SPIRITUALITY:
Whether we are conscious of the desire for spirituality in our lives or not, we all yearn to experience the quality of the great power — the definitive truth within ourselves that cannot be disputed or denied. Whatever our beliefs, whatever our sphere of action, we have a primal need to connect with something greater, more significant than our limited sense of self. Experiencing life from a spiritual perspective

Perhaps these words by Gurumayi Chidvilasananda, the current head of the Siddha Yoga lineage, will help us to explore the answer:

A true seeker longs to know the power that is hidden in beauty, in stagnant water, in a shooting star, and also in a harsh word. He wants to know the power hidden in boredom, the power that exists in pain and suffering, in a river, in hatred, or in the call of a bird.

A true seeker wants to know, “What is this great power that exists in all things?” The Chandogya Upanishad says: That is the soul, free from evil, ageless, deathless, sorrowless, hungerless, thirstless, whose desire is the Real, whose essence is the Real.

The experience of the spiritual is not ephemeral or ethereal. It is real. It is something we can draw forth from within us. Something we can encounter in every moment. Something that is deeply hidden, and yet very tangible. We know what this power feels like when it is present, because there is a sense of deep peace and well-being. The ego disappears, and we become one with an unwavering firmness and flexibility. We are “in the zone.” Everything flows. In perfect balance, we become the steady flame in a windless space. There is a sense of freedom, and yet, we feel surrounded by a column of firm clarity. As we go about our day, talking, laughing, taking care of business, we are detached. No bad news can change our state or pierce our heart. Just as the Chandogya Upanishad says, we are free from evil, free from sorrow, free from hunger. So, how can we experience this power more often? How can we touch it, have it saturate our entire being? We can begin with the practice of meditation.

THE GREAT POWER

ANDREA ADLER

The experience of the spiritual is not ephemeral or ethereal. It is real.
Meditation

Whatever our spiritual path or tradition, meditation is the fundamental technology for experiencing the depth of reality — and the great power. For it is only when we have learnt to quiet the mind, to settle into stillness, and allow this stillness to expand, that we can begin to feel this power, its presence and protection. Whether we sit with eyes closed or open, this essential human activity offers us an opportunity like no other to engage fully in the pursuit of looking inward. This plunge into the core of our being is not always easy or automatic. The minute we sit, what do we find? Often our first encounter is with our obstacles, physical, emotional, and mental. Our back aches, our neck is stiff, and our knees are tight. Our emotions jump from joy to despair. Our thoughts race, or circle, or obsess, skittering from sexual fantasies to simmering resentment. We have a front-row seat to the show of our own restlessness.

Meditation is a practice that allows us to witness these states. By pursuing this simple practice, we create a space; a ground in which the restlessness can move, uncoil itself from the attachments that keep it in place, and be transformed. And from this space, we can explore ways to be gender with ourselves. We can allow the quality of our striving to be more delicate. There is no need to force anything. We find ways to make adjustments. Stretching gently to open the body and the breath. Breathing deeply to open the heart. Repeating a mantra to allow the thoughts to slow and dissolve. Slowly but surely, we are able to sit, dive into our own true nature, and rest in the heart of the great power.

Meditation as the Foundation

In my book The Science of Spiritual Marketing: Initiation into Magnetism, I explore the practice of meditation as a way to support our business and our marketing decisions. But, truly speaking, meditation benefits every aspect of our lives. It brings us tremendous clarity, and becomes the gateway through which we can dive into the heart and perform self-inquiry. It is a practice that allows us to witness our thoughts, our senses, and our emotions, building an internal muscle that strengthens the mind. It reveals our limitations—and also shows us our greatness.

I have met many people who think meditation is a waste of time, or who think it is boring. Active people, who would prefer to be “doing something”: “Who has the time?” “Nothing’s happening when I sit.” The fact is, while we are “just sitting,” there is tremendous activity within. There are insights and revelations that we may never otherwise encounter. Internal shifts begin to occur, emotions are transmuted, and stagnant places get charged. There is an ongoing plunge into the depths of our soul. This is the realm of the great power.

