

Table of Contents

Foreword	XV
Preface	XIX
Introduction.....	1
They come to be known.....	1
The question	2
The process	3
The thesis	4
The book.....	4
<i>Section I: Wholeness and the Grand Illusion</i>	<i>5</i>
Chapter 1: A Question of the Soul.....	7
The “Sacred Quest”	7
The elements that resist.....	14
The roots of illness	15
Healing and wholeness	17
Chapter 2: The Necessary Illusion of Separateness.....	19
The paradox	19
Separation and choice in the light of consciousness.....	20
Identity through maximal contrast and polarity	25
Oscillation from maximal contrast	29
Polarity and attraction.....	30
Self-consciousness and awareness of “the other”	31
Defining consciousness.....	32
Relationship and identity.....	33
Vesica pisces as the doorway of life	35
The gravity of love.....	39

Chapter 3: Me Against the World	45
In tune with the rhythms of life	45
The evolution of “me”	47
Religion and the separation of spirit and matter	54
Science and the separation of mind and body	56
<i>Section II: Fingerprints of Identity</i>	61
Chapter 4: Reawakening of the Goddess.....	63
Wholism, systems theory and the new physics	63
Iteration, feedback loops and nonlinearity	65
Individuality and the ambiguity of part and whole.....	67
Chapter 5: The Mirror and the Universe—	
Reflecting on God.....	73
Symmetries of Life and the adventure of becoming.....	73
Before the beginning	77
The first separation.....	80
The gravitational force of love	81
Out of the void	84
Conception.....	85
Outside-in, inside-out	89
The “Three Hidden Splendors”	92
And “The Word” was made manifest	93
Chapter 6: The Signature of Creation.....	97
Three as one	97
Autopoiesis and continuous creation.....	105
First summary of living systems	110
Chapter 7: Archetypes of Nature and the	
Pattern of Life.....	113
Archetypes of pattern	113
The point	120
The circle/spiral.....	120
The line.....	122
Archetypes of process.....	123
The fractal geometry of self-similarity	124

Self-organization through self-reflection	127
The cycle of life and the two deaths of identity.....	134
<i>Section III: The Affirmation of Life.....</i>	<i>139</i>
Chapter 8: Living On the Edge of Chaos.....	141
Staying open to stay alive	141
Death by transformation vs. death by entropy.....	146
Self-organization on the edge of chaos.....	148
Growth and evolution	151
Dying to live and the paradox of transcending self	154
A word of caution.....	160
Second summary of living systems.....	161
Chapter 9: The Victory of Death and the Hero's	
Journey	163
Born to die	163
Transformation through sacrifice and surrender.....	167
Following the hero's path.....	170
Chapter 10: Illness and the Healing Journey.....	175
Caught in the confusion of chaos	175
Defining health and illness	180
Illness at its core	181
Know thyself	183
The consciousness of disease	185
The self factor	191
The disordered identity of cancer	195
Choosing the way of health.....	202
Chapter 11: Instruments for transformation	203
The substance of faith	203
Thinking, imagination and desire	205
Acknowledgments	213
About the Authors.....	215
Endnotes	217
Bibliography & Credits	237
Index.....	243

Foreword

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“The patient does not come to the doctor to be cured; the patient comes to be known”—A profound insight. This concept never occurred to me in the early days of my practice. While well trained in the art and science of natural healing by the great healer/teachers John Bastyr, DC, ND, Joe Boucher, ND, Bob Carroll, ND and so many others, it took me years of clinical practice before I became aware that many of my patients came to see me for more than physical healing.

Sadly, we live in a world suffering from a tremendous burden of unnecessary sickness and pain. Much of that is clearly in the physical world: the incidence of most chronic degenerative diseases has increase in almost every age group every decade the past fifty years. Much of that is due to our increasingly polluted environment and the decreasing nutrient value of the foods we eat (still plenty of calories, but fewer nutrients). Equally important has been the startling failure of conventional medicine to improve health in stark contrast to its almost miraculous ability to save lives. This failure of medicine is due largely to its orientation to the diagnosis and treatment of disease rather than improvement of the health of the patient. Therein lies naturopathic medicine’s greatest strength—our fundamental belief in the health potential of each person who comes to us for care.

