

- Sample Chapter -

Return to Radiance

A 21 DAY
TRANSFORMATION
TO VITALITY

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CHAPTER 1

The Mystery of Radiance

*Radiance is the inner luminosity or brilliance
which occurs when we are energetic and **vital**;
it occurs when our inner light is bright.*

I've had a passion for many things over the years. I dearly love Bach and the Beatles, independence, mountain-climbing—and most of all, self-exploration. But over the past forty years, one steady fascination or passion, if you will, has held firm. I've studied it from all sides, taught it, and examined its workings in my own life, every single day. This overriding passion of mine is to understand the workings of the mind; what I refer to as *the mind's metabolism*.

The clinical term *metabolism* tends to make people's eyes glaze over. Once we can move past this temporary obstacle, though, we get to the term's real meaning. The mind's metabolism is our inner fire—our radiance, that luminous vital energy that dwells within

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us. It's literally the crucible of life and death, and it's at the heart of both the problem and the solution. Depending on the health of the mind's metabolism, it can bring us to the mountaintop—or pull us down to the depths of discouragement and despair.

We can't live at our full capacity unless this inner fire is being fed, focused and contained. Our contemporary lifestyle, however, seems designed to dampen our inner fire, thus depleting our vitality. Consequently, too many of us are diminishing the living spark required to live our best life. This state of affairs manifests in poor physical health, mental turmoil, and spiritual unrest.

WHAT IS RADIANCE?

When I ask people, “Do you want to be radiant?” Everyone always says, “Yes, of course!” What does it actually mean to be radiant, though? Is it the way you feel at twenty? Does it come from doing work you love? Does radiance depend on looking sexually attractive or having a good relationship?

All of these circumstances can help put us in touch with our radiance, but true radiance is not dependent on age or circumstances.

Radiance is the *inner luminosity* or brilliance which occurs when we are energetic and **vital**; it occurs when our inner light is bright. The word vitality comes from the Latin word *vita*, meaning “life.” It's the life force with which we were born. To be vital is to be in touch with that natural wellspring of renewable positive energy; the condition of that wellspring of vitality is dependent upon what

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we do to feed and nurture it. When we are healthy in mind and body, it shows in the outward expression of our radiance. The stronger our life energy, the more radiance we exude.

It is inevitable that we are going to get older. How we age is determined to some degree by our genetic makeup. However, a far more important influence is our everyday lifestyle habits—how we eat, how we breathe, how we move and most importantly, how we think.

These patterns are so familiar and comfortable that most of us don't even recognize them as habits. We think of them as facets of our personality—inherent and inescapable. In reality, however, the unhealthy and unhelpful patterns we've established throughout our lives are acquired behaviors that have become so deeply ingrained in us that we've come to identify with them.

We can unlearn the habits that drain our vitality. When we do, we become the architects of our own lives. This is a much brighter and more dynamic approach to “the normal course of aging.” Best of all, it's totally realistic.

Arabian legend reveres the Phoenix, a mythical bird that was consumed by fire every five hundred years. After the fire died down, a new, young phoenix would spring from the ashes. In the mythology of ancient Egypt, the Phoenix represented the sun, which dies at night and is reborn in the morning. Early Christian tradition adopted the Phoenix as a symbol of both immortality and resurrection. When a myth keeps surfacing in various cultures, and over centuries as this one has, we know that there must be some kernel of truth in it, something that human beings everywhere instinctively recognize as a reflection of their own inner

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experience. When I first read the legend of The Phoenix, I made a copy of it and put it on the wall. It activated some inner knowing for me, that challenged all those gloomy messages we as a society are bombarded with regarding the aging process.

The truth at the heart of the phoenix story is this: each of us has the power to rejuvenate our own body, mind, and spirit.

WHY DO WE LOSE OUR BRILLIANCE?

According to physiologists, we should be able to live for as long as two hundred years. Why, then, do we lose our brilliance? What happens? Furthermore, why in our own culture does the aging process trigger such precipitous and dramatic declining changes in our physical and mental functioning?

These questions were the impetus that fueled my self-inquiry for healing and transformation. Have you ever noticed how some people seem to resign themselves to fatigue, and depression, as if it is their natural destiny? I couldn't believe this to be true, so I made my mind up. It was time to crack the code of the pervasive anxiety, fatigue and depression related to aging and loss of vitality I was witnessing in a good number of my clients. Through my studies in nutritional biochemistry, Traditional Chinese Medicine, and Ayurvedic Medicine—the ancient Indian science of rejuvenation—my suspicions were confirmed. The dismal warnings I'd been bombarded with were based more on fear and ignorance than reality.

As the legend of the Phoenix demonstrates, we have the ability

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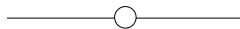
within our own being to rejuvenate ourselves, again and again.

