“Soul Shifts is a brilliant, authoritative, practical guide to higher awareness written by one of my all-time favorite colleagues and friends for the past three decades. Every page brims with highly specific suggestions for shifting to a more enlightened way of being. I love this book, and I absolutely love this woman.”

DR. WAYNE W. DYER
#1 New York Times best-selling author of I Can See Clearly Now

YOUR INVITATION TO REMEMBRANCE AND AWAKENING

From #1 New York Times best-seller Barbara De Angelis, Ph.D.

Waking up is for the heart.

Becoming a seer, and not just a seer, is not for the faint of heart. It is for the visionaries, the awakeners, the Soul Shifters.

There’s nothing missing inside of you. We suffer because we’ve forgotten who we are. All awakening is remembrance. You’re not trying to change into something you’re not. You’re not searching for something you’ve never had. You’re retrieving what you’ve already had the whole time, even if through the picture of life you think you hadn’t."

“Most of us try to change ourselves on the level of our thoughts, on the level of our emotions, or on the level of our behavior. But this is control, not transformation. True transformation must happen, and it can only happen, at the level of your vibration for it to be authentic and permanent.”

“The best thing you can do for everyone in your life is to operate from your Highest possible vibration. Your choice to be in the Highest can recalibrate other people to their Highest. This is actually the true meaning of love, and the true purpose of service. Understanding this we suddenly, joyfully, realize that, in each situation and in every moment, we can feel it.

Your Highest振动 must happen, and it can only happen, at the level of your vibration for it to be authentic and permanent.”

Dr. De Angelis offers a practical handbook for soul transformation from #1 New York Times best-selling author Barbara De Angelis, Ph.D. Now, in her most powerful offering yet—the culmination of her life’s work—Dr. De Angelis offers a practical handbook for awakening, and a brilliant reworking of the journey of personal and spiritual transformation that will inspire and enlighten longtime seekers as well as new arrivals on the path of growth. Soul Shifts are radical, vibrational internal shifts that spontaneously and inevitably transform the way you relate to yourself, to others, and to the world. For transformation to be real and lasting, it must originate from the inside out, so that instead of trying to constantly micro-manage everything, you operate from true mastery at the deepest level of who you are—

the soul level.

When you learn how to make these Soul Shifts on the inside, everything on the outside of your life shifts. Places where you’ve felt stuck or confused become illuminated with new clarity and understanding. Obstacles turn into possibilities, dead ends transform into doorways, and challenges convert into astounding maps leading you to exciting new territories—all because you have made a Soul Shift.
SOUL SHIFTS

Transformative Wisdom
for Creating a Life of Authentic Awakening, Emotional Freedom, and Practical Spirituality

DR. BARBARA DE ANGELIS
Offered with the Highest love in honor of my beloved Teachers.

Offered with the Highest love in honor of my beloved students, who have given me the privilege of being their teacher and who have also been my teachers.

Offered with the Highest love in honor of all who are courageously remembering.
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Preface

In Service to Your Highest

“Your own Self-realization
is the greatest service you can render the world.”
— Ramana Maharshi

My Highest welcomes your Highest to this great journey of awakening! I’m overjoyed that you remembered our appointment with each other, and, even more important, that you kept your appointment with yourself and with the unfolding of your own emotional and spiritual freedom.

I’ve been preparing for your arrival for many years, creating a sanctuary of healing, revelation, and remembrance in the form of this book. Now it’s complete, and everything is ready for you. It’s finally time for me to joyfully fling the doors open and invite you in.

This is what teachers do—we prepare ourselves to serve the student, and then we wait for the student to arrive. So it’s a great moment of celebration when we can finally deliver what we’ve been saving for you. My own teachers were in service of my greatness. I’m honored to have the opportunity to offer myself in service of your greatness, in service of your freedom, and in service of your Highest.

For 40 years, I’ve been an author, a speaker, a radio and TV host, and an educator. Mostly, however, I am a mystic. A mystic is someone who understands, contacts, and maps the invisible roads inside of us. Since I was a child, I’ve always felt as comfortable navigating these inner highways as I have moving on the external plane of existence. It seems that I show
up in people's lives when they're ready to cross a threshold into more consciousness, healing, and awakening.

Over the past four decades, my work as a transformational teacher has undergone several major paradigm shifts. Each time, these external shifts have been birthed by my own foundational spiritual shifts, significant inner transformations that made it possible for me to be a more powerful and transparent channel for love and wisdom, and, subsequently, to be able to actively transmit these healing energies to my students for the purpose of the upliftment of their vibration and the acceleration of their return to wholeness.

Now I'm at a place in my life where I find myself with an abundance of harvested, ripe wisdom. This kind of authentic wisdom can only be born from a mysterious process of the alchemy between profound contemplation, deep mystical and personal experience, the passage of time, and the careful articulation of all of these.

Imagine an explorer who knows there is an amazing destination that will take them years to get to, years to explore, and then years to travel back from, but the promise of what they will find there is irresistible. They depart, and when they return, they aren't the same. This is the exciting adventure I've been on—I've taken eight years away from writing to immerse myself in teaching and a serious deepening of my own journey. Out of this, *Soul Shifts* emerged.

