

PART I

MUTUAL AWAKENING

Prologue: The Longing



There is a candle in your heart, ready to be kindled.

There is a void in your soul, ready to be filled.

You feel it, don't you?

You feel the separation from the Beloved ...

~ Rumi

I was sitting in my kitchen when “it” awoke. My two-year-old son, in his blue plastic chair, was sitting beside me eating his lunch. Below my window, the well-worn cobblestones of our tranquil Milanese courtyard soaked up the midday sun. The city was quiet, doors closed, while people gathered for lunch and a moment of repose before returning to work.

Then out of nowhere it came. I felt the most intense longing arise within me. It was like a tornado unexpectedly appearing in the midst of a clear day, tearing through the countryside and rearranging the landscape.

My heart and then my whole body started to burn with intensity. It seemed to force its way into my awareness, cracking through the surface of my contented life, leaving me aching with an inexplicable, inconvenient, overwhelming desire for love. I wanted to love and be loved — *passionately, deeply, and completely* — but in a way I had never considered.

The love I was longing for was not a love I had ever known, not the delicious thrill of romance or the companionable parallel paths of my married life. I wanted to dissolve and die into something far greater. And I could sense that it wanted me too. What I longed for had no face or name. Was it a person? Was it my deeper self? Was it God? I didn't know. What I did know was that it was so vivid and real that beside it my life seemed pale and insubstantial.

Have you ever experienced a longing like that — a restless, mysterious, undeniable sense that something is missing and calling you? Are there moments in the midst of your busy life when you feel the ache of a deep loneliness, even though there are people all around you? Do you sometimes feel like you're missing something, or someone, but you can't quite say what or who?

Many people have told me that they've had this kind of experience. Even those who lead successful, fulfilling lives surrounded by friends and loved ones can inexplicably find themselves filled with a yearning for something more, a sort of "divine discontent." Suddenly, this longing arises, sometimes as a gentle, nagging discomfort, other times as a searing desire.

When this longing first arose in my awareness, it shocked me and woke me up. I was fearful, apprehensive, but also fascinated. As a successful, married woman living a stable, comfortable life with my husband and young son, I didn't want to admit (even to myself) how much I yearned for a deeper and more compelling experience of love and consciousness. I didn't know how to find what I was seeking or if it really existed. I didn't even know what it was that was flirting with me. Consequently, allowing myself to feel the longing was the greatest risk of my life. But I let it in anyway, let it fill my awareness, and allowed it to swing like a wrecking ball through my comfortable life and leave me standing in the rubble ... defenseless, excited, and facing the unknown. I allowed myself, as Rumi wrote, to "be silently drawn by the pull of what you really love."¹

Most of us are afraid to feel this deep longing because we don't know why it is calling us or what it is asking us to do. We want to satisfy our existential hunger, but we fear that by opening ourselves up to it, we may subject ourselves to a life of fairytales and frustration. Nevertheless, when I opened my heart to this sacred longing, I found it had the power to transform and transfigure me. Such fulfillment truly is possible, and some of us are capable of integrating this evolutionary impulse that calls us to a new order of love and relating — what I call “Evolutionary Relationships.”

After my marriage disintegrated — taking with it my family's approval, my reputation, my community, and many of my friends — I had nothing left to hold on to but this divine longing. So I let it lead me on an improbable journey, signposted by intuitions and coincidences, until I found myself visiting a large and soon-to-be infamous spiritual community in Oregon. There, I met an unusually awake, mystical man named Peter, who would reach into my soul and change my life forever. From the moment Peter and I met, something was set in motion that we couldn't control. It was as though the pattern of our oneness already existed, engraved in the fabric of the cosmos, just waiting for us to stop resisting its gravitational pull.

When the spiritual community imploded in a much-publicized scandal just a few weeks after we met, Peter and I reluctantly separated, but the intensity of my need to be with him soon overwhelmed me. Real love is shattering in a most magnificent way: destroying ideas, plans, and all our unconscious inner structures that create separation. True love is relentlessly humbling, reducing our defenses, displaying our vulnerabilities, and evoking an unambivalent “yes” to life. As a result, within a few short months, Peter and I found a way to be together, allowing our mutual longing to penetrate layers of falseness, insecurities, fears, and separateness. There were times when, lying in his arms, I found myself crying from pure relief — a total surrender to what I had been trying to find my entire life. With ultimate wonder, I began to understand what the longing was pulling me toward. It wasn't just Peter; it was what our coupling revealed to me about the true purpose and potential of human relationships. Peter and I had entered into a state of “mutually awakening,” a spiritual state shared by two people, which I now realize is part of a larger movement of consciousness.

