

Having It All!

Audrey Mairi



We are living, organic pieces of art — the sum total of all that we have experienced in life. Art in motion is forever opening and contracting, forever changing shape and expression. Like the dabs of color a painter applies, our experiences are imprinted on our body/mind. As we learn and grow we constantly rework our painting or refine the contours of our sculpture. A dab of paint here and a little shaving off there, but instead of a paintbrush or a chisel we use a different kind of tool: feelings. We have been molded, the way a sculptor molds clay, by each and every feeling we have ever had. The longer we live, the more we become a living map of our life's journey.

If we want to add a new road to our map — to change our living work of art — we cannot simply walk down the same old path or use the same old material. In order to live a different life, we are called to change the quality of the medium with which we create our organic piece of art. But because every cell holds the emotional memory of our past experiences, we need to go beyond our body, beyond our cells, beyond even our DNA to create something new. In fact, we need to go into a different art supply store altogether for new material to integrate into our old sculpture or painting. This art store is transcendental and is open all hours, every day of the week, from the beginning of time to the end of time. It supplies only one material. But this one material is infinitely versatile and of the purest quality. And with it we can do just about anything. If we knew how to get it, then...we could have it all!

Having it all, however, does not mean what many of us think it means. If we believe advertising, having it all means a well-paid job, a beautiful home filled with all the latest gadgets, a new car, and perhaps a holiday or two a year. Owners of corporations, in their bid to make money, bombard us with myriad choices that promise to make us happy. But what many of us are finding is that when we reach this goal of a better lifestyle, we are still not fulfilled. Many in our culture have had the privilege of going down this road of consumerism; to our surprise we have found that the much-touted idea of having it all does not ultimately make us feel happy.

Expecting to find happiness and contentment by acquiring objects doesn't work because consumerism is based on the belief that we do not have enough. We always need more clothes, a new sofa, a bigger house, a second or third car — all to keep us distracted from the truth of our situation, that we feel powerless. We think we are victims of disease, of bosses and their whims, of government, of terrorism, of banks, of family obligations, of dysfunctional relationships and our aging bodies.

What having it all means to me is a very different thing. To me, it means being Hooked-Up, exuding a sense of lightness, traveling through the world unburdened and connected to the flow of the Life Force. When we exude light, we create a wholly different work of art than we have been conditioned to create. Our experiences and

feelings increase in depth and breadth. Our senses become keener. We open ourselves to the robustness of life. Our pain, grief, and disappointment simply become other colors on the palette of light.

If only we were conscious of the flow of the Life Force. If only we could access it at will — oh, how our lives would change! The current of lightness would carry us toward who we were meant to be, who our souls would naturally become.

To consciously experience light is not to go skipping down the road bellowing Broadway show tunes (though feel free if that's your fancy). Instead, to experience light is to allow into our conscious lives the energetic component that runs throughout the universe, and therefore throughout our body/mind. Light is merely a word. Some might substitute peace or bliss. Others may call it gratitude. Whatever word we put to it, what counts is the feeling of the energetic component when we are wholly in the present moment.

That's the key: the present moment. From the perspective of this energetic flow, the past and the future do not exist. There is just the ever-unfolding present. Anything else is an imaginary construct of the mind. While there's some usefulness in our imagined constructs, these constructs can impede our ability to truly focus on the present moment. If we could learn how to be in the present moment, we would have conscious access to this energetic flow.

The Relative and the Absolute

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the developer of Transcendental Meditation, says that when we are in the present moment we simultaneously recognize both aspects of the universe:

- The relative part that constantly changes, and
- the absolute part that never changes.

This absolute part is the origin of the energetic component, of that flow of light, of bliss, of peace and appreciation. It is where potential lives — the place from which all of creation springs. And it is what we often ignore.

We forget that everything is made of energy. The chair you are sitting on, this book you are reading, the car you drive in, the trees outside, the sky, and, of course, your body. All of these have their source in this absolute aspect of the universe.

