



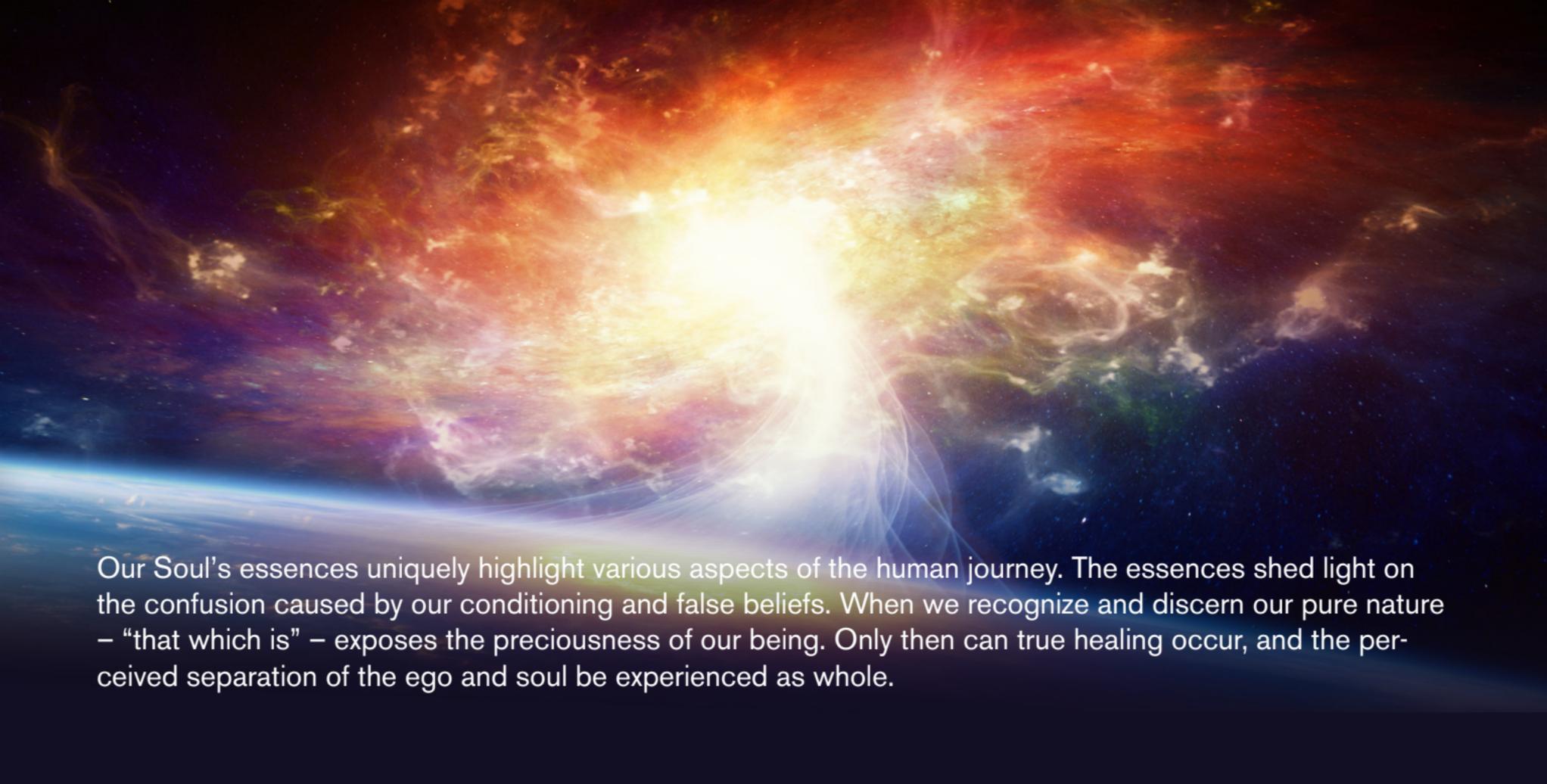
In the beginning there was the Light. Within the vast night sky, there appeared a star of piercing brightness – a point of light illuminating the soul.



Now this Soul Essence was given the potential to evolve. But to improve, it had to unite with the body. For this reason, soul was given an affection for the body and threw itself upon the body. And being fine and very expansive, it sank and penetrated all parts of the body and forgot about itself. It came to think of itself as the body. In this way, we may come to see ourselves only as bodies and, losing awareness of the soul, disbelieve it.

To access our soul's true nature ~ the finest most subtle substance within us ~ we must drop into, meet, and be with the inner spaces and denser matter of the body. This requires us to feel what is present in the moment. Whether arising as a belief, emotion, or sensation, we must "presence" this terrain to gain access to the delicate, essential nature of our subtle body.