Today, many people are moving beyond solo spirituality and hyper-individualism into the truth of our interconnectedness. Ultimately, I see

humans moving toward a “WEvolution” — a futuristic concept that we will touch on in this book as we explore Evolutionary Relationships, which represent the first stage of this collective awakening.

But it all starts with love. We sometimes forget that love is the most powerful force in existence. Popular culture has tended to reduce it to romance, desire or affection, and while those are some of love’s expressions, the force itself is much greater and more mysterious. Philosophers, mystics, and poets throughout the ages have understood and honored the power of love — its potential to draw us deeper and its ability to make us stronger and more courageous. This longing for sacred love unveils what some have called “the Beloved” and others call God. It is no accident that many mystics chose the language of human love and desire to describe their longing for divine union with the evolutionary impulse.

For example, in the 13th Century, medieval German mystic Mechthild of Magdeburg wrote in her *Meditations*:

God tells the soul, “I desired you before the world began. I desire you now as you desire me. And where the desires of two come together, there love is perfected.”

And the soul replies, “Lord, you are my Lover, My longing.”²

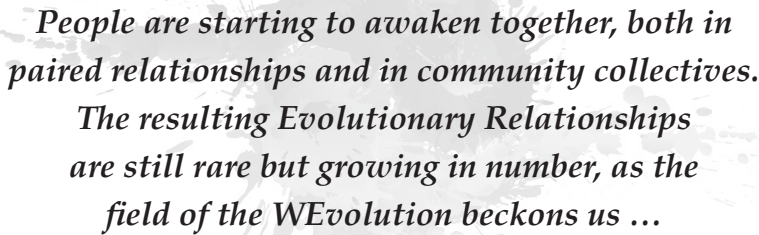
And in the 16th Century Spanish mystic Teresa of Avila wrote:

Since my Beloved is for me and I am for my Beloved, who will be able to separate and extinguish two fires so enkindled? It would amount to laboring in vain, for the two fires have become one.³

Rumi, of course, addressed many of his impassioned poems to “the Beloved.” For these early mystics, the Beloved was not a person. In fact, for most mystics even today, the longing for union draws them away from the society of people. Alone in the desert or on a mountaintop, they seek oneness with God and more easily find the Beloved in solitude.

But how much more exciting to discover the Beloved in the form of another human being! At this moment in history, many of us have had a peak experience, touched bliss, and tasted oneness. Moreover, I believe

this potential is now emerging for more and more of us at the frontier of human development. We have evolved from divinely *inspired* to divinely *inherent* human beings, who now have access to the process of mutually awakening with others.



*People are starting to awaken together, both in
paired relationships and in community collectives.
The resulting Evolutionary Relationships
are still rare but growing in number, as the
field of the WEvolution beckons us ...*

In the years Peter and I spent together, we experienced the divine love that Rumi wrote about. We existed not as two individuals but as a unified field — sensuous, fluid, and flowing. We were capable of feeling each other's feelings and knowing each other's thoughts before and as they arose. Effortlessly, we entered higher states of consciousness and were shown greater dimensions of love and reality. Yet, this book is not about our love story. It's about what I gained from my first Evolutionary Relationship, and what it taught me about the extraordinary potential for a higher order of human relatedness.

Since receiving the precious gift of an Evolutionary Relationship with Peter, my life has been devoted to helping others activate this possibility for mutual and collective awakening. Over the past few decades, I've worked with thousands of men and women, and this book shares what I've learned about how to create a new kind of relatedness that fulfills our deepest longing for love, intimacy, and sacred union.

Evolutionary Relationships are not limited to romantic partnerships. You can create one with a close friend, with a colleague, and even among a group of people, so long as each individual feels the same divine longing and is willing to surrender to its irresistible pull and commit to its fulfillment. Today, Evolutionary Relationships represent the unfolding edge of our development as a human species. In truth, the longing is not *our desire for*

divine love so much as *divine love desiring and needing us*. This new dimension of love and more evolved consciousness needs our surrender and our wholehearted cooperation.

If this book has found its way into your hands, I hope that what you find here will speak powerfully to you. I trust it will make you feel clearer, more inspired, and more empowered in your own sense of what is important — that which is needed and worth fighting for, living for, and giving to generously. This book, after all, is about LOVE. The early 20th Century Jesuit mystic Pierre Teilhard de Chardin put it this way:

The day will come when, after harnessing space, the winds, the tides and gravitation, we shall harness for God the energies of love. And on that day, for the second time in the history of the world, we shall have discovered fire.⁴

I believe that day is close at hand, and this book is intended to hasten its arrival. This book also proves our capacity as human beings to love each other and enter into a shared consciousness of unity, which does indeed harness the energy of love for something higher than ourselves. And in the process, we will come to know ourselves more distinctly, while at the same time feeling our interconnectivity with others in Evolutionary Relationships.

