

Michael Singer: Living Untethered by Tami Simon

What follows is the syndicated transcript of an Insights at the Edge interview from Sounds True, between Tami Simon and Michael Singer. You can listen to the audio version [here](#).

Tami Simon: Welcome to Insights at the Edge produced by Sounds True. My name's Tami Simon, I'm the founder of Sounds True and I'd love to take a moment to introduce you to the Sounds True Foundation. The goal of the Sounds True Foundation is to provide access and eliminate financial barriers to transformational education and resources such as teachings and trainings on mindfulness, emotional awareness, and self-compassion. If you'd like to learn more and join with us in our efforts, please visit SoundsTrueFoundation.org.

In this episode, I speak with bestselling author Michael Singer. Michael is the author of the spiritual classic *The Untethered Soul*. He's also the author of *The Surrender Experiment*. Both of these books are New York Times bestsellers. *The Surrender Experiment* is the book that recounts his personal story of spiritual unfolding.

And now Michael Singer has written a sequel to *The Untethered Soul*, it's called *Living Untethered: Beyond the Human Predicament*. And it's a true honor that Sounds True was able to publish *Living Untethered* in partnership with New Harbinger.

Sounds True has also created an online course with Michael Singer. It's called *Living from a Place of Surrender*, and, quite honestly, I hear lots of comments from Sounds True friends and listeners about their favorite programs at Sounds True, and this course with Michael Singer often comes in at the very top of the list for so many people, *Living from a Place of Surrender*.

It's a rare gift for me to have an opportunity to have an in-depth conversation like this with Michael Singer. He's known as somewhat of a hermit, a recluse, someone who doesn't give many interviews. And I decided to take it upon myself to really ask him the questions that I felt burning inside me after reading *Living Untethered*. Take a listen.

Michael, we're here to talk about your new book, *Living Untethered*, the sequel, if you will, to *The Untethered Soul*. And to start, first of all, I just want to say how grateful I feel to have this chance to be with you in this way. I know you don't give very many interviews, and this is a really special treat for me. So, thank you.

Michael Singer: No, thank you for inviting me.

TS: Now share a little, what inspired the writing of Living Untethered? What welled up inside of you, such that you felt it's time for another book?

MS: I generally write when I have something to say, and that's what happened. People were asking questions; people were going deeper. And I wanted to make sure they had the teachings at the deepest possible level, so Living Untethered came out of all that.

TS: You begin the book asking people, "Are you in there?" Tell me about that question, "Are you in there?"

MS: That's the beginning of all spiritual journeys. It's for a person to ask or someone to ask someone the question, "Are you in there?" I've never had anybody say, "No, I'm not in here." That's an interesting concept to think, if they said, "No, I'm not in here." Well, then who's answering and who heard me?

That's a real centering beginning that anybody can deal with. Doesn't matter if they're on a spiritual journey, they were meditating or anything like that. "Are you in there?" And they all say, "Yes, I am in here," and that's a starting place.

TS: In talking about being "in there," you describe something that you call the seat of awareness, and I wanted to start our conversation there. If someone were to listen to this conversation from the seat of awareness, what would that be like? How would they do that?

MS: That's jumping ahead a whole lot, but let's start there. You are aware. People don't pay attention to the fact that they're aware, but obviously they're aware. You see through your eyes; you hear through ears, and you feel through touch, and so on. Who does that? What does that? Your eyes don't see, you see through your eyes. Your skin passes messages back to you, your ears pick up sound vibration, send them back to you. Who is that in there and where in there? It's not really everywhere. There's a place inside of yourself from which you listen.

That's why some meditation techniques are very beautiful. They tell you to just listen, listen to quiet, listen to whatever sounds there are, pay attention, listen. Then you really realize you're in there trying to listen. Where is that? You're listening from that. And you can't talk about this stuff because if you talk about it, it's mental and then you're basically thinking about it.

I would rather have people just be natural and realize, you do hear, don't you? You do see, don't you? Who does? And the big question is where do you hear from? But that's getting into yoga, that's getting into deep spirituality when you're asking, "Where do you hear from?" And most people can't right away center in on that. They're not used to

focusing on the consciousness. They're used to focusing on the object of consciousness. I always accept that. That's fine. I want them to start there because they're not able to just all of a sudden pull back and withdraw the consciousness from the object of consciousness, which is what you're seeing through your eyes—objects—[and] you're hearing through your ears sounds that are outside.

You're asking a deep question; the deep answer is you are inside. And if you meditate and you pay attention and work with witness consciousness, you're going to find out that there is a place in there where you are and that the sights that are coming in are outside of you, even inside. Your thoughts are outside of you, you'll feel that they're at a distance from you, because you're sitting in a center of consciousness and then you're projecting your consciousness onto objects of consciousness.

TS: Michael, we're going to have a deep conversation here, you and me, because I think there's an audience of people who are so hungry for this. They want this so much and they want to hear from you. I'm not going to hold back, just to let you know.

MS: OK. Fair enough.

TS: OK. You talk about how from this place of the witness, we can witness a three-ring circus, you call it, which I think is quite humorous. Describe the three-ring circus.

MS: Basically, there are three categories or groups of objects of consciousness that your consciousness is aware of. One is the outside world. If you close your eyes, you don't see the outside world. If you open your eyes, Ah, there it is. It comes in.

I discussed in the book—it goes deep, tries to be somewhat scientific, so that we fit into an intellectual model because everything is logical and intellectual and reasonable. The fact of the matter is, most people don't think about this. You don't really see through your eyes. Your eyes are sensors—we call them senses, but they're sensors, just like computer sensors—that are picking up light, turning it into signals that are being sent up your nervous system, your optical nerves, and then it is rendering it inside your mind. Just like you look at a flat-screen TV and you look at it in there.

That's hard for us to relate to, because our mind is so intelligent that it creates 3D and depth perception and everything, even though you're actually back in here watching what's coming in. And I like to have fun with people. I say, "I'll prove it to you that it's really just light that's bouncing off of objects and coming into your eyes, right? Turn off the lights and you won't see anything because then there's no light bouncing off of things." That's how we think. We think we turn off the lights therefore I can't see. No, it's because I turned off the light, there's no light bouncing off the objects and reflecting back into your eyes. It's kind of neat, isn't it?

It's fun to talk about this stuff. So, one thing of the three-ring circus is there's an outside world with all of its objects and there's a lot of objects out there. The second is, that's not

all you receive inside, not all you're aware of inside. You're also aware of thoughts, which I'm sure we'll be talking about deeper so I'll just surface level it. You're aware of thoughts that go on in there. Are you not? Right? You notice your thoughts are talking to you. You notice you can make your thoughts think different things. So, you, the consciousness, the exact same consciousness that is aware of the outside world, is aware of your thoughts.

