

Sidra Jafri

FOREWORD BY ANNE JIRSCH,
AUTHOR OF *CREATE YOUR PERFECT FUTURE*

The
AWAKENING

9 *Principles for Finding the
Courage to Change your Life*

'Sidra Jafri is a fresh voice who lovingly opens the conversation
about releasing our past and stepping into our future.'

TORI HARTMAN, BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF THE *CHAKRA WISDOM ORACLE CARDS*

Foreword

I have long believed that the best people to guide, teach and heal others through key experiences and traumas are those who have been through similar challenges. The best bereavement counsellors have lost a loved one; a brilliant addiction specialist is one who has had an addiction. The most effective therapists and teachers are often those who have been through a great deal themselves. They have been there and come out the other side.

In my twenties I went on a journey of self-discovery. I needed to because I felt all areas of my life were a mess. I sought out books, teachers and healers. In effect I rebuilt myself. My life changed dramatically. I know first-hand how the right tools can bring dramatic, wonderful change.

I love Sidra's book. She openly shares her traumatic experiences and her journey of self-discovery, including a wealth of case studies, stories and techniques. You do not need to spend years (as I did) searching for the right teachers and techniques; Sidra's research offers you now a wonderful opportunity to clear the past and rebuild your life and your future.

Don't just read this book; work your way through it, make notes, go back and do certain exercises again. That way you will gain so much more.

When I work with people I usually find they are stuck at a certain point or area in their life. Wherever you are right now, however well or not you are doing, there will be something in this book to help create a shift.

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I have worked in this field for over 40 years and these days rarely find anything new and fresh, but this book is an exception. Sidra's honest approach and a perfect balance of self-awareness and healing techniques will help you to move forward to a better life.

Anne Jirsch

Author of *Create Your Perfect Future!*

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INTRODUCTION

Experiencing The Awakening

It is no accident that you picked up this book.

It may be that on some level you already know that it's time for a change. Perhaps you are living a life you didn't choose or a career someone else thought would be a good idea, or are now following a particular path because you thought that's what you were *supposed* to do; what was expected of you. You may also notice how, in certain situations, you sound just like your mother or react exactly like your father, without even thinking about it. Perhaps you have started to notice that some of your behaviours are self-sabotaging or you have acquired habits that you can't seem to shake. Or you are simply aware that your life doesn't feel like yours or have a disquieting sense that your life is not everything it could be.

You may even have started to realize, as I did, that you are living what I call a 'programmed life' – by which I mean a life you didn't consciously choose – but are unsure of how to break free from those binds and reclaim the life you want. Awakening will show you a way to take charge of your life once again, and the first step on the path is to recognize all those beliefs, behaviours and values that don't belong to you – which developed as a result of your upbringing: family traditions, cultural background, education, environment, gender, religious beliefs and other social pressures.

Once you do this, you'll be ready to create new empowering ones – beliefs, behaviours and values that will propel you!

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forward in life. So, to discover the true meaning of Awakening, you must first spy on your life and begin observing your reactions and behaviours. In so doing, you will become aware of all the programs and plug-ins that have been directing your life thus far. However, Awakening is not an event or a set of rules to follow; it is a process that helps you to separate other people's issues from your own and allows you to take full responsibility and charge of your life.

Before my Awakening, I felt disconnected and hollow. It didn't occur to me to question why I wasn't enjoying life. I thought it was just the way things were. I looked around and saw many other people doing the same and simply accepted things as they were. Without realizing it, I was living my life according to others' expectations, opinions, feelings and experiences.

Since Awakening I have lived according to my own truth, instead of being pulled along by an invisible undercurrent. I feel blessed that I understand how to be happy and I want to honour this knowledge by sharing what I call the 'Nine Principles of Awakening' with you, so that you can also have the courage to acknowledge and live with the truth of who you really are. I discovered, as you will too, that life's most challenging lessons are the ones that eventually set you free. You'll discover it is no coincidence that the Awakening has found you when you need it the most, just as it found me.

I look forward to being your guide on your journey of Awakening.

Sidra Jafri

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PART I

Awaken To The Nine Principles

*'Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside,
awakes.'*

Carl Jung

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Dying To Live: Birth Of The Awakening

'The only source of knowledge is experience.'

Albert Einstein

On a warm summer's day in 2002, I woke up in bed and couldn't believe that I was still alive. My head was groggy from the overdose of sleeping pills I'd taken and every muscle in my body felt stiff and raw. I couldn't speak or move, even to open my eyes. Drifting in and out of consciousness, I found myself in a peaceful state of bliss. At that moment, something lit up inside my head and I watched as my entire life story was projected, like a movie in my mind's eye. I viewed scenes from my family life, conversations with friends, arguments and snapshots of moments that defined the choices and decisions I'd made. Watching myself play the starring role in my very own blockbuster, I felt oddly clearheaded and detached. Being an observer with no emotional involvement, I suddenly knew what had been causing me so much pain – 'not wanting to be here' was not new but something I had lived with all my life.

