

My Spiritual Compendium is a fictional story in which the main character is given a small book of spiritual teachings, which she describes as a spiritual compendium. The spiritual compendium seeks to summarize spiritual concepts and ideals.

My Spiritual Compendium

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# **My Spiritual Compendium**

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## Chapter 1

It was a warm, overcast afternoon in Southern California and I had just arrived home following the signing of my final divorce papers. My marriage was over, and I felt a sense of relief, but at the same time I was feeling melancholy about leaving my home of more than ten years. There were just too many memories in that house for me though, and I really needed to make a clean break and start anew. Thankfully, the house was sold and much of my belongings already packed and ready to be moved, when, while cleaning out my last closet, I came across the small book of handwritten teachings given me by the most remarkable man I have ever known. The book is something I call an artistic, spiritual compendium, as it details, in a manner that is both artistic and compendious, the main aspects of spirituality and the spiritual journey. I am not sure how it ended up in the back of the closet, however, as it had served as a source of inspiration for me for many years. But come to think of it, I do remember him saying that a time would come when I would lose touch with his teachings. It seems he was right.

While reading through the book again after more than five years, I was quickly reminded of just how special not only the words are, but the time it represented for me, and the man who gave me more than I probably would ever realize. He was, indeed, the most interesting and intriguing person I have ever met or have come to know. I say, “come to know,” but I did not come to know him too well, however, mostly because he had such a depth about him that it gave him a certain unknowable quality, I suppose, but partly because my time spent with him was brief. And although our time together was short-lived, what he imparted to me, or attempted to impart to me, I should say, in that time, goes well beyond time.

My name is Melissa Reed, and this is my story of a young woman’s first initiations with a true spiritual teacher and the writings he gave me that would change my whole outlook on life.

## Chapter 2

I was beginning a four-week vacation from my acting career and was desperately in need of break. I was just twenty-two at the time and had been on a four-year whirlwind tour since embarking on what had blossomed into a fairly successful movie acting career. Although at the time I still had not landed a lead role in a feature film, I thought I had it all in those days, and from a certain perspective, I did: I had more money than most my age, I was attending some of the exclusive Hollywood premiers, I had a certain amount of acclaim from my peers, etc. Basically, I was living the life of which most people only dream. I have to admit, too, that I had become quite cocky about all of it, as I really thought I was one of the most special people on Earth, and with all the attention I was getting, it was difficult not to. It felt like being part of an exclusive club that is reserved only for the privileged few. It was all part of the life that I have come to look back upon with a certain fondness and reverence, but I was soon to find out, however, just how much more to life there really is.

I was invited to the private party of a wealthy movie producer, John Davis, with whom I had worked and respected very much. In fact, it was John that inspired me to begin acting, and he has helped me enormously with my career. Actually, if it was not for him, I do not think I would have gotten as far as I did. And although it did not take me long to discover that there are not many people one can trust in this business, I have come to trust John completely, as he and I have forged a very special relationship together; strictly platonic, of course, but very close.

At the time of the party, I was one of the most beautiful women in the world; at least that was what I was told. And with my long, flowing, golden hair, perfectly thin, almost unattainable body, blue eyes, cute button nose and angelic face, I really believed it. Even back then, though, it felt like a blessing as well as a curse. I mean, the attention and opportunities it brought were nice, but it also became an all-consuming obsession for me attempting to maintain those looks; it

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seemed at times I was more preoccupied with my appearance than with the actual work I was doing, but that is another issue. I was still single then, dating occasionally, although at this particular time I was not involved with anyone, so I chose to go to the party by myself. And, since the party was to go well into the night, I arranged with John ahead of time to stay overnight in one of his guestrooms, as I did not want to have to drive back to my apartment late at night.

The party was taking place outside on the patio of John's home in Malibu overlooking the ocean and numerous tables had been set out scattered between the many bars that had been positioned around the large swimming pool. I was told about one hundred people were attending the party, but it seemed like more than that; it did not matter though, we were all having a good time and John spared no expense for the party. I remember wondering, however, why he was having such an extravagant party when there did not seem to be a reason for one; it was not his birthday or anything, nor was he celebrating a new movie at the time, but I suppose it did not matter, he was my good friend, so I told him I would attend, although I had never been one for attending all the big parties. I usually tried to avoid them at all cost, actually, but because it was for John, I was not going to disappoint him by not attending.

Midway through the party, just as the sun was beginning to set and some lighting had been put on to offset the verging darkness, I noticed John from across the patio talking with a strange man whom before I had never seen. And while sipping from my champagne glass, I also noticed that John was talking to the strange man quite uncharacteristically for him. You see, John has a way of talking with people that almost makes one feel small in comparison to him. I laugh at that because he is so small physically, standing at only about 5' 7", but I do not know exactly what it is. It is just his mannerisms and the intense way he looks at you, I guess, but this was different: I had never before seen John respond to someone like this; he seemed to be extremely respectful of this man, almost as if he had saved John's life

or something. And although I really wanted to find out who this person was, I did not want to impose, so I just watched from across the patio as the strange man smiled and gestured with the grace unlike I had ever seen in a man.

