The book cover features a serene natural background. On the left, several bamboo stalks are visible, with a bright light source behind them creating a lens flare effect. In the foreground, a stack of smooth, dark grey stones is arranged vertically. A yellow fern frond is positioned behind the title text. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting a forest or garden setting. The title is written in a large, elegant serif font, with 'Life-Changing' in white and 'Spiritual Practices' in dark green. The authors' names are at the bottom in a smaller, dark green serif font.

Life- Changing Spiritual Practices

Volume 2

*Spiritual practices to build
into your lifestyle, as you
walk the spiritual path on practical feet.*

Rev. Bil Holton, Ph.D.
Rev. Cher Holton, Ph.D.

Life-Changing Spiritual Practices

Volume 2

*More individual spiritual practices to build
into your lifestyle, as you walk the spiritual
path on practical feet*

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YourSpiritualPractice.com

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To Your Higher Self – May you always be in alignment!

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Introduction

We are so excited as we share a second volume of Spiritual Practices with you, our reader! For us, spiritual practices are not just something you do when you have the time. In our opinion (and you'll hear us say that a lot!), spiritual practices are a way of life ... an intentional choice you make to put your spiritual beliefs and principles to practice in your daily life.

Obviously, some practices are very specific activities that are done in a block of time set aside for that purpose. Other practices, however, can be done in conjunction with the things you are doing every day. This book contains a combination of both, and offers you a smorgasbord, if you will, of different activities to guarantee you will find something that connects with you at a deep level.

We recommend that you give every practice a try, just to experience it. If it intrigues you, try it again. If you feel a deepening within your very Being, then you know you have a keeper! This is something to add to your repertoire of spiritual practices, which we hope you are continuing to build.

Spiritual practice refers to your intentional and purposeful spiritual journey inward beyond your five senses, mind and intellect to experience your God essence. Because its focus is on your inner beingness, we call it an insperience instead of an experience, which involves the five physical senses. This volume, like Vol. 1, consists of many soul deepening journeys.

It involves the choices you make, actions you take, soul deepening habits you adopt, and rituals you perform each day to nurture your connection with your Divine Nature. It means becoming consciously one with the Eternal Presence within expressing as your Higher Self so you can master the art of living by staying connected with your own truth and purpose.

Your spiritual focus is an intentional personal journey inward to accelerate your enlightenment. And you do that by building into each day spiritual practices that keep you focused on your spiritual growth. A spiritual practice is not a dogmatic path, nor is it a 'worship a white bearded god in the sky who is an entity separate from you' path. It is a path of Self-realization that acknowledges you are the human expression of the Eternal Presence (God Essence) expressing Itself as you.

Spiritual practices can take many forms—and that's the wonderful thing about making your life a spiritual practice. You can decide what practices you adopt for your over-all practice! While the forms of spiritual practices may differ, the intent is the same: nurturing the connection with your Higher Self which we call the Extraordinary You.

Life-Changing Spiritual Practices, Volume 2

The spiritual practices we share in Volume 2 are all sacred experiences, whether they involve just a few precious moments or take longer periods of time. Developing a regular spiritual practice will help you get the traction you need to live the life you want. We feel certain you'll find the perfect practices that align with your spiritual aspirations.

We applaud your desire to live a more spiritual life. The transformation you're seeking is possible when you enrich and enliven your life by adopting as many of these spiritual practices as your interests and time permit.

Choose what works for you. Adopting a practice is a personal decision. It must *feel* right. Be willing to "try out" a number of these practices. Look for a good fit between the practice and your current spiritual interests. Make the practices you choose high on your lifestyle priority list. See them as concrete evidence of walking your talk.



Spiritual Practices

Absent Healing

Absent healing (distance healing, remote healing) is healing that occurs when healers are not in direct physical contact with the person being healed. Absent healing is exactly what it sounds like: healing for someone who isn't in physical proximity. You can use the phone or Skype, or simply visualize his/her recovery and health at a specific day and time.

Absent healing is a very common practice within the Reiki healing system. However, you do not need to be a Reiki master to perform distance healing. Absent healing is energetic healing by intentionality, which means consciously directing your healing thoughts and energies toward the person who requests healing.

Some of the things you may want to be aware of in the remote healing process concerning major health issues are: knowing what people's health challenges are, how they fell ill or were injured, any medical diagnosis and/or projected prognosis, family medical history, and so on. However, you do not need all these details in order to practice energy healing.

An important thing to remember in any kind of healing of this type is that it doesn't take place in isolation. If the person is already under traditional medical care, the distant healing you are offering should be in addition to existing healing modalities.

Also understand that the healing offered may not be a 'cure.' You're working to help ease pain and discomfort. Your healing intervention brings balance back to the body, mind and spirit by seeing them 100% healthy and vibrant. The emphasis is on wholeness. The remote healer's role is sending the best, most positive, and heartfelt energy.

Here's How This Spiritual Practice Works:

Send white light and/or colored light to someone who isn't in close proximity to you. Pick a color that is related to the chakra associated with the area of the injury or illness. See the person surrounded with light. See any physical signs of h/her health issues dissolving and h/her body strengthening.

You can ask for the person's photo and prop it up as you visualize his/her health, and/or write his/her name on a sheet of paper to strengthen your connection in the physical world.

By the way, many studies have shown that not only does distant healing work but also that the distance between the healer and the one being healed makes no difference whatsoever, whether its 50 feet, 50 miles or 5,000 miles. Organizations such as The International Society for the Study of Subtle Energies and Energy Medicine (ISSSEEM) and The Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS), which was founded by Apollo 14 astronaut Edgar Mitchell, have research available supporting the efficacy of distant healing. (See our spiritual practice *Healing Affirmations* in Vol. 2).



