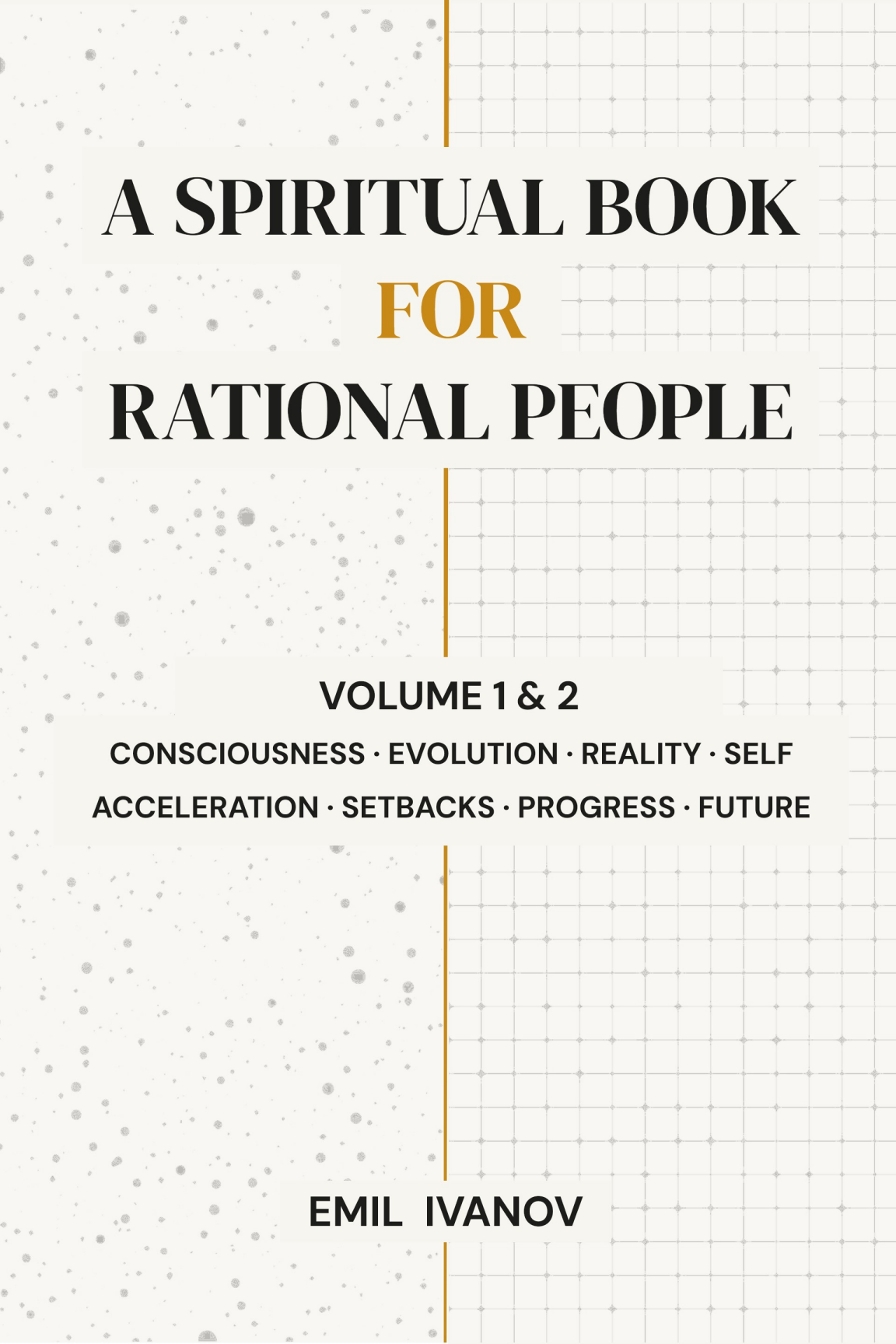


The background of the book cover features a light gray grid pattern. On the left side, there is a vertical band with a dark background and numerous small, light-colored dots, resembling a starry sky or a particle field. A thin, solid orange vertical line runs down the center of the cover, separating the dotted area from the grid area.

