



Our Identity Crisis and a Solution: The One Mind

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The notion of a separate organism is clearly an abstraction, as is also its boundary. Underlying all this is unbroken wholeness even though our civilization has developed in such a way as to strongly emphasize the separation into parts.¹

~David Bohm and Basil J. Hiley, physicists

When we view ourselves in space and time, our consciousnesses are obviously the separate individuals of a particle-picture, but when we pass beyond space and time, they may perhaps form ingredients of a single continuous stream of life. As it is with light and electricity, so it may be with life; the phenomena may be individuals carrying on separate existences in space and time, while in the deeper reality beyond space and time we may be all members of one body.²

~Sir James Jeans, astrophysicist

There are no passengers on Space-ship Earth. We are all crew.³

~Marshall McLuhan, futurist

The most urgent issue we humans face is how we conceive ourselves—whether as individual, isolated, complex lumps of matter guided by the so-called blind, meaningless laws of nature, or as unified, interconnected creatures who, although physical, are also imbued with something more: consciousness, mind, will, choice, purpose, direction, meaning, and spirituality, that difficult-to-define quality that says we are connected with something that transcends our individual self and ego. Every decision we make is influenced by how we answer this great question: Who are we?⁴

The following discussion explores this important question. It is a composite of questions from scores of interviews—internet, radio, television—that followed the recent publication of my book *One Mind: How Our Individual*

*Mind Is Part of a Greater Consciousness and Why It Matters.*⁵ All these questions have been asked repeatedly by interviewers or call-in listeners. I have expanded many of my responses for reasons of clarity, but I've tried to keep the tone conversational. I have included only a few references to the scientific literature to keep distractions to a minimum. Hundreds of citations substantiating my views can be found in the book itself.

WHAT IS ONE MIND ABOUT?

It's about the nature of our mind, and how it has no limits. It's about how our minds are connected—how we all are literally of One Mind.

The One Mind includes all individual minds and their content—thoughts, emotions, feelings, and cognition. Over and beyond individual minds and the collective One Mind, however, is consciousness. Consciousness is the overarching principle in the universe that makes both individual and collective awareness possible.

Consciousness is like the light shining through a movie projector. The light itself has no specific content. Individual mind is analogous to the film and the images that are projected from it. It has recognizable content—"stuff," "things." Consciousness illuminates this mental stuff of the mind.

Consciousness is fundamental. It cannot be explained by, nor reduced to, anything more basic. It is not produced by the brain, but it works *through* the brain. In this process the brain modifies, restricts, and often distorts consciousness. One of the features of consciousness that is distorted by the brain is the collective nature of our mind. Our minds *feel* individual and personal, giving rise to our sense of an isolated self and ego. Our goal, I believe, must be to

experience consciousness and our collective One Mind without these distortions. There are various ways to do this, as we'll see.

Through many individual stories, experiences, and experiments, I show in *One Mind* that our mind is not confined to our brain or body, as we've been taught, but it extends infinitely outside them. Having no boundaries or limits, individual minds merge with all other minds: the One Mind.

The experience of the One Mind is not merely a philosophical or intellectual exercise. It involves a direct apprehension of the universe and all in it as being One, with no fundamental dividing lines or divisions. Everything is perceived as connected with everything else. Partition and separation are seen as illusions. This experience carries with it the sense that one has apprehended Truth, the way things really are, and is accompanied by a feeling of compassion and love—not only toward other humans, but toward all varieties of life.

So this book is about the size of our mind—whether it is small, medium, large, or infinite in extent—and why this is important for us as individuals and for our species' survival.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

People who tune in to the One Mind are more likely to be happier, healthier, wiser, and more creative. A sense of connectedness with all others and with all sentient life has been recognized throughout human history as a source of immense joy and fulfillment. Unity with others has always been a highly prized goal of the great wisdom traditions.

Although "time out" and "time alone" are important, abundant evidence shows that protracted, continual isolation is terrible for happiness, health and longevity. We are not designed to be alone.

This greater mind is nonlocal or boundless not just in space but also in time; therefore it is immortal and eternal. It is a cure for the greatest of all diseases: the fear of total annihilation with physical death.

The One Mind is also a rich source of creativity, because it constitutes an infinite pool of information that many great artists, poets, and scientists have learned to access throughout history.

HOW DO WE KNOW THE ONE MIND EXISTS?