They're not separate, we're not categorizing it. This is the consciousness, here's my thoughts and that's the consciousness, this is the world. You can do them both at the same time, particularly looking at something and thinking about it, and your same consciousness is seeing both.

The third is your emotions, which are quite different than thoughts, and I'm sure we'll talk more about that. But basically, emotions are feelings, they're vibrations that come up. They're not thoughts or thought forms. You can actually see a boat in there. You don't see words, but you can hear words. They're talking to you, that voice inside your head.

Emotions are not like that. They're just basically shifts in energy patterns, vibrations that you pick up, but they're very strong and they catch your consciousness.

So those are the three things in the three-ring circus: the outside world that you're aware of; the thoughts that are inside your head, your mind; and the emotions that emanate from your heart. And consciousness gets distracted by those things.

It's really funny that the word "distraction" becomes a spiritual word. People don't think of it that way, but deep spirituality deals with distractions. That's what it's all about. If you weren't distracted by your emotions, distracted by your thoughts, or distracted by the outside world, you'd be sitting in Shakti.

The consciousness would be able to come back into its source, and that is very deep. We can talk about that later too. The source of consciousness is not human. It's divine. It's universal. But we can't stay there because we have an emotion, boom, the consciousness gets drawn to the emotion. It gets distracted. We can't because the thoughts come up: "What I'm supposed to do? Do I have time for this? Why'd she say that?" And then we're distracted by the thoughts.

What is distracted? Like we talk about ADHD and different distractions. We're all that way. We're all ADD, right? We're constantly distracted by our thoughts, distracted by our emotions and distracted by objects in the world changing and doing things. Therefore, our consciousness is drawn out of the seat of consciousness, the center of consciousness onto the objects that are distracting us.

The main thing I point out at one point in the book, I say you don't stand a chance. It's like a conspiracy against you. Something happens outside, it causes thoughts to happen inside, and it causes emotions to happen, and they generally all line up. And then next thing your consciousness is not seated in a centered position, it's projected onto the objects of consciousness. So that's what I mean by three-ring circus.

TS: As I was reading Living Untethered, and there's the witness, there's the three-ring circus, the sense perceptions, the thoughts, emotions. I was tracking with you, and I was kind of following your argument, if you will, the presentation, beautifully. And then you got to the point where you said there's a fourth thing in there as well, and you used the

term Shakti, and I noticed the moment that you introduced this fourth thing inside, I got totally turned on. I got so excited. I was like, “Thank you, Michael Singer for naming this thing in my experience.” I haven’t really known exactly what to call it. I don’t even know exactly—is it Shakti? How would I know what Shakti is?

I want to go into this because, as I said, I think there are people who are starving to hear their experience named. When we discover Shakti inside, what are we discovering?

MS: We have energy inside. The way I teach—and you know that—and that’s one of the reasons why people relate so well to the teachings, is I don’t expect you to be some spiritual person that’s studied all this stuff. And beliefs are a whole other thing. I don’t care if you believe—I don’t want you to believe. I don’t want a mental concept of these things.

Do you feel energy inside? And the best way to talk about that is, do you feel shifts in your energy pattern? Are there times in which you just are brimming with energy, like something really nice happened? You say, “I’m so filled with energy, I could take on the world. Everything’s power inside of me.” It could be brimming up inside of you, you feel it tingling inside. That is Shakti. That’s not maybe what a deep yogi says about Shakti, but that is Shakti, that is energy.

There are other times in which there’s no energy. You feel like a wet dish rag. All of a sudden, the energy goes down, you feel depressed and there’s just no juice. So many words we use for it. Juice—is it flowing inside of you? Those shifts in your energy pattern are shifts in Shakti. There are shifts in the deepest spiritual thing that exists, but you’re feeling it at a surface level and that’s where I like to start. At least admit, everybody feels shifts in their energy patterns, right? Everybody has different times that they feel high energy and they feel low energy. We call it being up, being excited, to be enthused, that’s energy. And we feel it being depressed and being down and being drained, that’s a lack of energy. Okay, so that’s where I start and then we’ll work our way back to the deeper concepts of Shakti.

TS: If you were to describe right now in this moment, as we’re having this conversation, what does Shakti flow feel like for you right here, as we’re talking?

MS: I don’t generally talk about that stuff. But if you work enough on yourself—and what does that mean? It means letting go of yourself, and we’ll be talking about that. The energy flow doesn’t come and go, it’s always there. It can shift a little bit, but it shifts from patterns that are very high and it flows up and it flows to the third eye, into the top of the head. And you feel this constant all day, 24 hours a day, even feel it when you’re sleeping, that this energy is going up. It’s flowing up. It’s always lifting you. You’re always feeling love. If you need energy, you just stop for a second and it comes flowing up inside of you but that’s because you cleansed yourself, you cleaned out what’s blocking the energy.

I don’t like to talk about it, that people should feel this or so on, but you can, and you should. You should be able to not block your energy. So, you start to understand the

power of the Shakti flow, which is the power of your energy. You have energy. It doesn't take someone saying something nice to you for you to feel high, or it doesn't take that somebody says something not nice to you and you feel depressed. Behind that little shift in the humanness, there's a constant upward flow of energy. It's always coming out. So that's best I can say.

TS: Would you think one way to define living untethered is the free flow of Shakti energy through the person who's living untethered?

MS: Tethered means you're blocked, you're tied down. I like to think of a hot air balloon. If you were to a ride in a hot air balloon, big, colorful things, you're not going anywhere while you're tethered. They even call those tethers—I like it a lot. The cord, the ropes are tying you down to the ground, and they're tied in. You're not going to go up, put more helium in, put more hot air in, I don't care, you're not going up because you're tethered.

If you cut those tethers, it just goes up automatically. You don't have to do anything. It's the nature of things that it will rise because it has helium or hot air in it. So that's what's happening to you. There's nothing wrong with your energy flow. There's nothing wrong with your Shakti. No one has more Shakti than somebody else. Everyone has infinite, but it's blocked.

The question becomes, how is it blocked? Where is it blocked? Why is it blocked? And what can I do about it? Because what everybody wants, whether they call a Shakti or spirit, whatever you want to call it, what they want is energy. Everybody wants to feel enthused. Everyone wants to be excited about what they're doing. Everyone wants to feel love. They don't want to feel depressed and down and that means they want to feel energy.

Then the whole discussion about living untethered is first understanding that is what you want. I don't care. You tell me, "No, I want a new house." That's because you think it'll make you feel good. "I want a new relationship," that's because you think that a new relationship will make you feel more love and make you feel higher. No matter what you tell me you want, you really don't want that. You want what you think it will give you. You want what you think the effect of that. "I want to travel to Europe, all over the place, and I want to visit the great wonders of the world." Why? What if you're depressed and you're not having a good time? "Well, no, I don't want that."