This is the most important work of my lifetime. It has transformed me, it has transformed my students, and now I'm hoping it will transform you. The nature of this kind of wisdom is that it yearns to be transmitted to others. For a true teacher, the feeling of passionate enthusiasm that accompanies this is not “Look at me,” but “Look at this! Look at this golden goblet of wisdom! Look at this sparkling jewel of understanding! I want you to have it!”

Books arrive in our lives like gifts delivered by mysterious benefactors—a friend, an article, an e-mail, a store display. Something inside of you whispers, “You need to read this.” You sense that it contains messages and guidance you've been waiting for. It's the answer to a prayer, a question, or a longing, sometimes especially those longings you haven't allowed yourself to fully acknowledge or articulate. It's as if your soul decides it wants the book before your mind can intervene. It recognizes a piece of the puzzle you've needed, and grabs it.
Preface

Some books offer us information, and some books take us on a journey. I’ve designed Soul Shifts to do both. When I write, my highest intention is to create a virtual “Ashram of Words,” a refuge, a place to which all of my students—past, present, and future—can come for guidance, inspiration, and practices to help them on their own path to freedom.

“The fruit ripens slowly, but falls suddenly and without return.”
— Nisargadatta Maharaj

When I was 20 years old back in 1971, I spent six blissful months in residence on the island of Majorca off the coast of Spain with my first spiritual teacher, His Holiness Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, as part of a meditation teacher–training program. Maharishi was a great enlightened master and a radiant being. Every night, he’d sit with us and share profound, life-changing wisdom. During those six months, I wrote down every single word he said in a series of large hardbound notebooks.

Yesterday, something prompted me to find one of these precious notebooks and page through it. As I did, I came upon this beautiful sentence I’d noted that was part of a talk he gave to our group the day before our course was over, as we were about to leave for different parts of the world to teach meditation. He said:

“When the fruit comes on the branch, the tree bows down.”

There are so many layers of wisdom woven into this seemingly simple but stunningly profound sentence. The ripe fruit creates a triumphant heaviness on the branch of the tree, helping it to bow down so that it can more easily offer itself to whoever is waiting to receive it. The fruit blossoms on the branch and the tree does not feel proud, but bows in humble awe at the miracle of what has been revealed.

My teacher was teaching us how to be teachers: to always remember that teaching is an act of service; and to not feel elevated, but rather to be humbled by the ripening of our own awakening that he knew would unfold for many of us as the years passed.
Forty years later, I am awed by the fruits of wisdom and awakening that have appeared on my branches, and I bow down in humble gratitude for the opportunity I’ve had to serve others on their path and be a channel for healing. “The instrument is blessed by that which flows through it,” said Paramahansa Yogananda. This book is my ripened fruit, offered to you with great love. I feel so deeply blessed to have been the instrument for the delivery of Soul Shifts, and I am honored and delighted to pass the gifts, guidance, and grace it contains on to you.

Our responsibility as conscious beings, sincere seekers, and planetary transformers is to rebirth ourselves over and over again.

May these Soul Shifts bless and free you as they have blessed and freed me.

Offered with great love and in service to your Highest,

Barbara De Angelis
August 2014
Santa Barbara, California
PART ONE

GATEWAYS TO AUTHENTIC AWAKENING
Stepping Over the Threshold

“If [the teacher] is indeed wise, he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your mind.” — Kahlil Gibran

In all religions, on all spiritual paths, one of the most sacred and mystical physical places is the threshold one crosses to enter the temple, cathedral, prayer hall, synagogue, teepee, or space of worship. A threshold is a doorway between worlds, a mystical border between the everyday and the Divine, and, therefore, a place of potency and grace.

In most Eastern cultures, one honors this understanding of the threshold by never stepping directly on it, but always stepping over it, and by leaving one’s shoes outside as a sign of reverence and respect. On my pilgrimages to Indian temples, I have often seen a temple attendant squatting on the ground next to the threshold leading into the temple proper, to make sure no one, particularly no uninformed Western tourist, makes the terrible mistake of stepping on the raised divider.

Many years ago when I began my spiritual journey, I was taught that whenever I entered a temple, or a hall in which the teacher was seated, I should bend down to touch the threshold or entrance with my right hand, and then raise that hand up to touch my heart. It was also suggested that I do this on the way out of the temple or hall. No one explained the significance of this to me, but I did it anyway because that was what everyone else was doing—and because I was always a very dutiful student!

In time, however, as I had the direct experience that my teacher was giving me the gift of entrance into my innermost realms of consciousness, I understood that gesture of respect, and why my hand went from the floor to my heart. For me, it became a way of saying, “May what awaits me in this room, over this threshold, go directly into my heart.” On the way out, it was a way of saying,
“I am so grateful for the grace that I have received while in this sacred space. May it unfold fully within me.”

This metaphor of stepping over the threshold is a beautiful mirror for your journey of personal and spiritual transformation: **You have been on a path since the moment you were born into this world, and you’ve already courageously crossed many significant thresholds.** All seekers must travel these invisible roads within, distances that cannot be measured in miles, yet are the hardest and most challenging part of the human adventure: the distance from the habit of turning away to the insistence on turning toward; the distance from the frightened part of you that says, “I don’t want to look at myself, I don’t want to face things, I don’t want to feel things,” to the fearless part of you that finally proclaims, “I will do whatever it takes to be free.”