While looking at him, I noticed that he was not young, but not old looking either; it was difficult to gauge how old he was. He had medium-length, brown hair, a pleasing build, and was dressed very casually, wearing only a T-shirt, shorts, and a pair of sandals; he stood out in that regard, as nearly everyone at the party was dressed rather fashionably. And although he stood at about six feet tall, he almost seemed to be a thousand times that. I could not explain what it was about him, but there was definitely something very different about him. I felt a strange warmth for him, too, and although I would not say it was love that I felt, I felt strongly attracted to him in a way unlike I had ever experienced. I decided merely to observe them for a while and see if I could figure out what I was feeling.

I got briefly distracted, as I began thinking about my plans for the next four weeks. I was unsure exactly what I was going to do, just rest I supposed, but basically I had decided that I would just take one day at a time.

While I was thinking this, John suddenly approached with the strange man and announced,

“Melissa, there is someone that I want you to meet.”

I noticed him approaching and immediately froze like a deer in headlights, but his smile was so warm and inviting that I soon began to feel more at ease. He then stepped up to me quite casually and very politely extended his hand to shake, which I graciously did. As I did, I felt an exhilarating tingle flow through my body, like a small electrical charge; it did not hurt or anything, but rather it soothed me. And as he looked at me, I sensed a profound wisdom in his eyes.

“Hello,” he said, “Pleased to meet you. I have seen your work and have enjoyed it very much,” he commented.

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“Thank you,” I said quite shyly, as he seemed to be staring right into my soul. “Are you a friend of John’s?” I quickly asked to take the pressure off me.

“Yes, you can say that,” he replied.

His manner of speaking was quite cool and confident, and he had a very laid-back way about him. At first, I was not sure if he was coming on to me or if this was just his natural way of talking.

“Do you work for John?” I asked, just trying to keep him talking.

“I suppose you can say that,” he replied, “but I am not in the movie business. I guess you can say I am somewhat of a consultant,” he added as John chuckled lightly.

His voice was so melodic that it seemed to have a tranquilizing effect on me, yet at the same time I felt quite invigorated; it was a very unusual sensation.

“I have never seen you before,” I said. “Have you ever worked with John before?” I asked.

“No, John and I have only recently become friends,” he replied. “We were introduced through some mutual friends,” he added. “John asked that I attend the party as a way of saying thank you for some help I imparted to him.”

What also was strange to me was that John, who typically had to be the center of attention in any conversation, very quietly stood off to the side not uttering a word.

“I asked if I could meet you,” he continued, “and I am glad that I did. But there is something to which I must attend, so I will have to say goodbye for now,” he said.

“It was very nice to meet you,” I uttered. “Will I see you again?” I asked.

“It was nice to meet you, too,” he replied. “Yes, I will be back tomorrow. Perhaps we can talk more then,” he added.

“Sure,” I said, “I would like that.”



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And with that, he turned and began walking toward the house with John. They disappeared as they walked through the large doors leading into the house, and I just stood there wondering, “Who is this guy?”

John returned to the party a short time later without the strange man and we began talking:

“Who is that guy you introduced me to?” I asked.

“Well, he’s a nice guy who’s done something very special for me,” he replied.

“What did he do for you?” I asked with curiosity.

“Let’s just say he’s not your average consultant,” he said as if I would not understand.

“So what did he help you with?” I insisted.

“Well, I suppose you can say that he’s a shaman,” he replied.

“What’s a shaman?” I asked.

“A shaman, I guess you can say, is a kind of healer,” he answered.

“So he’s some kind of a healer?” I said as if almost misunderstanding him.

“That’s right,” he said. “I heard about him from my friend Jim,” he added. “Jim used to work with me and he knows some people that know him. Jim’s into all that New Age stuff. I mean, I don’t have anything against any of it; it’s just I’m too busy to be meditating all the time, you know? Anyhow, he told me that this guy can heal anyone, but that he wasn’t easy to get a hold of.”

“How did you get a hold of him, then?” I asked.

“Jim went to see him,” he replied. “It took some time for him to agree to with me,” he added, “but he finally did.”

“So, what did he do for you?” I asked. “Are you sick?”

“Not anymore,” he replied. “He healed me of my cancer!” he said quite emphatically, although at a low volume so that others would not

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hear him saying it. “I had cancer in my thyroid,” he said pointing to the area of his neck where it was located, “but it’s gone now,” he added with a smile. “You wouldn’t believe it,” he continued. “The healing was the most miraculous thing I have ever seen! He simply placed his hand over the area and after a few seconds he said he was done, and that was it!” he exclaimed.

“What?” I asked in disbelief. “I didn’t know you had cancer. Why didn’t you tell me?” I asked forcefully.

“That’s because I didn’t tell too many people,” he replied. “Actually, I was considering several healing approaches, and when Jim told me about him, I decided that that was what I wanted to do. I had heard from Jim, in fact, that he’s a remarkable healer and that he’s worked with some of the wealthiest people in the country, so I figured I’d give it a chance. I was a little skeptical at first, naturally, but after spending some time with him, I began to believe that he does have some special kind of power or something. He insists that he doesn’t have any special power though, that anyone can heal if they want to, but I have never seen anything like it.”

“Are you sure about this?” I asked. “This seems like it can be a script for one of your movies,” I commented.

“Quite sure. I’ve never felt better, in fact,” he insisted.

“I can’t believe what I’m hearing,” I said as if he was pulling my leg.

“Well, it’s true,” he replied.

“Wow, this is the most incredible thing I ever heard!” I exclaimed.

“Yes, it is quite wonderful,” he replied. “But his only request,” he added, “was that I keep it to myself. I told you, but please don’t mention this to anyone else, okay?” he asked.

