

A woman is shown in profile, looking out of a window. The scene outside the window is a sunset or sunrise over a mountain range, with a warm, golden glow. The woman is wearing a dark top and large, round sunglasses. Her hands are resting on her lap, and she has a ring on her finger. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

follow your soul, it knows the way

The Soul Therapy Life

KNOW, LOVE & HEAL YOURSELF

Dawn Michele

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
The Birth of Soul Therapy	4
Chapter 1: Soul & Therapy	12
Chapter 2: Healing	18
Chapter 3: Awakening	24
Chapter 4: Deconditioning	30
Chapter 5: Conclusion & Next Steps	36

INTRODUCTION

Who are you? Take a few moments to answer that question. Most of you said things like, wife, mother, friend, brother, and a job title like teacher, lawyer and customer service rep. But I'm here to let you know that none of these are who you *are*, these are *roles you play* in this thing we call life. But who are you at your core? It's entirely possible you've never asked yourself this question before. This is normal in a world where life gets hard, trauma abounds, chaos is abundant and fear proliferates. We're too distracted being in survival and consumer mode.

Life has its ups and its downs. In life, we are taught many things directly and indirectly about who we are supposed to be. We learn directly through systems like school, church and family and indirectly through things like norms, marketing and socially constructed ideas and expectations. We're taught how to *act* but we're not taught how to process our emotions, release the pain and discover who we truly are. Our default programming is wired for survival and far too few of us ever live a life beyond it.

Talking about who we truly are can be a loaded concept. It may feel heavy, woo woo or too idealistic. What do I mean by learning who we truly are? I mean discovering the essence of our being known as our soul. Tuning into our likes & dislikes without judgement and chasing joy without expectation is a soul-led process.

We start by asking questions like “What do I think outside of the opinions of others”? “What are my values and what do they really mean to me”? “How do I want to show up in the world”? “How am I currently showing up in the world”? “What is important to me”? “What is not important to me”? Answering these questions is where we can begin to uncover our truest self.

However, since we’re not taught how to do this, it is most often the pain of life that forcefully pushes us into an awakening where these questions naturally begin to arise. Pain gets our attention when the gentle nudges and whispered messages go unheard. There have been many points in my own experience where those moments of pain shifted my path in ways I never would have imagined. Here is part of my story, the part that led me to discover *The Soul Therapy Life*.

The Birth of Soul Therapy

In 2006 I started my own business and I named it Alimayu Ministries and focused on helping women heal from the effects of sexual abuse. I had left my amazing position as a COO for a behavioral health company about 6 months prior to follow what I believed to be “the voice of God” and serve him by helping others heal from this far too common experience.

I had no idea what I was doing and I couldn’t figure out how to run a business, which is what it really was but I was so seeped in religious doctrine that I struggled to create a vision and carry it out in a way that would support me and my two kids. But deep in my heart I wanted to do what I was certain I was here to do. The self-doubt became crippling at times. By 2017 I had been in and out of many jobs because we needed money to pay these bills. But what I didn’t know was that each job sucked the life force out of me one ounce at a time.

In September of 2017, I had an ugly break with my latest employer. I mean it was ugly. And painful. I was tired of these jobs, having my energy zapped, my ideas pimped and not being able to do what I knew I was here to do. But my conditioning held strong to the belief that I had to work to survive. I decided to pick my business back up, “re-brand” and see if I could take another go at doing this myself. So A New Dawn Soul Therapy was created.

I wrote another book, planned a few events until old familiar crept back in and made me get a job a few weeks later. I went to work as a Trauma Therapist in an inpatient Drug & Alcohol facility. I was there for about three months when suddenly, during a group session where two ladies were about to fight each other, I fell onto the ground screaming in a fetal position. I cannot describe the pain, confusion and embarrassment that overtook me when I came to. My supervisor at the time told me that I just care too much to do this kind of work. I never came back.

Despite this painful experience, I mean how many messages do I need, I went back to work only a few weeks later in January 2018. I thought I was smart this time because I didn't get one full time job, I got two part time ones. Surely a part time job won't stress me out as much, especially since I have more control. Here, my ass was a part time Therapist in a dual diagnosis outpatient program and part time Psychology Adjunct for which I had to travel over an hour to each way. Needless to say, I was in the same space I had been struggling in for the last 12 years.

In May, I had just come home from my therapist job and was making dinner when suddenly and scaringly, I leaned against a wall in my living room and with full awareness yet no bodily control, I slumped to the floor. I tried to tell my husband I needed help getting up but no words would come out. I tried to tell my son the same thing as they were both within sight of me. Again, nothing would come out. I tried to get up using my arms. Nothing. I told my legs to lift me up. Again, nothing.