What you're saying is, "I think that these things will open me, will let me feel more energy and that's what I want and that's what everybody's doing. I don't care what they're choosing to do. Everyone has different impressions, ideas of what will turn them on. Look at that term, "Turn me on," that's a light switch, that's energy. "Turn me off." It goes off. Everyone doesn't realize that they're talking about energy.

And so basically the idea becomes, how do you untether yourself? You do that by working with your energy. Some people, and there's nothing wrong with it, I support all spiritual teachings, period. I understand everybody's different and there are many different teachers and they teach different things. Many teachers, many spiritual teachers teach how to get the energy up, how to reach it up, how to make it flow, how to do different things that will stimulate your energy. All right. And what I like to do, and I've always done

it this way, to say, "OK, that's wonderful, but why is it not flowing that way naturally?" Because I happen to know that it should, that there's so much energy inside of you that you don't have to do anything. You just have to find out why is it not flowing? That's a different question as opposed to "How do I get it up? Why is it not up?"

For example, with a hot air balloon, I just need to put more hot air in it, I need to lighten it. No, you need to cut the tethers. If you cut the tethers, it's a whole other ball game about how to go up. So that's why it's called The Untethered Soul, and that's why it's called Living Untethered, because we're going to focus on what it is that's stopping your energy flow, instead of what it is that I can temporarily get a rush from.

Nothing wrong with temporary rushes. Right? But I want more permanent stuff. I'm greedy. I want it to stay there all the time and I want you and everybody else to have it there all the time. Like never, ever stop, no matter what happens. I want that underlying energy to keep flowing, lifting you, supporting you and then we can just keep getting higher and higher, by letting go.

TS: I might call that the deepest generosity and not greedy, Michael, but OK. So, I would say a huge focus of the book Living Untethered is this identification of what these blockages are. What are these blockages?

And you introduce another yoga term in addition to Shakti, which is a term from yoga for energy inside, you introduce the term, samskaras. Help us understand what samskaras are and how they block this natural flow of energy.

MS: I'll do it in the simplest form, and the book goes into it in great detail, which is very important, and that is that events come in through our senses. We live in this world and doesn't matter where we are, events come in through our senses, whether living in the middle of New York or living in Iceland in the country, events come in through our senses.

That's a beautiful thing, that's why we have senses so that we can experience this world. If we didn't have them, there'd be no reason to be here. It's God's gift, the universe's gift, that we get to experience life. They come in through our senses and our consciousness is aware of them. Otherwise, if there are no senses, then I'm not experiencing the world; if there is no consciousness, then I'm not experiencing the world. So, those two things kind of go together as the gift of experience.

You've returned to the garden. I get to see all these things, hear all these things, experience all these things. They come in and they flow into my consciousness like a river flows into the ocean. They just keep flowing. They don't stay; there's not a single thing that stays. Every moment there's a motion picture going past me. It doesn't matter if I move, it moves, everything moves. Buddhists say it's temporal, and they're right.

The world comes in and then it pours into my consciousness. And when it does that, I become a greater being, just as the ocean becomes purified and fulfilled and more whole, because these beautiful rivers flow into it. You become a more whole being, because you're having experiences. If you experience a squirrel for the first time, you now know more than you knew.

You don't have to think about it. Your experience of squirrels, your experience of all different things. That's what meant to be going on. That's pure experience and it's a very holy and high thing and there's no problems. You're just experiencing reality. The problem is that the consciousness—and this goes very deep—the consciousness will tend sometimes to not be comfortable, to not be open, to feel some resistance to what it's experiencing.

Maybe you know something about that, all right? It just doesn't feel comfortable letting this come in. I use the example of rattlesnakes. I always use that example—who wants to be standing around a rattling rattlesnake? It's not comfortable when it comes in, so you don't let it all the way in. I'm not saying you have to go pick up the snake, but if you're experiencing that at least experience this, so you can make some good decisions and not say, "No, I don't want to experience this," and that's not a mental thing.

That's an energetic thing inside where you resist; it's called resistance. You use your will. And that's a whole other question, what will is. You use your will in there to resist what's coming in. Notice you're not resisting the actual object outside; you're resisting when it comes in. And you're experiencing it inside, then you push it away.

Okay, that act of resistance keeps the impression that got made. The outside came in, made an impression on your mind, it keeps it in your mind. It keeps it there, you know that. You walk away, the rattlesnake crawls away, but it didn't crawl away inside of you. You're all scared. Why are you scared? There's no rattlesnake, because you kept it. You kept it in your image. You don't do that with the white lines on the road, they go right through. All kinds of trees you drive by, all kinds of cars you pass, all kinds of things go on.

I once said that we're 99.9 percent enlightened. Okay, I guarantee you, Tami, 99.9 percent of everything that comes into your senses passes right through, but then there's the rattle snake. There's something that didn't feel comfortable; therefore, it drew your attention. It distracted you and you resisted it. You used your will, this power of will to resist it. So, it got blocked inside your mind and your heart, inside your emotions. That is what a samskara is, a blocked internal experience that you did not let go through. Therefore, it stayed in there and it will stay in there your whole life.

What your mommy did to you and what daddy did and this happened, and fact that you didn't get the color bicycle you wanted, it's still in there. Go ask Freud; he'll tell you. That's what he realized. He didn't get deep into yoga and spirituality, but he realized that they're in there holding this stuff, suppressing this stuff, repressing, suppressing. I add a word to that. Repression, suppression, those are very deep things psychologically.

There's a thing called resistance. Resistance, you don't have to suppress it, it doesn't have to be clinically suppressed. If you touch it, you own it. So, when it's coming through and you say, "No, not on my watch," that thing stays inside. That's what a samskara is, a caught rendering of the world inside your mind, that a particular object that caught your attention so much that you held onto it and therefore it didn't pass through, and it will be there until you let go.

You'll be exerting that energy for the rest of your life to hold every single thing that you resisted. If somebody says something to you and you're not sure what they said, but you didn't like it, I guarantee you next time you see that person that's coming back up. You understand that?

TS: Yes. Michael, I want to take an example that I think is in our collective awareness, and I want you to help us with it and help me with it. Because here I've been reading Living Untethered in a very systematic and serious way and really trying to put it into practice.

I got an email from someone about a terrible news event, a terrible atrocity, another school shooting. I thought to myself, how would I experience this from a place of pure experience, not resisting this news? How does someone do that? I'd love to hear from you on that.