Alphabiotic Thinking

Alphabiotic Thinking is the spiritual practice that supports the belief that faith is a necessary condition in the healing process and that all *disease* is the result of an imbalance and/or blockage in energies essential to health and well-being. Alphabiotics is the brainchild of Dr. V. B. Chrane who started practicing it in the 1920's.

The practice of Alphabiotics is concerned with the damage that unrelieved stress causes to the human body. Much of the stress we experience is caused by our negative reactions to the world of outer appearances. We see the world through the filters of the amygdala and tense up when we feel threatened. It is that very hypertension that blocks our being able to manifest our good from the Field of Infinite Potential.

While based on Chrane's Alphabiotic practice, this spiritual practice limits its focus purely toward alphabiotic thinking and not the head and neck realignments associated with Chrane's work.

Alphabiotic thinking, from a spiritual standpoint, champions the conscious alignment between our body, mind and soul. It is the kind of thinking that gets us out of the amygdala (our fight or flight propensity) and into our neocortex (the seat of our higher brain functions).

Neocortex is Latin for 'new bark.' It is our third brain in terms of evolution. It is what makes our judgments and our knowledge of good and evil possible. It is also the site from which our creativity emerges and it is the home of our sense of self (small 's' – human self) and Self (capital 'S' – Divine Self).

"The neocortex," says Carl Sagan in *Cosmos*, "is where matter is transformed into consciousness." Your alphabiotic thinking paired with your 'neo' sense of greater 'Self' contributes to your ability to comprehend esoteric and metaphysical concepts and principles.



Here's How This Spiritual Practice Works:

Create a neocortex moment! That is what alphabiotic thinking is all about. It keeps you out of negativity and limitation, and moves you toward positivity, optimism, and spirituality. Think alphabiotically by relaxing into a positive mindset so you can eliminate any negativity regardless of what you have experienced today. When you do this, it strengthens the brain's hemispheric alignment and serves as the bridge between physicality and Spirit.

Spend approximately 5-10 minutes with a specific intention of staying in a positive state of mind. If a worrisome thought slips in, thank it for sharing and allow it to pass through your conscious awareness without resisting its trespass.

Life-Changing Spiritual Practices, Volume 2

Say any positive affirmations that come to mind. You might want to have several positive affirmations available so you can repeat them. Breathe easily and smile after you vocalize each affirmation.

Use this spiritual practice to stay above the negativity you encounter. See positivity as your 'go to' setting regardless of the circumstances in which you find yourself. (See our *Positively Positive* spiritual practice in Vol.5).

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Managing Badware

In IT language, software that has been installed on a computer without the user's knowledge, consent, or control is called badware. From a spiritual perspective, badware is a term used to describe error thoughts, choices, and intentions that surface in your consciousness and catch you by surprise.

To extend that analogy, badware is anything that compromises your spiritual growth. It includes the actions you take as a result of your thinking and the consequences you suffer as a result of your poor choices. It also takes into account a faulty world view, self-defeating beliefs and bad habits. It even includes interpersonal relationships that are detrimental to your well-being.

Here's How This Spiritual Practice Works:

This spiritual practice encourages you to take a look at you badware and delete it from your life. Make a list of your most bothersome badware and prioritize the error thoughts, choices, habits, and intentions you want to eliminate first. Spend quality time on this practice.

'Paint a self-portrait' that is more in line with your professed spiritual beliefs, knowledge, and values. Promise yourself you will systematically eliminate the Self-negating badware from your spiritual walk. (See *Eliminate Mental Kudzu* spiritual practice in Vol. 3).

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Bonsai Contemplation

Bonsai is a Japanese art form that dates back over a thousand years. It uses miniature trees grown in containers as the focus for a contemplative experience. While Bonsai practice focuses on long-term cultivation and shaping of one or more small trees growing in a container, it serves as a metaphor for the ‘long-term cultivation and shaping’ of our innate divinity.



Here's How This Spiritual Practice Works:

Adopting the Bonsai Contemplation spiritual practice means concentrating only on a single word, thought, concept, teaching, spiritual experience, or item for a specified period of time. The time period can range from a few minutes each day to a couple of days every month. It's important to meditate, because some questions can't be answered by Google!

You do not need an actual Bonsai tree for this spiritual practice. The tree is simply the metaphor. However, if you really want to add the cultivation of a Bonsai tree to the practice, we certainly won't stand in your way!

As you put this practice into effect, you can meditate on a word or phrase at one sitting and/or use that same word or phrase as your mantra for a number of sittings. You can focus on a spiritual teaching for a given week or month by researching it online, attending a class on it, and/or discussing it with friends, teachers or mentors. You can reflect on a specific spiritual retreat experience by journaling about it and/or discussing it with someone who attended the same experience.

The nature of the Bonsai Contemplative experience is up to you. You can involve someone else or keep this practice purely private and individual. (See our *OM Oomphing* spiritual practice in Vol. 8).

Bum Rushing

In boxing terms, a ‘bum rush’ means trying as fast as you can to hustle the opponent out of the ring, and thus, out of the fight. It is a technique used to intimidate and confuse your opponent.

Bum Rushing as a spiritual practice means eliminating bad habits, poor choices, and/or negative language as fast as you can from your life. It is a spur-of-the-moment tactic used to reinforce your decision to not allow bad habits, poor choices, and negative language to form outposts in your consciousness.