There are two main ways. First, people have *experiences* in which minds interact and share information at great distances and outside the present. They could not do this if minds were isolated; they *must* be united and connected for these experiences to occur. Second, there are thousands of actual *experiments* that confirm these interactions. Therefore, *experience* and *experiments* show that our minds are connected in ways that transcend separateness.

During the 20th century, we took the mind apart. It's time to put it back together.

We've been taught that our mind is fragmented and divided into the conscious, the pre-conscious, the sub-conscious, the unconscious, the superego, ego, id, and so on. *One Mind* looks through the other end of the telescope. It shows that our individual minds are part of a greater whole, a dimension of consciousness that encompasses all minds—past, present, and future.

This realization may be our best hope for our survival on Earth. Only by realizing, at the deepest level, our connections with one another and the Earth itself can we summon the courage to make the tough choices that are required in order to survive. So this book is about staying alive—preserving the environment and saving our own skins in the process.

Alice Walker, the novelist, said, “Anything we love can be saved”—including ourselves, our children, generations yet unborn, and the environment itself. The One Mind helps us re-sacralize the world, to see it as sacred. When we sense our intrinsic unity with one another, we can upgrade the Golden Rule from its

customary expression, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” to “Be kind to others because in some sense they *are* you.”

Hints of the One Mind are all around us. For example, the love of a mother for her baby is a study in oneness, in which boundaries and isolation are overcome.

Anyone who has been deeply in love experiences the same thing: a fusion of two people in which the concept of “the other” is set aside.

We *yearn* for unity with one another. The recent explosion of interest in genealogy, the study of one's family origins, can be seen as a hunger for oneness expressed through the attempt to restore historic connections.

Consider the popularity of “flash mobs,” which did not exist until recently, in which groups of people appear to emerge spontaneously to perform, sing, and dance in unison, evoking happiness and delight in the crowds around them. Flash mobs are a kind of celebration of unity and connectedness between people of all strata and cultures.

The emergence of the crowd-funding phenomenon reflects the same instinct—the coming together of a great many people to finance a worthwhile project.

There's strong evidence from hundreds of experiments, as mentioned, in which people exchange thoughts, emotions, and even physical changes at a distance. This is particularly common between people who are emotionally close. The classic example is a mother who “just knows” that her child is in danger, even though far away and beyond the reach of the physical senses, as if the mother and child have a common mind.

Similar experiences occur between distant identical twins. These are called telesomatic events. They may involve the simultaneous sharing of not only emotions, but actual physical changes as well.

Another example is creativity, in which people often acquire knowledge of things in ways that are inexplicable. For example, the great inventor Thomas Edison said, “I have never created anything. I get impressions from the Universe at large and work them out Thoughts come from the outside.”

Savants are a related example. Although they are often profoundly

mentally handicapped, cannot read, and are incapable of conventional learning, they demonstrate detailed information they could not possibly have acquired through ordinary means. Where does this information come from? I suggest they connect with a reservoir of wisdom that is the One Mind, and “download” information in ways we do not yet understand.

People frequently have detailed dreams of future events, to which I devoted an entire book, *The Power of Premonitions*.⁶ Premonitions involve mind functioning outside the present, without temporal boundaries. This is a frequent feature of minds that are spatially united.

Near-death experiences are also a portal to the One Mind. Around 15 million Americans have experienced an NDE. The hallmark of the experience is a sense of joyful oneness with all there is—an awareness that is so profound that their life is transformed following recovery.

HOW SOLID IS THE EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE FOR THE ONE MIND?

There are six areas in consciousness research in which studies have been replicated in labs around the world, each area giving odds against chance of around a billion to one, or combined odds against chance of 10^{54} to one^{7,8}:

- Remote viewing
- Random number generator influence
- Global Consciousness Project
- Presentiment
- Precognition
- Ganzfeld

WHERE DID YOU COME UP WITH THIS IDEA?

The concept of the One Mind has been around for a long time. We can trace this concept back 3000 years to the philosophy of ancient India, where it was called the Akashic Records. Plato recognized this idea, saying, “[H]uman nature was originally One and we were a whole.” It is echoed in the Hindu concept of the union of the human and the divine: *tat tvam asi* or “thou art that.” The experience of the One Mind in Zen is called *satori*. In the tradition of Yoga,

it's called *samadhi*. In Sufism, it's known as *fana*. In Christianity, it has been called *Christ consciousness*. Other terms include cosmic consciousness, illumination, awakening, enlightenment, and so on.

