

Introduction

*A problem cannot be solved
on the level at which it appears.
It must be solved on a higher level.*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

We live in challenging times. Whether it is the affairs of the world or a more private struggle that disturbs your peace, solutions can feel elusive. Some days are better than others, of course, when kindness and grace and insight appear—like those brilliant shafts of light we see when the sun pierces a thick cloud. But some days are worse, when fear and anxiety overwhelm, and there is no light in sight, at least not in your corner of the world.

Each of us faces challenges every day, large and small: health, job stress, difficult family relationships, finances, education, violence, prejudice in all its hurtful forms, and more. As Einstein so wisely advised, we cannot solve these problems by relying on the same kind of thinking that got us into trouble in the first place. In other words, we must seek a higher knowledge. I know you are not Einstein—

neither am I—but *each one of us, including you, already has access to the source of the greater wisdom and creativity we need to solve life’s most difficult challenges.* This book is meant to help you discover, assimilate and employ that wisdom.

Let’s begin our exploration with an old, mythological story about the beginning of time. Long ago, when the universe was being created and everything was just about ready to go live, the Creator realized there was one final task to complete. So an angel was summoned.

When the angel arrived, the Supreme Intelligence—a.k.a. God, Adonai, Allah, Brahman, Divine Mother, Great Spirit—told the angel that there was one last job to do before the universe could be fully functional.

“I saved the best for last,” the Creator told the angel. “In my hands I hold the key for accessing the highest wisdom, the power to creatively resolve all of life’s challenges. This sacred treasure is of infinite value, and when it is finally found, human beings will know its blessings to be inexhaustible. We need to find a safe place to protect this treasure!”

So the angel agreed to the task and offered up an idea, “I will hide the treasure of life on top of the highest mountain peak.”

“The treasure will be too easy to find there,” replied the Creator.

“Okay,” said the angel, “then I will hide your treasure in the middle of the largest and driest desert on planet Earth. Surely, they won’t look there.”

“Nope, too easy.”

“In the vast reaches of the universe?” asked the angel. “That would definitely make for a demanding search.”

“No,” the Creator said, while contemplating. Then, in a flash of Supreme Genius these words were spoken: “I’ve got it! Hide the highest Wisdom of Life *within human*

beings. They will look there last, and know how precious and valuable this treasure is. Yes, hide the treasure there.”

This wisdom, and the search for it, are the subjects of sacred texts from every tradition—East and West. It is known by names such as: Holy Spirit, Soul, Divine Light, and Super Conscious Wisdom, to name just a few. The words we use to describe it are all inadequate! This wisdom is accessible to all, *but* given the predictable habit patterns of human beings, this treasure has indeed been well hidden. The last place we humans look for solutions is within ourselves. Instead, we look everywhere else—to religion and philosophy, technology, politics, art, education, sex, food, sleep, travel, consumerism, psychological therapies, a variety of addictive substances, this or that person, this or that hobby or profession. Yet again and again, with each well-meaning effort, we come away no better off than we were. We still have not found a reliable method of accessing and utilizing the highest wisdom to resolve life’s issues—both simple and complex. And in the process, we deplete our energy and remain in pain.

Unfortunately, the real meaning and value of pain is not well understood. Pain presents invaluable guidance. In actuality, pain is the shadow of the outstretched hand of the Supreme Intelligence advising us that there is some form of friction in our lives. The friction exists between the limited perspectives of our undisciplined mind, and the Super Conscious Wisdom that is always available to lead us to greater awareness, creativity and reward.

We may have accepted pain as a familiar, unwelcome companion for years, but at a certain point we begin to recognize that if we always do what we’ve always done, we’ll always get what we always got. That honest assessment prepares us to examine our lives, and to discover new possibilities that can bring us the purpose, freedom and happiness we deeply desire. Through that new clarity

of vision, we arrive at a point of openness to change. Perhaps that time is now, for you.

Perhaps you are coping with a serious illness. Perhaps you've graduated from high school or college, and don't know what comes next. Maybe you just retired. Or maybe you have questions about gender or sexual orientation. Maybe you have been working for decades to realize "a more perfect union," and you are simply exhausted. Perhaps someone you love dearly has recently died. Perhaps you lost your job, and you're trying to figure out what you're meant to do in this world. Maybe you still have a job, but it's not rewarding. Or you don't have enough money to pay your bills, much less to buy the things that would make life more comfortable. Perhaps you can't sleep because you're habitually plagued by worry. Perhaps you have recently broken up with your partner, or perhaps your partner has recently broken up with you.

Maybe you feel like you are (mostly) doing fine, but you can't shake the feeling that something is just a little "off," that there's something missing, something more meaningful to be found in life.

Or perhaps, for no reason you can identify, you felt a little spark of curiosity when your eyes landed on this book, and rather than ignore it, you chose to pause and honor that little spark.

Whatever the reason, I am glad you are here. Our karmas have brought us together. There it is, that word: *karma*. We throw it around so freely, yet many of us don't understand its true meaning. The Law of Karma states, quite simply, that actions result in consequences. Or, as Sir Isaac Newton stated in his Third Law of Motion, every action gives rise to an equal reaction, or "fruit" of that action. Many of us learned this in school, and we see examples of it every day of our lives. We push on a door, and the door opens.

It is the *mechanics behind* the Law of Karma that make things interesting, however, and that is the subject of this book.

What do I mean by the mechanics behind the Law of Karma? I will answer with a question: What makes a human being—you, me, anybody—take an action? In other words, what initiates an action? Before I continue with my explanation, please take a moment to read that question again. Slow down, and contemplate your answer before you continue reading.