We step over the threshold of our resistance, back into the sacred space of trust.

We step over the threshold of our fear, back into the sacred space of vision.

We step over the threshold of our confusion, back into the sacred space of truth.

We step over the threshold of our forgetfulness, back into the sacred space of remembrance.

And with each bold, brave step, we come closer and closer to the great reunion with the fullness of our own awakened self.

As you stand at this threshold of your Soul Shifts journey,
I welcome you to your pilgrimage.
I honor you as a great seeker.
I offer you a virtual garland of flowers,
and respectfully place them around your neck as one would do
to a long-awaited and revered guest who has finally arrived.

Enter . . .
For all human beings, life is a long series of questions. It’s our nature to want more and to wonder how to achieve those things. These questions are there from the time we can speak, and evolve as we do. When we are children, our questions are focused on our own comfort and pleasure:

“Can you carry me? Can I have more candy? Why do I have to brush my teeth? Why do I have to go to school? Why can’t I have that toy? Why can’t I stay up and watch TV?”

As we move into adolescence, our questions shift their focus from our isolated world to include the world around us:

“Why can’t I stay over at my friend’s house? Why does that teacher hate me? How can I get that boy to like me? Why is that person acting so mean to me? If I join that club, will people think I’m a nerd? What do I have to do to get into that college? Why don’t I ever like the way I look? What do I want to do when I grow up?”

Our adulthood brings more serious questions into view:

“Where do I want to live? Is this the right person for me? How can I create my own business? Are we ready to start a family? Am I spending too much money? Why can’t I get through to my son? Should I quit this job and look for another one? Why can’t I lose this extra weight? Do I have enough put aside in my savings?”

Sometimes our questions are the wrong ones, because they aren’t real questions—they’re actually complaints disguised as questions that aren’t waiting for real answers:

“Why is this happening to me? Why is he such a jerk? When is this going to stop? Why can’t my kids just behave? Why does everything always go wrong? Why does everyone always let me down? Why can’t people get it together?”

One way to know that you have truly begun your journey as a seeker is to recognize that the kinds of questions you’ve been contemplating have changed. You begin to ask what I call “sacred questions,” those questions whose focus shifts from wondering about the outside of your life to wondering about the realm inside of you:
“What is my purpose in this life? Why is it so hard for me to love myself and allow others to love me? Why aren’t I living as the person I’m supposed to be? Why do I react to people and situations in ways I know aren’t from my Highest? What is the truth about existence? How can I find a refuge of peace inside myself? What is the Source of everything, and how am I connected to it?”

And perhaps the most important question of all: “What do I have to do to find the answers to these questions?”

Some of you have been asking these questions all your life, as I have. Some of you just began these contemplations in the past few years, or months. These questions come from deep within your being, and whether you realize it or not, they signal that something profound has already taken place inside of you.

The courage to ask yourself sacred questions is what identifies you as a seeker of truth, and is an auspicious sign that your journey of awakening has already begun.

**Time to Wake Up:**

**Your Cosmic Alarm Clock Has Gone Off**

What is this powerful inner turn of events that starts us off on a serious path of growth? I call it the Cosmic Alarm Clock. It’s as if an alarm suddenly goes off inside of you, and it dawns on you that you’ve been asleep in your life, and need to get up. Often you are awakened with a start: “Oh—have I been asleep? Wait a minute—what am I doing here on this planet? Wasn’t there something I was supposed to do? I feel like I’ve been in such a daze. I can’t waste any more time! I have to get up now!”

The thing about the Cosmic Alarm Clock is that once it goes off, no matter how many times you push the snooze button and try to ignore the alert, it is going to keep ringing until you pay attention. Perhaps some of you are reading this now because you finally realized that you couldn’t keep pushing the snooze button!

This brings us to the next important question:

**Who set the alarm in the first place?**

The answer, of course, is: You did!
Stepping Over the Threshold

Your Highest Self, your soul, set your own cosmic alarm to make sure you got up in time to participate in the great shift that is happening on our planet. You had an appointment to wake up now, at this moment, in this life, at a time when so many others are waking up, and when so many others are in need of being woken up by those who got up first.

Recently in my own spiritual studies, I was astonished to discover that this concept I’ve taught for some time of a Cosmic Alarm Clock going off inside of you is actually described in the ancient texts of Kashmir Shaivism, a Hindu philosophy originating around the 9th century in Kashmir, which is in the northwestern part of what we now know as India. These texts were written over a thousand years ago, and explain that there comes a profound moment in the life of a soul when the individual suddenly begins to have what they describe as the “thought of awakening”:

“I should learn more about the truth of life. I think I am here for something, to do something, to search for something. I must find out. I need a teacher. I need wisdom. I must wake up.”

These thoughts of awakening occur, the texts explain, because an inner awakening has already spontaneously occurred as a cosmic event in the deepest regions of your individuality, an awakening that generates a turning toward enlightenment, toward wisdom, toward freedom. This inner event manifests within you as a rising up of the impulse to begin searching for truth, and is what actually sets you in motion toward a guide or teacher, toward spiritual or religious pursuits, toward reading, toward study, and ultimately toward attainment.

