

THE
SPONTANEOUS
HEALING
OF BELIEF

ALSO BY GREGG BRADEN

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THE
SPONTANEOUS
HEALING
OF BELIEF

SHATTERING THE PARADIGM
OF FALSE LIMITS

GREGG BRADEN



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In the instant of our first breath, we are infused with the single greatest force in the universe—the power to translate the possibilities of our minds into the reality of our world. To fully awaken our power, however, requires a subtle change in the way we think of ourselves in life, a shift in belief.

Just the way sound creates visible waves as it travels through a droplet of water, our “belief waves” ripple through the quantum fabric of the universe to become our bodies and the healing, abundance, and peace—or disease, lack, and suffering—that we experience in life. And just the way we can tune a sound to change its patterns, we can tune our beliefs to preserve or destroy all that we cherish, including life itself.

In a malleable world where everything from atoms to cells is changing to match our beliefs, we’re limited only by the way we think of ourselves in that world.

This book is dedicated to our acceptance of such an awesome power and our knowing that we are never more than a belief away from our greatest love, deepest healing, and most profound miracles.





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INTRODUCTION

*Let yourself be silently drawn by
the stronger pull of what you really love.*
— **Rumi** (c. 1207 C.E.–1273 C.E.), Sufi poet

Pioneering physicist John Wheeler once said, “If you haven’t found something strange during the day, it hasn’t been much of a day.”¹

For a scientist, what could be any stranger than discovering that by simply watching our world in one place, we’ve somehow changed what happens somewhere else? . . . Yet this is precisely what the revelations of the new physics are showing us. As far back as 1935, Nobel Prize–winning physicist Albert Einstein acknowledged just how unsettling such quantum effects can be, calling them “spooky action at a distance.” In a paper that he coauthored with noted physicists Boris Podolsky and Nathan Rosen, he stated, “No reasonable definition of reality could be expected to permit this [action at a distance].”²

Today, it’s precisely these bizarre anomalies that have ignited a powerful revolution in the way we think of ourselves as well as the universe. For the better part of the 20th century, scientists struggled to understand what quantum strangeness is telling us about the way reality works. It’s a documented fact, for example, that human consciousness influences quantum energy—*the stuff everything is made of*—under certain conditions. And that fact has opened the door to a possibility that pushes the limits of what we’ve been led to believe about our world in the past. A growing body of evidence now suggests that these unexpected results are more than just isolated exceptions. The question is: *How much more?*



Are the effects of observers in influencing their experiments actually a powerful window into the kind of reality we live in? And, if so, then we must ask, “Are those effects also telling us *who we are* within that reality?” The answer to both questions is yes: These are precisely the conclusions that the new discoveries suggest. They are also why I’ve written this book.

There Are No Watchers

Scientists have shown that while *we may think* that we’re only observing our world, in fact it’s impossible for us to simply “watch” anything. Whether our attention is focused on a quantum particle during a laboratory experiment or anything else—from the healing of our bodies to the success of our careers and relationships—we have expectations and beliefs about what we’re watching. Sometimes we’re consciously aware of these preconceptions, but often we’re not. It’s these inner experiences that become part of what we’re focused on. By “watching,” we become part of what we’re watching.

In the words of Wheeler, that makes us all “participators.” The reason? When we focus our attention on a given place in a moment of time, we involve our consciousness. And in the vast field of consciousness, it appears that there’s no clear boundary that tells us where *we* stop and the rest of the universe begins. When we think of the world in this way, it becomes clear why the ancients believed that everything is connected. As energy, it *is*.

As scientists continue to explore just what it means to be participators, new evidence points to an inescapable conclusion: that we live in an interactive reality where we change the world around us by changing what happens inside of us while we’re watching—that is, our thoughts, feelings, and beliefs.

- **The Implication:** From the healing of disease, to the length of our lives, to the success of our careers and relationships, everything that we experience as “life” is directly linked to what we believe.



- **The Bottom Line:** To change our lives and relationships, heal our bodies, and bring peace to our families and nations requires a simple yet precise shift in the way we use belief.

For those who accept what science has led us to believe for the last 300 years, even to consider that our inner experience can affect reality is nothing short of heresy. The very idea blurs the safety zone that has traditionally separated science and spirituality—and us from our world. Rather than thinking of ourselves as passive victims in a place where, for example, things just “happen” for no apparent reason, such a consideration now places us squarely in the driver’s seat of life.

In this position we find ourselves faced with undeniable evidence confirming that *we* are the architects of our reality. With this confirmation, we also see that we have the power to make disease obsolete and relegate war to a memory of our past. Suddenly, the key to catapulting our greatest dreams into reality is within our reach. It all comes back to *us*: Where do we fit into the universe? What is it that we’re supposed to be doing in life?

Belief Code 1:
Experiments show that the focus of our attention changes reality itself and suggest that we live in an interactive universe.

What could be more important than answering these questions, understanding the implication of this revolution for our lives, and discovering what it means to *us*? In a world where the greatest crises of recorded human history now threaten our survival, the stakes couldn’t be higher.

The False Assumptions of Science

Although the revolution in the way we think of ourselves began nearly 100 years ago, it may not have been recognized by average



people going about their daily routine. The change that it brings to our fast-paced lives of day planners, Internet relationships, and reality TV is happening on such a subtle level that few people may have even noticed that it's begun.

You probably haven't read about it in the morning newspaper, for example. It's unlikely that the question of "reality" has been the topic of conversation in your weekly staff meetings or at the office watercooler . . . that is, unless you're a scientist working to understand the nature of that reality. For *these* people, the revolution is akin to a huge earthquake that registers "off the scale"—while leveling some of the most sacred beliefs of science. Its effects are thundering through their laboratories, classrooms, and textbooks like a never-ending sonic boom. In its wake, it's leaving a wide swath of outdated teachings, along with the painful reevaluation of long-held beliefs and even entire careers.

Although it may seem to be quiet, the transformation that this reality revolution brings to our lives has erupted with a force unmatched by anything in the past, because the same discoveries that have sparked the questions have also led to the conclusion that the "facts" we've trusted for 300 years to explain the universe and our role in it are flawed. They're based on two assumptions that have been proven false:

- **False Assumption 1:** The space between "things" is empty. New discoveries now tell us that this is simply not true.
- **False Assumption 2:** Our inner experiences of feeling and belief have no effect on the world beyond our bodies. This has been proven absolutely wrong as well.

Paradigm-shattering experiments published in leading-edge, peer-reviewed journals reveal that we're bathed in a field of intelligent energy that fills what used to be thought of as empty space. Additional discoveries show beyond any reasonable doubt that this field responds to us—it *rearranges itself*—in the presence of our heart-based feelings and beliefs. And this is the revolution that changes everything.



It means that since the time when Isaac Newton's "laws" of physics were formalized in his 1687 release of *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy), we've based what we accept as our capabilities and limits on information that is false or, at the very least, incomplete. Since that time, most science has been grounded in the belief that we are insignificant in the overall scheme of things. It has written us right out of the equation of life and reality!

Is it any wonder that we often feel powerless to help our loved ones and ourselves when we face life's great crises? Is it at all surprising that we frequently feel just as helpless when we see our world changing so fast that it has been described as "falling apart at the seams"? Suddenly everything from personal capabilities and limitations to our collective reality is up for grabs. It's almost as if the conditions of our world are pushing us into the new frontier of consciousness itself, forcing us to rediscover who we are in order to survive what we've created.

The reason why you are a powerful key in this revolution is that it's based entirely on something that you and I are doing right now, in this very moment. Alone and together, individually and collectively, consciously and unconsciously, we are all choosing the way we think of ourselves and *what we believe* to be true of our world. The results of our beliefs surround us as our everyday experience.

The revolution of scientific understanding suggests that from our personal health and relationships to global war and peace, the reality of our lives is nothing more and nothing less than our "belief waves" shaping the quantum stuff that everything is made from. It's all related to what we accept about our world, our capabilities, our limits, and ourselves.

The Undeniable Facts

"Okay," you're saying, "we've heard all of this before. It's naïve, and maybe even arrogant, to suggest that the universe is in any way affected by our personal beliefs. It just can't be that simple." Twenty years ago, as a scientist trained in the conventional ways science has viewed our world in the past, I would have agreed with you.



At first blush there appears to be nothing in our traditional way of seeing the world that allows for our inner beliefs to do much of anything at all, let alone change the universe itself—that is, however, until we begin to examine what the new discoveries are showing us. Although the results of reality-bending research have been published in leading technical journals, they are often shared in the vocabulary of “scientification” that masks the power of their meaning to a non-scientific person.

And that’s where our revolution comes in. Suddenly, we don’t *need* the language of science to tell us that we’re a powerful part of our world. Our everyday lives *show* us that we are. What I believe we *are* asking for, however, are the keys to applying our power to what happens in our world.

I suspect that future generations will see our time in history as the turning point when the conditions of the planet forced us to discover how the universe really works and accept our interactive role in it. Rather than following the first three centuries of scientific imagery that has portrayed us as powerless victims in life, the new science suggests we are just the opposite. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, research has revealed the following facts:

- **Fact 1:** The universe, our world, and our bodies are made of a shared field of energy that was scientifically recognized in the 20th century and is now identified by names that include the field, the quantum hologram, the mind of God, nature’s mind, and the Divine Matrix.³
- **Fact 2:** In the field of the Divine Matrix, “things” that have been connected physically and then separated act as if they are still linked, through a phenomenon known as *entanglement*.⁴
- **Fact 3:** Human DNA directly influences what happens in the Divine Matrix in a way that appears to defy the laws of time and space.⁵



- **Fact 4:** Human belief (and the feelings and emotions surrounding it) directly changes the DNA that affects what occurs in the Divine Matrix.⁶
- **Fact 5:** When we shift our beliefs about our bodies and our world, the Divine Matrix translates that change into the reality of our lives.^{7, 8}

With these and similar discoveries in mind, we must ask ourselves the question that is perhaps the most revealing of all: *Are we born with the natural ability to create and modify our bodies and the world?* If so, then we must be willing to pose an even more difficult question: *What responsibility do we have to use our power in the presence of what are arguably the greatest threats to the future of our lives, our world, and even our species?*

Now Is the Time

Clearly we don't know all there is to know about how the universe works and our role in it. While new studies will undoubtedly reveal greater insights, we could wait for another hundred years and still not have all of the answers. A growing consensus of scientists suggest that we may not have that long.