My breathing began to feel heavy and it felt like I couldn't get enough air. I'm still slumped onto the floor. Finally, my son looked at me and my wide, terrified eyes and said "something's wrong with mom". They rushed to my side and still, I couldn't talk or move, still struggling to breathe. They decided after a few moments to call 911.

The trip down the two narrow stairwells to exit my home was a blur but I could remember the fear and helplessness in my family's faces. I had no idea what was going on but I knew I was utterly terrified. In the hospital while running what felt like thousands of tests for an existing condition, I started coming to. The diagnosis? Paralyzing Panic Attack caused by PTSD. I did not know I had anxiety, let alone panic attacks and PTSD. But I should have.

As I laid in the hospital bed trying my best to understand what was going on, I looked at the faces of my daughter, son & husband and saw both concern and confusion. It seemed none of this made sense to any of us. And we were all terrified of the past returning with a vengeance. You see, in 2010, just 5 months after getting married, my kids were just 8 & 13 when I was hit with massive headaches that impacted my ability to move and communicate. I had to stop teaching college because

I couldn't connect my thoughts to my words. It was horrible. I was diagnosed with Pseudotumor Cerebri (also known as Idiopathic Intracranial Hypertension). It took two years to reclaim my ability to have some semblance of a normal life.

Here I was, 8 years later with a shiny new PTSD and Panic Attack diagnosis. The thoughts began to race: "What kind of therapist has PTSD", "See, you really don't know what you're talking about", "And you think you can help people heal, humph!"...so many negative thoughts that had me questioning, once again, who the hell I was. I KNEW with every fiber of my being that something had to change. That *everything* had to change. But I had no idea where to begin. I literally, with all of my mental health experience, experience as a minister, all my degrees & certifications, had absolutely no idea where to begin. This was when I first remember feeling a small, almost indiscernible nudge in my gut. This is when I began *following my soul*.

My first step was to *go to therapy*. Now this may sound like a simple enough task but for me it was monumentally difficult. I had about two decades of experience as a counselor & therapist and had not yet learned that I had the typical "I know it all when it comes to this stuff" attitude. I didn't think anyone could tell me anything I didn't know when it came to mental health and healing. What I realized was that it

wasn't the information I needed, it was the ability to *apply it* to my own life. There was a huge gap between knowledge and behavior that I consistently demonstrated in my own life. Shit! I had some heavy work to do.

After about 6 weeks of going to therapy once to twice a week, I began to feel like we hit a wall. As amazing as my therapist was, she was not able to guide me to the depths I needed to go to find myself and truly heal. What she was able to help me see was that the one-woman island I had created to survive in this world was only hurting me more. She showed me that I can find safe spaces to let go. She held space for me and gave me plenty of contrast to consider. We both recognized that I needed more. But she didn't have many options. Then I felt it again. I felt that gentle nudge to follow my soul.

My next step was to *stop everything*. This is where I start to get radical. I quit both of my part time jobs, my ministry/business and the pursuit of anything that wasn't healing. This was an extremely difficult decision for several reasons. For one thing, we weren't rich. Like much of the world we were barely making it paycheck to paycheck. What we did have going for us was the stability of my husband's job and only one kid left in the house. We both decided that I was worth whatever it would cost to get better because we both knew that the cost of continuing on as I was would eventually kill me. Literally. The second major reason this was difficult was *who in the hell was I without work?*

Despite not knowing exactly what to do with myself without work and serving others, I continued to follow my soul one step at a time. I felt pulled to review A New Dawn Soul Therapy and use it on myself. I quickly discovered that there was so much more to the healing process. Yet, I struggled to accept that I was worth all of the effort and time it would take to discover myself and heal from all of the trauma life had given me. Not helping others in the way I was used to was one of the hardest aspects of this part. It took me years to not feel guilty for putting all of my focus on myself.

The last step I took during this time was *to explore*. By this I mean that my mind had begun to open up to the notion that there were answers for me that existed outside of the religious doctrine I had immersed myself in. I had begun to accept the possibility that this path was not the correct one for me. I remember when I discovered a place called Firefly on social media and it was close to where I lived. They did things like reiki, chakras, crystals, natural healing, and the like. Actually, many of the things that the church teaches are demonic and warned us to stay away from if we wanted to be close to god. Even though I didn't know much at all about these other modalities and beliefs, I kept trusting and following my soul.