To illustrate how this is true, let's look at a sample body. It is, say, six feet tall, 190 pounds, with brown hair, a medium build, and blue eyes. This body is a relative aspect of creation, which means we can touch it, see it, taste it, smell it, and hear it move through space. When we step nearer to this body and observe it closely, we see that the texture of the skin is smooth except for the fingertips and soles of the feet, the hair has a soft, fine texture, and on the left shoulder there is a mole.

When we look at this body under a microscope, we see that it is made of cells. These cells aren't worried about being late for work or what movie they want to watch that evening. They are concerned about manufacturing chemicals and duplicating themselves and stopping invaders such as viruses, antigens, and bacteria. When we go even deeper, we see that these cells are made up of molecules. Molecules constitute the smallest quantity that a substance can be divided into without losing its characteristics. On this level it is hard for anyone who does not study chemistry to differentiate between the molecules of a human body and the molecules of a cat or a dolphin (or any other life form, for that matter).

Taking our observation further in, we see that a molecule is made up of two or more atoms. An atom is the smallest particle of an element that can exist and take part in a chemical exchange and still retain its identity. Atoms are composed of still smaller particles called electrons, neutrons, and protons. Comparatively speaking these small particles move around in a huge vacant territory. From this view we appear to be almost entirely made up of empty space. This view of the universe looks very different from the global view of our sample body. Now, it is even harder to differentiate between a body and anything else in creation.

Let's look still further, beyond the subatomic level. Here, elementary particles display very different laws of nature and can zip in and out of our perception. From this perspective there are no boundaries. We can't discern which particle comes from the human body or which comes from a rock, a cat, a star, a chair, or anything else. These particles sit on the threshold of emptiness and vibrate faintly, seemingly at random. Some vibrations die off to nothingness, while others manifest into our reality as energy. When they wink out of existence, where do they go? They drop down to a point of zero vibration, their source, the starting point. This starting point is common to everything that has ever been or will ever be created. From here there is no differentiation; everything is one and the same.

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi calls this place the Unified Field. It is the origin of the energetic flow that runs not only through the universe but also through our body/mind. It supports everything. And it feels light, like bliss, like peace, like gratitude infused throughout our being. From the perspective of the Unified Field there is only one of us.

I first learned about the Unified Field — and the meaning of the saying “We are all One” — during the late 1960s and early '70s. This was a time of reformation. Consciousness was shifting. Historically this was a pivotal moment when the Western world moved into a New Age. The Vietnam War was raging, the sexual revolution was blossoming, the music industry was forging new ground, and creativity was at a high. People were no longer satisfied with the status quo. We were discontented with the way things were and fearful over what the future might bring; we therefore doubted what we called “the establishment,” and all that it stood for. We started to question everything: Is war necessary? Why can't I have long hair if I want it? Why do I get paid less just because I am a woman? Do I really need a bigger house and a new car?

For me, the first step toward expanding my consciousness and understanding the Unified Field was more ego based than spiritual. Late in the Calgary summer of 1969, I sat enthralled in a booth at Verona's Pizza Parlour. Chin in hand, elbow on the table, I drank in the words of my school friend as he expounded upon the virtues of Transcendental Meditation, or TM, as he called it. Like the zealous new initiate he was, he told me that all I had to do was meditate twice a day and enlightenment would be mine. I would become anchored in the light of profound knowledge; free from all worries and fears, I would appreciate the totality of life.

As I sat there listening to my friend, I realized I didn't have a clue about what he really meant by "profound knowledge" or "the totality of life," I just knew I wanted to be the one doing the telling, creating awe and envy in my fellow listeners. I had to learn how to meditate so I could walk around with that air of mystery, knowing I knew something that perhaps you didn't, or if you did that we were part of an elite club. As a result, late that August I was initiated into TM. It was the cool thing to do.

I began watching and listening to videotapes and audiotapes of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the developer of the TM technique, and after finding that they made incredible sense to me, both intellectually and intuitively, I knew I was on the right path, cool or not. I dutifully practiced TM twice a day. During these sessions I sat comfortably with my eyes closed, using the special sound or mantra I received at my initiation to help my mind turn inward. My thoughts became more and more subtle, taking me into a deep, warm, safe place filled with light that went beyond thought to the source of everything — the Unified Field.