A SPIRITUAL BOOK FOR RATIONAL PEOPLE

VOLUME 1 & 2

**CONSCIOUSNESS · EVOLUTION · REALITY · SELF
ACCELERATION · SETBACKS · PROGRESS · FUTURE**

EMIL IVANOV

A Spiritual Book For Rational People

Emil Ivanov

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A Note From The Author

About This Evolving Edition

This book is being published incrementally. Each chapter is released only after it has been revised to a standard suitable for serious reading. The book as a whole, however, is still evolving.

As later chapters are written and as thoughtful readers identify ambiguities or unanswered questions, I may revise earlier chapters for greater clarity, precision, coherence or accuracy.

What Your Purchase Includes

This Leanpub edition is the complete, integrated edition of the entire work. It will include the Introduction and all eight planned chapters as they are published.

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Current State and What Comes Next

The current release contains the **Introduction** and **Chapter 1** (*Consciousness*). Together, they establish the rational person's dilemma, the five-layer methodology and the case for the primacy of consciousness grounded in direct first-person experience.

The Next Release: Chapter 2 (*Evolution*) is already fully drafted and is currently undergoing final editorial review. It is scheduled for release in **six weeks**.

Book Structure

This Leanpub edition presents the complete work as one single continuous book. On Amazon, the work is planned for publication in two separate volumes, each available as a separate ebook and paperback:

- **Volume 1: Foundations (Introduction and Chapters 1 to 4)**
- **Volume 2: Applications (Introduction and Chapters 5 to 8)**

The Leanpub edition will include the complete content of both volumes as each chapter is published.

Version History

The latest release date and a summary of substantive changes appear in the **Version History** at the end of this book. Significant revisions to previously published material are recorded there. Minor typographical and formatting corrections may be made between releases without a separate **Version History** entry.

Reader Feedback

Because this book attempts to bridge rigorous rational analysis with direct subjective experience, I do not expect passive agreement. I actively welcome careful critique from rational readers, especially where:

- an argument seems logically incomplete or unclear;
- a claim appears stronger than the evidence provided;
- an important counter-argument or sceptical objection has been overlooked; or
- a key phenomenological or analytical term needs sharper definition.

You can:

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- [join the book's discussion forum](#)

Thank you for supporting this book in its formative stage.

Emil Ivanov

Introduction

The Rational Person's Dilemma

Everything that you perceive as your world – every sound, every sight, every thought and every emotion – occurs in a space, which science has not yet been able to locate or explain. For the rational person, everything in the universe is governed by the laws of science; matter is fundamental and consciousness is a product of the brain. This view of the world is logical and undisputed by many. There is only one issue. It cannot account for your most direct, intimate and undeniable reality: your own subjective experience. The fact that your direct subjective reality cannot be explained by science is not an exaggeration or an attention-grabber. There is a clear dividing line between the objective physical world and the subjective internal world, which has not yet been crossed. This line represents probably the single biggest unresolved gap in the scientific understanding of the world known as the 'Hard Problem of Consciousness'.

Let's not take this as a theoretical debate, but test it against your own experience. Please focus your undivided attention on the words that you're reading right now. Notice the white background, the black shapes of the letters, and the meaning that arises from them. It appears very strongly that the letters and the words are out there on the page, right? But where is the experience of seeing actually taking place? Is it appearing on a piece of paper in front of you? Clearly not. Or is it happening in your eyes? Your eyes are just lenses that convert light into electrical impulses. Clearly, none of the images that you're experiencing are appearing in your eyeballs. Logically then, the seeing must be happening in your brain, right? Not so fast. Imagine a neuroscientist with technology so advanced that they can observe the firing of every neurone in your brain as you are reading these words. Although they can trace the complete pattern of electrochemical signals that is taking place right now, can they find the visual experience of the white background, the black shapes and the meaning that you are getting right now? I don't think so. They can point out which areas of the brain get activated when you are reading, but this represents a correlation rather than an explanation. The electrical activity of neurones is one thing; the actual