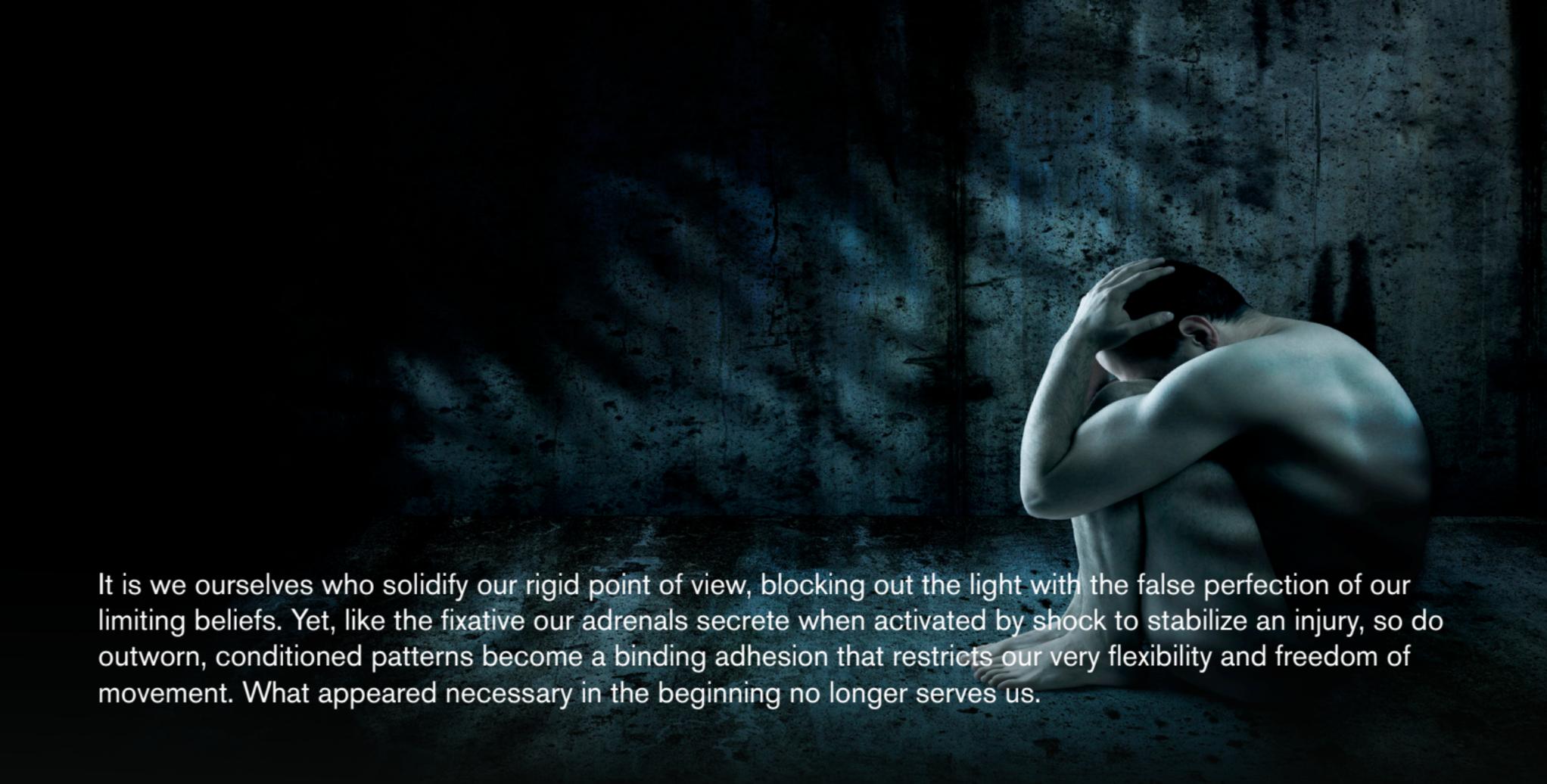


Our Soul's essences uniquely highlight various aspects of the human journey. The essences shed light on the confusion caused by our conditioning and false beliefs. When we recognize and discern our pure nature – “that which is” – exposes the preciousness of our being. Only then can true healing occur, and the perceived separation of the ego and soul be experienced as whole.