Just as an earthquake deep within the ocean generates powerful tsunami waves on the surface, so an “earthquake” on the soul level suddenly generates your questioning, your longing, your seeking, and, ultimately, your finding.

I remember how excited I was when I first heard these ancient verses explained, because the significance was mind-boggling: According to these texts, there is no such thing as a random encounter with a teacher, a helper, a minister, a healer, a path, a transformative event, or even a book such
as this. You wouldn’t have come into proximity with these kinds of experiences had a profound inner shift not already taken place within you, even if you don’t remember or realize it! Because of that inner shift on your soul level, you are then drawn, guided, or magically “led” to individuals, teachers, teachings, or situations that will help you unfold that awakening.

If you’ve begun your outer journey toward a state of awakening, then you must have already experienced an inner awakening.

In my life, I had my first conscious “thoughts of awakening” at a very early age, even though at the time, I didn’t understand what I was experiencing. I remember being 10 or 11 years old and writing beautiful but depressing poetry, wondering what life was all about, wondering where I could find someone to help me discover the truth, and feeling certain that something was wrong with me because no one else I knew seemed to think about the same things I did.

I recall believing, somewhat naively, that the more I learned, the quicker I’d become enlightened. I’d go to our local library each week and check out 10 to 15 books on philosophy. Late at night, when my mother thought I was sleeping, I’d read my books by flashlight. I can still smell the cloth bindings of the old volumes, see my library card with the handwritten titles and date stamp, and feel the excitement of taking my first intoxicating journeys into wisdom. Even then, I was desperately hoping to find some answers to questions I didn’t know how to articulate.

This was the early 1960s, and there was no personal-growth movement, no self-help literature, no transformational seminars, no popular awareness about anything that is commonplace today. My mother was so worried about me that she sent me to a child psychiatrist, who, of course, could not relate to my soul-searching, and explained it away as “prepuberty disturbances.” Inner awakenings, however, do not disappear with time, and thankfully do not reverse themselves, and as I’d come to understand from reading those ancient texts 40 years later, my trajectory toward the spiritual path had been set in an inevitable motion toward a cosmic and blessed rendezvous.

In the fall of 1969, when I was 18 years old, I left home to attend college at the University of Wisconsin. I’d only been there for two weeks when, one
afternoon, I saw a poster on a bulletin board that said Learn to Meditate along with a photo of a beautiful, smiling Indian man wearing white robes. I had absolutely no clue what meditation was; I had absolutely no idea who the Indian man was; I'd had absolutely no exposure to any kind of Eastern philosophy. Yet in that moment, my heart somehow recognized what I was seeing as what I'd been seeking, and I knew without a doubt that my formal spiritual journey had begun.

Perhaps you can remember when you first had your own thoughts that propelled you onto a path of transformation. For some of you it may have been a long time ago, and you have been consciously transforming ever since. For others, it may have been just recently that you found yourself longing for more understanding, more learning, and deeper spiritual experiences. It has been over half a century since I began my search for meaning, and now in the 21st century, there are so many doorways available through which seekers can enter a path of exploration. One of my greatest feelings of accomplishment in this life stems from having been one of the first individuals to popularize the idea of self-help, beginning in the early 1980s, and to have my books and television programs be there waiting when so many people's Cosmic Alarm Clocks went off.

It was not by accident that I went to that particular university, or saw that poster and decided to attend the lecture that would lead me to my first spiritual teacher and to a profound mystical path of awakening, without which you would not be reading these words. It is not by accident that perhaps you happened to open an e-mail announcing a personal-growth seminar, and decided to attend the weekend that would lead you to a whole new path of understanding. It is not by accident that perhaps you began dating someone who happened to practice meditation, and decided to begin yourself, which would lead you to great inner self-exploration. It is not by accident that perhaps you hurt your back and decided to take the yoga class offered through your church that would lead you to becoming a yoga instructor yourself. It is not by accident that you are reading this book.

This is a great moment of celebration on the journey of your soul.
Your first, and most important, Soul Shift has already happened:
You remembered that you had an appointment for remembrance.
And you kept it!
Take a minute to really try on this understanding, and see how wonderful it feels. The hardest part of your journey is already over. You woke up! *The rest is just remembering what you forgot.*

*Something miraculous and profound has already taken place inside of you.*

*It is a cosmic event of the greatest importance.*

*The fact that you’re seeking means that you have already found something.*

*Your seeking is your inner awakening in action.*

*The thought of awakening means you are, finally, already on your way home.*

I know that this is all very intense and serious stuff to consider, in our first chapter no less! Since humor is a great way to ground ourselves, here is a little joke I wrote just for you:

*A soul came into a new body, and immediately forgetting what he was here for, fell asleep at the beginning of his life.*

*The personality he became went about the business of being human, completely unaware that anything was wrong.*

*Seventy-five years passed, and the soul’s time on Earth was over.*

*The angels responsible for escorting souls back to the Other Side arrived at his deathbed, and took the still-sleeping soul in their arms.*

*Suddenly, the soul woke up and saw the angels.*

*“Whoa, I must have dozed off,” he said. “What did I miss?”*

My hope is that the answer for all of us will be: **Less and less every day.**
Introducing Soul Shifts

“Once the soul awakens, 
the search begins and you can never go back. 
From then on, you are inflamed with a special longing 
that will never again let you linger in the lowlands 
of complacency and partial fulfillment. 
The eternal makes you urgent.”
— John O’Donohue

A golden moon was just rising over the shimmering water of Back Bay when I stepped into the car I’d hired to take me from my hotel to the international airport in Mumbai. I was returning to California from a magnificent trip to India, and although I was happy to be going home, I wasn’t looking forward to the 30 hours of traveling ahead of me. I spent the next 20 minutes gazing out the window to take in my last glimpses of this fascinating city.