To get there I had to let go, give up trying, and use no effort.

My first conscious experience of the Unified Field occurred not long after my initiation. I sat quietly, following the technique I had been taught, when all of a sudden a curtain opened in my perception. No matter where I looked in my mind's eye, I could see nothing; it was like sitting in the middle of a flat, sandy desert. I felt larger than the confines of my skin, with no boundaries, no walls, no gates, no scenes, and no immediate thoughts. I also experienced a profound feeling of lightness, stability, and appreciation. I felt I had arrived home after a long journey through storms and floods and battles.

Twice a day every day, in my meditation my mind would dip into the unbounded reservoir of the Unified Field. I was completely at rest yet totally alert. I was still. I felt light. My mind was naturally drawn to these levels of greater and greater bliss just as our minds naturally wander to beautiful music wafting through an open window.

My ability to stay in the present moment and appreciate my surroundings increased the more I experienced my source. The more present I was, the more conscious I became of the source in all things, which was an enjoyable feedback loop. In this way I gradually gained a degree of awareness of the absolute quality of life in my everyday environment, which resulted in changes that went beyond my limited beliefs and enhanced my reality.

Since we can't experience the Unified Field without it directly affecting our relative existence, these experiences had far-reaching effects on me. Although I knew that deep down I was changing for the better, I really didn't know how much and how quickly this path would transform me. About four years after starting TM, I woke up to the realization that familiar parameters no longer existed. I felt, for a time, as if I were sliding down an icy slope with no brakes.

I looked around. I was living in foreign territory; a place unknown.

My entire perception changed. I dropped down into an even deeper level of experience. Nothing so far in my life had prepared me for the realizations that came with it. Words such as still and contentment took on new meaning. I came to understand them to indicate a profound sense of inner tranquility. And color wasn't something to just look at anymore; it had texture and sound and purpose. Green became a soft healing melody in a forest; red, a fiery, passionate storm. Everything I saw, touched, smelled, or heard had more depth and breadth. I perceived the underlying unity in all things. It was now obvious to me that the universe was a unique expression of our common source — the Unified Field.

I felt excited but also very scared as my old foundation started to crumble. Who I was and why I was here changed so quickly that I remember repeating to myself almost daily, "So this is who I am!"

And my outer world changed too. My marriage to my childhood sweetheart abruptly ended, and I moved across the country to Kingston. I wanted to ensure that I was not just paying lip service to a theoretical spiritual ideal. I wanted to walk my talk. At the time, the TM Organization was planning to build an academy nearby, and my intuitive sense encouraged me to seek this new idyllic setting in order to contemplate "life, the universe, and everything." At age twenty-four, I left my husband, my mother, my brother, my sister (who was my confidante), my friends, and my life as I knew it.

I started again.

Experiencing the Unified Field

Does this mean we have to practice Transcendental Meditation and start a new life to experience the Unified Field? Of course not, there are many ways to get acquainted with our source. TM just happened to be my first. But it does mean that when we regularly experience the Unified Field in a conscious way, we will give up life as we know it for something better?

Bringing our awareness of the Unified Field into our daily life will cause all unsupportive aspects, such as the wrong job or dysfunctional mental/emotional habits, to become so obvious we will feel compelled to change them in order to feel better. Take heart, though; we can trust in this new direction because the Unified Field is intelligent.

This intelligence is expressed in the active component of the Unified Field — the Life Force. The results of this force are creative yet orderly. A seed becomes a seedling and grows into a beautiful mature plant. A tree is not created fully matured only to regress to being an acorn. When we plant a flower seed, we don't get a Dodge minivan. We aren't born with bark for skin or seaweed for hair. Because we recognize this basic principle, we can be assured that the Life Force will lead us to become more than we are right now. For example, I knew when I left Calgary for Kingston that no matter what I encountered on my journey across the country, I was in the process of experiencing something greater than I had before. I trusted this growth in the same way I trusted the sun would rise in the east the next morning — and set in the west come evening. I understood I was an expression of that transcendental art store, the Unified Field, and its sole material, the intelligent energetic flow called the Life Force.

