

## ***The Worlds Inside You***

Chi is the sum of the energetic frequencies that run through your body.

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“Your family will appreciate that the more Chi-full you are, the more cheerful you are.”

— **Kenneth S. Cohen**, Qigong Grandmaster

There are things we can think about and there are things we can't. Awareness is an outpost at the boundary, something like a monastery in which we study our reflection. Life forms seem to drift toward greater awareness, but the force behind this is unclear.

Studying one's reflection is fairly safe. It doesn't compel you to see or act and it has few repercussions. It might lead to insight and action, but that becomes a choice. Self-study is vague and intangible. It offers no guarantee that you'll learn anything.

There are other ways to encounter yourself that are more compelling, that require more of you and have greater returns. Some of these are sex, addiction, illness, depression, mania, service, sacrifice, and

exploration. There are others I ponder but have not tried, and which may also offer paths to some kind of enlightenment such as war, violence, and insanity. Anything that takes things apart gets some credit for the subsequent putting of things back together, but neither redemption nor reassembly is guaranteed.

It appears to me—from watching others and from my own experience—that there is no single path to full awareness. But more than that, no one path is sufficient. One needs to follow several paths and gain overall views from several vantage points. There is more to become aware of than any one personality can express.

To stretch the idea to its limit, there is no one personality from which the full scope of one's awareness can be seen. At least, not within what we view as the scope of personality.

You either live to pursue many paths, or your path traverses many lives. In this respect the Buddhist notion of reincarnation makes sense as full awareness requires seeing the world in a way that includes the perspectives of many people.

It is the integration of opposites that constitutes advancement. Advancement is a process of inclusion, growth, and greater control that is much different from evolution. Advancement is a state of greater balance, one which brings together more cycles, more energy, and larger rhythms. In contrast, evolution is simply the process of moving to the next step up, down, or sideways.



## Personal Awareness

It does seem that many people cannot stretch themselves enough to see their own reflection. Most people seem averse to recognizing their ignorance. I can't deny it is a painful process, and one for which one is usually punished.

That punishment comes from within the project, employment, or society that is averse to growth. Anyone who reveals the fallacy of what others believe will likely be struck by the double edged sword of rejection and dislocation. This is why few people are aware and strenuously resist any effort to make them so. And it is tragic—though it is natural—that the more knowledge you have, the more unaware you are encouraged to become. The true prophets always seem to reside at the unstable frontier.

You can do something about this for your own good. You can engage in active self-reflection. This is self-reflection that leads to change and, to do it, you must let go of some preconceptions.

Readers of my book *Becoming Lucid, Self-awareness in Sleeping & Waking Life*, explore the reality of our projections. These are the fundamental images we construct of what exists and on top of which we build our ideas. Disassembling this reality is a good place to start if you hope to find new understanding, but your mind is not your only source of reality; your body is another.



## **Tai Chi and Chi Kung (Qigong)**

These two traditions are seen as movement arts, and they are that, but they are also arts of awareness. Tai Chi is mostly known as a set of movements that follow a strict order. That order is both a physical series, a series of stories, and a set of spiritual precepts. Most people who practice Tai Chi focus on it as a physical discipline and let its spiritual aspects arise as they will.

Chi Kung places a greater emphasis on energy in the body. It advances the idea that energy governs form. Where Tai Chi teaches that energy follows the form, Chi Kung insists that energy gives life to movement. I have always felt the two traditions are paths to the same destination. Tai Chi for the morning when movement emerges, and Chi Kung for the evening when movement goes inward.

Both traditions require you to release your mind and move into a larger awareness. It is hard to describe this awareness because descriptions are in the mind and of the world, while awareness is of the mind and in the world. Awareness is what descriptions represent. We can talk about greater awareness but the talk does not make it real. Awareness is an experience, like sight or emotion.

I am working on a book on interoception, the ability to sense your internal functions. At the moment, the book is in pieces. It exists on my website as blog posts and hypnotic audios. The book, to be made from these parts, will be an exploration of what you can sense by focusing on your internal physical self.

## **Energy and Mechanism**

Most Western medical specialists today believe that your mind cannot communicate with the organs and processes of your body. They believe your body is autonomic, that it governs itself, and that your mind exists in a separate world of thoughts. They believe the only connection from the body to the

mind is through sensations of pain or pleasure. For these people, the body is a machine and the mind plays no role in its operation.

This is not the case. The mind and body effect each other through the endocrine, neurological, immune systems, and the gut, but these connections are neither obvious nor straight forward. I believe the connections go far beyond these mechanical avenues to a level where aspects of mind actually inhabit our tissues.

I have little interest in arguing the point. It rests largely levels of awareness that some of us don't have, rather than a deductive conclusion. Eastern healing traditions, which include Tai Chi and Chi Kung, strive to integrate mind and body. They accept the fundamental concept of Chi, or body energy, which is dismissed in the Western tradition.

The Eastern approach to the Western rejection of Chi and the disconnection of our parts is simply to ignore what is ignorant. I am inclined to do the same. I realize that this fails to achieve the kind of integration we need, but sometimes there is more to gain by moving forward than by argument.



## **The Body's Awareness**

A chapter of my book on interoception will foster awareness of one's Chi. You might argue this should be the first chapter, but you could also say that learning to sense, follow, and direct your internal life force is the final goal. I will consider it here.

