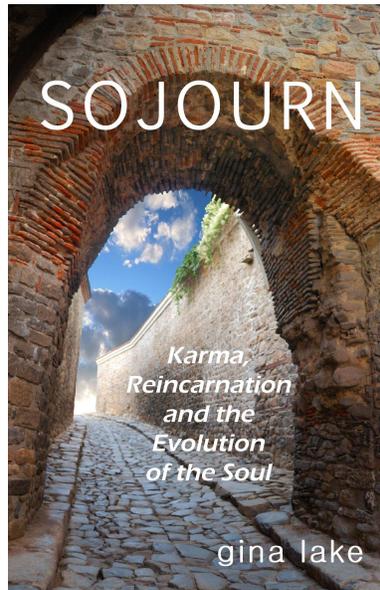


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# SOJOURN

## Karma, Reincarnation, and the Evolution of the Soul

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## PREFACE

The information about soul evolution and the stories of past lives were given to me by my nonphysical teacher. This was written in 1997, and although metaphysics, reincarnation, and karma aren't central to what I'm currently teaching and writing about, I offer this book in hopes that it will lead to more compassion and understanding.

G. L. February, 2009

## INTRODUCTION

With telecommunications making the world a global community, it's especially important that we learn to appreciate the diversity of the human population and its cultures. Every day, in the streets, in our businesses, in our classrooms, and on television, we encounter people from different cultures and walks of life. They are our neighbors, our employees, our employers, and our co-workers. Daily, we are challenged to understand each other and appreciate our differences. We need to begin living in greater harmony with each other. The ideas in this book provide a reason for doing that as well as a way for understanding our diversity. They are offered with hope for a better world.

Reincarnation is such an important concept in helping us understand and appreciate our differences. Part One describes the stages of our journey on earth, which take place over many lifetimes, and the impact these stages have on how we live. Each stage in this journey is unique in its perceptions, lessons, and contributions. As we move through each stage, we see life through the lens of that stage and encounter the lessons of those perceptions, which shape them into new perceptions. The reason for learning about these stages is to shed light on the journey and the tasks along the way, not so that we can better compare ourselves with others. A greater understanding of the function and perceptions of each stage can help us relate to each other more compassionately.

Part Two contains teachings about karma, another important concept in understanding life. Part Two shows how our soul operates throughout our many lifetimes to deliver our lessons and heal our psychological wounds, which often prevent us from fulfilling our potentials and experiencing our spiritual nature. These teachings are in the form of stories that show how karma has worked in the lives of real people. These stories also illustrate how unique every situation is.

These stories were obtained through clairaudience, or channeling. This phenomenon has existed

throughout history and is one way that knowledge is introduced into the world. Of course, you're free to reject any of this information. But I think even the most skeptical of minds will enjoy reading the accounts and examining their logic.

My hope in writing this is that your sojourn on earth will be made a little easier because of the light this information sheds on the human dilemma. We are travelers enmeshed now in our own perceptions of life. But at the end, we will see that it has all been a fine journey in which we have been not only the actors, but also the originators of the story. May this serve you as a roadmap.

# PART 1

## The Stages of Evolution

### CHAPTER 1

#### The Journey

#### REINCARNATION AND KARMA

Reincarnation is the belief that we live many lifetimes in many different bodies with a period of review, reflection, and growth in between lifetimes. Reincarnation supposes that we are spirit, or a soul, traveling through the world of matter, which is like a school for us. The lessons of the physical universe are many and so demand many different bodies. A variety of bodies allows our soul to experience a variety of times, environments, people, cultures, and challenges. A variety of bodies also allows us to experience life through the ever-changing lens of our evolutionary status. So a young soul will learn something different from a situation than an old soul in the same situation. So not only do our circumstances change in each of our lifetimes, but also what we bring to those circumstances changes and so our experience of those circumstances is different.

You may be wondering why we bother—why do we have to experience all this pain and struggle? The answer to this can't be fully appreciated from the physical frame of reference. But once we're out of the body, why we bother is eminently clear: We choose to. Our soul—the spark of the Divine within us—eagerly embraces *all* experience and the opportunities those experiences afford for growth. When we quiet ourselves long enough in meditation to experience our divine Self, we know this. We know our existence to be purposeful—and glorious.