I was born into a middle-class family in Karachi, Pakistan. When my mother was pregnant with me she prayed for a boy. She already had a daughter, but in that culture boys are considered to be an investment in the future while girls are a liability. This feeling of being unwanted later manifested as headaches, nausea and stomach aches. While still only a young girl at school, I displayed neurotic patterns and sought !

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relief in food, self-harming and anything else that would put me at the centre of my parents' world. Of course they did take notice, but not in the way that I'd hoped. By the time I took my first degree I was an emotional wreck. To others, everything appeared to be fine on the surface, but underneath I was struggling.

The same internal struggle continued after I'd married and moved to the UK. Everything should have been good. After all, I had escaped from my domineering parents and was now living a comfortable life with a good husband and, by that time, a beautiful son as well: a dream life for most young women of my background. I couldn't understand why I still felt anxious, lonely, unwell and ill at ease – and it was those feelings that led me to take an overdose. It wasn't the first time that I'd tried to take my own life, but this time I was determined never to feel those same intolerable feelings again . . . only to wake up a few hours later, staring at the same ceiling before losing consciousness. I felt I had done everything I could to feel different and my escape plan had failed. The newfound knowledge that I had *always* felt this way, while helpful, didn't offer a solution. So, when I gained full consciousness, I started praying intensely for help.

Listening for an answer, I suddenly recalled what my schoolteacher had said to me years before. On hearing that I was moving to the UK, he told me how all his students dreamed of such an opportunity and encouraged me to continue my education. He said, 'Leave everything else, but never leave learning.' They say when the student is ready the teacher appears, and those words pulled me back from the brink.

After that day, I realized that no matter how many times I cried or tried to take my own life, there was something bigger than me that was determined I would stay on this earth. I had been given another chance. At that point, I made a decision to continue studying again. I enrolled for a second degree in management and law, and it was there I discovered my passion for human behaviour and my purpose: I wanted to!

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help other people, but I knew I had to find a way to ease my own pain first.

So, I read every book I could find on health, wealth and relationships; and completed diplomas and attended countless workshops on personal development. I loved being a perpetual student and various seminars and courses kept me going in my quest to 'help people'. I was determined to find the root cause of what keeps us stuck and discover a way to rise above our challenges to create the life we truly desire.

Unlocking the mind

I started to understand how our values and beliefs are the sum of the programming within the psyche, and so began to search for a way to rewrite my programs – neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) granted my wish. Developed by Richard Bandler and John Grinder, NLP is a powerful mind tool that makes the connection between the three components that allow us to perceive the world:

Neurology: How we think

Linguistics: How we communicate

Programming: Our beliefs, behaviours and emotions

Training in NLP provided me with a set of tools and techniques that gave me access to that 'central storage system', also known as the mind. Now I understood the mental processes underlying my behaviours and had strategies to replace those programs with more empowering ones. I was still troubled, however, because there was still so much I didn't understand about *why* I had developed all these feelings. Shortly afterwards, however, I started studying Energetic NLP (ENLP) developed by Art Giser and had a breakthrough that was to complete my Awakening.!

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One evening, while in an ENLP workshop, I felt a massive knot in my stomach. My body seemed to be reacting to the workshop leader's words and, at one point, I felt as though I couldn't breathe, so I asked what was going on. He closed his eyes and, smiling, said: 'Oh, it's your mother's anxiety. You are breaking free from your ancestral patterns . . .

98 percent of who you think you are is not truly who you are, it's other people's energies in your space. Their beliefs, attitudes, stresses, fears all influence our behaviour.' His words opened up a world of questions for me, but finally I knew where to look for the missing piece of my puzzle.

Discovering energies

From that day, I immersed myself in the world of 'energies'. My knowledge of physics was limited, but my hunger for discovering energies was limitless. I explored the concept of 'everything is energy' through Einstein's familiar formula $E=mc^2$, which teaches us that matter and energy are equivalent and we can convert energy into matter. To simplify: everything we perceive – whether it is the air we breathe, our own body, the car we are driving or even the solid brick wall in front of us – is energy. Physics tells us that if we were to break down the structure and form of everything present in this world, we would recognize that underneath it all are the molecules. These molecules are further made up of atoms. Within those atoms are the sub-particles. Once we split these sub-particles, what we observe are electromagnetic waves vibrating at a very high speed or as simply stated 'energy'. So, in reality, the Universe and everything in it is an ocean of vibration. What really distinguishes one form from another is how that energy is coded or put together.

