

Foreword

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Anna knew what she was getting when she asked me to write this foreword. Or so I told myself as I fretted about just what to say. As friends and colleagues, we'd had long conversations during which I'd expressed my admiration for her work—and shared some of my doubts. Sure, I'd written some self-help books she'd liked, and Anna knows that I'm more open than some people to different ways of seeing the world. I'd been a guest on *Oprah* in 1999, and that stood as a significant overlap in our worlds—my “I'll believe it when I see it” view and Anna's view that “there's so much more to life than what we can see or even imagine.”

I readily agreed to provide the foreword to this book because I know Anna. If you know Anna, then you know what *knowing* Anna means. Anna, in person, exudes a kind of magic, like a modern-day sorceress or wizard. She just knows things most people don't; she can give advice from an angle most people don't have access to. She'd helped me through some relationship challenges that, from where I stood, seemed insurmountable. She's (wildly) confident in herself, but more importantly, she's confident in *everyone*; you can't be in a room with her and not feel better about yourself than you did before she walked in. She's already been out past where you are and has returned to report back, in all her thrilling wide-eyed enthusiasm.

But what about Anna on the page? Could she energize and delight on the page as she does in person? Despite myself, or maybe because of myself, I was still skeptical.

So I started reading. I was immediately drawn in by the crackling energy of her writing, by the unique but relatable stories, by the empathy and soul. I was learning, I was feeling, I was moved and inspired. This should be enough for any reader, and yet about a third of the way through, I noticed a certain nagging doubt returning. An image came into my head: I am talking to Anna and we are having our usual conversation, the one where I tell her I'm open and interested but skeptical, and she smilingly reassures me there is so much more.

And then it happened: my imagined conversation with Anna merged precisely with what I was reading. At the end of a passage inviting the reader to try an introspective exercise, the book started to speak directly to me:

"It's possible you are sensing a strong urge to find fault with this offering, to search for proof that your experience of it might be something less than amazing. But does this urge really serve you to the fullest? Or does it shield you—from failure, yes but also, perhaps, from vulnerability, openness, potential, and success?"

Yes, book! This is exactly what I am thinking. Down this road lies the possibility of fulfillment, but also of vulnerability or failure. Is it possible that I am paralyzed by fear? Anna continues:

"What if your resistant orientation ... is simply a form of fear?"

I think it is! But what should I do?!

"And what if the antidote to that fear is its exact opposite? Fear's opposite, if you ask me, is not so much courage as it is *curiosity*. What might become possible for you ... if you allowed skepticism to give way, even for a short time, to curiosity? The answer lies within you. It lies within this exact moment, in which you decide to try this, or to fight against it."

That was all I needed to hear. The encouragement, yes, but more importantly, that Anna knew exactly what I was thinking, just as I was thinking it. This book about the miracle of uncovering and living in our

most nourishing selves had produced a little miracle for me. I wanted proof that there is more to the world than I can see, and there it was, in the very words I was reading. Anna on the page was the next best thing to Anna in person, to having a conversation with the sorceress herself.

You may not be as skeptical as I was. But wherever you are is right where you're supposed to be. Anna will win you over as she won me, in person, on the page, or in whatever dimension you and she choose to meet.

Douglas Stone

Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2017

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Introduction

From my parents I was given the gift of believing that anything is possible, as long as it is truly aligned with what your heart wants. The gift I hope to give you here is my very own grown-up, lived-into version of that exact same message:

Life is one repeating opportunity
to attune yourself to the stirrings of your heart
and then to dare to live into them.

I hope you find many things while reading this book, but I wish most of all to create, for you, these five in particular:

(1) I want to speak a language you long to hear.

I want to speak your language, only more so. I want to give voice to a way of communicating that resonates deeply within you. I want to put words on ideas that you did not ever quite realize there were words for, but when you hear them, they sound *right*.

(2) I want to get you thinking differently.