Consider this: before you or I take any particular action (in word or deed), we must first *entertain a thought*. Before we push on the door, we must *think* about pushing on the door. Sometimes we are consciously aware of the thought, for example, “I am angry.” In response to that thought, I might act by walking away, yelling or slamming the door shut. Often, however, we are less aware of the thoughts that cause us to act, as when we do something unconsciously, simply because it is a longstanding habit. Either way, the thought comes first, and then the action. As it turns out, the mechanics behind of the Law of Karma are also uncompromising: *thought leads to action, and action leads to consequence*.

If we accept that every action begins with a thought, then the study of the mind—as the source of all thoughts—becomes the key to experiencing a lifetime of positive consequences. *Remember, consequences always have their beginnings in the mind*. We are the architects of our lives. We determine our destiny, and if we honor the Law of Karma with discrimination, our destiny can be a life of good health, abundance, and loving, nurturing relationships.

This examination of the Law of Karma, the power of thoughts, and their relationships with action and consequence, leads us logically to Yoga Science. Five to six

thousand years ago, the pioneers of modern Yoga Science dealt with similar stressors in their own lives—how to keep themselves and their loved ones safe, how to find meaning and purpose in their lives, how to be healthy and happy. Instead of seeking solutions outside themselves, some women and men embarked on journeys of self-inquiry and self-discovery. By experimenting with the scientific principles of the Law of Karma, they learned how to unify the wisdom potential of the mind with the skillfully dynamic capacities of the body. Through their process of internal research and mental experimentation, these early Yoga Scientists received a priceless, practical Wisdom that can serve us well today—if we are motivated to follow in their footsteps. They figured out where that most precious treasure was hidden, and we can too.

Yoga Science provides a scientific “template” to access and employ the same higher knowledge that physicist, mathematician and mystic Albert Einstein spoke of. This same Wisdom is described in all the texts of our world’s religious and spiritual traditions. It’s a blueprint for experiencing happiness, health and security while fulfilling the purpose of life without pain, misery or enslavement. Sounds pretty attractive, right? It is.

In fact, Yoga Science, the world’s oldest holistic mind/body medicine, offers us a hands-on framework for gathering, measuring and organizing data, making predictions, testing those predictions with repeatable experiments, and drawing conclusions. The conclusions derived from each Yoga Science experiment then become the basis for our daily thoughts, words and deeds. Gradually we learn to live in accord with the Law of Karma and to act more skillfully, lovingly and rewardingly in all realms of life—physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. The laboratory for every Yoga Science experiment is your very own mind-body-sense complex. No special equipment required.

So, that is where we will begin, each of us exactly where we are in our minds and bodies. If you are an earnest seeker, Yoga Science will offer you great benefits, regardless of your current level of experience, knowledge or state of mind.

Along the way, we will practice *ahimsa*. The word *ahimsa* means non-injuring, non-harming or non-violence. Sometimes it is translated as “kindness,” and is simply a restatement of the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. It is the highest yogic principle and underlies every successful relationship—within and without, subtle and gross, with others *and with yourself*.

When learning a new frame of reference or a skill of any kind, we can sometimes become impatient with our lack of understanding or progress. I will remind you throughout our journey together to be kind to yourself as you study, assimilate and experiment with this teaching. This is a transformational process, and a life-long one at that. Have patience. Be kind to yourself. Practice *ahimsa*. To become proficient in any endeavor in life requires ongoing dedication. This is especially true with the study and practice of learning how the mind works. Because the Unconscious mind is filled with a field of unhelpful forces (for instance fear, anger and complacency) that can undercut your efforts, it is best to start by taking small steps. Don't take on too much too soon.

Start with what's easy, and the choice will be exactly right for you. In order to be the right choice, it must be easy. If you wanted to become a body builder, you wouldn't rush to the gym and, with no prior experience, attempt to bench-press two hundred pounds. You'd start by lifting just the bar with no additional weight. Then, you'd gradually add five pounds, then ten pounds, then twenty—until you reached your ultimate goal. I urge you to take

the same reasonable (and kind!) approach as you begin to train your mind.

One final word on my experience with the wisdom presented in this book. My wife Jenness and I have studied and applied Yoga Science and philosophy for 55 years because this teaching is eminently practical and common-sensical. It has prepared us to make wise choices in every relationship and situation that arises. We have never disengaged from the world or our culture. Rather, we have lived our adult lives working, playing and facing the same challenges you face. Since 1971, Jenness has earned a living as a professional artist, and I as her art dealer—careers that we continue to enjoy today. As a consequence of our life-long commitment to practicing and experimenting with Yoga Science, in 1996 our teacher, Swami Rama of the Himalayas, directed us to “Start teaching now.” In service to his instruction, we founded The American Meditation Institute in our home near Albany, New York. This was not the life either of us had imagined or desired, yet we were called to do this work and to share these teachings, and it has offered us unbounded happiness and fulfillment.

If you have ever gone to a yoga or a meditation class, you may have been greeted by your teacher with a smile and the word *Namaste*, which means “I honor the Supreme Intelligence in you.” Even if you haven’t had that experience, it’s likely you’ve heard the word somewhere. Like that word *karma*, it seems to have worked its way into our collective vocabulary—even if we haven’t yet fully grasped its meaning. I hope it will resonate more deeply for you by the time you finish this book. Thank you for being here. I am honored to be with you. *Namaste*.