

# I N T E G R A L L I F E P R A C T I C E

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A 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Blueprint for Physical Health,  
Emotional Balance, Mental Clarity, and Spiritual Awakening



KEN WILBER, TERRY PATTEN,  
ADAM LEONARD & MARCO MORELLI

“From the moment I began an Integral Life Practice, it was as if my life was assigned a new trajectory and course setting from deep within the cockpit of my soul. ‘Glory upon Glory’ is the way my days are unfolding since I began to practice. An ILP is an incredible catalyst to growth in ways that I could never have imagined. See for yourself!”

— **EDDIE KOWALCZYK**, lead singer-songwriter of Live

“*Integral Life Practice* is an extraordinary achievement. Comprehensive, detailed, and powerfully rational, it inspires any and all of us to consider more deeply how profound is our embrace of the life we are living. The searing clarity of the integral perspective leaps off every page of this manual for personal evolution, clearly illuminating what it means to be fully alive!”

— **ANDREW COHEN**, spiritual teacher  
and founder of EnlightenNext

“Ken Wilber’s Integral Theory has created a road map. Now Terry Patten, Adam Leonard, and Marco Morelli have added a GPS (Global *Practicing* System) with *Integral Life Practice*. Travelers on the spiritual path will find this book indispensable.”

— **BROTHER DAVID STEINDL-RAST**, Benedictine monk, author of *Listening Heart: The Spirituality of Sacred Sensuousness and Gratefulness, The Heart of Prayer: An Approach to Life in Fullness* and cofounder of Gratefulness.org

“Once again, Ken Wilber and his colleagues have taken a big subject, swallowed the whole thing and the kitchen sink too, and then spent years working to understand it, digest it, metabolize it, and then translate it into clear prose and helpful practices. And the outcome? This wonderfully helpful manual for living: *Integral Life Practice*. A fantastic resource for a more peaceful, meaningful, intelligent, and exuberant life.”

— **ELIZABETH LESSER**, author of *Broken Open: How Difficult Times Can Help Us Grow, The Seeker’s Guide*, and cofounder of Omega Institute

“*Integral Life Practice* will help you build the healthy foundation from which you can wake up to your transcendent nature or Big Mind. Western aspirants have long needed a universal practice manual that wisely draws upon ancient traditions and modern science and psychology. Now we have it—an inspiring, straightforward guide for living a truly harmonious, awakened life.”

— **ZEN MASTER DENNIS GENPO MERZEL**,  
author of *Big Mind, Big Heart: Finding Your Way*

“Ken Wilber and the authors of this clearly written, sensible, well-informed book are fellow explorers with George Leonard and me in the development of integral transformative practices. Such practices grow out of a philosophic vision dawning across the world that joins our aspiration for personal and social transformation with both science and the contemplative traditions. This book will advance this developing worldview and the disciplines needed to actualize it.”

— **MICHAEL MURPHY**, author of *The Future of the Body* and *The Life We Are Given* and cofounder of Esalen Institute

*“Integral Life Practice* offers a finely honed distillation of some of the most effective and universal practices from the great wisdom traditions, at the same time presenting a context for practice that is both soaring and sensible. True to its title, it takes seriously the human need for fully balanced development, for depth as well as breadth, for psychological as well as spiritual development, for softness and toughness, for ethics and bold experimentation. Beautifully written, laid out in accessible modules, the book is truly an on-and-off-the-mat guide to 21<sup>st</sup>-century practice, arising from that place in us which stands in the best of tradition, yet rides the cutting edge.”

— **SWAMI SALLY KEMPTON**, author of *The Heart of Meditation: Pathways to a Deeper Experience*

*“This book spells out how to apply Integral philosophy to everyday life by working with body, mind, spirit, and the deeper psychological aspects of ourselves. Integral Life Practice* presents a useful map of one’s existential condition leading toward the attainment of the highest states of consciousness.”

— **TRALEG KYABGON RINPOCHE**

*“Integral Life Practice* is a masterpiece guide of grounded, intelligent, self-transforming wisdom integrating the insights of all the great traditions of truth.”

— **CAROLINE MYSS**, author of *Anatomy of the Spirit* and *Entering the Castle*

*“Integral Life Practice* brings the integral system from the mind to doable action in life. Here is a treasure of integral Upaya.”

— **RABBI ZALMAN SCHACHTER-SHALOMI**,  
past holder of the World Wisdom Chair of Naropa University

*“Integral Life Practice* represents a particular milestone. It gives a lucid and easy to understand summary of the Integral thought-system, without dumbing it down—no mean feat. What’s more, it describes in an engaging and practical way what to do in order to live from this elegant and inclusive worldview. If you want a clear and easy-to-follow map for waking up, read this book.”

— **BILL HARRIS**, Director, Centerpointe Research  
Institute and creator of Holosync Meditation Technology

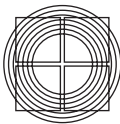
*“Here we learn, through integral wisdom and disciplines, how to be freer and more fully authentic by ironing out the peaks of higher consciousness development into every nook and cranny of daily life. This is the secret of the integral life: transcending while including, and being there while getting there every single step of the way. Get ready to train your mind, open your heart, and awaken to your true universal Self.”*

— **LAMA SURYA DAS**, author of *Awakening the Buddha Within: Tibetan Wisdom for the Western World* and founder of the Dzogchen Meditation Centers

# INTEGRAL LIFE PRACTICE

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Health, Emotional Balance, Mental Clarity,  
and Spiritual Awakening*

KEN WILBER, TERRY PATTEN,  
ADAM LEONARD, and  
MARCO MORELLI



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## PREFACE

Welcome to the world of **Integral!** The fact that you have picked up this book means that you are ready to begin not just thinking about Integral but practicing and applying it as well. This is a truly momentous occasion, to judge from the developmental research itself.

Developmental models are in general agreement that human beings, from birth, go through a series of stages or waves of growth and development. The lower, earlier, junior stages are initial, partial, and fragmented views of the world, whereas the upper stages are integrated, comprehensive, and genuinely holistic. Because of this, the earlier stages are often called “first tier,” and the higher stages are called “second tier.”

The difference between the two tiers is truly profound. As pioneering developmental researcher Clare Graves put it, with second tier an individual “goes through a momentous leap of meaning.” **That leap is what Integral is all about**—Integral Thinking and—yes—Integral Practice. At the Integral stages of development, the entire universe starts to make sense, to hang together, to actually appear as a **uni**-verse—a “one world”—a single, unified, integrated world that unites not only different philosophies and ideas about the world, but different practices for growth and development as well.

**Integral Life Practice** is just such an integrated practice, a practice that will help you grow and develop to your fullest capacities—to your ultimate Freedom and greatest Fullness in the world at large (in relationships, in work, in spirituality, in career, in play, in life itself). ILP is about developing your greatest FREEDOM from the world—freedom

from your limitations, freedom from fragmentation, freedom from partialities—and your truest FULLNESS in the world—a fullness that includes and embraces all the seemingly partial aspects of yourself and your world into a seamless, whole, ultimately fulfilled life. Freedom and Fullness—to transcend all of life and to include all of life, unfolding and fulfilling your greatest capacities—is what Integral Life Practice is about.