Here’s How This Spiritual Practice Works:

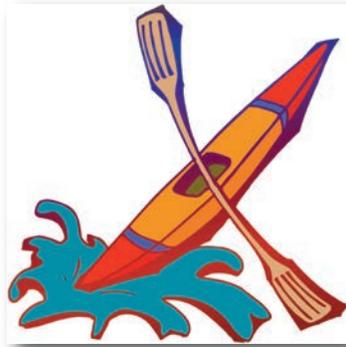
The essence of this spiritual practice is that eliminating anything that interferes and/or blocks your spiritual growth is based on the power of choice. So, ‘bum rushing’ invites you to simply – or not so simply – decide to stop repeating poor choices and actions that compromise your spiritual growth. It encourages you to see positivity as a virtue and negativity as ballast.

Although psychologists tell us it takes 21 days to change a pattern of behavior, the truth is all it takes is resolve and a willingness to honor your willpower instead of your ‘won’t power.’

That’s the basis of this spiritual practice. It reminds you that your personal, professional, and spiritual transformation are just a choice away. You can re-cause your experience by making your next choice ‘the choice’ that transforms your life. (See our *Let Go of Limbic Lingo* spiritual practice in Vol. 6).



Canoeing / Kayaking



The total immersion in a watery environment that is forced on the canoeist or kayaker demands an intimacy and focus with nature that is so easily missed when travelling in other ways—particularly when that mode of transportation is in cars, SUVs, buses, trucks, and the like.

Canoeing/Kayaking reminds you that your connectedness and oneness with living things is woven into the canopies of the trees lining the banks, the thickness of the scrubs bordering waterways, and the energy of the water as you move downstream. It reminds you of the interplay between vulnerability and resilience, going with the flow and engineering change, self-efficacy and patience, risk and preparation, finesse and awkwardness.

Whether you are canoeing or kayaking, flowing water is constantly changing, never repeats itself, and presents a line of travel that has endless trajectory changes. It requires concentration, contingency management, intuition, and listening constantly to your inner guidance. Working with the features that untamed rivers create in their tumble down natural landscapes gives rewards so deep that the experience penetrates your whole being.

You learn to respect the power of the river, riding its flow and judging its consequences. It teaches you awareness, trust, respect, and mindfulness. The natural forces that surround you have no ill will and do not care about your financial status, political power or position.

Canoeing and kayaking rivers epitomize the art of staying comfortable, dry, and safe by merging with the force of nature. They represent the art of styling down waterways with grace and smoothness, blending with the primordial energy that flows from the heart of the earth, transforming mishap into safety and fun. The rewards are unique, compelling, and soul deepening as a spiritual practice.

Here's How This Spiritual Practice Works:

Take a canoe and/or kayak trip. Experience the *feeeeel* of the lake or river. If it's your first canoe or kayak outing, get some pointers before you start. If you choose a river, feel the power of the river as you ride its flow and judge its direction. Experience the vulnerability and resilience, going with the flow and engineering change, self-efficacy and patience, risk and preparation, finesse and awkwardness.

The stillness of a lake also has its contemplative benefits. See if you can sense what the lake teaches you. Include the landscape bordering the lake in your assessment. Enjoy both types of water worlds. (See our *Cycling / Motorcycling* spiritual practice in Vol. 3.)

Confessing on the Run

Confessing on the Run is a spiritual practice that helps you recognize (confess) an error thought, word, and/or action on your journey toward enlightenment and correct the mistake by choosing a more spiritual thought, word, and/or action in its place. That's the only confession you have to make—confessing to yourself!

Here's How This Spiritual Practice Works:

Whenever an error thought or inclination surfaces, simply acknowledge it without giving it much energy and replace it immediately with a spiritually-attuned thought or intention.

If you say something you wish you hadn't said, forgive yourself immediately, recognizing that the errant word or phrase is not who you are. If you do something that is uncharacteristic of you, apologize to yourself or to the person on the receiving end of your discordant behavior and resolve not to do it again.

The important thing to remember is that you are in control of whatever you think, feel, say and do! This spiritual practice reminds you of the control you have. So, confess on the run. You don't have to slow your spiritual growth by dwelling on your missteps. Focus on the spiritual you. (See our *Fasting From Error* in Vol. 1).



Controlling Cringe-Worthy Slips

We've all said something or done something that we've regretted. We call these boo-boos *cringe-worthy slips*. Cringe-worthy slips are thoughts you have, choices you've made, and actions you've taken that are totally uncharacteristic of you. People closest to you wonder where that slipup came from.

These boo-boos are missteps, lapses in judgment, and unfortunate blunders. They even include miscues that you have not shared with anyone else because you feel embarrassed to have had them.

They usually take the form of unkind slights and hurtful insinuations. They may include expletives and obscenities that belittle your Divine Nature. Blasphemous statements and selfish choices that tarnish your credibility cause people around you to cringe. All of these foolish actions stain your truth walk.

Here's How This Spiritual Practice Works:



Correcting these slip-ups takes conscientious practice. It involves a little tact and diplomacy, and a lot of soul searching. Recognizing these miscues for what they are and clearing your consciousness are actions you must take if you want to walk the walk.

We recommend creating powerful denial statements, along with their accompanying affirmations, to cleanse these slips from your thoughts and behaviors.

Denial statements are powerful statements that refuse to give power to the world of outer appearances. In this case, denial statements are your refusal to give power to your slip-ups and miscues.

For example, when you catch yourself thinking of a hurtful thing to say or of an unkind action to take, think to yourself or say out loud:

- “I reject any and all forms of hurtfulness and harshness” or
- “I dismiss any thoughts and actions that lead to unhealthy criticism” or
- “I purge all sourness and acidity from my consciousness.”

The process of releasing cringe-worthy slips is an important spiritual practice because it is an intentional ‘letting go’ practice. And it is the kind of ‘letting go’ that shows your spiritual growth progress. Each of the slip-up corrections is a demonstration of your awareness and resolve to ‘up your consciousness.’ (See our *Pest Management* spiritual practice in Vol. 5).