experience of seeing and deriving a meaning is a completely different thing. Notice that whatever you do, you cannot experience your brain. Yet you can still experience seeing. Where and how the grey matter of the brain translates the electrical signals into your movie of reality is at the heart of the 'Hard Problem of Consciousness'.

There is only one possible and logical answer to the question above. Your entire experience of seeing – the page background, the words, their meaning, your eyes, and even the concept of your brain – is taking place in your consciousness. As a matter of fact, everything you have experienced or will ever experience comes to you through a single access point: consciousness itself. This insight is often overlooked when investigating what the world, or reality, is made of, even though it is painfully self-evident. Such an insight might appear simple, but it is of profound importance for all practical aspects of life and science. It is the very key to resolving the 'Hard Problem of Consciousness'. Moreover, such direct first-person experience is the most fundamental piece of data that anyone can gather and exactly the type of data that this book is built on as we investigate together the other aspects of reality. We can theorise and draw any conclusions about objective (external) and subjective (internal) worlds, but our only access point to both is through consciousness.

Paradoxically from a conventional point of view, all perceptions of matter around you (the chair that you're sitting in, the walls of the room that you're in, etc.) are all 'intermediated' by consciousness. In other words, we only know matter because consciousness is here to perceive it. And this is not all. Human history is full of well-documented, albeit anomalous data points that science struggles to explain using the traditional paradigm. Chances are that you have had such experiences, too; for example, sudden knowing without reasoning, meaningful synchronicities (i.e., pattern recognition beyond causality), certain transcendent states of consciousness (i.e. sense of oneness or presence of a deeper reality), etc. Just remember a time when you were thinking of a friend, only for them to call you a moment later; or the sudden 'aha' moment when you knew the solution to a complex problem fully formed in your mind; or the inexplicable 'gut feeling' about a critical decision that turned out to be correct, even though logic suggested otherwise. Remember a feeling of deep connection with nature when you felt one with all, or a feeling of beauty so profound that the world around you disappeared. Examples like these are countless and rather than labelling them 'paranormal' or 'supernatural', the spirit of direct experiential observation requires us to include them in our investigation of reality and not just dismiss them as weird

products of imagination or random coincidences.

If you are a rational person, as I truly hope you are, then you have already formulated in your mind a number of counterarguments or alternative explanations for the experiences just described. And this forms an essential part of our investigation rather than a barrier to it. Your scepticism is the most valuable asset that you can bring to reading this book. You are probably thinking that confirmation bias, apophenia (pattern-seeking in randomness), or psychological projection can explain most of the above examples. For instance, any synchronicity can be a result of a confirmation bias: remembering the one odd hit and forgetting the thousands of misses; or a strong gut feeling can be explained away with our tendency to find patterns in random noise. These are valid and honest arguments.

I am not asking you to set your critical thinking aside; all I am asking you is to bring along an open mind as some of the concepts in this book will dramatically challenge your existing belief system. None of your sceptical arguments will be dismissed. Instead, I am hoping that they will be woven into the book's methodology and structure. The goal is to build collaboratively a coherent framework of reality that can withstand your own scrutiny, rather than exchanging one belief system for another.

My Journey

The course of my whole life has been determined by the flow of two powerful rivers. The first river can be described as the flow of rational thinking, which I have developed over the years by solving business problems with logic and clarity. Since I was a young boy, I have always been attracted to science and philosophy, and later in life I built a career in strategy consulting and financial services. This river has been very influential and its presence allowed me to earn a comfortable living.