“Yeah, okay,” I agreed. “Why, though, will he still be here tomorrow?” I asked.

“There was something he said he needed to do here,” he replied, “but he wouldn’t say what it is. As you know, though, I’m going to be

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in Europe for the next few weeks. I mentioned this to him after he did the healing for me, in fact, and he asked me if he could stay in the house while I'm gone; I guess so that he could do whatever he needs to do. Anyhow, I agreed, so he'll actually be staying here in the house while I'm away," he added.

"I knew there was something very unique about that guy," I commented while smiling at the intrigue I felt, hardly even noticing that John had mentioned that he'd be staying in the house.

"Anyway, that is the reason I am having the party," he said, "although he and Jim are the only ones who know, besides you now, of course."

"Didn't anyone else ask why you were having such a big party?" I asked.

"Yeah, but I told everyone it was just a summer bash before I head off to Europe for a month. No one questioned it," he replied.

## Chapter 3

The rest of the party is a blur, as I could not stop thinking about that guy. All I remember is the party winding down and asking John if I could retire for the night. Once I got to my room, however, I tried to get some sleep, but I ended up tossing and turning in the bed all night, until around early dawn, when I decided to go out to the patio and get some fresh air. I remember thinking it must have become cloudy overnight, as it looked like it was going to rain, but noticing how peaceful everything was that morning, it did not seem to matter.

The sky was still quite dark, and the sun had not yet begun to rise, but there was a dim, pre-dawn light that permeated, and even though I had not slept all night, I somehow felt more energized than I had in a long time. The sights, sounds, and smells all seemed to be alive!

Then, as I was contemplating the all the beauty I was seeing, I noticed him walking along the beach across from the staircase that led down from the patio. And as he stood near the base of the steps, he noticed me and called out:

“Ah, I see I’m not the only one up early this morning.”

“Good morning,” I said. “I didn’t even hear you come back last night,” I added.

“Good morning,” he replied. “I got back late and I didn’t want to disturb anyone, so I was careful to be very quiet,” he said. “Nice morning though, isn’t it?” he asked.

“Yes it is,” I answered, “although it looks like it might rain,” I commented.

“Yes it does,” he said looking up at the sky. “But I think the rain will hold off for while,” he stated. “Would you like to take a walk?” he asked. “I was going to take a walk down the beach and I wouldn’t mind the company,” he added.

“Sure, that sounds nice,” I replied.

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I walked down the staircase and greeted him at the base of the steps, even though I was wearing only a T-shirt and pajama pants. I noticed, too, that I was not the only one barefoot.

“Should I let John know I’m going to be gone for a while?” I asked.

“No, John’s still sleeping,” he answered. “It’s best if we don’t disturb him. Besides, we won’t be gone too long,” he stated as he began walking toward the ocean.

“You know, I didn’t get your name last night,” I queried while walking to catch up with him.

“You can call me Peter,” he answered. “Although I have been different names to different people,” he added.

“How many names do you have?” I asked jokingly.

“Well, people have named me many things,” he replied. “It’s just that people have formed different perceptions of me, so I’ve been called by many names. You can relate to that, can’t you?” he asked.

“Sure I can,” I said laughing. “I don’t even want to mention some of the names I’ve been called. I see your point,” I added.

The sun was beginning to rise over the horizon, and the amount of daylight was increasing, although a thick cloud mass still blocked its view.

“Well, it seems John likes you,” I said not knowing what else to say.

“Yes, I believe he does,” he replied. “I like him, too. John has a unique vitality that makes him almost magnetic to those around him,” he commented.

“I noticed that about him, too,” I said. “He really does have an great personality. I owe much of my career to him, too, in fact. He’s helped me more than I think I could ever repay.”

“Yes, he seems to have a fondness for you, too,” he said. “The daughter he never had, perhaps,” he added while smiling.

We both laughed at this.

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“John told me of the work you did with him,” I said. “I hope that was okay?” I asked. “I know he mentioned that you didn’t want anyone to know,” I commented.

“No, in your case it’s all right,” he answered. “It’s just I like to keep a low profile, so I ask those I assist not to mention it to too many people.”

“Well, I think it’s extraordinary!” I exclaimed. “How did you learn to do that?” I asked with sincere curiosity.

“It took many years of discipline,” he replied.

“Well, I wouldn’t mind learning what you know,” I said emphatically.

“Now why would an actress want to get involved with this sort of thing?” he asked chuckling, almost as if mocking me.

“No, I’m serious. I really would like to know what you know. I’ve always been very interested in this stuff,” I said.

“Well, it’s not the things I know that has done what you think I’ve done,” he replied.

“You see, that’s it; that’s what I’m talking about!” I exclaimed. “I want to know what that means,” I said emphatically.

“Well, I’m not sure if I can help you with that,” he said.

“Well why not?” I insisted.

I was beginning to become a little annoyed, as I had become very accustomed to getting whatever I wanted. I quickly realized, though, that my demands were not going to work with him.

“I’m sorry,” I said. “I didn’t mean to press you like that. Sometimes my desire to get what I want gets the best of me and I end up becoming too pushy,” I commented.

“That’s okay,” he said. “You don’t have to apologize. It probably would have worked with almost anyone else; you were merely doing what you felt would get the response for which you were looking. It’s natural to want to know what we don’t know. And sometimes in our

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enthusiasm, we all can get a little carried away. It used to be a big problem for me, too.”