Divinely Ordering Your Experience

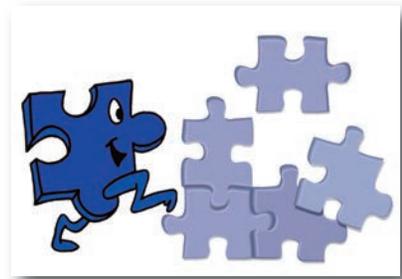
Divinely ordering your experience, as a spiritual practice, is based on the creative process of Mind, Idea, and Expression that occurs within us. It means working all things together for good. It advocates turning millstones into milestones.

This spiritual practice helps you understand that Divine Order is not an external God-generated fiat or something a celestial deity imposes upon you. Divine Order is not an event. It is a process. It is not a noun. It is a verb. It is not a pre-determined outcome. It is a pre-emptive course of action on your part, as a Divine being in human form, to manifest something visible from the invisible.

Because Divine Order is the creative process of Mind – Idea – Expression it is an intentional act of creation. You can divinely order your good or you can misapply Divine Order and create error expressions. A Divine Idea can be expressed spiritually or selfishly. Spiritually expressed, it is a capital “D” Divine Idea. Selfishly expressed, it is ‘diddlysquat order’ since a Divine Idea has been misapplied.

Here’s How This Spiritual Practice Works:

Divinely Order your experience from the consciousness of your oneness with Spirit. This means taking that extra moment to pause, breathe, and consciously ask yourself how you can best Divinely Order your next thought, word, or action. It means denying any power to diddlysquat order, which is a millstone perspective allowing your fractured and frightened ego to tempt you into believing you are separated from Spirit, you are not a Divine being, and all good things must come to an end. From your Divine nature, you know this is not true!



Remember that you are always Divinely Ordering your human experience. There is always an order to what you are doing! If you’re like most people, you don’t always use it at its highest, most elevated level of consciousness. Be aware that sometimes you Divinely Order your life, and other times you manifest what we lovingly call diddlysquat order!

Practice Divinely Ordering your good so it is a conscious process of allowing your prosperity and good to flow through you. Affirm your highest and best at all times. Recognize that the Field of Infinite Potential is available to you each-consecutive-moment-of-now!

This spiritual practice helps you see that you create your good through the thoughts you have, the words you say, the choices you make, and the actions you take. (See our *Millstones Into Milestones* spiritual practice in Vol. 5).

Reversing Dogma

The spiritual view of dogma is in reverse order from a religious perspective. **Dogma spelled backwards is ‘am god.’** Wasn’t it the Christ as Jesus who said, “Ye are gods?”

In *The Complete Works of Meister Eckhart*, the mystic is quoted as asserting that “God is novissimus (the newest thing there is). He championed “celebrating an ancient tradition of the childlikeness of divinity—a divinity that is not old and tired, controlling and judgmental, but spontaneous, playful, erotic, full of surprises.”

Also, in *Why Christianity Must Change or Die*, Bishop John Shelby Spong sounds a rousing call for “a Christianity based on critical thought rather than blind faith.”



Essentially, dogma is a cookie cutter outlook. If the truth be told, it’s a spiritual lobotomy; theological fog; awfulizing scriptural interpretation; spiritual inertia; missing the forest for the trees. It’s a conviction that resembles the purr of a dog and the bark of a cat. It’s a religious fiasco, spiritual sterility,

religious thoughts that ossify into empty formulas, Jurassic theology.

Dogma asphyxiates itself on its own lack of depth. It’s a ‘walled’ religious perspective that is filled with smidgeons of false assumptions, pinches of inaccuracies, and light touches of misconceptions concerning the nature of things. It is fear-based religious indoctrination.

Here’s How This Spiritual Practice Works:

Simply put, this spiritual practice helps you put dogma in its proper place by **DEFRIENDING IT!** Because the light of the dogmatic lamppost keeps many people in the dark, this spiritual practice invites you to graduate from the dogmatic tool shed. Keep an open mind. Realize that dogma will stifle your spiritual growth.

Defriend dogma as a default strategy! Recognize that it slows down your Self-realization process. It puts the breaks on your spiritual growth. Carve out periods of time devoted to identifying the dogmas you have working in your belief system, then question their validity. Turn your dogmas around and claim the Truth of who you really are—God expressing at the point of you! (See our *Question Unquestioned Answers* spiritual practice in Vol. 8.

If we had more space, we’d really tell you how we feel about dogma!

D r e a m O n

The thought of including a spiritual practice on dream interpretation was both appealing and cautious for us: appealing because dreams are one of the royal roads to self-discovery and transformation; cautious because of the high probability that most people will at best make only superficial attempts at understanding and interpreting their nocturnal ‘videos’ – despite the fact that sleep occupies a third of our lives and is one of the important channels for the guidance from our Higher Self (our SuperSelf™, the Extraordinary Us) to seep into our conscious awareness.

Having justified this spiritual practice with these opening statements, we invite you to explore the world of dreams as a highly credible divine connection mechanism.

Dreams are nocturnal messages from ourselves to ourselves. Some dreams are prophetic; others call for emotional and physical growth and transformation. Still others are warnings to clean up our human acts. Many are re-enactments from the day’s activities (known as day residue). Dreams are truly one of our magic mirrors toward self-recovery and actualization. The power of dreams to lift people to the heights of unprecedented spiritual enlightenment is well documented.

You have the opportunity to connect with your your Higher Self, your Divinie Self, through the symbolism of dreams. An experience from a single dream can shape your destiny and bring many rewarding ideas, insights, and spiritually significant aha’s. Solutions to life’s worrisome challenges and persistent life patterns that seem to limit your good most definitely appear in dreams.