There are allusions to this perception in the New Testament, as when St. Paul spoke of "the peace of God that passes all understanding." And as mythologist Joseph Campbell put it, Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven is within. Who is in heaven? God. This means, Campbell said, that God is within each person— infinite, boundless, immortal, and one.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, the American transcendentalist philosopher, called the One-Mind concept the Over-Soul. William James, the founder of American psychology, was a proponent of a collective, unitary mind. Carl Jung, the Swiss psychologist, called the One Mind the collective unconscious.

Many great scientists in a variety of fields have endorsed the idea. It has surfaced in modern physics in the writings of Nobel Prize winner Erwin Schrödinger, whose wave equations lie at the heart of quantum physics. The eminent physicist David Bohm also strongly supported the idea of a single, over-arching mind that includes all individual minds. So too did ecologist Gregory Bateson, as well as many other outstanding scientists. Countless numbers of creative artists and poets have also endorsed the idea.

IF THE IDEA OF THE ONE MIND IS BOTH ANCIENT AND CURRENT, WHY DO WE NEED ANOTHER BOOK ABOUT IT?

Up to now, the concept of the One Mind has rested mainly in philosophy, spiritual insights, and reports of people's personal experiences. Not anymore! We have an abundance of empirical evidence pointing to the One Mind. But the evidence is little known. We therefore need an update of the One Mind, in which we bring together the numerous threads of evidence for the idea.

HOW DID YOU BECOME INTERESTED IN THE ONE MIND?

I have had several experiences suggesting that my mind, my consciousness, my awareness are not limited to my

individual brain and body or the present. I'm not unique; millions of individuals routinely have similar experiences, but are reluctant to talk about them. There's a social stigma in talking about them publicly.

Early in my practice of internal medicine I had a series of precognitive dreams, dreams of future events that proved true in great detail. My patients related similar experiences to me. So did nurses. After I began to write about these events, my medical colleagues eventually began to open up and share their own experiences. An example is an internist who reported that she dreams the specific values of her patients' lab tests— before she even orders the tests.

During my early years as a physician, I stumbled across actual experiments affirming the idea of linked, unified minds. This was rather shocking, as this evidence never came up during my entire educational experience, from university days through post-graduate medical training. I began to consider this one of the best-kept secrets in modern medicine.

I was delighted to discover that first-rate individuals—some of our greatest scientists and philosophers—have come to the same conclusion I reached: that there is a collective domain of consciousness that is a kind of umbrella for all individual minds.

BUT THERE'S A HUGE PROBLEM, ISN'T THERE? CURRENTLY, BRAIN SCIENCE AS WELL AS PSYCHOLOGY DOESN'T AGREE WITH YOU ABOUT THE ONE MIND

It is not quite right to say that most scientists don't agree. For the most part, they simply ignore the entire issue and don't look at the evidence.

An increasing number of leading scientists and psychologists support this idea. For instance, one survey found that a *majority* of academic scientists believe that extrasensory perception or ESP has already been proved or is likely to be proved. ESP is an expression of minds without boundaries in space and time. It is a natural, short step from ESP to the unbounded, unitary One Mind. ESP is one way the One Mind manifests in our lives.

THERE ARE SEVERAL SECTIONS IN YOUR BOOK ABOUT ANIMALS. ARE THEY PART OF THE ONE MIND?

Yes. Several experiments show that we can interact mentally with animals at a distance, beyond the reach of the physical senses. An example is British biologist Rupert Sheldrake, whose experiments with dogs show that when their owners are returning home from a distant location the animal begins to perk up, apparently through a link of distant awareness between the human and the animal.

Many other creatures demonstrate an ability to process information at a distance. Many ethologists, experts in animal behavior, have marveled at the way groups of animals—herds of animals, flocks of birds, schools of fish—demonstrate coordinated group behavior that is very difficult to explain without invoking a kind of collective mind operating simultaneously between all the members of the group. Ordinary sensory communication via sight and hearing just doesn't add up.

YOU'RE A PHYSICIAN. DOES THIS HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH YOUR INTEREST IN THE ONE MIND?

During my early career as an internist, I experienced several events that turned my views of consciousness upside down. I found these experiences unnerving.