As such, this “**transcending and including**” contains modules that address practices for the body, mind, spirit, and shadow dimensions of your own being. Because it is inclusive, this practice contains a distilled and condensed series of practices that are taken from premodern, modern, and postmodern approaches to growth and development. It is an “all-inclusive” practice in the sense that it takes the very best practices from all of them, and puts them together in a larger framework that uses—and makes sense of—all of them. **Premodern** practices include the world’s great wisdom traditions and the meditation practices that drive them. **Modern** practices include scientific studies of human growth and ways to induce it. **Postmodern** practices include a pluralistic and multicultural composite map of the human territory—the territory of you—and ways to include (and not marginalize) all of the important dimensions of your own being (physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual—in self, culture, and nature).

Putting all of these together creates a “**cross training**” for human growth and spiritual awakening, a cross training that dramatically accelerates all of its dimensions—body, mind, spirit, and shadow—producing faster, more effective, more efficient practices than were ever possible prior to this time. It is the comprehensive, truly holistic, extraordinarily inclusive nature of Integral Life Practice that makes it the simplest practice you can do to truly wake up. Other approaches have part of the puzzle and therefore give you partial practices (and partial successes), whereas Integral Life Practice gives you a composite and comprehensive practice that covers all the essential bases, increasing the effectiveness and quickness of each, compared to when they are practiced alone. It is the dramatically increased speed and effectiveness of ILP that is one of its hallmarks.

ILP is practicing from the leading edge of evolution itself, from the Integral stages and waves that are just beginning to evolutionarily unfold in humanity at large. Being grounded in these Integral stages, ILP embodies, emerges, and attracts individuals to the same stages that produced it. Put differently, Integral Life Practice is a second-tier practice—it comes from second-tier, and it draws consciousness itself to second tier. Thus, it trains both “altitude” and “aptitude”—altitude or vertical growth in consciousness, and aptitude or specific training in horizontal capacities. All of this is included in the Integral Life Practice, which the following pages will fully train you in. In short, ILP is a practice aimed at helping you discover your own “momentous leap of meaning,” a leap that will radiantly affect every aspect of your life.

So, once again, welcome to **Integral**. One of the advantages of this particular book is the team of writers that created it. They have a broad and fully qualified exposure to Integral Life Practice, both in its theory and in its actual practice. The writing team is an integration of the richly different backgrounds and perspectives of the co-authors. Although I did not write any of these chapters myself, I fully participated in the writing and its review, and oversaw the integration of the various perspectives and experiences of the writers, reaching across generational and typological differences. That’s what Integral Life Practice is all about—integration—and that is one of the many strengths of this book. The style turned out to be accessible, transparent, and covering difficult topics with an easy-to-understand clarity and humanity. I’m very happy with the results, and proud to put my name on it.

Integral Life Practice is, as the name implies, the practice aspect of Integral Theory. Integral Theory, in both its original form and critical alterations of it, has had a profound impact on several million readers around the world. If you want to just do Integral Theory and not also Integral Practice, that is fine. (Integral Theory is itself a mental praxis, and it summarizes practices in all of the major dimensions—it is a composite Map of the world’s most important methodologies.) But if we take that composite Map and turn it into a composite Practice, the result is Integral Life Practice, a practice that is therefore grounded in the very

best of Integral Theory itself. For this reason, ILP is a truly groundbreaking and leading-edge evolutionary practice for waking up.

Thank you for picking up this book and beginning your own “momentous leap of meaning.” If you are ready, then let’s get started!

*Ken Wilber*  
*Denver, Colorado, Winter 2008*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The book you are about to read has been thousands of years in the making. We have written it with conscious gratitude to the visionary pioneers of the past—those who endeavored to see further, feel deeper, love more fully, and live more mindfully than previously done—and those who left all endeavor behind in radical awakening. This extraordinary lineage—our ancient and modern brothers and sisters, teachers, and spiritual heroes—evolved “up from Eden” to create the fertile ground on which we’ve stood to birth what you now hold in your hands.

We would like to give special mention to the courageous founders of the human potential movement, which began in the 1960s and has been maturing ever since. These early practitioners experimented with new transformative techniques, methods, and syntheses—documenting both the powers and pitfalls of practice along the way. Especially significant were Michael Murphy and George Leonard, who joined Ken Wilber early on in calling for a more balanced or *Integral* approach to practice, which they described in their groundbreaking book *The Life We Are Given*.

We extend a huge thank you to the team of brilliant colleagues who helped us develop many of the ideas and practices presented in the following pages. They include Jeff Salzman, Huy Lam, Diane Hamilton, Bert Parlee, Willow Pearson, Rollie Stanich, Cindy Lou Golin, Sofia Diaz, Brett Thomas, Rob McNamara, and Shawn Phillips. These exceptional individuals have led numerous seminars, workshops, and practice groups, touching the lives of thousands of people, who, through their

questions, feedback, and sincere application, also contributed to the evolution of ILP. Special appreciation goes to Genpo Roshi, who shared his Big Mind process through which seminar participants often glimpsed their “Original Face.” (Indeed, the Big Mind process would have been included in this book, but it requires a full book or DVD—or better yet, a live workshop—to truly experience it. For more information on Big Mind, see BigMind.org.)

Others, too, like Nomali Perera, Clint Fuhs, Nicole Fegley, and Kelly Bearer made valuable contributions, as did Frank Marrero, Ted Phelps, and Marc Gafni (on whose work, along with that of Jonathan Gustin and Bill Plotkin, we’ve drawn in articulating our conception of “the Unique Self”). We also appreciate the editors and graphic designers who contributed their talents to this project. Our editors and readers include Liz Shaw, Kendra Crossen Burroughs, Annie McQuade, Deborah Boyar, Jordan Luftig, and Nick Hedlund. Joel Morrison, Kayla Morelli, and Paul Salamone created many of the elegant graphics that appear throughout the book. We also thank Jonathan Green, Sara Bercholz, and the entire Shambhala team, who have been helpful and professional throughout the process.

Our personal teachers—including S. N. Goenka, Richard Weaver, Adi Da Samraj, Rabbi Steven David Kane, Baba Muktananda, John Haight, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, Byron Katie, Gangaji, Doc Childre, Rabbi Shaya Isenberg, Professor M. C. Dillon, Michael Scheisser, Adyashanti, Candice O’Denver, Genpo Roshi, Susanne Cook-Greuter, and too many others to name—inspired and awakened us to the insights we share in these pages. We’ve been further uplifted, informed, and clarified by our friends, colleagues, and teachers at Integral Spiritual Center, including Father Thomas Keating, Brother David Steindl-Rast, Rabbi Zalman Schacter-Shalomi, Roger Walsh, Saniel Bonder, Patrick Sweeney, Sally Kempton, and David Deida. Also thanks to Andrew Cohen for his penetrating advocacy in such forums as *What Is Enlightenment?* magazine.