What do I mean by *return to radiance*? I mean that it is possible to bring our mind back home to our body and rediscover our luminous, vital font of energy that originates from within. When we return to our radiance, we enhance the quality of both our physical body and our mind. These changes stimulate a transformation in our quality of life. This is no esoteric pipe dream: we've all interacted with this feeling, probably several times in our lives.

Take the experience of falling in love. Remember how that felt? Did you eat and sleep a lot? Were you fearful about the future? Or, were you enthusiastic, encouraged, joyful, full of peace, and looking forward to the next moment? That positive, enlivened, vibrant feeling is a natural consequence when there is a free flow of vital energy.

That glorious “in love” feeling doesn't last though. Not because our vital energy dies, but because we've attributed it to an *external source*. No external source, regardless of how magical, wonderful, or authentic, can equal or sustain the radiance that arises naturally within ourselves. So we blame our lover for changing, or we blame ourselves for not being able to stay in love, and we slip back into our narrow, devitalized, everyday existence.

The source of our vitality is always available to us. We can tap into it daily, whether or not we are externally supported, loved or acknowledged.



Unfortunately, the current climate of our Western culture does not fully encourage bringing our mind back “home.” In fact, the

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antithesis of this predominates. We are conditioned to believe that our source of vitality and happiness is outside of us. We're moving way too fast to even recognize what is happening. We don't have enough hours in the day to get our work done, and we don't make the time to nourish our bodies. Instead of supporting radiance, our world currently seems to be set up for systematic isolation and degeneration. The fundamental principles governing human health and well-being are breaking down. So we go looking for a magic bullet: the drug, a belief system, a healing modality, the relationship, or a diet that will miraculously fix all our physical and mental discomfort and make us more beautiful, more brilliant.

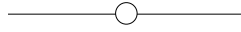
If such a magic bullet had been found, we'd all be free of anxiety and illness (and somebody would be very, very rich!). The band-aid, quick-fix approach can't sustain long-term energy and vitality. Repeatedly falling back on caffeine, pharmaceuticals, and adrenaline rushes steadily weakens both body and mind. The "fix" is imaginary.

Our body's true energy source is internal. No external solution for inner uneasiness can ever address the source of our energy drain. It can only offer temporary symptomatic relief. Immediate, short-term respite can sometimes be exactly what the situation calls for; however, as a long-term strategy the quick fix rapidly reaches the point of diminishing returns.

Fortunately we have options. We have choices that don't necessarily require us to quit our jobs, give up our cars, or leave our families. We can rekindle our vital energy right in the midst of our fast-paced lifestyles. All it takes is a clear understanding of the underlying forces that have brought us to where we are, and a

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genuine willingness to strike out on a new path of vibrant health and clarity—radiance.



I often encounter people who have undertaken a sincere spiritual journey. These seekers deeply long to go beyond the conventional limitations of their own human potential. All too often, though, no matter how powerful their resolve, they soon find their motivation and momentum faltering. They might ask, “Why can’t I follow through?” Some will say, “I just don’t seem to have the willpower, discipline or endurance.”

As I studied my own experience, it became clear to me that my spiritual growth is inextricably linked to the health and wellness of my mind and body. Our body draws its nourishment from our lifelong physical and mental habits. If those habits are depleting our energy and vitality, spiritual progress will grind to a halt.

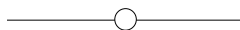
Many of these habits may seem benign on the surface. However, the cumulative effects on our bodies and minds over years can be depleting. Although the spiritual path can sometimes feel noble and transcendent, we will inevitably hit a roadblock unless we’re willing and able to recognize and revise our devitalizing lifestyle habits.

When the body is in pain, the mind is forced to focus on bodily functions. If the energy in your body is not flowing in a healthy way, or if it’s creating obstacles, your mind remains at the level of coping with your physical condition. A disturbed mind affects your entire being—when the body is out of balance, the mind cannot be clear. The mind will not be free to move toward higher

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levels of consciousness where the experiences of joy and peace await us. Meanwhile, when it comes to our everyday functioning, we cannot operate fully at any level. This leaves us vulnerable to dis-ease—or what society generally believes is “the normal course of aging.”

The good news is that we have everything we need right now to start making the changes that will set us on a vibrant path to physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual transformation.



How does one return to radiance? On the physical level. It all begins with metabolic regulation. Our metabolism governs the mechanics of how we move, how our organs function, how we breathe, and how we think. When my clients say, “My metabolism is sluggish,” they’re essentially telling me that their energy is low.

As I’ve said, vital energy is linked with our life force—the essence of being. We’re in touch with that essence when we feel totally at peace and centered. We are radiant. It’s a positive feedback loop: peacefulness and centeredness nourish a healthy essence, from which further peace and centeredness flow.

I would ask you these important questions: “What is your purpose in life? Is it to somehow make it through the days with as little effort and discomfort as possible? Is it to make yourself look better, or to own things?” Even if these are your true goals, having your energy and vitality at peak performance will make them more easily attainable.