We discover that, unless we tap into the wisdom of the soul, we become lost in the convoluted and labyrinth of never-ending stories that reflect the limitations of our early experiences. This invites us to cultivate a deeper, and fuller understanding of our Self. Thus, as suggested by Leonard Cohen's lyrics:

*Ring the bell that still can sing  
Forget your perfect offering  
There is a crack, a crack in everything  
That's how the light gets in.*



It is we ourselves who solidify our rigid point of view, blocking out the light with the false perfection of our limiting beliefs. Yet, like the fixative our adrenals secrete when activated by shock to stabilize an injury, so do outworn, conditioned patterns become a binding adhesion that restricts our very flexibility and freedom of movement. What appeared necessary in the beginning no longer serves us.

We actually embed our power in our deficiency, and then we convince ourselves that our deficiency is who we are, and we defend it with all our might! Imagine that! No wonder we often feel crazy and don't understand what is going on. Because our construct is so hidden, so convoluted and so confusing. Which 'I' am I really?



Letting in the light – the brilliance of being – exposes a crack, a chasm in an identity constructed upon the deficiencies of powerlessness, loss, lack, fear, shame, doubt and guilt. To open in surrender to our shining radiance is to give up and let go of the old forms we believed would protect us. Our true self can then come out of hiding! We are no longer driven by self-preservation based on a belief, which is actually a judgment based on a constructed identity about who we are and what is permissible.