“Well, is there anything I can say or do?” I asked. “I mean, I’m very impressed with what you do and I would like to--”

He interrupted me by pointing casually at the ocean and then said with a gleam in his eye:

“The ocean has many qualities, but it does not seek to control them. And the tide knows to rise and fall, but it does not know how. You are like the tide,” he added, “when it is wiser to be the ocean.”

I think I knew what he was trying to say, and I felt somewhat embarrassed about my naivete.

“Okay, can you teach me how to be the ocean?” I asked.

“You already are the ocean,” he replied while smiling. “You’re just not aware of it,” he added.

“Okay, you seem to be contradicting yourself,” I said. “First you said that I’m the tide and that it’s wiser to be the ocean, and now you’re saying that I already am the ocean. Which one is it?” I asked.

“I said you are ‘like’ the tide,” he answered, “but the tide cannot be distinguished as being separate from the ocean, as it is an expression of the ocean. You are thinking that they are separate, but in fact, they are not. It is a matter of perception,” he stated.

“Okay, so how do I become ‘like’ the ocean?” I asked.

“You already are the ocean,” he insisted. “You don’t have to become ‘like’ it; it’s simply a matter of expanding your awareness from thinking yourself as being like the tide to being the ocean.”

“Okay, so how do I expand my awareness?” I asked.

“Ah, now you’re asking the right questions!” he exclaimed. “You see, when you ask the right questions, you get the kinds of answers you are seeking.”

“Okay, can you teach me, then, how to ask the right kinds of questions?” I asked smiling as if I had figured out his game.

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“Well, those you will have to come to on your own,” he answered. “I can, though, help guide you in the right direction and provide you with a basic road map, if you will, that will ultimately lead you to asking the right questions,” he added.

Okay, but how will I know what--” I asked.

“Well, in life,” he continued, always seeming to know what I was about to ask, “our experiences are the result of two principle processes: perception and choice, and the two often are linked together. By this I mean the specific choices we make are the result of our perceptions, and likewise, our perceptions are a matter of choice. Let me explain: Out of the multitude of percepts available, we select the ones that most accurately seem to reflect that which our senses report and that which matches our belief system. In turn, we make choices, or selections, based on those perceptions,” he explained.

“Here’s a practical example that may help you with your pushiness,” he continued while smiling. “Think before you speak rather than speaking while you think. That’s a choice one can make.”

Everything he said made absolute sense to me, and yet it all seemed so simple. I could tell by now that he indeed possessed a great deal of wisdom.

“That’s sounds simple but I bet it’s not easy to do,” I replied. “I have such a habit of--”

“The concept is simple,” he commented. “It’s the execution of choice that’s challenging, and that’s why habits of all kinds can be difficult to break.”

“So how does someone execute choice?” I asked.

“Well, people execute choice all the time,” he replied. “It’s impossible not to, in fact; even deciding to get out of bed in the morning or not is a choice. What you really want to know, though, is how to execute the kinds of choices that bring the results or experiences that you want, and that’s where it can become challenging. It can become challenging because there are different forms of choice and it is important to understand the difference: Choice can be a conscious,



deliberate one, for example, which is probably how most people would associate it. Or, it can be an unconscious one. The latter is more involved, and it is the more important one, actually,” he explained.

“But how can someone make an unconscious choice?” I asked. “I mean, if I’m not conscious of making it, how can I be sure, then, to make the choice I want?” I added.

“Like I said before, it’s natural to want to know what we don’t know,” he answered. “But know that ‘knowing’ is merely a perception. So thus, the choices you make will be based on your perceptions.”

I was beginning to feel my head spin, as it was too early in the morning for me to be philosophizing, although I loved what he was saying. I always, from a very young age, had a deep interest in this kind of stuff, and I wished that I had something profound to say, but I did not. So, we just continued walking for a while, where he asked me about little things, nothing much of consequence, at least I did not think so, but I asked him to tell me more about himself.

“Well, I grew up on the East Coast,” he replied, “where I earned several college degrees and then worked as a professor until the university I was teaching at let me go after they said my teachings were becoming ‘too radical.’ After that, I then moved out west and lived in New Mexico for a number of years, where I studied and taught meditation and other New Age practices. I’ll add that I never married, and above everything, I enjoy the freedom of not having to be accountable to anyone,” he commented.

I had not even noticed that we had walked quite a distance from John’s house when he suggested that we should begin heading back. By this time, too, the sky had grown increasingly dark and I commented that we might not make it back in time before the rain came.

“Oh, not to worry,” he replied. “The rain will hold off until we return,” he said with assurance.

“I don’t know,” I said. “It looks like it’s about to pour any second now.”

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A loud crash of thunder exploded what seemed to be right above us and I began walking faster, as the thought of getting caught in the rain did not seem appealing to me at all. He noticed my near panic and calmly reassured me that the rain would off until we returned to the house. Another crack of thunder, and I began to think that he was either nuts or perhaps was just anxious to see me in a wet T-shirt. I could not understand how he seemed so unfazed by it, but he quite simply commented,

“Rain is a natural part of the creation and there’s nothing to fear. We will make it back before it rains,” he insisted.

Gradually, we were getting closer to the house, and I began to settle down a bit. We finally approached the staircase leading up to the house, and I remember him saying that he was going to see John, and I said that I was going to wash up and pack my things. And, just as we entered the house, the rain suddenly came down as hard as I had ever seen, and I wondered: How did he know the rain would hold off until right when we got back?