At any time we can feel the lightness of the Life Force by bringing our awareness to the present moment — that is, by consciously focusing on both sides of our existence: 100 percent on the relative and 100 percent on the absolute.

The relative aspect, which we perceive with our senses, follows rules such as gravity, time, and space. It is always changing, constantly moving from one form to another. When we observe a tree, we see the trunk, the leaves, and maybe some roots. We can smell its scent and touch the rough bark. The leaves change with the seasons; we can see and touch them as they change from green to gold to red. The bark and trunk change too, even though we cannot see it. The trunk grows a new ring each year, the growth reflecting the kind of year it had — its own personal map. In time the tree will die and form compost, just as our body goes through its life cycle and ages and eventually dies.

What we don't see at first glance is the source of our body or the tree — the part of life energetically rooted in the Unified Field; nevertheless, throughout all this growth and change, the source, the absolute, remains the same. It is the never-changing aspect of our life, the only constant we will ever experience. Whether we are happy or sad, sick or healthy, rich or poor, the common denominator in all of these scenarios is that we are being something. The being part is perennial. It is always there, rooted in our communal energetic reservoir, the Unified Field, and its active component, the Life Force.

From the time of my earliest memories, a quiet consistent feeling/voice has spoken to me, often manifesting itself as intuition. It has been a constant companion and has never changed its tone or peaceful presence no matter what the circumstances. This consistent feeling/voice, however, is not merely a part of me; it is my core, my Spirit, my energy signature, the central thread around which the rest of my life is woven. And it is through our Spirit or energy signature that we connect with one another and with the rest of creation. For example: We walk down a road on a beautiful day and we feel grateful. We look at our partner and we feel love. We touch our mother's hand and we feel safe. We hear a bird's song and we feel carefree. A spectacular sunset gives us a feeling of awe. These feelings are a manifestation of the energetic connection that underlies such moments in time — light meeting light, Spirit meeting Spirit — in the present moment.

This energy connection fuels us. With practice, we find it empowers us. It enables us to make clear, significant choices that lead to healthy life changes. Through this mindful connection we cease being victims reacting to circumstances but rather become creators of the life we want. Yes, by being consciously connected to our source we can have it all: the strength and self-empowerment to thrive as well as to enjoy the bounty around us. Right here, right now.

Recognizing the Life Force

When we begin seeking the Life Force, we often find it is not always recognizable in obvious or superficial places. But it is everywhere. It is non-local energy unconfined to a single space/time, yet it has a measurable influence. At first the Life Force appears soft, quiet, subtle, and still, but only because we have been raised to focus on activity. While we are engaged in the intellectual navigation of our life, the Life Force fades into the background. When we learn to decrease our level of activity and quiet our minds, the Life Force suddenly appears everywhere. But in reality it hasn't changed; it has always been everywhere. Only our ability to recognize it has increased. By becoming present and letting go of our preoccupations, we effortlessly Hook-Up to it. For example, imagine admiring a healthy newborn baby girl. Our first reaction might be to notice her soft, curly hair, blue eyes, and button nose. And who in the family has those funny toes? But at the same time, as our eyes and ears are drinking in all the relative aspects, we experience a feeling of wonder, of joy. Therein lays the Life Force. Therein lays the feeling of light. A newborn, relatively speaking, has no emotional baggage, no agenda, and no pressure to perform. It is never in a rush but in a state of constant discovery. Such purity allows us to perceive the uncluttered Life Force as it is manifested through a living being.

It is found...in the pause.

In the wonder

In the innocence

It is behind whatever color looks good to us.

Behind whatever sound is soothing to our ears.

Between the notes of a melody

Between our in-breath and our out-breath

Behind whatever texture gives us pleasure and comfort.

It is behind a beautiful sunset and a rainy day.

It is found in the spaces between these words.

Behind a great painting

Underneath our movement

Between the cells in our body

Inside the core of a tree

It is still.

It is real.

It is here, now.