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and companionship it would have been far less pleasurable and fulfilling (if not impossible!).

This book would not have been even remotely possible without the monumental contributions of Ken Wilber. As the meta-author not only of this book, but of Integral Life Practice itself, he has literally defined the field in which these perspectives could arise. In his books and dialogues, he has outlined the Integral worldspace with clarity, compassion, erudition, and most graciously, a sense of humor. As our co-author, colleague, mentor, teacher, and friend, he has supported us from the beginning, with brilliance, eloquence, and generosity.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge you, our reader. The evolutionary spark that drew you to this book is the same impulse that motivated every pioneer who ever found him- or herself on the growing edge of consciousness. It's in your sincere use of what follows that Integral practice comes to life. We consider it a sacred privilege to share this embodiment of an Integral vision with you.

*Terry Patten, Adam Leonard, and Marco Morelli*  
*Summer 2008*

# INTEGRAL LIFE PRACTICE

# THE GREAT EXPERIMENT

For thousands of years, in almost all parts of the globe, human beings have engaged in **practices** to transform and balance their lives. From the magical rituals of ancient shamans, to the contemplative science of the mystical traditions, to the latest scientific breakthroughs in health, nutrition, and physical exercise—we have always sought a way to connect with deeper truths, to achieve well-being and harmony, and to realize our highest potentials.

Now, in the information age, this incredible wealth of knowledge, teachings, and techniques—our evolutionary human legacy—is available to us like never before. The question is, how can we best use it? How can we put it all together? How can we make sense of the myriad approaches, from such diverse places and times, in a way that’s relevant to our individual and collective lives?

Our answer to these questions amounts to an experiment in the deepest sense—an amazing and humbling and life-long adventure in consciousness itself, in humanity itself—a trek into the future of our own bodies, minds, and spirit. That’s not to say this book presents an “experimental” or unproven approach—far from it. Rather, it means that in order to see the “data” (and taste the fruits) of practice, you must be willing to try the experiment yourself. This is, we believe, one of the most exciting and rewarding of all possible endeavors.

**Integral Life Practice** is a way of organizing the many practices handed down through the centuries—along with those developed at the cutting edge of psychology, consciousness studies, and other leading fields—using a framework optimized for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is, at

once, ancient and modern, Eastern and Western, speculative and scientific, and yet also something beyond those dichotomies. Integral Life Practice (or ILP) is *Integral*—which means “comprehensive, whole, and balanced.” It’s a synthesis of the “best of the best” that our traditions have to offer, combined with the most state-of-the-art transformational techniques. ILP is a free and fearless exploration of the terrain of your own being and awareness.

The authors, along with a handful of other explorers, have been developing ILP for over thirty years, researching the most essential keys to human growth. We’re proud to present the results in this book. To get started, all you need is the willingness to give it a try—to carry on the Great Experiment in your own life.

Whether you’re a beginner or a more advanced practitioner seeking a more integrated approach to practice, we hope this book will be exceptionally useful to you. We look forward to helping you reach your highest aspirations, as we grow together toward a brighter here and now.

# 1

## Why Practice?

Integral Life Practice starts where all practice starts—with inspiration, a yearning to grow, to become all that you can be.

Sometimes the choice to practice comes after you've been touched, opened, shaken, or maybe even awakened by something or someone profoundly *true*. Sometimes the decision to practice is triggered by the heartbreaking lessons of life—the experience of intense suffering, meaninglessness, or pain.

Maybe it's the inspiring example of someone living an uncompromised life or the reading of a book full of mind-blowing insights or the extraordinary presence of a wise teacher or saintly person. Maybe it's the death of a friend or loved one. Or maybe your conventional life is simply undone, because you suddenly see through your own game.

*Somehow* you get a glimpse of a freer, clearer, more authentic, loving, and true existence—and you want to live it.

People have been inspired like this for thousands of years. Those who got bit by the bug often became monks, nuns, shamans, or yogis—surrendering their lives to a mystical spiritual path. Others did it in alternative ways, becoming samurai or martial artists—giving themselves over with great intensity to a transformational discipline. Serious, traditional stuff, eh?

But it ain't necessarily so. Even though there's a lot of wisdom and beauty in the traditions, practice by nature is extremely *alive*. It continually reinvents itself. It breaks free of all bonds. It doesn't have to be a certain way—and certainly not *only* the way of the traditions. Though, of course, any tradition can be profoundly enlivened by the spirit of practice.

In truth, the traditions have always depended on innovation and

improvisation. And so we continue the tradition of . . . breaking with tradition, while still drinking deeply from the wisdom of the past. Why? Because the world keeps changing. *We* keep changing. Human life has evolved—and so has practice. A personalized Integral Life Practice has many layers and dimensions. It goes as deep as you do, and flexes to fit your unique life. It can and will go through countless cycles and mutations. But the *essence* of ILP is simple, and it embodies the intention of authentic practice in every context, ancient or modern: to be *true*, *real*, and *whole*—to *wake up* in all directions and dimensions of your being.

Integral Life Practice means living for real. It's getting real with life—perhaps like never before. Or it's taking the real-ness you already have to a higher, more integrated level. ILP expresses your impulse to be as fully aware as possible—now and now and *now*—and to grow in that awareness over time.

It's also founded in deep care—care for ourselves, for others, and for this mysterious existence. This care inspires us to want to make a difference, to give more, to cut through the bullshit of narrow and fragmented views, and to magnify the freedom, love, openness, and depth in us, in others, and in this beautiful, terrible world.

And, from a certain perspective, practice is simply *what is*—it's a personal choice and a genuine lifestyle—not really something to make a big fuss about. . . .

Here are a few more possible reasons for engaging an ILP:

- Embracing and working with crisis, pain, or suffering
- Becoming a better person—on all levels, in all areas
- Living with integrity and excellence
- Getting over yourself
- Waking up!
- As a way to understand everything or make sense of it all
- Living according to your highest ideals
- Becoming more fully alive and creative
- Finding and/or living your deepest purpose
- Loving and caring for others more fully

- Making your highest contribution
- Communing with life, the universe, and Spirit
- Participating in the evolution of consciousness
- Because you're in love with the Mystery (or God)
- No specific reason—it's just what you're drawn to do

Many people come to ILP after an experience with a specific type of practice, which, at a certain point, no longer seems full or inclusive enough. ILP makes room for you to bring everything to the path:

- You may have experience training for physical excellence or competitive sports.
- Maybe you've disciplined your mind and emotions for peak performance in business.
- Perhaps you've practiced yoga or meditation, maybe even for decades.
- You may have done deep psychological exploration, facing your shadow and exploring your deep psyche.
- You might have come to practice out of your deeply felt devotion to God or a beloved teacher or guide.
- Maybe your interest in ILP comes through your scholarship, insight, and thirst for understanding.