I was a typical believer that mind and brain were essentially the same. But when I began experiencing precognitive dreams, as mentioned, gaining information from the future before the event happened, I began to question the dogma that says these events are not possible. It wasn't just I; my patients, as well as nurses and other doctors, shared similar experiences with me.

In the late 1980s, experiments began to be published in medical journals assessing the impact of healing intentions and prayers on the clinical course of patients in distant hospitals and coronary care units. Similar experiments have been done in non-humans and with organs and cells. These experiments strongly imply that our mind is not confined to our brain. Our intentions, thoughts, and wishes can reach beyond the body and make a difference in "the world out there."

Several evaluations of this field called systematic or meta-analyses have been published. This is a way of combining the results of many studies in order to obtain an overall look at a particular field. These analyses have been published in peer-reviewed journals. Most of them are positive, strongly indicating that these effects are real. Still, they have not penetrated our awareness as they should.^{9,10}

It is vital to realize—and this is almost always ignored by skeptics—that scores of these experiments deal with effects not just in humans but in animals, plants, microbes, and even chemical reactions. Why is this important? Skeptics generally say that if a person responds to, say, the healing intentions of a distant individual, this is due to chance or is merely a placebo effect—the result of positive thinking, suggestion, or expectation. But if an animal, plant, microbes, or biochemical reactions are affected, the distant effect cannot be easily dismissed as a placebo effect because, as far as we know, animals, plants, microbes, and chemicals don't think positively—or if they do, as some evidence in higher animals suggests, these effects are not as widespread as in humans. So these non-human studies strongly suggest that the remote, distant, consciousness-mediated healing effects and similar nonlocal phenomena are real, and that we are not fooling ourselves.

These various experiments point toward the One Mind. They show that some aspect of our consciousness operates outside the human brain and body, and cannot be confined or limited, but is nonlocal or *limitless*. And if *limitless*, the mind has no boundaries and must, in some sense, come together with all other minds.

Other studies called “presentiment” experiments, or experiments in “anticipatory awareness,” show that we can acquire information from the future before an event happens. Presentiment experiments, pioneered by researcher Dean Radin, have been replicated in scores of experiments by researchers around the world. The odds against a chance explanation of these findings are millions against one, as noted.¹¹

Putting this evidence together, a *non-local* picture of consciousness emerges, which means that our minds are not localized or confined to particular points in space or time. And if our minds are unbounded, they must in

some dimension come together to form a single mind, a single entity: the One Mind.

THIS SOUNDS PRETTY RADICAL, DON'T YOU THINK?

I used to think so, but not anymore.

New ideas in science, art, music, math, education, etc. often sound radical and can be rejected automatically when introduced. This is especially true where consciousness is concerned. As one skeptical scientist said about the evidence for nonlocal, unbounded consciousness, “This is the sort of thing I would not believe, even if it really happened.”

Physicist Max Planck, the main founder of quantum physics, faced this resistance. He said that the older generation of scientists would die off, and younger, more open-minded individuals would take their place. Planck's view has been paraphrased as “science changes funeral by funeral.”

Radical change in any field is nearly always resisted. Think of the resistance to modern art. It is still easier for most people to like Michelangelo and Rembrandt than Picasso or Jackson Pollock. It's the same way in science.

But new views of consciousness have continually arisen historically. In the 20th century we saw a flurry of new ideas about consciousness—the unconscious, the pre-conscious, the sub-conscious, and the collective unconscious. The One Mind is a version of the collective unconscious, which was glimpsed by psychologists Carl Jung and William James and many others. But we have something Jung and James did not have; we have a great deal of empirical evidence supporting the idea.

YOU BEGIN YOUR BOOK WITH THE STORY OF WESLEY AUTREY, AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN CONSTRUCTION WORKER WHO SAVED THE LIFE OF A YOUNG WHITE MAN FROM CERTAIN DEATH IN THE NEW YORK SUBWAY. WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH THE ONE MIND?

Wesley Autrey, 50, a black construction worker and Navy veteran, saw a young man fall onto the subway tracks in

Manhattan while having a seizure in January 2007. He instantly jumped onto the tracks and tried to lift him onto the platform, but could not do so in time. As a train approached, Autrey shoved him into the depression between the rails and covered him with his own body. The train could not stop in time and several cars passed over the two men before it could be brought to a halt. Autrey was nearly beheaded; he had grease stains from the train's undercarriage on his cap.