The laws of physics state that energy can neither be created nor destroyed; it is simply converted. So what we experience!

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in our reality is actually a transfer of energy from one system to another. Just like the energy of water when it is heated: first it turns into steam, then it evaporates and forms clouds, which in turn affects the temperature, causing rain, then freezing water that then forms into ice. Water is continually changing form and so changing the structure of its energy. As humans, we rely on our five senses to translate this energetic world into meaningful information. For example: our ears translate the vibration of sound into someone's voice or our touch translates infrared energy as the warmth of our loved one's hands. Just as our eyes decode light and turn it into images.

Humans are highly intelligent beings and we translate this energetic world into meaningful information that we can name, label and categorize as phone, money, wood or laptop, for example. However, we do have sensory limitations and our capabilities are not as developed as other species. Think for a moment about migratory birds that use the earth's magnetic fields to navigate or mosquitoes that are able to detect their prey by using chemical, visual and heat sensors. What we do know is that there is a lot more happening energetically than we are aware of.

Energy also emits frequency and contains information, and this is how we are able to use wireless devices, remote controls and satnavs. In the same way, our body is made up of energetic frequencies and contains information about our lives. It is like a computer that has been programmed by our parents, ancestors, teachers, religions and environment, and it is *that energy* that holds the key to all of our challenges, as well as our successes in life.

Once I understood the characteristics of energy, I could see that my overdoses, self-harming, anger, anxiety, food issues and relationship problems were just another form of energy, created from programs that I had absorbed from my environment. The more I became aware of it, the more I realized I could do something about it. I became certain that I !

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find a way to access the point of creation of these programs, un-create the outdated, disruptive ones and replace them with the ones that were in alignment with what I truly wanted.

Along with my family, schooling, religion and culture, I now understood how my ancestors had shaped who I was. Each had installed their beliefs or 'programs' of how I should think, perceive and behave in my psyche. For example, my grandfather had committed suicide a long time before I was born and my family didn't speak about it much. Once I started to understand the power of energetic imprints, I realized how I had unwittingly tapped into a dormant memory of my grandfather's death. I began to see that there was a world beyond that of everyday life, where we eat, sleep, work, count calories, brush our teeth and earn money. There is a parallel reality or world that we cannot see. In fact, it is the energetic structure of this unseen world that solidifies the formation of the seen world. Both worlds coexist and are the basis of all our experience. Everything that exists in the seen world has its energetic coding in the unseen world. Once we learn to perceive energetic coding and change it from there, the seen world changes too.

After discovering that one can't exist without the other, I began to balance both realms. I spied on my life, asked my family questions about my ancestors and started working on myself to rewrite those programs. The more I identified with the source of my issues, the easier it became to address them using the tools I was learning. What you don't know you can't solve! My knowledge about myself was increasing and my life was truly changing this time. I felt lighter for the first time in my life and it was liberating.

The journey from waking up in bed that morning *still* alive had taken me nearly four years, but by 2006, armed with two degrees, a diploma in counselling and hypnotherapy, and as a Master NLP Practitioner, trained in ENLP, and a Reiki Master, I was ready to start helping others Awaken too.!

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Change and growth is inevitable, and the more we align ourselves with this truth the easier our lives will be.

Exploring timelines

Working with clients, I continued to grow and expand my knowledge of energies. I started realizing that we have a central storage system that records everything that happens in our lives. It not only stores information from our present-day life, but also holds the record of events of our past lives and ancestors – they too can affect the programming we run in the present.

Past lives weren't something I even knew about, never mind considered believing in, while I was growing up. The concept of beginning a new life in a new body after death (known as reincarnation) was an alien idea to me. But while my clients were in the state of hypnosis, they were spontaneously recalling events that didn't make sense to them. Using my Access Body Consciousness (ABC) process (which you'll learn on page 37) on those memories, these clients were able to shift the problem and reprogram their behaviours.

AN EYE-OPENING EXPERIENCE

My first encounter with past lives was with a Spanish lady called Bella who came to see me for depression. We used the ABC process to help identify and release the source of her depression and I asked her, 'If the energy of depression could live in your body, where would it live?'

Bella replied, 'Chest.' Then I asked her to imagine that the energy was leaving her body and standing

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in front of her. I carried on by asking her, 'If it was a person or an event, what would it be?' She started crying and said, 'It looks like a war zone, all the other soldiers are dead and I am the only one alive,' and then she sobbed for ten minutes. When she was calm again, we completed the process.

