



Extended Human Capacities



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Exploring Consciousness with David Hawkins

Interview by Pamela Becker

Drawing by Leonardo da Vinci



Since the publication of his book *Power vs. Force: The Hidden Determinants of Human Behavior* (over 200,000 copies sold in 17 languages), David Hawkins, MD, PhD, has become a popular and at times controversial figure in the world of consciousness studies.

In attempting to chart levels of spiritual maturity and the veracity of any claim or statement by using a technique called behavioral kinesiography, he has attracted a vast audience of both readers and therapists intrigued by his work and has sparked debate among scientists and others who challenge both the technique and his application of it. Hawkins and his wife, Susan (his exclusive kinesiography partner and coresearcher), have used simple muscle-testing to “calibrate” belief systems, historical events, and the levels of consciousness of various human beings, from the beginning of history up to the present time. While acknowledging the high resonance of saints and inspirational leaders (such as Gandhi), certain documents (such as the Bible and the U.S. Constitution), and emotional states (bliss and joy, for example), he also claims that global warming is caused not by humans but by magnetic activity on the surface of the sun and that most of humanity calibrates at a level of less than 200, which he describes

as “nonintegrated”—that is, showing a generalized weakness in spirit. In Hawkins’s schema, 200 represents the demarcation point between truth and falsity. His Map of Consciousness charts a wide range of mind-states on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 1,000 (highest).

David Hawkins is not your typical spiritual pedagogue. In 1973, he coauthored with Nobel laureate Linus Pauling the seminal book *Orthomolecular Psychiatry*. Hawkins is a distinguished fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, was nominated for the Templeton Prize, and claims to have had a number of profound spiritual experiences since the age of three. In this excerpted interview, artist-writer Pamela Becker talks with Hawkins about his work and his beliefs on the evolution of consciousness.

Pamela Becker: Let me ask you about the nature of your teachings, which you refer to as “Devotional Nonduality.” From my understanding, *nondual* means neither subject nor object. How does one surrender to something neither here nor there?

David Hawkins: In religious and spiritual literature, nonduality is a very specific area. Classically, the closest thing is Advaita Vedanta in Hindu philosophy. The research technique we use differentiates between the domains of the linear—including perception, definition, logic, and reason—and the nonlinear, which is

context. Out of context arises significance and meaning. All of the great teachers throughout time say, “Let go of your attachment to the linear,” to the definition of things, and as you do that, you begin to experience the nonlinear aspects. [They then] become the greater reality, and your own consciousness advances as a consequence. The linear is limited to this world; if you are nothing but linear, that would make you think that there’s nothing once the physical collapses.

PB: Which is how most people view things. What would be the best way to let go of the linear? Is acceptance the same as surrender?

DH: They are similar. Attachment occurs when the ego seems to see some gain in it. Perception is really a projection of the ego. Descartes’ famous statement, *Cogito, ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am), differentiates *res interna* (how a thing looks) from *res externa* (how things actually are). To differentiate perception from essence is what spiritual work is all about. Our research is very specifically focused on differentiating essence from appearance. When we calibrate the consciousness level or energy of something, we are looking for the essence and not the perception. We are looking at what is inside. The world looks at the sheep’s clothing, but we see the wolf inside—or vice versa.

PB: The ego has a hard time accepting things it doesn’t like.

DH: There are certain rules and disciplines that apply to almost any spiritual pathway—for example, letting go of aversions and attachments, accepting everything as it is, and focusing on the perfection of all things. Once you let go of your judgments, they are recontextualized. When they are recontextualized, you can see that something is just whatever it is—neither good nor bad.

PB: So the only way to do that quickly would be in the moment when it is arising in you?

DH: [With] mindfulness, you are aware of what is arising within you, and you can choose to let it go. You feel the energy of being irritated arising, and you don’t wait until you’re in a full temper tantrum. You let go of it. With more advanced spiritual awareness, you are constantly aware of the leading edge of what is arising within your consciousness, and you are constantly surrendering that to God as it arises. You stop trying to control it or resist it. It is like riding the crest of the wave. You are not clinging to the past and you are not

anticipating the future, because the future has no reality until it gets here. A good example comes from Alcoholics Anonymous and its 12-step program:

A guy goes to an AA meeting looking bedraggled and unhappy. Someone asks him, “What’s the matter with you?” He says, “My wife was killed, my house burned down, I lost my job, and now I’m bankrupt.” So the other guy says, “Yeah, but that was yesterday.”