Powerful voices in the scientific community, such as Sir Martin Rees, professor of astrophysics at the University of Cambridge, suggest that we have only a "50/50" chance of surviving the 21st century without a major setback.⁹ While we've always had natural disasters to contend with, a new class of threats that Rees calls "human induced" now have to be taken into account as well.

Emerging studies, such as those reported in *Scientific American's* special issue entitled "Crossroads for Planet Earth" (September 2005), echo Rees's warning, telling us: "The next 50 years will be decisive in determining whether the human race—*now entering a unique period in its history*—can ensure the best possible future for itself [my emphasis]."¹⁰



In a series of essays written by experts in fields that range from global health and energy consumption to sustainable lifestyles, the general agreement is that we simply can't continue with the way we use energy, the direction of technology, and an ever-expanding population if we expect to survive another hundred years. Complicating all of these problems is the growing threat of a world war that is driven, at least in part, by the competition for the same disappearing resources that defined the essays. Perhaps the uniqueness of our time is best described by Harvard University biologist E. O. Wilson. He states that we are about to enter what he calls the "bottleneck" in time, when both our resources and our ability to solve the problems of our day will be pushed to their limits.

The good news echoed by the experts, however, is that "if decision makers can get the framework right, the future of humanity will be secured by thousands of mundane decisions. . . . It is usually in mundane matters that the most profound advances are made."¹¹ Without a doubt, there are countless choices that each of us will be asked to make in the near future. I can't help but think, though, that one of the most profound—and perhaps the simplest—will be the decision to embrace what the new science has shown us about who we are and our place in the universe.

If we can accept the powerful evidence that consciousness itself and our role in it are the missing links in the theories of how reality works, then everything changes. In that change, we begin anew. This makes us part of, rather than separate from, all that we see and experience.

And that's why this revolution is so powerful. It writes us—all of humankind—right back into the equation of the universe. It also casts us into the role of solving the great crises of our day, rather than leaving them to a future generation or simply to fate. As we are architects of our reality, with the power to rearrange the atoms of matter itself, what problem cannot be solved and what solution could possibly be beyond our reach?



The Power to Choose Is the Power to Change

The prospect of relying on something *within us* to meet the challenges of our time, as opposed to depending on the science and technology of our outer world, can be a little unsettling for some people. “How do we learn to do something so powerful and so necessary?” is the question that often arises. It’s usually followed by another: “If this is the way of the future, how do we learn now—and do so fast?” Perhaps both of these questions are best answered in the words of the 20th-century philosopher and poet Kahlil Gibran.

In his classic book *The Prophet*, Gibran reminds us of what it means to have a great gift and to know that its power is already within us. He states: “No man can reveal to you aught but that which already lies half asleep in the dawning of your knowledge.”¹² In words that are as beautiful today as they were when they were first published in 1923, Gibran tells us that we can’t be taught what we don’t already know. And we came into the world already knowing how to use our beliefs.

So this book is less about learning to rewrite the code of reality, and more about accepting that we already have power to do so—something that has been explored by many mystics in the past, including the ancient Sufi poet Jalal ad-Din ar-Rumi. “What strange beings we are,” says Rumi, “that sitting in hell at the bottom of the dark, we’re afraid of our own immortality.”¹³ With these words, the great mystic describes the irony of our mysterious condition in this world.

On the one hand, we’re told that we are frail and powerless beings who live in a world where things just “happen” for no apparent reason. On the other hand, our most ancient and cherished spiritual traditions tell us that there’s a force that lives within every one of us, a power that nothing in the world can touch. With it comes the promise of surviving the darkest moments of life and the reassurance that difficult times are only a part of a journey that leads to a place where bad things can’t happen any longer. It’s no wonder that we feel confused, helpless, and sometimes even angry as we witness the suffering of our loved ones and share the agony of what sometimes seems like hell in the world around us.



So which is it? Are we hopelessly fragile victims of events that are beyond our control, or are we powerful creators harboring dormant abilities that we are only beginning to understand? The answer may reveal the truth of one of the deepest mysteries of our past. It is also the focus of some of the greatest controversy in scientific discussions today. The reason? Both questions have the same answer: *Yes!*

Yes, we are occasionally victims of circumstance. And yes, we are sometimes the powerful creators of those same circumstances. Which of these roles we experience is determined by choices that we make in our lives, *choices based upon our beliefs*. Through the godlike power of human belief, we are given the equally divine ability to bring *what* we believe to life in the matrix of energy that bathes and surrounds us.

Why This Book?

As I was writing *The Divine Matrix* (Hay House, 2007), it was immediately clear that our role in the acceptance of miracles could easily become lost as a sidebar in the overall message of the book. To describe the language of belief and how it allows us to be the architects of our lives would require another volume.

Within these pages, you'll discover how to heal the false beliefs that may have limited you in the past. In addition, you will . . .

- . . . identify the beliefs that reverse disease in your body.
- . . . learn the ones that create lasting, nurturing relationships in your life.
- . . . uncover those that bring peace to your life, your family, your community, and your world.

As different as peace, relationships, and healing may appear to be from one another, they're all based in the same principle: the "language" of belief and the feelings that we have about what we believe.



By its nature, the exploration of belief is a journey that is deeply personal. Each of us has a little different take on our own beliefs, while finding a way for them to fit into the greater collective ones of our culture, religious teachings, family, and friends. Since it's such an experience, there are probably as many ideas on what belief is as there are people having them.

Throughout the seven concise chapters in this book, I'm inviting you into a new and possibly very different way of thinking about yourself, your life, and your world. For some, this way of seeing things is a challenge to everything they've been taught. For others, it piques their curiosity just enough to begin a new path of self-discovery.

For everyone, it's important to know up front what you can expect from the information that follows. If you're like me, you like to know where you're going before you begin the journey. For that reason, I've described precisely what this book is—and what it is *not*:

— **This is *not* a science book.** Although I will share the leading-edge science that invites us to rethink our relationship to the world, this work has not been written to conform to the format or standards of a classroom science text or a technical journal.

— **This is *not* a peer-reviewed research paper.** Each chapter and every report of research *has not* gone through the lengthy review process of a certified board or selected panel of “experts” with a history of seeing our world through the eyes of a single field of study, such as physics, math, or psychology.

— **This is a well-researched and well-documented guide.** It has been written in a reader-friendly way that describes the experiments, case studies, historical records, and personal experiences that support an empowering way of seeing ourselves in the world.

— **This is an example of what can be accomplished when we cross the traditional boundaries of science and spirituality.** Rather than viewing the problems of our time through the eyes of nature, artificially separated and isolated as physics, chemistry, or history, it is



designed to bridge the gap between the best science of today and the timeless wisdom of our past, weaving the two together into a greater understanding of our role in life. The aim in doing so is that we may apply this knowledge to create a better world—and discover more about ourselves along the way.

The Spontaneous Healing of Belief is written with one purpose in mind: to share an empowering message of hope and possibility in a world where we are often led to feel hopeless and powerless.

Do We Really Want the Truth?

In another of his writings, Rumi further described the curious nature of our relationship to reality, saying, “We are the mirror, and the face in the mirror. We are the sweet cold water, *and* the jar that pours [the water].” Similar to the way Jesus told us that we might save ourselves by bringing forth that which is within us, Rumi reminds us that we are continually creating reality (sometimes consciously and sometimes *unconsciously*) and are doing so *while* we experience what we have created. In other words, we are the artists as well as the art, suggesting that we have the power to modify and change our lives today, while also choosing how we fashion them anew tomorrow.

While for some people these empowering analogies are a refreshing new way to view the world, for others they shake the foundation of long-held, traditional assumptions. It’s not unusual to see prominent scientists who are reluctant to acknowledge the implications of their own research when it reveals that we are, in fact, powerful creators in the universe.

When I share this irony with live audiences, it’s often received with a response that echoes a classic line from the film *A Few Good Men*. In the powerful 1992 drama, when Guantánamo Bay base commander Colonel Nathan Jessep (played by Jack Nicholson) is subject to courtroom examination by Lieutenant Daniel Kaffee (played by Tom Cruise), he is asked for the *truth* regarding the mysterious death of a U.S. serviceman at the base. Acknowledging that his answer would be



too much for the people in the courtroom to bear, Jessep responds with the timeless words: “You can’t *handle* the truth!”

Perhaps the greatest challenge of our time in history is simply this: *Can we handle the truth that we have asked ourselves to discover?* Do we have the courage to accept who we are in the universe and the role that our existence implies? If the answer is yes, then we must also accept the responsibility that comes with knowing that we can change the world by changing ourselves.

We’ve already seen that the widely held beliefs of hate, separation, and fear can destroy our bodies and our world faster than we could have ever imagined. Maybe all we need is a little shift in the way we think of ourselves in order to recognize the great truth that we are, in fact, the architects of our experience. We are cosmic artists expressing our deepest beliefs on the quantum canvas of the universe. What are the chances that by transforming the destructive beliefs of our past into life-affirming ones of healing and peace, we can change the world of today and the future as well?

We may not have to ask ourselves this question much longer. New discoveries about the power of belief suggest that we’re about to find out.

— **Gregg Braden**
Taos, New Mexico





CHAPTER ONE

A New View of Reality: The Universe as a Consciousness Computer

“The history of the universe is, in effect, a huge and ongoing quantum computation. The universe is a quantum computer.”

— **Seth Lloyd**, MIT professor and designer
of the first feasible quantum computer

“A long time ago, the Great Programmer wrote a program that runs all possible universes on His Big Computer.”