... AND THE ONE MIND?

The reasoning goes back to my experience as a field battalion surgeon in the boonies in Vietnam in 1968–1969, where I was involved in an experience similar to Autrey's, which I describe in the book. Briefly, I rescued a pilot from his crashed helicopter with the help of one of my medics, when everyone believed it would explode. Fortunately it did not. I experienced other similar events in Vietnam.

I was disturbed and confused by these happenings. Before going to Vietnam I had sworn that I would *never* take unnecessary chances. When I found myself violating this resolution repeatedly, I began to doubt my sanity.

Why would I, or anyone else, risk his or her life to save a perfect stranger? It goes against the premise of evolutionary biology, which maintains that our most basic drive is to preserve our genes or those of our close kin, but not risk our life for total strangers.

On returning to the US, I eventually came across an explanation by the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, described by mythologist Joseph Campbell. Schopenhauer believed that at the decisive moment the rescuer identifies so completely with the rescued person that their minds have literally fused; they have become a single mind. Their mental union is so complete that the rescuer is not rescuing someone else, he is essentially rescuing himself. I felt deeply that this description explained my own experiences in Vietnam.

In researching my book, I collected a number of life-saving stories. They are not just human-to-human events, but they also involve humans rescuing animals, animals rescuing humans, and

animals rescuing animals—every possible combination.

So what is going on? What's the pattern? I think Schopenhauer nailed it: there is a fusion of apparently separate, individual minds into a single, collective consciousness. In these instances something larger than individuality takes hold; the One Mind is bridging and uniting individual minds, pushing separation aside in favor of unity and oneness. "Courage" or "valor" is what we call it later—concepts based in individuality and separateness.

YOU SAY THAT THE ONE MIND IS CRUCIAL IN CONFRONTING THE GREAT CHALLENGES WE HUMANS FACE. WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

Our problems are enormous: global climate change, environmental pollution, overpopulation, water scarcity, hunger and food insecurity, endless wars, religious strife, degradation and acidification of our oceans, on and on. Nearly all these problems are caused by individuals who represent a particular culture, race, tribe, country, or religion, who are competing with other individuals who hold different views: "the other." We cannot see beyond our individual self, our tribe, our religion, our political party, our culture. All of these problems are compounded by greed and selfishness. Put another way: we are fragmented, and we are destroying our planet's life-support systems.

The fundamental cause of these problems is that we have an identity crisis. We have forgotten who we are. The "cult of the individual"—I, me, mine—overrides our awareness of wholeness, unity, and membership in the shared community of life, not just human life but the entire biome. Our illusion of the separate ego and self blinds us to the interdependence of all things.

The message from modern science that we are merely mortal, local creatures who are completely annihilated with physical death is part of the problem. Having no long-term vision, and blind to our nonlocal, immortal nature, we are driven to a pathological acquisitiveness in this life: "get it while you can" because "you can't take it with you." If this insane level of consumerism continues to spread, it may be the death knell of

our civilization. As Emerson put it, "The end of the human race will be that it will eventually die of civilization."

It is going to be difficult to confront these problems intelligently without dealing with our fragmentation and sense of separateness. We need a profound shift in our sense of how we are related to one another. I believe this is possible by re-imagining how we connect with others through consciousness. The "us-against-them" competitive model is not going to see us through. A shift to a One-Mind perspective may be our best alternative—a sense of unity that is experienced at our deepest psychological levels, and which makes a difference in our behaviors.

A dramatic example of this shift is the "Overview Effect" experienced by astronauts and cosmonauts returning to Earth. Many of them sense profoundly that our planet is an integral whole. They feel deeply that the Earth's customary borders are not fundamental. Our disagreements and divisions are seen as petty, arbitrary, and utterly misleading. This shift in perception can be life-changing. An example is Edgar Mitchell, the lunar module pilot of Apollo 14 and the sixth man to walk on the moon. On returning he established IONS, the Institute of Noetic Sciences, to explore this integral way of knowing.

If we genuinely believe we are of One Mind with all others, our existential premises shift. Our resentment and loathing of "the other" diminish. Not only is our attitude toward other humans transformed, but our regard for the Earth and all its creatures as well.

OK, THE ONE MIND IS IMPORTANT. HOW DO WE ACCESS IT?

Good news! It's easier than you think.

