

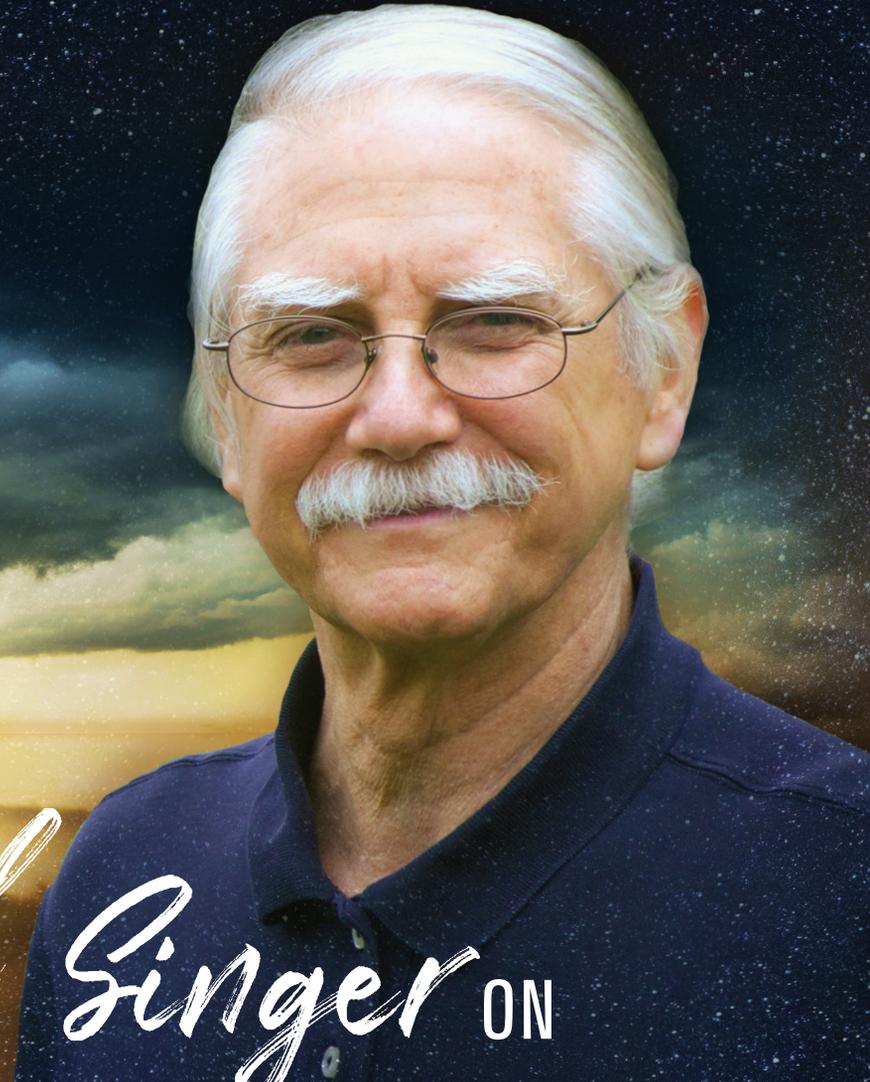
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DEEPEN YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

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Michael Singer ON
ACHIEVING AWARENESS:

Relax, Release, Repeat

AWARENESS ISSUE

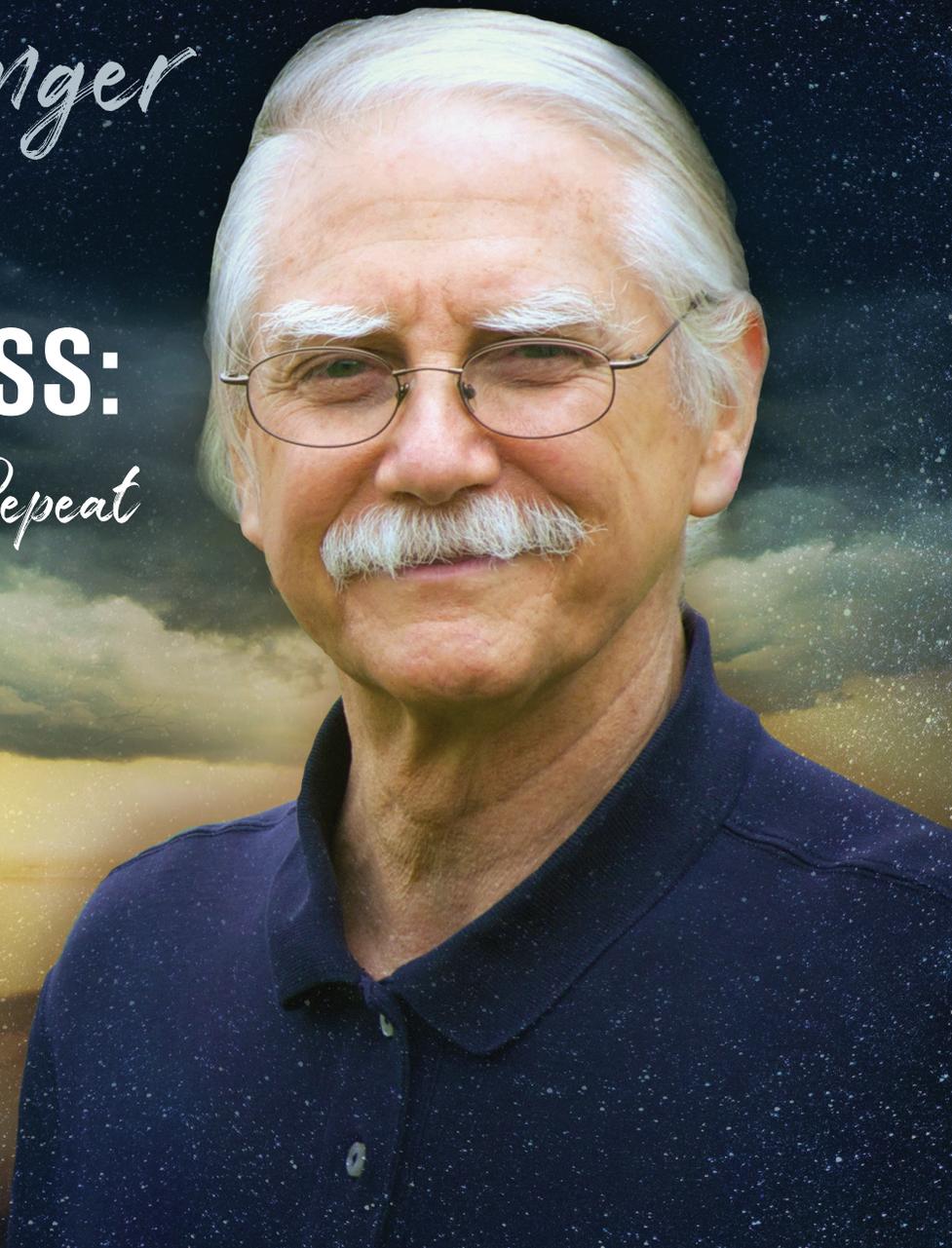
DENISE LINN'S PAST WITH PRESENCE
ANDREW HARVEY COMMUNES WITH KABIR

LISTENING IN WITH ...

Michael Singer

ACHIEVING AWARENESS:

Relax, Release, Repeat



MICHAEL SINGER HAS LIVED THROUGH INCREDIBLE HIGHS (FOUNDING A BILLION-DOLLAR HEALTH SYSTEMS COMPANY, APPEARING ON *OPRAH*, AND WRITING TWO *NEW YORK TIMES* BEST-SELLERS) AND CHALLENGING LOWS (GETTING DIVORCED IN HIS MID-20S, HAVING HIS PH.D. DISSERTATION REJECTED, AND BEING INDICTED FOR—AND

ULTIMATELY CLEARED OF—ACCOUNTING FRAUD). BUT TO HIM, NONE OF THOSE EVENTS IS PARTICULARLY GOOD OR BAD. ANY REACTION THAT ARISES HE MERELY NOTICES AND THEN RELEASES, LIKE WATCHING MIST DISSIPATE. HE INSISTS THAT WHAT MATTERS, WHAT'S REAL, IS NOT HIS PERSONAL SELF AND HIS STORY BUT THE OBSERVER WHO

WATCHES IT ALL UNFOLD—THE ETERNAL, DIVINE, AND BLISSFUL SOUL WHO IS HIS REAL IDENTITY. HERE, SINGER TALKS WITH *UNITY MAGAZINE* EDITOR **KATY KOONTZ** ABOUT THE PRACTICE OF LETTING GO AND ENJOYING THE RIDE, NO MATTER THE BUMPS IN THE ROAD, TRAFFIC SNARLS, AND DETOURS BEYOND OUR COMFORT ZONE.

KATY KOONTZ: You teach that the goal of spiritual growth is freedom *from* yourself rather than freedom *for* yourself. Can you elaborate?

MICHAEL SINGER: The reason we have desires and fears is because we're blocked. The psychological aspect of our being, our self-concept, is what blocks the energy, the spirit, the *shakti*, the *chi*—whatever you want to call it. We feel unfulfilled, lacking, needy, lonely, scared—whatever it is—and we try to compensate. Almost everything we do, in fact, is a compensation for that. What we do isn't wrong, but it's a compensation for something that's wrong and it just doesn't work.

Maybe you want to go to Hawaii, change spouses, get a new job. That might temporarily help you get around the blockage, but your stuff comes back up. Your solution wasn't permanent. So that's what we call freedom *for* yourself—doing what your personal self wants.