[Laughs] That’s a basic in the 12-step program: Be in the present and live one day at a time, because if you don’t keep letting things go, they accumulate, and you’ll end up the prisoner of them, with so many resentments and griefs that you become immobilized.

PB: You have acquired quite a following in recent years. Any concern that your teachings are becoming distorted or misinterpreted due to the sheer volume of interest?

DH: Even in the New Testament, which calibrates in the 800s, you suddenly have the Book of Revelations, which calibrates at 70; in every religion, that which is negative or evil has managed to sneak in the door and contaminate it. I have bulwarked everything I have said. Experientially, I have been the witness, testified to [the authenticity of my teachings], and calibrated them. I have cited the references in history that confirm them and have tried to show students how to confirm a statement. All of my books are extensively referenced. So I feel that my work is more safeguarded than any teaching I know of in history.

PB: I have found people referencing your Map of Consciousness with their own calibrations and have to question their legitimacy. Do you?



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David Hawkins truth-tests a statement on the arm of Susan, his wife and research partner.

DH: These are people who don't understand the work and are seeking to profit. They will tell you they can raise your consciousness 100 points, and it will only cost \$350. For \$5,000, one guy calibrates you every hour and claims you will become enlightened in two weeks. I tell people to go back to what I've written and listen to my lectures before trying to use or manipulate the technique. People are always trying to put me in a position of trying to convince others [of the validity of my work]. I am not interested in persuading people; I just give them the evidence. If they are truly interested in the truth, they will be drawn to it, and if they are not, they will find some way to negate it.

PB: According to your calculations, the overall level of consciousness of the world recently dropped a few points. If this is true, might it affect the ability of an individual to rise?

DH: I haven't researched whether the capacity to advance individually is independent of the overall level. [Hawkins tests the statement on his partner's, Susan's, arm. It stays strong, thus confirming that one's capacities are independent.] It's an individual matter. You are not controlled by the prevailing consciousness level of the world. We are at the effect of our own experience of the world.

PB: It is hard for people to find the voice of guidance within, and even if they do, such as through the use of kinesiology, following through is difficult. Do you have any advice for people trying to find or listen to this voice?

DH: It is not so much a voice as an inclination to expand the depth of the field. We follow that inclination when we begin to practice spiritual concepts and feel an immediate result. You are very angry, for example, and suddenly you remember to see things differently: You remember the intrinsic innocence of people, that they don't know any better, or that they couldn't have done it any differently or they would have. Negative feelings become less and less tolerable, which increases your desire to see things differently in the future.

PB: You had a spiritual breakthrough in 1965, and I'm curious about fluctuations in consciousness and choice. Was your own path a roller coaster? Did you feel like you were moving two steps forward, one step back, or was it a smooth transition?

DH: No, it moves in phases. You could say, in general, [that] you transcend the various levels. Each one

The Evolution of Behavioral Kinesiology

Building on the established use of muscle testing, developed by physiotherapists Henry Kendall and Florence Kendall in the 1940s, chiropractor George Goodheart developed *applied kinesiology* (AK) in 1964 from clinical work in which he determined that the technique was useful for diagnosing medical conditions. The technique also relies on what is called a "proximity effect," in which holding a particular substance (as opposed to ingesting it) is sufficient for establishing its particular effect on someone. The technique has been refined over time and is now used by many alternative and some mainstream health practitioners (certification programs are available), though its diagnostic validity remains the subject of considerable study and skepticism (see sidebar, p. 20).

John Diamond, MD, extended the application of AK to both diagnosis *and* treatment of various conditions when he pioneered the field of *behavioral kinesiology* (BK) in the 1970s. In the late 1990s, Hawkins took BK a quantum leap further by asserting that if your body doesn't lie, has information about its own healing, and is connected to a larger energetic field of knowledge, then it also contains all the information necessary to discern truth from falsehood across an endless range of issues and situations. In reaching these conclusions, he has also drawn from the morphogenetic fieldwork of Rupert Sheldrake as well as Karl Pribram's model of a holographic universe.

Hawkins's method requires a series of specific conditions:

- 1) Both testers must be integrous (score over 200 on Hawkins's *Map of Consciousness*) and have no bias or strong emotion on the subject being tested.
- 2) Both testers must be clear and neutral toward each other.
- 3) There should be no background noise or distracting music.
- 4) All metal, including eyeglasses, must be removed.
- 5) Both testers must thump their thymus gland for balance and ask permission to ask a question. (This is done by stating out loud, "I have permission to ask this question," muscle testing that statement, and continuing with the inquiry if the muscle stays strong.)