New forms of connection are arising in the outer world, and I believe we need to develop new forms of consciousness between us that inform how we relate collectively. Just as the internet has brought us ever-closer, we need to create an “innernet” that reflects the higher values of shared awakened consciousness. In fact, the force of evolution is pushing us to access the deep unified field of our interconnectedness and to experience this field as our normal way of knowing ourselves and each other. We are a transitional generation, moving from an older form of human being to a new modality — from *homo sapiens* to what some are now calling *homo universalis*.

I am a teacher and spiritual practitioner, but above all, I consider myself an artist. My medium is consciousness and the life force, as it manifests through me and through the people with whom I have the privilege of working. This book is the expression of my art — the fruition of forty years

of living, teaching, and working intimately with thousands of people. My teachings are not a fixed or finished product, but a continuing emergence, which I have done my best to capture on these pages as it is presenting itself at this moment in time.

Today, I continue this critical work in a group called the Evolutionary Collective. Many of the stories contained in this book come from members of this group. As such, these stories constitute a secondary experience of and engagement with evolutionary potentials. Knowing “about” something and understanding it mentally can be interesting and even fascinating, but my intention is to give you direct access to this new dimension of consciousness. I want you to be able to taste it, know it, and live it for yourself, discovering how it shows up in your life and in your relationships, so that when it does, you’ll feel the excitement of being a vehicle for the WEvolution of love.

As you read this book, I encourage you to embrace the ideas and perspectives I’ll be sharing. Allow these concepts to create a new context for your life, even if they confuse you, disturb the status quo, inspire agonizing longings, or open you to mind-blowing possibilities. The more you engage experientially with this book, the more you will experience the transformative power of love in your own relationships.

For decades as a student of spiritual wisdom, I immersed myself in books and benefited from master teachers. Now, as a teacher myself, it is clear to me that in order for people to truly transform, they need to integrate new material in three distinct ways, but depending on your natural tendencies, you may favor just one of these learning styles.

First, you may be the type of person who seeks cognitive understanding. You may prefer to read books, take courses, and listen to the recordings afterward to gain additional knowledge. You may take notes and enjoy discussing various perspectives with other students. Second, you may be the type of student who follows an experiential approach to learning. You may like to immerse yourself in practice and don’t particularly care about information that contextualizes what you are experiencing. Or third, you may be the type of person who wants to take action and apply what is being learned to implement change. Neither understanding nor having a deep experience is your priority. Rather, your focus is practical and action-oriented.

As a teacher, I know that if a person unconsciously follows their natural learning tendency, they likely will grow in a distorted way. For example, you might gather more and more information, or accumulate more and more experiences, or taking action without the proper depth of understanding or spiritual maturity. Therefore, this book provides the necessary ingredients for balanced growth. I'll be sharing information, experiences, and tools for taking action. Most importantly, I'll be offering you the opportunity to create Evolutionary Relationships in your life.

My suggestion is that you read through the book once and allow it to expand and inspire you. Then, go through the book again and work with the exercises. There are practices that you can do alone with a journal and ones that will require a partner. Chapter 3 will assist you in choosing the right partner for this work and instruct you on how to approach the exercises together. Lastly, if you would like to connect with others who are exploring these same potentials or wish to explore additional resources for your journey, please visit my website: **www.EvolutionaryCollective.com**.

*What in your life is calling you when all the noise is silenced ...
The meetings adjourned, the lists laid aside,
And the Wild Iris blooms by itself in the dark forest ...
What still pulls on your soul?*

*In the silence between your heartbeats hides a summons.
Do you hear it?
Name it, if you must, or leave it nameless,
But why pretend it is not there?*

~ Terma Collective⁵

Notes

- 1 Rumi, quoted by Larry Chang, *Wisdom for the Soul: Five Millennia of Prescriptions for Spiritual Healing*, Washington, DC: Gnosophia Publishers, 2006.
- 2 Quoted by Henry L. Carrigan, Jr., editor, *Meditations from Mechthild of Magdeburg*, Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 1999.
- 3 Translated by Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez, *The Collected Works of Saint Teresa of Avila*, Volume Two, Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1980.
- 4 Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, "The Evolution of Chastity" (February 1934), in *Toward the Future*, translated by René Hague, New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975, p. 87.
- 5 Terma Collective, "The Box: Remembering the Gift," quoted by Sheri Gaynor, *Creative Awakenings: Envisioning the Life of Your Dreams Through Art*, Los Angeles, CA: New Insights Press, 2009.