I remember the feeling of my first (and only so far) reiki session. It was overwhelming yet familiar. When I was lying on the chakra mat at the guidance of one of the owners who saw how I was impacted, I realized that the feelings were familiar to some of those I had in church. This only piqued my curiosity even more. I trusted

that soul level feeling so I followed it. I began to find freedom and clarity the more I explored what felt right for me while at the same time being scared of the unknown. All I knew was that I was beyond desperate to get out of the space I was in. So, I continued to follow the gentle nudges in my soul on step at a time. Over the next 8 years, I continued to follow my soul and fine tune The Soul Therapy Life for myself.

One thing I always knew throughout my journey was that all the knowledge, information and wisdom I would gain throughout this journey was not just for me. It was for you too. That compulsion to serve others by helping them heal from their traumas was a true part of my identity and my path, but I had to do it for me first. Because I've done the work to create my own path, I can teach others to do the same for themselves.

If you've ever seen a fresh blanket of snow covering the ground from your door to your car, you know that someone has to be the first to make a path to leave the house. Once the path is created, either by footsteps or a shovel/snowblower, you can then easily see the path that you can follow. I've left those footprints to make it just a bit easier to leave your house. Consider this book to be the beginning of your path to healing.

Now that we have some of the background of how we got here, my intention with the rest of this book is to breakdown what the Soul Therapy Life is, its key components and extend an invitation for you to create your own Soul Therapy Life.

CHAPTER 1: SOUL & THERAPY

"You don't have a soul. You are a soul. You have a body." -C.S. Lewis

The *SOUL* part of soul therapy is the driving force behind the entire concept I'm introducing you to in this book. Since there can be many definitions and understandings about what the soul is, it's important for us to have an understanding of what we mean when referring to the soul in the context of the Soul Therapy Life. The closest working definition of soul is *"the spiritual or immaterial part of a human being"*.

C.S. Lewis says "You don't have a soul. You are a soul. You have a body." While our body is the suit we wear in this experience we call life, our soul is the true essence of who we are. We cannot see our soul, we feel it through sensation and energy moving through us. This energy communicates with us providing us with information we can use as we move throughout life. It's the still, small voice, the whisper in the wind and that "gut feeling". It's a sense of knowing without knowing why or how you know. It's a deep, deep sense of something the world hasn't been able to teach us.

Connecting to our soul leads to inner joy and not being aware of our soul and the wisdom, direction & knowledge it contains leads to suffering. Our soul is our compass and our guide. It's our secret weapon in overcoming the many challenges of

life. We don't possess our soul, it's not something we own, it's something we are. We honor it as the core of our identity. This is why the soul, and being intentionally connected to it, is the key to discovering who we truly are.

Soul & Spirit

While many people use the terms soul & spirit synonymously, which is okay in some situations, I've come to determine there is a slight difference. Many of the definitions of spirit include a person's character and our character is tied to our personality which is a conditioned perception of who we are rather than the truth of who we are. This perception of ourselves is also called the ego. Spirit is also often used synonymously with energy but as humans that contend with an ego, the divine essence is a bit watered down here. Therefore, neither the soul as spirit or the soul as energy is fully accurate when it comes to the true nature of the soul. I believe the spirit is a combination of our physical & non-physical essence and the soul is our *divine source of sovereignty* and completely non-physical.

Soul & Sovereignty

Sovereignty is defined as *supreme power or authority*. Many religions believe this only describes the gods of their books & beliefs referencing an ultimate authority and power figure over all. When I refer to sovereignty, I'm referring to the *ultimate personal power & authority we have over ourselves*. Yes my friends, we are our own sovereign being endowed with knowledge, wisdom and our own kind of individual magic. And our soul is the source of our sovereignty.

In summary, whenever I'm referring to the soul I'm referring to the non-physical part of ourselves that contains the knowledge, wisdom and direction we need because it's where our inner divinity & highest self sits. I'm referring to the source of our sovereignty. The box that holds your personal power.

"There are many forms of therapy and now we have Soul Therapy"

- Dawn Michele

The *therapy* part of soul therapy is the actual process and solutions we find as we follow our soul which leads to our own path of healing, growing, changing, transforming and becoming who we truly are. The word therapy refers to a treatment

that helps a person get better from the effects of a disease or injury. Other words for therapy are antidote, remedy, cure, treatment and solution. I submit to you ladies & gentlemen of the jury that *life* is the disease or injury for which we need healing.

Soul Therapy vs Psychotherapy

When most people hear the word *THERAPY* they immediately think of talk therapy also known as psychotherapy. Although it can be confusing since psyche means soul or spirit, *Soul Therapy is NOT talk therapy or psychotherapy* as traditional psychotherapy often has little to do with the soul or spirit. It is based on a medical model of healing and primarily cognitive based. The medical model of healing focuses on alleviating symptoms rather than identifying and eliminating root causes.

