

The Untethered Soul: The Journey Beyond Yourself

Written by Michael A. Singer

Reviewed by Nancy Eichhorn

When I started SPT Magazine six years ago, I decided to only review books published within the most recent calendar year. I believed SPT Magazine was a niche publication with a small-ish international audience, and I couldn't afford to share what's already been said and done. Take Michael A. Singer's 2007 release, *The Untethered Soul* for instance. There are reviews on GoodReads.com, Amazon, Wanderlust.com, PsychologyToday.com, HuffingtonPost.com, Joyfulturtle.com, abc.nl/blog and hinessight.blogs.com just to name a few. Oprah Winfrey even



interviewed him and there are Utube videos offering all kinds of first person experiences with Singer talking, reading from his book. I mean, what can I possibly add that these reviewers haven't already covered?

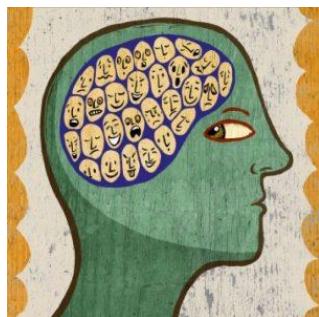
Then I thought, well, my reactions, humble as they may be, reading this book. To be honest my reading the book was actually a mistake (or divine intervention). A colleague mentioned he'd just received a copy of Singer's book and thought I should read it. I assumed it was new so immediately contacted New Harbinger Publications for a reviewer's copy, which they kindly sent right along. When I opened to the Publisher's Notes page and saw the 2007 release date my interest waned. *I'm too busy to read something this old*, I thought. Then, one of my inner voices, the responsible business persona, reminded me that I owed the publishers the integrity of at least reading the book. Another policy of mine is to only write positive reviews. I refuse to add negativity to my world, and I try to practice wise speech in all circumstances. So, I started to read knowing I didn't have to write a review if I didn't like what the book had to offer.

Reading the book, once, then scanning my notes, I knew I wanted to, no, I had to read it again. There's so much going on that a once over didn't capture it for me. First there is the awakening of consciousness (part one). Readers learn to look at who they are, and deal with the voices in their head (a constant practice for me).



I've worked with spiritual teachers for many years to "wake up". The awakening that comes from listening to the divisions within—the voices and energies split during early wounding experiences to create the illusion of safety, to survive that which was emotionally experienced as insurmountable. I learned to watch, to observe, to be the witness to my experience and not get caught up in it as if it were truly real. I learned that what is, is, and that so much of this lived life is merely an illusion. When reading Singer's book, I felt a kindred resonance, a sense of coming home to what I knew but had stepped away from in the hustle and bustle of being Nancy in some chaotic times. I knew this book appeared in my life at that exact moment for a reason, a reminder to practice once again the meditative moments that bring me closer to the energy that is me and allow me to step away from the noise and confusion of patterned responses in a mind, a brain and a body that try to claim they're me.

For starters, it was refreshing to reconnect with the truth—my brain rarely rests. But reading Singer's book reminded me to step back and simply watch. Today, writing this review, I'm no longer hampered by it all. My energy isn't drained by the constant chatter. Today, I simply notice the stories and say things like, "oh, another story", or "oh, the drama queen", or, "oh, fear". I notice but don't engage—these voices, these thoughts and emotions are not me; rather, I'm the person watching and listening.



Basically, I'm not alone in my head. There are distinct aspects of my inner being including what Singer calls: "the awareness, the witness, the center of your willful intentions; and the other is that which you watch" (pg. 17). Singer writes that "when you contempt the nature of Self, you are meditating" (pg. 37). Thus, meditation is how we "return to the root" of our being (pg. 37). I loved this sense that I'm not even a human being but rather I just happen to be watching one—me. Rather than focus on my thoughts, emotions, and sensory world, I can step back and have a more expansive view. I move from the finite to the infinite (pg. 38). I truly appreciated his statement, "Imagine what fun life would be if you didn't have those neurotic personal thoughts going on within you" (pg. 93). According to Singer, real spiritual growth occurs when there's only one of you inside (all those pesky voices are gone).