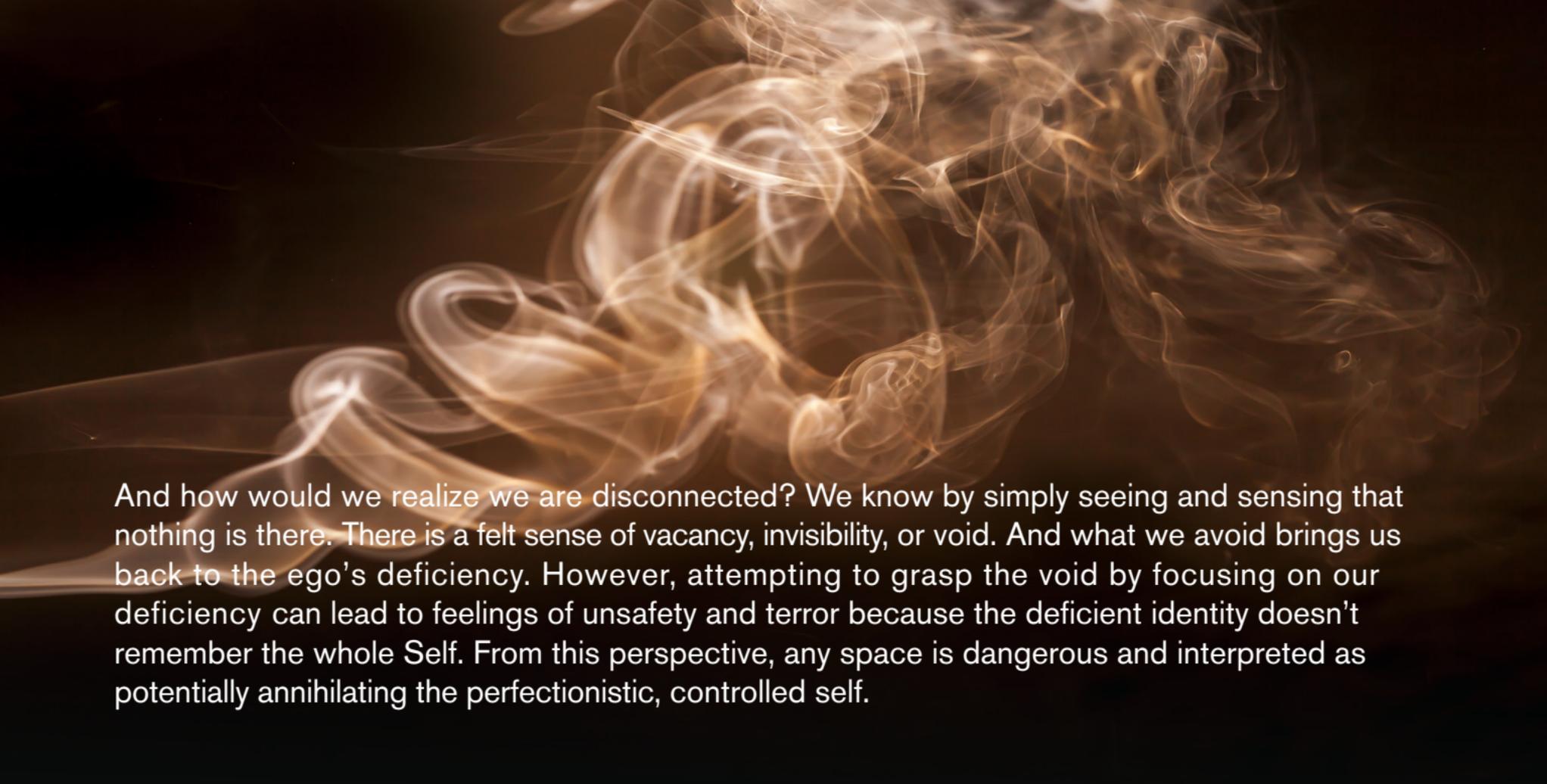




Where it gets tricky is that this ego structure that formed around our helplessness and vulnerability became a would-be protector. But protecting what? Protecting our body and beliefs. In other words, our limited self-identity believes we are the body, and so it validates itself through tension, pain, and emotional entanglements. And any attempt to get rid of the ego is met with extreme defensiveness. Viewed from our ignorance, our unconscious self fears that the loss of ego could result in the death of the body.

Telling oneself to get rid of the ego re-traumatizes the protective structure that formed out of the original trauma. And here's the kicker: if we don't kill it, then let's heal it! This infers that we are broken. So now we try to fix what's been made up based on the false perception of lack. But you see we aren't lacking. We are intrinsically whole in our natural state of being. What is needed is clear perception into those places we denied, hid, disempowered, and dissociated from – strategies that ensured our survival in early life.



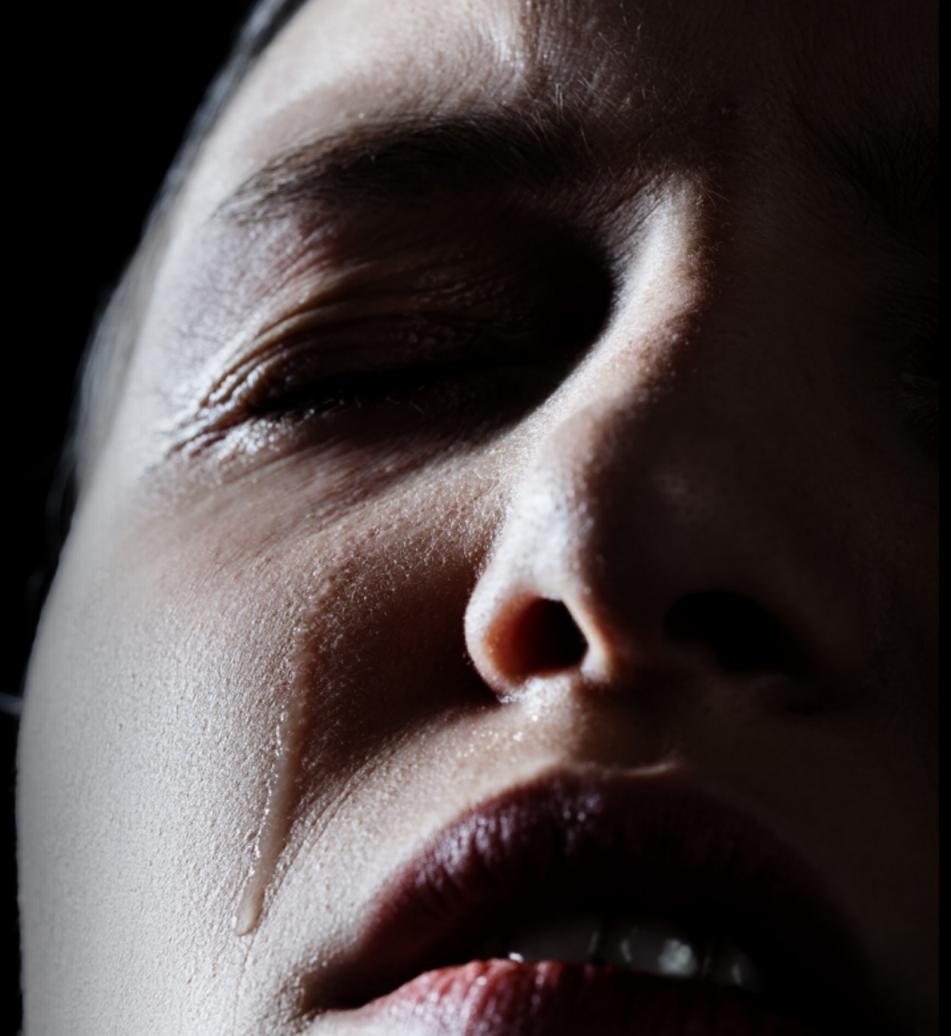


And how would we realize we are disconnected? We know by simply seeing and sensing that nothing is there. There is a felt sense of vacancy, invisibility, or void. And what we avoid brings us back to the ego's deficiency. However, attempting to grasp the void by focusing on our deficiency can lead to feelings of unsafety and terror because the deficient identity doesn't remember the whole Self. From this perspective, any space is dangerous and interpreted as potentially annihilating the perfectionistic, controlled self.