I want to get you thinking differently about what hurts, and what holds you back—about what you may be ready for, and what you are willing to try, now.

(3) I want to activate feelings you love to feel.

I want to activate within you a feeling of hopefulness. I long for you to feel awakened and newly alive in your own life as you engage with the ideas

and anecdotes herein. I want to have chosen those ideas and anecdotes well, and timed them well, so that they leave you feeling *better*—not because of the book you are reading but because of *the places within yourself that you are allowing to become activated* as you engage with these pages.

(4) I want to help you discover the finest, truest place within you.

I believe a place exists within your consciousness that will astound you. I want to help you become more familiar with this powerful seat of energy, and to help you connect with this place from four easy angles, one for each section of this book, so that you can:

- **Shift the Balance** of your consciousness to incorporate more expansive and free-flowing energies into your life.
- **Change Your Mind** about upsets and drama—to discover how they are not meant to “knock you off balance” but rather to teach you when and how to turn inward.
- **Deepen the Conversation Within**, to help you build friendships with the places within you that most need attention, as *avenues toward* the places within you that hold the greatest concentration of clarity, wisdom, and forward momentum.
- **Navigate the Deeper YES**, to encourage you to steer your life from the seat of your strength and to move forward in ways that *feel deeply good*.

(5) I want to awaken your desire to play.

I want to present all of this material to you in a way that leaves you feeling playful about trying it on for size and then living into it. I want to help you develop an easy relationship with energetic shifts within yourself: ways of moving things around on the inside so that they feel better, so that your interactions with others feed you, and them, more and more fully.

Because that’s it, really. We are gifted this one “wild and precious life,” as the poet Mary Oliver so poignantly puts it. We can experience it partially. We can experience it from a place within ourselves that is pinched off or distant, fearful or resistant. Or we can dare to wake up and begin to ask:

What is my next step?
And how might it be amazing?

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Q: What is the Deeper YES?

A: It is possibility and potential
waking up within you

It's a concentration of energies
that are the seat of your power,
designed to snap into alignment
the moment you decide
to let it be so.

*Will you?
Is it possible?
Shall we begin it now?*

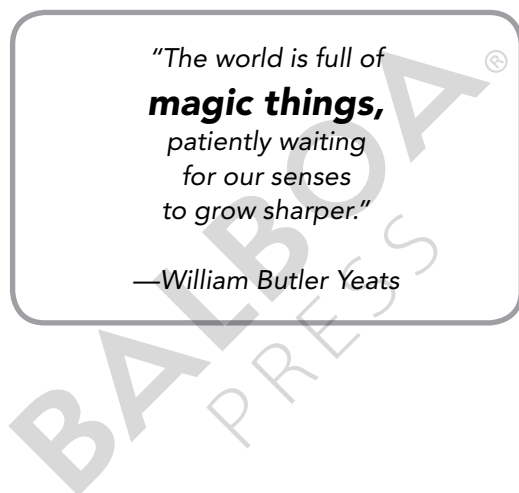
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SECTION 1

SHIFT THE BALANCE

*"The world is full of
magic things,
patiently waiting
for our senses
to grow sharper."*

—William Butler Yeats



In this section, I intend to show you ...

How you have probably been living
a smaller, more pinched-off version of
your life than you need to.

How the uphill battles
of your existence can melt away
when you tap into not just one but
two different levels of reality at the same time.

How harnessing the power of stopping
can help you invite much more
flow into your life.

How you can
SHIFT THE BALANCE
from a logistics-based to a
more essence-based orientation to life,
and in so doing,
discover a much more
buoyant and tapped-in
version of yourself.

Chapter 1

An Invitation

So, there you are.

You.

You and I are in no way fully acquainted. But meeting you here, I want you to know this: I am imagining myself, at the outset of our journey, bowing.