• XV •

This inherent striving of living organisms towards health has been named in many ways: I like the *vis medicatrix naturae*, or “healing power of nature.” It is a powerful force within each of us. But this force is not simply a manifestation of biochemistry, it is a manifestation of life in all its aspects.

I remember vividly, now twenty-five years later, my sudden insight into a woman who had been seeing me for almost a year. I do not recall her first diagnosis, nor her second or third. Each time she came to see me with a well-characterized, easily diagnosable disease. Each time, using nutrition and botanical medicines, I helped her eliminate her disease and apparently return to health. However, when she came to see me for her fourth, different disease in less than a year, I suddenly realized I was treating the wrong problem. I started to listen to her more carefully, not just to her symptoms. What I heard was a person no one listened to, saw a person unrecognized, and felt a person unloved and unloving. I suddenly understood that she was coming to me, an authority figure, to be heard, seen, appreciated—told she was important, of value—real.

It was a stunning revelation to me. I had prided myself in being a good doctor, competent in my diagnosis of pathology and expert in determining the underlying physiological dysfunction that lead to a patient’s ill health and susceptibility to disease. I was also very good at utilizing the many effective therapies of natural medicine to facilitate normal function and restore health. But I was not yet a healer. I did not yet understand how to elicit within my patient the full manifestation of her lifeforce, spirit—selfness. I totally changed the way I interacted with this woman. I still provided the expected, and necessary, diagnostic and therapeutic care she needed. However, I also started spending more time listening to her, guided her to find a pathway to exploration of her spiritual self. No, I did not recommend to her any specific religion or spir-

itual guide, but rather helped her recognize the necessity of manifesting this aspect of her life and she then found her own way. As she found the meaning and importance of her life, she soon came to no longer need my services. She was healed, not just cured. And I took another step in my journey becoming a healer/physician, an unending, but deeply rewarding experience.

I wish *The Face of Consciousness* had been available when I was a young clinician—I could have learned the art of healing much sooner and better helped so many more patients. This work is transformational, not just for practitioners, but to each of us on our unique, personal journey through life. Ultimately, isn't full manifestation of our "selfness" or "consciousness" all we really have? Exploring this wonderful book has been a powerful experience. It will be a powerful experience for you as well.

I can think of no better reward for a teacher than to be taught by his students. Thank you Dr. Patrick Donovan, thank you Dr. Herb Joiner-Bey for making all the hard work worthwhile.

Preface

Who are you and why are you here? Why is anyone or anything “here,” living in this world, this universe? Better yet, why is there anything at all, even a “here?” Life forms come and go, eventually to be lost to the dark abyss of the evolutionary obsolete. Even you and your loved ones come and go, each a mere microsecond on the time line of eternity. It all seems so useless, so meaningless! But why is it so?

Many authors have written about the evolution of life, “consciousness,” the cosmology of the universe, the “new physics,” the biology of living systems, the mythology of life’s “Sacred Quest” and the hero’s journey, and the mystical experience of life’s transformation through death into new life. Their information has been innovative and often inspirational. However, few have attempted to engage the “why” behind the scientifically quantified phenomena of life and the physical universe. Because of this, the issues of causation and reason relative to the development of life, consciousness, identity and self-awareness have not been explicitly addressed to any great degree.

One can discern specific reasons for this situation and the obstacles to integrating experience and insight across scientific and theological disciplines. Since the time of Descartes and the Scientific Revolution, which finalized the separation of faith and reason, Western scientists have been loath, in fear of professional suicide, to explore realms culturally sequestered to the exclusive purview of theologians. Conversely, unbridled scientific inquiry

has been a terrifying anathema among clerics and the “religious faithful” for fear any philosophical or rational inquiry or dialogue would open the door to “the devil of doubt and reason.” Consequently, no well-defined, unifying theory of causation or reason for existence has been postulated addressing all of the various disciplines from science to mythology and mysticism using a language that integrates their essential precepts into a functional hypothesis offering significant personal, social, and therapeutic applicability.