After packing my things, I went to see if John was awake, and he was, enjoying a cup of coffee while reading the morning newspaper.

“Good morning,” I said.

“Good morning,” he replied. “Some rain storm, huh?” he asked.

“Yeah, I can’t believe how hard it’s raining,” I replied. “I got up early this morning, actually, and I saw Peter. We went for walk down the beach and we almost got caught in the storm,” I added.

“Yeah I know,” he said. “He told me about it.”

“Where is he?” I asked.

“He went into town,” he answered. “There were some things he said he needed to get. He’ll be back a little later.”

John and I enjoyed breakfast, and we talked about my next movie, which was not set to start filming until later the following month. I commented on how much my life had changed during the past few

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years and how complicated it had seemed to become. He reminded me of all the trappings to the business and said that keeping a level head was the only way to keep from losing oneself. He suggested that I just take it easy and enjoy myself. I agreed, as it was what I really needed.

## Chapter 4

Later that morning, Peter returned, and while John went to finish packing in preparation to leave for his trip, we began talking:

“We just made it back in time this morning, huh?” I asked.

“Back in time for what?” he asked.

“We made it back before the rain came,” I answered.

“Oh yes,” he replied. “I know you were getting quite nervous,” he said laughing.

“I guess it was a little silly of me to get nervous about getting caught in the rain,” I commented.

“Well, not if you don’t like it,” he said.

“Yeah, I guess,” I replied thinking that he was right. “How did you know, though, that it would hold off until we got back?” I asked. “I mean, I’m surprised it held off as long as it did.”

“Oh, it was just a feeling I had. Sometimes we just know things without knowing how we know them, you know?” he asked.

“Do you always talk like this?” I asked smiling while slowly shaking my head from side to side.

“What do you mean?” he asked.

“I don’t know how to describe it,” I said. “It’s just there’s something very profound about the things you say.”

“No, I don’t always talk like this,” he replied while chuckling. “It’s just you have a certain proclivity, if you will, for such talk.”

I was not sure how he could have made such an assumption, being that we hardly knew anything about each other. I knew he was right, though, as I had always, as long as I could remember, been very drawn to profound utterances. Growing up, in fact, I was often told that I was mature beyond my years, and I often found it more interesting to be around adults than with other children. Even my teachers in school

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would tell my mother that my level of maturity was greater than many of the other students and some even commented that that translated into a special talent I had for writing and literature. I always liked, for instance, how language can be constructed so as to imply meaning well beyond the actual words themselves. I think that is one of the reasons why I gravitated toward acting, as I am able to see into scripts and pull things out that are not apparent to others. Directors, in fact, have complimented me on this ability.

“But if you are serious about wanting to do this,” he continued, “I can teach you what you will need to do. You, then, ultimately will have to do much on your own, although I would encourage you to seek out other teachers so as to get as broad a range of teaching as possible,” he added.

“Now, to help you get started,” he stated, “there is something that I would like to give you that will help you a great deal and you can use it as a basis from which you can build.”

“All right,” I said. “What is it?” I asked.

“I will give it to you later,” he answered. “For now, though, let’s see if John needs any help before he leaves on his trip.”

## Chapter 5

After wishing John a good trip and seeing him off, I began wondering what Peter had planned and what he said he wanted to give me? I was feeling like an excited child on Christmas Eve and could hardly wait to see what it was.

It was now late afternoon, and Peter suggested that we take another walk down the beach. This time we went much farther and came to a secluded cove where we stopped and rested and where we would spend many afternoons. It was an area where some trees on a small cliff overhead provided some shade, which made it comfortable during the hot afternoon sun.

We had walked to this spot at a rather fast pace and I was feeling a little tired, but I noticed that it did not seem to have the same effect on him. I wondered about this, but I also really wanted to know what he wanted to give me, so I asked:

“So, what is it that you want to give me?”

“It’s something that I wrote for you,” he replied. “But before I give it to you, I want to talk with you more about perception and choice,” he said. “Now, if you take what I’ve already stated this morning a step farther,” he continued, “what would you say perception is?” he asked.

“Well, I guess it’s a—I don’t know what it is,” I said confusingly.

“Okay, how do you form a perception?” he asked. “What composes it?”

“I suppose it’s just what I think,” I answered quite unsure of myself.

“That’s right. It’s what you think. Perception and choice are both expressions of the same thing; it’s similar to the tide and ocean analogy I used this morning. In this case, perception and choice are both composed of thinking. So they are, then, simply just thoughts in your head, right?”

*Michael Kevin*

“Yeah, that makes sense,” I said. “It’s my thoughts that make my perceptions and choices,” I agreed with a sense of understanding.

“That’s right,” he answered. “So you can see, then, how your perceptions can change,” he added.

I loved how he could evolve a notion so quickly. That is, to take an idea or concept and extend from its base or foundation to its more practical applications.

“Yeah,” I said excitedly. “If I change what I think, then I can change my perceptions. Wow, it seems so simple!” I exclaimed not knowing why I had not already thought of this.