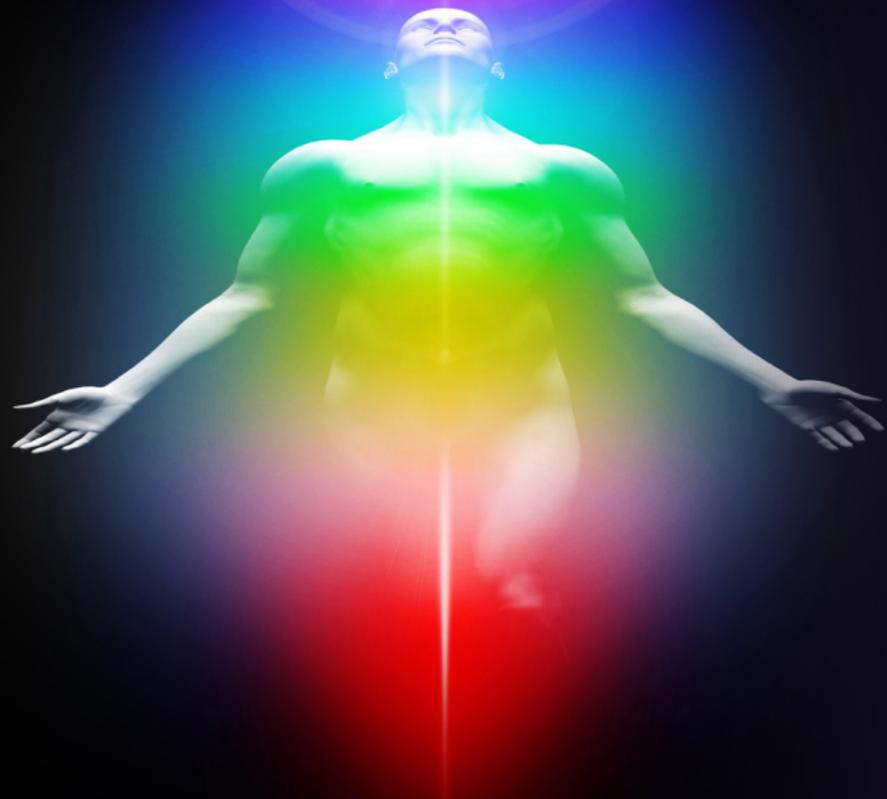
The annihilation we fear is both true and not true. The rigidity that was familiar will be gone. But we will still exist. We need to learn to trust that the dissolving and reintegration process will grow our capacity to metabolize embodied spaciousness. A consistent practice can be very helpful in developing this capacity.

Spaciousness and dissociation can look-alike, yet they are very different. Dissociation is a shock response, a protective strategy where we split off awareness of our bodies to avoid feeling overwhelming sensations, emotions, and thoughts. With dissociation, fear resides more in the body than our mind and it doesn't feel safe to be in the body. The mind will assign meaning to the feelings; but, to be fully alive, we must learn to be completely present with the sensations that arise. The difficulty is that feeling more sensation can also arouse feelings of fear.





To be present here requires us to cultivate calming patience and loving kindness to bridge the chasm and separation we ourselves created. Right here, right now, is a standing invitation to reconnect with what we have disconnected from. To return to our true essential self, we need to be present with whatever needs to be witnessed with pure understanding and an open heart.



When we include with awareness all three intelligences – the mental, the emotional, and the instinctual – gratitude and appreciation naturally flow. Our egoistic identity can now trust that it is safe and can turn toward essence, bowing its head to the heart's embrace. What was hidden comes to light. The ego, now supported, can wholly devote itself to serving our inherent, divine grace.

Self-realization is an evolving process, inviting us to deepen our relationship with the intimacy of Self. Habituated patterns give way to the fluid nature of being. In so doing, our universe bio-dynamically transforms the vast spaciousness of our heavenly masculine radiance into a precisely focused potency penetrating the fleshy earth of our feminine nature, releasing her fragrance and ravishing beauty. Embodied as form and formlessness, each residing, one within the other, they meet at the nexus of our heart's most inner





And so it is – the womb of our sacred heart opens into divine marriage with fully illuminated Presence. Disrobed of any misunderstanding that we were ever anything but That; our soul, ignited with passion for her lover slips into an ecstatic embrace ~ with the One ~ Beloved.