With the help of Dr. Joiner-Bey, I wrote this book in an attempt to transcend and neutralize the culturally conditioned barriers and perception of antagonism among the many schools of thought regarding the “why” of creation, consciousness, healing and the Cosmos. We labored to dissolve these arbitrary barriers and the resulting fragmented, territorial thinking by coherently integrating the strikingly similar, irreducible pearls of truth, residing consistently at the core of these paradigms, into a unifying theory of creation, life and the transformational process of healing.

This unifying theory is predicated upon the primary theme of self-realized identity arising from these historically antagonistic, yet remarkably parallel paths of revelation. The verified quantifiable properties of living systems, as described by modern physicists and biologists, are conceptually matched by the ancient discoveries and understandings of philosophers and mystics. The fabric of this “unified theory of life” is woven from these parallel threads and based on; 1) the mystical traditions and scientific evidence pinpointing consciousness as the fundamental phenomenon (the “Materia Prima”) of life and, 2) the conclusion that the primal driving force of life (its “raison d’etre”) is its “sacred quest,” as consciousness, for a sense of its own identity i.e., a realization of itself through the experience of itself. I feel Dr. Joiner-Bey and I have formulated a new perspective on conscious-

ness and its manifestation as life through the synthesis of essential principles from the biological and physical sciences, psychology, philosophy, mythology and various traditional schools of mystical thought (e.g., Kabbalah, Sufism, etc.). In addition, we propose a theory that explains the “why” of creation and life and defines the transformational process of healing in a way in which it can be practically applied to one’s life enabling one to transcend death and transform illness into greater life.

This book is only a beginning. There is so much more yet to be researched, experienced and written. This book is our initial endeavor to promote individual exploration and personal revelation, and to nurture integrative thinking and dialogue among scholars, healers, and the general public. We wish to encourage more vigorous, unlimited, and fruitful dialogue among scientists, philosophers, theologians and every individual seeking answers to his/her own existence. Perhaps then, the fragmented half-truths and dogmatic exclusivisms that have dominated discussions of the most haunting questions of the human heart and mind can be transcended by a clearer and more satisfying picture of who we are and why we are here.

Patrick M. Donovan, N.D.

Introduction:

They Come To Be Known

“The patient does not come to the doctor to be cured; the patient comes to be known.” This profound statement slipped innocently from the lips of my friend and colleague Leanna Standish, Ph.D., N.D., L.Ac, as she addressed the graduating class of naturopathic physicians at Bastyr University. There I was, sitting quietly on stage with the other faculty members, my eyes wandering through the sea of nameless faces in the audience, wondering if the atmosphere at yet another graduation was going to get any stuffier. Then I heard it: “The patient comes to be known.” Like a sudden gust of cool wind that throws open the doors on a quiet August evening announcing the onset of a sudden summer storm, this statement of revelation threw open the doors of my mind with its gust of confirmation.

That was it! What I had been considering for some time, through years of study in various mystical traditions, as the primal cause for the creation of the universe may also be the key factor through which healing could be defined and illness and disease could be understood. Identity is the unifying key. Self-realization and the quest for meaning are the stimulus for creation, the evolution of self-aware consciousness and the unfolding of life through the cosmogonic cycle of continuous creation and transformational change. Therefore, realizing and living passionately one’s true, essential nature of being is the key to healing. The

essential question that resounds throughout the soul of every sentient, self-aware being throughout the universe is a question of identity—“Who or What Am I?”

The more I thought about it the more familiar the question became. Actually, I realized most of us know it very well. Sometimes friend, sometimes foe, it regularly, consciously cries out in the midst of adolescent emotional traumas and haunts the intimacy of every meaningful relationship we have. More often we ignore it or actively suppress it within the shadows of our subconscious. Answering it is a frightening proposition. Most of us choose to battle with the feelings of anxiety, fear, loneliness, and isolation that arise from its suppression—feelings commonly associated with illness and overwhelmingly present in the lives of the majority of my patients.