If, however, your purpose is to discover your unique gift—your calling, if you will—and find a way to offer it to the world, then cul-

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tivating your vital energy is essential. It's an absolute prerequisite for living the full and joyous life you've always known is possible. It is the key ingredient for being radiant.

In the following chapters, I am going to be specific about the proper foods to eat, what exercises to do, and what breathing practices you will want to establish in order to build a foundation for mind/body energy and rejuvenation. The end of the book will conclude with a three-week program for radiance seekers to begin their journey. It is created to bring maximum results in a minimum amount of time—if you fall back into old habits, however, these techniques and the overall program will lose the desired effect.

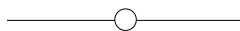
Still, exceptions can be made. You'll learn that the bulk of your eating (pun intended) should take place between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. If you have a business dinner to attend, or a special meal with friends and family, enjoy your experience and make adjustments the following day. If you're new to the program and crave sugar as I do, by all means you can sometimes have your "cake and eat it too." Just do it between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. when the digestive fire is highest.

By the second week, you will find desserts will begin to lose their allure. Additionally, if a specific herb or spice does not agree with your taste, then skip it. If the exercises suggested don't feel right or take too long, make adjustments. If in moments of stress you don't always breathe from your diaphragm, go on breathing anyway!

The *Radiance Program* is designed for all women, although men can benefit as well. I recognize that each of us is unique. What works for one—due to circumstances, body characteristics,

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schedule, mindset, lifestyle, and so on—will not work as well for another. Therefore, fine tune to your needs.



We approach diet and nutrition with the understanding that each individual is unique in their biological makeup. There are diet books that promise success for everyone, and some that dictate eating only a specific food group (just protein rich, or fruit only, for example). Although we are each unique, there are foundational principles to direct us when selecting a diet and nutrition protocol; *Return to Radiance* provides these guidelines.

When we turn to exercise, I believe your own body should dictate what exercises you perform, so long as you get *enough* movement in your day to keep your mind and body metabolism in balance. The exercises in this program are specifically chosen to build your metabolic fire, the foundation for energy and rejuvenation. In addition, I emphasize the importance of diaphragmatic breathing so that it becomes natural to you, as this is the link that connects the mind and the body.

Because we know the energy of the mind is the essence of life, there is a skillset for you to establish practice. Meditation is the tool to make this happen.

The program works from the ground up, building our foundation to collect and contain our essential energy so that we can have access to working with concentration.

HIGHLIGHTS

Radiance only *seems* mysterious. You can solve the mystery when there is mastery of the energy in your body, breath and mind. Mastery starts with awareness followed by creating skillful habits.

This overall program is more important than its specifics, but if you follow it, you will see results. As you start, remember:

- Overeating or eating the wrong foods is like putting wet wood on a fire. Metabolic fire is what gives us radiance—the luminous vitality that dwells within us.
- Eating processed, stale, pesticide-laden, or canned foods is like using low-test gasoline when your car requires premium.
- When cells age or become damaged, raw fruits and vegetables—the best source of vitamins and minerals—will replenish them.
- The best healer of the body is the mind, and the mind and body are one.
- Caffeine, diet pills, and extended fasting are sure ways to destroy vitality. All will reduce or eliminate the production of essential enzymes and hormones, and while you may lose weight temporarily, you'll also be losing your foundation. Your body will be feeding on itself to get the nourishment that it seeks.
- Diaphragmatic breathing is the most efficient way to breathe, as it vitalizes cellular mechanisms.
- Stress adversely affects our essential hormones; proper breathing practices reduce stress.

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- Exercise can cause problems if it creates stress rather than energy flow.
- Both the upper and lower body should be exercised, since both areas affect the overall stability of your body.
- Metabolic regulation is most accessible when working with the abdominal and sacral region of the body.
- Your own radiance will evoke the radiance in others, women as well as men.
- The best of all vitalizing substances is the recognition of who you are. The best way to find the truest expression of you is to go inward toward the deepest part of self. When you discover your authentic being, then you have returned to radiance.

Before you start the program, put a check mark beside each symptom or action that applies to you.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue or chronic tiredness | <input type="checkbox"/> Underweight |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digestive Problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Breathe from chest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Constipation | <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent sickness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diarrhea | <input type="checkbox"/> Extreme emotional fluctuations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bladder problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Feel emotionally burdened |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Menstrual problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Depression |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hormonal imbalance | <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of exercise | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of creativity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stiffness | <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inflammation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overweight | |

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- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Low self-esteem | <input type="checkbox"/> Feel hesitant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feel overworked | <input type="checkbox"/> Feel unattractive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty getting up in
the morning | <input type="checkbox"/> Feel shy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insomnia | <input type="checkbox"/> Feel fear |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Feel unloved |

If you've checked a number of these—or even one—read on!