The other thing about psychotherapy is that it requires a diagnosis in order to participate in the various processes set up within the mental and behavioral healthcare systems such as insurance and managed care. These diagnoses become part of your record and the entire system is not exactly set up to help you overcome your presenting issues. As a former mental health, trauma, family, mobile & primary therapist in my past professional life, I have insider knowledge that made me all too aware that psychotherapy was not going to give me what I and many others need...true, lasting, transformative *healing*.

Having said all of that, psychotherapy absolutely has its place in the spectrum of healing for many, including myself. This form of therapy is often helpful in teaching alternative coping skills and identifying feelings. However, as much as I want to believe in systems that claim to help people heal, I have seen from the inside out that it's not always their goal. I'm sharing some of my personal, professional and experiential views with you to give you more context for the background of how the Soul Therapy Life came to be.

There are many forms of therapy (think occupational, speech, physical, rehabilitation etc) and now, there is Soul Therapy. The *therapy* part of soul therapy is the actual process and solutions we find as we follow our soul which leads to our own path to heal, grow, change, transform and become who we truly are.

Soul Therapy & Mental Health

Mental health is our emotional, psychological, and social well-being and is a large part of the Soul Therapy Life. Our mental health state affects how we think, feel, and act. Good mental health is not just about the absence of mental illness, it's an overall state of well-being where we can cope with normal life stresses, work productively, and contribute to society. Good mental health includes resilience, emotional management, and the ability to have healthy relationships. Soul Therapy

goes beyond mental health to include our physical health, spiritual health, emotional health and energetic health in the healing, awakening & deconditioning process.

The Soul Therapy Life

The Soul Therapy Life is a form of self healing that focuses on the intuition that resides within each one of us. This intuition and all of its knowledge, guidance and wisdom is held in our soul. Because it encompasses all aspects of self, it becomes a lifestyle specifically curated for you, by you. As you heal, awaken & decondition, you create your own path that leads to the transformation you desire for yourself. This self led process of discovering who you truly are and aligning your life with that version is the essence of Soul Therapy.

Throughout the remainder of this book, I will give you an outline of what the Soul Therapy Life entails complete with an invitation at the end when you desire to begin or deepen your own personal journey of becoming who you truly are and living life from that place. While I do my best to provide a brief overview of what I call Soul Therapy here in this book, there are so many elements and nitty gritty details of what it really means to live the Soul Therapy Life that they cannot all be listed in here. It truly must be lived and I have created the resources not only for you to be able to start to live out your own path, but to do so with something I deeply desired...guidance & support.

CHAPTER 2: HEALING

*"Healing takes courage, and we all have courage, even if we have to dig a little to find it." -
Maya Angelou*

The purpose of healing in the context of Soul Therapy is to *process pain and release it*. As with most words in the human language(s), healing can have various meanings depending on the context of its use. I believe we tend to throw the word and the concept around with ease, but have lost the essence and the power associated with the sacred process of healing. So, let's talk a bit more about what healing means.

To heal means to get well again, to make free from injury or disease and to restore health and wellness. Healing is the process that leads to the easing or ending of pain. I mentioned in chapter one that I believe *life* is the disease or injury for which we need healing. We have all experienced events in life that have left us wounded, scarred and traumatized yet very few of us actually know and understand how to heal ourselves. In addition to this, many of us enter this reality carrying the unhealed trauma from generations before us.

In the healing part of Soul Therapy, our goal is to get well again. For some, it's a return to wellness, for others, it's the first time we've been able to experience any measure of wellness. We want to be free from constant intense emotional and physical pain that results from our current conditioned status in life.

Healing & Pain

When I was 11 I was visiting with my paternal grandma in Detroit. I remember it vividly more than 40 years later because she would send me to the corner store to get her Viceroy cigarettes and salt pork for breakfast. Anyway, I was in the attic and I brushed up against this old chest and scraped my leg deep enough to see the white meat. First of all, I didn't even know we had white meat so I thought I was dying because I thought I was looking at my bones. It hurt so bad that if I focus in on it now I swear, I could still feel it.

All these years later I can recall the exact location where I was when it happened, where the wound was on my body, what it felt like, what I was thinking...all of it. The only difference between that day and today when I look at the scar is that I don't feel the pain anymore and I'm a few years older than 11. There is a scar and an immediate recall of the story behind it, but *it doesn't hurt anymore*. This is healing.

That painful life event, that broken heart, that shattered dream, that traumatic experience...none of these have to cause you pain any longer. You may have the scars, but it doesn't have to hurt anymore. Some of the things we need healing from is a result of getting caught up in the actions of others (like childhood abuse). And some of the things we need healing from is a result of not knowing how to end the cycle of pain by truly healing (like addictions). We're not really taught that part and it's a major reason why so much suffering exists.