MS: That's a beautiful question. You asked me why I wrote the book. Because of these deep questions, if we're going to really try to work with this honestly, then there are deep questions like that. Life brings this stuff up. In the highest state, this is how a very evolved high open being handles this. The first thing is, if it didn't come into your mind, even though it happened, unfortunately it doesn't make any difference to you; you didn't know about it, it didn't come in.

But now it did come in. The news brought it in, or you were closer, unfortunately. So, it comes in, the minute it comes in you have to realize it's reality. It's not about like or dislike or want or not want or right or wrong, it happened, or it wouldn't be in here. Okay, so the first thing you do is honor and respect the reality that took place. Doesn't mean you won't do something about it, it doesn't mean anything. It just means it happened, right?

Evolution says that we're supposed to be the highest species. What does it mean to be the highest species? Adaptability to your environment. You understand that? You can adapt your environment. "Well, this is my environment right now. This took place. It came into me, and I have to honor and respect and accept the reality of it." It sounds terrible. People don't want to accept the reality of it, but not accepting the reality of it didn't change it one iota. All right, it did really happen. And so you come and you let it pass in and you feel the terrible vibration that's involved with that. Everything has a different vibration and you're capable of handling that vibration.

You're not freaking out; you're not closing down. This is part of reality, yin and yang, it comes in and you experience it. All right, believe it or not, that is the highest thing you can do to help. If you can't handle it, you can't help. You're too busy trying to do something to make yourself feel better. You understand that? Because "I can't handle this. I can't handle this." Then what are you going to do? You try to talk, you try to do this, you try to do that. In essence, "I can't handle it, something has to change so that I can handle it." That's not dealing with the situation; that's dealing with your inability to handle the situation, and those are very different things.

I always use this example: let's say there's a car accident and people are hurt, but you can't stand the sight of blood. You're of no use. You're of no use to that accident. You can't help anybody. I can stand the sight of blood, I don't like it. I don't have to like it. I don't have to want it to happen, right, but I can handle it. Now you can come forward and help people that are having a problem.

The first thing a spiritual person does, who understands the depth of the truth of life, is to accept the reality that it took place. Now what? That doesn't mean that's the end of it,

acceptance doesn't mean walk away, don't do anything, but I'm not doing anything personal. I was personally able to handle the reality of the situation. Now, what can I do to help? Not help me, not help my anger, not help my resistance, not help my hatred. That's not going on. What can I do to actually help the real situation? What can I do to help them pass gun laws or do whatever it is that needs to be done?

If you're in denial, then you can't help. What if, unfortunately, you're very close to that situation and you freeze and, "Oh my God, no," then you're of no use. You can't do it. It starts with acceptance, but it doesn't end up meaning you don't do anything.

TS: But now let's talk about that person who has a strong, emotional response—you said we'd talk about emotions—and part of them is like, "No, the sadness and the rage I feel, I don't know if I can handle this," and they are resisting in some way, because the amount of heartbreak is so extreme that they do close down in some way. How could this person do this inner work that you're describing right in that moment when they're noticing?

MS: As I would expect, you asked the deep questions. If you read the book—and you did—I almost want to sit there and say it's too late. In other words, if you have not worked with yourself sufficiently to where you can handle reality, you're going to get lost at times. And that's fine, that's just part of your growth, all right.

If you're riding a bicycle as a kid and you fall over, don't come to me and say, "Oh, I shouldn't have fallen over." No, that's how you learned your balance. You need to go through situations. So, in the book I talk about what's called low-hanging fruit, you of course, went right away to the very difficult hanging fruit.

TS: I did.

MS: I know.

TS: But we can also talk about low-hanging fruit too.

MS: Well, I'm going to do that as the answer to your question. What you do is you realize there are things that are going to go on in life that I'm going to have trouble handling. A divorce, somebody dies, I get sick, all kinds of things go on in life. If I'm going to do well in life, I have to start by being able to handle reality and then working with it to raise it.

Remember, acceptance and surrender do not mean that you do not interact with life. They are not giving up, they are not a white flag, it's not that kind of surrender. What you're doing is surrendering your resistance to the reality of the situation. That's a very different kind of surrender. Then you are dealing with the situation to raise it. By all

means, be an activist, put your whole heart into it, but not because you can't handle it, because then you can't think straight, then you're making all kinds of decisions that are not really productive.

What do you do in order to handle things? And that's what you just asked me. You start practicing, like you learn to play tennis. You learn to play the piano. You learn anything. You have to start from where you're at. We're not going to make believe we're somewhere else, putting on a fake front, all right? You start from where you're at and you sit there and say, "Do I resist even little things? Or is it just these giant things that I can't handle?"

"Well, the other day it was raining, and I wanted to go play a sport and it disappointed me because I really wanted to be with the person." OK, can we handle that? Can we learn to handle that? Because if you can't handle the weather, you're in trouble. You understand that, because you're not going to change the weather, it has nothing to do with you. If you're supposed to be the highest species on the planet, this thing about adaptability to reality, to the environment, we can start with the weather.

I really see the weather as a tremendous chance for growth. I'm not kidding. "It's hot." Yes, it's hot. Can you handle it? "No. I have to complain all the time and freak out all the time and get all sick and get myself upset." Well, you don't have to do that. You can sit there and say, "All right, today it's hot. Am I okay with that?" You better say yes because saying no doesn't make it not hot. It's so simple and silly, all right.

The same thing with the rain. I've pulled up somewhere, I need to make a delivery, which means getting out of my car, and it started pouring, but there's a time factor and I have to be there. "Tami's waiting for me, and so I can't mess around with this. OK, I'm going to get wet." Can you handle that? Or is this a freak experience that for the rest of the day, you tell everybody how terrible it was and you're afraid—this is silly. You start to practice little things, the low-hanging fruit.

And how do you do that? You let go, you just look at that part of you. It's not like because you decide to do this there won't be a part of you that doesn't resist. It's trying to resist. You have a habit of resistance. We all do. You have habits of resistance. Let them go. How you do it? There are all kinds of techniques: breath or a mantra; it could be positive thinking. I don't generally have to do it, but I still use positive thinking. That's a good foundational thing. Every time I have a negative thought, I replace it with a positive one.

In the book I give the example that it's hot out. If I feel really hot and I want to complain about it—I like astronomy—I ask myself, "Why is it hot? What's making it hot. Is there a heater somewhere?" I say, "Yeah, 93 million miles away there's a star. 93 million miles. It's hot enough to make me hot here on the planet." Wow. I ask everybody, I am in Gainesville 350 miles away, 250 miles away, "How big would a fire have to be in Miami for me to feel the heat in Gainesville?" Are you ready? The entire city could catch fire and I wouldn't feel a single thing. And that thing is 93 million miles away and I'm complaining about the heat.