— **Jürgen Schmidhuber**, pioneer in artificial intelligence

We live our lives based on what we believe. When we think about the truth of this statement, we immediately recognize a startling reality: Beyond anything else that we may actually *do* in our lives, the beliefs that precede our actions are the foundation of all that we cherish, dream, become, and accomplish.

From the morning rituals that we go through to greet the world each day, to the inventions that we use to make our lives better, to the technology that destroys life through war—our personal routines, community customs, religious ceremonies, and entire civilizations



Belief Code 2:

We live our lives based on what we believe about our world, ourselves, our capabilities, and our limits.

are based on our beliefs. Not only do our beliefs provide the structure for the way we live our lives, now the same areas of study that have discounted our inner experiences in the past are showing us that the way we *feel* about the world around us is a force that extends *into* that world.

In this way, science is catching up with our most cherished spiritual and indigenous traditions, which have always told us that our world is nothing more than a reflection of what we accept in our beliefs.

With access to such a power already within us, to say that our beliefs are important to life is an understatement. Our beliefs *are* life! They are where it begins and how it sustains itself. From our immune response and the hormones that regulate and balance our bodies . . . to our ability to heal bones, organs, and skin—and even conceive life—the role of human belief is rapidly taking center stage in the new frontiers of quantum biology and physics.



If our beliefs hold so much power, and if we live our lives based on what we believe, then the obvious question is: *Where do our beliefs come from?* The answer may surprise you.

With few exceptions, they originate with what science, history, religion, culture, and family tell us. In other words, the essence of our capabilities and limits may well be based in what *other people* tell us. That realization leads to the next question that we must ask ourselves:

*If our lives are based on what we believe,
then what if those beliefs are wrong?*



What if we're living our lives shrouded in the false limitations and incorrect assumptions that other people have formed over generations, centuries, or even millennia?

Historically, for example, we've been taught that we are insignificant specks of life passing through a brief moment in time, limited by the "laws" of space, atoms, and DNA. This view suggests that we'll have little effect on anything during our stay in this world, and when we're gone, the universe will never even notice our absence.

While the words of this description may sound a bit harsh, the general idea isn't so far from what many of us today have been conditioned to hold true. It's precisely these beliefs that often leave us feeling small and helpless in the face of life's greatest challenges.

What if we're more than this? Could it be that we're really very powerful beings in disguise? What if we're delegates of miraculous potential, born into this world with capabilities beyond our wildest dreams—ones that we've simply forgotten under the conditions that have shocked us into the dreamlike state of being powerless?

How would our lives change, for instance, if we discovered that we're born with the power to reverse disease? Or what if we could *choose* the peace in our world, the abundance in our lives, and how long we live? What if we found that the universe itself is directly affected by a power that we've hidden from ourselves for so long that we've forgotten it's even ours?

Such a radical discovery would change everything. It would alter what we believe about ourselves, the universe, and our role within it. It's also precisely what the leading-edge discoveries of our day are showing us.

For centuries, there have been people who refused to accept the limitations that have traditionally defined what it means to live in this world. They refused to believe that we just appear through a mysterious birth that defies explanation. They rejected the idea that such a miraculous emergence could be for the purpose of living in suffering, pain, and loneliness until we leave this world just as mysteriously as we arrived.

To answer their yearning for a greater truth, they had to venture beyond the boundaries of their conditioning. They isolated



themselves—from friends, family, and community—and let go, *really let go*, of what they had been taught about the world. And when they did, something precious and beautiful happened in their lives: They discovered a new freedom for themselves that opened the door of possibilities for others. It all began by their asking the question that was just as bold in their time as it is in ours: *What if our beliefs are wrong?*

As we'll see in the story of the yogi that follows, it's in our absolute surrender to such a possibility that we discover the freedom that tells us who we really are. My personal belief, however, is that we don't have to live in a cold, damp cave in the middle of nowhere to find it. I also feel that personal liberation begins with the individual commitment to know who we are in the universe. When we make such a commitment, everything from the way we think of ourselves to the way we love will change. They must, because we are changed in the presence of these deeper understandings.

It all comes back to what we believe.

While it may sound too simple to be true, I'm convinced that the universe works precisely in this way.

A Miracle Set in Stone

In the 11th century C.E., the great Tibetan yogi Milarepa began a personal retreat to master his body, a journey that would last until his death at the age of 84. Earlier in his life, Milarepa had already acquired many seemingly miraculous yogic abilities, such as the power to use "psychic heat" to warm his body in the harsh Tibetan winters.

After suffering the unbearable pain of losing his family and friends at the hands of village rivals, he employed his mystic arts for purposes of retribution and revenge. In doing so, he killed many people and struggled to find meaning in what he had done. One day he realized that he had misused the gift of his yogic and psychic abilities, so he went into seclusion to find healing through even greater mastery. In sharp contrast to the life of material abundance he had known before, Milarepa soon discovered that he needed no contact with the outside



world. He became a recluse.

After exhausting his initial supplies of food, Milarepa found himself surviving on the nourishment of the meager vegetation near his cave. For many years, the nettle plants that grow in the arid expanses of Tibet's high desert were all he ate. Without any substantial food, clothing, or companionship to interrupt his inner focus, Milarepa lived for years on almost nothing. His only human contact was the occasional pilgrim who stumbled upon the cave that sheltered him. The reports of those who did happen to find him by accident described a frightening sight.

The little clothing with which he'd originally started his retreat had weathered into sparse shreds of cloth that left him virtually naked. Due to the lack of nutrition in his diet, Milarepa had shrunk to little more than a living skeleton, with his long hair, as well as his skin, turning a dull green from the overdose of chlorophyll. He looked like a walking ghost! The deprivation that he imposed upon himself, although extreme, did lead him to his goal of yogic mastery. Before his death in 1135 C.E., Milarepa left proof of his freedom from the physical world in the form of a miracle that modern scientists say should simply not be possible.

During a group pilgrimage to Tibet in the spring of 1998, I chose a route that would lead us directly to Milarepa's cave and the miracle that he left behind. I wanted to see the place where he breached the laws of physics to free us from our limited beliefs.

Nineteen days after this trip began, I found myself in the great yogi's retreat, standing precisely where he had stood nearly 900 years before. With my face only inches away from the wall of the cave, I was staring squarely into the mystery that Milarepa left behind.



Milarepa's cave is one of those places that you have to know how to find in order to get there. It's not somewhere you would just happen upon during a casual jaunt through Tibet. I first heard about the famous yogi from a Sikh mystic who became my yoga teacher in the 1980s. For years I'd studied the mystery surrounding Milarepa's



renunciation of all worldly possessions, his journey throughout the sacred plateau of central Tibet, and what he discovered as a devoted mystic. All of the study led to this moment in his cave.

I stared in wonder at the smooth, black walls that surrounded me and could only imagine what it would be like inhabiting such a cold, dark, and remote place for so many years. While Milarepa had lived in as many as 20 different retreats throughout his time in solitude, it was his meeting with a student in this particular cave that set it apart from the others.

To demonstrate his yogic mastery, Milarepa performed two feats that skeptics have never duplicated. The first was moving his hand through the air with such speed and force that he created the “shock wave” of a sonic boom reverberating against the rock throughout the cavern. (I attempted this on my own, with no luck.) The second feat was the one that I had waited nearly 15 years, traveled halfway around the world, and acclimated to some of the world’s highest elevations for 19 days to see.

To demonstrate his mastery over the limits of the physical world, Milarepa had placed his open hand against the cave’s wall at about shoulder level . . . *and then continued to push his hand farther into the rock in front of him*, as if the wall did not exist! When he did so, the stone beneath his palm became soft and malleable, leaving the deep impression of his hand for all to see. When the student who witnessed this marvel tried to do the same thing, it’s recorded that all he had to show for it was the frustration of an injured hand.

As I opened my palm and placed it into the impression of Milarepa’s, I could feel my fingertips cradled in the form of the yogi’s hand in the precise position that his fingers had assumed hundreds of years earlier—a feeling that was both humbling and inspiring at the same time. The fit was so perfect that any doubt I had about the authenticity of the handprint quickly disappeared. Immediately, my thoughts turned to the man himself. I wanted to know what was happening to him when he merged with that rock. What was he thinking? *What was he feeling?* How did he defy the physical “laws” telling us that two “things” (his hand and the rock) can’t occupy the same place at the same time?



In anticipation of my questions, our Tibetan translator, Xjin-la (not his real name), answered before I even asked them. “He has belief,” he stated in a matter-of-fact voice. “The *geshe* [great teacher] believes that he and the rock are not separate.” I was fascinated by the way our 20th-century guide spoke of the 900-year-old yogi in the present tense, as if he were in the room with us. “His meditation teaches him that he is part of the rock. The rock cannot contain him. To the *geshe*, this cave is not a wall, so he can move freely as if the rock does not exist.”

“Did he leave this impression to demonstrate his mastery for himself?” I asked.

“No,” Xjin-la replied. “The *geshe* does not need to prove anything to himself. The yogi lived in this place for many years, but we see only one handprint.” I looked around for signs of others somewhere in the shallow cave. Our guide was right—I didn’t see any. “The hand in the rock is *not* for the *geshe*,” our guide continued. “It is for his student.”

It made perfect sense. When Milarepa’s disciple saw his master do something that tradition and other teachers said could not happen, it helped him break through his beliefs about what is possible. He saw his teacher’s mastery with his own eyes. And because he witnessed the miracle personally, his experience told his mind that he wasn’t limited or bound by the “laws” of reality as they were known at the time.

By being in the presence of such a miracle, Milarepa’s student was confronted with the same dilemma that everyone faces in choosing to free themselves from the limits of their own beliefs: He had to reconcile the personal experience of his teacher’s miracle with what those around him believed—the “laws” that they accepted describing how the universe operates.

The dilemma is this: The worldview that was embraced by the family, friends, and people of the student’s day asked him to accept one way of seeing the universe and how things work. This included the belief that the rock of a cave wall is a barrier to the flesh of a human body. On the other hand, the student had just been shown that there are exceptions to such “laws.” The irony was that both ways of seeing the world were absolutely correct. Each depended on how someone chose to think of it in a given moment of time.