Contrary to what many think about reincarnation, we are not on an endless treadmill or wheel, returning to life to make amends, only to reincarnate again in another imperfect form. No, we are here to evolve beyond the physical plane. For that, perfection is not required, since human beings can never be perfect. For that, only understanding and love are required. When we have finished with the lessons of the physical plane, we move on to another plane and its lessons. Just as certain lessons can only be learned on the physical plane, others can only be learned on other planes, which aren't physical at all. Life is a progression: The wisdom gained in one lifetime is carried into the next and built upon. This continues indefinitely on other planes as well.

We are continually evolving, as is the Divine, of which we are an expression. We are not entities apart from our creator as much as aspects of the Creator, which continually expand it. We don't have to become God—we already are God (or an expression of God)! This explanation is simplistic, but useful. It may be all we can hope to grasp of our greatness while in the physical body and limited by the mind and senses.

Like reincarnation, the concept of karma is often misunderstood. Some people think that their problems are punishment for something they did in a former lifetime. This couldn't be farther from the truth or the spirit of karma. Karma is the means by which we receive the lessons we need to evolve and return Home, to our true nature. Our karma is the situation created to teach us these lessons.

These teachings come in many forms, some painful and some not. Actually, many of our challenges aren't karmic at all, but chosen by our souls to speed our growth. Challenges are the means by which we evolve and become conscious of ourselves as divine, as something beyond our personal self—not proof that we did something wrong in a former lifetime. Difficulties are part of the natural process of evolution on the physical plane.

The nature of life is to evolve, and this sometimes necessitates pain. Blaming ourselves, others, or God for our misfortunes is a waste of energy and a misuse of our will. And yet, we're free to choose blame over acceptance, even though this will lead to stagnation and pain rather than wisdom. Although we may not be able to choose whether or not we will evolve (we all eventually do), we do choose *how* we'll evolve—slowly or quickly, through pain or through acceptance. Accepting everything that comes to us is the joyful choice.

Karma is an impartial and wise teacher. Furthermore, we participate in choosing our karmic circumstances. They are chosen through a cooperative decision-making process entered into willingly by the souls involved, not meted out by an external judge. We choose the circumstances that will teach us to make better choices. Life is an exercise in free will, not only when we are incarnate, but also before entering the body.

## **BEFORE THE BEGINNING**

To appreciate the purpose of life on the physical plane, it might be helpful to try to understand the state we existed in before our incarnations on earth. Although I don't presume to know our origins, the following myth is one conception of the story of Life, which shares many similarities with other creation stories from all over the world:

*In the beginning was darkness and the Void. The Creator existed as undifferentiated energy, infinite and all-inclusive. Then, the Light was born and shined upon the Void. With the Light, came awareness of being, and the Creator smiled. This gave rise to an urge to further differentiate and explore that which is differentiated. And so the physical universes were born. The Creator breathed life into them by sending a portion of itself into matter. This way, it could experience life through the perspective of matter. Each new experience fueled the Creator's desire for further experience and differentiation.*

*While incarnate, we, as part of creation, are connected to the Creator and long for the unity we have lost. This desire to reunite with the Creator, to return to the primeval state of Oneness, is the energy that fuels evolution. When evolution is complete, the Creator recalls that portion of itself back unto itself and sends*

*forth others. The energy of creation is constantly in motion, moving from unity with the Creator to enmeshment in its creations and back again to unity. In and out of creation, the creative energy moves, all the while expanding the Creator's understanding and love.*

This is an allegory and shouldn't be taken too literally. The fact is that when we are in a body, we aren't capable of fully grasping the truth of who we are and our origin. But this shouldn't and doesn't prevent most of us from trying to understand our origins and purpose for being here. And, fortunately, there does come a time when our intellectualizations about this are overshadowed by the experience of our true nature. When this happens, we know we aren't far from Home.

As the myth describes, the Creator differentiates and sends a portion of itself into the myriad physical forms on our plane to experience this plane's diverse possibilities. The Creator breathes life, or a portion of itself, into matter. This life expresses itself on many different levels: human, animal, plant, and mineral. These are the various kingdoms of matter. But of them all, humankind and possibly the cetaceans (whales and dolphins) stand alone in their ability to contemplate their reality, think rationally, make choices, and learn from those choices.

## **THE STAGES OF THE JOURNEY**

Ever since human beings incarnated and forgot their divine origins, they have wondered who they are and why they are here. The answer to this is different for each stage of our sojourn on earth and reflects the various states of consciousness along the way. By investigating how people at each stage answer this question, we get a glimpse of how they see the world and their place in it.