I am bowing before the known and the unknown that lie within you. And from deep within that bow, it is my great desire to reach out and connect. To connect with *you*, yes. But much more to the point, to connect with one very specific locus-point within you: **that place which represents your greatest concentration of clarity, focus, and joy.**

How might we help you access and activate that place, so that it can connect more directly with the world you live in? That's the journey of this book. I want to invite you to embrace the larger energies all around you, to transform the tangled and limiting stories of drama alive inside you, and to attune yourself to the voices within you that are wise and brave and can set you free into a life that feels deeply good. It starts with an invitation for you to follow me—not spellbound by any powers I might hold, but awakened and re-animated by your own. Because I want to invite you to take a peek at someplace amazing.

We are standing at the gateway and there it is before us: A Completely Different World of energies and possibilities—one that I have spent the last twenty years of my life learning to inhabit.

A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT WORLD

Look around and I will show you what I know about this Completely Different World. The energy of thought vibrates differently here. It has a robust power.

In this world, there is a palpable, positive connection between the thoughts you think and the events that play out around you. Here, your thoughts *interact* with what is occurring “out there.” And what is occurring starts to *shift*, in ways that honor and favor you and those all around you.

You are gifted, here, with a powerful lens that allows you to see that some of the events playing out in your surroundings are offering you profound lessons, great clarity, and deep pleasure. And to see, too, that other events are truly not worthy of your attention. As temptingly as they may call out to you with their distraction, you, with your lens, can see beyond them, and they fall away.

You are different here, too. You know yourself as no one has ever known you. You are able to hear subtle messages from deep within yourself. Quiet, hidden messages of off-centeredness can be easily discerned. Intuitive, clarifying, expansive ideas and thoughts move forward in your consciousness in a way that allows you to easily *engage* them.

You are lighter here. You move about easily within the different levels and aspects of yourself. There is a playfulness about you—a tenderness, a strength. And bubbling up from within you like a fountain, there is joy.

And oh! So *much* is possible here. Possibility hangs ripe like fruit all around you. Not on every branch, but on so *many* of them! Your ability to discern which branches are most fruitful is such a clean, focused, intuitive ability. There is a knowing, here, deep within you, that your power is rooted in something larger than the confines of your own consciousness. You are *connected*. Tapped in. A vibrant life force moves through you, and you know yourself to be worthy of it. You know how to stay open to it. There is no place left in you that blocks this greater whoosh of energy-from-beyond. You are an open portal, and this energy flows through you: deeply, easily, magically.

In this Completely Different World, you can see the pain of others, beneath whatever pleasant or angry mask they hide it with. You can see the potential of others, even when they have lost sight of it

themselves. In this world, you are grateful, growing, learning, expanding, expressing, and discerning. You are wise, trusted, and very present. You are unencumbered. You are *fun*. You are *good*. You are imperfect, but learning, humble, brave. And you are filled with a sense of experimentation and play.

On bad days, a world like this seems an eternity away—entirely out of reach. A fabrication. Some half-baked, unreachable version of perfection. Some drug trip, which sounds fabulous except that reality, dense and demanding, will always be waiting on the other side. This Completely Different World is just a life meant for some saint, or some other lucky bastard who had it better, had it easier, got handed something that you don't have. Someone, perhaps, who has not sustained the betrayals and disappointments of your particular life.

On dark days, in dark years, it is often all you can muster to just keep going. There is no Completely Different World like this. And if there is, you are locked out of it. Maybe it's someplace you get to go to when you die. But right now, there are bills to pay, arguments to kick up or run from, and more disappointments hovering just out of sight.

I don't have time for this, I hear you say. Can't you see how busy I am? How far behind I have fallen? Take your poetry and your quiet moments in the woods and your tender eye gazes somewhere else. That's not where I am.

And perhaps this is exactly the point.

I want to invite you to enter a Completely Different World that is located just exactly where you find yourself sitting in this one, particular moment.

I want to invite you to enter into this Completely Different World that exists, elusively, right where you are, even if entry is not easy at first. Even if it taxes your understanding of where you are and what is possible. I want to invite you to enter into this world because *you have been here before*. Maybe you've written it off as a temporary place—a moment of grace, some kind of random and fleeting good luck, a strange coincidence, or a mistake.