Now, sitting in that graduation ceremony, those nameless faces in the crowd seemed so much more familiar as I realized, in that moment, we all come into the experience of life to be known to ourselves and to others. Through that act of knowing, we are made whole—we are healed.

The Question

The most fundamental question of life and of the consciousness that animates life is the question of identity. It is the quintessential question of every self-aware being and the fundamental query that lies at the very root of consciousness. The urge to answer this query is the impetus that, through the illusory experience of separation, continuously drives the individualized, self-aware consciousness of the I to enter into relationship with itself and the universe as Thou. This impulse forces the ego to ultimately “lose itself” in the illusion of separateness that it may “find itself” in the reality of wholeness. For anyone to answer the question of identity fully is to realize the “why” of creation and to know who one is as a conscious participant in that creation.

Many mystical traditions propose that the question of identity is the very causal phenomenon that motivates the unrealized potential of God, The Absolute All, into the act of creating. Through this act, “The Face” is able to “gaze upon The Face,” and “God beholds God” and rejoices in His glory and magnificence. The dynamic, ever-evolving process of life is generated and propagated by the asking and answering of this question. Its query is the root of the “Sacred Quest” of the mythic hero—the mythological representation and male archetype of ego-consciousness seeking to discover its true essential nature of being. Additionally, self-realization is intimately related to the transformational process that brings about healing.

As I further pondered the question of identity—its biological, psychological, mythological, and theological implications—I turned to my close friend and colleague, Dr. Herb Joiner-Bey for more inspiration and intelligent dialogue. Many lengthy conversations ensued which led to a remarkable discourse ultimately resulting in this book.

The Process

To answer the question of identity, we explored the latest scientific evidence and theories pertaining to the origins and nature of living systems, particularly in the disciplines of physics, biology, and mathematics. We reviewed the mythological, theological and mystical concepts of cosmogony and the nature of life in the light of the scientific information, hoping to develop a richer, more complete understanding of the origin and nature of consciousness, of the self, as it manifests individually and universally as life. Our explorations have only begun to scratch the surface of the information available. We confess that so much more has yet to be done. But, because we have been so impressed by the recurring themes and patterns of conception, belief, and evidence, over such wide-ranging disciplines and perspectives, uncovered at every level of investigation, we felt compelled to share what we have gathered so far.

The Thesis

We believe the purpose of life is to give identity and meaning to consciousness. We believe the recurring patterns observed in physics, metaphysics, and biology constitute a unique and unmistakable “signature,” “finger print,” or “hallmark” of identity, revealing the true essential nature of the Infinite Self that brought life into being. We also believe the fundamental principles or archetypes of life that determine and govern the nature and function of living systems are the functional constructs of this fingerprint and should act as the foundation upon which a more complete and functional understanding of health and healing is based. We propose that the fundamental patterns of living systems are the fingerprints of life—evidence of the “Creator’s” personality and identity. By understanding them in this context, one can recognize the “Deity” within each creation and begin to answer the primordial, burning question of self-awareness—“Who or What Am I?”

The Book

In the following pages, we present the results of our exploration in a synopsis to acquaint you with what we feel to be the salient principles of life and the true fundamental nature of being and of healing. It is our fervent hope that our presentation will stimulate further exploration, discussion, and illumination by you and others. Hopefully, this exposition will give you a sense of connectedness to something greater than the separate I of the ego-self and provide a more comprehensive understanding and knowledge of the laws of causality, transformation and healing. We would be delighted if this awareness serves as a springboard to propel you towards an expanded appreciation of your own unique identity as a distinctive part of the Divine Whole. May this new self-realization assist you in answering the question “Who or What am I?” and catalyze a healing and self-affirming transformation.



SECTION I:
Wholeness and the Grand Illusion

• 5 •

THE FACE OF CONSCIOUSNESS: A GUIDE TO SELF-IDENTITY AND HEALING
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Chapter 1

A Question of the Soul

*“To be, or not to be—that is the question:
Whether ’tis nobler in the mind, to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them?”*

William Shakespeare,
Hamlet; Act III. Scene I.