Afterwards, Bella reported feeling so light, as if she had released that depressed 'fragment' of her, and no longer felt that energy. The process didn't make any sense to either of us, but the result was there.

From then on, I kept an open mind about past lives and evidence of their existence continued to present itself to me. Over time, I came to see how, as the French philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin described it, 'We are spiritual beings having a human experience', because each of our incarnations has an impact on the next.

The other element that has a massive effect on our current life is what happened in the lives of our parents and grandparents. How they lived and their experiences have a huge impact on us. So, the more informed we are about our family's history, the easier it is to discover where the point of creation of our challenges, and even talents, lies. The experience of wars, poverty, death, abortions, miscarriages, murder, suicide, divorce and even physical and mental health in our family line contributes a great deal to our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual make-up in this life.

In my time as an Awakening facilitator, I have seen that every event we experience has its point of creation on these three levels:!

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Current timeline: The first level consists of information regarding your present lifetime in your body from conception to present.

Eternal timeline: The second level consists of the information of all your past lives contained in the central storage system. Some schools of thought refer to this information as the Akashic Records, which are considered to be an otherworldly archive holding all the information from all of your (and everyone else's) lifetimes.

Ancestral timeline: The third level contains all the information pertaining to the experiences of your parents and of their ancestors. This timeline sometimes holds the key to life-long patterns, which to you seem to have no rhyme or reason.

When you become a spy on your life and start addressing your current challenges, if you find that a particular issue doesn't resolve itself – no matter how many processes you do or how many times you have worked on the issue – then it's time to look beyond your current timeline and start looking into your eternal and ancestral timelines.

The journey of Awakening is multi-faceted and you progress by integrating the experiences from all three levels using the ABC process. The truth is that we are always working on our current timeline, as it is this life that matters the most. The reason I am sharing the information about eternal and ancestral timelines with you is so that you can integrate any unfinished business or missed lessons from your own past lives and release the programs and decisions of your ancestors. In so doing, you will enhance your present life experience and align it with the higher purpose of your soul's journey.

In Awakening we are seeking to recognize our true self so that we can reach our destination..!

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Birth of the Nine Principles of Awakening

'Awakened' from the conditioning and programming that had been keeping me stuck, I faced another challenge, which I now refer to as an 'identity crisis'. While the change in energy had created a positive transformation in me, I no longer knew who I was and didn't know how I was supposed to live my life. All I understood was that I could now choose to lead a happy and fulfilling existence. But I also wanted to know how to function in my day-to-day life and continue to attract wonderful things into my world.

I was also working with clients who were facing similar identity crises, so over the next six years I developed a method that can be used to not only create an Awakening in us, but also help us to continue to live an awakened life. I have always loved acronyms, so I worked on finding a phrase for each letter of the word AWAKENING. Each phrase is based on the most profound and impactful truths that have shaken my tree, helped me to see the truth of my challenges, empowered me to take charge of the situation and created a long-term solution. Those phrases were:

- A** Ask quality questions
- W** Work on you
- A** Awareness is the key
- K** Knowing versus owning
- E** Energy is everything
- N** No judgment
- I** It takes one to see one
- N** Nothing is missing
- G** Growth is inevitable

Little did I know that those key phrases would become the Nine Principles of Awakening, which have now helped thousands of other people, from all walks of life, to wake up and live Awakened lives. Those people have seen real and!

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Dying To Live: Birth Of The Awakening

tangible results when they applied the principles to their day-to-day lives, and these are the same tools and techniques I will be sharing with you in this book. Once you apply them and make them part of your life, I know they will work for you too. Every time we face a challenge, we can refer to the Nine Principles of Awakening and see which one requires attention. Observing your three timelines and then working to transform the energy where you are stuck using the Nine Principles, you'll discover how to:

- make peace with your past!
- live fully in the present!
- discover your purpose!
- empower yourself to create the life and future that you truly deserve.

If I could do anything in the world, absolutely anything, I would still do this work because I know it has the power to change your life as much as it did mine – and continues to do so every day. Consider this book a toolbox for building the ultimate life that you desire.

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CHAPTER ONE

Awakening From A Programmed Life

'Nothing has such power to broaden the mind as the ability to investigate systematically and truly all that comes under thy observation in life.'

Marcus Aurelius

Visualize for a moment William Shakespeare's idea of 'All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players.' In fact, we're not just the 'players', we're also the scriptwriters, directors and producers of our own play called 'life'. However, unaware of this, how often do we let our parents, teachers, peers, religious beliefs or lack of them and our environment write our script and direct our play? Sometimes we even act out our parents' dreams and programming not knowing that it is not our own.