Almost certainly, *you already know the One Mind, but you don't know that you know!* We've forgotten this knowing, and our goal is to re-awaken to it. Our membership in the One Mind already exists; we're already a part of it. It is not something we have to engineer, acquire, or generate. We just have to become aware of it. This process always means turning off the rational mind, so that our unconscious wisdom can bubble up into our awareness.

Most people who come to this realization don't have a dazzling, spectacular experience. They simply grow gradually into the realization of connectedness. This is a natural process, a part of our psychological and spiritual maturation. It is the result of staying alive, growing older, and paying attention. Without realizing that it is happening, a One-Mind awareness becomes part of who we are.

Some people are born with this awareness—advanced souls who come into life knowing their larger connections.

Unexpected events can pave the way. We can spontaneously experience an epiphany—a sudden, unexpected jolt that reveals how we fit in, accompanied by an expanded sense of joy, meaning, and purpose in life. Many people have described this expanded awareness following a near-death experience—15 million Americans, according to a recent survey.

People may also experience a powerful telepathic, clairvoyant, or precognitive event that demonstrates they are more than their brain, and that their consciousness can operate outside the here and now. These happenings often involve an uplifting sense of having touched what is real.

We can invite this awareness through meditation or some other contemplative type of spiritual practice, in which we learn to set our ego and sense of self aside and permit a larger, more expansive awareness to emerge from our unconscious mind.

Peak experiences, such as being "in the zone" in athletics—you can't miss on the basketball court, or you have the perfect downhill run while skiing, etc.—are ways of experiencing oneness and being in synch with all there is.

Exposure to the beauty of nature and wild places has been important for me—a kind of short-cut to what matters in life. For decades, my wife and I have spent weeks camping in wilderness each year, removed from civilization. This has become a pilgrimage of sorts, a retreat from the distractions and noise of daily life.

All these processes have this in common: the dominant sense of self and ego is transcended in favor of an expanded notion of who we are.

Every section in the book is an example of how we can become aware of our participation in the One Mind. For

instance, the chapter “Dream Pathways” reveals how people often enter this awareness through detailed dreams of far-off or future events, which jolts them into realizing that their consciousness is not stuck in their brain or the present. The chapter “Telesomatic Events,” in which people share similar physical symptoms and feelings with a distant person, is also a doorway to One-Mind awareness. Sections on children who remember previous lives is another, as well as the chapters on remote viewing, near-death experiences, shared death experiences, communication with the deceased, presentiment effects, and so on throughout the entire book.

But when all is said and done, you don't have to *do* anything to experience the One Mind. More often it “does” us; we don't “do” it.

Still, there are ways in which we can set the stage for realizing the One Mind.

One of the most effective is doing something for others. Helping others through my practice of internal medicine has been for me a path of service. Mentoring has served the same purpose. Writing books has been a similar path—a way of sharing, of giving, of “paying it forward.”

For many, the simple retreat into silence works best: turn off your smartphone, sit down, be quiet, and pay attention. To what? To whatever comes through. Whether we call this process meditation, contemplation, or simply getting quiet, the point is to turn down the chatter that crowds out everything else in our waking life. You may be surprised to discover what you *already* know.

The Four Rules of Life, elaborated by author and cultural anthropologist Angeles Arrien, are helpful: (1) Show up, (2) Pay attention, (3) Tell the truth, and (4) Don't be attached to results.

Mary Oliver, the Pulitzer-winning poet, also emphasized the importance of paying attention. She wrote, “Instructions for living a life: Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it.”¹²

Here's what novelist Aldous Huxley said about this task:

Understanding is not inherited, nor can it be laboriously acquired. It is something which, when circumstances are favorable, comes to us,

so to say, of its own accord. All of us are knowers, all the time; it is only occasionally and in spite of ourselves that we directly understand the mystery of given reality.¹³

The Law of Reversed Effort applies here: the harder we try, the more it eludes us. So set an intention, open up, invite wisdom to enter, and go with the flow.

But paradox reigns, because this is not as passive as it might seem. As the saying goes, “God's wind is always blowing, but first you must raise your sails.”

In accessing the One Mind, there are many ways, not one way. Here's a brief summary of how this access may happen:

- having this awareness at birth
- the practice of a contemplative/meditative tradition
- a sudden, spontaneous epiphany or profound religious experience
- a near-death experience
- an experience of expanded consciousness—a precognitive dream, telepathy/clairvoyance, etc.
- exposure to great beauty through art, music, nature
- most commonly, a gradual process of psychological maturation, “growing into” spirituality

WHY IS IT SO DIFFICULT TO BE AWARE OF THE REALITY OF THE ONE MIND?