“That’s right,” he replied. “It’s your thinking that determines your perception, and so, it must become the single most important thing in your life. You see, what you are seeking to do is to gain a measure of control of your thoughts—your perceptions--because when thoughts are allowed to run uncontrolled, there is chaos. But when controlled, you can exercise more choice, and that’s what everyone says they want, although they may not have seen it from this perspective. People say they want to be happy, for instance, but they don’t know how to make that choice a permanent one. They look outside themselves for it, when they should look inside—to their own thoughts and perceptions. It’s like seeing the tide as a separate entity within the ocean, when it’s really an expression of what the ocean is doing,” he explained.

“But how can people learn to control their thoughts?” I asked as if it was a nearly impossible task.

“It’s a matter of practice and discipline,” he said. “I know it seems like it would be like trying to hold the tide back with a broom,” he chuckled, “but it can be done.”

I thought about what he was saying, and decided that I wanted to learn.

“Okay,” I said. “I want to learn how to do it. Where do I begin?” I asked.

*My Spiritual Compendium*

“All right, just relax for a little while,” he said. “The journey you are taking is one that everyone is taking, even if they don’t know it, but you are now making a conscious, deliberate choice to accelerate that journey, if you will,” he added. “Listen to another metaphor,” he continued. “It’s a story that has been said before but I will put my own spin on it:

Imagine that life takes place in and around a large mountain. At the top of the mountain lives a community of those who have traversed the journey from the bottom and have arrived at the higher levels where they live in a glorious city in what you would call a trouble-free life. That is, they experience no burdens or discomforts in life of any kind. There is no sickness or disease, no strife, no negativity of any kind; they are totally content and live a completely comfortable life.

From their higher perspective of being at the top of the mountain, then, they can see all that is going on down below them, down all along the mountain itself, around the base of the mountain, as well as beyond the mountain. From this higher perspective, and from having made the journey themselves, they are then in the position to help those who have not yet reached those higher levels. But, to arrive at the top, one must climb the mountain. So, the climb is the journey.

Most of humanity, however, lives at lower levels of the mountain, although some of those living down below have looked up and caught glimpses of the glorious city above and have gotten a sense of what lies ahead. The city, though, is difficult to see, as clouds obscure its view much of the time, not to mention its great height in the sky. But for some of these individuals, after having seen the potential that exists, they decide to begin climbing the mountain so that they may reach the top and live in the glorious city. It is not an easy journey, however, as the task is a challenging one. The mountain is very steep and there are many blocks and pitfalls along the way that can take one off the path leading to the top. So, it takes a very strong person to make it.

When one begins the journey, though, he has to take loads of provisions with him, as the journey will be a long one, and the weight of carrying it is rather heavy, so the burden can be rough. But, as one



*Michael Kevin*

climbs, he begins to exhaust the provisions a little at a time and the load he is carrying begins to lighten, thus making the journey a little easier the higher one rises.

For many of those living down below, however, they aren't even aware of the city above; in fact, some aren't even aware of the mountain, as they live so far off in the wilderness they cannot see it through the thick forests in which they have become secluded. And so, they aren't even thinking about taking the journey yet.

Some, though, are aware there is a mountain, but they are not terribly interested in climbing it. Perhaps they're comfortable where they are, or they're just preoccupied with other things and it's not a concern for them. Or, perhaps they are lazy and are just simply unwilling to make the journey. Or, for some, it may be their belief that they somehow will be placed at the top of the mountain after their life here is over, provided of course that they lived their lives according to the pre-determined set of practices that comprise their belief system.

For all of those who are not at the top of the mountain, however, life sometimes can be difficult, even if there is a measure of happiness or contentment in their lives, as they will find themselves wrestling with various inner conflicts at times. These will involve the many uncomfortable or negative emotions there are, such as fear, in all its forms: doubt, worry, anxiety, insecurity, etc., guilt, anger, resentment, and other forms of emotional pain like self-pity, jealousy and envy, etc. Often times, too, these individuals will have outer conflicts with others, which invariably are based on various judgements and resentments that are formed. And sometimes, it may even involve physical fights over what they amount to differences in opinion or belief. They may even use wars to solve those differences. But as I said previously, life for these individuals is not all pain and sorrow, as there are moments of joy and happiness, although their means for acquiring happiness, however, does not make for a lasting one. And so, there will be a mixture of pleasure and pain for these individuals, since their search for lasting happiness lies exclusively in a continual external searching for 'things' or for other people. These may be such physical 'things' as more

money, more possessions, the ideal mate, etc., or perhaps less tangible but equally sought-after ‘things,’ such as publicity, or one’s status or position in life, etc. Even with mass accumulations of these, however, these individuals still will find themselves ‘wanting’ at inner levels because ‘things’, no matter how beautiful or satisfying they may be for a time, are temporary in their existence; that is, they do not last. And this is one of the secrets to arriving at the top, because one must ultimately learn to turn internally if he is to find the lasting happiness he is seeking. This does not mean, however, that one must live a totally restrictive lifestyle, renouncing all that is material or worldly, as some have proposed. We are all here to enjoy all there is to enjoy, but it is the means by which things are enjoyed and valued that makes for the difference. That is, it’s the reliance on, or the attachment to these ‘things’ or other people, that determines the outcome. If one learns to enjoy all that there is to enjoy and yet not be attached to it or reliant on it for one’s happiness, for instance, then he is free and can move into the highest levels on the mountain.