Controlling Chi is part sensation and part imagination. We take sensations as real and what we imagine as fantasy, but this is a mistake. Sensations are as much a creation of our mind as any other image, and the images that we create in our mind can play as fundamental a role in our reality as any sensation.

Let's just say that all sensations are a product of our imagination, and every sensation must be imagined in order for it to become real.

The ultimate goal is to be able to focus on any and every part of your body whether or not you know what sensations are produced by it. We must start by recognizing that most people have almost no awareness of any part of their body. In fact, unless they're athletic, most people in the West don't even know what it means to have body awareness.



## **Between the Hands**

If you're standing up, sit down. And if you're sitting down, then drop whatever you're holding and relax. Focus on one part of your body. You could choose anything, and after we're finished here I hope you will choose various different parts of your body. For now, focus on your hands. We'll do two exercises.

First, with your hands resting palms down, place your focus on the backs of your hands. Let your sensations guide you. Maybe you have sensations in your wrists or your fingertips. Don't stress or flex your hands but you can look at them. Telescope into the backs of your hands with a tunnel vision that shuts out everything else.

The backs of your hands are aware of temperature. There are tissues and veins and there are many tendons that run over your knuckles and attach to your finger bones. These tendons gather together as they pass through your wrists and attach to muscles in your forearms. Simply attend to the feeling in the back of your hands.

Imagine there is an energy that flows through the backs of your hands. It has a sensation that you are not accustomed to, but which is always there. Imagine it as a dark violet color, as if it radiates a black light that's partly heat but more than heat because it flows.

Imagine a pool in an otherwise dry riverbed fed by the stream that flows beneath the gravel. This energy, in the backs of your hands, is like the underground water that flows up from your wrists, across the surface of your hands, and back into your knuckles.

Feel the energy at the surface of your hands partly carried by the blood, but it's not a liquid and cannot bleed. It's a coordination between all the cells in your hands, a kind of communication that has a rhythm. A frequency you can imagine as something pulsing gently, but also with fast ripples. Like the ripples on a stream that twists over and around large boulders. A flow of white noise, like the noise in your ears that first you hear and then goes away.

Now take a slow breath and feel your chest lift... and your shoulders lift... and feel the breath in your arms, down into your hands like a wave that rides up the beach and then sinks into the sand as the sea rolls back.

Turn your palms facing each other and bring them toward each other just to the point where each hand senses the other, or separate them so they're just where you feel something between them. Your palms are two to six inches apart and you feel a warmth, a tingle, or a field; something that you can pass your hands through.

Focus on the space between your palms and sense it as a gas or a vapor. It has a form and a boundary. It's something created by your hands that forms more strongly when your hands come closer and begins to dissipate as you move your hands apart. Take a breath... and as you inhale imagine this ball of energy between your hands growing in form and substance, and as you exhale feel it losing its color and becoming transparent.

With small motions of your hands, slight and almost imperceptible, sense the size and substance of this energy between your palms. Let the energy swell with the inhale and ebb with the exhale. Feel the energy within your hands, between your hands, created by your hands, and surrounding your hands.

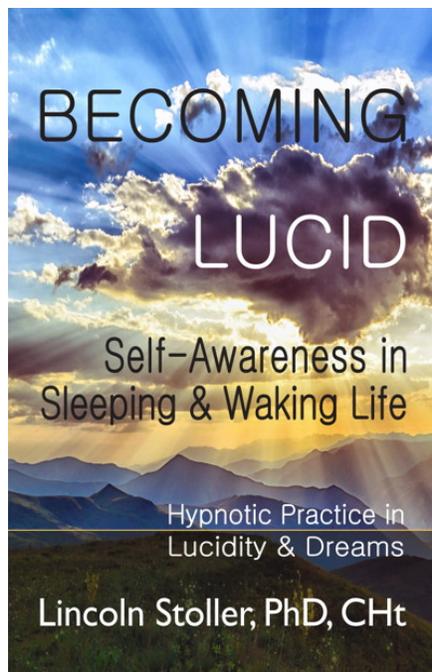
Settle your hands back down, down onto your thighs, the arms of your chair, or by your sides. Let the energy that is lingering in front of you be soaked up by your eyes. It gives you the impression that you can see farther, more clearly, deeper, and into things. Your mind's eye can now see with greater detail, as if images have more meaning, and you can understand symbols and associations.

Let yourself follow this energy to float into a landscape of indistinct vistas and unrecognized characters. Let your images be populated by pleasant memories taken from welcoming opportunities from the past. And when you daydream, imagine this energy filling your mind to give you super sight.

Think back to what we're talking about now, the awareness of sensation, imagination, and your mind. States of focus and concern, or states of reverie, dreams, relaxation, and emptiness. These are the mental aspects of physical awareness. You can use your body to explore the limits of your mind. Any body state that captures your attention is a vehicle to greater awareness.

If you're interested in going further with this exploration of sensation and awareness, then consider reading *Becoming Lucid*. You can get from my website as a set of printable PDF and downloadable audio MP3 files by using this link:

<https://www.mindstrengthbalance.com/product/becoming-lucid-access-to-book-and-audio-files/>



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