The “Sacred Quest”

There has been a story being told since the beginning of time. It is the story of you and me. It is our story. It is the story of all of life and the consciousness life embodies. Its plot is simple: “Reflect Me that I may see My ‘Self’ and know I AM.” The characters are infinite and diverse; they include the life-forms of all living systems from the simplest and most minute to the grandest and most complex. They are constantly changing and evolving, always struggling to survive against the unremitting influences of death and non-being and their own self-generated illusions of separateness and isolation merely to realize in the end only birth conquers death and only love shatters the illusion of separateness. There is, however, an irony here. For only through

• 7 •

death can the mystery behind the plot of life's story be revealed, and only through the illusion of separateness can self be reflected in the face of another to realize that beneath the illusion of twines dwells the reality of oneness.

But who or what is this thing called "self?" Herein lies the mystery of our story. It is deeply rooted in this question and the more fundamental question of identity: "Who or what am I?" This question of identity is a question of self-aware consciousness that also intimates a question of origin ("Whence came I?") and a question of purpose ("Why am I here?"). It is bound closely with beginnings and commonly appears as the catalyst stirring the eternal stillness into manifest existence in numerous creation stories and myths. Every character in the story of life arriving upon the threshold of self-consciousness is faced with this mystery and must answer this inevitable question of the soul. Answering it truthfully demands wholehearted and profound introspection and a passionate love and almost obsessive curiosity for life. It also demands the willingness and fortitude to manifest and experience the answer fully in one's life; discovering its answer is not a singular, momentary revelational event: it is the activity of life itself. One lives the continual query as a state of consciousness, as a state of being and becoming where one is ever watchful for and receptive to the answer. The asking and answering of this question is the dynamic, ever-evolving phenomenon that writes life's story—our story. The search for the answer to the question of identity is the sacred quest of life and the consciousness that is life. Life itself is the answer.

"The Quest" of all mystical and mythological journeys from all cultures and peoples may very well be representative of life's sacred quest for identity through self-realization. This quest is often exemplified in the myths of the hero where the common theme is one of life's resurrection into greater life through the death that transforms life. For this to occur, the pre-hero, as commoner, must

undertake a perilous journey replete with some great deed(s) of self-sacrifice through which his/her life is transfigured into “The Divine” and he/she is transformed into “The Hero.” This journey is a labor not of self-discovery, but of self-rediscovery of the divine creative image of “*The One*,” the Infinite Self that is hidden within all life’s creatures waiting to be known and rendered into life.

The mystical traditions of many established religions such as Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity suggest the desire for *The One* (God) to “see Itself that it may know Itself” was and is the primal and continued impetus for creation that rendered It into life (i.e., God made the world in his own image.) Every religious system is a temporal-dependent, culturally restrictive, allegorical narrative of this transformative process. It is the narrative of life’s heroic journey from darkness into light, from non-being into being, from undifferentiated consciousness into differentiated, self-aware consciousness so that God may know God. This journey is the journey that recapitulates the history of the self-emancipation and self-affirmation of ego consciousness into the “I AM” of fully realized identity as it struggles to free itself from the entropic power of the unconscious. To achieve such a feat, it must hold its own in continuous affirmation and creation against the overwhelming odds of entropy and passive equilibrium of non-being.

Great courage and emotional honesty is demanded of anyone willing to fully live life’s heroic story and begin the quest for identity, because to do so means to begin a perilous journey and struggle against unimaginable odds. Such courage enables one to leave the safety of complacency and denial and willingly engage the conscious and unconscious illusions and feelings of fear, guilt, anxiety, loneliness and separateness as they are met along the way. These distressing feelings and illusions are the allegorical demons, dragons and monsters of the shadow world often met along the

mythological hero's journey. Avoiding them and continuing the journey is not a possibility. Living authentically with emotional honesty allows one to deeply acknowledge and experience these feelings so they may reveal the source of suffering and the solution to the riddle of identity. This engagement and struggle has been referred to mystically as "going into the fires of initiation" with reference to the mythical phoenix and its transformational ascent from the ashes. It is also mythologically represented by the hero's entry into the cave, the dragon's lair or the witch's castle; the crucifixion, wounding, or descent into the underworld; or as being swallowed by the whale. Scientifically, it is the evolutionary journey of life's continuous creation as it evolves through chaos into ever increasing levels of order, complexity and self-awareness.

