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## **WE'VE BEEN LIVING IN A DREAM WORLD**

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"Most people are other people," Oscar Wilde once remarked. "Their thoughts are someone else's opinions, their lives a mimicry, their passions a quotation." As he so wryly observed, the vast majority of us are not who we've been pretending to be, and the lives we've been living until now are molded according to rules and values that are not our own. Most of humanity is stuck in someone else's discarded chewing gum and has yet to break free.

Unless you have been brave enough to forsake this trap, here is your likely portrait: your religious convictions are those of your parents or community; you root for your hometown sports teams; your political allegiances conform to the party system that society offers; you are an avid observer of the cultural pageantry, like the Super Bowl and the Oscars; your holidays are the standard ones, such as Christmas, New Year's Eve, and Independence Day; you look to your political and religious leaders for guidance and protection; you feel driven to succeed—to make more money, to live a better life.

These are worthy and desirable choices that hold families and societies together. They make you who you are, you might argue. True, but only if you are content with admiring the wrapping and never looking inside the box. If you dared to look, you'd discover how these basic thoughts originate in a fundamental belief formed during the first years of your life: that survival depends on obeying the rules. Children typically bend their perceptions and interpretations of reality to match those of their parents and others who care for them. They find clever ways to please in order to receive attention and belong. As they grow up, the people and issues may change over time, but the initial patterns of conformity remain deeply ingrained in the subconscious.

The price for surrendering to consensus is steep. It is nothing less than the loss of individuality and curiosity. Without these two magnificent attributes, you disengage from the grandness of the creation and implode into the holographic illusion humans have come to call reality. You become one of Oscar Wilde's other people, thinking someone else's opinions and assuming they are your own.

We are trapped in the daily drama the culture and the media feed us: mortgages, sporting events, tsunamis, sex offenders, AIDS, terrorism, global warming, corrupt governments, and economic inequities . . . all demanding our attention. The matrix plays us like an instrument. A thirty-second

news bite can push our buttons. We get hooked and riled, liberally lacing our collective guts with corrosive biochemicals unleashed by our righteous indignation.

This condition is virtually universal. It is also the underlying cause of the world as we know it. People cling so tightly to their personal and social identities that they are blinded to anything that does not validate them. The inevitable product is a world of war, greed, and competition, driven by paranoia and fear.

The way out is easier than anyone might imagine. However, very few summon the courage, for it requires them to leave the comfort of their known world and walk alone, unaided by the crutch of belief and dogma, into the domain of pure consciousness. Most people would rather get caught up in the business of earning a living, raising a family, or helping their community than deal with the unsettling immensity of All That Is.

Yet it seems that all humans are meant to take this epic journey of discovery at some point in their series of lives on this planet. If you choose to walk this path, you will find yourself gaining a new perspective—that of consciousness, where the mind, with its judgments and emotions, ceases to dominate and the heart is your only reliable guide. The great issues of your daily life that once commanded your attention now seem wondrously arbitrary and irrelevant—simply interesting experiences that lasted far too long and became unnecessarily weighty.

You now see the illusion for what it is: a game-board projection designed so aspects of the Oneness can experience duality, fear, and separation. It is no more real than a programmed matrix in a computer game. You and I are merely units of awareness projected into the matrix, defining ourselves by the points through which we view and believing what we see to be reality. Who did the projecting? You. Who is the projection? You. There is only you.

How do you get to this liberating place from which you can see the larger picture?

The cosmic formula of creation is gloriously simple: Attention + Intention = Manifestation. Nothing in the universe evades this law. The reality you perceive is entirely a function of the only two forces at your command: your attention and your intention. Bring conscious awareness to this equation—consciously monitor your attention and intention and what you are manifesting—and everything changes.

Through this ongoing process of self-observation it will become increasingly clear that the part of you that is projected into the illusion is in trouble. This realization in fact marks the beginning of your journey out of the illusion. Once you begin to couple the law of Attention + Intention = Manifestation with the concept of Oneness, you begin to see a completely different picture. You are All That Is. There is nowhere for you to go, nothing to attain, no lessons to learn.

If you buy into the reality that you are an earthbound human stuck in the struggle of life, presto, there you are. If you focus on the part of you that is watching you flounder in the illusion, snap, you're free. It can't get much easier than that. Yet why are so few of us awake?

The written or spoken word can do no more than point the way. And trading one belief system for another accomplishes nothing. The answer lies elsewhere. Waking up is a consequence of induction. Just a few years ago you might have placed yourself in the presence of a guru or master and, through devotion, discipline, or some other practice, gradually assumed some of his or her enlightenment. Now, using the law of  $A + I = M$ , you become your own master. By focusing your attention on the part of you that is watching the rest of you floundering in the illusion, you are taking a giant step in restoring control over how your attention is commanded. If you add the intention of reclaiming your essence, you complete the formula that can only result in the manifestation of whatever your curiosity seeks to explore.

The payoff of having been so deeply mired in the illusion that you nearly succumbed is compassion for those still stuck in the matrix, coupled with a large dose of humility. You have learned that the illusion is perfect exactly as it is. The only thing that needs to change is the point from which we view it. Now all that's left is for you to summon the courage to begin the journey home.

**Jean-Claude Koven** is author of *Going Deeper: How to Make Sense of Your Life When Your Life Makes No Sense*, the Allbooks Reviews editor's choice for the best metaphysical book of 2004. Recipient of USABookNews.com best metaphysical book award. For more information, please visit [www.goingdeeper.org](http://www.goingdeeper.org). ©2005. Jean-Claude Koven / All Rights Reserved

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