Some radical teachers and teachings point out the limitations buried within many of our motivations for practice. Most of us at least begin practice as “spiritual materialists,” seeking personal gain through spiritual pursuits, motivated to perfect or fulfill our separate-self sense. It's just a more refined form of egocentrism. But our exclusive commitment to self-centered motives tends to loosen and relax as we mature. The most fundamental paradox is that of *seeking*. Everyone begins the path as a seeker, and yet, the seeker must outgrow the notion that something's missing—and thus give up seeking—for the path to be fulfilled. So our motives do naturally evolve.

But none of those motives are necessarily wrong. We don't need to wait until our motives are perfectly pure. People find countless reasons for practice—and every motivation for practice is valid . . . and partial.

The beauty of practice is that it transforms us so that we outgrow our original intentions—and keep going! Our motivations for practicing evolve as we mature. They each contribute something to our path, even if we eventually leave them behind.

Ultimately, all our motivations and intentions converge in the present moment: What is our practice *right now*?

There's no single best or right way to practice, but there are plenty of less than optimal ways. ILP drops the baggage and cuts to the essentials, so you can easily find a practice that works for you, with a minimum of wasted time.

Shall we begin?

### *About the Practices in This Book*

Peppered throughout this book are experiential practices. These are provided to help you convert theory into action. Some practices are explicitly “integral” and custom designed for ILP—these are called **Gold Star Practices**. Others are taken from different sources, but are adapted to an Integral context. Some Gold Star Practices also come in an ultra-condensed form called a **1-Minute Module**. You can use one of these any time as a virtually effortless way to bring practice into your daily life—instantly!

When we say “experiential,” we mean this in the broadest sense. At a minimum, there are *bodily* experiences, *mental* experiences, and *spiritual* experiences. When you see a Gold Star Practice or a 1-Minute Module, try to open yourself to whatever form of experience is involved: bodily, mental, spiritual, or any combination of the above.



#### **1-MINUTE MODULE**

##### **What's Your Deepest Motivation?**

It's important to connect with what practice means for you. Here's a way to check in with your motivation. You can try this now, but

really, it's a great thing to do regularly, at the beginning of any practice session—and it takes less than a minute!

Place both hands over your heart, and take a few deep breaths. Feel any activity in your mind, heart, and gut. Now, thoughtfully feel into your deepest motivation for practice. What is your real desire? What's behind the "pushes" or "pulls" that you're experiencing right now? What's arising in your self-awareness?

You might be seeking something extraordinary; you might just be curious about what will happen; or you might feel something that you can't really describe. Feel what motivates you most deeply in this moment and be aware of it.

Finally, feel or be aware of the Witness of your experience—the Witness being the part of your awareness that simply observes the content that is your experience. What is the experiencer behind this and every experience? What is it that's aware of, and therefore not, your motivations?

Breathe and relax into this awareness for a few moments. . . .

Then let it go, and move on.



# 1

## What Is Integral Life Practice?

Whatever your motivation, the intention to begin, renew, or deepen a practice is a wonderful first step. But once you've made that choice, how do you follow through with it? Thirty years of experience have shown us that your practice will turn to mush without a framework for organizing it. An *Integral* framework can help you make sense of the many options available to you, providing ultimate flexibility and inclusiveness, so you can most fully and deeply honor your intentions and fulfill your potentials.

### *A Radically Inclusive Approach*

The Integral Life Practice framework allows for maximum flexibility. It's not a program you must follow uncritically, humorlessly, and perhaps even with a sense of superiority, until you're enlightened, more successful, better looking, and someday hopefully perfect. It gives you a set of tools for designing a unique and personalized practice, in whatever form works best for you right now, with the understanding that what works best will change over time.

The "Integral" part of ILP is that it is **radically inclusive**. To be this, it draws on a conceptual map called AQAL (which stands for "All Quadrants, All Levels" — we'll get deeper into this in a moment). AQAL (pronounced *ah-qwul*) is a *theory of everything*, a way of comprehending life and reality in very broad yet precise terms. AQAL is a map of consciousness, the Kosmos,

**Kosmos** with a "K" is the word the ancient Greeks used to denote a universe that includes not just the physical reality of stars, planets, and black holes (which is what "Cosmos" usually means), but also the realms of mind, soul, society, art, Spirit—in other words, everything.

and human development, at every level and in every dimension that presents itself.

Technically speaking, AQAL is a map of maps, or a *meta-theory* that incorporates the core truths from hundreds of other theories. It organizes the profound insights of the spiritual traditions, philosophy, modern science, developmental psychology, and many other disciplines, into a coherent whole. AQAL accounts for the many perspectives that great thinkers, teachers, and researchers have brought to our understanding of self and world.

But it doesn't stop there, because AQAL is also intuitive—it describes the *terrain of your own awareness*. You don't need hi-tech equipment or an advanced degree to enjoy the benefits of an AQAL-informed perspective. All you need is to bring a new kind of awareness to your lived experience.

It's similar to learning a second language. At the beginning, it may feel a little awkward as you're memorizing new vocabulary and fumbling with new ways of expressing yourself. In time, however, you discover that the more you apply the new grammar to real life situations, the easier it becomes to remember and use it, even if you still instinctively think in your native language and translate to the second.

With practice, you begin to think in the new language with greater ease and mastery. Eventually, you even begin to dream in the new language. And you haven't lost your old language; you've only become bilingual. The more fluent you become, the more the language infuses your being and becomes a part of who you are. Soon the words effortlessly flow from your lips and you're able to communicate with different kinds of people in totally new ways. Your world has expanded to include new horizons that you may have never thought possible.

### *Integral Life Practice Is “Powered by AQAL”*

Because AQAL attempts to map the Kosmos itself, ILP engages nearly every aspect of our lives. As you embark on an Integral Life Practice you will learn to hold more perspectives, and to do so more freely and flexibly, exercising every dimension of your being. It's not just a mental

game, but a felt and lived embodied intelligence. Integral Life Practice is AQAL applied to life—a life of conscious evolution in all parts of your being.

In creating Integral Life Practice we asked some key questions:

- What are the most effective and essential practices of the ancient traditions?
- What new insights into practice are offered by the most current discoveries?
- How can we find the patterns that connect the most diverse insights and methodologies?
- How can we use this knowledge to promote a lifetime of growth and awakening?

We're not the first to attempt a synthesis of East and West, or to extract the spiritual wisdom from the religious traditions. It does seem though that AQAL provides some powerful missing keys to a truly universal approach to practice that is still capable of respecting—and even empowering—the healthy differences between divergent paths.

As grand as this may sound, the basic principles are not particularly complex or difficult to grasp. Integral Life Practice is designed for and by people living within the pressurized schedules of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. You can't afford to waste your time any more than we can. That's why, if a practice isn't high-leverage, you won't find it here. ILP is perfectly compatible with a fast-paced professional lifestyle. But we haven't cut corners either. If you want to go truly *deep* in your practice, ILP can help you do that quickly and directly.

How does ILP work? First, we suggest a **modular** approach to practice. An ILP *module* is a category of practice that relates to a specific part of your being, such as body, mind, spirit, or shadow. Identifying your practice modules will give you an overview of your practice life, allowing you to determine which areas you're exercising and which you're leaving out.