I asked myself: *Could the same thing be happening in our lives today?* As far-fetched as this question may sound in light of our scientific knowledge and technological advances, modern scientists are beginning to describe a similar irony. Using the language of quantum physics rather than evidence of yogic miracles, a growing number of leading-edge scientists suggest that the universe and everything in it “is” what it “is” *because* of the force of consciousness itself: our beliefs and what we accept as the reality of our world. Interestingly, the more we understand the relationship between our inner experiences and our world, the less far-fetched this suggestion becomes.

While the story of Milarepa’s cave is a powerful example of one man’s journey to discover his relationship to the world, we don’t need to seclude ourselves in a cave and eat nettles until we turn green to discover the same truth for ourselves! The scientific discoveries of the last 150 years have already shown that the relationship between consciousness, reality, and belief exists.

Are we willing to accept the relationship we’ve been shown and the responsibility that comes with such power so that we can apply it in our lives in a meaningful way? Only through the future that is on the horizon will we know how we’ve answered this question.

We Know There Are Things We Don’t Know

During a press conference at NATO headquarters in Belgium in June 2002, then U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld described the status of intelligence and information gathering in a post-9/11 world, famously stating, “. . . there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns—the ones we don’t know we don’t know.”¹

In other words, Rumsfeld was saying that we don’t have all of the information and we *know* that we don’t have it. While this now-famous speech was directed toward American intelligence gathering for the war on terror, the same can be said of the state of scientific knowledge today.



As successful as science has been in revealing the answers to our deepest mysteries, some of the greatest minds of our time openly suggest that the language of science is incomplete. In 2002, a journal in the Nature Publishing Group featured an editorial describing the virtues of the scientific method that stated: “By its nature, even at its most exact and profound, science is incomplete in its explanations, but self-correcting as it steers itself away from the occasional wrong path.”² Although the “self-correcting” of scientific ideas may occur eventually, sometimes it takes hundreds of years to do so, as the argument of whether or not the universe is connected by a field of energy demonstrates.

This limitation is not unique to a single branch of study such as physics or mathematics. Twentieth-century physician and poet Lewis Thomas, for example, stated that in real life, “every field of science is incomplete.” He attributed the gaps in our knowledge to the youth of science itself, asserting, “Whatever the record of accomplishment during the last 200 years [most fields of science] are still in their very earliest stages.”³

Admittedly, there are huge gaps in our scientific ability to describe why things are the way they are. Using the language of science, for example, physicists believe they have successfully identified the four fundamental forces of nature and the universe: *gravity*, *electromagnetism*, and the *strong* and *weak nuclear forces*. While we know enough about these forces to apply them to technology ranging from microcircuits to space travel, we also know that our understanding of them is still incomplete. We can say that with certainty, because scientists have still not been able to find the elusive key that combines these four forces into a single description of how our universe works: *a unified field theory*.

Belief Code 3:

Science is a language—
one of many that describe
us, the universe, our bodies,
and how things work.



Although new theories, such as the superstring theory, may ultimately hold the answer, critics have posed a good question that has yet to be answered. The string theories of the 1970s, which eventually became the superstring theory that was formally accepted in 1984, were all developed more than 20 years ago. If the theories really work, then why are they still “theories”? With hundreds of the planet’s best minds and the greatest computing power in the history of the world, why has the superstring theory failed to successfully marry the four forces of nature into a single story that tells us how the universe works?

Without question, this was one of the great disappointments that haunted Einstein until the end of his life. In a 1951 letter to his friend Maurice Solovine, the great theoretical physicist confided his frustration. “The unified field theory has been put into retirement,” he begins. “It is so difficult to employ mathematically that I have not been able to verify it somehow, in spite of all my efforts.”⁴

It may not be surprising that the science of today doesn’t have all the answers. The quantum discoveries of the last century have led to a surprising and radical new way for us to think of ourselves and how the universe works. This novel way of thinking is so radical, in fact, that it flies directly in the face of what science has asked us to believe for nearly 300 years. So rather than building upon the certainty of what was believed in the past, the new discoveries have forced scientists to rethink their assumptions of how the universe works. In some ways, they’ve had to go back to square one. Probably the biggest shift in thinking has been the realization that matter itself—the stuff that everything is made of—doesn’t even exist in the way we used to think it did.

Rather than thinking of the universe as being made of “things”—such as atoms, for example—that are separate and have little effect on other things, quantum theories suggest that the universe and our bodies are made of ever-changing fields of energy, which interact with one another to create our world in ways that can only be described as possibilities rather than certainties. This is important to us because we are part of the energy that is doing the interacting. And it’s our awareness of this fact that changes *everything*.



When we recognize that we're enmeshed in the dance of energy that bathes creation, that realization changes who we believe we are, what we've always thought the universe is, and how we believe our world works. Perhaps most important, it transforms our role from that of passive observers to powerful agents of change interacting with the same stuff everything else is made of. And our view of where that stuff comes from is itself changing very quickly.

***Particles, Possibilities, and Consciousness:
A Brief Look at Quantum Reality***

In Newton's mechanical view of the cosmos, the universe is thought of in terms of particles whose behavior can be known and predicted at any moment in time. It's like balls on a pool table: If we have the information that describes the force of a ball as it strikes another (speed, angle, and so on), then we should be able to predict where and how the one that has been struck will travel. And if it should hit other balls in its journey, we'll know where and how fast they're traveling as well. The key here is that the mechanical view of the universe sees the smallest units of the stuff our world is made of as *things*.

Quantum physics looks at the universe differently. In recent years, scientists have developed the technology that has made it possible to document the strange and sometimes miraculous behavior of the quantum energy that forms the essence of the universe and our bodies. For example:

- Quantum energy can exist in two very different forms: as visible particles or invisible waves. The energy is still there either way, just making itself known in different forms.
- A quantum particle can be in one place only, two places at once, or even many places simultaneously. The interesting thing, however, is that no matter how far apart these locations appear to be physically, the particle acts as if it's still connected.



- Quantum particles can communicate with themselves at different points in time. They're not limited by the concepts of past, present, and future. To a quantum particle, then is now and there is here.

These things are important because we're made of the same quantum particles that can behave miraculously when given the right conditions. The question is this: *If quantum particles are not limited by the "laws" of science—at least as we know them today—and we're made of the same particles, then can we do miraculous things as well?* In other words, is the behavior that physicists call "anomalous" demonstrating our scientific limits, or is it really showing us something else? Could the freedom in time and space that these particles show us be revealing to us the freedom that is possible in our lives?

Following all of the research, documentation, and direct experience of those who have transcended the limits of their own beliefs, without reservation I believe that the answer is a solid yes.

The only difference between those isolated particles and us is that we're made of lots of them, linked through the mysterious stuff that fills the places we used to think of as "empty space"—a form of energy that we're only beginning to understand. It's the recent acknowledgment of this strange form of energy in mainstream science that has catapulted us into a new and almost holistic way of seeing ourselves in the universe.



Belief Code 4:

If the particles that we're made of can be in instantaneous communication with one another, be in two places at once, and even change the past through choices made in the present, then we can as well.

In 1944, Max Planck, the man many consider to be the father of quantum theory, shocked the world by saying that there is a "matrix" of energy that provides the blueprint for our physical world.⁵ In this place of pure energy, everything begins, from the birth of stars and DNA to our



deepest relationships, peace between nations, and personal healing. The willingness to embrace the matrix's existence in mainstream science is still so new that scientists have yet to agree upon a single name for it.

Some simply call it the "field." Others have referred to it with terms that range from the technical-sounding "quantum hologram" to almost spiritual-seeming names, such as the "mind of God" and "nature's mind." In my 2007 book describing the history and proof of the field, I echoed the bridging effect that it has had between science and spirituality, referring to it as the *Divine Matrix*. The experimental proof that Planck's matrix is real now provides the missing link that bridges our spiritual experiences of belief, imagination, and prayer with the miracles that we see in the world around us.

The reason why Planck's words are so powerful is because they forever changed the way we think of our bodies, our world, and our role in the universe. They imply that we're much more than simply the "observers" that scientists have described, passing through a brief moment of time in a creation that already exists. Through the connection that joins all things, the experiments have now shown that we directly affect the waves and particles of the universe. In short, the universe responds to our beliefs. It is this difference—thinking of us as powerful creators rather than passive observers—that has become the crux of some of the greatest controversy among some of the greatest minds in recent history. The implications are absolutely staggering.

In a quote from his autobiographical notes, for example, Albert Einstein shared his belief that we have little effect on the universe as a whole and are lucky if we can understand even a small part of it. We live in a world, he said, "which exists independently of us human beings and which stands before us like a great, eternal riddle, at least partially accessible to our inspection and thinking."⁶

In contrast to Einstein's perspective, which is still widely held by many scientists today, John Wheeler, an honored Princeton physicist and colleague of Einstein, offers a radically different view of our role in creation. Wheeler's studies have led him to believe that we may live in a universe where consciousness is not only important, but also actually creative—in other words, a "participatory universe."



Clarifying his belief, Wheeler says, “We could not even imagine a universe that did not somewhere and for some stretch of time contain observers because the very building materials of the universe are these acts of observer-participancy.”⁷

What a shift! In a completely revolutionary interpretation of our relationship to the world, Wheeler is stating that it’s impossible for us simply to watch the world happen around us. We can never be observers, because when we observe, we create and modify what is created. Sometimes the effect of our observation is nearly undetectable; and, as we’ll discover in later chapters, sometimes it’s not. Either way, the discoveries of the last century suggest that our act of observing the world is an act of creation unto itself. And it’s consciousness that’s doing the creating!

These findings seem to support Wheeler’s proposition that we can no longer think of ourselves merely as onlookers who have no effect on the world that we’re observing. When we view “life”—our spiritual and material abundance, our relationships and careers, our deepest loves and greatest achievements, as well as our fears and the lack of all of these things—we may also be looking squarely at the mirror of our truest and sometimes most unconscious beliefs.