For those who are climbing and who are aware of it, they are scattered all along the mountain’s paths, and there are many paths that will lead to the top. Naturally, some of these individuals are at higher levels than others, and the higher the level, the easier life generally is, as the burdens that weigh one down at the lower levels lessen as one rises higher on the mountain. Fortunately, for those climbing, they are not totally on their own, as those that live in the glorious city above can come down, so to speak, to help those who are climbing, but this usually does not occur until those climbing have reached a certain level, however. There are, though, teachers and helpers who are on the mountains’ various paths, and although they have not yet arrived at the top, they can lend assistance to those below them and can provide a great deal of help for those that are seeking it. Recognize though, that many times, people come to enjoy the view at any of the various positions on the mountain and they become content and simply stop climbing.

For almost all those who begin the journey, however, they invariably will start with faulty motivations or intentions, because the

*Michael Kevin*

true means to reach the top is not yet fully realized. So for most, the climb actually begins with the wrong reasons in mind, such as those who may be seeking power in the attempt to control those or that he thinks is below him or her. Or, perhaps it may be those that are motivated by the need to impress others or to gain the acclaim of others. Or, it may be those who might simply be trying to elevate themselves above others, such as those who seek money or wealth as an end in itself.

But in any case, as one rises up the mountain, the goals and purposes that will take one to the top become clearer, just so long as one remains true to the higher ideals. That is, one learns, as a matter of course, to straighten out his purpose, if you will, as he learns the higher ideals. But if one remains on a totally self-seeking pursuit, he will discover that he is on the wrong path. He or she invariably will end up either falling into a ditch from which he or she cannot escape, or he or she simply will go from one dead end to another and thus not make very much progress at all. He or she very likely, then, will abandon the journey all together, as his or her motives ultimately will bring disappointment and discouragement, which then will lead to a depression over his or her perceived failure, and finally total resignation all together. And yet, for some, it may seem that the climb itself is not fast enough, and they find that the gains that they are seeking are not being achieved quickly enough, and so they end up giving up because the goal seems to distant or simply to difficult to achieve.

Let me just comment on those who get caught in dead ends by going down wrong paths or those who fall in ditches, etc., because many do. These may include those who become slaves to various desires or addictions, or to their status and acclaim among others, etc. Or, it may be those that become so preoccupied with their particular style of climbing that that becomes a trap for them, as their focus shifts from the climb itself to the specific manner in which one is climbing. The focus should not be so much on the manner of climbing, but rather with the intent on reaching the top. That is what will make the difference—

desire—for without it, one will not make it very far along any path taken.

Finally, as one begins reaching the higher levels, he comes to realize that all the paths that lead to the top actually come together and form one path, and that each path was only a particular way of reaching the top. He then realizes that each path has no real meaning other than being a means to an end, or a particular method of achievement, and he then has risen above all the paths and can then go on to the top to live in the glorious city.”

At this, he paused to watch my reaction, which was one of interest, as I was wide-eyed and processing all that he had said. Noticing this, he continued:

“It is imperative, then, that any aspirant becomes aware of the states of mind that have directed their lives to where ever it currently may be. That is, to whatever position they hold on or near the mountain. By this I’m referring to the fields of attention or the thinking that keep people trapped at the lower levels of the mountain—the fears, guilt, resentments, anger etc.—as these must be dealt with if a person is to make it very far up the mountain. In fact, if one really is to make any progress at all.”

He paused again momentarily seemingly to gather his thoughts and then continued:

“Now, with this by way of foundation, we are ready to discuss its specific aspects, but realize that the kind of learning that will take you to the top of the mountain is not one in which one simply passively absorbs knowledge from another giving it. No, this would, in itself, not be of too much value, although it is part of the process. Rather, it is your experiences and practice, coupled with the input of new knowledge, as well as one’s desire to reach the top, that will make the difference. I can assist you with some of these, but the desire to do so must come from deep within you and no one really can give that to another. Ultimately, too, a time will come when another being will no longer be able to assist you any further, and then you must complete the journey yourself.”

*Michael Kevin*

I was a little overwhelmed at hearing this, as I really had no idea what I was to do on my own, but I quickly realized that he would explain more in time. He must have noticed my semi-confused state as he kindly stated:

“Okay, you’ve learned much today, but realize that learning is a process that must be integrated at all levels of thinking, and all true learning takes place at deeper than conscious levels. So, before we head back to the house, I would like to ask the deeper parts of you to make use of all you’ve learned and experienced today and make use of the natural state of sleep tonight *to dream a dream that helps you undream your waking dream.*”

I heard him say this, but I was not quite sure why he was saying it, and I really did not want to question it at that time, as my mind was already swirling with so many things, so I decided to ask him about it later. At this point, he then stood up and said it was time to return to the house.

## Chapter 6

When we returned to the house, he made a nice dinner for both of us and I was not surprised to learn that he was also a great cook. After dinner, we rested on lounge chairs on the patio while watching the sun set just talking about current events and things and enjoying the warm evening. I was delighted, too, with his wonderful sense of humor and we spent much of the time laughing and giggling together.

After dark, I announced that I was going to head back home for the night, when he told me that he wanted to give me the book so I could read it before the next time we were to meet. He told to take it home and read it the following day after I had slept and felt more rejuvenated, and to come back whenever I wanted to.

When I arrived back at my apartment, though, I could not wait until morning, so I began reading almost immediately. While looking at the book itself, I noticed that it was small and finely bound, not unlike a diary, but not exactly like one either. It had an ornate cover, decorated with celestial images and had blue pages inside, coincidentally my favorite color.