Pain is a part of life and we learn how to alchemize and transmute it in Soul Therapy. Pain acts as a pattern interrupter. When we're stuck in negative patterns and self sabotage, painful life events act as an intervention. Pain is supposed to be a temporary condition but many of us hold onto it which leads to suffering. Suffering is the state of being stuck in the illusion of who you think you are based on who you were *conditioned to be* in this life. You're not alone, everyone who eventually heals goes through this pain because we're not taught about this process as part of learning who we are.

Preparing for Healing

One thing I wish I knew or understood about the healing process is that preparation goes a long way. Most of us just jump into some kind of healing protocol we saw on tik tok, read in a book or heard from a friend. I've heard virtually no one in the healing space talk about the importance of preparation or how to prepare for the healing process. Again, there are so many aspects of the healing process that I don't have room here to share them all, but here are the first three steps I cover in Soul Therapy.

First, you want to set the foundation for your healing journey by creating space for it. Whatever process you choose, Soul Therapy or another amazing community, you want to create space for it because it's not going to just happen on its own. By

space I mean physical space, mental space, emotional space, time space & energetic space.

You want to create a physical space where you can feel safe and be undisturbed. This could be a spare room, your closet, your car, a corner of your bedroom, anywhere you can so that when it's time to dig in you already have a space and location you know is already set up and intended for the purpose of healing. This is a great opportunity to create a small space just for you. Take as much joy in it as you can, it will help!

Next, you want mental space to comprehend what is being learned and emotional space to be able to process and observe your feelings & emotions. This is extremely difficult to do, especially for those with unresolved trauma and full lives. But it's so important. And it is possible so don't believe the lie that you don't have the space or can't create it.

Really think about what is constantly rolling around in your mind that you can either resolve or tuck away to make space and room for the mental & emotional process that needs to occur? A friend constantly in need? An expectation that isn't vital right now? Yet another activity they say your kid needs to be well rounded? This is a great opportunity to choose you first. I promise you, the people that matter in your life will benefit from the healed version of you more than they would doing anything else.

Lastly, you will need time to receive information and learn whether it's watching videos, journaling, completing a workbook or integrating learned information. This all takes time. In my experience, this is a difficult part of preparation due to the conditioned lifestyle of go, go, go and do, do, do. Every minute is filled or we don't feel "productive".

Let me tell you, this work is the *most productive thing you will do your entire life*. Make the time and space for it. This is a great opportunity to practice saying no. PTA mom, no thanks. Chairing another committee, nah. Attending another event that you'd rather not, nope.

A full plate has no room on it for more. We must clear a space for healing to take place, it does not happen on its own. If you can just remove one thing, even just 2-5 hours a week to start is the first step in loving & honoring both your current and your future self. You are so worth it! This is also the first step in creating systems that will enable you to build your lifestyle after you've achieved the level of healing you desire.

Creating the physical, mental, emotional space as well as building in time is absolutely vital. The intention you put in is the healing you will get out. I was so desperate to create this space and get the healing I needed and deserved that I stopped everything. By everything I mean that I stopped working, stopped seeing my

own clients through my business, stopped going places I really didn't want to go, and stopped talking to people that took away from my life force rather than add to it.

Nothing, absolutely nothing was more important than my healing. You don't have to be as radical as me and I realize not everyone is able to do all of these things. But there are things you *can* do, so do them.

CHAPTER 3: AWAKENING

"Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes." – Carl Jung

The purpose of awakening in the context of Soul Therapy is *to receive information and truth from your soul*. Awakening is not a destination, but a continual process of shedding the layers of illusion to reveal the truth of who we are.

The process of awakening involves awareness, acknowledgement, acceptance, recognition and remembrance. You (the you that you think you are) don't awaken, we awaken from the character we've been conditioned to play. Awakening is about ending the nightmare and stepping into the dream. The nightmare is what we've been told about life, god and ourselves and the dream is our grandest notion of what our life could be and the fulfillment of our soul's purpose.

Awakening Is Self-Discovery

It is a process of increasing awareness. When we hear the word awakening, we often hear it mentioned in spiritual circles. Spiritual awakening is described as a realization that you are more than your thoughts and ego and that your true self is part of a larger, interconnected consciousness. Many describe the awakening journey as a journey of self-discovery where we let go of control and align with the flow of life.

Awakening is a process of continuous growth that relies on receiving information and truth that resonates with your soul. We learn to tap into our soul to receive our truth by silencing the mind, finding peace in the present moment, and not being afraid to ask ourselves questions that really matter.