Suddenly I snapped out of my reverie, realizing that for some time our vehicle had been going at half the speed of other cars on the road, and we were still far from where we should have been by then. If we continued at this rate, I’d miss my flight.

“You’re driving awfully slowly, sir,” I said. “Can you please go faster?”

“Don’t worry, missus,” the driver responded cheerfully. “Please relax yourself. We are sure to be getting there eventually.”

“I don’t doubt that,” I replied. “But I don’t want to get there eventually. I want to get there much sooner than eventually.”

There are pivotal moments in the lives of all seekers when we realize that we’ve been moving along on our path of transformation but, simply put, we want to go faster. Staying where we are, or proceeding at the pace we’ve been used to, is no longer comfortable or even acceptable. We know we’re being called to something more significant, authentic, and expanded, and, like me on the way to the airport, we want to get there sooner than eventually. We have become spiritually impatient.

In these pivotal moments, what is needed is not simply more change, but profound transformation; not simply an adjustment in our outer life,
but a repositioning from the inside out. We don’t just want to rearrange the pieces of ourselves so that they look better temporarily. We want nothing less than rebirth. *We are ready for Soul Shifts.*

**What are Soul Shifts?** They are *transformative inner actions originating from and in alignment with the highest spiritual truths.* Rather than focusing on rearranging or revising things on the outside, we learn how to take these auspicious inner actions, to make powerful shifts in understanding, feeling, and consciousness from within, thus transforming our lives from the inside out.

This is the difference between simply *changing* and actually *shifting.* Most of us attempt to change either ourselves, our relationships, or our circumstances by dealing with things on the surface level—managing, controlling, or even covering up what we’re unhappy with. To truly shift, we need to go beneath the outer, visible manifestation of our life to the “roots.” For transformation to be significant and lasting, *it must originate from the inside out,* so that instead of constantly micromanaging everything, we operate from true mastery at the deepest level of who we are—the soul level.

**Soul Shifts are not adjustments in thinking or behavior that we make and have to remember to keep on making.**

Instead, they are radical, vibrational shifts originating from inside that spontaneously and inevitably transform the way we relate to ourselves, to others, and to the world.

What are the “inner actions” that create a Soul Shift? You will be learning about this in detail throughout this book. A simple understanding to begin with is that an inner action isn’t a behavioral action in the way we understand the term *action*—trying to “act” more caring, for instance—nor is it a mental action, such as a shift in attitude, like trying to think more positive thoughts.

*The inner actions that I call Soul Shifts are inner choices, pulsations of feeling, and perspectives that, by nature, have a higher vibrational frequency because they’re in alignment with the highest spiritual principles. Therefore, the vibrations of these inner actions are expansive, life enhancing, uplifting, and liberating, and create conditions for profound and permanent recalibrations of our energy field.*
When we learn how to make these Soul Shifts, our inner position or internal vantage point inevitably shifts position, and automatically our way of seeing and experiencing ourselves and our life fundamentally shifts, too. *It’s as if we put on a new pair of glasses and are seeing ourselves and the world differently, not because we’re trying to, but because that is now what we see!*

Suddenly, what we perceive when we examine our work, our relationships, our external world, and ourselves looks radically different. Places where we have felt stuck or stagnant, or issues about which we have been unclear or confused all become illuminated with new, enlivened understanding. Pathways emerge where none seemed to exist, obstacles turn into possibilities, dead ends transform into doorways, challenges convert into astonishing maps leading us to exciting new territories, all because we have made Soul Shifts.

You have already experienced many Soul Shifts in your life without realizing it, changes on the outside propelled by internal shifts or “inner actions”:

Perhaps after years of trying to control everything, you were forced to “let go” in a particular situation, and soon found a new road presenting itself.

Perhaps you had been very hard on someone you loved, and finally became exhausted from trying to change them so stopped pushing, and it was then that the person began to look more deeply at themselves.

Perhaps instead of trying to talk yourself into how much you should like your job, you gave yourself permission to feel how unhappy you were, and suddenly you saw a solution that had been hidden from view.

In all of these examples, something energetically shifted inside yourself, something invisible and unexpressed to anyone but yourself, or something even you weren’t conscious of occurred, and because of that, a significant external event was able to take place.

The Soul Shifts and transformations you make on the inside will manifest in profound transformations on the outside in all areas of your life.

This is the formula for mastering your life from the inside out.
Are You Suffering from Divine Discomfort?