While applied kinesiology has been the subject of scientific testing by established researchers, behavioral kinesiology has yet to attract similar attention.

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Testing Applied Kinesiology

Two new studies have cast an aura of skepticism upon claims that applied kinesiology (AK) has diagnostic validity. The most recent, “A Study to Assess the Validity of Applied Kinesiology (AK) as a Diagnostic Tool and as a Nonlocal Proximity Effect” (publication pending), was completed this year by a group of researchers and kinesiologists led by Stephan A. Schwartz for the Bial Foundation. The objective of the study was to answer the following four questions:

- 1) *Is there a difference in muscular strength when an individual holds a substance that is inimical to life processes, as compared to a substance that is essential for life?*
- 2) *If there is an effect, does the process involve input from both the person being measured and the clinician doing the measurement, or does it only involve the person being measured?*
- 3) *Is the result the same when different clinicians take the measurement or when no clinician is involved?*
- 4) *Can AK be considered a reliable diagnostic tool?*

“The data in this study, particularly when considered in the larger context of the five prior nonclinical studies of Radin (1984), Quintanar and Hill (1988), Braud (1989), Arnett et al. (1999), and Kendler and Keating (2003)—and the even larger horizon of the 50 papers assessed by Klinkoski and Leboeuf (1990) and the 22 papers examined by Hall, Lewith et al. (2008)—all seem to suggest one common conclusion: Applied kinesiology does not presently provide a useful or reliable diagnostic tool upon which health decisions can be based.”

In another recent study, titled “Disentangling Manual Muscle Testing and Applied Kinesiology: Critique and Reinterpretation of a Literature Review” by Mitchell Haas, Robert Cooperstein, and David Peterson (*Chiropractic and Osteopathy* 15, no. 11 [2007]), the authors concluded: “When manual muscle testing as used in applied kinesiology is disentangled from standard orthopedic/neurological muscle testing, the few studies evaluating specific AK procedures either refute or cannot support the validity of AK procedures as diagnostic tests. In particular, the use of MMT [manual muscle testing] for the diagnosis of organic disease or putative pre/subclinical conditions is insupportable.”

— MG

is preparatory and opens the way to the next level. I remember going through the stages. You go through a state of universal lovingness, in which you break into tears all the time. You go into a state of joy and ecstasy, and in those states you can't function.

PB: What levels are those states at?

DH: Sainthood and joyfulness are at 570, and then comes ecstasy at about 590—it is exquisite beyond all description, described by the great saints. Once the ecstasy subsides, the divinity of the presence of infinite timeless peace—*satchidananda*—shines forth at the level of 600. In that state, you need nothing from the world, nor does life need to go—it makes no difference. But then comes love, and love says, “Yes, but you would be short-circuiting the purpose of being here.” So love returns and continues the conversation.

PB: So would that itself be a fluctuation and choice?

DH: No, it is always there. You see, your consciousness is like a full pipe organ. When you stop playing this note, it doesn't go away; it remains this entire panorama. At a high level of consciousness, you can be at whatever level you want. So for purposes of functioning, you go into what I call “the persona that interacts with the world,” as I am doing now, because you have to converse and talk and gesticulate and so on. It is just one thing on the organ, because the organ is also in a state of bliss and absolute silence and ecstasy. Our conversation, our being here, the whole phenomenon as it unfolds is all happening autonomously. There is no personal “I” doing or initiating or deciding it—that's an illusion. You are an impersonal agent of creation, functioning and fulfilling your potential. The butterfly flies because that is what a butterfly does, but it doesn't sing a song. Conversation is our being what we are: talkingness. The questions you are asking are already happening on their own, and you become aware of “Oh, I just asked that” 1/10,000 of a second after the phenomenon. With full enlightenment, that 1/10,000 of a second disappears, and suddenly you are transformed into a different dimension of existence. The delay between a *that* and a *me* disappears, and that which you are is all there is.

PB: I have heard you say that no one calibratable level is better than another, just different. But wouldn't you have to agree that some levels are preferable to others?

DH: Well, we are talking about judgmentalism. Is it better to be a chameleon or a crane, a heron or a hippo?

You can't really say that one is better than another because you are projecting preference. Being a hippo is a hippo, and being a crane is something else. It isn't a matter of better than: It's that it is what it is. Identity and meaning are identical. If you live in the world of essence, then you see and experience the world differently. You see that everything is just being that which it is in that point of evolution, and eventually the perfection of all things dawns on you—even toward an adolescent who has been brainwashed into thinking that violence is holiness. That is all he or she can believe at that point in this lifetime. This world isn't celestial, nor is it hell. To my view, it is purgatorial. You have a choice between heaven and hell right here, right now.

