



**N**OT LONG AGO, I received an advertisement in my mailbox asking me to subscribe to a new magazine. The headline read, “In a world gone slightly mad, you need to read...”. It was a great marketing hook because everyone can relate to the message. We may have different political, environmental, or economic leanings, but everyone I know these days agrees: We live in a world gone slightly mad. According to any number of parameters, the future looks bleak—global warming, melting ice caps, depletion of natural resources, pollution of water and air, growing economic disparity, ethnic and religious conflict—with the stakes escalating beyond our capacity to imagine. And this is not just an academic consideration or idle dinner party chatter. If you have been paying attention, this is a matter of ultimate concern. It’s one thing to discover dry rot in your basement. It can be fixed. And if the damage has really gone too far, inconvenient as it may be, you can move. Even if the whole neighborhood has gone to the dogs, there is still the rest of the country, the rest of the world. But our planet in trouble? This is all we know for sure: Every memory, every reference we have, is to this Earth. This is it.

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# Cultiva Transl

## A Curriculum for a S

BY ARJUNA ARDAGH

Albert Einstein is reputed to have said, “The significant problems we have cannot be solved at the same level of consciousness with which we created them.” What do we need to learn, individually and together, to collectively shift to a level of consciousness that solves problems rather than creates them?



## RADICAL AWAKENING

Back in the 1970s at Cambridge, my friends were already concerned. John became a Marxist and saw the solution as political. Clair joined Greenpeace and is still with them to this day. Paul became a pacifist, abandoning his math degree to devote himself fully to waging peace. Like many others of my generation, I took to spiritual practice. I started with the only arena in which I felt I had any real authority: me. The journey seemed endless, and often discouraging, but it was fueled by a longing that couldn't be denied.

About fifteen years ago, we began to see an extraordinary shift occurring, at first for just a few people. In 1992, for example, Robert was out on an evening walk. He had been through a series of trials and tribulations over the previous several years, and his mood was blacker than the night. "I am finished," his mind announced. He still has trouble explaining what happened next. "I was overcome by a sense of relief," he reports. "A sudden feeling of inexpressible freedom. I even began to laugh out loud. My body was filled with happiness, as if I were suddenly getting a joke I'd been missing. For the first time I was feeling really good for no

moment when you taste reality outside the limiting confines of the mind, when you know yourself to be limitless, much bigger than—yet still containing—the body, beyond birth and death, eternally free. Despite the activity of thought and feeling, you know yourself to be the silence experiencing that movement. It is the moment when you can intuit the real potential of life, free from the incessant machinery of complaint and ambition. A radical awakening often releases a tidal wave of creativity and generosity of spirit, a natural impulse to serve and contribute. In these moments, we know that love is who we are, not something we sometimes feel.

Such awakening can leave an imprint on the body and psyche. You are left with a deep knowing of the perfection of things, even when they are going wrong. You realize that everything is interconnected, even when you are caught in conflict; that who you are is actually much bigger than the person you have taken yourself to be. At the same time, you have the humility, the honesty, and humor to cop to the habits of this human monkey—it has addictions to particular pleasures, and to its favorite miseries. The awakening initiates a gradual metamorphosis, which is both evolutionary and endless, inherent in life itself.

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reason at all. I was totally here, in this moment. I could feel the trees around me, and hear the sounds without having to listen to thoughts telling me things needed to be different in some way. Everything was being experienced, but the 'me' was gone."

I call a moment like this a "radical awakening." It is the

This awakening is the impulse for the realization to continuously marinate the personal, and to become ever more deeply embodied. You develop an amused, playful attitude to the only raw materials available: the strange habits of the bundle of thoughts you call "me."

I call people who have been transformed in this way

“translucent,” which *Webster’s Dictionary* defines as “letting light pass through, but not transparent.” A transparent object, like a clean sheet of glass, is almost invisible. You see everything through a transparent object as if it were not there at all. An opaque object, on the other hand, blocks light completely. A translucent object allows light to pass through diffusely while maintaining its form and texture. Objects on the other side cannot be clearly distinguished. A crystal is translucent. So is a sculpture of frosted glass: If the sun were to shine on it from behind, you would see the light passing through the sculpture, and it would appear to be glowing from the inside.