For you to answer the question "Who am I?" and begin your quest for identity, you must, like the mythical hero, enter the dragon's lair or shadow world of chaos and death—the womb of the personal and collective unconscious. Entrance is achieved through penetrating, purposeful introspection. Once inside, you will confront the dragon of death, chaos and non-being and will be faced with two choices—to fight the dragon and risk death, or to run in fear. To fight the mythical dragon means to struggle against the static equilibrium of non-being, which is the fundamental source of all fear and anxiety that looms ever present in the underworld of the unconscious. To defeat the dragon is to defeat the tail-swallowing serpent of the uroborus (*Fig. 1-1*), the mythological symbol of the primal womb of unconsciousness and non-being whose siren call always beckons one back into the deep sleep of unconscious living. Defeating this uroboric dragon is the hero's deed of many mythologies, legends and literature (*Fig. 1-2*). Through its defeat, you are transformed into a higher state of consciousness and self-realization.¹ This act is self-affirming and transformational, because it reaffirms life and clarifies identity. Although it is mythologically an archetypically male act, all con-

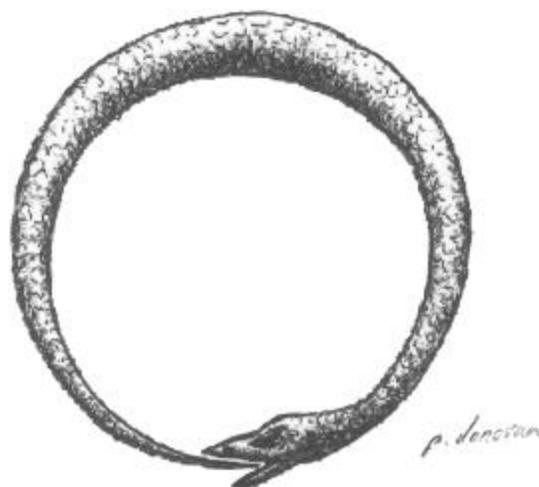


Fig. 1-1. The Uroborus. This is the mythological symbol of the Primal Serpent that is the most ancient deity of the prehistoric world. It appears in the art of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Africa, Mexico, South America, and India. There are pictures of it in Navajo sand paintings and alchemical texts. It is the Alpha and the Omega (the beginning and the end). It devours and yet gives birth to itself. It is the symbol of life in continuous creation and represents the Eternal Womb that has given birth to all.



Fig. 1-2. Pen and ink rendering by P. Donovan of Raphael's painting, St. George and the Dragon. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

scious, sentient beings, male or female, must experience this heroic act, as all who complete it will win their soul—the female archetype of the self-liberating wellspring of creativity, immortality and contextual identity often referred to as “The Holy Spirit.”² The irony, however, is that to defeat this uroboric dragon of non-being you must surrender your self to the reality of non-being. You must lose yourself to win yourself. More will be said about this in following chapters.

The courage and personal integrity required to undertake life’s heroic journey and achieve such a deed is impressive. The respected, contemporary theologian and philosopher, Paul Tillich, Ph.D., called this requisite valor “the courage to be.” In his book by that name, Tillich states, “The courage to be is the ethical act in which man affirms his own being in spite of those elements of his existence which conflict with his essential self-affirmation.”³ However, in the act of affirming one’s own being, the elements that conflict with this process are never eliminated. They cannot be eliminated because they are the elements of one’s own existence and belong to life itself. They are, instead, *transformed*. They become the fair maiden or virgin that is won, the magical child, the treasure hard to attain, the Holy Grail, the pearl of great price, the elixir of life, etc. All of which are the mystical and mythological representations of this transformational element—the frog who, once kissed, becomes the prince. In truth, they become the self-liberating wellspring of creativity and immortality through which the hero (the male archetype mythologically representing the conscious, egoic self of every individual) is revived and reborn anew as Thou—the female archetype of the eternal, all-inclusive, Infinite Self.

