

# INTRODUCTION

Sometime between the death of the dinosaurs and the birth of Pat Robertson, someone (probably a he) assumed he was qualified to tell others how to know God. He collected theories, speculations, and superstitions about the unexplainable, death, and the afterlife. Sorting through his collection, he tossed out the practices he did not like or understand, and altered others to fit his own limitations and intolerances.

He called his collection of beliefs a “religion” after the Neanderthal word *rilijon*, which means, “Someone else knows more about God than you do.” His religion was accepted only by the few who had more important things to do than think for themselves.

Most of the rational people saw the illogic in his philosophy and refused to follow him. Then one day with a stroke of brilliance he realized he had to convince people that God did not want them to think for themselves, and that *not thinking* was a virtue. So he invented “faith” a word he derived from an ancestral concept called “hope.” Faith meant, “Even though I have no sound evidence to believe it, I desire it so much that it must be true.” and “If I believe it enough, then it is fact” also, “If I pretend that it is true, then it is.”

During his fifteen sundials of fame, he convinced the masses that:

- Some people actually know facts about God
- Spiritual beliefs are helpful

- Having faith is a good thing
- The best way to know God is to practice a religion or spiritual path

All of which, alas, nearly all religious and spiritual seekers still believe, and argue about, to this day.

## **Our Fragile Spiritual Egos**

Although some rap music comes close, I know of no surer way to offend, threaten, or anger people than by challenging their spiritual or religious beliefs; but if seekers aren't genuinely experiencing the personal growth they yearn for, they must be willing to risk asking themselves some unsettling questions.

Finding the truth, enlightenment, or God has to be the most difficult undertaking known to humankind. It can be confusing, frustrating, and humiliating, as well as heartbreaking. It has driven people mad and, except for a few enlightened souls, only a madman would assume himself qualified to tell anyone else how to know the Infinite. Every day millions of people pay money for books, lectures, sermons, workshops, and psychics so they can be told what to believe. However, until I am able to walk on water, I will not presume to tell anyone how to know the ultimate reality.

I have, nevertheless, been on a unique, extensive, and extraordinary journey that has ultimately given me insight that now allows me to help others dodge some of the major pitfalls that I—along with most of the spiritual seekers I know—have blindly stumbled into. (I have included a very brief spiritual biography to give more insight into the origins of my discoveries in Appendix A.)

After a lifetime of ardent spiritual searching, I find that my perceptions about spiritual growth dramatically contrast those of nearly all spiritual teachers, religions (Eastern and Western), and most of today's metaphysical movement. Yet those who are able to embrace this unique perspective will discover a wonderful new way to grow spiritually and to genuinely accept themselves, other people, religions, and philosophies.

In three key ways, this book is different from any other spiritual or religious book available:

First, it does not give you more beliefs to replace or override the ones you currently have.

Second, this book will not cater to your spiritual ego as many metaphysical books do. Often, authors baby their readers pampering their egos in order to sell more books or workshops. Then, after the ego-high wears off, readers realize, once again, that although they were momentarily inspired, they ultimately did not learn more about spiritual growth. So seekers go out and shop again for more beliefs.

In contrast, this book is intended to confront the spiritual ego, so much so that only those above the second stage of philosophical growth are expected to make it through the entire book—or even try to read it. (The next chapter explains the first five stages of philosophical development.)

Third, often at the beginning of self-help books authors present a premise and then each proceeding chapter gives arguments to support it. By the end of the book, writers hope that the accumulation of evidence will convince their readers that the premise is sound. However, I've found that this method does not work with this book. Because some of my premises are so contrary to what most seekers

want to believe, they may be difficult to accept—unless the seeker is adequately prepared.

What works for this book is to present ideas and questions designed to open and purge the mind. Each chapter gradually inserts new possibilities so that by the time the main premises are introduced, readers are convinced not only of the validity of the premises but of the necessity to practice them in everyday life—to actually walk the talk.

Put another way, I love to teach. I have done it for much of my life, mostly martial arts, dancing, and personal communication. Fifteen years ago after the release of my first two books about relationship communication, I traveled from New York to Hawaii to lecture and teach. Still, I continue to receive appreciation from my students and readers.

However, when I first tried to teach the main principles of this book, I found it impossible—my students were just not accepting them. And I knew why. It was for the same reason that I refused to accept these ideas for decades. Even after a life-altering, close-to-death experience forced me to look at these truths, I refused to believe what I didn't want to believe.

When a cup is full, there is no room for anything else. So long as seekers have minds full of ineffective and obstructing spiritual or religious beliefs, it is next to impossible for them to accept conflicting ideas—no matter how open-minded seekers think they are.

As I will explain in the next chapter, there are prerequisites for this philosophical course. Most people are not ready to take it; and the few that do will only be able to pass it if they fully participate in all of the early chapters. If readers skip them, or even skim through

them without sincerely asking themselves all of the questions, they will most likely be unable to understand, receive, and integrate the ideas presented later in the book. Hopefully, you will take the time to read the chapters thoroughly so you can learn from my mistakes.

The primary pearls of wisdom in this book have taken a very long, arduous, uphill journey to make it to you. For over forty years this information was offered to me again and again, thousands of times; yet, in my stubbornness, in my narrow view of what I thought spiritual growth should be, I continuously rejected it. I wanted God and spirituality to be what those who appeared much wiser than I said it was. Yet, the lesson continued to pound me on the head until I finally gave in and accepted what I was shown.

It has taken me fourteen years to transfer those forty years of spiritual experience into this book. Now, my biggest challenge is getting you to ask yourself all of these questions honestly and to not reject, or deny, your answers as I did for so many decades. I do not expect anyone to agree to all of the concepts in this book—but they are not meant to be agreeable, they are meant to provoke, challenge, encourage, and entertain.

Hopefully, you will have the courage and resolve to conscientiously ponder all of these questions. And hopefully you will be motivated to move beyond the limitations and distractions of any embedded dysfunctional spiritual beliefs you may be enabling.

For a number of you, some of the ideas in this book may be tough to hear, tougher to accept, and toughest to apply. However, once the denials of that ever-present insecure spiritual ego are calmed down so that reality can be perceived and accepted, deep changes can take place in your authentic inner core. You can reach the fifth stage of

philosophical growth, where you no longer need to obtain your spiritual beliefs, information, advice, or inspiration from others.

Please note: In this book, all references to God, Spirit, Creator, or Ultimate reality, can mean the Christian's anthropomorphic old man in heaven, the Buddhist's universal consciousness, any ultimate form of spiritual guidance or higher power, or even God as a natural law of the creation. (I think that covers everything).