Translucent people also appear to glow from the inside. They have access to their deepest nature as peaceful, limitless, free, and unchanging, and at the same time they remain fully involved in the events of their personal lives. Thoughts, fears, and desires still come and go; life is still characterized by trials, misfortunes, and stress. But the personal story is no longer opaque; it is now capable of reflecting something deeper, more luminous and abiding, that can shine through it.

Over the last three years, I have conducted in-depth interviews with more than 170 transluents, and surveyed 13,000 more. Those interviews fill 250 cassette tapes and make up more than one million words. They include such well-known writers and teachers as Eckhart Tolle, Byron Katie, Ram Dass, and Jean Houston. But I also talked to dentists, hairdressers, housewives, and hobos. I’ve asked politicians, drug dealers, and even my tax consultant about this. I regularly ask whoever is sitting next to me on the plane. All over the world, from every imaginable background and system of belief, people report that the trance of separation is being broken. And, as sociologist Paul Ray shared with me, “The mouth of the funnel is getting bigger every day.”

In a translucent life, we no longer separate spiritual

experience from the fabric of our day-to-day existence. Our most mundane circumstances are the very context in which realization lives and breathes. An unattended life segregates realization into a small box called “spirituality.” A well-attended life can make a trip to the grocery store a sacred pilgrimage. James O’Dea and the late Wink Franklin, present and past presidents of IONS, are among many who told me that the emergence of the translucent human is the only grounds for real optimism they have for our future.

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## TRANSLUCENT PRACTICE

What great learning are we passing through to bring spirit out of the cave and into the marketplace, down from an idealized “ultimate enlightenment” and into the vibrant reality of this very moment? How can we live in a way that honors our deepest realization of truth? How can relationships, sexuality, parenting, education, business, creativity, and

political activism become spiritual practices? These are the questions that have fueled my investigation. From this quest I have come up with a few nudges for living a life translucently. They aren’t the final word on our evolution, but a line in a conversation that is ongoing, global, and playfully urgent.

**Be Reborn Every Day.** Find your unique ways to step beyond the personal perspective. Be willing to die every day to the person you think you are, to hand the wave back to the ocean. Awakening is not a single event in time; it is a river endlessly flowing in this moment now. Come home to yourself as the prelude to all else.

**Open to All Life as a Teacher.** Transluents live for the most part outside the context of organized religion and hierarchy. They no longer need to have one teacher or teaching, but rather have many teachers or experience all of life as a teacher. Ram Dass speaks of no longer being a Buddhist but being a “generalist.” Richard

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# A Whole New Mind

BY DANIEL H. PINK

There is a seismic—though as yet undetected—shift now underway in much of the advanced world. We are moving from an economy and a society built on the logical, linear, computer-like capabilities of the Information Age to an economy and a society built on the inventive, empathic, big-picture capabilities of what's rising in its place, the Conceptual Age.

The last few decades have belonged to a certain kind of person with a certain kind of mind—computer programmers who could crank code, lawyers who could craft contracts, MBAs who could crunch numbers. But the keys to the kingdom are changing hands. The future belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind—creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers and meaning-makers. These people—artists, inventors, designers, storytellers, caregivers, consolers, big-picture thinkers—will now reap society's richest rewards and share its greatest joys.

What does all this mean for you and me? How can we prepare ourselves for the Conceptual Age? What exactly are we supposed to do?

I've spent the last few years investigating that question. And I've distilled the answer to six specific high-concept and high-touch abilities that have become essential for this new era. I believe that anyone who wants to survive and thrive in this emerging world—people uneasy in their careers and dissatisfied with their lives, entrepreneurs and business leaders eager to stay ahead of the next wave, parents who want to equip their children for the future, and the legions of emotionally astute and creatively adroit people whose distinctive abilities the Information Age has

often overlooked and undervalued—will understand and master these aptitudes:

**Design:** Today it's economically crucial and personally rewarding to create something that is also physically beautiful or emotionally compelling.