In some ways, those in the first stage of evolution are closer to their divine nature than some older souls because they are so fresh from the original state of unity. Unlike older souls, they still see themselves as part of the universe rather than separate from it. The term used to describe this state of non-differentiation in primitive humankind is *animistic*. This state is similar to that of the human infant who perceives the mother and father and everything that comes into its life as part of itself.

In this state in primitive humankind, the sense of oneness is not all-encompassing, but one of oneness with nature and the family group or tribe. It's not the oneness experienced at the end of our evolutionary journey, when there's little question about who we are and why we are here. Animism eventually dissolves with each succeeding lifetime as the ego is strengthened.

By the time we have reached the stage beyond animism, corresponding to youth, we are enmeshed in the personality and its ruler, the ego. This stage represents the height of separation. Just as youths struggle to differentiate themselves from their parents and establish their own identity, those at this stage seek to develop themselves as separate and powerful entities. In this stage, we see ourselves as the center of the universe and in conflict with others. This stage develops the ego to its fullest.

After this stage, in the stage of maturity, the ego's grip begins to loosen. The answer to the question, "Who am I?" broadens, as we begin to identify ourselves not only with loved ones, but also with humanity in general. At this stage, the question, "Why am I here?" becomes pressing, as we seek meaning that goes beyond the ego's goals. This questioning continues into the final stage where, at last, some answers are found. In the final stage, we begin to glimpse our divine nature and understand the divine plan.

## **THE STAGES IN HUMANITY'S JOURNEY**

We as individuals are making this journey, but humanity as a whole is also passing through these stages. There was a time when most people on earth were in the earliest stage of evolution. Then, animism was the representative state of consciousness and humanity's religions reflected that. The gods were assumed to be actively involved in their lives and present in the forms of nature.

People at this stage developed elaborate rituals that helped them feel they had some power to control their destinies. But they saw their power as coming from the gods and not from within themselves. In this stage of evolution, feelings of powerlessness and dependency on supernatural forces presided. Nevertheless, early human beings learned to survive in their unpredictable and dangerous world, and they developed a philosophy that helped them cope with their feelings of powerlessness and fear. Religion provided comfort and an explanation for the unpredictable and seemingly cruel events of life.

The next step in humankind's evolutionary journey was out of animism and into a worldview that saw human beings as children of an anthropomorphic god. This god passed judgment on them and either damned them to hell or sent them to a blissful paradise. This is a familiar perspective even today because, although many have evolved beyond this stage, many are still at this stage.

Feelings of powerlessness and fear continue to pervade this worldview, and the previous stage's animistic sense of oneness is replaced by a sense of separation. At this stage, the world is seen in polarities: us vs. them, God vs. Man, good vs. evil. In this worldview, there is no room for the shades of gray, which are so much a part of the perception of later stages. The religions of this second stage reflect this philosophy, as does the hierarchy in their governments, families, and businesses.

This polarized and hierarchical mentality carries over somewhat into the next stage of evolution, the stage to which most of the world's people have now evolved. This is the stage corresponding to youth in humanity's evolution. The difference between this stage and the last is that those at this stage rely more on themselves and less on authority. The individual acts as his or her own authority and tries to be an authority to others.

In this stage, the ego is king and power is sought for one's own benefit rather than for the benefit of one's tribe or one's God. Those at this stage today have built a highly technological society capable of fulfilling every physical comfort and ego desire. But their sense of separation and their competition

with the environment and desire for power and comfort have brought humanity to a critical point, which is forcing us to reevaluate our relationship to life and to each other.

The next stage in the evolution of humankind corresponds to maturity, or adulthood, and is yet to come. When this time does arrive, it will change the tone of life on this planet significantly. Those at this stage have a greater sensitivity to the plight of others, a longing for the Divine, and more resources and talents to put to use to improve conditions on earth. The world at this stage will be a very different place.

The last stage, when most people on earth would be in the final stage of their evolution, is hard to imagine. It will be one in which brotherhood and the Divine will be honored above all else and most of our physical needs will be easily met. This will leave us free to explore our talents and experience life from the perspective of our true nature rather than from the perspective of the ego.

The names that will be used to describe these stages of human evolution are the names given to these stages in the book *Messages from Michael* by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro: the Infant cycle, the Baby cycle, the Young cycle, the Mature cycle, and the Old cycle. These five stages, or cycles, will be the framework used to discuss the evolution of human consciousness and its lessons.