Architects of Life

Through our beliefs, we’re the bridge between reality and all that we could ever imagine. It’s the power of what we truly believe about ourselves that gives life to our highest aspirations and greatest dreams, the things that make the universe as it is. And if the whole universe sounds like a place too big to even think about, that’s okay—we can start by simply thinking about ourselves and our everyday world.

Consider your relationship to the room you’re sitting in. While you’re thinking, ask yourself these questions: *What role did I play to get myself here? How did I arrive at this precise place in this precise moment?* Then consider how time, space, energy, and matter have all converged in a mysterious and precious way to bring you to this very moment, and ask: *Is it just an accident?*



Are you merely a fluke of biology, energy, and matter that just happened to converge in this instant? If your answer to this question is *No!* then you're really going to like what comes next. Because if you honestly believe that you're more than an accident of time, space, and energy, then do you really think that you would find yourself in a world of so many quantum possibilities without a way to choose from among those possibilities?

To acknowledge that we play a central role in how our everyday reality turns out is to acknowledge that we're somehow interacting with the essence of the universe. For such a thing to be possible, it means that we must also recognize the following:

When we choose to embark upon a different career path or a new relationship or to heal a life-threatening disease, we're really rewriting the code of reality. If we think about all the implications of all the decisions we make in each moment of every day, it becomes clear how our seemingly little choices can have effects that reach far beyond our personal lives. In a universe where each experience is built upon the outcome of previous ones, it's obvious that *all* are necessary. There are no "wasted" choices, because every event and decision is required. Each must be precisely where it is before the others can follow.

Suddenly, our choice to help someone who's lost in the airport, for example, or our willingness to understand our anger before we unleash it on those who don't deserve it takes on new meaning. Each choice sets into motion a ripple current that will affect not only our lives, but also the world beyond.

So, think of all the things that had to happen from a time before you were even born for you to be in the precise place that you are in this moment. Think of the unfathomable number of tiny particles of

Belief Code 5:

Our beliefs have the power to change the flow of events in the universe—literally to interrupt and redirect time, matter, and space, and the events that occur within them.



star dust that originated with the birth of the universe. Contemplate where those particles have been, and consider how they've come together in just the right way to become the "you" that you are today. In doing so, you find it becomes abundantly clear that something—*some intelligent force*—is holding the particles of *you* together right now, as you read the words on this page.

That force is what makes our beliefs so powerful. If we can communicate with it, then we can change how the particles of "us" behave in the world. We can rewrite the code of our reality.

A growing number of mainstream scientists are now drawing parallels between the way the universe works and the output of a huge and incredibly ancient computer simulation—a literal virtual reality. In this comparison, our everyday world is thought of as a simulation that operates in much the way the "holodeck" did in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, a TV series that first aired in 1987. It's an experience that's created within the container of a greater reality for the purpose of mastering the conditions of that reality.

Taking this just one step further, we can imagine that if we understand the rules of this ancient and ongoing reality program, then we can understand how to change the conditions of fear, war, and disease that have hurt us in the past. In such a way of thinking, everything takes on a whole new meaning. As speculative and science fiction-ish as such a proposition may sound, it's only one of the implications that stem directly from this powerful new way of thinking of the universe.

But first things first: Let's go back to the whole idea of reality as a program. Just how can something as big as the entire universe be the output of a computer?

The simplicity of what follows may surprise you. . . .

The Universe as a Consciousness Computer

In the 1940s Konrad Zuse (pronounced *zoo-sŭh*), the man credited with developing the first computers, had a flash of insight into the way the universe may work. When he did so, he also gave us a new way of thinking about our role in creation. While he was developing



the programs to run his early computers, he asked a question that sounds more like something out of the plot of a novel than an idea meant to be taken as a serious scientific possibility.

Zuse's question was simply this: *Is it possible that the entire universe operates as a big computer, with a code that makes whatever is possible, possible?* Or, perhaps even more bizarre, he wondered if a form of cosmic computing machinery is continually creating the universe and everything in it. *In other words, are we living a virtual reality running on a really big computer made of quantum energy itself?* This is clearly a huge question with implications that rattle everything from the ideas of life and evolution to the basis of religion itself. Also, it spawned the hugely popular 1999 film *The Matrix*.

Zuse was obviously a man ahead of his time. Thirty years later, he elaborated on these ideas in his book *Calculating Space* and set into motion the events that led to the revolution in our view of reality and everyday life.⁸ Commenting on how his mind-blowing insights took shape, Zuse described how he made the connection between the machines that he was building and the machinery of the universe. "It happened that in contemplating causality [the relationship between things that happen and what causes those things to happen]," he said, "I suddenly thought to interpret the cosmos as a gigantic calculating machine."⁹

The bottom line of this way of seeing the universe is that whether we're talking about rocks and trees, the ocean, or you and me, *everything* is information. And just as any information can be the output of processes that put it all together, the universe is really the product of a very big program that began long ago. While the *Who?* and the *Why?* of such a program are certainly key, Zuse was looking more at how something like this could be possible. Although he was asking the right questions, the technology to test his theories was simply not available to him as it is to us now.

In recent years, new discoveries have directed scientists right back to Zuse's original questions. Picking up where he left off, a growing number are now thinking along the same lines and asking the same question: *Are we living in a virtual simulation?* If so, then the universe and everything in it is what and where it is because something in the



cosmic program put it there. And that would mean that we're living in a digital reality where everything is made of *information* rather than *things*.

In 2006 Seth Lloyd, the designer of the first feasible quantum computer, took the idea of a digital universe one step further, elevating it from a question of *What if?* to the statement of *It is*. Based on his research in the new field of digital physics, he leaves little doubt as to where he stands in this emerging view of reality. "The history of the

Belief Code 6:

Just as we can run a simulated program that looks and feels real, studies suggest that the universe itself may be the output of a huge and ancient simulation—a computer program—that began long ago. If so, then to know the program's code is to know the rules of reality itself.

universe is, in effect, a huge and ongoing quantum computation," he asserts.¹⁰ Just in case there's any uncertainty in our minds about precisely what Lloyd is saying here, he clarifies his findings. Rather than suggesting that the universe may be *like* a quantum computer, he blasts us into the most radical description of reality to emerge in the last 2,000 years, stating: "The universe *is* a quantum computer [my emphasis]."¹¹ From Lloyd's perspective, everything that exists is the output of the universe's computer. "As the

computation proceeds, reality unfolds," he explains.¹²

Wow! At first blush we find our minds reeling from the magnitude of what such a possibility implies. Then we find ourselves taking a closer look and a deeper breath, sitting back in our chairs, and saying, "Hmm . . . this actually makes sense. It makes *a lot* of sense. This may just be the way things really work!" The reason is because the comparison between the atoms of the everyday world and the information of a computer's works so well.



Thinking of Atoms as Data

To begin such a comparison, let's take a look at what we know about computers. No matter how large or small, how simple or sophisticated, every computer has a language that it uses to get things done. In our familiar desk- or laptop, that language is a code based on patterns of numbers called *bits*, which is simply the computerese shorthand for the longer phrase "binary digits."

And "binary digits" simply means that all information is coded as patterns of 1's and 0's, "*ons*" and "*offs*," the shorthand for the polarities that make the universe what it is. Because there are only two choices in polarity, the code of bits is called a *binary* language. In the most basic way of thinking of matter and energy, this represents everything: matter and non-matter, positive and negative, yes and no, male and female. In the case of the bits themselves, it's 1's and 0's, where 1 represents "on" and 0 represents "off." Binary code is just as simple as that.

But don't think that bits don't hold much power just because they're based on a simple idea. On the contrary: Binary language may be the *most* powerful in the universe. It represents the way things seem to be: They either are or they aren't. This language is universal. As amazing as it sounds, all computers—from those that guide our astronauts to the moon to the one in your car that tells you when it's time for an oil change—are based on a code made up of different combinations of 1's and 0's.

This code of bits is believed to be so universal that NASA even used it to inscribe the message that left Earth in 1972 aboard the *Pioneer 10* spacecraft. The idea was that if intelligent life ever found the football-sized probe, the binary language would tell them that we're a species that understands the way the universe works.

In 1983, *Pioneer 10* became the first artificial object from Earth to pass Pluto and leave our solar system. It was last heard from on January 22, 2003, when the sensors of the Deep Space Network picked up the final faint signal as the tiny craft hurtled deep into interstellar space. Although its power source has weakened over the last 35 years, scientists believe that *Pioneer 10* is still intact and on course, heading



toward the star Aldebaran, where it should arrive in about two million years. When it does, it will be carrying a calling card from Earth in the universal language of binary numbers.

Just as every computer uses binary language to get things done, it looks as if the computer of the universe uses bits as well. Rather than being made of 1's and 0's, however, the bits of creation appear to be the stuff everything is made from: *atoms*. The atoms of our reality either exist as matter or they don't. They're either here or not here, "on" or "off."

In a recent interview, Seth Lloyd described a conversation that he had with his young daughter in which the irony of thinking of the universe as bits rather than as atoms became very clear. After Lloyd explained to his daughter how it's possible to program the universe, she replied, "No, Daddy, everything is made of atoms, except for light."¹³

From one perspective, she is absolutely correct. Lloyd acknowledged this, while offering yet another perspective. "Yes, Zoey," he agreed, "but those atoms are also information. You can think of atoms as carrying bits of information, or you can think of bits of information as carrying atoms. You can't separate the two."¹⁴

Belief Code 7: When we think of the universe as a program, atoms represent "bits" of information that work just the way familiar computer bits do. They are either "on," as physical matter, or "off," as invisible waves.

Question: *What Is the Universe Computing?*

Answer: *Itself*

In another interview exploring consciousness as information and what it all may mean, Lloyd was asked the question that typically arises when we think of the universe as a computer: *If the entire universe, and*



everything in it, is really part of one great big quantum computer, then what is the purpose? What is the universe computing?