We are victims of a collective hypnosis, a cultural trance that has convinced us that the One Mind cannot possibly be real. Our culture is obsessed with the importance of the individual—pulling ourselves up by our own bootstraps. This has an isolating effect because it obscures the ways in which we are connected with everyone and everything.

Moreover, we are wired biologically to focus on our separateness and individuality—the survival of *my* genes or those of my kin. This makes it difficult to acknowledge our unity with one another.

This is ironic, because the ways in which we encounter the One Mind are so numerous and varied that it is quite easy to be aware of our membership in it—but only if we can break the trance. So our goal is to overcome our identity

crisis—to break the hypnotic spell of the cult of the individual.

We should not disparage individuality, however, but recognize that a coin has two sides. Our task is to honor *both* sides of the coin—our individuality *and* our unity. Healthy individuality is important in developing a sense of personhood. So it's not that individuality is bad, but that it is limited. For many, individuality and the self have become tyrannical. Thus Ravi Ravindra, the physicist and theologian, asserts that we should strive not for freedom *for* our self, but freedom *from* our self.

BUT DOESN'T THIS RISK LOSING OUR SENSE OF SELF AND BEING SWALLOWED UP IN THE ONE MIND?

I'm not advocating totally abandoning our sense of individuality and self. I emphasize the need for a *dual* identity that honors *both* our individuality as well as our collective unity with one another in the One Mind.

This is an example of what physicist Niels Bohr called *complementarity*—the coming together of apparent opposites to produce a more accurate picture of the whole.

There is a saying in the field of transpersonal psychology: “In order to transcend the ego, you must first *have* one. In order to go beyond the self, you must first *be* one.”

It's also a paradox—“truth standing on her head to attract attention,” as Chesterton said. It's like men having a feminine side, and women having a masculine side. That's a healthy complementarity and a paradox. Problems arise when one side is ignored.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SECTION IN ONE MIND?

It's probably the section on twins. I am an identical twin, and my twin brother and I have had One-Mind experiences all our life that we simply call “twin stuff.” I'm also married to a twin; Barbara and her fraternal twin have had similar experiences. This is an area where the One Mind really gets personal for me.

Around 30% of identical twins report vivid experiences in which they simultaneously and at a distance have the same

thoughts and even the same physical symptoms as their twin—so-called “tele-somatic events,” as mentioned. This is some of the most dramatic evidence that we are connected through space and time at the level of consciousness.

WHAT'S THE MOST FAR-OUT STUFF IN ONE MIND?

I used to think the whole premise of the One Mind is far out, but no longer. Now I think it is ordinary and ho-hum.

The problem, as mentioned, is that we have become practically hypnotized culturally to think that we are isolated individuals, connected with each other only through our see-touch-hear-feel senses. We're taught that our mind is locked into our brain; it doesn't go wandering through space and time to unite with other minds.

Actually, *that's* the far-out view. It's far out because evidence shows it isn't true. The *ordinary* situation is One-Mind unity and connectedness. We've turned reality upside down.

Once we get comfortable with the basic idea and open up to the myriad ways in which our unity reveals itself, we'll wonder how we could ever have swallowed the conventional view that we're individuals isolated in a sea of others.

YOU'RE WRITTEN EXTENSIVELY IN PREVIOUS BOOKS ABOUT HEALING AND SPIRITUALITY. WHAT'S THEIR CONNECTION WITH THE ONE MIND?

The healing experiments I've previously written about are entry points to the One Mind.¹⁴ They reveal that our compassionate intentions matter. They can influence what happens “out there,” at a distance. These studies reveal a *nonlocal* feature of our consciousness—that it can function outside the brain remotely to change the state of the physical world, in this instance the clinical condition of someone in need. Healing experiments reveal an unbounded, unlimited side of the mind.

THIS SOUNDS BLASPHEMOUS: HUMANS BECOMING GOD

Not really. The evidence does show that we possess qualities via the One Mind

that we have traditionally attributed to the Divine, such as infinitude in space and time. That's not the same as being God.