By starting our day with this practice, we stand firm in our present
state of awareness. Our decisions come from a place of conviction, rather than from guessing. The banter and chatter about whether we should do this or do that . . . stops. We listen more closely, more attentively. Patience becomes an active, dynamic virtue we perform, rather than an act of passive toleration. And, at those moments when we feel overwhelmed, we are conscious of the imbalance. We step back from the chaos, and pause. And in the pause, we know we can sit, get in touch with the source once again, and be guided. This is not hocus-pocus, nor is it a game. Meditation is a concrete practice that connects us to the great power of the soul, and allows us to live more freely in the moment, in the flow of life and its surprising events.

**Manifesting the Great Power**

The spirit of the soul that we align with during meditation not only encompasses the inner worlds of our existence; it supports us in our outer world as well. It energizes the flow of creativity, so we are able to manifest the great power in our daily lives and stream-along in an unobstructed way. When you think about it, what is creativity? Why do we yearn for the experience of it? Creativity, the dictionary tell us, is the ability to use the imagination to develop new and original ideas or things . . . Creativity has been attributed to chance, accident, serendipity. It has been associated with genius, mental illness, and humor. Some say it is a trait we are born with; others say it can be taught with the application of simple techniques.

Let’s think about this for a moment. Is creativity an accident? Is it serendipitous? Is it a stroke of genius that we stumble upon from time to time? Or is it something intrinsic to our very nature?

We watch a great dancer pivot from one pirouette to another and wonder how in heaven’s name she can make it look so easy. We see an actor move seamlessly from one emotion to another, take on another persona and lose himself totally in the character. We see artists, musicians, and business people prosper exponentially in their chosen fields, excelling without seeming to exert an ounce of struggle, as if their innate gift had surfaced from lifetimes of practice.

Whether we come into this world with an innate gift, or we have a burning desire to create something significant while we are here, there inevitably comes a point where we need to pause, review, dig deeper into the crevices of our own passion, and see if there is a need to refresh our creation or change directions entirely, reinvent ourselves. Often times, we are startled by this revelation and ask ourselves: Why do we even want to create? What is pushing us forward? Is there something asking to be born, or reborn? And if so, what is it? What is the Real for us?

For Michelangelo, there was a shape that wanted to emerge from the stone; his job was to see the form that was already there, and set it free. For Virginia Woolf, writing was an urgent response she had to the reality of each fragile moment. “I net them under with a single phrase,” she said; “I rescue them from formlessness with words.” Virginia Woolf was always going for the real — that split second of heightened reality. What is the Real for you? As intrinsically creative beings, we have a need to bring into being some kind of form. It is our core desire to make something beautiful and significant, something that is Real. The creative process, whether we succeed in shaping
our vision or not, whether we create a product or not, gives us a glimpse of the great power, and how we can bring it into manifestation.

Desire to Create
The first glimpse of the creative process is the yearning: the desire to create. We bathe in the yearning, feel that yearning inside ourselves, and express that yearning in every move we make. Every move then becomes the catalyst for our yearning to grow. We know it wants to flourish and express itself, because we feel it. There is a tangible, physical push.

For instance, we may long to play the piano. We don’t even know if we have a talent for it, but every day we sit and practice. We study the scales, and we learn the notes. Day after day, we practice. We are immersed in the practice. So much so, that even our repetitive actions express the longing, and give us the experience of our yearning. One baby step at a time, we continue our practice.

The creative process unfolds in many dimensions. Emotions, realizations, and insights come up. We ride them, surf them; feel them fully without being overwhelmed. At the same time, our practice becomes an exploration, in which we follow our thoughts, feelings, and impulses where they lead us. In the same way that the scientist follows where the data take him, in the same way the White Rabbit scurries down the rabbit hole, it is that exploring, that open-ended quality, that moves us into a deeper space.