One of the benefits of a modular approach is that with just a handful of modules you can engage all the key areas of your life—while maintaining full choice of exactly *how* you do so. ILP does not dictate the

specific practices you should do—and by “practices” we mean consciously and regularly performed activities such as yoga, weightlifting, journaling, acts of service, and so on. Rather, it suggests a few general areas—i.e., modules—that are essential, and others that are also important but optional, and then allows you to decide exactly how you want to engage those areas. This makes it easier to choose the practices that are right for you, while still covering all the bases.

Second, ILP is **scalable**, which means you can simplify and shorten your practice to accommodate your time frame. Do you often find yourself too busy for practice? You can do a basic form of Integral Life Prac-

### Integral Life Practice is . . .



#### **The Ultimate in Cross-Training.**

working synergistically on body, mind, and spirit in self, culture, and nature.



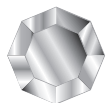
**Modular**, allowing you to mix and match practices in specific areas or “modules.”



**Scalable**, adjusting to however much—or little—time you have, down to the **1-Minute Modules**.



**Customizable** to your individual lifestyle—you design a program that works for you, and adapt it on an as needed basis.



**Distilled**, boiling down the essence of traditional practices—without the cultural or religious baggage—to provide a highly concentrated and effective form of practice for post-postmodern life.



**Integral**, based on **AQAL™ technology**, an “All Quadrants, All Levels” framework for mapping the many capacities inherent in human beings.

tice in as little as ten minutes a day. Thus, *anyone*, no matter how busy, can have an Integral Life Practice.

Are you interested in deep and rapid transformation? You can also use the ILP principles to engage a committed life of practice at the deepest level—with the same intensity of a traditional monastic or an Olympic athlete. Your practices can stretch to several hours each day and may include attending retreats or living in a dedicated practice community.

Do you have a wide or very specific range of practice interests? ILP is **customizable**, letting you bring your unique interests, passions, and needs into play. It doesn't impose rigid structures on you, but rather creates a flexible, open space in which you can creatively engage the many dimensions of your being.

When we do suggest particular practices, such as the Gold Star Practices, these are **condensed** and **distilled**—keeping what's essential and discarding what isn't—in order to give you the “most bang for your buck.” You can be sure you won't be wasting your time.

Finally, **ILP is Integral**, by which we specifically mean “powered by AQAL.” AQAL is the most comprehensive map of consciousness available at this time, and Integral Life Practice puts it to use to create a cutting-edge form of practice for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The AQAL structure of Integral Life Practice makes room not only for higher growth and self-actualization, but also and especially for awakening to, or recognizing, the Suchness or ever-present *is-ness* of this moment, and this one, and this . . .

### The Universal (and Particular) Adventure of Waking Up

The adventure of awakening is among the most universal of human dramas. It takes every possible form, and thus it's an utterly creative, unpredictable, and unprogrammable process. The river's twists and whitewater sometime include passages such as the “dark night of the soul,” or gates through which no one passes except on their knees. It can be experienced as an ordeal of transformation, a process of “blossoming,” or as a romance with God.

The principles of ILP are remarkably clear and simple, putting practice within the reach of almost anyone. It provides an *organizing framework* for a lifetime of learning and transformation. By illuminating the big picture of consciousness, life, growth, and awakening, and distilling the essentials of practice, it helps you drop any unnecessary baggage and focus on the potent, juicy heart of the matter while giving you room to do so in your own style, in your own unique way.

Each traditional path paints a unique picture of what waking up looks like. Even modern scientific consciousness began with its own “enlightenment.” ILP is not about rejecting any particular form of awakening in favor of the next new fad. It’s about *understanding and supplementing* existing paths, enabling them to function even more deeply, in a way that adequately addresses life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

ILP presents a new, clear framework through which practitioners (of any path or religion, or no religion) can not only understand and upgrade their existing practice, but *communicate* deeply and meaningfully, across diverse paths, about the universal matter of practice.

That means that Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and any other religious, indigenous, and trans-traditional practitioners can all make use of this Integral approach and talk about their practices in a common language (which, incidentally, may provide new connections, highlighting how much they have in common—with each other and even with those that hold non-religious world-views). Even atheists and agnostics can put ILP to work in their lives, since the AQAL framework is neutral with regard to “belief.” It doesn’t require (nor does it prohibit) any particular belief system.

This addresses a serious need. A Buddhist could easily discuss with a friend in the same tradition how to apply his or her spiritual practice to life challenges. But could a Buddhist do that with a Christian? Or a Muslim? The same holds true for spiritual aspirants outside of these traditions. We need to begin to engage a practice conversation across and beyond traditions. The growing international community of spiritual practice needs to establish a common vocabulary if we are to come together in service of the greater good.

Thus, this book begins a conversation about a new evolutionary direction in personal practice, one that will be continued by future explorers on the edges of human potential. Integral Life Practice is helping to define an emerging *field* of study, inquiry, and application.

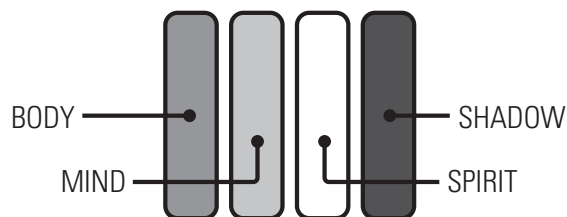
### *Launch Pad: 4 Core Modules*

Integral Life Practice has **4 Core Modules**:

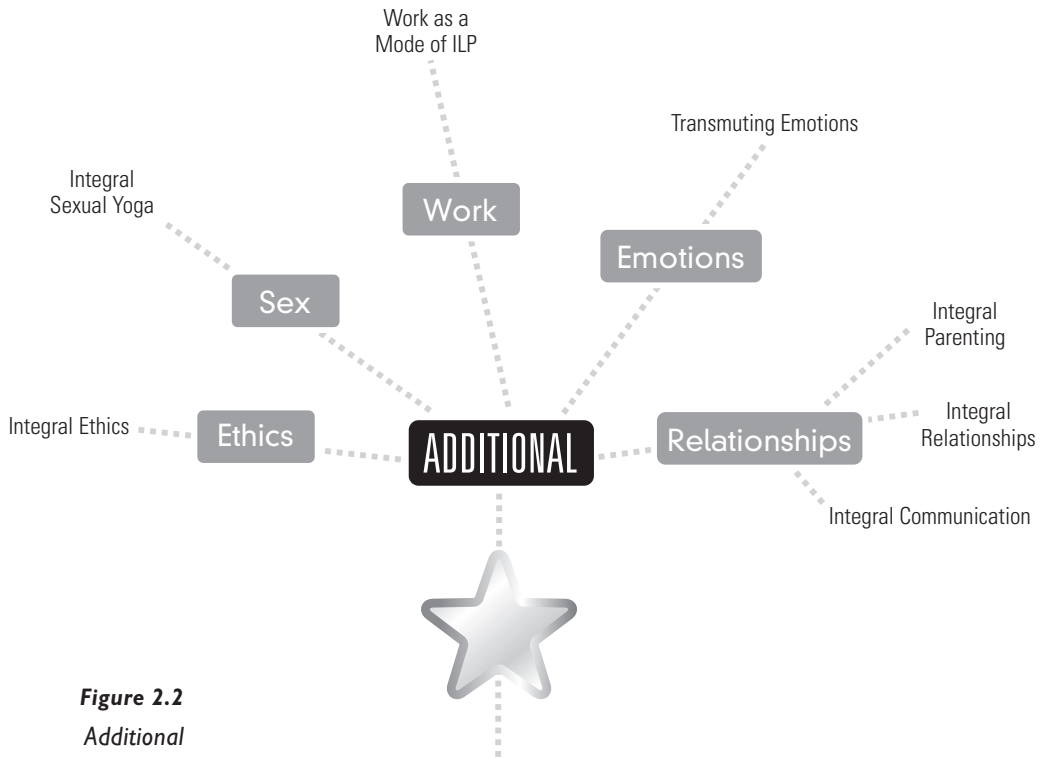
- Body
- Mind
- Spirit
- Shadow

**Additional important modules** include:

- Integral Ethics
- Integral Sexual Yoga
- Work
- Transmuting Emotions
- Integral Parenting
- Integral Relationships
- Integral Communication



**Figure 2.1**  
Start with the 4  
Core Modules.



**Figure 2.2**  
Additional  
modules.

The universal starting point for ILP is the **4 Core Modules**. That’s because they relate to four primary dimensions of your individual being: **body, mind, spirit, and shadow**. They don’t require anything or anyone else but *you*. So you can, if you wish, work on them by yourself. If you consistently engage practices in each of these four areas, you’ll empower and turbocharge your overall development. You will be better able to function inwardly and outwardly, through multiple perspectives, with greater clarity, presence, and vitality in practically any area of your life.

Traditional spiritual paths have usually emphasized only two or three of these modules—they almost never included the Shadow module. Modern and postmodern paths of self-development often do include shadow work, but some jettison the Mind module, and most usually lack the depth and rigor of the meditative traditions in the Spirit module.

If you only take on one practice in each of the 4 Core Modules, you'll be doing ILP. That's all it takes. And if you do it wisely, you'll avoid the common pitfalls that can otherwise hold back meaningful transformation.

Some people ask, "Well, what if I really need to focus on something else besides the 4 Core Modules?" Of course you do! You can bring awareness and care to all your key relationships and functions (career, intimacy, family, and more) in the additional modules. And *any* module could be your focus at any given time. *All* the modules—core and additional—are important. If you're in a phase where you're looking to align your career with your life's purpose or your heart's passion, then you probably want to focus on the **Work** module and on unfolding your **unique self**. If you've just fallen in love (or are looking for love), or are working on issues with your intimate partner, then you probably want to focus on the **Relationships** module. If you're starting a new family—well, then, you guessed it, the **Parenting** module.

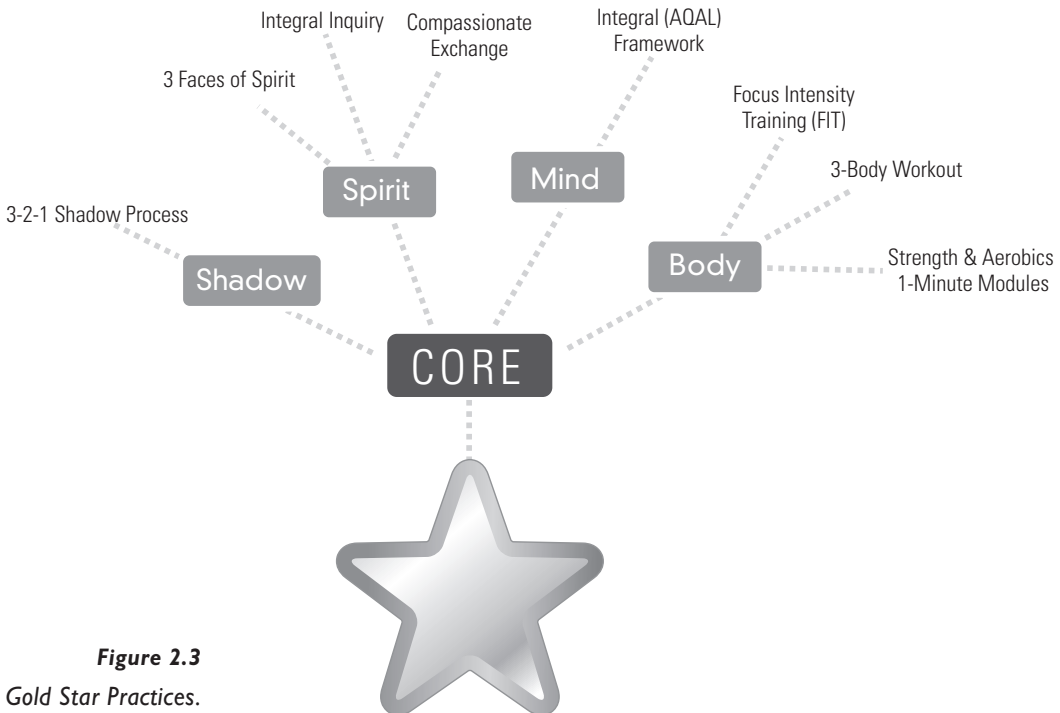
The 4 Core Modules are a recommended foundation, not a rigid, dogmatic structure. The journey of your life will have many chapters, and the emphasis of your practice can shift accordingly. The ILP modules are just a way to account for the more central dimensions of your life. Moreover, you need not think of a module as a rigid, compartmentalized, abstract unit of your being—there's no need to relate to yourself in a detached and clunky way. Modules orient, balance, and integrate a life of practice. The exact terms are less important than the energy, clarity, sincerity, and intentionality with which you engage your practice.

### *Gold Star Practices*

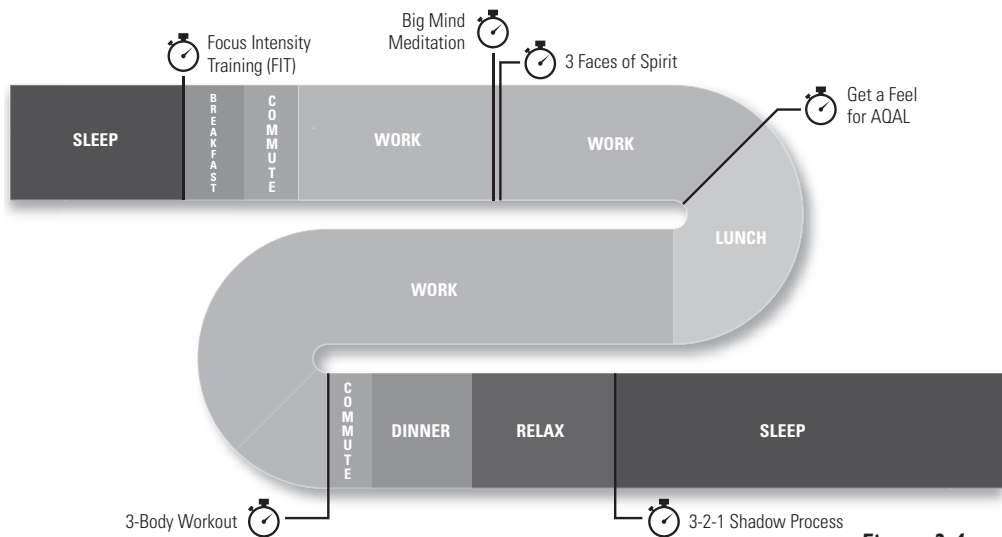
Each module contains any number of practices that you may choose from. For example, the **Body** module includes a broad range of practices, including weightlifting, aerobics, sports, swimming, yoga, qigong, diet, and nutrition. *Any* practice that focuses on the embodied aspect of your life can be considered a Body module practice. Likewise, practices such as prayer, meditation, and devotional worship belong to the **Spirit** module, because they relate to the spiritual dimension of your being.