Being Present

In Zen Buddhism it is said that when we walk, we walk, and when we eat, we eat. Being present means our attention will not be on what happened to us last night or last

year, or what we will be doing next month, or, for that matter, what we are going to have for dinner. We cannot be present while we are carrying a grudge against someone or when we are preoccupied with a current life crisis. Showing up, or being present, means that all of our attention is on the object or task at hand. There are numerous ways to find presence, many requiring at least one or two hours a day devoted to practice.

“But I just don’t have the time!” How often have you said these very words? One of the ways we lose our ability to respond to the question “How can I feel better?” is our sense that we just don’t have the luxury of time to ponder and seek out new relationships with ourselves or with a higher purpose. Maybe that great job we were so happy to get required more overtime than we had anticipated. Maybe our children’s needs became even more demanding as they navigated the labyrinth of their unique lives. Or as our parents aged it became payback time as they required more of our assistance to carry out their daily routine.

“There’s just no time!” But let’s not throw out the baby with the bathwater. Take a deep breath. We’re not talking about neglecting our responsibilities here. On the contrary, by putting our awareness in the present moment we not only experience a sense of lightness, but we are also more effective and have greater long-term productivity.

When we are not being present two problems occur: First, we no longer receive all the information available. Second, we separate ourselves from our fuel — the Life Force. Both create dis-ease and disharmony in our body/mind and upon the earth.

Instead, we need to educate and strengthen our nervous systems to accept the life-sustaining energy we require to thrive. The process of educating and strengthening our nervous systems by consciously reconnecting our Spirit to our physical self is, however, more than an intellectual construct. Real neuropeptides are unplugging from real receptor sites and plugging into new receptor sites, causing change on fundamental levels. The way to start this process is to become present.

Be careful, however, not to make becoming present a goal you must work hard for. Life is not about the destination; it is about the journey. Goals are great to set direction, but in order to implement them (contrary to cultural beliefs) it is best to relax into the present moment where the Life Force resides. For us to continuously focus on the goal jettisons us into the future, dividing our attention and taking us out of the here and now.

When I started to write this book I set a goal of having it finished in two years. That was five years ago! Staying focused on the goal and pushing myself forward to obtain it did not serve me because when I didn’t stay in the present moment I couldn’t access my creativity. I needed to Hook-Up to the Life Force (our source of creativity) and then stay in the present moment to allow this book to unfold one word, one paragraph, one page at a time.

Yes, we all intend to reach our goals, and we use that feeling of intention as an impetus to steer us through our life's journey. But the act of continually looking into the future or remembering the past is counterproductive. If our attention is on yesterday, or tomorrow, or last year, or twenty years from now, then we cannot be present. We cannot feel the quality of the absolute permeating the relative, right here and now. It is in the process, not the goal, that we find a fulfilling life. We set our intent or goal and then show up in the present moment to experience the process along the way.

There is no use telling yourself you will be happy when you retire. Allow yourself to be happy now. There is no use telling yourself you will practice being present after you finish the next contract, or after your children have grown and are on their own. When we stand in the present moment and perceive the relative aspect of our life along with the absolute (the Life Force of the Unified Field), we experience feelings of lightness, bliss, and peace in a real, tangible way. This is having it all.

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Audrey Mairi is a Reiki Master and a Trager practitioner/tutor/teacher, with a thriving practice in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. She regularly holds workshops for students and therapists dealing with the connection between the body and mind. In addition, she has given numerous presentations to professional organizations.

After leaving her home province of Saskatchewan, Audrey began her professional career as a Medical Laboratory Technologist in Microbiology and Biochemistry at the Calgary General Hospital, which led to a position as Immunology Research Assistant at Queen's University, Kingston.

In 1969, she began the study of Transcendental Meditation (in Canada, and later in Vittel, France) becoming an Associate Teacher in 1976. Her interest in the mind/body connection led her to certification as a Trager Psychophysical Integration practitioner in 1985. In 1993 she earned the Trager International's Tutor level. Later she did two terms as Canada's representative on the Trager Tutor Committee, while also sitting on the Board of Directors of Trager International, helping to create their present structure. The level of Reiki Master was bestowed upon her in 2003, about the same time she was finishing up her book called ***Trager for Self-Healing: A Practical Guide for Living in the Present Moment***. You may reach Audrey through her web site at www.audreymairi.com