Here’s How This Spiritual Practice Works:

We invite you to keep a dream log for no less than six months. If you do not intend to devote that kind of time and energy to this important spiritual practice, we suggest you choose another practice and revisit this one when you’re ready to explore dreams.

If you’re willing to explore this nocturnal avenue to become more aligned with your True Self, we encourage you to spend a few moments reviewing the *Thirteen Dream Appreciation Hints* and *Twenty Basic Dream Recall Hints* that appear on the next couple of pages.

We believe dreams are cosmic faxes sent to us from the other dimensions of our being. Whether dream or nightmare, they materialize to help us become more whole. And they are one of the royal roads toward uniting the human you with the spiritual you.

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Thirteen Dream Appreciation Hints

1. Recognize that every dream is sent to offer the dreamer help, health, and happiness.
2. Walk the mystical path with practical feet. Interpret dreams literally first by examining signs of objective truths such as warnings, reminders, health issues, and so forth. Then consider the esoteric and metaphysical implications of the dream elements and symbols.
3. Consider the relationship of each dream theme to some event or preoccupation of the previous day or two (called day residue).
4. Analyze the emotional tone of the dream and its relationship to your current life dramas.
5. Realize that recurrent dream themes may have different expressions depending on where you are in consciousness at the time of the dream.
6. Recognize that dreams come to expand and transform us, not to diminish or frighten us.
7. Believe that the best interpreter of your dreams is yourself – your own unfailing guru within.
8. Know that your dreams are as real as your waking life.
9. Appreciate the fact that each dream has several levels of meaning.
10. Recognize that a series of dreams that occur during the same night often has a unifying theme.
11. Nightmares usually indicate poor or inadequate diet. They are also psychic ‘awakeners’ that direct you to clean up your act.
12. Look for past life experiences in your dreams. Usually they manifest in color and appear with the proper attire of the era. They generally warn against repeating the same old mistakes or hanging onto the same outdated attitudes or beliefs.
13. Do not fear conversations with those who have died. If the communication is one-sided, it may denote telepathy. Dialogues may suggest actual transpersonal or cosmic encounters.

Fourteen Basic Dream Recall Hints

1. A conscious commitment and desire to remember your dreams is probably the single most important step in dream recall.
2. Decide what means you will use to record your dreams and place everything you'll need next to where you're sleeping. The more convenient and accessible your recording materials and devices are, the easier it will be for you to capture your dreams in writing.
3. Establish pre-sleep incubation rituals.
4. If you awaken during a dream, immediately record a few key words, impressions, and images. Procrastination is a thief in the night.
5. If you don't recall any dreams upon awakening, move into habitual sleeping positions and dialogue with your dreaming mind.
6. If dream recall seems to be difficult, visualize some of the faces of people you have strong emotional responses to in waking life.
7. Join a dream appreciation group. Attend dream appreciation workshops.
8. Add low dose B-complex vitamins to your diet.
9. Repression of repugnant dream material which is too intense or disturbing is shoved into your transpersonal storehouse for future integration. Therefore, some highly emotionally charged content may not surface until you are psychodynamically ready.
10. Before drifting to sleep, visualize yourself waking up during the night and remembering clearly several dreams or dream fragments.
11. Keep a dream diary.
12. Read articles about dreams, listen to CD's, watch TV shows and documentaries about dreams. (An interest in mysticism, meditation, psychoanalysis, or hypnosis will also help unlock the dream gates).
13. Eliminate lifestyle saboteurs of dream recall such as late night eating, alcoholic beverages, sleeping pills, poor or inadequate diet.
14. Confront unrealistic fears and expectations about the nature of the dream content. Recognize that sexual fantasies, uncharacteristic behaviors, and dreams of death are common themes.

Efficacious Grace

Grace is a term present in many religions. It is defined as the divine influence which operates in you to regenerate and sanctify you when you mess up, to inspire virtuous impulses within you, and to strengthen you in order to endure trials, tribulations, and temptations.

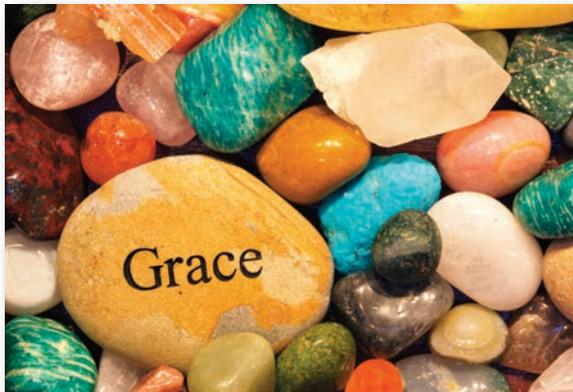
Metaphysically, grace refers to your corrective next steps whether they are in the form of amended thoughts, edited choices, and/or ameliorated actions. It is efficacious grace that re-causes your experience and saves you from the consequences of your errant thoughts, words and actions.

The 'divine influence' is the Divine Nature within you. It is your Higher Self which gives you the wherewithal to give up the false for the truth. This spiritual practice helps to strengthen your alignment with your Divine Nature through conscious improvement, modification, and self-correction.

Here's How This Spiritual Practice Works:

Efficacious Grace as a spiritual practice is your immediate and spontaneous awareness of self-sanctification. It involves choosing a spiritual thought, word, and action over worldly thoughts, words, or actions.

The practice involves becoming consciously aware of the impact of the choices you are making. At any moment you catch yourself feeling uncomfortable with the consequences of a choice, stop. Instantly. Take a deep breath. Ask yourself what choice you can make in this moment to be more in alignment with the Truth of who you are.