Awakening & Pain

Those of us who awaken are introduced to this process most often through painful life experiences. These experiences can be emotional, spiritual, mental or physical in nature. The first phase of my awakening journey was spiritual. It was at a time in my life where I was a devoted christian. After getting involved in some church mess, the pain, embarrassment and inconsistent messages from others in the church, led me to deeply question what I believed and why I believed it. As many who have braved to travel this route know, this is not a popular thing to do in organized religion. Believe–don't question. Trust–don't question. Have faith–don't question. Despite the bible saying ask, seek & knock, the church heavily encourages, actually demands, not to question the god of the bible or his “representative”.

Despite my earnest sincerity and desire to be “right in the eyes of god”, I simply could not wrap my head around the huge gap between what I said I believed and the inconsistency with my behavior. Something just wasn't right and after 10 years of trying to make religion fit, or make me fit religion, I just couldn't any longer. So I

decided I was no longer christian. Little did I know I had dived head first into my awakening journey. Truth be told, I was probably there for a while, years even, but I just wasn't ready to be open, vulnerable to myself and really explore.

The second round in my awakening journey was initiated by the physical pain of having a paralyzing panic attack. This event was more painful than the first one because I felt it deep down in my soul. This physical event uncovered a simmering volcano of unresolved trauma, unregulated emotions and a perspective of a world and of myself that was untrustworthy and dangerous. It was this event, that I described in the beginning of the book, that flipped my world upside down.

During my process I realized that I hadn't correctly responded to the pain sparked in the first round of awakening. I spent nearly 10 years after that first call chasing security in church settings because I still believed somewhere that religion would save me. The journey of remembering who I am, reclaiming my sovereignty and determining how I want to show up in this reality is a very special one to me. And I treasure it.

After 8 years of being open to information & truth, vulnerable to myself, following my soul and digging into my own beliefs and their origins, I've come to discover that awakening is so much more than our spiritual & religious practices, who or what we call god and the vague expectations set by a society who is completely lost to who they are.

Awakening Is A Choice

Awakening is not just some weird, mystical, woo woo experience only available for a few people. We awaken to undertake the process of knowing our true self and this process takes time, intention and the twin cousins...trust & faith. Although awakening is another stage in human development, it is not one that everyone experiences because awakening is a *choice*. We either continue to ignore the painful messages or we lean in and go for the ride towards freedom.

Before we awaken, we play a character similar to those we see in movies or games. During the awakening process we come to realize we are actually the director, producer & creator of that character. We become much more aware, and like just waking up from a dream, we wake up from the illusion of who we think we are in this reality. We awaken from the illusion that we're not enough, not lovable, not deserving, not worthy, not valuable, not sovereign, not capable and wake up to the recognition of our true nature—that we are part of divine source energy and we are sovereign souls. This is our birthright.

We remember who we are and our life becomes an adventure where we get to define this and all versions of ourselves and determine how we show up in the world. We no longer outsource this power to others, instead we determine these things for ourselves and create a life that matches that vision.

How to Awaken

As stated earlier in this chapter, the purpose of awakening in the context of Soul Therapy is to receive information and truth from your soul. It's not a destination, but a continual process of shedding the layers of illusion to reveal the truth of who we are. So *how* do we do this?

You can begin to awaken by increasing your awareness. Becoming more aware of our thoughts, behaviors and patterns is an important step in the awakening process. A good place to start is to simply tune into and notice your thoughts. Ask yourself several times a day “what am I thinking about”? And just collect data. You can do this by journaling, recording by voice or video, writing or any other way you choose. You will use this data in your deconditioning phase.

You can also choose an area you would like to awaken to. It can be something like a negative emotion that doesn't serve you, relationship issues, triggers, self esteem issues, or any area you would like more guidance in. Ask yourself questions like “Does this cause me pain? If so, where & how?”, “What happens right before I (do that thing that you don't want to do)?”, “Where do I feel this in my body?”, “Where did I learn this?”. The key here is to be Sherlock Holmes looking for clues. Be as curious as you can.

Since the awakening stage is about receiving truth and information it is important that you make space by setting an intention to receive it. Something like

“I’m setting an intention to awaken. I open my heart to receive the information needed for me to receive my truth in all forms”. You can say it out loud, write it, sing it or say it in your heart. Don’t skip this simple but profound step.

Wherever you start and whenever you use this essential tool, you will need to be cognizant of any judgments and negative self-talk. It will creep in to keep you where you are but don’t listen to it. It only drains energy that can be better used to observe and gather information. Issues around morality and concepts related to good, bad, right and wrong that come up are letting you know that judgements are seeping in. These judgements, while providing valuable information in and of themselves, only distract us from our purpose in this phase.