We've developed a number of *recommended practices* in each of the 4 Core Modules. We call them **Gold Star Practices** and they're original, AQAL-based, and especially appropriate for 21<sup>st</sup> century life—integrating the best of traditional, modern, and postmodern approaches. Many Gold Star Practices are **distillations** of traditional practices—minus the religious and cultural baggage. In some cases, we invented a practice from scratch, to address a newly perceived need. All Gold Star Practices are streamlined and condensed, covering the most relevant aspects of practice.

Listed in figure 2.3 are some Gold Star Practices in the 4 Core Modules. All are described in more detail later in the book. The best way to find out if you like any of these practices, or if they really work for you, is to try them of course!



**Figure 2.3**  
Gold Star Practices.



**Figure 2.4**  
Sample ILP with  
1-Minute Modules.

### *Pressed for Time? Try a 1-Minute Module.*

Your ILP can be as rich and expansive as you want it to be. But for when you're in a hurry, we've created quick versions of the Gold Star Practices that are called **1-Minute Modules**. A 1-Minute Module is a Gold Star Practice condensed into a remarkably efficient and authentic exercise that takes very little time to complete. It's a Gold Star *mini*-practice, which you can do almost any time or anywhere—at work, on the subway, after lunch, between classes, just before bed . . . whenever.

The 1-Minute Modules are not a *replacement* for more intensive practices. Ideally, you might have an hour or two each day to deeply engage your practices; and sometimes, for example in an extended retreat, you would have even more. But when you don't have that much time, the 1-Minute Modules help you keep in touch with the *essence* of your practices, which is light years better than neglecting them completely.

By utilizing the 1-Minute Modules, you can do a full ILP, realistically, in about *ten minutes a day*. This makes it easy to maintain your practice even when you're busy—and it also eliminates the main excuse for not practicing! *Anyone* can make the time to practice ILP regularly.

# The Integral Life Practice Matrix

MODULES				ADDITIONAL				
CORE								
Body	Mind	Spirit	Shadow	Ethics	Work	Relationships	Creativity	Soul
3-Body Workout ☆ FIT (Strength Training) ☆ Aerobic Exercise Balanced Diet & Conscious Eating Yoga Martial Arts Sports & Dance	Reading & Study Discussion & Debate Writing & Journaling Looking At Your Meaning-Making Integral (AQAL) Framework ☆ Pursuing a Degree	Meditation Prayer The 3 Faces of Spirit ☆ Integral Inquiry ☆ Spiritual Community Worship, Song, & Chant Compassionate Exchange ☆	3-2-1 Process ☆ Dream Work Journaling Psychotherapy Family & Couples Therapy Transmuting Emotions Art, Music, & Dance Therapy	Moral Inquiry Integral Ethics ☆ Volunteer Work Social Activism Professional Ethics Philanthropy Heartfelt Service	Right Livelihood Time Management Professional Development Integral Communication ☆ Personal Productivity Systems Financial Intelligence	Conscious Commitment Weekly Check-Ins Intimacy Workshops Integral Parenting Being Vulnerable Integral Sexual Yoga ☆	Integral Artistry ☆ Practicing, Playing & Writing Music Creative Writing Dance & Drama Cooking & Interior Decorating Creative Community	Solitude Nature Communion Discovering/ Living Your Purpose Depth Psychology Resonance with Art, Music & Literature Vision Quest Journeys

SAMPLE PRACTICES

## It's as simple as:

- Pick **one practice** from each of the **4 Core Modules**
  - Add practices from the **Additional Modules** as you wish
- (We particularly recommend the Gold Star Practices ☆)

## *Time to Devote Yourself Deeply? The Principles of ILP Still Apply.*

There is no end to practice. After years of dedication, experienced practitioners often work with the same modules in subtler, more nuanced ways. Once your whole life is practice, you tend to work more deeply with your states of mind and emotions. Your practice deepens in your relationships, work, and other additional modules. And, of course, you continue to return to Body, Mind, Spirit, and Shadow. Your practice should continually adapt, flex, and evolve as you move into each new phase of life and maturity.

The principles of ILP will help you to design and keep refining an overall practice that's effective, balanced, and high-leverage. You won't leave out any of the essentials, or neglect major dimensions of your development, even during periods when you concentrate on particular kinds of growth, such as an intensive phase of meditation practice or a period of focused training for an athletic event.

### **Practicing for 3 Kinds of Health**

Regular practice changes us, in both dramatic and subtle ways. Looking at our **3 kinds of health** helps us to see this more clearly:

1. **Horizontal Health:** Our dynamic fulfillment of the possibilities for awareness, aliveness, and care available to us at our current stage of development
2. **Vertical Health:** Our continued growth into greater consciousness and complexity—thus outgrowing old ways of being, and moving into new stages of development
3. **Essential Health:** At any stage of development, our contact with, attunement to, and realization of Spirit—the Mystery, Suchness, or is-ness of this and every moment

ILP includes and integrates all three.

Even during phases of life in which practice apparently takes a back seat to work or family, you'll have tools so it can flex and morph appropriately. In fact, the way you engage the modules and practices of your Integral Life Practice can evolve over time: general guidelines can become firm commitments that can develop into a natural and inherent orientation to every moment of life. There's room not just for inhalation but also for exhalation—for all the qualities and phases of a healthy human life.

### *Principles of Practice*

#### **No Quick Fix**

One reason we call it Integral *Life* Practice is because there's *no quick fix*. If there were, we'd be recommending it here. One of the primary hard-won lessons of the last half-century and the human potential movement is that weekend workshops wear off! The same is true for weeklong or monthlong intensives. A lasting, committed, daily practice is the only way to produce sustained transformation.

The quickest, shortest path to lasting change is a lifestyle that embraces some kind of ILP, including at least the 4 Core Modules. Although this might seem to require a lot of time (and sometimes even a minute seems like too much!), it pays huge dividends by unleashing our potentials, freeing up our energy and attention, and increasing our effectiveness and enjoyment in the rest of life. We've found that we don't have time *not* to engage in an ILP!