My first degree was my father's dream of 'becoming an accountant', while my marriage was a result of witnessing my parents' interaction in their relationship. If you are having relationship issues, where you keep attracting the same type of situation or partner, the chances are that you're enacting your parents' programming – perhaps they split up when you were young or had a challenging relationship. Or if you find yourself chasing a certain dream, chances are that you picked up the idea of that dream from one of the above-mentioned sources.

Of course the reverse is also true, and we also pick up positive programming as we are growing up, which serves us !

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well and is the reason why we brush our teeth twice a day, work hard at our jobs or have other life-affirming behaviours – and I remain truly grateful for everything that my parents did for me. So, in observing your life, it is important to acknowledge all your positive values, beliefs and behaviours while seeking to awaken from anything that is keeping you stuck and not aligned with the life you truly want.

Signs of Awakening

Awakening interacts with us on four levels (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual) and here follow some of the common signs that you have already begun to awaken:

Physically: You may experience aches and pains that seem to appear out of nowhere and/or have ailments that don't respond to conventional medicine.

Mentally: You may have negative thoughts, find it difficult to concentrate and struggle to enjoy activities and hobbies that you once loved.

Emotionally: You may experience mood swings and feel overwhelmed with emotion. You may also find it difficult to relate to colleagues, friends or your partner out of fear of getting close to people.

Spiritually: You may experience a feeling of emptiness and question your purpose in life.

You can go through Awakening on more than one level at a time, or even all four simultaneously. However to transform the energy of your programming (energetic imprints, which you'll learn to access on page 27), it is important first to understand how the mind really works and that it operates on three levels:!

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Conscious: The part of your mind that is aware right now, and is responsible for paying attention and focusing.

Subconscious: This is like the software of a computer and is where all your programming is stored. It dictates where you live, how much money you earn, what type of work you do, even the sort of person you are attracted to.

Superconscious: While the conscious and subconscious aspects of your mind are closely aligned with your physical body, the superconscious is connected with the unseen realm. It exists at a level extending beyond what our five senses can perceive and exists in our energetic thought forms. When we are accessing our eternal and ancestral timelines we are connected to this part of our mind.

You might find it easier to think of your conscious mind as the computer (hardware) while the subconscious mind is the software (programming), which runs your conscious mind, the computer, and is closely aligned to your physical body. The third part, your superconscious mind, is the Internet and connected with the energetic realm. It exists at a level extending beyond the space–time continuum and has the ability to link to every other mind on the planet.

In order to get in touch with our subconscious and superconscious, we need to be able to bypass the conscious brain and the fastest way to do this is by inducing a meditative or trance state. Many people are wary about ‘hypnosis’ and think it means someone else (the hypnotist) having control of their mind, but this is not the case – the participant is always in control.

The truth is that we actually go in and out of these trances all the time, usually when we are doing something familiar, such as driving our usual route to work, brushing our teeth or washing the dishes. They can also occur when we are doing something mentally creative – such as writing or playing music; or emotional – such as making love; or spiritual – praying or meditating; or physical – running or walking. !

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Afterwards, we can't actually remember doing the act, but that's because we were no longer using our conscious brains. We were in the moment and in a dream-like state where we were connected to our innermost thoughts and feeling (or energy). Some people talk about this as being 'in the flow', and inducing a hypnotic state is simply a way of inducing that flow-like state at will, so that we can speak to the subconscious and superconscious parts of the brain and make positive changes to our energy.

Discovering your programs

When I first started learning NLP and ENLP, I worked intensely on my own development so that, in time, I could help others out of their stuck-ness and find their energy. In that time I learned that it is possible to see all our difficult issues as true gifts, rather than problems or misfortune. This might sound strange, but our trials and tribulations allow us to look beyond our current understanding of life and urge us to explore possibilities we didn't think existed before. We learn and evolve through our difficulties as we embark on a quest for meaning. The following describes how this process works.

During my first session, I focused on the deep sadness that I had felt all my life and traced the energy back to when it was imprinted – which was all the way to the time when I was born. I could sense my mother's disappointment and relived that same sadness as a newborn. Then I worked on transforming the energy of that imprint by communicating to my infant self. Using the power of imagination, I cradled myself as a newborn and told her that she was loved and wanted – I visualized the sadness leaving my baby self and love entering.

We can do this type of work on ourselves because as adults we are able to perceive situations differently and therefore transform how the event affected us – which in turn changes our present experience of who we are.!

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Awakening From A Programmed Life

After that session, I felt different and, for the first time, truly loved, which immediately changed how I related to life. Being able to accept and appreciate myself transformed my relationships, which in turn helped my health and I started to experience a sense of wellbeing and health.

