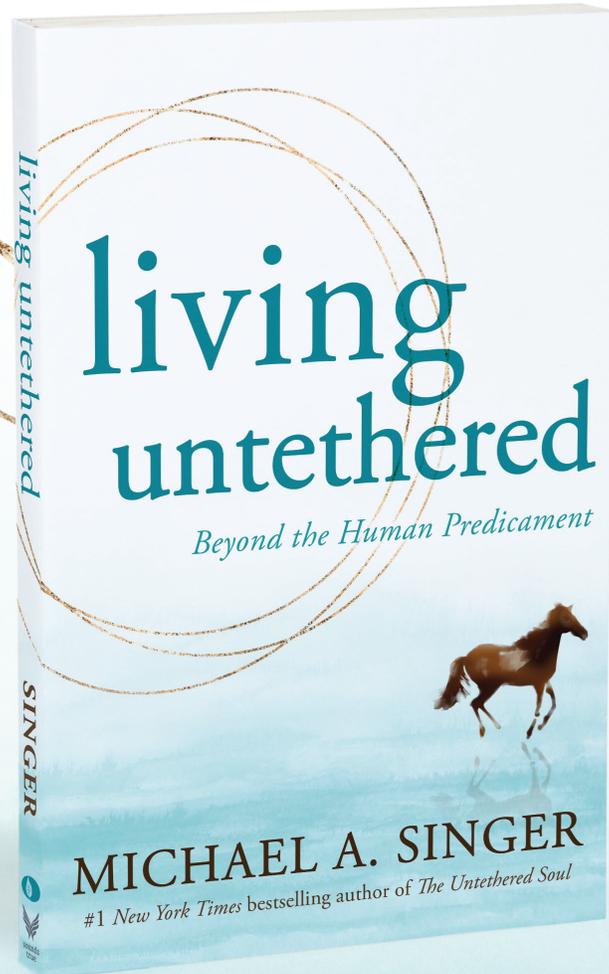


Living Untethered

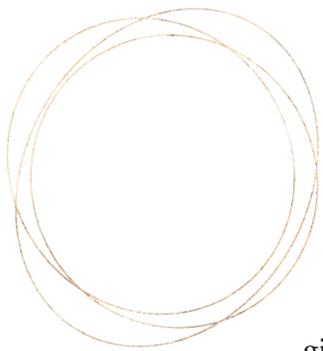
Beyond the Human Predicament

by Michael A. Singer



EXCERPT FROM CHAPTER 1

Awareness of Self



Sitting on a planet spinning through vast outer space for a handful of years—in the broadest sense, this is the human predicament. Earth has been here for 4.5 billion years, yet each of us is limited to roughly an eighty-year ride on the planet, give or take a few years. We were born onto the planet, and we will leave it when we die.

That is simply the truth. What is not such a hard and fast truth, however, is what our few years on Earth are like. Undoubtedly, life on the planet can be a very exciting experience. It can bring enthusiasm, passion, and inspiration at every turn. When it unfolds that way, every day can be a beautiful adventure. Unfortunately, life on Earth rarely unfolds exactly as we want it to, and if we resist, our experience can be quite unpleasant. Resistance creates tension and anxiety, and it makes life a burden.

To avoid this burden and be able to fully embrace life, wise ones throughout the ages have taught the importance of accepting reality. Only by accepting reality can we work with the flow of life as it passes by and create a better world. All of science is based on studying reality, learning her laws, and then working with those laws to improve our lives. Scientists can't deny reality, they must fully accept reality as the starting point of their endeavors. To fly, we must fully embrace the law of gravity, not deny its existence. The same is true in the spiritual realm. Teachings such as surrender, acceptance, and nonresistance form the basis of a deeply spiritual life. But these concepts can be difficult to grasp. In *Living Untethered*, we are embarking on a journey into the sheer reasonableness of acceptance and the great gifts it promises: freedom, peace, and inner enlightenment. Acceptance is best understood as nonresistance to reality. Try as you may, no one can make an event that has already happened not have happened. Your only choice is to accept the event or resist it. During our journey together, we will explore how and why you make this decision. But first you have to understand who is within that has the power to decide.

You are certainly *in there*; you have an intuitive sense of existence inside. What is that? It is awareness of Self, the most important topic we could ever discuss. Since we're going to take a deep dive into the spirituality of acceptance, we must start by understanding who is in there accepting or resisting.

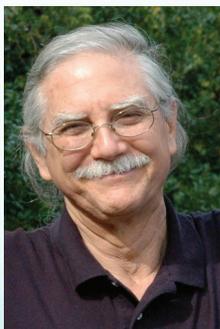
There are many ways to approach the nature of Self. Let's go slowly and start with something very simple. Imagine someone comes up to you and asks, "Hi. Are you in there?" How would you respond? No one would actually say, "No, I'm not in here." That would be the ultimate non sequitur. If you're not in there, who responded? You're definitely in there, but what does that mean?

To isolate what “you in there” means, imagine you’re shown three different photographs. The photos are held up one after the other, and then you’re asked, “Though the photos changed, was it the same you who saw all three of them?” Your response would be, “Of course it was the same me.” Very good; that helps us get our bearings. From this simple exercise, it’s clear that you in there are not what you look at; you are the one who’s looking. The pictures changed; you who saw them stayed the same.

It’s not hard to understand with photographs that you are not what you look at, but there are some objects we identify with more than others. For example, our bodies. We identify with our bodies enough to say, “I’m a forty-three-year-old woman who is five foot six.” Is that really who you are in there: a forty-three-year-old, five-foot-six-inch female body? Or is the body something you in there are aware of? To sort this out, let’s start with your hand. If you were asked whether you can see your hand, you would say, “Yes, I see my hand.” Okay, but what if it got cut off? Don’t worry about the pain; just for a moment imagine it’s gone. Would you still be there? Wouldn’t you notice that your hand is gone? It’s like the changing photographs: When the hand was there, you saw it. When it was gone, you saw it was gone. You in there who “sees” did not change; what you were looking at changed. Your body is just another thing you see. The question remains: Who is in there doing the seeing?

(Continued in the book)

About the Author



MICHAEL A. SINGER is author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller, *The Untethered Soul*, and the *New York Times* bestseller, *The Surrender Experiment*, both of which have been published worldwide. He had a deep inner awakening in 1971 while working on his doctorate in economics, and went into seclusion to focus on yoga and meditation. In 1975, he founded Temple of the Universe, a now long-established yoga and meditation center where people of any religion or set of beliefs can come together to experience inner peace. Along with his nearly five decades of spiritual teaching, Singer has made major contributions in the areas of business, education, health care, and environmental protection.