Affirm your ability to recause your experience with the next choice you make. Then—make it!

This is a self-monitoring practice that assures your conscious awareness of living in the now moment. It is the conscious tracking of your now-momentness. Your next divinely-attuned thought, word, or action is your saving grace. Why? Because it re-causes your next experience. Each time you choose a spiritual thought, word, and action over worldly thoughts, words, or actions you are saved. You can't get any more efficacious than that!

(See our *Make Consistent Codified Choices* spiritual practice in Vol. 4).

Refraining From an Exclusivity Bias

A religious exclusivity bias is characterized by believing a particular faith tradition is the only way to salvation. Unfortunately, religion's exclusivity bias derails it from its more spiritual and mystical roots, and thus, its enlightenment value. Until and unless it gets back on track religion's exclusivity derailment will prevent it from reaching the station and status it deserves. It may also interfere with your spiritual growth.

Here's How This Spiritual Practice Works:

This spiritual practice invites you to be more inclusive in your thinking, being, and doing when it comes to expressing your spirituality. It encourages you to consider the best practices, rituals, teachings, ceremonies, and principles of other faith traditions that can enrich your own spiritual growth.

We're not suggesting that you leave your current faith tradition. This spiritual practice can be an integrative path that enriches your current practice by expanding your horizons. Besides the obvious best practices, many faith traditions have an esoteric side that will take you to higher realms of thought that not only will deepen your faith but show you that at an esoteric level all religions are more similar than different.

Refraining from an exclusivity bias will accelerate your enlightenment because you won't find yourself 'walled in' by the dogma of a particular faith tradition. (See our spiritual practices *Dump One Channeled Religion* in Vol. 7 and *Refrain From Mono-Cropping* in Vol. 9).



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An In-Depth Reading and Spiritual Practice:

Faith It Till You Make It

The title of this spiritual practice came from our frustration with a phrase we heard far too often: Fake it till you make it. While we understood the idea behind the phrase, it really grated on us because the emphasis was on faking, which never leads to authenticity. We spent a lot of time discussing what the phrase was actually coaching people to do, and came up with our own rephrasing of the quote to say: ‘Faith It Till You Make It.’ That really resonated with us, and we feel a need to spend a little more time digging deeper into the whole idea of Faith as a Spiritual Practice!



In her book, *God Is No Laughing Matter*, Julia Cameron says: “Faith means walking blindfolded in a way—knowing we are moving toward our goal. That’s exactly what great saints have done. They’ve stepped out on faith by listening to the still small voice.”

Listening to the still small voice takes courage. And courage is a heart thing which makes faith an exercise in heart-to-head resuscitation.

Two thousand years ago, the apostle Paul gave one of the most compelling definitions of faith: “Faith,” he said, “is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” That’s exactly what faith is—looking beyond outer appearances. Faith is doing within while you’re doing without. (Repeat that last sentence to yourself several times. We’ll wait!)

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Emilie Cady assures us in her book, *God a Present Help*: “Although invisible to our mortal eyes ... a persistent, unwavering affirmation that it is done ... brings into manifestation whatever we desire.”

Faith has momentum. It has centrifugal force. It is knowing something to be true before you can see it, touch it, wrap your intellect around it. It is patient expectation, unadulterated trust in Divinely Ordered experience.

Notice we said Divinely Ordered experience instead of Divine Order. Divine Order is one of the most misunderstood New Thought concepts. It is most often used in the traditional sense that there is a God ‘out there’ engineering everything that happens to us. The belief is there is a pre-set order for our lives, a sort of cosmic regimentation we have to follow.

Most people get Divine Order out-of-order because they fail to see its connection to faith. Here’s the connection. It is a connection that has worked for mystics and spiritual teachers for thousands of years, and it can work for you!

The strength of your faith is the wattage! Your unflinching belief in the process is the amperage! Your patient expectation will accelerate your good!

‘Faith it till you make’ it is not just a cute phrase. It is the secret to manifesting your good. Our job, our privilege as Unity ministers, is to help you turn faith into a spiritual practice so you can grow the kind of faith that can help you move both literal and figurative mountains.

Apples, Oranges, and the Condo of Faith

If we planted an apple seed and cared for it, would you believe we could actually grow an apple tree? If we squeezed an orange, would you believe we'd actually get orange juice?

If we visualized an abundant flow of prosperity flowing through our connection with the Field of Infinite Potential, would you believe we could demonstrate prosperity?

Why is it so easy to believe, without a doubt, that apple seeds produce apple trees, and oranges produce orange juice — but so difficult to believe that the Field of Infinite Potential is readily available for us to produce everything we need? Maybe it has something to do with what people have actually seen and experienced, versus what they have been told, but haven't actually experienced.

This truly is the foundation of faith! In John 20:29, Jesus said to Thomas, “Because you have seen me, you have believed: blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.”

Believing even when we have not seen: that's faith. But we think it is really important to recognize that faith is a powerful essence which we can develop and grow. People criticize themselves when it appears they don't have the faith they think they should, and beat themselves up.

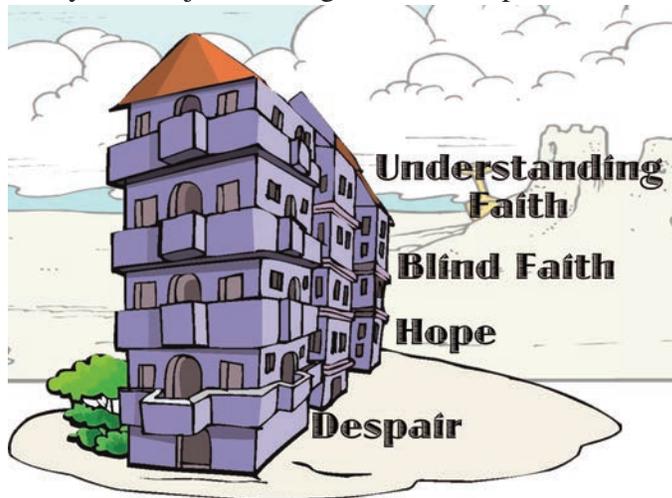
If you decide to learn to play the piano, do you sit down and expect to play Mozart perfectly on your first sitting? If you decide to take up golf or tennis, do you expect to walk

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in and hit the perfect drive or land the perfect serve on your first lesson? If you decide to take up ballroom dancing, do you expect to go out on the dance floor and do a professional-level routine your first day out? Of course not!