Each session, I picked a past event that had hurt me or upset me, induced a trance-like state by relaxing and focusing on my breath and then worked on identifying where my energy was coming from and what it was teaching me. Once I was able to visualize all my emotions as energy in motion I could trace them back to the point of creation and then transform the energy into something more life-giving, creative and aligned with my heart's desires. For example, I discovered that the energy of fear surrounded how I felt about money and so I worked on transforming that emotion into one of excitement, and so my finances started improving.

Becoming aware

So your first step on your journey of Awakening is to become aware of any issues that require attention. Ask yourself where you might be following yourself blindly; where your habits, traditions and ideas of yourself may need updating or shifting. Start an Awakening journal and write your observations down in as much detail as possible. Consider where the issue might have started, how it manifests in your life and how it affects you on the four levels: physical, mental, emotional, spiritual. If you are experiencing any signs of Awakening (listed on page 18), then you are already beginning to become aware of the scripts (programming) you have been running in your life from your current timeline, or carried forward from your eternal timeline, or may have been affecting your family for centuries (ancestral timeline). This work will help clarify how that energy is affecting your life.!

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Don't worry if you begin to question everything. We don't tend to look for the answer until something stops working, so see this questioning as taking action before things go wrong.

The source of our values, beliefs and behaviours

After spending many years helping people, I have found that whatever issue you are currently facing, it is unlikely to be a new problem. It is more likely that the issue you are dealing with in adulthood is an unresolved problem that happened during your formative childhood years. The problem is that many of us spend our lives believing what our environment taught us to believe. Our first instinct when we are born is to survive and in order to survive we take on the point of view of everyone around us. These points of view create our 'beliefs' and, like the monks in the following story who thought tying the cat was a holy practice, this is also how most traditions are formed.

THE MONASTERY'S CAT

The monks of one particular monastery in Tibet were renowned for their spiritual practice, spending their days absorbed in profound meditation. But one day a cat stalked into the monastery grounds and interrupted the monks' practice with its infernal screeching. This enraged the head monk so much that he ordered his monks to trap the cat and tie it to the banyan tree until nightfall, the time when the monks would end their meditation. Furthermore, he ruled that the cat should be tied to the tree in the!

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same way every day, to prevent such disruption ever happening again. And so tying the cat to the banyan tree became part of the monks' habitual practice. When the head monk came to the end of his life, his replacement continued all the monastery's customs, not omitting the practice of catching and tying up the cat every day. When the cat died, however, no one in the monastery knew what to do. How could they continue their usual daily practice without the cat? Eventually, after much thought, everyone agreed that a new cat must be purchased, so that the monks could catch it and tie it to the banyan tree before they began their meditation each day.

In the same way, most people take beliefs to be something that appears to be absolutely true for them. It is their understanding of the world. For example, if I believe that apples are good for me, then it must be due to evidence or experience that has created that belief; it has become a truth. Somewhere in my mind I will have enough resources to believe this is the case. Some of these beliefs are helpful, such as the one that fruit and vegetables are good for us – due to that belief we eat a healthy diet. However, others are not. For example, we might grow up believing that we always fail, that we are unlucky or that we are not good enough (because we were often told this as a child), or that eating ice cream will make the hurt go away, or that relationships always end in heartbreak.

In adulthood, our beliefs can manifest as all sorts of issues, including low self-esteem, destructive relationships and bad habits, because the programmed voice in our head keeps telling us, for example, 'I am not good enough' or!

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'I am unlucky' or 'This food will make me feel better' or 'I will get hurt if I get too close to them.' Our beliefs are personal to us and the list of possible beliefs is endless but they have one thing in common: our beliefs are powerful because they are always backed up by evidence.

All the beliefs that parents hold about the world are automatically installed in their child's memory at conception, along with their biological genes and cellular make-up, and these affect what the child believes about the world. This may sound unbelievable, but there have been many cases where children have been separated from their natural parents at birth, but have grown up with similar traits due to nature not nurture. Take, for example, the true story told by Elyse Schein and Paula Bernstein in *Identical Strangers* of twins who were separated at birth and yet developed strikingly similar behaviours. Epigenetics, the study of inherited traits and behaviours, is currently one of the hottest topics in psychology, and while more research is needed, we do know that our genetics aren't just limited to physical traits but can affect our behaviours (which are due to our beliefs) at a cellular level.

So when the child is born those inherited beliefs are strengthened by the parents' behaviours and practices, and because the child has some common beliefs with the parents it's more than likely they will act the same way and attract similar situations as they grow into adulthood. Due to their beliefs they may find that they are having similar experiences as their parents, and this is why it's not uncommon to find that we often make the same mistakes as our parents.

