

FOREWORD

Patricia Albere is five steps ahead of us. Having dedicated decades to awakening the space between us, she now is standing at the summit, peering out intently at a possibility for human relatedness that most of us can't yet quite see, but sense lies just beyond the limits of our own awareness.

Her vision is fresh, compelling, and above all hopeful. For who among us is not restless with the sober conviction that we must find our way to a new level of consciousness if we ever hope to successfully solve the urgent and dire problems we now collectively face? A consciousness where these terrifying challenges can not only be solved, but in many cases, actually outgrown, such that they are no longer even relevant threats.

Those of us who care — *which I'm assuming is all of us who hold this beautiful book in our hands* — are impatient with the knowing that many of our good and noble efforts to address these crises have simply been rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic. Despite more than two thousand years of cultivating our individual spiritual capacities to awaken the Kingdom of God *within us*, it is now the absence of the Kingdom of God *between us* which threatens our very existence.

So many images we have of our future are dark and barren, filled with fighting over scarce resources and dog-eat-dog struggles for survival. Not so the future Patricia offers us. Hers is a deeply benevolent world of harmony, attunement, authenticity, cooperation and kindhearted connection. And if this seems like a pipe dream, it is simply because collectively we still are operating out of the primitive hallucination of separation that prevents the organic emergence of this kind of co-creativity and care between us.

The shift to utopia that so many of us are waiting, hoping, and praying for will not magically materialize one day. This transformation can only happen *through* us, and not just *to* us — through a deliberate step-by-step devotion toward evolving our own skills and capacities in that direction, so that we might become the people we need to become in order to co-create that world.

Those of us on a spiritual path speak of Oneness as the goal for humanity, yet few offer an actual pedagogy for how we might get there. This is where Patricia comes in. She is a master teacher in this new paradigm of relatedness that will allow us to enter the promised land. What makes her teachings so extraordinary is that they are a unique combination of both theory and practice. So many great ideas about where our consciousness needs to go from here are philosophical in nature. Yet Patricia's methods are a means by which we can actually awaken to Oneness through Evolutionary Relationships — the first stage of the “WEvolution” that we are yearning for.

Refreshingly, she presents herself not as a guru who has arrived, but as a seasoned student and an evolutionary leader of this pioneering work, inviting us all along for the ride as she continually clears the pathway toward this new kind of awakening. I see her almost as a camp counselor of consciousness, blowing her whistle as she leads us through the thick of the woods, joyfully declaring, “Hey guys, over here! Come this way!”

Most of us have been devotees of personal and spiritual growth for quite some time. I myself had a spontaneous spiritual awakening at the age of fourteen while visiting the Sunday School class of a girlfriend. From that moment forward, I have organized my life in one way or another around knowing and serving this benevolent Force and field of Life that I've been deeply in love with ever since. Even as a bad-ass kid in high school, I'd sit in the girls' room with my other bad-ass girlfriends, smoking cigarettes, skipping classes, and reading Bible passages to them, with a fierce desire to be of service to their spiritual awakening.

Over the years, my devotion has led me to spend many thousands of hours on both my meditation cushion and a therapist's couch, feeding my deep and cavernous hunger to transform the darkness within myself and awaken to a rich relationship with the beauty and goodness of Life. Yet in all that time, my quest for personal enlightenment — sitting on my meditation cushion to experience the God within — was never as interesting to me as the desire I had to create and compel the emergence of a deeper love

between all living beings. It's not that the spiritual path has never included instructions on how to be with one another. Most of us were raised with an awareness of the Golden Rule and Christ's admonishment to love others as we love ourselves. Yet these teachings seem somehow to be a rule book one is meant to follow, as opposed to radically alive practices that would inspire the actual experience of awakening in relationship with others.

For years this confused me, since the only model I saw for true spiritual advancement was of a sole individual sitting with eyes closed in a seeming state of euphoria. Yet the idea that God also could be experienced with eyes wide open and while connected with others has always intrigued and fascinated me. And so, even though I'd always thought myself a bit odd, I stopped judging myself and surrendered to doing what I was driven to do to the best of my ability. Today, I still meditate, but not simply to realize personal enlightenment — now I sit on my cushion to stay centered and strong and to focus on how I can be of service, helping to fulfill the vision of a more deeply related and caring world.

I don't believe I'm alone in being odd in this way. You yourself may be as well, which is why I'm thrilled that we are here together to sit at Patricia's feet! Through *Evolutionary Relationships*, Patricia transmits the vision of mutual awakening with a partner. She also provides the practices we need to develop the potent skills and powerful capacities that move us to the next level of our individual and collective awakening.

I predict that one day soon, we will find ourselves walking down the street, driving in our cars, or sitting on a subway, profoundly related to and organically connected to those around us, whether we know them personally or not. For when enough of us are awake in this way, we then will know how to solve our many unsolvable problems and co-create a world that we will feel proud to pass on to future generations.

~ Katherine Woodward Thomas

Katherine Woodward Thomas, M.A., M.F.T., is the New York Times bestselling author of *Conscious Uncoupling: 5 Steps to Living Happily Ever After* and *Calling in "The One": 7 Weeks to Attract the Love of Your Life*. She is a licensed marriage and family therapist and a leading voice in the field of interpersonal relationships. She has taught thousands of people from all corners of the world in her virtual and in-person learning communities.