

**THAT  
WHICH IS  
BEFORE  
YOU**

**MATTHEW LOWES**

**AUDIO BOOK SUPPLEMENT**



Empty Press

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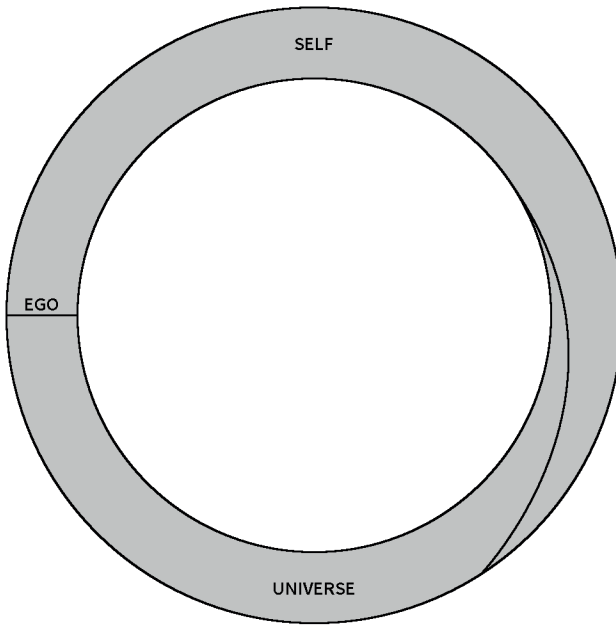
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# TOTAL PERCEPTION



# THOUGHT-PROJECTED EXPERIENCE



# APPENDIX A

## PRACTICES OUTLINE

The following outline summarizes the practices discussed in this book. Use it as a reminder and quick reference. Pick a practice and focus on it for a while with consistency. Establish your intention, take note of contrast, conduct ongoing inquiry, and remember that you are responsible for your own practice and where it takes you.

### BEGINNING MEDITATION

1. Sit with good posture.
2. Breathe and relax.
3. Be aware of what is.

Logistics: Take a few deep breaths at the beginning, releasing excess tension, and allow some time at the end to let the mind go.

## SUSTAINING ATTENTION

1. Begin meditation.
2. Focus your attention on the breath.
3. If you notice the attention has strayed, gently return your attention to the breath.

Variation: Focus your attention on some other object of meditation, such as a candle, a rock, a mantra, or a sacred image.

Variation: When the attention strays, note the distraction as a thought, an emotion, or a sensation, before gently returning your attention to the breath.

## OBSERVING THOUGHTS

1. Begin meditation.
2. Observe your thoughts as they come and go.
3. If you become caught up in thoughts, see what happened and gently return your attention to observing the thoughts as they come and go.

Variation: Observe your emotions or sensations.

## OPEN AWARENESS

1. Begin meditation.
2. Practice selective awareness of sounds, sights, tastes, smells, bodily sensations, thoughts, and emotions, without labeling or analyzing.
3. Without directing your attention in any way, open your awareness to the entire field of perception in which various phenomena arise and fall away, without resistance or grasping.

Note: This can form the backbone of ongoing meditation practice.

## SEEING NOTHING

1. Begin meditation.
2. Stop all thoughts, and do not allow the attention to focus on anything whatsoever.
3. If anything arises in awareness, gently abandon it and return the attention to nothing.

Note: Use as an occasional practice to return to periodically.



## BREATH EXPLORATION

1. Observe your breathing.
2. Consciously control several breath cycles through voluntary action.
3. Let go of conscious breath control and observe involuntary breathing in action.

Continuation: Switch between voluntary and involuntary breathing. Make voluntary breathing more subtle until you can identify the dividing line between voluntary and involuntary.

Variation: With voluntary breathing, breathe into various parts of the body. With involuntary breathing, observe where the breath goes.

## BREATH SUSPENSION

1. Lie down, inhale, exhale, and hold the breath with neutral air pressure.
2. Observe all reactions and thoughts as the breath hold continues.
3. Breathe in through the nose and out the mouth and continue your observations as the body completely recovers.

Variation: Try lying on each side and on the stomach.

## **BREATH CHECK**

1. Periodically check in with your breathing throughout the day.
2. Pay attention to anything that may disrupt or stop the pattern of regular breathing.
3. Whenever you notice an interruption, try to restore a balanced rhythm by inhaling and exhaling through the nose. In more extreme cases, inhale through the nose and exhale out the mouth.

Variation: Combine with a body scan.