The second river has been equally powerful. It can be described as the flow of intuitive knowing accompanied by experiences and perceptions that could not be explained by logic alone, including strong intuitions, sudden knowing, vivid dreams and highly unusual memories, which I never experienced in real life.

For years, these two rivers flowed side by side, both in the same riverbed, but rarely ever mixing with each other. Yet I have known without a shadow of a doubt that both originate from the same place. My goal has always been

to uncover their common source rather than damming either river to favour the other. My journey has been a quest for their unification and this book is a direct result of this intent.

Over the years, I have had many experiences that could not be explained by rationality. To demonstrate some of the elements of methodology used in this book, I would like to share a few key experiences from my own life. I have selected a few specific and unusual data points that shifted my search from a mere intellectual curiosity into a personal quest. These examples were selected for a specific reason: all of them, in their own unique way, expose directly the limitations of the conventional worldview of reality. I am certain that some of my readers have had similar experiences, too, which could be so difficult to express in words.

The first example was something that I had struggled to explain for years after it first happened. I call it my 'symphony dreams'. They started in my early teenage years and lasted intermittently for a number of years. Every now and then, while dreaming, I would find myself completely immersed in music played by a full symphonic orchestra. It was always a beautiful melody accompanied by the complete orchestral environment, including all the various sections: the strings, the brass, the percussion, etc. In my dream, I heard only the rich and beautiful music, without seeing any musicians or instruments..

Now, if I were a trained musician or a composer, this might be expected, yet I had no background in music. But I was not. I had no ability to read or play music and no understanding of orchestration. I could no more write and orchestrate music in my waking life than build a space rocket. In addition, I had not been exposed to any symphonic music on the radio or anywhere else for that matter.

These simple facts transformed my dreams from a simple curiosity into an acute intellectual problem. The traditional worldview would say that minds process, store, combine and recombine information, but in this case the information was completely new and totally outside of what I would be exposed to in my daily life. I often loathed the fact that I could not write the music down, as it was so mesmerising. Gradually, I stopped dreaming those symphonies, but the experience itself did not disappear. It transformed into dreaming simpler songs. They had their melodies, various instruments and very often they had lyrics, too. The last time this happened to me was as I was considering writing about this.

This recurring experience became one of my prime motivations for seeking a

credible explanation and for trying to combine to the two rivers in my life. A few years later, I learned that many accomplished musicians first heard their music in their sleep, only to wake up and write it down. This was my cross-validation, which refuelled my search for years to come.

If the symphony dreams presented me with an information puzzle, my next experience gave me a tool for investigation. This experience came in the form of lucid dreaming – a real classic for many people, but with an interesting twist for me. From a young age, I was a frequent lucid dreamer. Many times in my dreams I would soar in the skies and fly, often without a specific destination, just playing and enjoying the experience. These dreams were remarkably stable and consistent. When I woke up, I would retain the dreams for days. The experience of flying was so realistic that at some point I got interested in studying it. One part of me was playing in the dream and another part of me was studying what made flying possible. How was the flight initiated? How was it sustained and controlled? While dreaming, I experimented. I tried flapping my arms – nothing. I tried jumping in the air – again nothing. Gradually through repeated experiments in my dreaming and thinking about them during the day, I concluded that flying in my dreams was governed by something different from the laws of physics. Back then, I described it as a strange psychological energy which was activated when I fixed my mind on the goal of flying with unwavering focus. It was a directed operational force, but I had no name for it. Moreover, if any doubt or comment entered my mind, the flight was always immediately over.

For years after these flying dreams stopped, this was just a private discovery that I did not think about too much – I was just a boy playing in my vivid dreams. The first moment of cross-validation came years later in my early thirties, when I first read the works of Carlos Castaneda. He gave a name to the force that I had discovered. He called it 'Intent'. The way he described it matched my own experience like a glove. Later still, Tom Campbell's *My Big TOE* trilogy provided me with a scientific framework that validated this force from first principles. The question became bigger: if intent is the operational force that can produce effects in non-physical dreams, what, if any, is its role in the physical waking world? It did not take too long to find numerous examples from my own life to convince me that this force was just as real in waking life.