The passive equilibrium and inertia of non-being—of death—are overcome through the hero’s deed, and, by it, the limited, individualized consciousness of the *I* is united with the universal

consciousness and contextual identity of the Thou. In other words, through the death of the egoic self, the hero wins his soul, the feminine archetype or Holy Spirit that is the original, eternal and essential self from which *all creative acts* spring forth and through which *all life* is experienced as *Thou*. As psychologist and mythologist Erich Neumann informs us, “The hero myth is fulfilled only when the ego identifies with this self.”⁴ This situation only occurs “when the personality experiences dying as a simultaneous act of self-reproduction,” and the “twofold, finite self is reborn as the total Infinite Self.”⁵ Through this rebirth or resurrection, you realize your eternal and lasting essence and identity as part of the whole (as God), and move closer to becoming a perfected soul and escaping from the jaws of fate and the flux of instinctive, unconscious living. Through this rebirth, you step upon your path of destiny to rise above the instinctual trappings of the limited self (eat, sleep and procreate) to become the Greater Self that surpasses itself, the self whose self-affirmation, according to Tillich, “is virtue and courage.”⁶ Through this rebirth you live the mystery of life’s story and become the answer to its query.

The elements that resist

The elements that resist the expression of your greater identity appear in the guises of feelings and experiences that threaten you with pain, chaos, death, and non-being. According to Tillich, these elements are, at their very core, rooted in the anxiety of non-being and the fear of death.⁷ When you allow your fear and anxiety of these elements to dominate, circumscribe, and sculpt your life on any level, you deny yourself the experience of your “essential affirmation of being,” (your eternal and lasting essence and identity). In a sense, you deny yourself the hero’s deed. This can happen in varying degrees at any level of your life and when it does, life at that level is then lived disingenuously and passionlessly in a state of existence in conflict with itself. Being then, is not

affirmed and the specter of death and non-being looms ever present as the demons and dragons come forth from the caves and underworld of the unconscious as disease in all its various forms to ravage and pillage your mind, body and relationships to a degree correspondent to the depth of your denial. Anxiety-ridden, irresolute impotence and evolutionary paralysis eventually set in from the subconscious tension between unaffirmed being and the threat of non-being. The question of identity goes unanswered, and your potential, unfulfilled and unrealized.

The roots of illness

Through our research for this book, coupled with our years of clinical experience, we have found most people dwell in an existential quandary of identity. This is particularly true for those manifesting signs and symptoms of illness. They are either consciously unaware of their identity crisis or unable to fully live the hero's journey and manifest their true essential nature or essence of being, due to various psycho-emotional traumas that have occurred in their lives. The vital force of life that surges through them and drives the evolution of their consciousness on its sacred quest for identity is then suppressed and distorted within the various levels and aspects of their lives affected by these traumas. As a result, they feel trapped between the fear of being (living their essential nature or essence of being) and the fear of non-being (ego-death and meaninglessness). Caught in the mire of this identity confusion and haunted by the nagging, incessant disquietude of non-being and meaninglessness, they are either unable or unwilling to take the risk of discovering their essential essence and live fully and forthrightly in a manner consistent with who and what they really are. To ease or mitigate the distress of such a situation, they unconsciously rationalize the unimportance of the hero's quest, deny the existence of the dragons, and turn an apathetic, deaf ear to the cries of the fair, young virgin or magical

child—their soul. They then submerge themselves in the depthless realm of mind-altering substances and addictions; adult toys; status symbols; the insatiable pursuit of material wealth; and shallow, codependent, and dysfunctional interpersonal relationships absent of any real intimacy and meaning. At the same time, they will begin living their lives vicariously through the mindless melodramas of television sitcoms, the latest Super Bowl, reality TV, and virtual reality computer games. The degree to which they submerge themselves in these distractive and, at times, destructive living habits is directly associated with their degree of denial and/or need to escape the nagging discomfort of life's transformative demands. For some, it can be just a brief, periodic interlude—a periodic “vacation”—and is well balanced with “real living.” For others, it can be self-destructive.