“The eternal makes you urgent,” wrote the late poet and priest John O’Donohue in the beautiful quote I offered earlier. Put more colloquially in the context of what we’ve been contemplating, once the Cosmic Alarm Clock goes off, you wake up, you get up, and then you realize that you’re impatient to rise up to do whatever you’re here to do and learn whatever you’re here to learn. I’ve felt this “divine urgency” for as long as I can remember. I call it “Divine Discomfort,” an inner pressure from something in you trying to bring itself forth into your life and the world that, in its efforts to move out, collides with your own inner walls and obstacles.

What creates Divine Discomfort? I believe that all of us come to this planet with what I call bundles of cosmic deliveries—bundles of wisdom, bundles of service, bundles of offerings, bundles of love. We promise to make these deliveries during our lifetime as our contribution to the planet. Just as a delivery person who loads up their truck in the morning knows that by 6 p.m., they need to have delivered everything and come back with an empty truck, so too we come in with “truckloads” of packages that we are committed to delivering by the end of our “day.”

However, doing our cosmic “job” of delivering these packages isn’t as simple as it sounds. We have problems with our “vehicle”; we have delays on our route that discourage us; we become distracted by the superficial and forget that we’re making deliveries; we misplace our maps and lose our way; we get tired of driving around and just want to take a long nap; we feel no one is appreciating the things we deliver, and go on strike.

As we get older, it becomes later in the cosmic day, and we realize that we haven’t made the deliveries we were supposed to. They begin to feel heavy and burdensome, and the sense of frustration becomes more intense. We know we are behind schedule, and become frightened that we’ve failed. We have a bad case of Divine Discomfort.

Whenever I speak about Divine Discomfort, people in my audience react very strongly. Some cry. Some start to laugh. Some look like the weight of the world has just slipped from their shoulders. Some stare at me with their eyes as wide as saucers. I have named something that they’ve been experiencing without knowing what it is. Afterward, I always hear the same comments:
“I’ve never been depressed before in my life, but lately I can’t seem to shake off this sensation that something inside of me is stuck.”

“I’ve been feeling like I’m going to explode, but haven’t known why.”

“My husband keeps telling me I’m having a midlife crisis, but I knew that wasn’t what was wrong. I just feel like I want something to come out of me. No wonder I’ve been overeating—it numbs me to how uncomfortable I feel.”

“No matter how much I meditate or pray, I haven’t been able to calm my anxiety down, but I can’t figure out what’s making me feel so crazy.”

“I have a great wife and terrific kids, and have pretty good financial success, so being this unhappy hasn’t made any sense to me.”

If you suspect you’ve been suffering from a case of Divine Discomfort, don’t despair—you are not alone. I firmly believe that we are in the midst of a Divine Discomfort epidemic, particularly among those of us on a conscious path of growth who are feeling the pressure to deliver more and deliver now:

The accelerated times we’re in are propelling you to your next level of “delivering”—of serving, of offering, of helping, and of loving.

More people are trying to wake up, and they need their “packages.”

The cosmic energy within you is building up, and so an internal battle ensues between that which wants to express itself out through you, and those habits, patterns, outdated psychological programs, and emotional blockages that are in the way.

The collision between what’s trying to emerge and what’s in the way creates tremendous inner agitation, discomfort that has a “divine” source.

Like so many teachers and guides who have gone before me, I’ve suffered through my own long bouts of Divine Discomfort in order to birth myself into who I am today. In the process, I’ve developed powerful technologies for transformation that have become the “deliveries” I am making now through my work. *Soul Shifts* is the most recent of those deliveries, which I am overjoyed to be offering to you.
This, then, is the loving intention behind this book: to help you move more gracefully through your own Divine Discomfort and bring forth all that is waiting inside of you out into the world. It is an invitation to accelerate your personal and spiritual transformation in these times of intensified planetary velocity when stepping up into your Highest Self is desperately needed.

You may believe that you need to wait for the passage of time or the impact of significant outside circumstances in order for something remarkable or magical to occur for you, but this is not true. **You can accelerate this process of meaningful transformation, learn how to invite it, to open to it, to identify and relinquish your resistance to it, and to masterfully navigate through it to create a new way of living, loving, and serving your world that will go beyond anything you ever imagined or hoped was possible.**

**A Message from Bell Rock**

“*Soul development should take precedence over all things.*”

— Edgar Cayce

One of my favorite spots on Earth is Sedona, Arizona, where I often give retreats. Sedona is an exquisitely beautiful area characterized by impressive and otherworldly configurations of red rocks, and is known for being a place of metaphysical healing because of what is said to be the mysterious power that emanates from its vibrational vortexes. Simply put, a vortex is believed to be a location at which highly concentrated, subtle spiritual energies are radiating from the surface of our planet, creating a conducive environment for prayer and meditation, and strengthening our ability to connect with our Highest Self.

My preferred vortex in Sedona is a towering red-rock formation known as Bell Rock. I’ve been to Bell Rock dozens of times, and when I’m there, I always feel as if I’m hooking myself up to an enormous cosmic antenna through which I receive a powerful spiritual recharge. The intense vibration is unmistakable and pretty hard to miss.

Recently I was teaching a seminar in Sedona, and decided to visit Bell Rock before my students arrived. There’s a walkway that leads to the base of the mountain, and as I proceeded along the path, I was already
feeling a definite sense of upliftment and expansion. Just then, I noticed a couple coming toward me. They caught my eye because it's highly unusual to see unhappy people at Bell Rock, especially when they're on the way down, and the man looked really angry and disgruntled. He was walking ten feet behind his wife, scowling, shaking his head, and muttering under his breath, while she scurried along ahead of him, nervously glancing back every few seconds. It was clear to me, even from a distance, that he had not enjoyed Bell Rock at all!