Lloyd answered in a way that is reminiscent of something that we might expect to hear after trekking for weeks in the snow-covered peaks of the Himalayas searching for a great wise master hidden in a forgotten monastery. The simplicity of his response, and the magnitude of what it means, calls to mind the kind of answer we might find in just such a place: “[The universe] computes itself. It computes the flow of orange juice as you drink it, or the position of each atom in your cells. . . . But the vast majority of the universe’s thinking is about humble vibrations and collisions of atoms.”¹⁵ At first, we may believe that one atom colliding with another doesn’t really make all that much difference in our lives. After all, it happens all of the time, right? . . . Maybe. Or maybe not.

The implication of what Lloyd is saying invites us to think again. He reminds us how what he calls “the dance of matter and light” had the power to produce our universe and everything in it. His book *Computing the Universe* describes how the simple act of just the right atoms bumping into just the right other atoms can affect everything: “All interactions between particles in the universe convey not only energy but also information—in other words, particles not only collide, they compute. As the computation proceeds, reality unfolds.”¹⁶ From this way of thinking of things, we’re the product of energy, movement, and matter touching matter—a big cosmic dance in the truest sense of the word.

In much the same way, John Wheeler was thinking about the universe as information in the 1980s. He explained, “Every *it*—every particle, every field of force, even the space-time continuum itself—derives its function, its meaning, its very existence entirely from binary choices, *bits*. What we call reality arises . . . from the posing of yes/no questions.”¹⁷ In other words, Wheeler was suggesting that the “things” that make the universe and life what they “are” are really information, little specks of polarity. Everything boils down to opposites: pluses and minuses, male and female, on and off.



How Does Our Virtual Universe Work?

If, as Wheeler proposes, the particles of the universe are like computer bits of information and, as Lloyd states, “The universe is a quantum computer,” then the question of what it *would* mean to know that everything is based upon a code has now changed to: *What does it mean?* As we’ll see, the evidence suggests that the odds are greater than not that we’re living in some kind of a simulated reality.

So now that we’ve opened the door to such a powerful possibility, let’s continue with this line of thinking and take our possibilities yet one step further. In our simulated reality, do we have access to the code that makes all things possible? Can we upgrade the program of life, healing, peace, and everyday reality just in the way we can the code of our Internet connection or word processor? At the very least, such a possibility is intriguing.

From this perspective, for example, miracles are programs that bypass the “limits” of science, and the unfortunate accidents and bizarre occurrences that just seem to “happen” sometimes are due to occasional glitches in the computer’s programs. Invariably, these questions open the door to even deeper ones—and with them, the mysteries that may not be answered anytime soon:

- Who is the programmer that started our cosmic computer simulation?
- Does the idea of a cosmic architect relate to our ideas of God?
- How long has the consciousness computer been running?
- What does the “beginning” and the “end” of time and life really mean?
- When we die, do we simply leave our simulation and continue existing in a realm outside of our virtual reality?



While these are all good questions, they are also beyond the scope of what we can do justice to in this book. There is an additional question, however, the answer to which may solve the mysteries of the others as well. It is simply this: *How does it all work?*

As stated earlier, we could study the creation of the universe and how it got here for another hundred years and still not have all of the answers. While such an investigation is certainly worthwhile, it may do little to address the urgent problems that face our world today. With the threat of global war and the very real chance that it will involve atomic weapons, the emergence of new disease from viruses that seem impervious to our arsenal of drugs, and the suffering brought on by drought and starvation that has already begun as the result of abrupt climate change, we simply don't have the luxury of another century to understand every iota of the universe's secrets before we act.

Clearly, now is the time to apply what we do know about the way our universe works in order to address the problems that threaten our survival and our future. And it all begins with our understanding of our cosmic belief code. When we master the language of that code, we can use it in our lives for everything from healing and reversing disease to successful relationships between people and peaceful cooperation among nations.

To think of the entire universe as an ongoing computer program, however, is huge! The idea seems so big and so complex that it could take forever just to know where we begin. A new branch of study may hold the clue. If so, we can start solving the mystery of the unknown by using the analogy of what we already do know. And it may all be much simpler than we thought possible.

The Whole Universe from a Few Good Patterns

The science of the last 300 years has led to an inescapable conclusion about the reality of our everyday world: Everything is ultimately made of the same stuff. From the dust of distant stars to you and me, ultimately everything that "is" emerges from the vast soup of



quantum energy (what “could be”). And without fail, when it does, it manifests as predictable patterns that follow the rules of nature.

Water is a perfect example. When two hydrogen atoms connect to one oxygen atom as a molecule of H_2O , the pattern of the bond between them is always identical. It always forms the same angle, which is always 104 degrees. The pattern is predictable. It is reliable—and because it is, water is always water.

It’s all about the patterns.

So to pose the question of how the universe may work as a big computer, what we’re really asking ourselves is how its energy creates patterns. This is where the boundary between our everyday world and the esoteric mysteries describing the universe becomes fuzzy.

When Zuse began to think of the universe as a computer, he was considering how it seemed to work like the one in his laboratory. The resemblance led him to suspect that not only were they similar in the way they operated, but also the way they processed information. He began to look for equivalent functions for his computer in the universe.

Reasoning that the bit is the smallest unit of information that a computer processes, he considered the atom—the smallest unit of matter that retains its elemental properties—as its equivalent. From this perspective, all that we can see, feel, and touch in the universe, then, is the matter made of the atoms that are in the “on” state. The ones that we don’t see, those that exist in the invisible (virtual) state, are in the “off” position.

Just as the axiom “As above, so below; as below, so above” describes how the orbits of an electron can help us understand those of a solar system, Zuse’s analogy offers a powerful metaphor that may go a long way toward doing the same thing for reality itself. It is simple. It is elegant. Perhaps most important, it works.

In a 1996 paper titled “A Computer Scientist’s View of Life, the Universe, and Everything,” Jürgen Schmidhuber of Dalle Molle Institute for Artificial Intelligence elaborated on Zuse’s ideas.¹⁸

Exploring the possibility that our universe is the output of an ancient reality program that has been running for a very long time, Schmidhuber begins with the assumption that sometime in our distant



past a great intelligence began the program that created “all possible universes.” I have intentionally bypassed the complex equations that he uses to arrive at his conclusions and have cut to the portion that is relevant to what’s under discussion.

Because his theory assumes that everything began at a moment in time with a fixed amount of information, he suggests, “Any universe’s state at a given time is describable by a finite number of bits.” His second assumption describes why this is important to us, as he concludes: “One of the many universes is ours.”¹⁹ In other words, Schmidhuber is suggesting that, just as it is with any simulation, the universe began with a certain amount of information—a certain number of atoms (bits)—which remains with us today and can be identified and accounted for. What a powerful and intriguing way to think about how the universe works! If in fact everything is really the information that Zuse, Schmidhuber, and others describe, then where do we fit in the universe’s consciousness computer?

We’ve all heard the adage “When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.” In much the same way, we find that when the idea is ready, the technology to explore it will materialize. It generally happens just in the nick of time. History shows that the right mathematical formula, the right experiments, and the right computer chip mysteriously arrive exactly when we need them to join the pieces of a new paradigm into something that becomes useful in our lives. The corollary to such new insights is that once they occur, there’s no turning back.

This is precisely what’s happening with the theories of the universe as a computer. While visionaries such as Zuse may have been thinking about it as long ago as the 1940s, in his day the mathematics to explore such radical ideas was simply not available. It wasn’t until 30 years later that all of that changed. A new branch burst onto the scene, forever changing the way we think of everything from nature and our bodies, to wars and the stock market: fractal mathematics.

In the 1970s a professor at Yale University, Benoit Mandelbrot, developed a way for us to see the underlying structure that makes the world as it is. That structure is made of patterns—and more specifically, patterns within patterns within patterns . . . and so on. He called his new way of seeing things *fractal geometry*, or simply *fractals*.



Before Mandelbrot's discovery, mathematicians used euclidean geometry to describe the world. The belief was that nature itself was too complex for there to be a single formula that represents it accurately. For that reason, many of us have grown up learning a geometry that only approximates nature, using lines, squares, circles, and curves. We also know that it's impossible to represent a tree or a mountain range using what we learned. For precisely this reason, our first drawings of trees looked like lollipops on sticks.

Nature doesn't use perfect lines and curves to build trees, mountains, and clouds. Instead, it uses fragments that, when taken as a whole, become the mountains, clouds, and trees. In a fractal, each piece, no matter how tiny, resembles the larger pattern that it's a part of. When Mandelbrot programmed his simple formula into a computer, the output was stunning. By seeing everything in the natural world as small fragments that look a lot like other small fragments and combining them into larger patterns, the images that were produced did more than approximate nature.

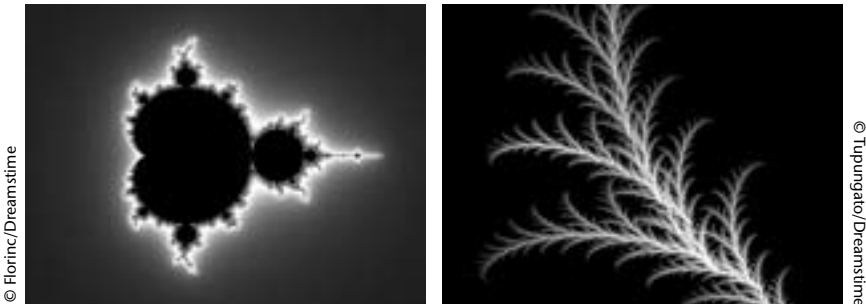


Figure 1. In the 1970s, Benoit Mandelbrot programmed a computer to produce the first fractal images like the one seen here on the left. Since that time, scientists have found that fractal geometry can mimic even the most complex patterns of nature, such as the fern leaf on the right. This discovery supports the possibility that nature and the universe may be the output of such patterns created by a huge quantum program that began long ago.

