

The Untethered Soul: Twelve-Step Guide to Spiritual Awakening

[Michael Singer: The Untethered Soul: Twelve-Step Guide to Spiritual Awakening](#)

Spirituality is meant to bring about harmony and peace. But the diversity of our philosophies, beliefs, concepts and views about spiritual matters often leads to confusion or even conflict. The fact is that the very act of seeking spiritual freedom causes notions of success and failure, and these notions serve only to bind us to our own self judgments: Am I growing? Have I done anything wrong? Am I meditating enough?

Truth is only complicated because we pass it through our habitual thought patterns. When we step back from ourselves, truth becomes simple. There are not many paths to freedom, there is only one. In the end, no matter what particular patterns of thought we have managed to build in our minds, freedom always means transcending these personal thought patterns.

But how does one go about transcending the personal self and awakening to spiritual freedom? What is needed for this journey are succinct steps that are so universal that they can echo through the halls of any religion as well as support intellectual understanding. The following is a universal road map to Self Realization.

1. Realize that you are in there.

You must first come to realize that you are in there. From deep inside, you are experiencing this world. You are experiencing your physical body, your thoughts, and your emotions. You are conscious and you are experiencing what it is like to be human.

2. Realize that you are not okay in there.

Look to see what's going on inside. If you want to understand why you've done everything you have ever done, if you want to see what's really going on, just observe your mind and emotions--just experience your inner state. If you objectively look, you will see that you are never completely at peace. You will see that you are not okay in there.

3. Realize that you're always trying to be okay.

At any point when you look at the state of your inner being, you will see that something is bothering you. You will then notice that this causes urges, drives, and impulses to do something about it. You will find yourself constantly trying to either get something or avoid something. All of this is done in an attempt to be okay.

4. Realize that your mind has taken on the job of figuring out how everything needs to be for you to be okay.

If you watch, you will see that your mind is always telling you what you should and should not do, what others should and should not do, and how things should and should not be. All of this is the mind's attempt to first create a conceptual model of what would make you okay, and then try to get the outside world to match it.

5. Realize that the process of defining how the outside needs to be is not going to make you okay.

You must seriously look at this process of trying to be okay. You've been at it your entire life--you've just tried different things at different times. While it's true that sometimes you manage to make it better for short periods of time, you know that you've never even come close to reaching a state of permanent peace. Watch very closely how you react to the things your mind has preferences about. You will see that if your mind gets what it wants, you feel joy; if it doesn't get what it wants, you feel disturbance. Likewise, when your mind experiences what it doesn't want, you feel disturbance, and when it avoids what it doesn't want, you feel relief. You will never be okay playing this game because the world will never match the conceptual model your mind has made up. Eventually, you will come to see that struggling to be okay does not work. At some point, you will try to find a different way to be okay in there.

6. Learn to not participate in the mind's struggle to be okay.

This step is about learning to sit in the witness, the part of you that notices the inner urges to be okay. You must become comfortable with sitting in there and not participating in the inner energies. You learn to relax in the midst of them. You come to see that there is a habitual process in which the moment you feel inner disturbance, you are drawn into doing something about it. You must learn to sit inside and not participate in this process. If you truly understand that going outside to try to be okay inside doesn't work, then you'll be willing to sit inside and simply allow the disturbance to pass through. It is not difficult. If you can do this, all disturbance will cease by itself.

7. Learn to go about your life just like everyone else, except that nothing you do is for the purpose of trying to be okay.

If you aren't so preoccupied with trying to be okay, you will be free to sit inside and quietly love, serve, and honor whatever naturally unfolds in front of you. When you reach this point, you are no longer living for yourself. You are interacting with life, but not for the purpose of being okay.

8. As you sincerely let go of the inner energies you are watching, you begin to feel a deeper energy come in from behind.

Up to this point, everything you were watching inside was in front of you. But now that you are no longer being drawn into those personal energies, you'll realize that your inner universe is actually very expansive. You will begin to feel Spirit flow in from behind. It lifts you and brings you great love and joy.

9. Your inner experience becomes so beautiful that you fall in love with the energy itself, and you develop a very deep and personal relationship with it.

It will become completely clear to you that there is an absolute trade-off between your personal energies and the amount of Spirit that you feel. The more you get drawn into your personal energies, the less Spirit you feel. The more you don't participate in your personal energies, the more Spirit you feel. You now have a direct relationship with the spiritual energy, and you will find yourself constantly longing to experience it.

10. You begin to feel the energy pulling you up into it, and your entire path becomes letting go of yourself in order to merge.

Will is no longer needed. Now your path is strictly about releasing yourself into the pull of the higher energy. You must surrender deeply enough to be able to overcome the fear of losing your connection to the personal self. You must be willing to die to be reborn.

11. Once you get far enough back into the energy, you realize that your personal life can go on without you, leaving you free to become immersed in Spirit.

This is the greatest miracle: You've surrendered and your entire life is about Spirit, yet people, places, and things continue to interact with you. The difference is that these interactions require none of your energy. They happen naturally, by themselves, leaving you at peace and absorbed in Spirit.

12. Now you are truly okay and nothing inside or outside of you can cause disturbance--you have come to peace with it all.

Because you are now completely okay, you don't need anything. Things just are what they are. At this point, you know yourself as Self. The world, mind, and heart cannot disturb you. You've transcended them all. What is more, instead of feeling drawn into Spirit, you now actually experience yourself as Spirit. You have no boundaries in time or space. You have always existed and you will always exist. You have no form, shape, gender, or body. You simply are, have always been, and will always be--Infinite Spirit.