

Foreword

I met Philip Shepherd many years ago, when he was pondering the ideas that he would so brilliantly communicate in his first masterpiece: *New Self, New World*. I was working on my first book, *Soulshaping*, and also trying to bring language to a vast array of ideas and experiences. We only spoke briefly, but I had the strongest sense that our meeting was no accident. We were traveling similar pathways. Years later, our manuscripts arrived on the same publisher's desk on the same day. Both of us subsequently received and accepted an offer to publish. We were kinfolk, in the ways that matter.

Some authors write only from their mind. Not Philip. He writes from a consciousness that bridges mind and body, from deep within the sacred dialogue between abstract intelligence and felt experience. It is a beautifully artful, co-creative dance that illumines and integrates his vision. And it ensures that his message comes through with a rare degree of genuineness, vibrationally congruent with the author's own transformation. He writes from the wholeness he speaks of. His words carry a living resonance.

I have always been particularly interested in what motivates an author's message. Not just how a book was breathed into being, but why it came to be. Some authors are motivated by the hunger for egoic or financial glory. Philip isn't. He writes in an effort to make sense of his own experience, and because he longs to help us make sense of our own. I think of him as a kind of authenticity-tracker, someone who has devoted his life to understanding where we took the wrong turn on the trailways of

transformation, and to locating a way of being that will serve us going forward.

In *Radical Wholeness*, we are blessed with the fruits of Philip's impassioned labor and years of dedication. In his first book, he took us to the edge of a new frontier. In this book, we cross with him to the other side. There we find our seat of wholeness. Out of the dark ages of a bifurcated, head-down consciousness, we arrive at an inclusive consciousness, one that unites the abstract intelligence of the head with the sensory intelligence of the body, and especially the integrative genius of the pelvic bowl. No longer antagonistic entities, body and mind become one and we are awakened to the living pulse of reality. That reality includes all that we were unable to access in our previously fractured state: unintegrated perspectives, capacities, hopes, memories, emotions and energies. Through a fragmented lens, all we can experience is separation. Through a unified lens, we experience our wholeness. And once there, we find our sacred purpose, our partnership with the world. This is the great gift of Philip's offering. So many of us are lost on the path, not knowing why we are here. It's little wonder—in a state of division, we cannot see our place in the world. Philip brings us back to the whole, and from the place of freedom that wholeness offers us, we finally recognize our reasons for being. We discover our place in the world. What greater gift is there?

This book couldn't have come at a better time, as our unintegrated and divisive ways of being threaten our very existence as a species. If we continue to experience the world as something distinct from us, we will continue to destroy it. In Philip's words, "When our thinking unmoors itself from the body ... we come to feel and believe that we are superior to the world and distinct from it and that the fate of humanity is somehow sealed and independent from that of life on Earth." This emphasis on superiority—rather than inclusivity—is fundamental to the cultural story that most of us have been fed. At its root is the patriarchal obsession with mastery, which shows up everywhere we look.

We see it in the single-minded focus of the unconscious capitalist—who seeks to accumulate at the expense of all else. On his endless quest for more, he perpetually confuses fragmentation with self-actualization. We also see it in the cultural fixation with perfection, a ridiculous notion that compels those who seek it to over-develop one aspect, while neglecting all others. And we even see it in the spiritual movement, where a vast cadre of pseudo non-dualists seeks to master a unified field of consciousness while bypassing the very stuff of their humanness—their memories, unresolved emotional issues, personal identifications, egos, stories, the body itself. Although they would appear to have a growthful intention, these spiritual seekers are, in fact, no less fragmented and dangerous than the unconscious capitalists. The latter turn us into head-tripping accumulators, entirely unaware of the relational field and the earth that houses us. And the former turn us into self-avoidant automatons, bereft of feeling. Too much unhealthy ego, or no ego at all—both leave us oblivious to what really matters. And oblivious won't get us anywhere good. It's integration that we need. Not rarefied, but realified—available to and within all. The holy wholly. This is the place Philip brings us to: that critical point of integration. From there, a new vista opens before and within us. Radical wholeness.

Perhaps the most personally satisfying aspect of this book is the way that it invites the reader to reconcile his own relationship to reality. It doesn't simply articulate wisdom—it hearticulates a palpable experience that calls out to your own quest for wholeness. As I read through its pages, I found myself stopping time and again to reflect on my own journey and the struggle to integrate my aspects into a harmonious whole. As an adolescent and young adult, I too survived by my wits. I too sought to master particular threads of consciousness at the exclusion of all else. These ways of being served me for a time, and yet I would move through my days with the agonizing sense that I was living a fragmented life. That sense soon blossomed into a visceral knowing, a deep cry arising in the middle of the night, words demanding to be written

on my bedroom wall: “Excessive analysis perpetuates emotional paralysis.” The longing to be whole was awakening. Thereafter, I spent many years questing for it, making slow, steady strides both within my body, and within my various spiritual practices. But I couldn’t quite get all the way there, despite my best efforts. Something has been missing, not wholeness itself, for it is always present, but a living experience of it. In braving this journey and writing this book, Philip has handed me the blueprint for that next step. He has not only validated my intuitive knowing as to the direction to take home—towards the body, deeper within the body—but he also provided me with practices to support that deepening. I am grateful.

Some books are brilliantly wise, but don’t leave us any the wiser. This book is truly different. The bell of truth chimes throughout it, calling us into alignment, celebrating us home. As you read it and apply the exercises, you are not only energized by its wisdom, you are left different than when you started—both divinely inspired, and more fully human. Many will find the next steps on their heroic quest for wholeness in its pages.

In Philip’s words, “whatever else I have done in my life, I have focused on one issue: to understand the nature of the Story of our culture, to discern how it shows up in my body, and to acquire freedom of choice in the matter.” In so doing—and particularly with this book—he offers us freedom of choice as well. The freedom at the heart of wholeness. May we seize it with everything we are.

—*Jeff Brown*
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