Now you start to marvel: "Isn't that neat, I can feel the heat of a star." That's an example of how you start to work with yourself. You're not lying to yourself. You're just replacing this lower energy of resistance with an acceptance, with an awe, until eventually you do that with everything. You just do that with more and more things. And that's how you work with yourself.

We'll talk about another low-hanging fruit a little bit later, but if you'll do that, you're going to find out that all of a sudden something happens—not as big as the shooting—but something happens in your life that's bigger than the weather: somebody doesn't show up when they were supposed to. Somebody says to you, "They're my favorite." "Listen, I don't have time right now, but I want to talk to you when you come home tonight." Oh, you're not going to have a good day. Well, they want to talk to you because they're going to take you on a trip and they want to know which place you want to go, but your mind's not going to do that; it's going to freak you out. Well, there, that's a little bit bigger than low-hanging fruit, but it's not as bad as what we're talking about.

Next thing you know, it doesn't bother you. You all of a sudden sit there, "Okay, I'll see you then." And all day, it doesn't bother you because you learn to let go of being bothered. My favorite line in the book—and when I talked with Oprah, she said it was her favorite line also—is as follows: "The moment in front of you is not bothering you. You are bothering yourself about the moment in front of you." I want people to contemplate that because that's always the condition.

The driver in front of you that didn't use his blinker is not bothering you; you're bothering yourself. The blinker didn't get used, the car turned, whatever, now you're bothering yourself for the next five minutes: "Why don't they use their blinkers? What's going on?"

You'll find, if you think about it and contemplate it, that you are causing all this bothering. And so if you start with the small stuff and you work on yourself, that's what it's called, working on yourself, you're going to find out amazingly something will happen that used to freak you out or at least knock you off center, you wouldn't even remember that it used to.

You just reached a level inside, of letting go of that baby inside that can't handle things and you become a stronger, greater person.

TS: I wanted to ask you, Michael, about positive thinking, and then you offer another technique as well: working with a mantra, some kind of repetitive phrase. And then the third option as we're practicing, not being disturbed by what's happening is that we can actually work with the process of transmutation.

Let's put the process of transmutation to the side because I want to go deep into that and understand what you mean by that. But in terms of positive thinking and the repetition of a mantra, there's a part of me that's always thought, isn't that a form of suppression? Isn't that a form of like pushing something down? It's not really going to change the actual patterns of resistance inside me if I'm just making replacements at the surface level. I'd really love to know what you think about that.

MS: Very good. Let's start with positive thinking, and I make the point very strong in the book. You're not trying to not have the negative thoughts come up. You're trying to replace, not beat down, not stop, but give an alternative for your consciousness. It's sitting there saying, "Oh my God, it's raining. What the heck am I going to do?" Just put in there: "I love the rain. I love the rain. Imagine if it didn't rain, we wouldn't have crops. There are probably farmers that are so happy right now."

It can still say, “I don’t like the rain. I don’t want to have the rain.” I don’t want you pushing that away. This is not about suppression. I give a whole discussion in the book about automatic thoughts and willful thoughts, right? That’s an automatic thought, you didn’t decide to be upset by the rain, it started talking about it as a habit that you have. It’s a mental habit. You have the right to create another thought willfully that just says, “I’d rather think like this.” I don’t just throw the other thought away, over time you’ve carved a new channel, neuro pathways, call it whatever you want.

I live in the country. If it were to rain a lot, it might tick a little pathway through the grass that’s been mowed, and it’ll flow down the hill that way. Next time it’ll definitely go that way. Third time it will cause a rut. And that’s how you build a habit of thinking.

By being willing to create this positive thought—not fighting—but just to create a positive thought, put your consciousness there, pay attention more there than you do to the other. The other can still be there, that’s the key. You’re not saying, “Get out of my mind, I don’t like you.” You’re saying, “I like this better.”

If you pay attention to that, over time I guarantee you the positive will win over the negative. Light dispels darkness. Positive energy is much more enjoyable than negative energy. It is just like eating something that doesn’t make you feel well, but you’re in the habit of doing it. You have to replace that by eating something healthy, which may not taste as good, but over time you feel better, and it becomes a natural thing to let that go. That’s what positive thinking is.

More so with mantra—I teach this all the time. People say, “I’m saying my mantra: God, God.” No, you’re using a sledgehammer inside your head. You’re using the mantra to beat down your thoughts. No, no, no, no.

I make it very clear in the book. Your consciousness is what determines what you’re experiencing. If I focus on a picture on the wall, then I focus on another one, where I shift my consciousness determines what I’m experiencing. If you’re experiencing some negative thoughts or some negative feelings or along with it, whatever. But as I say, instead of positive thinking, if you’ve got that mantra going on in there, you just shift your consciousness back to the mantra. You pay attention to mantra.

If there are two pictures on the wall and I’m looking at one, I don’t have to rip it off the wall to look at the other. I don’t have to throw it away or do anything. I just shift the focus of my consciousness to the other. It’s the same thing inside. If these are the thoughts that are going on inside, but I bother to instill the repetition of mantra behind a different layer of my mind, if you will, I don’t touch the other thoughts.

I don’t want you fighting with your mind, ever. I’m just shifting my consciousness to whatever the mantra is; so, basically, it’s not fighting, it’s not suppressing. You should definitely not suppress, and what will happen is because resting back into this positive layer of your mind, the mantra, the other will fall away. Why? Because light dispels darkness, high energy is more powerful than negative energy. People don’t know that, because they’re used to putting their conscious into bad feelings and bad things. If you put it higher, it falls off naturally.

TS: Now, what if you put some positive thought in your mind and you hear a voice inside that just says, “Well, that’s not true. Come on, really? Whatever.”

MS: Good. Kiss it on the head.

TS: You can't really invest in this new positive thought because it feels phony.

MS: I want it to. I like that. There's no problem with that. I'm telling you, if I'm eating food that tastes really good and I feel good after eating it, but an hour later I'm sick, OK. Then somebody gives me something that's holistic—it's not going to taste as good, but I have to make myself eat it. In order to shift from something that's making me not well to something that in the end will make me well.

It takes some will; it takes some effort. It doesn't mean I have to deny that the other tasted better, I don't have to deny that I liked it. I have somebody who's a drug addict, who's caught on hard drugs, heroin or something, they want to do it, they have to, they want that. If they want to go through withdrawal, they're not going to sit there during the withdrawal and say, "I don't want the hit, I don't want the drug. I want the drug." I'm not lying to myself, I want the drug, but I want more to get off of it because it opens up a whole new life for me.

It's the same thing with what you just said. The mind is in the habit of complaining. The mind's in the habit of not liking something. "I don't like what she said. I don't care what you say." "I can handle it. It's okay. Let's give her some space." "I don't want to give her space."