But it's no mistake.

I want to invite you into a place, right here, right now, where there is an expansiveness inside of you that is astonishing. Where the world around you reflects back to you the very best of who you are and always have been. I want to invite you into this world despite any resistance you might currently have or any limiting beliefs you might hold about your deserving to be here.

You deserve to exist in *this* version of reality. You are fully equipped to be here.

And getting *a-a-a-a-a-!* the way to this place, from wherever you currently find yourself stranded, begins, really, with engaging with an incredibly basic concept:

That “Completely Different World” already exists within your consciousness.

It’s not a matter of my talking you into it, shaming you into it, or hijacking you and dragging you to this place to prove that it is real. It’s simply a matter of locating it within your consciousness and interacting with it.

This is true even if this place is buried under piles of hurts, resentments, misunderstandings, and misinterpretations of reality.

There are *countless* ways of accessing this Completely Different World. There are luck-based ways. There are “random moment of grace”-type ways. There are ways of literally stumbling in “by mistake” on your way to something else. (*Oops! What? That moment right there was awesome! Wait! Where did it go?*) And there are plenty of ways that have to do with catastrophes and losses of epic and soul-wrenching proportions that crack you wide open and force you to learn to navigate anew.

But by far my favorite way, and the one I have dedicated my career to understanding, as I have made a lifetime study of *the Dynamics of Stuckness and Flow*, is by *learning how to shift your consciousness*. To, in essence, *CHANGE YOUR MIND* about what is possible.

It is largely an internal journey, though it’s punctuated by all kinds of real-world evidence, once you are ready to see that evidence. And it has,

at its root, the most fundamental relationship, friendship, and love affair that you will ever cultivate:

The key to that “Completely Different World” is your relationship with yourself.

I have come to believe, with a conviction deep and powerful, that the quality of essentially *everything* that plays out in your life has EVERYTHING to do with the nature of your own relationship with yourself—with how much you relate to *all* the different levels and facets of Who You Truly Are.

The sweetness of your interactions with yourself—the integrity, lightness, or heaviness of your interactions with yourself—is directly correlated to the sweetness and integrity and lightness or heaviness of the interactions you are able to attract and create out in the world.

The playfulness of your interactions with yourself—the creativity of your interactions with yourself, the judgmental-ness of your interactions with yourself, or, conversely, your ability to feel compassion for yourself, to encourage yourself, to draw clean boundaries within yourself—has EVERYTHING to do with your ability, out in the world, to engage on these same levels with others.

All of it, all of it, *all of it*, begins INSIDE HERE, in the Story of You, and in the way that you, consciously or unconsciously, relate to yourself. How you tune out, or tune in, to the messages coming from deep within you. How you trust or doubt those messages. And how, if you become disconnected from those deeper inner messages, you go about re-connecting.

I want to invite you into a space where you are so connected to yourself, so supportive of yourself from within, that The Brightness blooms and dances all around you, and The Darkness becomes simply an invitation to shine your light.

Your life is offering you a very specific invitation. And I am now inviting you to translate that invitation into something you can hear, work with, and benefit from.

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Anna Huckabee Tull

The particular pathway that I am about to show you is all about the powerful, mind-bending, life-expanding things that can happen when you learn what it truly means to deepen your connection with yourself, and in so doing, deepen your connection with the people and energies all around you.

The place where this other world is, is right here. In your very skin. In this exact moment, whether the moment happens to appear, on the outside, to be filled with beautiful gardens or some new tax form arriving in your in-box. What is happening “out there” need not set the tone for what is happening, “in here,” inside of you. The pathway I want to show you—the pathway I believe you, specifically, showed up here to learn about—starts right here, in this very instant.

Because this moment, always, is the portal to the place where the freest, sweetest, wisest, bravest, most generous version of you resides.

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