Whenever you take up a new skill or hobby, you realize there is a learning curve, and you go in expecting a learning curve before you get good! You know you will go through a period of seeing your ability grow, as you willingly put in the time to practice and learn. And you also discover that with each thing you learn, there is another level to tackle. There's always more to learn. Even professionals work with coaches, and continue to refine and perfect their skills, always pushing the envelope and discovering new and better ways to do things in their chosen field.

Why should the development of your faith faculty be any different? So here's what you need to know about faith. First of all: You never have no faith! That's a convoluted sentence, isn't it? But think about it. Faith is one of the divine powers inherent within us. It's our responsibility to quicken or strengthen it. So, people are really being incorrect when they say, "I lost my faith or I don't have any faith." You cannot lose your faith - you might just have forgotten how to use it. The comforting knowledge is that your faith is always there, just waiting to be developed.



Emilie Cady, in her masterpiece *Lessons In Truth*, talks about the different levels of faith. From her work, we have created a continuum of faith, which helps us identify where we are in a certain situation—and also helps us recognize the truth of where we can be. We like to call it *the Condo of Faith*. Here's how it works:

We begin with Hope. Hope takes a lot of flack in spiritual circles as a kind of cop out, but we want to go on record saying hope is

an important element on our spiritual journey, because hope provides the stimulus to keep someone moving forward when otherwise they may give up. It's kind of like training wheels! And when we don't have a really strengthened faith faculty, hope is the light at the end of the tunnel that keeps our journey going in the right direction! You hear people say things like, "Don't give them false hope." We personally believe there is no such thing as false hope. There are lies, and wishful thinking, but if there is hope, it is real and powerful and affirming.

So, why don't we just want to operate at the hope level? When we work from a basis of hope, we tend to live in a fearful state, concerned that we may or may not receive. And in the Hope state, we fall into the habit of seeing affirmations, dream boards, and

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visualizations as magic bullets. If we don't say it just right, or create it perfectly, we won't manifest the result. But it's a start, and we've all been there (at different times in different situations!).

We want to move up the Faith Ladder, from hope to Blind Faith. Blind faith is where we move forward, instinctively feeling that wherever we are, God is, and all is well. There is light at the end of the tunnel, and we don't know how or why, but we just believe things will work out. Blind Faith is higher than hope on our continuum, because it is based on Truth, but we may find ourselves having to reassure ourselves often that it will work, it may be hit and miss, and we may question it often when we don't see the results we expect as quickly as we expect them. But the important thing is that we persist, and continue to hold strong to the truth we believe and use the tools, even if we aren't sure why. Blind Faith is like magic -- it is only magic until we know how it is done! As we grow and learn.

We are able to move to the higher level of Faith—Understanding Faith. This is where we know and understand that there are spiritual laws as immutable as physical laws. For example, we know that the law of gravity just is, and when someone is jumping off a building, the law does not question who the person is, what job they have, or how much money or power they possess. The law operates as it operates. When people jump, they fall. They will have a hard, maybe fatal landing, or if they chose to have the right equipment, they will experience an amazing planned adventure. It wasn't the law's decision — the law operated. The people involved knew the law, and chose how they would use it.

Once we realize that spiritual laws operate the same way, our move into that powerful level of Understanding Faith assures us of the results that will follow. And that brings us to one other similarity between our apple seed and our orange analogies: you have to do something to get the desired result.

To quote Emilie Cady: “One of the unerring truths in the universe is that supply always awaits the demand. Another truth is that the demand must be made before the supply can come forth.” (You could have a bank account filled with money, but the only way to access it is to request a withdrawal.) To recognize these two statements of truth and to affirm them are the whole secret of understanding faith based on principle!" When we operate from Understanding Faith, we can say, "We will have the funds and resources necessary to move forward with this project" with as much conviction as we say, "We will squeeze this orange and get orange juice!"

We believe that children have Understanding Faith, until we train it out of them. Then we have to redevelop it as adults. Here's a great example of Understanding Faith in action in a story from *Guidepost Magazine*. It is about a little girl named Scoop:

Her family had recently moved to a new house, and used every cent they had to make the move. One of the great things about the new house was a little garden shed out back, that Scoop could use as a playhouse. She loved being out there, with her dolls, creating little tea parties and pretend sewing circles.

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She decided she would like the playhouse better if it had a real floor, instead of the dirt floor which made things dusty and dirty. But her mom just said, "We can't afford to put a new floor in there right now. Maybe later." And Scoop, her eyes gleaming, said, "I know I am going to have a real floor in that play house!" And every day, Scoop would go out to the playhouse, tell her dolls that they were getting ready for the new floor that was coming, and she would diligently sweep the dirt floor to get it looking as good as possible.

One day, Scoop's mother hear her yelling, "Mom, come quick!" She ran out to the playhouse, and looked in amazement! Sure enough, showing up underneath the layers and layers of years of dirt that had accumulated, the original brick floor of the playhouse was beginning to appear. That "real floor" had been there all along, but only through the belief and diligence of a little girl, who KNEW she would have that floor and did everything to prepare for it by her constant sweeping, was the floor able to emerge!