This experience and the subsequent cross-validations marked a profound shift in my search for explanations. I had moved from being a passive observer of subjective experiences into being an experimenter who stumbled upon intent, which Tom Campbell called 'the motive force of consciousness'.

While the first two experiences gave me a lifelong puzzle and a powerful tool, the third experience gave me an anchor into a state of non-dual awareness. It did not happen during a moment of quiet meditation as the cliché goes but on an ordinary afternoon while volunteering at a seminar in my hometown.

That day was pretty unremarkable to begin with. I was helping out and my mind was occupied with many practical tasks. In the afternoon, the facilitator of the seminar called me to the front of the room to assist him with something. I don't recall what. As I stood beside him, I looked at the back of the room, where seven fellow volunteers were standing. In that instant, something in me shifted. It was a profound change in the way I perceived the world, distinct from any thought or emotion.

I no longer experienced seven different individuals at the back of the room. In a way that is extremely difficult to describe but impossible for me to deny, I experienced them as extensions of myself. Suddenly I knew them as intimate parts of me, transcending our ordinary relationships as separate individuals or friends. I looked at the facilitator and then at the people in the room and the perception just expanded to include both him and the sixty other participants. They were all enfolded into my being, which was now theirs too.

This perceptual unity was accompanied by an overwhelming feeling of love. I loved deeply and unconditionally every single part of myself in that room. This feeling was so profound that it completely short-circuited my internal dialogue and analytical mind. I went utterly silent inside. There was only love and clarity. I don't remember how I did it, but I excused myself and left the room. It took me a few hours to return to my normal senses again.

As I tried to figure out analytically what had happened, I thought of a number of possibilities. Was it a psychological breakdown? Self-hypnosis? A neurological anomaly? I didn't think it was any of these, as the experience was accompanied by a heightened sense of clarity, order and coherence – exactly the opposite of a system breakdown.

Of course, I also knew about the 'awakening' experiences of various gurus and yogis, but weren't they supposed to happen in meditation? At that time, I also thought that 'awakening' experiences were supposed to solve all of one's problems and remove all suffering, whereas my experience certainly did not solve any of mine. Yet, the more research I did, the more it confirmed that I was not alone. Such states of non-dual awareness accompanied by so much love are described consistently across time and cultures.

The interesting thing is that this experience has never completely left me. Even though I continued to have my ups and downs in life afterwards, I could at will look at a person or a thing and experience them as part of myself, accompanied by love, harmony, or a feeling of beauty. There are some exceptions, but they are few and far between.

My life, as illustrated by these three examples, has been influenced by the gradual understanding of my own subjective experiences. At some point I started thinking of these events as building blocks that helped me understand reality from a wider perspective.

These experiences also revealed a crucial obstacle that I faced. In every instance the main obstacle to maintaining the experiences was my internal dialogue. Access to these different states of awareness was inversely proportionate to the prominence of my analytical mind's voice. The moment I began to judge, doubt, or just comment on what was taking place, the experience came to a sudden halt. This observation, coupled with other direct experiences, led me to the conclusion that the key to integrating the two rivers and broadening my perception of the world is the simple, yet so difficult, skill of silencing the internal dialogue.

I hope these experiences from my own life illustrate my motivation for integrating the objective and subjective parts of the world into a coherent framework. It is something I had to do for myself to help me investigate consciousness through the lens of reason. Now I would like to share it with like-minded readers such as yourself.

Who This Book Is For

If you feel that the rational objective lens on the world, while sharp and powerful, cannot fully account for the richness of your internal subjective world, including some of your most deep subjective experiences, then this journey is for you. This book is an investigation for those who have been feeling the weight of this contradiction all of their lives and have the courage to get to the bottom of it.