As they approached me, I heard the man say something I've never forgotten.

“I don't get what the big deal is,” he complained. “I didn’t feel a damn thing!” And just to make sure his partner got the point, he repeated: “Did you hear me? I don’t get what the big deal is; I didn’t feel a damn thing!”

Realizing that I’d overheard her husband’s comments, the woman gave me an embarrassed, apologetic smile as she passed by, probably noticing from the beatific look on my face that I was one of those people who certainly had felt something!

Suddenly, I understood how although I hadn’t even begun my climb, the vortex had already offered me a profound teaching: Our existence on this planet is just like a trip to Bell Rock. We arrive and prepare to climb up and see what awaits us. Everything is possible on this massive spiritual vortex called Earth: beautiful vistas; experiences of wonder, upliftment, and delight; innumerable moments of joy; and the opportunity for deep healing. At the end of our lifetime, we descend from the vortex. Our visit is over.

What will we say as we come down from the mountain of this existence? How many of us go through life missing what is happening because we don’t allow ourselves to see, to feel, to tune in, or to be moved? How many of us end up feeling just like the man that day: “I don’t know what the big deal was. I didn’t feel a damn thing. What was so great about being a human being? What was so great about love? What was so great about having a body? What was so great about making a difference in the lives of others? What was so great about the planet?”

That day, I felt so much compassion for that man. He’d showed up expecting something to happen but couldn’t receive what was right there waiting for him because he didn’t open himself to what was happening. This
is how so many people live. They wait for something to open them, rather than opening first to whatever awaits them.

Instead of waiting for something to open you, open yourself first. Only then will you be able to receive what is there to be received.

OPENING TO THE WISDOM THAT IS WAITING FOR YOU

Imagine that there is a great treasure hidden within you—your own remembrance, your own power, your own peace, all there patiently waiting to be discovered. Now, imagine that there is a great, wise teacher living within you—your own wisdom, your own love, your own wholeness, waiting for your arrival.

How do you locate this treasure, or this teacher? Your mind tells you that you have to search, to look, to run after every clue and not give up until you succeed. But what if I told you that you don’t have to search for anything, or run after anything? All you have to do is open to it. You just have to open to the wisdom that is waiting for you.

Try holding this phrase gently in your consciousness for a moment:

“I open to the wisdom that is waiting for me.”

Now take a deep, slow breath in, and as you exhale, say it out loud if it is comfortable for you to do so: “I open to the wisdom that is waiting for me.” Repeat your breathing cycle and say the phrase again. Do this a few times, and then relax. Notice how you feel.

The words “I open” create a powerful shift in your vibration. When you say “I open,” something in you does just that. Your mouth opens. Your energy opens. Your heart opens. In that moment, you are inviting in healing. You are inviting in grace. You are also pushing down the walls of fear, anxiety, skepticism, resistance, and mistrust. You are clearing the way to receive.

“I open to the wisdom that is waiting for me, within me as my Highest.” You are calling it forth—not wisdom you need to run after; not wisdom that is far away; not wisdom that is resisting coming to you; but wisdom that is waiting for you to open to it, to receive it.
Now, for our first Soul Shift:

**SOUL SHIFT**

**SHIFT FROM SEARCHING TO OPENING**

You’re not waiting for your wisdom.  
It’s been waiting for you.  
You’re not waiting for it to reveal itself.  
It has been waiting for you to open to it.

This book has a destination, a reunion with something inside of you that’s already there waiting for you—your own wisdom, your own love, your own Highest. So we aren’t searching for anything that is separate from who you already are, but rather we’re remembering how to open to it. As we learned from the disappointed man at Bell Rock, *by looking too hard for something, you will miss everything.*

**When you read, remind yourself that you’re opening not only to my wisdom, but to your own.** The maps and keys I share in these pages are meant to help point you in the right direction, and to assist you in unlocking those places of guidance and revelation that already exist within yourself, clues to your freedom that have been patiently waiting to be discovered.

As you journey through the vortex of this book, allow this new understanding to guide you:

Tell yourself that you do not have to do anything now but receive what these pages will offer to you. You don’t have to try to understand; you don’t have to try to learn because you think you need to fix yourself; you don’t have to work hard to attain anything.

Just open, and then receive. Just open, and then receive.
I love flowers, and the tuberose is one of my favorites. Its delicate white blooms grow on a long stalk and emit an intoxicating tropical fragrance that reminds me of Hawaii and India—two of my most sacred pilgrimage destinations. My students always lovingly offer me tuberose garlands, and whenever I can find the flowers here in Santa Barbara, I fill the house with them.

One thing that always puzzled me about tuberoses was that I felt they were teasing me by only offering a few open flowers on each stem. When I'd buy them and bring them home, there were always some blossoms opened, but many more of the tiny buds were closed and never opened at all. I couldn't figure out why this was the case, and would stare at the closed buds with longing, wondering what I could do to entice them to open.