Your abundance, inner peace, and joy is here, right now, right in front of you. You can know it, because a great spiritual teacher called the Christ as Jesus said, "I have come that you might have life, and have it more abundantly!" And He directed us, "Affirm, believing you have received..." You can KNOW, without any doubt, that you can 'faith it till you make it' when you put this spiritual practice into practice!

Here's How This Spiritual Practice Works:

Put faith into action. Faithfully believe in the reality of what is not yet seen and believe in your worthiness to receive it. When you do that you will Divinely Order your good. (You may want to read that again).

Be conscious of what level of Faith you are operating from at any given time. Understand that you will probably move from the 'Hope' level of awareness, to the 'Blind Faith' level of awareness, to the 'Understanding Faith' level of awareness. And that's okay because each is a step closer to actualizing your divine potential.

Move forward on your spiritual journey by recognizing it as a process of growing and developing your Faith Quotient. That means 'Faithing it till you make it' through practice. Affirm the truth of what you know. Deny any power of doubt over you. Move forward, claiming the good that is yours by right of consciousness! And become fully aware of your Divine Nature! Bless the inflow and outflow of everything in your life, knowing that it is good. (See our *Fill Your Life With Faith Lifts* spiritual practice in Vol. 4, and our chapter of Faith in *Power UP Your Life! Accessing Your Twelve Powers to Achieve Health, Happiness, Abundance, and Inner Peace*).

This ends the Sample of Volume 2. You can
order the entire book at:
The Global Center for Spiritual Awakening

About the Authors



Combine a flair for the dramatic, a deep understanding of metaphysics, an ability to think outside the box, and a knack for bringing scientific research and spiritual practices to life in practical ways, and you have defined the dynamic duo who co-authored this book. This exciting couple thrives on inviting people to walk the spiritual path on practical feet.

Revs. Bil and Cher Holton bring quite a background of business experience to their spiritual work. Together they founded The Holton Consulting Group, Inc. in 1982, and have worked with clients in the U.S., Canada, Germany, England, and South America, with a mission of leading, guiding, and inspiring people and organizations to live productively and joyfully at the speed of life ... one choice at a time.

As a subsidiary of their consulting firm, the Holtons created two publishing enterprises: Liberty Publishing Group (focusing on professional and personal publications) and Prosperity Publishing House (for spiritual material). They have published over 50 titles, including the highly acclaimed Metaphysical versions of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and the Book of Revelation (the first ever verse-by-verse metaphysical interpretations of these New Testament books). They've also published metaphysical interpretations of the best-loved scriptures of the rest of the New Testament books in two volumes.

In 2005, the Holtons made the decision to follow their hearts, and entered into a spiritual training program that has led them to become ordained Unity ministers. After serving two different churches in North Carolina, they moved to a more global, catalytic role and co-founded The Global Center for Spiritual Practices, with a mission to guide and inspire people to walk the spiritual path on practical feet, by tapping into their Divine Nature.

On a personal note:

Bil and Cher take what they call "Indiana Jones Experiences" including white-water rafting, sky-diving, helicopter fly-bys and even fire walking to push their risk-taking envelopes. But one of their most exciting adventures led them into the world of ballroom dancing, and they are amateur student couple champions in several ballroom dance categories. They even have a ballroom dance floor in their home!

The Holtons have two sons, beautiful daughters-in-law, and seven incredible grandchildren who live close to them, providing many opportunities for fun!

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A Sampling of Other Books by the Holtons:

By Rev. Dr. Bil Holton:

The Gospel of Matthew, New Metaphysical Version; The Gospel of Mark, New Metaphysical Version; The Gospel of Luke, New Metaphysical Version; The Gospel of John, New Metaphysical Version

The Book of Revelation, New Metaphysical Version

Ruff-Housing With Religious Dogma

Rev. Bil Unplugged and Unedited

Get Over It! The Truth About What You Know That Just Ain't So! (co- authored with Paul Hasselbeck)

Get Over These, Too! More Truth About What You Know That Just Ain't So! (Co-authored with Paul Hasselbeck)

By Rev. Dr. Cher Holton:

Extraordinary Leadership

Living at the Speed of Life: Staying in Control in a World Gone Bonkers!

PowerUP: The Twelve Powers Revisited as Accelerated Abilities (co- authored with Paul Hasselbeck)

Applying Heart-Centered Metaphysics: A Workbook to Bring Metaphysics To Life in Your Life (co-authored with Paul Hasselbeck)

Co-Authored by Revs. Drs. Bil & Cher Holton:

Power Up Your Life! Accessing Your Twelve Powers to Achieve Health, Happiness, Abundance, and Inner Peace

Spiritually Speaking: A Metaphysical Interpretation of Spiritual, Religious, and Modern Day Secular Terms ... for those who are more spiritual than religious

Straight Talk About Spiritual Stuff

Reconciling the Church's Science Phobia: The Dance Between Science and Spirituality

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The Manager's Short Course to a Long Career

Crackerjack Choices: 200 of the Best Choices You Will Ever Make

From Ballroom to Bottom Line ... in business and in life

Business Prayers for Millennium Managers

SUPPOSE ... Questions to Turbo-Charge Your Business and Your Life

They also have many digital books available in a variety of formats through Smashwords.com/profile/view/bilholton

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**To order books or invite the Holtons to speak at your organization,
spiritual center, or association, contact them at:**

cher@holtonconsulting.com

We invite you to visit their cutting-edge website, read their blog, listen to their transformative podcasts, and sign up for their newsletter at:

<https://TheGlobalCenterForSpiritualAwakening.com>

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