And then we begin to shape it. We shape it by dancing with it, swimming with it, by seeing where the current takes us. We learn to feel the moment, trust the throb of the impulse — without judgment or manipulation. The more sensitive we become to the “flavor” of each impulse, the more we can differentiate one impulse from another. Becoming one with the object of our awareness, we open to the point of being vulnerable, & then, we let go, and become the witness to the shape, the creation itself.

Dancing with the Great Power
All of life is a creative venture. Every second creation is whirling and dancing in front of us. One only needs the eyes in which to see it, the sensitivity to feel it. Why become frustrated if your desire does not come when you want it? Even your pauses, your standstills, and your abrupt stops, are in perfect step with your spirit and your creation. Even when you think you have made a mistake, the “mistake” can lead you to a place you never would have come to — without experiencing it. To truly dance with the great power, we start by being mindful, by being aware of everything around us. We start by looking for clues, by being vigilant, and on the lookout. Clues and signs are everywhere. They may come in forms that we may not think are creative. There may be a license plate that triggers a change of heart. The mailman, the store clerk, or your brother-in-law may lead you to your next great idea. A chance encounter with your old boss that you could never stand, a neighbor’s need that you’d rather not respond to, may lead you to your next treasure.

I will never forget this story, as it epitomizes the need we all have to listen and be mindful of the signs. There was a client who called me for a consultation not too long
ago. He was very frustrated. He had just broken up with his wife; he had no job, very little money, and no idea what his next step should be. Listening to him, I knew what he needed to hear, as the answer welled up inside me: If he could just be open to living in the present moment with the eyes of a child, in wonder and exploration — if he could just sit for a few minutes in meditation and touch the great power inside himself & listen, he would be led to his next step. The client followed the instructions. A few weeks went by, and then he called me. He was ecstatic, and shared the following story:

I started meditating a few minutes every day, just like you suggested. I must say, I had a really hard time, at first. But after the third day, I was able to sit for fifteen minutes. As I sat there, I could feel my hands burning. I didn’t know what the burning was about. There was no rash, no swelling, nothing I could see. It seemed to be coming from the inside. The funny thing was, I couldn’t feel the burning during the day, while I was busy — only when I got quiet and sat in meditation.

And then, about a week later, I had an impulse to call an old friend. He told me he had just opened a training center for hair designers. The minute he told me that, my whole body filled with an incredible rush of energy. It had been an early childhood desire of mine to work with people’s hair. I had forgotten about it.

As I sat there, listening to him tell me about this training school, my hands started to burn again. Two days later, I packed my bags, got in my car, and drove to North Carolina, where I am now training to be a hair stylist. I am so happy doing what I love; and my hands no longer burn. They are doing what they love.

Not everything gets revealed to us through the intellect. There are those subtle feelings, intuitions and impulses that we want to listen to and trust. We know that if we ignore them, we may miss an opportunity. If you have an impulse to pick up the phone, pick up the phone. If you have an impulse to walk into an art gallery, walk into an art gallery. You never know where that impulse will take you. Synchronicity happens when you trust that little voice, those internal signals, for they will connect you with the external answer to your needs. It is this match that you want to make.

The great power that we long for is Real. It is the soul, the spirit that becomes our rock, and our connection to God. It is the longing for this connection that creates a spiritual life, which spurs us on, provoking us to explore our desires, our gifts, and our creations. Do not be afraid to dive into this longing. In fact, I urge you to welcome it, embrace it, and surrender into it. Kabir, the thirteenth-century mystic poet, said, “It is the intensity of the longing that does all the work. Look at me, and you will see a slave to that intensity.” **

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Andrea has been a marketing consultant for over thirty years and travels the world demonstrating how to integrate spiritual practice and psychological self-inquiry into a fundamental transformation of people’s lives and their marketing approaches.

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