It's like, if you can learn to give it some energy at a higher level, over time the other will fall away. I don't care that it's saying, "I don't like it, I don't believe what you're saying, I don't believe in God."

I remember the first time that—Yogananda is my guru. And he is very, very much into God. I wasn't. I didn't ever think about it my whole life. Then I got an experience—if you read *The Surrender Experiment*, it explains all that. I had this experience and all of a sudden, I'm meditating, I'm living in the woods, and it happened very suddenly for me.

I remember the moment that I was standing up in the loft where my meditation pillow was and my mind stood up and it said, "But I don't even believe in God." I just stopped for a second and looked at it and said, "Here, God, here's the part of me that doesn't believe in you." It never said another word from that moment forward. I'm just using the example of God. I don't really talk about that.

It could be anything. Just be willing to see that you have a habitual way of thinking, a habitual way of feeling and a habitual personality that you built through the samskaras, through the stuff you stored, that you liked and didn't like and now they're expressing themselves through you. That's what you are now. The sum of those samskaras, things that happened to you that you liked, you're acting that way. Things that happen to you that you didn't like, you're acting that way.

At some point, if you really want to grow, if you want to untether yourself, you realize

that's not going to make it because I'm just going to keep fighting with the world to match me, as opposed to changing me. You remember Rumi? "Yesterday I was clever, so I was trying to change the world. Today I'm wise, so I'm trying to change myself." That is essential for spiritual growth. If you've not reached that point that you realize it's not about getting what I want and making myself feel good, it's about changing all these patterns I have inside myself that are causing me to feel bad. "I feel bad unless I get what I want." I don't want you to feel bad. I want you to feel good all the time.

That's what you do with the part of you that is still saying, "I don't believe in this." I don't care. You can say all you want. "Yes, the sun's 93 million miles away"—I used to say that. "The sun's 93 million miles away. What's that got to do with me?" It has a lot to do with you. "Big deal. There are 2 trillion galaxies out there and I'm just sitting in a little planet speeding through space. It has nothing to do with me." Yes, it does. I don't care what you say—it's called reality. It's big.

It's good to think about that stuff, but at first your little self is going to keep expressing itself. What I want, and all the really great teachers teach this, is just be in a seat of consciousness, witness consciousness, notice that's going on. No problem with that, he [the little self] is that way. All right, he was brought up that way, it's his tendencies, but I want to raise him. It's not wrong that he or she keeps saying that, it's just that you are willing to stay higher. You're willing to stay behind it and raise yourself all the time.

TS: Is there a mantra, Michael, that you recommend or that you found effective for people to use?

MS: I, of course, came up through yoga—you all know that. So, I have yoga mantras, whatever it is, Sanskrit. But I recommend [this one]: "I can handle this. I can handle this. I can handle this. I can handle this."

What a wonderful thing to be going on in the back of your mind when your mind says, "I can't handle this." "I can handle this." For example, as you were saying, someone might keep saying, "I can't handle this. I can't believe she said that." "I can handle this." Whoa, just shift your consciousness off this lower vibration of energy that you're accustomed to working with to a higher vibration. I'm telling you it will fall off over time. It will just fall off. How's that?

TS: It's beautiful. I love it. And then I'd love to hear more about this word and the process of transmutation. We're not suppressing, we're not expressing when a difficult emotional experience arises, how do we transmute it?

MS: We skipped one step. You said I gave three techniques. It was positive thinking, mantra, and witness consciousness. In order to talk about transmutation, I have to talk about witness consciousness first. So, what is the difference between positive thinking, mantra, and witness consciousness?

Positive thinking is your mind is creating automated thoughts. It just does it by itself. You didn't tell it to you. You wouldn't ever tell your mind to do what it's doing, nobody would, it just does it by itself because it's expressing samskaras. That's what it's doing, your mind is trying to get these samskaras out, and so it's trying to release the energy, but a lot of it is negative energy or a lot of it is—we didn't talk about positive samskaras, which is, something happened that you really, really, really liked, so you held onto to it.

Buddhists call it clinging—I know you know about that, in the sense that you studied that stuff. Buddhas have this word called “clinging,” which just is perfect. So, if something happens, somebody says something nice to you, you have a nice experience, you don't want to let it go. You want it to happen again. So, the next thing you know, you're holding it in your mind and you're comparing everything against that. And you can't ever be happy again, unless the exact same thing happens again. But the exact same thing can't happen again because this is the second time it happened. There's no surprise concept to it, there's no beginner mind. So, you really messed yourself up by holding onto positive things, the same as holding onto negative things. Basically, you have these samskaras, and they're expressing themselves through your mind. That's why you feel desires, that's why you feel fears. That's why you have all these likes and dislikes.

Positive thinking is to put some willful thoughts on top of that, so that you raise those thoughts, so that they can in the end, be higher. Mantra is getting a layer of mind behind you, it's not the same layer, you are able to think of two layers at once. You read a book, the next thing you know, you didn't read a darn thing. You have to go back and read. You thought you were reading it, but your mind was very busy doing something else. There are layers of our mind, get a mantra going in a layer. And then when something negative is coming in or whatever, shift your consciousness in a mantra.

The next layer, the next deep technique is witness consciousness. Why is it so deep? It is not about doing anything with mind. It's not about replacing mind with positive thoughts; it's not about shifting back to a layer of mind that's deeper. It's about sitting in the seat of consciousness and being willing to watch what your mind's doing. It's being negative. It's being positive. It's upset today. Your emotions aren't good. You just notice. People say, “Well, how can you just notice?” Everybody's noticing—otherwise, how would you know it's there? “My mind's bothering me today.” How do you know? I don't know your mind's bothering you, because you're in there. Be the one that's in there. Don't mess with the mind. Don't mess with the emotions. Don't suppress them or express them. Just for the moment, are you willing to relax and release and be in there and notice that this is going on inside of me?

I heard a little clip from Eckhart Tolle, who I respect a great deal, and what he said was, when something happens and it is drawing you into it, you can see you're being drawn out of your witness consciousness into a desire, into a fear—he was so beautiful—he said, “Just give me two minutes. You can do it.” When it's all said and done, I don't teach like that—I'm tougher. He said, “Just for two minutes, don't go do it yet.” That's really beautiful. That's very tolerant. And it's a way of sitting here saying, “I can do that. Here we go. I'm okay, I can do that. I can be here and see this desire or see this fear or see this messed up pattern that's drawing me into it.” It draws you into it, it has power because you're so interested in it. Can you wait a little bit?

I don't care how you do it. Eckhart's a great teacher, and there are many others, many, many great teachers. They all have different techniques. Are you willing to do the technique that gives you the intention of letting go of the pull that these lower aspects of your being have on your consciousness?

