according to the work of the wicked. Again, there are wicked men to whom it happens according to the work of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity.

- Ecclesiastes 8:14

The reason I have given such prominent real estate to the words of Solomon throughout this book, is because I wish to demonstrate that these precepts are by no means earth-shattering ideas that originate with me. Wisdom existed before the foundations of the earth came to be. It has been and will remain available to all who thirst and diligently seek Her. Wisdom's words have a similar ring and tone no matter who utters them because they spring from a singular source, the Spirit of Truth. Nobody can claim a monopoly on wisdom, just as no one can claim exclusivity to the concept of love. These are universal gifts which Divinity has graced humanity with from the creation of the world, and that will remain with us beyond the grave. The singular approach dismisses the notion of division, because in wisdom it beholds and cherishes the fact that when we get right down to it, we are all truly *one*.

Bob Marley's timeless anthem *One Love* does a marvelous job at capturing this concept in catchy and poetic song lyric, "*One love, one heart, let's get together and be all right. Give thanks and praise to the Lord, and we will feel all right.*" There is a reason that sound philosophy throughout the ages has a common, universal tone and appeal. That is because true philosophy requires no interpretation. Philosophy that requires formal philosophical training to be appreciated and understood is no philosophy at all. Genuine philosophy

is the truth, and truth requires no translators, interpreters or apologists. Truth speaks soft and clearly to all. "All who have ears, let them hear," was a favorite saying of Yeshua of Nazareth. He did not cloud and obscure his wisdom in unsearchable and enigmatic rhetoric. A true teacher, a good teacher, makes the teaching as bright as day and accessible to young and old, experienced and inexperienced alike. True teachings come about in relatable parables and can be grasped by the budding minds of children. Simplicity of speech is the mark of true wisdom and deep learning. Not obfuscation, complex arguments and prolix prose. Wisdom is as a lamp illuminating the dark and foggy night, clearly visible and welcome by all. It is a fire in a cold and dreary land, and all the townsfolk may simply walk up and warm their hands by it. Or use it to light a flame of their own. Such is the nature of Wisdom, and that is why throughout the ages and regardless of the orator, it has a similar taste, sound, look and feel. This inescapable and universally recognized quality of wisdom is the beating heart of singularity. And truly understanding and adopting Singularity is the key to a perennially transcendental life.

Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth,  
Before the difficult days come,  
And the years draw near when you say,  
"I have no pleasure in them."  
While the sun and the light,  
The moon and the stars,  
Are not darkened,  
And the clouds do not return after the rain;  
In the day when the keepers of the house tremble,  
And the strong men bow down;  
When the grinders cease because they are few,  
And those that look through the windows grow dim;  
When the doors are shut in the streets,

And the sound of grinding is low;  
When one rises up at the sound of a bird,  
And all the daughters of music are brought low.  
Also they are afraid of height,  
And of terrors in the way;  
When the almond tree blossoms,  
The grasshopper is a burden,  
And desire fails.  
For man goes to his eternal home,  
And the mourners go about the streets.

Remember your Creator  
Before the silver cord is loosed,  
Or the golden bowl is broken,  
Or the pitcher shattered at the fountain,  
Or the wheel broken at the well.  
Then the dust returns to the earth as it was,  
And the spirit returns to God who gave it.

“Vanity of vanities,” says the Sage,  
“All is vanity.”

And moreover, because the Sage was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yes, he pondered and sought out and set in order many proverbs. The Sage sought to find acceptable words; and what was written was upright — words of truth. The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by One Shepherd. And further, my son, by these be admonished. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is wearisome to the flesh.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:

Fear God and keep His commandments,  
For this is the lot of all men.  
For God will bring every work into judgment,  
Including every secret thing,  
Whether good or evil.

- Ecclesiastes 12

*The End.*

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