This book is for the rational person who has had experiences that did not fit in their rational view of the world: a striking synchronicity, keen intuition, unexpected premonition, or transcendent states of consciousness. It is for the engineer, the analyst, the consultant, the doctor, the scientist, or any

other honest seeker who respects data and evidence, but has come to realise that there is a substantial piece of the reality puzzle that is missing.

A fundamental requirement for getting the most out of this book is to possess intellectual humility, a genuine willingness to question your own assumptions and beliefs, whether they come from scientific materialism, historical philosophical traditions, or popular religious systems.

Your scepticism is welcome, but it must be accompanied by an inquisitive and open mind. If you are certain that you already have the complete picture of reality, whether from philosophical or religious scriptures or from the physics textbook, and if you're more interested in defending your own view than questioning and expanding it, then this book may not be for you at this juncture of your life. It is a call for active engagement with reality rather than an escape into a parallel world. Finally, if you're currently in the midst of a significant life struggle (financial, health, or another personal crisis), then your energy is probably best directed towards stabilising your situation first.

If you can see yourself in the description of the honest seeker above, then the promise of this book is twofold: first, to provide a coherent, first-person framework that integrates the objective world studied by rational science with the subjective reality of your direct experience; and second, to apply that foundation to the practical reality of daily living. In doing so, the book will not only resolve the central tension of the rational person's dilemma, but also identify and release the specific internal brakes that impede your own evolution of consciousness, thus unlocking a deeper wisdom, heightened intuition, and a more gratifying way of living.

The Approach: A Framework, Not A Model

Now that we have established who this journey is (and is not) for, it is important to outline how we are going to travel. What follows is an outline of the approach that we will apply at every step of our exploration.

This methodology is not scientific in the conventional sense of inviting third-person, verifiable and, most importantly, repeatable experiments. This is primarily because it is extremely difficult in practice to set up the initial conditions for repeatable subjective experiments and insights, even if theoretical execution remains possible. However, our approach will be guided rigorously by the spirit of scientific enquiry; that is, prioritising curiosity, commitment

to first-person observation and systemic comparative analysis of the domain of subjective experience.

This is primarily a first-person investigation. Our primary data will be the direct, lived and often suffered experience of your own awareness. You will observe your perceptions, thoughts, feelings and emotions with the care and precision that a scientist aims to bring to their work. You will treat your inner world as a rich field of valuable data rather than random noise.

Words matter immensely to the rational person. In this regard, you will notice that we are using the words 'framework' or 'description', not 'model', throughout the book. 'Model' often conveys a fixed and complete representation of reality, whereas, 'framework' can be interpreted as a foundation upon which further understanding can be built. In that sense, a 'framework' is open-ended in nature and can continue to evolve, whereas a 'model' is either seen as right or is proven wrong eventually. The goal of a 'framework' is to build a coherent conceptual scaffolding that helps make sense of our direct first-person experience and can serve as a valuable guide for future, more detailed investigations by scientists and practitioners in various fields.

I value immensely the wisdom found in the world's contemplative and religious traditions; however, this book diverges in one key way: it does not require faith. Where many religious and spiritual paths for understanding the profound questions of life begin with accepting revealed truths, our journey begins with direct observation of our own subjective experiences. Then, the insights of past mystics are treated as valuable data points and hypotheses of past explorers rather than scripture truths.

Modern spiritual teachers have been invaluable in bringing important spiritual concepts to a mass audience. While many of their books and lectures offer powerful insights and inspiration (the 'what'), they more often than not lack a systemic and rational explanation about the underlying mechanics (the 'why' and the 'how'). While these systems are more than enough for the intuitive person, they lack substance for the rational one. Therefore, my goal here is to provide a functional framework or a description of reality that a rational person can test on their own, work with and build upon.