How do you do that? Relax. Ultimately, you relax. I notice this thought pattern. It has always bothered me. And now somebody said something and it's bothering me again. Are you willing to notice it and not do anything about it? Are you willing to just relax? But it won't relax. I know it won't relax. I didn't ask it to relax. It's not going to relax. You can relax. You, who's experiencing it, can just fall back behind it.

It's really beautiful. People talk about, "But shouldn't I experience my emotions?" Well, that can mean a lot of different things. It can mean going down there, get into them feel every aspect of them, enrich. Or it can mean I'm back here experiencing the fact that there's an emotion going on down there. I'm not stopping it, I'm not doing anything, I'm experiencing the emotion. I'm experiencing the thought. That's a very high state; that's witness consciousness. From there we can talk about transmutation, but I'll stop for a second in case you want to ask something in between.

TS: No, I think I'm tracking with you perfectly here. I love this notion also of falling back. There's something, whenever I hear you say the word "back" I notice I feel more spacious and feel in a deeper part of this seat of awareness, the "back" word.

MS: Again, remember, I started by saying that it turns out that distraction is a very spiritual word. Your thoughts are distracting you; they're pulling your consciousness into them. And the very fact that these are the thoughts that are being created, there's a reason for that because you stored stuff inside from before that's not settled and now it's complaining or it's needing or wanting. Therefore, it draws your consciousness into it, because it interests you.

If you go down there and if that's what you mean by experiencing your emotions, they've become a pattern. You're feeding them, but you don't suppress your emotions. You don't not experience your emotions; you just relax in the face of them. Most people, they have to practice doing that with low-hanging fruit. You can relax in the face of every single thought you have and every single emotion that comes up inside of you. You are capable. The one who's experiencing it can just say, "I can handle this. I can handle this."

That doesn't just mean the outside world you can handle; you can handle the inside world. You relax. And what's going to happen is the pull it has on you is diminished because you're letting go. You're not going into it. You're letting go. And you're going to find out if you let go, the hot air balloon goes up. And that's what I mean by behind, relax and lean back. If you let go of the tether, this thing goes back there naturally, you don't have to do anything. "I have to try. What does Michael mean by going back there?" No, no, no, no. Don't you dare think about that. If you let go of what's pulling you down, you will go up, it naturally happens.

Now let's talk about transmutation. The energy is expressing itself because you stored it in there. Every way you think is "I've been this way since I'm little"; that's because something happened and you got patterns. You have patterns that are making you express that way. The mind is trying to push these samskaras, these block patterns out.

Your mind is not your enemy. Your lower heart is not your enemy. They are actually the same as your body, trying to push impurities out, and that's why you get a fever or that's

why a boil comes up or something. We don't like it, but it's trying to push impurities out, correct? Your mind is doing the exact same thing, and your emotions, your heart is doing the exact same thing. It's saying you stored all this stuff inside of me, stuff you didn't like, stuff you're not comfortable with, and I need to push it out.

You end up thinking about it. Right away it comes into your mind when somebody says something from these samskaras from the past. So, if you can learn to not get pulled down into them, but to allow them to be and just let it come up, the natural process of transmutation is going to take place. What does that mean? The energy was lower. It was anger. It was fear. It was self-consciousness. It was embarrassment. That's what it was, that's what got stimulated from inside, from the past.

You only get embarrassed because you know to get embarrassed. A child didn't know about it, they cry in public, all right? You get embarrassed because you had a situation, somebody yelled at you because of the way you behaved or because you lost a boyfriend or a girlfriend, things happened that made you realize, "Well this is embarrassing." Now that's the energy that's there.

What are you going to do about it? Get into it, change the behavior. Apologize. Fine, you can do all that. You're a human. Or relax and realize this is stuff from the past that's coming up inside of you. "I'm sitting on a little planet, spinning the middle of nowhere; I can handle it. I can handle it." And so you relax. Well, what does it do? What happens to that embarrassing energy? All of a sudden there's nothing pushing it back down. There's nothing resisting at all. It comes up, "Whoa." It comes up. "But now I feel a lot of embarrassment." Relax. "Now I feel the most embarrassment I ever felt. My God, it's really hot." Relax. Keep your hands off. And all of a sudden it becomes love. The energy came up to a higher level. It's all the same energy. There's only one energy in there. It's just expressing itself differently because of these different patterns you carved inside yourself. As you let it go, now it doesn't have to be in there anymore.

The energy that's behind it, pushing this samskara, this pattern out of the way, all of a sudden you start to feel Shakti. It will turn into Shakti. That's called transmuting the nature of the energy. It was expressing itself as anger, it was expressing itself as fear, expressing itself as embarrassment or guilt. And because I was willing to say, "Come on up, come on. I know I stored you in there," get the blockage out of the way—behind the blockage is Shakti and you will start to feel that Shakti more and more until eventually you realize that's what this is all about.

This is about me letting go of those blockages, but I don't have to go down there and get them and find them and pull them out. No, no, no, no. The energy, the Shakti flow, the energy flow underneath is always pushing up. To me, that's what Christ meant when he said, "I stand at the door and knock. Whoever will open I will come in." That's what Shakti's saying to you, "I'm trying to come up. You keep pushing me back down. And I'm the most beautiful thing that you could ever experience. I'm the source of love. I'm the divinity inside of you. Why do you keep pushing this stuff on top of me?" "Well, because I haven't learned not to because I don't know how to handle different things." "Well, handle this, handle the feeling of embarrassment." "OK, I'm going to do it this time."

Relax, mantra, whatever, be conscious, feel it coming up. And you're going to feel the tendency to resist. Don't. This is growth. This is the fire of yoga. It comes up, and I'm telling you, if you will keep your hands off, next thing you know, it made you high. Next thing you know, you feel all this rush of energy.

Transmutation is a very beautiful thing. Ultimately, what you want to do is keep your hands off in there and let the Shakti do her work. Let this energy push its way up. And as it releases, not only will you feel the rush at that time—but I don't like to say that, because then people say, "Well, I tried it. I didn't feel the rush." Come on guys, it takes a while. You've been screwing yourself up for a long time, all right? You've been controlling everything and pushing it all down there and then trying to change the world to fit you.

There's a whole other pattern. This is you saying, "The world is reality, and I should be able to handle it, and so therefore I'm going to let go. Then I'll deal with it." I always have to say that now because people misunderstand. Of course, you deal and interact with the world, but not to protect yourself, not because you need something.

You've let go of those patterns, and now all that's flowing inside of you is love and beauty and inspiration. I want you to come help me. I want you to go out there and deal with these different situations. I want all my senators and congressmen and presidents to be those people that are very high and clear and acting totally selflessly, not because they need anything. Wouldn't that be beautiful? That's John Lennon, "Imagine."