So our beliefs create what we hold to be important, and we usually define these beliefs as our 'values'. Our values are the system that drives our actions and behaviours; they are a road map of how we think we should behave and what our lives should reflect and look like. For example:

Belief: 'I must work hard to earn a living.')

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Value: ‘I must work hard for my money, even if it’s in a job I don’t enjoy’, ‘laziness is bad’, ‘work is more important than family and friends’, ‘money is really important’, etc.

Behaviour: Mentally – this may manifest as feeling constantly stressed and under pressure, and an inability to switch off from work; emotionally – relationships with family and friends may be poor because work takes priority over others and personal needs for rest and enjoyment; spiritually – feelings of isolation might pervade as commerce rules rather spiritual nourishment; physically – working too much might result in not exercising and eating a poor diet, and so minor or major health issues ensue from poor lifestyle habits and too much stress.

The energy of this one belief demonstrates how it can affect the whole of our life and result in us assuming a life that we didn’t choose. Awakening is about examining and transforming the energy of our beliefs so that they create positive and life-affirming values that result in behavioural changes, which in turn impact life physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

Storing our beliefs (programs)

Our memories also form part of our beliefs and values system, together with the decisions and promises we made to ourselves, and determine the type of life that we are currently living. For example, if you fell into a paddling pool when you were three years old and struggled to get out, then you may have decided that water is deadly. You never learned to swim, you hate going on boats and aren’t even that keen on the beach. The deal you made was a logical one at the time and its aim was to protect you from further harm, but the water you fell into as a child would barely come above your ankle now !

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that you are an adult. Yet the experience is still very real to you on some level.

Mainstream science tells us that the brain alone is responsible for holding our memories. However, new research is beginning to change this old paradigm. Take the example of David Waters. According to a story published by the *Daily Mail* in 2009, he received a heart transplant from 18-year-old Kaden Delaney, who was left brain-dead after a car crash. After the transplant David found that he developed a craving for a particular brand of burger-flavoured snacks, and when he spoke to Kaden's family he discovered that Kaden used to eat these snacks daily. This is one of many other examples where transplant recipients suddenly take on the characteristics of the donor, but how is this possible?

Caroline Myss, best-selling author of *Anatomy of the Spirit*, says, 'our biography becomes our biology'. She describes how the body, not just the brain, has the ability to store information such as memories, sensations, emotions, personality and even trauma in the neurons of its cells. This is often referred to as 'cellular memory' and is a compilation of our entire life. As the brain and the organs are constantly communicating, each cell has access to this entire information.

*Think of your body as a computer and each cell
within it as a separate RAM containing all the files.*

Our memories are not bound by time, either, because this is not a concept that the mind understands, which is why traumatic events can still feel very new and raw many years later. In its most extreme form, when the event or circumstances are deeply traumatizing, such as rape or being in military conflict, this can result in disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The mind simply views the images irrespective of whether they occurred in the present or years before and has no way of distinguishing what is real or unreal in the present!

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moment. Each memory we access is remembered as if we were living it now. For example, when we feel low or depressed after an uneventful day, it is not usually due to the day's events but because, in some way, these have triggered a memory from the past and we relive that event or set of circumstances over and over again in our present. As when we feel anxious about our future, the body reacts as if imagined events are currently taking place, and we may even experience the flight-or-fight response and experience an adrenalin rush, even when nothing is actually happening externally in that moment.

Energetic imprints and timelines

In the same way, many people come to me with relationship issues. Often their problem occurred in their current timeline when they were perhaps six or seven years old. They may, for example, have witnessed their parents fighting and arguing, and promised themselves that they would avoid the same pain by not getting married. As time goes on, they consciously forget all about that experience and start looking for their perfect partner, but as soon as things start to go well and marriage is on the cards they get 'cold feet' and everything breaks down. Why? Because they are still living the promise they made to a younger version of themselves.

ARMING AGAINST LOSS

Brenda came to see me because she wanted to resolve a long-standing weight issue. She had been trying for years to shift the extra pounds by trying every diet available, but always ending up eating foods that were bad for her. I used a guided meditation to help

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her discover the source of her beliefs about food. It turned out that her father's death when she was six years old left her feeling very vulnerable and small. Gaining weight then made her feel more protected and bigger, and she carried that belief into adulthood and discovered 'when I comfort eat, I feel the love from my father'. Once we were able to transform this belief about food, Brenda found that she was able to maintain her diet without the self-sabotaging belief that the food made her feel loved and protected her.