One day while visiting the local farmers’ market, I saw a man behind a table surrounded by buckets and buckets of tuberoses. He was the Tuberose Man! I became very excited as I approached his stall and basked in the abundance of so many beautiful flowers, as I imagined putting not just a stalk or two, but bunches in every room of my home.

I introduced myself and told the man about my love affair with tuberoses, which delighted him since that was his profession—growing tuberoses on his farm. “It’s so nice to meet someone who really appreciates them,” he said, smiling. “I’m going to get you several really good bunches.” In a moment he returned, and handed me about 50 tuberose stalks bunched together. “Here, these will be perfect,” he said proudly.

I looked at the stalks he gave me, and tried to hide my disappointment. They looked just like the ones I always bought, each containing only a few opened blossoms, with the remainder of the buds tightly closed. The farmer must have seen the sad look on my face, because he asked me if there was a problem.

“I’m sorry to appear so ungrateful,” I answered. “It’s just that I was hoping for a better bunch with more opened flowers. These only have a
few blooms on them, and since I know the buds will never open, they
won’t be as fragrant as I wished.”

The Tuberose Man stared at me for a moment. Then he said, “You
don’t understand how tuberoses work, do you? Here, let me show you
their secret.”

He took one of the stalks from my hand and pointed to a bud. “See
this bud? It looks closed, but it’s actually ready to open. This little pink spot
on the top of the white bud means the top of the bud has softened. If you
just gently press on it like this, see . . . the blossom opens.”

I watched in delighted amazement as he delicately opened bud after
bud with his finger. My tuberoses were blooming before my eyes.

“They just need your attention, and a little help to open at the right
time,” he explained. “Then you’ll have many more blossoms. But you
have to be careful—if you press the buds too soon before they’re ready, they’re
not going to open, and in fact they will break off. So timing is everything, plus
remembering to always be gentle.”

By now, I was smiling so much that the Tuberose Man was encour-
gaged to continue his lesson. “Here’s another secret,” he said. “See these
little buds that look kind of brown and crusty? They’re draining energy
and nourishment from the stalk. You need to pinch off the old buds that
didn’t bloom so they stop draining the sap, and then the new buds can have
more nourishment and open.”

“I had no idea this is what I was supposed to do.”

“That’s why we have teachers in life,” he told me with a wink.
“Though I guess most people just think of me as a flower farmer. So, you
said you live here in town. You seem like a nice lady. May I ask what you
do for a living?”

I smiled back at him. “Well, since you ask, I’m a teacher,” I replied,
“and I guess you could say I am also a flower farmer. Except my flowers
are my students. And what you just taught me to do with the tuberoses
is exactly what I’ve been teaching people to do with themselves so that
they can blossom.”

“I’ll have to think more about that, but it sounds good,” the Tuberose
Man said.

I paid for my stalks and enthusiastically thanked the farmer. As I said
good-bye, I told him that from now on, I was going to share the wisdom
he’d taught me about making tuberoses bloom with all of my students, and write about it in my next book. And so I have, and so I did.

That day, I realized why I’d always loved tuberoses. I must have unconsciously sensed that they contained a powerful teaching about transformation.

Even the humble flower delights in being a teacher . . .

So we return to where we began, to our sacred questions:

*How do we rebirth ourselves? How do we move through our Divine Discomfort? How do we prepare ourselves to make our cosmic deliveries? How do we proceed more rapidly, not eventually but now, down the road toward our freedom? And once we are awake, what do we do to fully blossom?*

Tuberose wisdom offers us the answer. We need to pinch off the old, dry, stagnant parts of ourselves that are draining the energy and nourishment from our entire being. **Our intention to grow isn’t enough—we have to learn how to locate what is no longer serving us energetically,** those things sucking the nectar from the garden of our soul, and remove them. Then, we need to redirect that energy of the life force so that it can flow where it is needed, to those parts of us waiting for new nourishment in order to blossom.

At the same time that we’re letting go, we need to be helping ourselves open. We learn to look for those places that are ready to shift, just like the buds on the verge of blossoming. **Soul Shifts will teach us how to stare at what appear to be walls until we see the hidden doorways, how to gently push against those places ready to open, how to understand divine timing, and be on the lookout for the signs of a transformation in progress so that we can align ourselves with it, and bloom.**

**Wisdom is everywhere.**

**Opportunities for revelation are everywhere.**

**Soul Shifts can happen anywhere, if we are open to the wisdom that is waiting to reveal itself to us.**

The more we wake up, the more we will have the wondrous experience that everything and everyone is somehow mysteriously conspiring to cooperate with our ultimate awakening.
Stepping Over the Threshold

“Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself.”
— Attributed to Rumi

Whether on a metaphysical mountaintop in Sedona, a midnight drive on a Mumbai highway, a farmers’ market in Santa Barbara, or wherever you are right now, your Cosmic Curriculum is already waiting and ready for you. As you cross threshold after threshold on these pages, you will discover your own inner temple of wisdom, and arrive at the true destination of this Soul Shifts journey, which is nothing less than your own wholeness, fulfillment, and freedom.

Stepping over the threshold,
May all you know you are seeking,
and all that you don’t yet know you are seeking
Be waiting to joyfully greet you on the other side,
welcoming you back Home . . .