TS: There's one other thread I want to pick up, Michael. You talked about the lower heart, how our lower heart responds in situations. And in the book *Living Untethered*, you describe our spiritual heart, the higher nature of our heart. And I found this one of the most inspiring parts of *Living Untethered*, and I wonder if you can introduce people to their spiritual heart.

MS: You have to start with the lower heart. We've talked a lot about samskaras, about patterns that you stored inside yourself. I can tell you right now that if you go back to your high school reunion, which I think it'd be very brave to do. When you go back to your high school reunion, you're going to meet people that you had situations with 20, 30 years ago. And you're going to feel the same thing about them that you felt 20, 30 years ago.

You remember "This is the person who stole my girlfriend. This is the person who dissed me when I was—" blah, blah, blah, blah. You have these patterns, these samskaras, that are blocking your heart and your feelings and your emotions. And your love and your hates and dislikes, et cetera, et cetera are going to be guided by that.

Here was somebody who was really nice to you in high school; you think they're wonderful. You don't know anything about them, haven't seen them for 30 years; they can be a mass murderer. All right, here's somebody that hurt you, and something happened in high school—or, competitively, they always won and you didn't do as well, you were number two. You're going to feel a certain way when you see people. That's because you stored this stuff in there like we said.

That is now going to determine what you call your heart. Your heart will open in the presence of situations that hit your samskaras in a way that you're comfortable, and therefore you feel safe, and therefore it opens, and you feel love. Shakti will come up into your heart and it will flow out toward that person. That's the lower heart. That's the human heart. It's conditional, it's based upon your samskaras and the outside situation that's happening.

That's how love at first sight happens. It's all of a sudden it just fits. "It fits every experience I had. He's in the Navy, and I love people in the Navy. My father was in the Navy." The next thing you know, boom, the heart opens up and all this energy comes out. But then they do something you don't like and bam, it closes, right or wrong.

Everybody knows that the heart can open and close. The lower heart can, because it only opens when things are matching the samskaras properly, the patterns. And it closes when things are not. Fine. Is there a higher heart? Yes. When? When you get rid of the samskaras. The more you release those things and realize "I don't want that running in my life; that's silly, that I interact with somebody after 30 years, the way I did when I was in high school," but you're going to, I'm telling you. Even if you just hear their name 30 years later, it could change your feelings.

What if you work with yourself the way we've been discussing, and you keep releasing and relaxing and leaning back and giving it room. Samskaras need room to release. Give them room, get out of the way. If you do that, what will happen? You will feel it, you will know it, it's a very deep spiritual state you'll go through.

It's called piercing the heart chakra. The energy will come up but now it's not blocked when it comes up. It doesn't have to go out horizontally. It manages to come up further, and it's very powerful, and it's actually a white-hot experience. It burns through enough of your samskaras to where it pops up to a higher chamber within the heart. And you'll know when that happens. All of a sudden, there's this pure love. It's called spiritual love, divine love, call it whatever you want. It never goes away. If you're sincere, it stays there forever. You would never trade it off by taking on more samskaras, and that is the spiritual heart.

TS: I'm so glad you introduced this phrase "piercing the spiritual heart." This is a quote from Living Untethered: "The roots of samskaras are stored in the heart. That's where the patterns you shoved out of your mind went. They didn't dissipate. They went down further into the source of your energy flow, which is the heart." I don't think I knew that before reading Living Untethered that the roots of these patterns were stored in the heart. Can you tell me why you say that with such confidence?

MS: Because you feel it, you feel it. Right now, what we tend to feel is the mind, so that when we have problems, it's a mental problem. They're complaining. Or you say, "Well, I really like him. How do I get back in touch with him?" The heart can feel something, but the mind, the root of the mind is in the heart. As the heart releases energy, it ends up in the mind and the mind starts thinking. Normally we don't go any further than that, we're caught in our minds. As you go deeper by letting go of those thoughts in your mind, you start to notice that it's all happening from your heart. That the root of the mind is in the heart, the root of the mind is in the heart. That's a true statement.

As you bypass the mind and don't get distracted by the mind, you will start to feel your heart, the fullness of your heart. And you're going to see that, before the mind says something, the heart's releasing and the heart is trying to get rid of the samskaras, and they're ending up talking through the mind.

It's part of your meditation, it's part of your spiritual growth. It's part of being able to

stand there when somebody's saying something you don't like and instead of defending yourself with your mind, you start feeling this pain in your heart. "My father talked to me like that." Whoa, that's not your father, that's a woman talking to you, but it doesn't matter, it feels like it.

You start realizing where all this stuff is coming from; it's coming from your heart. As you release these samskaras, your heart opens more and then eventually you can pierce through that, the blockages, and come up to higher centers.

TS: We started, Michael, and I asked you this question, the question that you ask at the beginning of *Living Untethered*: "Are you in there?" We said, "Yeah, we're both in there and this is a deep idea, 'Are we in there?'" And here's my question to you: at what point does the "me" in here—I'm in here, you, you're in there—when do we become one?

MS: When you stop focusing on yourself, when the consciousness—we talked about the consciousness, the awareness of being—stops being addicted to your thoughts, your emotions, and what's coming through your senses. Little by little, you let go. Again, I have to say it because people tend to resist. You're not not interacting with the world. You're just doing it from a deeper place. "I'm aware. I'm here."

The more you can be there and somebody else is there, you're going to find out that there is the same. There's only one consciousness. And that consciousness is focusing on your thoughts, on somebody else's thoughts, and that's what's going on. That's why when they say, "My father and I are one," is when you stop—Christ said, "You must die to be reborn." I am a nice Jewish Yogi who loves the teachings of Christ. Why? Because they're the truth, all right? He says you must die to be reborn. What does that mean? That means you have to let go of who you think you are, what your mind is telling you, what you're staring at. If you do, your consciousness will float back and stop being focused on you. And that's what universal consciousness is, that's what expansion of consciousness is. If you do it and I do it, we're all merged. It's all one.

Truth is it is all one. The sun is one, even though the rays are falling on different things, right? It comes all the way down, you're shining on this, shining on that, shining on that. There's one consciousness focusing on each of our thoughts and emotions and so on. But the question is, are you willing to die to be reborn? Are you willing to let go of yourself so that you can be who you really are?

TS: I've been speaking with Michael Singer. He's the author of a beautiful guidebook for the inner life: *Living Untethered: Beyond the Human Predicament*. I'm so glad, Michael, that you took the time and energy and focus to write *Living Untethered*. It's so helpful, so practical, so clearly explained.

MS: Thank you, Tami. It's a pleasure talking to you. I knew you'd ask deep questions. Thank you.