#### **Integral Cross-Training**

Typical cross-training is *flat*. You do some aerobics, some weightlifting, maybe some yoga—but it's all at the *physical* level. What if we applied the same cross-training principle—which holds that gains in one area will accelerate gains in others—across *all levels and dimensions of our being*? Well, that's the idea here. Preliminary research suggests, for instance, that a meditator who also lifts weights will progress faster in meditation than one who doesn't—and similarly, a weightlifter who meditates will progress faster in weightlifting. We can call this phenomenon *Integral cross-training synergy*. The 4 Core Modules simultaneously

activate several powerful synergies, between body and mind, spirit and body, shadow (the unconscious) and spirit. Additional modules can further intensify these benefits.

Though some practices seem to focus on one module more than others, there's a ripple effect: by engaging a module in one area of life, you increase the effectiveness of every other module in every other area of life! That's the power of cross-training. The Shadow module, for instance, primarily addresses your interior, psychological dynamics. But realize how many aspects of life the shadow influences. Becoming aware of and owning your shadow material will bring greater intimacy and honesty to your relationships, free up repressed energy in your body, add clarity and effectiveness to your work, increase your capacity for authentic and ethical behavior, and may even help you improve your finances (if, for example, you have some unresolved, unconscious fears of money and power, and are able to face your fears and overcome them).

### A Post-Metaphysical Approach

ILP is post-metaphysical. This principle is a bit more theoretical—but it's important. What “post-metaphysical” means here is that no perspective on reality is merely *given* to consciousness. Every perspective is *enacted*. In other words, you have to *do* something to *see* something. You have to look to know that it's raining. You have to use a microscope to observe an amoeba. You have to meditate to understand what Zen masters are really talking about.

Old-fashioned metaphysics assumes that reality is just given to awareness, unmediated by the contexts, actions, and perceptions of a person. A post-metaphysical, Integral approach claims that you must actually *do* an Integral practice to *experience* an Integral reality. Nothing presented in this book should be taken merely as a proclamation of truth. In all cases, you have to follow the practice injunction to determine for yourself whether or not what someone calls the “truth” is really true.

If you want to know if the moons of Jupiter really exist, you must actually learn some of the principles of astronomy and then look through a telescope. Likewise, if you want to know whether the Zen state of *satori*, or enlightenment, really exists, you must learn something about Zen

and then meditate, looking into the nature of your mind. Instead of unquestioning belief or skeptical disbelief, a post-metaphysical approach requires an open, inquisitive attitude. In a sense, post-metaphysics is an expression of the scientific impulse—that is, of empirical experimentation and experiential validation—but expanded to all levels and dimensions of our being, instead of only the material plane.

### Awareness, Care, and Presence

At its core, Integral Life Practice is not limited to the performance of specific practices. It's a sincere, inherent commitment to bring **awareness**, **care**, and **presence** to every moment of life—and thereby to *increase* one's awareness, care, and presence. An ILP practitioner naturally strives for a healthy body, a clear mind, an open heart, and a commitment to a higher purpose. This will then show up in how you breathe and feel as you go through your day, in how you do your job, how you treat your lover, how you respond to stress—it touches every aspect, every moment of life.

It's a profound thing to really be conscious, to really love—it means you're *seeing, feeling, being* in the moment—and yet you're not stuck in any one perspective, but free to flex and evolve with life itself.

**Integral Life Practice is *paradoxical*.** Your practices will progressively deepen over time, like in the classic “gradual paths” of some of the traditions, which can involve decades of diligent attention. But from the beginning, the path will often be punctuated by moments of sudden awakening and freedom. In these peak experiences, consciousness radically reveals itself. The true nature of things is evident and obvious. But then soon, this vividness fades. Yet if peak states occur frequently enough, the spirit of free consciousness eventually seeps into the whole of life. So the universal path is *both gradual and sudden*.

It is also both specific and general. Although this book may seem like a “how to” manual, ILP is much more than a self-improvement program. It offers a distillation of the universal processes of awakening into higher states and stages of consciousness. Thus, in a way, you can “do it.” But at a certain point, it begins to “do you.”

The freedom into which human beings awaken has been present from the beginning. There was never a problem, never any need to transform ourselves. Paradoxically, transformation is also important, and we are profoundly grateful for it. At the moment of realization, our path is seen for what it was—a container for unconditional awakening. We practice for the goodness, truth, beauty, and joy of living our practice.

**Your Integral Life Practice will keep evolving** and deepening for the rest of your life, becoming more and more intimate and real. How do you practice with frustration, disappointment, and pain? How do you respond when someone attacks you? What do you do—what *can* you do—when someone you love dies? How do you face the stark reality of your own inevitable losses, aging, and death?

This is when practice matters most. If you can illuminate your shadow issues, if you can balance your body with proper exercise and nourishment, if you can see multiple perspectives, if your nervous system can release tension, if you can open into contact with more life and truth—all of these factors will determine your immediate experience, how present and loving you can be with whatever is arising, and whether—and how wisely—you can use it to grow.

But it's not just the hard stuff that practice can help with—it's the beautiful stuff too. Life is infinitely wonderful and awesome. Falling in love . . . the birth of a baby . . . having a brilliant new idea . . . serving a higher cause . . . starting a new business . . . traveling and experiencing another culture . . . having an insight into the nature of reality . . . creating or enjoying a beautiful work of art. . . . We're stretched by all of it, whether it's delicious or not.

Spirit's light can blind you like a billion suns. The beauty of a single teardrop can liquefy your heart. True love can crush you like a crumbling mountain.

Then your intimate partner says something that hurts or infuriates you, and you forget the beauty and the love.

And then you remember—or rediscover—it again. Balance. Freedom. Happiness. Sanity. Oneness. Ordinarity. And again. And that's what practice is for.

## *The Smart Way to Wake Up*

The best thing is to just get started! Whether you're a beginner or a veteran practitioner, make use of this book to bring the most intelligent and useful practices to your own life.

Once you have the basics down, it's easy to begin your own ILP. Here is a summary of how simply and quickly you can do so:

- ILP has **4 Core Modules**: Body, Mind, Spirit, and Shadow. It works via the principle of *cross-training*.
- All you need to start an ILP is **one practice** in each of the core modules. See the **ILP Matrix** on page 20 for examples.
- **Design** your ILP and **scale** it to fit the realities (large or small) of your schedule, level of commitment, and state of inspiration.
- **Mix and match**. Include practices from additional modules as appropriate; focus on what's most relevant and needed in your life.
- **Gold Star Practices** are optimized for ILP—they're particularly distilled, concentrated, and effective, but not obligatory. Try a **1-Minute Module** if you're busy.
- **The hard part is the school of life itself**. But practice helps us be radically more present, alive, and capable of embracing both the difficulties and the pleasures of everyday life.

# INTEGRAL LIFE PRACTICE

A 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Blueprint for Physical Health,  
Emotional Balance, Mental Clarity, and Spiritual Awakening



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