People in each cycle have their own way of perceiving life, which is why understanding each other is so hard. Furthermore, we can only understand and accept different perspectives if we have experienced those perspectives ourselves. The purpose of examining these differences is not to figure out who is more evolved, but to bring greater understanding, compassion, and patience to human relations. Hopefully, this information will not be used to judge others. Even so, it's too important not to consider.

Our sojourn on earth begins with the first breath of the first incarnation in the Infant cycle and ends with the last breath of our last incarnation in the Old cycle. Because it takes many, many lifetimes in each cycle to learn the lessons of that cycle, most people have lived hundreds of lifetimes before reincarnation on earth is done. The number of lifetimes it takes to complete the journey depends on how fast we progress through the lessons and how many resting lifetimes we choose. We all choose some resting lifetimes for recuperation, which do little to advance our progress.

As an aside, it might be important to mention that some people who are alive today have already evolved beyond earth and have come here from other dimensions to help during this critical time on earth. Many of these individuals are here for only one lifetime, and they bring advanced consciousness, intelligence, and talents to this world.

## **EVOLUTION IN OTHER KINGDOMS AND REALITIES**

Evolution on earth is distinct from evolution in other physical realities, although there are threads of similarity in all physical systems. The most basic similarity is that every physical system has unconditional love as its goal. Another similarity is that all physical systems evolve by means of trial

and error, that is, the process of evolution is the same in every physical system. Some of the lessons are the same as well. But because of the vast diversity in the universe, lessons in one system may bear no resemblance to lessons in another.

For instance, where individuals are without emotional bodies, lessons pertaining to the emotions are irrelevant. But emotional development is central to our evolution because, in our system, developing unconditional love is related to emotional development. In other systems, unconditional love might be developed by other means. The universe is infinite and anything we can imagine exists. With this in mind, let's focus on our particular system and its characteristics and lessons.

## **THE FIVE CYCLES**

We are body, mind, emotions, and spirit. In each of these areas, we meet lessons, but certain lessons are more important in some cycles than in others. What we learn in each cycle is stored in our unconscious to be used and built on in later cycles. The lessons encountered in our earliest lifetimes pertain primarily to physical survival. Once these are learned, which takes many lifetimes, we focus on emotional and intellectual growth and then on developing specific skills and talents. In our final lifetimes, spiritual development becomes the goal, as we are ready to experience our true nature and begin expressing that in the world more.

How many lifetimes are spent learning each lesson depends on several things, particularly on our willingness to learn from our mistakes. We are free to accept or reject advice from others and make other choices that will either enhance or diminish our ability to learn our lessons. Another factor in how quickly we learn our lessons is the amount and kind of learning that has taken place in previous lifetimes. Conclusions we have drawn about our experiences in former lifetimes subconsciously influence our perceptions and how easily we accept new learning. Another factor is our personality. Everyone is born with inclinations and tendencies, determined by his or her astrology chart and other esoteric factors.

To understand the journey better, it might be helpful to outline the evolution of the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions of our being.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

The first lessons pertain to maintaining the physical body. The physical lessons are central to our earliest lifetimes because they teach us how to obtain the food, water, shelter, sleep, and warmth we need to survive. In the early stages of our evolution, life provides experiences that teach us the value of hard work perseverance, patience, endurance, responsibility, caution, realism, and practicality. Failure to develop these qualities in response to the challenges of life leads to death or a significant decrease in comfort and security. The reward for learning these lessons is being able to deal effectively with the

world and provide for our basic needs.

Once some basic survival skills are achieved, usually somewhere in the Young cycle, some choose to continue developing their physical abilities, although no one is required to. Like other talents, physical talents, such as athletic prowess, eye-hand coordination, agility, and manual dexterity take lifetimes to develop, but the drive to develop these talents shows up earlier than for most other talents. This shouldn't be surprising, given that the Young cycle is a time for ego development, and ego development is more related to developing the physical body and its skills and the attainment of material security than to other talents, such as musical or artistic ability.

## EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Because emotional development is intrinsic to developing unconditional love, the emotional lessons also begin early in our incarnations. For the same reason, emotional development continues to be important in each cycle, with each cycle having its emotional challenges and characteristic expression of feelings.