Finally, unlike the purely objective scientific method, which often dismisses subjective data as unreliable noise, each chapter of this book begins with a subjective investigation as a starting point. It argues that all data, including every scientific measurement ever taken, has ultimately been gathered through the 'intermediation' of consciousness. Therefore, beginning with the subjectivity of consciousness is the most fundamental approach of all.

This book offers a ‘third way’ between spiritual traditions and rationality: an approach that honours the validity of direct first-person subjective experience (the core of spirituality), while at the same time upholding the values of intellectual honesty, logic and evidence (the core of rationality). This represents a higher ground, rather than a compromise, from which we will explore the deepest questions of life and existence.

The Five-Layer Methodology

Any investigation is only as good as the methodology used to perform it. To ensure that our investigation into reality maintains a high level of integrity, in each chapter I employ the same systematic five-layer methodology. Its goal is to help you build a new, more coherent and comprehensive understanding of the world by providing a solid scaffolding, which can serve as a foundation for your own unique journey of self-discovery.

Layer 1: A Foundation in Direct Experience

We will always begin our investigations with the primary data source: your own direct, lived, subjective experience. When the subject of investigation is consciousness, the source of data must be consciousness itself. This practice of direct self-observation is the most fundamental tool at our disposal, superior to any second-hand accounts, expert opinions or belief systems. You will be asked to attend closely to what appears in your consciousness, while intentionally withholding any preconceived ideas and concepts, including premature judgements and comparisons. By starting with direct experience, you will ensure that you are not starting from unexamined beliefs. This is the skill of separating raw experiential data (e.g. a sensation of tightness in the belly) from the interpretations that we automatically attach to it (e.g. ‘I’m anxious’).

Such self-observation is inspired by phenomenology, which is a scientific discipline dedicated to rigorous exploration of one’s own lived first-person experience. It is very important to note here that this book adopts the spirit of phenomenology as a practical and personal tool for investigating the nature of reality from a first-person perspective. You are invited to view your consciousness as a personal laboratory, where your thoughts, feelings, sensations and emotions are all data points to be observed and analysed with attention and precision.

Layer 2: From Experience to Understanding

Subjective experience provides the raw data, but data alone does not build a framework. The second layer of our methodology is to transition from direct experience to rational understanding. In this step, we will take the insights discovered in your personal experiential laboratory and subject them to logical scrutiny. I will ask you to apply your critical thinking to determine whether your subjective findings also hold up as logical necessities. This process ensures that you actively translate those subjective experiences into rigorous coherent concepts that can be clearly communicated and understood by the rational mind.

Layer 3: Connecting the Dots

A rational insight gained in isolation may sometimes feel ungrounded, as self-doubt is often natural to so many rational people. Therefore, the third layer of our investigation is cross-validation. Once an insight has been rationalised, we will look for echoes of it in other domains, from ancient traditions and philosophies to modern scientific theories. Our aim is to check whether we are on a path that others have walked before, rather than to seek impossible validation from external authority. You might be surprised how ancient some of these insights really are.

What we will be looking for is pattern recognition rather than a rigorous comprehensive study. We will also be looking for the often-surprising parallels that emerge across ancient and modern times, and across different disciplines. Many of the powerful insights from the past were constrained by the language and the body of knowledge available to people at that time. Hence, a secondary aim of this cross-validation layer is to update some of the metaphors used to describe such insights and unlock a deeper understanding of the original concepts, stimulating new and alternative ways of thinking.

If you are an expert in any of the historical traditions, philosophies or modern scientific theories mentioned in this section of relevant chapters, you will inevitably notice many hidden nuances and omissions. As I mentioned, the focus remains on identifying overarching patterns across various traditions and scientific theories. In such cases, you are invited to practise intellectual humility and focus on the similarities as they might reveal surprising new patterns within your own area of expertise. I ask you to keep engaging with the material and remain open-minded, while reserving your final judgement until you have seen the complete big picture presented in the book.