CHAPTER 4: DECONDITIONING

"Personal empowerment means deconditioning yourself from the values and the programs of society and putting your own values and programs in place."~ Terence McKenna

Deconditioning in the context of Soul Therapy is the *re-writing of old thought, belief and behavior patterns that no longer serve us*. It involves the awareness of and the unlearning of automatic, programmed beliefs stored in our subconscious and the relearning of beliefs that we intentionally curate. Our focus is on breaking free from societal expectations that don't fit and releasing mental habits that keep us in a chokehold. We recognize and confront limiting beliefs and replace them with those that resonate with our soul.

This continuous process of unlearning and re-learning is our path to finding true freedom and happiness. Deconditioning is the *action* we take from what we learned in our healing and awakening process. It's the "boots on the ground" portion of a Soul Therapy Lifestyle, the action that follows the revelation.

Life in general has a way of conditioning us through our experiences. There are also systems of conditioning such as family, education, religion, corporate america, politics, healthcare etc. These systems not only teach us what to believe and how to

display a “correct” understanding of those beliefs but they also teach us the negative consequences of doing and believing anything other than what was taught.

Deconditioning In Action

I mentioned in the last chapter my awakening experience and church. This was an area that needed much conditioning as you can imagine but it certainly wasn't the only area that needed deconditioning. I had to decondition from working a 9-5. I started working at 15, 12 if we include the huge responsibility of babysitting. Getting jobs was never a problem for me. Given the fact that so many people complain about their jobs and about having to work in general, it is extremely difficult to be conditioned from.

Knowing what to do with oneself outside of such a conditioned experience in our society was hard as hell to figure out. Self-doubt and self judgement became unbearably loud as I beat myself up for being lazy, unfocused and irresponsible. After all, isn't that what we're conditioned to believe about people who don't work?

Another thing I had to decondition from was how I mothered my adult children. No one talks about this part of parenting. We have all the advice through books, podcasts and groups for raising the little ones yet we overlook the complications surrounding the transition of adult kids and their parents and their changing roles. Being a mother was the one consistent thing in my life that had been

there for almost 30 years. Yes, I am still and always will be a mother, but how our relationships with our children change as they grow up deserves so much more intentionality and wisdom than we currently give it in our society. Whew chile...this one was a doozie!

The last place I had to decondition that I'll share here is aging. All of the dumb ass messages we receive about aging and the aging process deserves a good dose of deconditioning. While I am chronologically almost 53 at the time of this writing, I still feel very much 26 in many ways. I had to confront a world that says I was less valuable, that my wisdom wasn't needed and that my perspective wasn't important. I had to define who I was as a woman in her 50's and who I wanted to be as I continued to age. I had to find my own value for myself, apply my hard earned wisdom to my own beautiful life, believe intently in my own perspective and learn to dismiss anyone who tried to convince me otherwise. Even my own kids.

Deconditioning Is Personal Empowerment

The deconditioning process allows us to live out loud who we have discovered ourselves to be from a place of love rather than expectation and judgement. We learn that personal empowerment means deconditioning yourself from the values and programs of the society that are simply not serving your long-term happiness. We learn to allow ourselves to independently use our own mind to choose our own values

based on our own rational judgment. Unlearning ourselves is the predecessor to knowing ourselves.

Our reality is largely determined by our upbringing and this conditioning sets the stage for what we believe we are and are not capable of in life. It is only by asking the tough questions, the questions everyone else is afraid to ask, and challenging what we and others take for granted and what we and others hold to be true, that we can break through the hypnosis of conditioning.

The deconditioning process is one that regenerates our subconscious mind as we shake ourselves loose from limiting behaviors and beliefs and form new ones in the process. This process, just like the healing & awakening processes, is highly individualized. No one can tell you *exactly* how your processes will work. They can only share what has and hasn't worked for them. This part of the Soul Therapy Life gives us inspiration from the stories and experiences of others and encourages us to follow those places of resonance as we forge our own path.

How to Decondition

Deconditioning is the phase where we use the data we collected in our awakening phase. It is where we re-write conditioned beliefs and wire in ones that serve us. Here is where we replace outdated ideas with fresh ones, old thought

patterns with new ones, negative self talk with uplifting words, and negative self image with the truth that you are more than enough.

The best way I can convey how to decondition is to share an example. So here's a real life, current example in my own life. An area I'm currently taking through the process I'm describing here is not feeling like I am able to be my authentic self in certain situations. Because I have worked hard to be able to embrace and love all of myself, I don't like this feeling at all. And it came up again recently.

I set my intention to increase my awareness and open my heart to receive the truth and information I need to identify the root. Because I created space for my own journey, I was already prepared for healing to occur (see chapter 2) and my heart and mind were ready to receive these sacred messages without judging myself. During a meditation, I was reminded that I have had experiences where I was painfully misunderstood and the resulting learned trauma response to be who I thought people needed me to be was wired in.