Fear is the overriding emotion of the Infant cycle. Because the youngest souls live in fear of nearly everything, venturing out into the world is threatening and avoided whenever possible. When Infant souls are confronted or feel threatened, they either withdraw or lash out angrily or even violently, depending on the degree to which they feel threatened. Their anger is automatic, uncontrolled, and primitively expressed. And because their egos are tenuous and their coping mechanisms are undeveloped, these youngest souls are easily overwhelmed by life. This often leads to a life of isolation or dependency on those willing to shield the Infant soul from the threatening forces in the world.

The degree of love that Infant souls are capable of feeling is limited. What love and joy they do experience is usually closer to appreciation than love as most of us know it. So if their protectors fail to shield them or abdicate this responsibility, Infant souls are no longer likely to feel love, but hatred and revenge. For the youngest souls, there is a fine line between love and hate. Consequently, violence is common in families with very young souls.

The Baby soul's emotional range is more extensive than the Infant soul's, although Baby souls' emotional reactions remain primitive. Fear and anger are still profoundly felt. But the most distinctive feature of emotional development in the Baby cycle is the appearance of guilt and shame. A degree of conscience develops by the Baby cycle that allows guilt and shame to come into play. Jealousy is another feeling activated in the Baby cycle because attachments to others have developed. While the Infant soul's experience of love was one of dependency, the Baby soul's is one of possession. Baby souls are a little more able to understand and respond to the feelings of others than Infant souls, but sensitivity and compassion are still at a very elementary level.

In the Young cycle, emotional expression is similar in many ways to that of the Baby cycle, but fear is less prevalent, and anger and aggression are more so. Young souls see themselves as separate

from others and have learned to respond aggressively to the environment rather than passively. This is an important step in their emotional development, but Young souls need to learn to control or channel their aggressive impulses. For most, this isn't achieved until well into the Mature cycle. So for much of the Young cycle, Young souls expend their energy aggressively defending themselves and then coping with the problems caused by that in their relationships. For this and other reasons, relationships are a major area of learning for them.

Although Young souls have a greater capacity to love than Baby or Infant souls, to them, love means possessing people and trying to get them to fulfill their needs. The lover is an object of gratification and a source of security for the Young soul. But that is fine. At least these feelings bond them with people long enough to develop some genuine feelings of camaraderie. For Young souls, love is a "you and me against the world" proposition but a necessary step along the road to learning to love more deeply.

Rather than blaming others for their problems, as in the Young cycle, Mature souls try to understand others and are more willing to accept their share of the responsibility for any problems. This shift from childlike egocentricity to adult self awareness and self responsibility is a major step in emotional development. Mature souls have also learned to cope better with their fears and to control their anger, often through repression.

In the Mature cycle, self blame and self denial replace the dogmatism and self-centeredness of the earlier cycles. Anxiety, discontent, apathy, alienation, boredom, depression, and confusion make this a difficult cycle. Mature souls are all too aware of the differences between themselves and others, resulting in continual self-questioning and seeking. This is often ameliorated through psychological counseling or a humanistic philosophy.

The ability to love has strengthened greatly by the Mature cycle, and many Mature souls find partners with whom they are comfortable and happy for life. Problems with trust, jealousy, and the usual challenges of personal love remain, but Mature souls are more in command of these feelings than in former cycles. This may be because they are more able to be objective about their behavior and the behavior of others. This is the cycle in which the most emotional growth takes place, probably because the emotional discomfort of this stage challenges us to move beyond our old ways of responding.

The emotional challenges of the Mature cycle continue somewhat into the Old cycle, but the emotions present less of a problem as we progress through this cycle. Fear, anger, jealousy, and other negative emotions are supplanted by peace, love, joy, and acceptance as this cycle progresses. Old souls know how to detach from their negative emotions and use them as guides. This doesn't mean they don't have bouts with depression, but depression is less frequent and more manageable than in the Mature cycle. The depression they do have is more apt to be produced by disillusionment with the material world and by their desire to return Home than by not being able to obtain material satisfaction.

Love as Old souls know it is closer to unconditional love, although this is an ideal and rarely a constant in anyone's life. So love becomes more inclusive and more impersonal in this cycle, extending even to so-called enemies. Old souls are often able to see beyond the personality of even their enemies, recognizing the Divine in them and their oneness with them.

## INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Intellectual ability is not a function of our level of evolution except beyond a certain level. Everyone, regardless of soul age, has a certain capacity to think, although the later cycles are often used to develop the intellect more fully. However, objectivity, or the ability to separate our thoughts from our feelings, is a function of our level of evolution. The achievement of objectivity is a major goal of intellectual development, and not until the late Young cycle is some degree of objectivity attained.

The Infant cycle is less concerned with intellectual development than with survival. Little energy is spent developing the intellect unless survival is dependent on it.

During the Baby cycle, improving communication with others, particularly about needs, is the primary intellectual concern. Improved communication helps Baby souls accomplish their goals of survival and mutual dependency. In this cycle, intellectual interests are still narrow, with little interest in anything that doesn't immediately affect them and their safety and comfort.

In the Young cycle, the intellect is primarily developed in the pursuit of the Young soul's goals. The experiences of the Young cycle demand a certain level of intellect, and the intellect will be exercised in meeting these demands. But not until the Mature cycle do we begin to apply our intellect to specific tasks that develop it in exceptional ways.

The greatest intellectual development occurs in the Mature cycle. At some point in this cycle, most of the basic lessons have been learned and more time is spent focused on specific life purposes, many of which require a high level of intellect. When that is the case, intellectual development may be the main focus for many lifetimes. But not every Mature soul takes on life purposes that demand extensive intellectual development. For those who don't, the Mature cycle may not be intellectually focused at all. Intellectual development beyond a certain level is a choice, not a requirement.

Intellectual development in the Old cycle is a continuation of previous development. If the individual has been involved in life purposes requiring complex intellectual abilities, these abilities will continue to be strengthened. But if the individual's tasks don't require intellectual prowess, the Old cycle may hardly focus on these abilities at all. Of course, our intellectual abilities are strengthened just by living. So even an Old soul who isn't intellectually inclined may function better intellectually than an early Mature soul.

## SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Every experience we have is part of our spiritual development, but during the Old cycle, our spiritual development takes on a special significance. It entails developing a philosophy, gaining wisdom and compassion, expressing our love for humanity through service, and developing extrasensory abilities. But more than this, it entails experiencing our divine Self. We are able to experience our true nature more in this cycle than ever before. Until the Old cycle, experiences of ego-transcendence are rare and limited. In the Old cycle, they become increasingly common. By the end of the Old cycle, the personality is clearly recognized as a vehicle for soul development.

Each step of the journey is of equal importance to the attainment of the goal of unconditional love. The next chapters look more closely at each step along the way.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gina Lake is a spiritual teacher who is devoted to helping others awaken and live in the moment through her books, online courses, and intensives. She is the author of numerous books, including *From Stress to Stillness*, *Embracing the Now*, *Radical Happiness*, *Trusting Life*, *Living in the Now*, *Return to Essence*, *Choice and Will*, *Ten Teachings for One World*, *Anatomy of Desire*, *Loving in the Moment*, and *Getting Free*. The focus of her writing and teaching is on helping people be in the present moment and live the happy and fulfilled life that is possible and on shedding light on the programming that interferes with awakening to one's true nature. She is also a gifted intuitive with a master's degree in counseling psychology and over twenty years experience supporting people in their spiritual growth. Her website offers information about her books, free e-books, book excerpts, a monthly newsletter, a blog, and audio and video recordings.

<http://www.radicalhappiness.com>

## *Books by Gina Lake*

Available in paperback, ebook, and audiobook formats.

***Trusting Life: Overcoming the Fear and Beliefs That Block Peace and Happiness.*** Fear and distrust keep us from living the life we were meant to live, and they are the greatest hurdles to seeing the truth about life—that it is good, abundant, supportive, and potentially joyous. *Trusting Life* is a deep exploration into the mystery of who we are, why we suffer, why we don't trust life, and how to become more trusting. It offers evidence that life is trustworthy and tools for overcoming the fear and beliefs that keep us from falling in love with life.

***Loving in the Moment: Moving from Ego to Essence in Relationships.*** Having a truly meaningful relationship requires choosing love over your conditioning, that is, your ideas, fantasies, desires, images, and beliefs. *Loving in the Moment* describes how to move beyond conditioning, judgment, anger, romantic illusions, and differences to the experience of love and Oneness with another. It explains how to drop into the core of your Being, where Oneness and love exist, and be with others from there.