Freedom *from* yourself, on the other hand, starts when you think, *Something's wrong, and I'm trying to compensate for it with something outside myself. Why don't I fix what's wrong inside instead?* Learning how to let go of what's blocking your energy becomes the spiritual path. Freedom from yourself always leads to something beautiful, while freedom for yourself leads to addiction—you have to keep doing more and more, and you're never satisfied.

KK: I love your teaching that we don't *have* souls, we *are* souls. Moving through your day as a soul rather than as someone who has a soul really changes everything.

MS: If you're putting out effort to find your soul, you'll never find it because it's you who's putting out the

effort. And so what's required is this constant process of taking a step back, relaxing, and releasing the personal until you're established in the core of your being.

KK: What about those personal qualities that make us clever, endearing, or somehow useful to society? Do we have to release those too?

MS: The personal is of no use. It's just garbage from your past. I'm pretty much the only one who's daring to say that. If you let go of the personal self, what is left is your greater self, which has tremendous inspiration, love, compassion, and passion for everything. When each moment unfolds, initially it's going to hit your personal self and you'll react with like or dislike. Those are just your past patterns. If you let go of that reaction, you'll find out you're still in there. You're the one who let go, and now you're interacting with the world from a deeper, nonhabitual, nonreactive place in a way that serves instead of a way that makes you feel better.

KK: What can we do to make it easier to break our conditioned reactions?

MS: It's not a question of going in there and repatterning the neural pathways. You'd be there forever. Just relax in the face of whatever is coming in front of you. Eventually, you'll see those patterns have nothing to do with you.

Now, if those patterns pull you out of your seat of awareness and you are able to come back to center, that's real growth. Can you reach a point where you never get pulled out of that awareness? Of course. It's called becoming established in the seat of self, where the patterns that unfold—anger, fears, insecurities, desires,

whatever—are merely things you notice, and you're always aware you're noticing them. Therefore, they have no power over you.

KK: How do you get to that point?

MS: Practice. It's too late to become established in the seat of self when you're freaking out about something big, so start with something small. Let's say you're driving, you're in a rush, and you're behind somebody going 35 in a 50-mile-an-hour zone. Your mind is talking to the other person, and all it's doing is bringing neurosis into your life. The other driver is not doing that. You're doing that. Why not just wait until you can pass and be at peace?

You can't stop the reaction from coming up. Don't take that on or you'll go crazy. Just ask yourself, *Can I handle that a person is driving 15 miles below the speed limit and my personal self is having a major problem with that? I'm sitting on a planet in the middle of nowhere and my little personal self is freaking out because somebody is driving 15 miles an hour below the speed limit.*

The "Can I handle it?" question is rhetorical. The answer is always yes. Just relax and lean away from it, and the situation will become easier to deal with. Every moment of every day, relax and release behind the noise the personal self is making. When you can stay above that energy, you'll no longer be feeding it with the power of your reaction.

KK: What does that look like?

MS: As these lower energies come up to your higher consciousness, they are transmuted into something positive. What was anxiety can become peace. What was anger can become love.

We don't have souls



We are souls

Throughout time, they stay up there—and you get all their strength. Eventually, they can't touch you.

I mean, you can meditate, say mantras, do breathing exercises, do yoga, or read the Bible—all these things are alternatives to giving in to your reactive self. But if you're able to just sit there and relax, it will happen. You don't need anything else.

Of course, if you start getting involved with new garbage, the lower energies will all come right back. Everybody's capable of reaching these very high states, but not if they're hanging out with the lower self.

KK: It helps to realize you're never upset about what you think you're upset about. Something underneath all that is causing the reaction.

MS: That's absolutely true. A friend walks by and you say, "Hi, Sally," and she doesn't say hello back. Why would that upset you? There are 7 billion people on this planet and they didn't

say hello either. It upsets you because you needed her to recognize you. Otherwise, you feel offended. *I thought she was my friend. I trusted her. What will people think if they see she didn't say hello to me?* You projected all these internal issues on to "Hi, Sally." All day you're thinking, *The next time she says hello to me I won't say hello back.* You're making this royal mess inside yourself when it should be just a two-second thought: *Why didn't she say hello? I don't know.* And that's the end of it. You don't even ask her later why she didn't. It doesn't matter.

KK: This reminds me of your teaching that no experience is truly traumatic. The way you deal with it causes the trauma. So it's not really the experience. It's you.

MS: Who taught us that if not Christ? Look what he went through while remaining at peace. The essence of his teachings is acceptance, nonresistance, and nonjudgment.

KK: Is it ever okay to hold on to the good things in our minds?

MS: It depends on what level you want to have a conversation. At the deepest possible level, everything exists in the now. What happened before is just stored in your mind, and whenever you're focused on that, you're missing what's happening now. How do you know the present moment isn't any more beautiful than the past you're busy thinking about?