This pattern of distracting, pacifying choices is not new to any of us. We are all familiar with such feeble attempts to narcotize and anesthetize ourselves to varying degrees from the disease of unrealized potential and the quiet desperation of unaffirmed being. Such choices, however, rob us of the rich, nourishing experiences of living passionately, intimately, sensually and authentically in the moment and tend only to exacerbate feelings of separateness and isolation. If, in the midst of this situation, we have no sense of connectedness to something greater than ourselves, no knowledge of the laws of causality, or no grand overview of the design of life, we easily succumb to a world ruled by fear and the irrationality of chance. At such a point, the strain of simple, daily existence becomes heavy and oppressive. Exhausted by the strain, while confused, frustrated and disillusioned from the futility of such hollow pursuits, our facade of superficial order crumbles into chaos as a pernicious, paralyzing depression sets in.

In this state of chaos, the dragons of unaffirmed being are freed from their chains of suppression and denial, and emerge as the

morbid phenomena of disease (physically, emotionally and psychologically). They rise from the unconscious and, if not confronted and transformed, devastate one's mind and body—one's preconceived notions of what life ought to be. To confront and transform these denizens of the unconscious is to confront and dispel the illusions that have distracted, detained and denied the full expression of your vital force and the evolutionary journey of your consciousness towards self-realization. If, caught in the throes of such a crisis, you are willing to risk death and the uncertainty of change, take up the fight, defeat the illusions of fear and free the virgin maiden—your essential and Infinite Self, illness can become the vehicle for self-affirming, healing transformation.

We believe illness is the evidence of life struggling to defeat and transform the monsters of unconscious illusions and fears and reaffirm itself against the inertia of equilibrium and non-being. In a more personal context, illness is the evidence of your essential Infinite Self, your own true essence of being, struggling to affirm itself against the inertia, complacency and denial of unconscious, uncreative, instinctual living. Ironically, this struggle, often experienced as illness, is also the process of life struggling to grow, transform and evolve. Therefore, as a process of life, *illness should not be eliminated or denied*. It is a heroic journey that should be experienced, passed through and transformed into health. Through illness, you can discover and dissolve the illusions that have denied the full expression of your vital force and essential self-affirmation. Through illness, you can be reborn anew from the limited, exclusive self of *I* into the eternal, all-inclusive self of *Thou*. Through illness you are healed—you are made whole again.

Healing and wholeness

All real healing is transformational and life affirming. All healing, like all illness, “knows only one goal: to make us become

whole.”⁸ It transforms the identity consciousness of the exclusive, individual I, which holds one prisoner to the illusion of separateness, into the inclusive *Thou* consciousness of universal, contextual identity. It is an act of unification and true individual self-affirmation where, as you become I you recognize your beingness in and identity with the whole—with “The Divine.” As Jewish mystic and philosopher Martin Beuber exclaims, “I become through my relationship to the *Thou*; as I become I, I say *Thou*.”⁹ The purpose of the hero’s journey and the secret of true healing lie within this transformational act.

This concept parallels the thinking of 17th century Jewish philosopher Baruch de Spinoza, considered one of the greatest of modern philosophers, who believed that true individual self-affirmation and, therefore, true healing, is an act of participation in the Divine self-affirmation, in the Divine Whole. He believed that when a soul recognizes itself, it recognizes its inherent beingness in God.¹⁰ *I*, then, is defined through its relationship to *Thou* (the Whole) as a part of the Whole. As you recognize your true essential nature of being (*I*), you recognize the true essential nature of the whole (*Thou*) of which you are a part and your participation within it. By this act of recognition, according to mystical tradition, the purpose of life is fulfilled (i.e., “God’s will to see God” is fulfilled).¹¹ By this act, the answer to the question “Who/What am I?” becomes self-evident, and the hero’s victory is realized. Also, by this act of recognition the mystery of life’s story is revealed, healing becomes complete, and the soul cries out ecstatically, “I Am that who I Am,” as it claims its unique beingness as an integral part of the universe and reflects that unique beingness back to The Face of God.¹² But essential to this revelational and transformational process is the illusion of separateness.