***Embracing the Now: Finding Peace and Happiness in What Is.*** The Now—this moment—is the true source of happiness and peace and the key to living a fulfilled and meaningful life. *Embracing the Now* is a collection of essays that can serve as daily reminders of the deepest truths. Full of clear insight and wisdom, it explains how the mind keeps us from being in the moment, how to move into the Now and stay there, and what living from the Now is like. It also explains how to overcome stumbling blocks to being in the Now, such as fears, doubts, misunderstandings, judgments, distrust of life, desires, and other conditioned ideas that are behind human suffering.

***Radical Happiness: A Guide to Awakening*** provides the keys to experiencing the happiness that is ever-present and not dependent on circumstances. This happiness doesn't come from getting what you want, but from wanting what is here now. It comes from realizing that who you think you are is not who you really are. This is a radical perspective! *Radical Happiness* describes the nature of the egoic state of consciousness and how it interferes with happiness, what awakening and enlightenment are, and how to live in the world after awakening.

***From Stress to Stillness: Tools for Inner Peace.*** Most stress is created by how we think about things. *From Stress to Stillness* will help you to examine what you are thinking and change your relationship to your thoughts so that they no longer result in stress. Drawing from the wisdom traditions, psychology, New Thought, and the author's own experience as a spiritual teacher and

counselor, *From Stress to Stillness* offers many practices and suggestions that will lead to greater peace and equanimity, even in a busy and stress-filled world.

*Ten Teachings for One World: Wisdom from Mother Mary* is a message from Mother Mary to her beloved children on earth. The teachings are intended to bring us into closer contact with the peace and love that is our divine nature, which has the ability to transform our hearts and our world. Mother Mary's gentle wisdom will inspire and assist you in awakening to the magnificent being that you are.

*Choice and Will: New Teachings from Jesus* explores the complex, mysterious, and important question of who or what chooses. The question is complex because there is more than one answer. It is mysterious because our nature is mysterious and because the answer may not be what you think. The question is important because our choices shape our reality and determine our experience of it.

*Living in the Now: How to Live as the Spiritual Being That You Are.* The 99 essays in *Living in the Now* will help you realize your true nature and live as that. They answer many questions raised by the spiritual search and offer wisdom on subjects such as fear, anger, happiness, aging, boredom, desire, patience, faith, forgiveness, acceptance, love, commitment, hope, purpose, meaning, meditation, being present, emotions, trusting life, trusting your Heart, and many other deep subjects. These essays will help you become more conscious, present, happy, loving, grateful, at peace, and fulfilled. Each essay stands on its own and can be used for daily contemplation.

*Anatomy of Desire: How to Be Happy Even When You Don't Get What You Want* will help you discriminate between your Heart's desires and the ego's and to relate to the ego's desires in a way that reduces suffering and increases joy. By pointing out the myths about desire that keep us tied to our ego's desires and the suffering they cause, *Anatomy of Desire* will help you be happy regardless of your desires and whether you are attaining them. So it is also about spiritual freedom, or liberation, which comes from following the Heart, our deepest desires, instead of the ego's desires. It is about becoming a lover of life rather than a desirer.

*Return to Essence: How to Be in the Flow and Fulfill Your Life's Purpose* describes how to get into the flow and stay there and how to live life from there. Being in the flow and not being in the flow are two very different states. One is dominated by the ego-driven mind, which is the cause of suffering, while the other is the domain of Essence, the Divine within each of us. You are meant to live in the flow. The flow is the experience of Essence—your true self—as it lives life through you and fulfills its purpose for this life.

*Getting Free: How to Move Beyond Conditioning and Be Happy.* Freedom from your conditioning is possible, but the mind is a formidable opponent to freedom. To be free requires a new way of thinking or, rather, not thinking. To a large extent, healing our conditioning involves changing our relationship to our mind and discovering who we really are. *Getting Free* will help you do that. It will also help you reprogram your mind; clear negative thoughts and self-images; use meditation, prayer, forgiveness, and gratitude; work with spiritual forces to assist healing and clear negativity; and heal entrenched issues from the past.

*What About Now? Reminders for Being in the Moment.* The secret to happiness is moving out of the mind and learning to delight in each moment. In *What About Now*, you will find over 150 quotes from Gina Lake's books—*Radical Happiness*, *Embracing the Now*, *Loving in the Moment*, *Living in the Now*, and others—that will inspire and enable you to be more present. These empowering quotes will wake you up out of your ordinary consciousness and help you live with more love, contentment, gratitude, and awe.

For more info, please visit the “Books” page at <http://www.radicalhappiness.com>