A metaphor that helps clarify this relationship is that of a drop of water or a wave within the larger ocean. The single drop of ocean water or the wave has essentially the same composition as the ocean itself, but it is profoundly different in terms of power, quantity and significance. It's the same, but different. Just so, the relationship of the human and the Absolute or Divine.

YOU MENTION CREATIVITY OFTEN IN ONE MIND. WHAT'S THE CONNECTION?

The connection is profound. Many people who have experienced the *Abhaa!* moment of any creative breakthrough often have an epiphany in which they sense a oneness will all there is.

The literature on creativity shows that creative breakthroughs often occur out of the blue, with little connection with logic or analysis. This happens in all areas—science, art, music, mathematics, etc. The creator, inventor, or artist often feels connected with something outside herself—a source of awareness that is far greater than one's individual mind.

I've already mentioned Thomas Edison, America's great inventor. To reiterate, he said, “People say I have created things. I have never created anything. I get impressions from the Universe at large and work them out, but I am only a plate on a record or a receiving apparatus—what you will. Thoughts are really impressions that we get from outside.”¹⁵

The eminent German physicist and philosopher Baron Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker agreed: “[In any great discovery] we find the often disturbing and happy experience: ‘It is not I; I have not done this.’ Still, in a certain way it is I—yet not the ego ... but ... a more comprehensive self.”

Edison's “impressions from the Universe at large” and von Weizsäcker's “more comprehensive self” point to the One Mind, an infinite source of wisdom and information.

IT'S THE INTERNET AGE. THERE ARE AN ESTIMATED SIX BILLION CELL PHONES ON EARTH, ALMOST ONE PER PERSON. PEOPLE ARE MORE CONNECTED THAN EVER BEFORE. WHY ARE YOU EMPHASIZING CONNECTEDNESS AND UNITY THROUGH THE ONE MIND? AREN'T WE CONNECTED ALREADY?

I'm talking about a different kind of connectedness—not the electronic, digital kind.

There is evidence that the more time young people spend on personal electronic devices, the *more* lonely they feel. A sense of desperation is often involved when people spend hours a day online; they crave connection but, not finding it, they increase the dose, like a drug addict.

Internet addiction has become a fact. “Internet rescue camps” now exist in some countries to wean people from this obsessive behavior.

Of course, electronic connectivity can be quite wonderful, but it can also be a faux unity that offers more than it can deliver. It does not convey the sort of psycho-spiritual satisfaction that comes with One-Mind awareness—the joy, fulfillment, and empowerment that come from the discovery of one's inner divinity and membership in the community of consciousness that is our birthright.

WHAT DIFFERENCE IN YOUR OWN LIFE HAS AWARENESS OF THE ONE MIND MADE?

Awareness of the One Mind has contributed enormously to my tranquility, joy and creativity.

I'm an introvert by nature, inclined toward aloneness. Awareness of my place in the One Mind has helped me overcome my innate tendency for isolation. I feel I've found a more authentic place in the Universe. It's rather like coming home and realizing that you never left. It's a sense of belonging, of finding your natural fit in the great scheme of things. It's a sense of rightness, of being in the groove.

The great human dread of death is diminished. As a physician, this is important to me, because I believe the fear of death and annihilation has caused more suffering throughout

human history than all the physical diseases combined. The One Mind reduces this fear and the suffering that goes with it. Why? The One Mind *mandates* immortality by way of our *infinitude* in space and time.

One-Mind awareness has affected the way I relate to other people. I've become much less competitive, more giving, more supportive, more understanding of other people's difficulties and problems, and more interactive with others. (I still have a long way to go!)

One-Mind awareness helps me see how I can make a difference. In today's world we can feel overwhelmed by the challenges we face. What difference can my efforts as a single individual possibly make? The One Mind increases our sense of adequacy and what is possible, because through it we have access to all wisdom and knowledge, and we can act in concert with others. We realize we don't need to know and do everything individually, because we are a part of the Great Connect. We are *never* alone. We are an infinite team, not a lone wolf. The pressure eases. A lightness of mind and spirit arises, and perhaps a sense of humor. Now *that* is different!

Let me leave you with a few lines of poetry that captures the One Mind from Hafiz, the 14th-century Persian poet:¹⁶

Let's go deeper,
Go deeper.
For, if we do,
Our spirits will embrace
And interweave.

Our union will be so glorious
That even God
Will not be able to tell us apart

Larry Dossey, MD
—Executive Editor

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