Finally, it is worth reminding ourselves that understanding is an unfolding process rather than a one-time event. It is completely natural for some of the patterns identified in this section to resonate immediately, while others require a second reading or a period of reflection. I hope that this section also serves as the beginning of a new and fruitful dialogue between representatives of various fields and disciplines.

Layer 4: Investigating Main Objections

This is not supposed to be a journey of passive acceptance. A framework which cannot withstand scrutiny is not worth building. Your doubts and questions serve as vital signals that help refine and deepen the investigation, rather than obstacles to be overcome. Hence, the fourth layer of this methodology is to seek out actively the strongest possible counterarguments and address them head-on – a practice known as steelmanning.

This investigation seeks to test and explore collaboratively a new framework of reality, rather than convert you to a new belief system, checking if it is more coherent and comprehensive than the alternatives. You are also invited to test it against your own reason rather than pre-existing beliefs and, most importantly, against your own direct experience. Where you find a discrepancy, you have found another valuable data point for investigation. As you will discover later, this approach is the hidden mechanism behind the evolution of consciousness itself.

Layer 5: Summary of Key Insights and Terms

The final layer of this book's methodology is synthesis. It is here that we move back from analysis to a holistic perspective. Here I will distil the insights from this chapter into a set of core ideas, their practical implications and the key terms used. By lining up the core ideas of all chapters, we will arrive at a single and cohesive framework that is more than the sum of its parts. The practical implications, on the other hand, may help you improve your life by putting the spotlight on potential areas for further development and investigation; however, I will stop short of guaranteeing any life-changing events.

The Journey Ahead: A Roadmap

Our joint investigation journey is organised into two volumes. Each volume addresses its own fundamental question:

Volume 1: The Foundations

We will begin the journey by examining the foundations of reality. We will first investigate the proposition that consciousness is primary (Chapter 1). Next, we will turn to the evolution of consciousness and how it shows up in our lives (Chapter 2). Then, we will discover how the world that we perceive is actively co-created by all of us together and what this means for our own personal consciousness evolution (Chapter 3). Finally, we will examine our sense of self and discover something that might be the single biggest obstacle to our personal growth (Chapter 4).

Volume 2: The Applications

We will then turn to understanding how we can practically apply what we learnt in Volume 1 to our own lives. We will begin by exploring the possibility of accelerating our own personal consciousness evolution by releasing the brakes that hold us in place (Chapter 5). We will follow up by looking at the setbacks to our consciousness evolution and the valuable feedback that these challenges bring (Chapter 6). Then, we will learn how to track our progress without turning it into another achievement of the ego (Chapter 7). Finally, we will examine some of the possibilities and applications that could open up for science, technology, society and the humanity at large, if we adopt our new understanding of reality and evolution (Chapter 8).

Preparing for the Journey

My goal here is to help you prepare well without unnecessary pressure. I would suggest committing to three things from the outset:

1. **Self-Observation.** Commit to putting sustained attention on your inner experiences. Attention is the most basic tool we have, and this will help you develop the skill of separating the signal from the noise.
2. **Big Picture Focus.** Commit to applying a systematic approach that always keeps the big picture in sight, even when individual concepts feel too abstract. It will stop you from getting lost in the details before you have had a chance to raise your perspective.
3. **Courage.** Commit to following your own experiential data with courage, even when it challenges your sense of self and your most cherished beliefs.

One more thing: read this slowly. The ideas presented here will likely need more time to settle. The first-person investigation at the beginning of each chapter is an invitation to pause and explore your own mind. Your own personal observations will always carry more weight than any belief systems imported from the outside.

Now let's take the first step.

Chapter 1: Consciousness

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From Experience to Understanding

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One Universal Consciousness Appears As Many

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3) Thomas Campbell (The Applied Physicist and Consciousness Explorer)

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Objection 7: The Involuntary Suffering Objection

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