It doesn't mean you can't ever think of a nice thing. But people build in their mind a collage of the nice experiences they've had without respecting and appreciating the moment unfolding in front of them. That's not "be here now." It's "be there then."

Is it ever okay? Everything is okay. There's nothing that's wrong. The question is how deep you have gone in understanding that the reason the past situation was beautiful is that it hit your personal self in a way that you opened and felt the beauty of your true self. It really isn't the outside situation ever.

People talk about whether they have chemistry with someone else. There is no chemistry. This person started interacting with you in a way that helped you feel an uprising of energy—which you call love—that made it past your blockages. You think you love this person, but what you really love is experiencing the free energy you feel inside. The moment that person does something that causes your blockage to get hit, you're not going to look at them and think, *I love you.*

You are the one who's beautiful, when you open. All love, all joy, all light, all inspiration is inside of you. When you are closed to it, you think something outside is required for you to open and feel it. But that's because you're blocked. That's conditional

well-being. It has to be the way it was before for you to feel good again.

I want you to have unconditional well-being, to wake up in the morning in ecstasy. I want every single thing that happens to you all day—good and bad—to be so exciting that you can't wait to throw yourself into it. Then I want you to put your head down at night and not even think about your day. Just giggle at how much fun it was and go to sleep. When you wake up in the morning, be excited to see what's going to happen next. That's the spiritual life.

KK: You have said that consciousness itself doesn't expand or evolve. It just ceases to contract. Why is that?

MS: As you settle back into who it is who is watching from the seat of consciousness, you will notice that it's unchanging. You're the consciousness. You have no qualities. You have no beginning, no end. You are eternal. The consciousness is actually God looking down at your body, your thoughts, your emotions, and getting caught there.

It's like you walk into a big room and there's a 24-inch TV in the corner that catches your attention. That's the most spiritual statement that could ever exist: *It catches your attention*. Your consciousness is now paying attention only to that TV. You spend hours watching it and miss the whole party in the room around you. There are all these people and everything going on, but not for you. The only thing that exists for you is what is on that 24-inch TV because it caught your attention.

To come back to the party, you don't have to destroy the TV or even turn it off. You don't have to expand your consciousness. All you have to do is cease to contract your consciousness, stop focusing it on something very



small. Your consciousness is already fully evolved. It's pure. It's perfect. It's one with God. There is no individuality; there's just universality. Focusing on the individual doesn't make you lose your perfection as long as you don't identify with the object of your consciousness.

By the way, when the commercial break interrupts your focus, how long does it take for you to be back in the room at the party with everybody else? A billionth of a second. That's how long enlightenment takes.

KK: When the universe keeps bringing up the same issues, triggering awareness of what we're now ready to release, would you consider that synchronicity sacred?

MS: You ask beautiful questions. I will answer this at a different level and then we can come back to the level where you asked it. Are you familiar with the Rorschach test?

KK: The ink blots, sure.

MS: Let's say my parents got divorced when I was 6 and I haven't gotten over it—but I'm not aware of that. The psychologist holds up an ink blot that reminds me of my parents fighting. Another ink blot reminds me of changing homes after the divorce. Four or five of these ink blots remind me of different aspects of that same issue. I wouldn't say, "That psychologist is so good. He knew how to bring up the issues where I'm stuck." That's not what happened. I needed to deal with that

issue, and every ink blot he put in front of me brought that up.

As the universe unfolds, it stimulates the blockages we have, therefore it appears that those issues are constantly in our face. We project from the inside out. We don't see what's *out there*, we see what's *in here*. As you let go, those issues don't come up anymore.

A lot of people don't want to hear that. They want to make things spiritual. If you dare to look at it the way I described, then you gain more power because you say, *I'm doing this to myself*. That's not taking away that situations unfold to hit you in the face and wake you up. However, I'd rather have you look at a lot of this stuff naturally, on an everyday basis, and think, *If this is hitting me in the face, it's because it's inside of me. I need to work with this*.

It's also fine to answer in the way you asked the question. Is there synchronicity? Do things unfold in a way that help us? The more you work with what I'm talking about the more it all becomes that. Everything you see is benevolent, even the worst thing that ever happened to you is for you. That's because you worked with it that way. If you had resisted it, it would have destroyed you. Since you decided to rise above it, it becomes something beautiful. 🌟

Michael A. Singer is the author of *The Untethered Soul: The Journey Beyond Yourself* (New Harbinger Publications, 2007) and *The Surrender Experiment: My Journey Into Life's Perfection* (Harmony Books, 2015), both *New York Times* best-sellers. His video course, *Living From a Place of Surrender: The Untethered Soul in Action*, is available from Sounds True. Visit untetheredsoul.com.