**Story:** When our lives are brimming with information and data, it's not enough to marshal an effective argument. The essence of persuasion is now the ability to place those facts in context and deliver them with emotional impact by fashioning a compelling narrative.

**Symphony:** What's in greatest demand today isn't analysis, but synthesis—seeing the big picture and combining disparate pieces into an arresting new whole.

**Empathy:** In a world of abundant information and advanced analytical tools, logic alone won't do. What will distinguish those who thrive will be their ability to understand what makes their fellow woman or man tick, to forge relationships, and to care for others.

**Play:** Ample evidence points to the enormous health and professional benefits of laughter, lightheartedness, games, and humor. In the Conceptual Age, in work and life, we all need to play.

**Meaning:** We live in a world of breathtaking material plenty. That has freed hundreds of millions of people from the day-to-day struggles, and liberated us to pursue more significant desires: purpose, transcendence, and spiritual fulfillment.

—Adapted from *A Whole New Mind: Moving from the Information Age to the Conceptual Age* (Riverhead/Penguin, 2005)

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Holloway, the retired bishop of Edinburgh, has re-evaluated his relationship to the Christian Church since recognizing God to be everywhere, both behind the eyes and in front.

**Forget the Future, Abandon Enlightenment.** Very few of the people I have talked to would seriously label themselves as “enlightened.” In fact, the overwhelming majority said that they were no longer seeking a state of enlightenment, although many had done so previously. Today’s translucents have fallen in love with the present moment and the possibilities of living right now as a gift of love, as a work of art. They live for now, and now, and now.

**Question Your Mind.** Translucents have learned to distrust concepts and learned beliefs. Rather than sharing an ideology, they delight in abandoning every kind of fundamentalism. The plethora of translucent tools that has developed in the last decade is not so much about self-improvement or the acquisition of new knowledge, but about the shift from cerebral knowledge to a deeper knowing.

**Honor the Goddess.** For millennia, spirituality has been dominated by the masculine expression of realization, which emphasizes transcendence, annihilation of the ego, renunciation of the world, and asceticism. Feminine spirituality is much softer, drawn toward deep and embodied love, open acceptance, the celebration of all life as the dance of divinity. Art, music, images, and sensations are just as sacred as words. Translucents demonstrate a restoration of this balance. Our understanding and our feelings find one common flavor. Freedom from life and immersion in life are no longer seen as opposed to one another, but rather as two aspects of a total incarnation.

**Embrace the Body.** Translucents are in their bodies, and care for the body as a sacred garden. They practice yoga and martial arts. They play tennis, ski, and surf, for the sheer joy of being embodied, not to achieve anything. They are

not, by the wildest stretch of the imagination, recluses. They are embracers of life.

**Find Your Tribe.** Humanity does not go through paradigm shifts very often. It can be a bumpy ride. Like waking up in the middle of an earthquake, you may sometimes wonder what is going on. In your immediate environment, become aware of who else is part of the new paradigm, and take refuge in each other. As you deepen in translucence, you may find old relationships dropping away and new people entering your life. Translucents easily recognize one another, often without even needing to speak.

Find your tribe—those with whom you can die together to the old and rise up as the new.

## MAKE EACH MOMENT COUNT

Are you a translucent? If what has been briefly summarized here sounds familiar to you, then you are already a part of this evolutionary current. You are probably more a part of the solution on this Earth than a part of the problem. What we do and how we live are not as trivial as we sometimes think. What you choose to do in the next five minutes, and the spirit in which you do it, may contribute to the difference between nuclear annihilation and the opportunity for this world to return to Eden. The future rests in our hands, and the stakes are getting higher. It is time for all of us to wake up to our natural sanity, and to live it passionately, dangerously, intensely.

Translucently. 

**ARJUNA ARDAGH** is the founder of the Living Essence Foundation in Nevada City, California, which is dedicated to conscious awakening within the context of everyday life. He is the author of *The Translucent Revolution*, just published by New World Library, and four other books. He lives with his wife, Chameli, and two sons.



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