Because of this awareness, I was able to receive the truth that I am enough just as I am and that I know how to communicate effectively. Now, when people misunderstand me, I let them. I replaced the thought of being "too much" and the fear of being painfully misunderstood with the truth that I get to take up space and that I am and always will be safe because I have everything inside of me to effectively navigate any situation. This is the work.

This process becomes easier and more automatic the more it is practiced. At first it may take days, weeks or longer to process a single event, feeling or circumstance. This is normal, it takes time for new patterns to take hold. Stick with it and you will come to realize that it begins to happen in hours or minutes. It's truly magic and such a beautiful representation of our sovereignty in action.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step”

-Lao Tzu

I appreciate a good summary, so before I share what next steps you can take to move your journey forward, here's a brief summary of what we've covered so far.

Pain is life's way of telling us something is off, something is out of alignment. These messages show up as mental, physical, emotional and spiritual pain and often after more subtle attempts to get our attention have failed. Many of us come to this work feeling exhausted, overwhelmed and confused by the pain we're experiencing and all we know is that we want relief from the pain.

The Soul Therapy Life is a form of self healing that focuses on the divine source energy that resides within each one of us. This intuition and all of its knowledge, guidance and wisdom is held in our soul. Because it encompasses all aspects of self, it becomes a lifestyle specifically curated for you, by you. As we heal, awaken & decondition, we create our own path that leads to the transformation we desire for ourselves. This self led process of discovering who you truly are and aligning your life with that vision is the essence of the Soul Therapy Life.

The purpose of healing in the context of Soul Therapy is to *process pain and release it*. In the healing phase of Soul Therapy, we learn how to process the pain that

life gives us and how to release it. Without this step, we just go around and around trying to figure it all out and “fix” ourselves. Healing isn’t fixing anything, it is releasing the emotional pain that is stuck in our nervous system.

The process of awakening involves awareness, acknowledgement, acceptance, recognition and remembrance. The purpose of awakening in the context of Soul Therapy is to *receive information and truth from your soul*. Awakening is not a destination, but a continual process of shedding the layers of illusion to reveal the truth of who we are.

Deconditioning in the context of Soul Therapy is the *re-writing of old thought, belief and behavior patterns that no longer serve us*. It involves the unlearning of automatic, programmed beliefs and the relearning of beliefs that we intentionally curate. Our focus is on breaking free from societal expectations that don’t fit and releasing mental habits that keep us in a chokehold.

It’s important to hook into a safe space where you can continue to heal, awaken & decondition. It’s an exchange of energy through mutual connection. I couldn’t find a community that fit and it wasn’t from lack of trying. I’ve come to believe it’s because I was meant to create one. I am its first member and now that you’re here, we have community.

If you've reached this point, you know by now if this resonates with you or not. If it does, there are 3 levels you can choose from within the Soul Therapy Life community. I invite you to join our amazing community where you can do your self-led work in an intentional space where everyone is doing the work. Whichever level you choose, there will be resources, guidance & support to help you actually do the things I describe in this book. And so much more.

The first level is to visit my website, soultherapylife.com and follow me on social media where I provide information, encouragement and other content relevant to healing, awakening, deconditioning and living the Soul Therapy Life. I also have some older, but still relevant, content on my website. The exchange for this level is free.

The second level is to join my membership circle, The Soul Therapy Circle. In this level I provide information & practical guidance via bi-weekly videos & worksheets about the healing, awakening & deconditioning process that focus on how to integrate information into everyday life. I like to choose more specific topics directly from the community when I can in order to bring more clarity. Each month I also host virtual group work sessions especially for my Soul Therapy Circle members. The exchange for this level is \$33/mo.

The third level is my Sovereign Soul experience. This is my deep dive level content, guidance & support for those who are ready to dig in, do the inner work and

begin to forge their path in a more intentional way. This is intense work where we meet weekly for virtual group work sessions that incorporate weekly video & workbook lessons contained in the course. Remember when I said there isn't enough room here to describe all of the elements to the process of healing, awakening & deconditioning? Yeah, this is where I let all of that flow. This level also includes access to me for 1:1 sessions to help integrate learned information into your daily life. The exchange for this level is \$111/mo.

You can visit my website, southerapylife.com, to learn more about each level.

Thank you for taking the time to read this book. I appreciate you for being here and look forward to having you in one of the Soul Therapy Life levels of community. I'll see you inside The Soul Therapy Life.

"The point & purpose of my life, and yours is to experience, express, demonstrate and fulfill my true identity, who I really am"

-Neale Donald Walsch