I opened to the first page and noticed that what was written in it was handwritten, and centered on each page was what appeared to be a short poem. I quickly noticed that it was not ordinary poetry, however, because when I began reading through them, I was astounded to discover the wisdom each portrayed. I was not too surprised at this, however, as he had said the book would help me with my spiritual pursuit.

I would describe the compendium as being a collection of twenty-five, short proverbs, or non-rhyming poems, as he called them, designed to enrich spiritual perception by providing a thought-provoking presentation on a wide-range of topics that gives insight into spiritual reality. The proverbs, or poems, are arranged in sections, which are organized in a manner that allows the reader to follow a sequence of topics and ideals that build upon one another throughout

*Michael Kevin*

the sections. It is the style of the writing, however, that makes the compendium unique, in that it is both educational and inspirational in nature, as it not only describes various aspects of spirituality, but it also inspires the reader with knowledge and wisdom regarding spiritual truths.

I began reading...

## SECTION I: BECOMING AWARE

“Becoming Aware”

Thoughts weave like a symphony  
coming from the source.

Unfiltered,  
unrestrained.  
Clean,  
without hesitation,  
without thinking.

Contradiction?

There is no separation,  
only levels of perception.

“Slaves to Identity?”

An idea.  
Something created.  
Finite when conceived.



*Michael Kevin*

Sticky.  
Attached.  
Afraid to lose.

Loss?  
There cannot be.  
Temporary enjoyment,  
that is the way.

“Higher Self”

Pool of desire  
seeking experience.

Selective,  
chooses expressive traits  
to satisfy intent.

Aware of the whole,  
but does not know dislike.  
Accepts everything.

Being it is the challenge.

“The Grand Awareness”

Life itself  
and beyond life.

Projecting,  
creating,  
being.

Immense yet small.  
Complex yet simple.  
All yet nothing.

Childlike innocence is the key.

“The Creator”

The gods sing the praise  
of the still, silent mind.

Forming and watching  
with Love and Law,  
sound turns to light.

Shut off your senses  
and you will know.

*Michael Kevin*

“One”

The glorious “One,”  
much told in books  
as the mighty, I Am.

Single in three,  
impacts by four.

Intellect is the beginning.  
Surrender, and books become unnecessary.

## SECTION II: WAYS AND MEANS

### “Devotion to Spirit”

The eternal, creative force  
bestows blessings upon fervent souls.

Spirit turns words into deeds,  
and devotion hands the world its desire.

### “Unchallenged Dreams”

Truths carry consistency  
through unchallenged dreams.

Promises made  
are what come,  
be they spoken.

*Michael Kevin*

“Interconnectedness”

Every thought that is hidden  
someday will be known.

The artistry comes from  
brightening the interconnected resemblance of all.

“Dedication”

Dedication  
points you in a direction.

Passion  
grants guidance.

Desire  
reveals how.

“Release”

What is not forgotten  
cannot be taken away.

Accept first,  
unfold second.

Releasing is the task.

“Freedom”

Evaporate attachment to desire,  
and you find freedom.

Seeking leads to finding,  
and intention guides the way.

*Michael Kevin*

“Silence”

Silence,  
the mystical mind of meditation  
stops the day.

Lifted from distraction,  
a quiet mind shimmers the soul.

### **SECTION III: LOVE**

“Love”

Love,  
holds all things together.  
More than an emotion,  
and yet simpler to understand than sunshine.

Honest and sincere,  
faith bears its prayer.

“Love (Part II)”

Love grants  
an undeniable feeling  
and wishes only to give.

It cannot be done wrong.



*Michael Kevin*

“Love (Part III)”

Life’s pearl of wisdom  
is a solitary reconstruction  
of love’s meaning  
and a renewal of the soul’s core.

“Love (Part IV)”

Those that work on love  
thrill beyond words,  
because dreams of love  
transcend what can be described.

## SECTION IV: FEAR

“Fear”

Fearing is praying,  
and every layer shackles.  
It steals from  
every passing desire.

Fear breeds guilt,  
and release comes from  
being open to forgiveness.

“Fear (Part II)”

When you hate  
it puts you with the same,  
since that thinking  
fills you with it.

And what you hate,  
you also fear.

*Michael Kevin*

“Fear (Part III)”

Fear  
clouds the heart.

Doubt  
lingers in the mind.

Both lead to grief,  
which stand against being free.

“Fear (Part IV)”

Faith is darkened by fear.

When cleared of fear,  
one’s faith is ripened  
by the eternal light.

## SECTION V: CREATING

### “Thinking”

To think is to create.

Desire beckons thought.

Thought gives rise to feelings.

Feelings empower thoughts,  
and both produce what is desired.

### “Expectation”

Expectation snares,  
rendering a welter of  
forfeited attainability  
wherein one’s desires  
are placed in captivity.

Forced attempts lead to disappointment.

Trustful allowance leads to positive results.

*Michael Kevin*

### “Pursuing Physical Perfection”

Some pursue perfection,  
spinning their ideal  
on a steel wheel.

Some pursue perfection  
by sculpting and shaping their bodies.

Both are the same.  
Outward appearance chases inward ambition.

### “Weighing Wait ”

He that waits  
and knows for what he waits,  
does not question manner.  
He knows only outcome.

My Spiritual Compendium is a fictional story in which the main character is given a small book of spiritual teachings, which she describes as a spiritual compendium. The spiritual compendium seeks to summarize spiritual concepts and ideals.

My Spiritual Compendium

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