## **BODY SCAN**

1. Scan the body from head to toe.
2. Note any areas of excess tension or pain, as well as blank spots or dead zones.
3. Inhale into trouble spots and try to release any excess tension on the exhale.

Variation: Combine with a periodic breath check.

## BODY PERMEATION

1. Lie down and get in a comfortable position.
2. On the inhale, gradually tense up all your muscles so that you are completely tense, head to toe, as you finish your inhale.
3. On the exhale, gradually relax all your muscles so that you are completely relaxed, head to toe, as you finish your exhale.

Variation: With the breath, tense and relax the body in a variety of wavelike patterns.

## MOVEMENT

1. Starting from a standing position, lay down on the ground and stand back up again.
2. Do this in as many different ways as you can manage.
3. Add specific breathing, such as inhale-exhale down and inhale-exhale up, or exhale down and inhale up, or inhale down and up and exhale down and up.

Variation: Add crawling while on the ground and walking while standing.

Variation: Practice with eyes closed.

Variation: Follow involuntary breath cycle down on exhale, up on inhale.

## STILLNESS

1. Lie down, get comfortable, and don't move for five or ten minutes.
2. Note the feeling of being inside your body.
3. Note any changes to that feeling during practice.

Variation: Feel the pulse inside the body and recognize full-body pulse. Allow pulse and breathing to synchronize.

Variation: Move the awareness to different areas of the body, then expand and contract awareness outward and inward from the limits of the body.

## PROCESSING PAIN

1. Use proportionate focused breathing to relax yourself and restore balanced breathing.
2. Accept present pain. Don't feel sorry for yourself. Don't engage in psychological avoidance.
3. Turn the gaze of awareness directly on the pain itself. Look right at it, and see it as pure sensation.

Variation: Process extensive or overwhelming pain in layers. Start with the outer edges and work inward to its root.

Note: This practice can be used to process any negative thoughts, emotions, or sensations.

## DEVOTION & PRAYER

1. Choose an image of God and struggle to understand and expand your conception of it.
2. Surrender your will and self to God
3. Repeat a prayer or mantra.

Continuation: Focus on a love and longing for God alone.  
Synchronize prayer repetition with breath and heartbeat.

## CONTEMPLATION

1. Doubt everything and ask questions in a relentless search for the truth.
2. When engaging in thought, maintain robust skepticism in the face of any idea, concept, or story.
3. Sit with a sense of unknowing and the unknown, while you wait for insight to arise.

Variation: Write down your thoughts. Try to determine what assumptions they are based on and if they are true.

## **EMULATING SELFLESSNESS**

1. Approach loving kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity with a spirit of inquiry. What are they and can you recognize them in yourself?
2. Try to recognize these attitudes in your interactions and observations.
3. Try to allow these attitudes to guide your actions in everyday life.

Variation: Commit yourself to following a set of spiritual precepts.

## **SOLITUDE**

1. Go off by yourself.
2. Turn off your gadgets.
3. Enjoy your being.

Variation: Dedicate yourself to a disciplined set of practices.

## SILENCE

1. Take some time off from speaking.
2. Observe the effects of silence on you and your interactions with others.
3. Look for opportunities to practice silence in everyday moments.

Variation: Study the speech and silence of others to understand what is really going on.

# APPENDIX B

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

I have alluded to a few well-known poems and passages within the text, but have otherwise endeavored to root everything in my direct and immediate insight. Nevertheless, I've read a number of books related to spirituality, practices, and enlightenment — before and after awakening — and they have certainly influenced my choice of topics and use of words. Influence is wonderfully unavoidable, and as it may be helpful for you to know what some of these influences have been, I am including a bibliography, which could also serve as a recommended reading list. As such, I will include a few books I read after writing this one, but which I found particularly worthwhile. If you take up any of these texts, I trust you will enjoy them as much as I did.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

On April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Matthew Lowes had an unexpected and profound spiritual awakening, just as the great mystics have described. Since this enlightenment dawned, he has endeavored to communicate the insights intrinsic to realization and help others on their spiritual journey. In addition to this work, he continues to be a writer of fiction and games, as well as a student and teacher of martial arts, fitness, and health practices.

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The spiritual journey is your life, exactly as it is.

# WHEN YOU ARE SILENT IT SPEAKS

**MATTHEW LOWES**

**CHARTING THE SPIRITUAL PATH**

An exploration of the spiritual journey: from the suffering of our  
existential hopes and fears, through a search for the truth,  
to the unimaginable awakening that awaits us all.

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