Sometimes the point of creation of a belief can be traced to the eternal or ancestral timelines, even though the challenge we might be facing is showing up in our current timeline. The truth is that every event we experience is multi-faceted and it's important to keep that in mind when you start to integrate those parts of you that have been ignored for so long. Accessing timelines using the ABC process (which you'll learn on page 37) can also reveal events and circumstances that have been holding you back, as the next case study demonstrates.

CHILDHOOD VOWS

Amanda was in love with a man who abused her, but she couldn't break free from the relationship no matter how hard she tried. After seven years of misery, she came to a live Awakening event and we carried out a process to find out when she had created this issue. She knew little about her mother or maternal family, but working on her ancestral timeline she!

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discovered to her astonishment that her mother and her grandmother had been in abusive relationships too. Going deeper, she recalled an event where her dad had come home drunk and beaten her mother. She was 12 and suddenly remembered feeling very scared for her mother. Desperately wanting her to feel better she made a vow to herself that she would have a bad relationship too in an effort to try and make her mother feel better. This is not uncommon, as children often believe that taking on the same pain will help their parent heal. Once Amanda had identified what had been holding her back, she was able to acknowledge it, heal it and then let it go.

The vows and pacts made in our eternal timeline also have an impact on our current life. I believe that in the soul plane (the place we return to before incarnating back on earth), we exist as a soul of pure spiritual energy with no ego or earthly ties. Without the burden of emotional attachment, we are able to see what we need to learn from each lifetime, or what we can do to help teach others, in order to evolve spiritually. Other souls

– people we will meet on earth – make pacts or agreements with us, and we with them, to help create experiences that will allow us to absorb the knowledge and grow spiritually.

For example, if there is someone in your life right now who has wronged, abused or hurt you, or someone you are unable to let go of, imagine if you could discover why you chose to experience all the pain (or the joys) of that relationship before you were born. I believe that's exactly what happened. You made the decision to meet that person so that you could mutually have an experience together from which you both!

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would learn. The thing that surrounds the truth of your relationship is what is called the 'Veil of Amnesia', between the conscious and superconscious mind.

The Veil plays an essential part in making sure we go through the spectrum of emotions required for an enriched and fulfilling experience that is necessary for our evolutionary journey. It allows us to experience all of life's ups and downs so that we can integrate them into our psyche.

Explore the power of this idea by imagining for a moment that you are a soul planning your next incarnation on earth. You decide to experience the lesson of self-empowerment. In order to learn the lesson, you agree a contract with another soul who will become your partner and you will have children together. Together you decide that when your children are three and six, he will fall in love with another woman and abandon you. After going through the pain, you will learn the lesson of self-empowerment by having to take responsibility for your children alongside many other growth lessons about courage, forgiveness and not judging.

If there were no Veil of Amnesia, the year your kids turned three and six, you would start searching for the 'other woman' your partner is going to leave you for, and ask, 'Isn't this the time you were supposed to leave me?' This would obviously dilute the shock and emotional impact of the lesson you have chosen to learn. You would not appreciate life's lessons if you already knew you were 'going home' at the end of it. The very point of each life on this planet, the earth plane, is to learn and evolve through our emotional experiences and recognize the higher purpose of our relationships. We may not remember the agreements made in the soul plane consciously, so when these spiritual beings show up as family members, friends, lovers or even enemies, they offer our biggest challenges wrapped in the Veil of Amnesia, so that we can work through our lessons as a result of those relationships. Sometimes the most loving beings in your life are also the ones who agreed!

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Awakening From A Programmed Life

in the soul plane to teach you the most painful lessons on the earth plane.

It is also true that not everyone you meet in your life has made an agreement with you in the soul plane. On the other hand, you'll probably instinctively know some of the people you encountered there. Often these are people you have a strong bond with, and you may intuitively know that you have met them before. They may also be people who have passed away that had an impact on your life or people who will become an important part of your future, that are as yet unfamiliar to you.

This is exactly what Awakening is about in spiritual terms – lifting the Veil of Amnesia to see the truth of your experiences. Recognizing the lesson in any challenging situation is one of the keys to living an Awakened life. And in the next chapter you will learn how to start burning the Veil and seeing the purpose of your incarnation.

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Awakening Events

The Awakening: Access the Courage Within

Experience Sidra's psychic and healing gifts at her one day masterclass, which will guide you in becoming aware of and releasing your blocks in health, wealth and relationships. Throughout the day you will gain first-hand experience of the proven tools that have transformed the lives of thousands. After attending Sidra's masterclass, many people report gaining a promotion or an increase in clients, as well as experiencing more fulfilling relationships than ever before. Sidra is the foremost expert of the new wave of personal development and she travels the world helping people awaken to their true selves. Share the space with like-minded people as you take the first steps in a life-changing journey.

Click the link below to see the upcoming events:

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