They looked *exactly* like nature. And that is precisely what Mandelbrot's new geometry was showing us about our world. Nature builds itself in patterns that are similar yet not identical. The term to describe this kind of similarity is *self-similarity*.

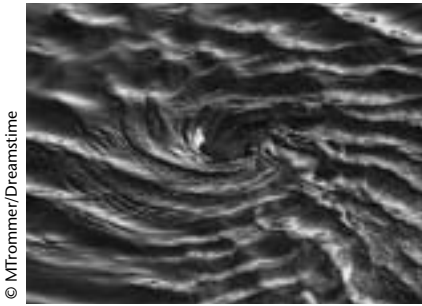
Seemingly overnight, it became possible to use fractals to replicate everything from the coastline of a continent to an exploding



supernova. The key was to find the right formula—the right program. And this is the idea that brings us back to thinking of the universe as the output of an ancient and ongoing quantum program.

Belief Code 8:

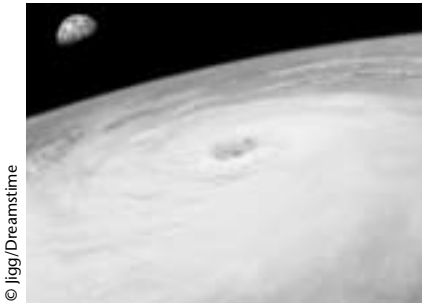
Nature uses a few simple, self-similar, and repeating patterns—fractals—to build atoms into the familiar patterns of everything from elements and molecules to rocks, trees, and us.



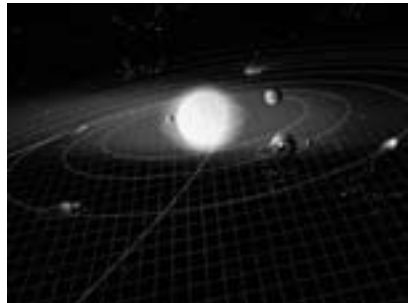
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Figure 2. Examples of fractals in nature. The bottom image on the left is a NASA image showing the eye of a hurricane from space, and the image above it is a water vortex. The similarities are striking. The bottom image on the right is a graphic depiction of our solar system, and at top is a mechanical model of the atom. Both sets of images illustrate how self-similar, repeating patterns can be used to describe the universe from the very small to the very large, differing only in scale.



If the universe is the output of an unimaginably long-running computer program, then the computer must be producing the fractal patterns that we see as nature. For the first time, this new mathematics removes the stumbling block of *how* such a program may be possible. Instead of the electronic output of bits creating what we see on-screen, the consciousness computer of the universe uses atoms to produce rocks, trees, birds, plants, and even us.

A Fractal Key to the Universe

A fractal view of the universe implies that everything from a single atom to the entire cosmos is made of just a few natural patterns. While they may combine, repeat, and build themselves on larger scales, even in their complexity they can still be reduced to a few simple forms.

The idea is certainly attractive; in fact, it's beautiful. Thinking of the universe as a fractal reality crosses the artificial separation that we have placed on our knowledge in the past, weaving very different disciplines of science and philosophy together into one great, elegant story of how the universe is constructed. The fractal view of the cosmos is so complete that it even accounts for the aesthetic qualities of balance and symmetry that artists, mathematicians, philosophers, and physicists aspire to in the highest forms of their crafts.

The universal appeal of this way of thinking certainly fulfills physicist John Wheeler's prophetic statement: "Surely someday . . . we will grasp the central idea of it all as so simple, so beautiful, so compelling that we will all say to each other, 'Oh, how could it have been otherwise!'"²⁰

Belief Code 9: If the universe is made of repeating patterns, then to understand something on a small scale provides a powerful window into similar forms on a grand scale.

In addition to accommodating the requirements of so many different ways of thinking, the fractal model of our universe has another important advantage: It



holds the key to unlocking nothing less than the inner workings of the universe.

If our little desktop computers are based in fractal ideas that mimic the way the universe works, then when we learn about storing information on hard drives and performing downloads, we're really teaching ourselves how *reality* works. If so, we're ultimately gaining insight into nothing less than the mind of the great architect that set the universe into motion. So maybe the computer that we use to pass the time with a quick game of solitaire or e-mails to friends is much more than we have imagined. It may be that the compact technology on your desk actually holds the key to the greatest mystery in the universe.

Big or Small, a Computer Is Always a Computer

While computers have gone through a tremendous evolution in size and speed since they burst on the scene in the mid-20th century, in some ways they have changed very little. Whether they fill an entire room or are miniaturized to fit into the palm of our hand, all computers have some things in common.

Regardless of its size, for example, a computer will always need hardware, an operating system, and programs to create its output. To shed new light on reality, however, it's important to understand just what these parts of a computer really do.

What follows is a brief explanation of each and the role it plays in an electronic computer. Although the descriptions themselves are tremendously oversimplified, they will allow us to compare the fractal of electronic computers to the larger workings of the universe. The parallels are fascinating. The similarity is unmistakable.

— The **output** of a computer is the result of the work it's done. All of the computations that happen inside the bits, chips, and circuits that compose its hardware are made visible as the information that we see as charts, graphs, words, and pictures. The output may be shown on a screen through a projector, printed on a piece of paper, displayed on a monitor, or all of the above.



— The **operating system** is the link between the hardware and the software. Through it, the input from our programs is translated into an even more complex language—the machine language—that speaks directly with the chips, memory, and storage of our computer. Whether it's the familiar Macintosh or Windows platforms or the specialized ones developed for specific tasks, the operating system is the reason why the commands we type into our keyboard make sense to the computer.

— The **programs** translate the commands that we've written in human language into a more complex one that will ultimately communicate with the processors of the computer itself. Examples include the familiar software such as Word, PowerPoint, Photoshop, and Excel that we install onto our computers to get things done.

While there are exotic forms of computers that are exceptions, by and large the three basic components in the preceding descriptions apply to nearly every computer in existence. When we apply these principles to the idea of the universe as a computer, *consciousness itself* becomes the operating system. Just as Microsoft's Windows or Apple's Macintosh operating systems are the link between our computer's input and its electronics, consciousness is what bridges *our* input with the stuff everything is made of.

It's a powerful analogy, and if our computers really mimic the way the universe works on a larger scale, it tells us two important things:

1. First, for all intents and purposes, the operating system of any computer is fixed. It doesn't change. In other words, it "is" what it is. So when we want our computer to do something different, we don't change the operating system—we change what goes into it.

2. This leads to the second important key to understanding how the universe works. To transform reality, we must alter the one thing that is not fixed: the programs themselves. For our universe, these are what we call "beliefs." So in this way of thinking of things, belief becomes the software (the *belief-ware*) that programs reality.



Summarizing the parallels between a familiar electronic computer and the universe, the following chart gives us a powerful clue as to how we may access the building blocks of the universe:

Comparison Between an Electronic Computer and the Universe (as a Computer)		
Function	Electronic Computer	Universe Computer
Basic Unit of Information	Bit	Atom
Output	Pictures, Charts, Words, Graphs, etc.	Reality
Operating System	Windows, Macintosh, Unix, etc.	Consciousness
Programs	Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.	Beliefs

Figure 3. For both the universe (as a consciousness computer) and an electronic computer, the way to change the output is through the programs that the operating system recognizes.

Every day we offer the literal input of our belief-commands to the consciousness of the universe, which translates our personal and collective instructions into the reality of our health, the quality of our relationships, and the peace of our world. How to create the beliefs in our hearts that change the reality of our universe is a great secret, lost in the 4th century, from the most cherished Judeo-Christian traditions.

Belief Code 10: Belief is the “program” that creates patterns in reality.

The Gospel of Thomas offers a beautiful example of a powerful belief. In the pages of this controversial Gnostic text, identified as a rare record of Jesus’s sayings, the master is describing the key to living in this world. He explains how the union of thought and emotion



creates a power that can literally change our reality. “When you make the two one [thought and emotion],” he begins, “you will become the sons of man, and when you say, ‘Mountain move away,’ it will move away.”²¹

The power of belief and of what we feel about our beliefs are also the crux of the wisdom preserved in the most magnificent, pristine, isolated, and remote locations remaining in the world today. From the high-altitude monasteries of the Tibetan plateau, Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula, and the southern Andes Mountains of Peru, to the oral teaching of native peoples throughout the Americas, the power of human belief and how to hone it into a potent force in our lives has been preserved as a well-kept secret.

At this point you may be asking yourself the same question that I found myself wondering about as a senior computer systems designer working in the aerospace and defense industry more than 20 years ago: *If belief is so powerful, and if we all have this power within us, then why doesn’t everyone know that we have it? Why don’t we all use it every day?*

I found the answer where I’d least expected it: in the words of a young native guide leading a tour through an ancient village in the high desert of northern New Mexico.

The Secret That Hides in Plain Sight

“The best way to hide something is to keep it in plain sight.”

Those were the words that drifted across the dusty road leading into the Taos Pueblo on a hot afternoon in August of 1991. I’d set the day aside to explore the place that held such an attraction for some of the most inspirational creative figures of 20th century. From Ansel Adams and Georgia O’Keeffe, to D. H. Lawrence and Jim Morrison (from the rock group the Doors), the mystique and beauty of the high deserts has changed the lives of artists and their art.

I glanced in the direction of the voice to see where such a curious statement had originated. Across the road I saw a small tour group following a beautiful Native American man as he led them through the main plaza of the pueblo. As I stepped closer to hear what the



young guide was saying, I quickly became part of the crowd that was shuffling toward the central part of the plaza. While we were walking, a woman in the group asked the guide about the spiritual beliefs of the Tewa people (the name that the original Taos natives called themselves based on the red willows that grow along the river).

“Do you still practice the old ways here, or do you keep those things hidden from outsiders?”

“The old ways’?” our guide echoed. “You mean like old medicine? Are you asking if we still have a medicine man around here?”

Now the guide really had my attention. Five years earlier, I had walked into the same pueblo for the first time and had asked the very same question. I’d quickly discovered that the spiritual practices of the local people are a sensitive topic, something that isn’t shared openly beyond close friends and tribal members. When such a question comes up, it’s not unusual to find that the subject is either changed quickly or simply ignored altogether.