PB: You spend a lot of quiet time in contemplation and meditation with nature. Then you are out in the world as a therapist, doctor, and spiritual teacher. How does one navigate these seeming polarities and stay in integrity?

DH: They are not polarities; they are all potentialities. Like a pipe organ, on this one I play the bass notes, and on this one I play the high notes. So the overall orientation is to be of service to the world in whatever way you can be. When your own needs are met, you try to fulfill the needs of the world, to complete the fulfillment of your own potentiality. Each person has a gift.

PB: Your writings and lectures emphasize that peace begins within an individual. The world is in such a state of distress these days. Could you speak briefly about how individuals might “integroously” be involved in the peace movement today?

DH: Peace as a movement . . . is very provocative, and it provokes its opposite. Why? Because it has become politicized, and when politicized, it wants to control. From the viewpoint of yin-yang, it gives you something to oppose. The way to have peace is to be peaceful. If you have it, why would you be protesting about it? Peace is an inner state.

PB: Then would you say the peace movement is a waste of time?

DH: I'd say it is very provocative of its opposite.

PB: How would one access choosing peace?

DH: Peace is an inner decision, you see. How do you bring about peace? Through the collective. Each person, by choosing peace within themselves, raises the overall level of consciousness. As each person chooses truth rather than falsehood and with integrity moves

forward in consciousness, that person lifts the collective consciousness of humankind. This collective consciousness is like the level of the sea; as the level goes up, it raises all the ships on the sea. When society reaches a certain level of collective awareness, peace becomes an automatic consequence of that reality. What the peace movement tries to do is pick which ships they are going to lift above the level of the water.

PB: Have you heard of the Law of Attraction and the DVD *The Secret*?

DH: As if they just discovered it. It has been around forever.

PB: Then it's not so secret?

DH: What you hold in your mind tends to materialize. That's an old saw, isn't it?

PB: Is there any correlation between the Law of Attraction and your model for attractor fields?

DH: No. “Attractor field,” as I use it, is a term from nonlinear dynamics. It is an energy field. You are attracted to your own energy field, that which you resonate with, that which you have become. The Law of Attraction is not a law; it is just an observation. What you hold in your mind tends to materialize [a certain thing] in your life because you are holding the pattern of it and naturally identifying with that pattern.

PB: There are a lot of people holding in mind Cadillacs and mansions, so wouldn't the source of your motivation affect what you get?

DH: Wanting it tends to keep it away. You don't picture wanting a Cadillac; you picture yourself having a Cadillac and being in a Cadillac and being joyful in it and appreciating it.

PB: What is it that a teacher gives to a student?

DH: The teacher brings knowingness and the energy field of that knowingness, without which a student would not be able to reach it on their own. It's really an energy transmission, classically called silent transmission, which is a high-energy vibration and aura. So although we are paying attention to what is being said, what's really happening is that the energy field has become yours and is accessible to you by your agreement. Nobody forces it.

PB: As if I can tune in to your channel because my lightning rod is nearby, and I am able to receive information.

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DH: Yes, so each knowingness with your assent would then become “Aha!” What the teacher gives you is the absolute certainty of that knowingness. Others can give you the information, but they cannot give you the power of certainty that makes it work for you.

PB: So it’s like planting seeds: I throw them down, but if I haven’t watered or cared for them, they won’t become anything.

DH: The energy field has to be of absolute certainty; it can’t be just something nice you read out of a book. AA is a very good example. AA deals with the impossible. Alcoholism was a hopeless condition; nobody survived it until Bill Wilson’s enlightenment. He reached a consciousness level of 575. The light in the room lit up, and suddenly he was in the Presence. Bill got sober, and then he gave it to another. So it was transmitted from one to another. All these people knew that giving up drinking would save their life, but nobody did it. It took the power of his knowingness. And so to this day, every person in AA has a sponsor. A sponsor is somebody who has taken the bit in his teeth and survived it.

PB: So you can’t be a good teacher until you have really experienced and moved through the higher states.

DH: Yes, because you have to experience the reality of it. How could you teach what you don’t actually know? ♪

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Hawkins’s newest book, Reality, Spirituality, and Modern Man, was published in October 2008. For more information on his work, go to www.veritaspub.com.

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