Part two teaches readers how to experience their energy, to tap into the infinite energy of all that is that leads then to part three, freeing yourself. Part four involves going beyond (going past where you are—to a place with no boundaries, no limitations, just an infinite universe) and part five discusses living life. Singer offers a step-by-step process with instructive meditations. The only requirement to finding you "self" is the "willingness to honestly look at yourself in the most natural and intuitive manner" (pg. 2) and maintain an open mind to new dimensions of thought.



I was fascinated by the concept that to attain true inner freedom I just had to learn how to objectively watch my problems instead of getting lost in them. Solutions can't exist if you're mired in the energy of the problems, so I had to look at my inner consciousness and let go of the part of me that seemed to be having so many issues with my reality. It's like, okay instead of be upset about a friend ditching me with short notice because he had the opportunity to go on a date with a woman he's interested in (yes, we're just buddies), I had to look at the energy creating the conflict inside of me. There was clearly a sore spot in terms of my Ego and there was a hurt little girl feeling the abandonment from long ago when mom and/or dad cancelled plans at the last minute because of work, when friends cancelled because of conflicts etc. A glance at what's creating my internal turmoil and who's having the issues with reality allows the choice to react or let the negative sensations disperse.

Here's where energy comes in. I can open to it and feel the magnificence of love and enthusiasm or I can block it (blocking creates loneliness and tension an all kinds of negative inner experiences). According to Singer, it's as simple as staying open to it. The most important thing in life, he says, is our inner energy (pg. 47). Without energy and passion there's no fun in life but it's not just letting go of thoughts and emotions--it's about letting go of the pull that energy has on our consciousness as it tries to bring our awareness to the inner dialogues and negativity. If we remain centered, remain present in our consciousness we can relax and let go.

Another major step in Singer's process is giving up the struggle to remain who you think you are and learn to embrace change all the time (pg. 81). It has to do with watching your mind as it tells you want to do—say eat another cookie when in fact you are stuffed full. It's not about fighting with it, you won't win, Singer says. "The key is to be quiet" (pg. 95). Now he's not talking about your mind being quiet but the you who is watching it. "You are not the thinking mind; you are aware of the thinking mind. You are the consciousness that is behind the mind and is aware of the thoughts. The minute you stop putting your whole heart and soul into the mind as if it were your savior and protector, you will find yourself behind the mind watching it" (pg. 95).



The key to feeling happy, Singer writes, is to first understand your inner energies—noticing that when you're happy your heart is open and when you aren't happy your heart is closed, no energy can flow in. It's a choice he says even with difficult situations (like someone dying), but with limited time left in our lives, is it worth giving away our happiness? He stresses meditation to strengthen our center of consciousness so that we are always aware enough to not let our heart close (pg.145).

I've barely touched on the depth of this book, nor even touched on all that's written. I'm going back for a third read. The practice, the possibilities intrigue me. And, when I'm in the balance, when I'm connected with the infinite energy of all that is and keep an open heart to happiness even in not such happy situations, I know I'm making strides toward a more spiritually lived life.

Michael A. Singer is the author of the New York Times #1 bestseller *The Untethered Soul*. He had a deep inner awakening in 1971 while working on his doctorate in economics and went into seclusion to focus on yoga and meditation. In 1975, he founded Temple of the Universe, a now long-established yoga and meditation center where people of any religion or set of beliefs can come together to experience inner peace. He is also the creator of a leading-edge software package that transformed the medical practice management industry, and founding CEO of a billion-dollar public company whose achievements are archived in the Smithsonian Institution. Along with his more than four decades of spiritual teaching, Michael has made major contributions in the areas of business, education, healthcare, and environmental protection.

Bio retrieved from: <http://untetheredsoul.com/michael-singer>

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