Today, however, neither happened. Instead, our guide offered a cryptic reply that left more of a lingering mystery than it offered answers. “No way!” he said, “We don’t have medicine people here any longer. We’re modern people living in the 20th century, with modern medicine.” Then, as he looked directly into the eyes of the woman who had asked the question, he repeated the sentence that had drawn me to the group only moments before: “The best way to hide something is to keep it in plain sight.”

As the words left his mouth, I could see the twinkle in his eye. He was letting her know that while “officially” the medicine people no longer practiced, their wisdom remained—safe, sound, and protected from the modern world.

Now it was my turn to ask a question. “I heard you say that earlier,” I said. “Just what does it mean to hide something ‘in plain sight’? How do you do that?”

“Just what I said,” he replied. “Our ways are the ways of the land, of the earth. There is no secret to our medicine. When you understand who you are and your relationship to the land, you understand the medicine. The old ways are all around you, everywhere,” he continued. “Here, I’ll show you . . .”



Suddenly our guide turned around and began retracing his steps back toward the pueblo entrance we had just come from. Pointing to our left, he began walking toward a building that was unlike anything I'd ever seen before. As we left the road and walked along the side of an ancient-looking wall, I found myself staring at what looked like a cross between the thick buttresses of an old frontier fort and the unmistakable bell towers of a chapel—a Catholic chapel—that had been built 400 years before.

Our guide laughed at our surprise as he opened the gate and motioned us into the courtyard. It was old and beautiful. As I stood in front of the main entrance, I held my camera up to capture the brilliance of the deep blue New Mexico sky that surrounded the silhouette of the bells still hanging in the towers.

When Spanish conquerors first arrived in the pristine wilderness of northern New Mexico, they weren't prepared for what they found. Rather than the primitive tribes and temporary homes that they'd expected, they found an advanced civilization already in place. There were roads, multistory homes (jokingly called America's first condominiums by today's residents), passive solar heating and cooling, and a system of recycling that left virtually no waste from the entire population.

The early pueblo people practiced a powerful spirituality that allowed them to live in balance with the land for more than a millennium. All of that changed quickly, however, after the explorers came on the scene. "We already had a religion," our guide explained, "but it wasn't what the Spanish were looking for. It wasn't Christianity. Although our beliefs had many of the same ideas that you find in 'modern' religions, the Spanish didn't understand. They forced us to accept what they believed."

It was a difficult situation for the early pueblo residents. They weren't nomads who could simply pack everything and move to another valley. They had permanent homes that protected them from the hot desert summer and insulated them from the harsh winds of the high-altitude winter. They couldn't turn their backs on a thousand years of traditions that they believed in, nor could they honestly embrace the God of the Spanish explorers.



"The choice was clear," our guide continued. His ancestors had to conform to the religion of the explorers or lose everything. So they compromised. In a maneuver of sheer brilliance, they masked their beliefs, hiding them in the language and customs that satisfied the Spanish. In doing so, they kept their land, their culture, and their past intact.

I ran my fingers over the hammered studs that held the old wooden planks of the door in place. As we stepped inside the little chapel, the sounds of the bustling pueblo outside fell away. All that remained was the still, quiet air of this 400-year-old holy place. As I looked around the sanctuary, I saw images that were vaguely familiar, similar to those I'd seen in the great cathedrals of Peru and Bolivia, the icons of Christianity. But something was different here.

"The Spaniards called their creator 'God,'" our guide broke the silence. "While God was not quite the same as our creator, it was close enough, and we began to call our Great Spirit by the same name. The *santos* [saints] that the church recognized were like the spirits that we honor and call into our prayers. Mother Earth that brings us crops, rain, and life they called 'Mary.' We substituted their names for our beliefs." So that explained why this church looked a little different from those that I'd seen in the past. The outward symbols were masking a deeper spirituality and the true beliefs of another time.

Of course! I thought. That accounted for why the clothes of the female saints change colors throughout the year. They do so to match the seasons, with white in the winter, yellow in the spring, and so on. And that's why the images of "Father Sun" and "Mother Earth" peek out from behind the saints on the altar.

"See, I told you. Our traditions are still here, even after 400 years!" our guide said with a big grin on his face. His voice echoed through the empty space below the exposed timbers and vaulted ceiling. As he rounded the corner at the back of the room and walked toward me, he clarified what he meant. "For those who know the symbols, nothing was ever lost. We still change Mary's clothes to honor the seasons. We still bring flowers from the desert that holds the spirit of life. It's all here, hidden in plain sight for everyone to see."

I felt that I had gotten to know our guide a little better. I couldn't imagine what it must have been like for his people when everything



changed four centuries ago. I had a renewed respect for the strength and courage, as well as the ingenuity, that they had to have had in order to mask their traditions with another religion. Now the mysterious words that I'd heard less than an hour before made sense. The best way to hide something is to place it where no one expects it to be: everywhere.



Like the people of the Taos Pueblo cloaking their spiritual beliefs in the traditions of modern religion, is it possible that we've masked a great secret as well? Could something as simple as our heartfelt belief really hold so much power that mystical traditions, the world's religions, and even entire nations were built around it? Just as native wisdom has been hidden in the plain sight of another tradition, have we done the same with what has been called the most powerful force in the universe? The answer to each of the questions is the same: *Yes!*

The difference between our secret and the hidden religion of the pueblo is that the native people have remembered what they placed into hiding four centuries ago. The question is: *Have we?* Or has something else happened? Have we concealed the power of belief from ourselves for so long that we've forgotten it while it remains in plain sight?

While there are many explanations as to *how* such powerful knowledge could have been lost for so long and *why* it was hidden to begin with, the first step in awakening the force of belief in our lives is to understand precisely what it is and how it works. When we do so, we give ourselves nothing less than the gift of speaking "quantum"—and programming the universe!





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New York Times best-selling author **Gregg Braden** is internationally renowned as a pioneer in bridging science and spirituality. His ability to find innovative solutions to complex problems led to successful careers as a computer geologist for Phillips Petroleum during the 1970s energy crisis and in the 1980s as a senior computer systems designer for Martin Marietta Aerospace during the last years of the Cold War. In 1991, he became the first technical-operations manager for Cisco Systems, where he led the development of the global support team that assures the reliability of today's Internet.

For more than 20 years, Gregg has searched high mountain villages, remote monasteries, and forgotten texts to uncover their timeless secrets. To date, his work has led to such paradigm-shattering books as *The Isaiah Effect*, *The God Code*, *Secrets of the Lost Mode of Prayer*, and *The Divine Matrix*. Now published in 15 languages and 23 countries, Gregg's work shows us beyond any reasonable doubt that we have the power to reverse disease, redefine aging, and even alter reality itself by embracing the power of belief as the quantum language of change.

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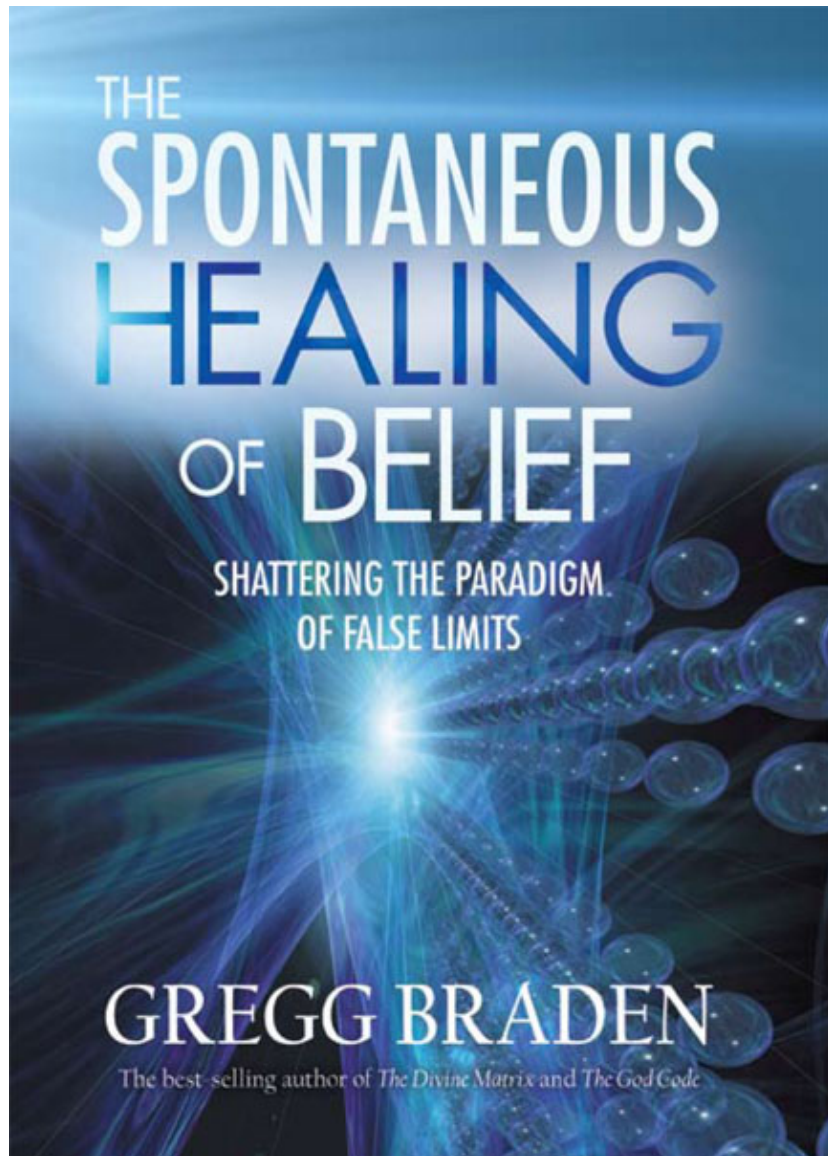
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