



Mission Consciousness

Embracing The Process

by **Christian de Quincey**

Times change. Circumstances sweep us along. And yet we always have the power of choice. Nevertheless, sometimes it seems no matter what we intend, choose, or do, greater forces are at work directing the unfolding of our lives. Gravity? The laws of physics? Genes or memes? Secret cabals? Divine purpose? Planetary alignment? The law of attraction? . . . who knows?

Something beyond our control pushes us along a path not always of our own choosing, and, it seems, the best we can do is enjoy the ride. Come what may, we are always, and inevitably, part of The Process.

Sooner or later, we stop resisting, give up pushing back against the tide, and wake up to the peace, power, and mystery of surrender.

This is very different from resignation. Surrender is not about falling victim to fate. It is simply letting go. It's not even about *trust*—in some higher power or purpose that will serve us well in the end. That's still hanging on to a hidden residue of hope (and hope is the breeding ground of fear). No, it's about *letting go of letting go*.

At times in life we feel so powerful we believe anything is possible. Nothing can stop us. We could, if necessary, take charge of running the world. And we create evidence to bolster this belief. We produce results. Our intentions manifest like water pouring out of a faucet. Just turn on the tap of choice and creativity, *et viola!*

And then something happens. Circumstances and times change. Our sense of omnipotence gives way to a growing realization that our power was, and is, always conditional. We exist in a network of what Buddhists call "*interdependent causation*." We are *interbeings*; our deepest nature is not individuality, but "*inter-viduality*." Our power is powerful because it happens to be aligned with the intentions and choices made by countless others. When that alignment shifts—due to any number of causes, such as natural disasters, economic bubbles and bursts, ruptured relationships, acute or chronic illness—our sense of agency comes into sharp relief.

From time to time in life, we face the fact that the greatest power we have is to choose to accept reality as it is—*whether we like it or not*. We surrender.

These are times for regrouping—literally. Time, first, to return to ourselves, to reconnect with our deepest values, purpose, and meaning in life. Time for self-clarification. *Who are we and what matters most to us?* Time to reconnect with friends and like-minded colleagues. Time to cultivate and express compassion for ourselves and for others. Time for realignment.

Time for patience. The Process unfolds at its own pace, unconcerned with our personal agendas or timelines.

Astrologers talk of the "Saturn return," a period in The Process when a person's life erupts into chaos and meltdown—an inevitable storm before a breakthrough and return to calm. These life eruptions happen roughly every 30 years. If you are somewhere between 28-35, or 58-65, chances are you know what I'm talking about. Now, I don't know how much faith we should put in the "fate of our stars," but, whatever the reason—biology, developmental psychology, sunspots, or cosmic archetypes—I have noticed this pattern of "eruptions" in my own life and in the lives of my friends.

Time to refocus. When the storm strikes, batten down the hatches, and do the inner work. Dust off your "inner compass," take a long and honest look at your life map, and chart your course. Even in a stormy sea, you are still your own best navigator.

Recalibrating My Mission

Recently, I found myself in the middle of The Process, and decided to recalibrate my mission, my life's purpose. The result is what I call my "cellular commitments" because, rather than something I have created, they are what I discovered about myself—my natural essence or "soul's calling"—as I peeled away layer after layer. Following months of "self archaeology," I rediscovered four core drives or purposes that have guided, and continue to guide, my life for as long as I can remember:

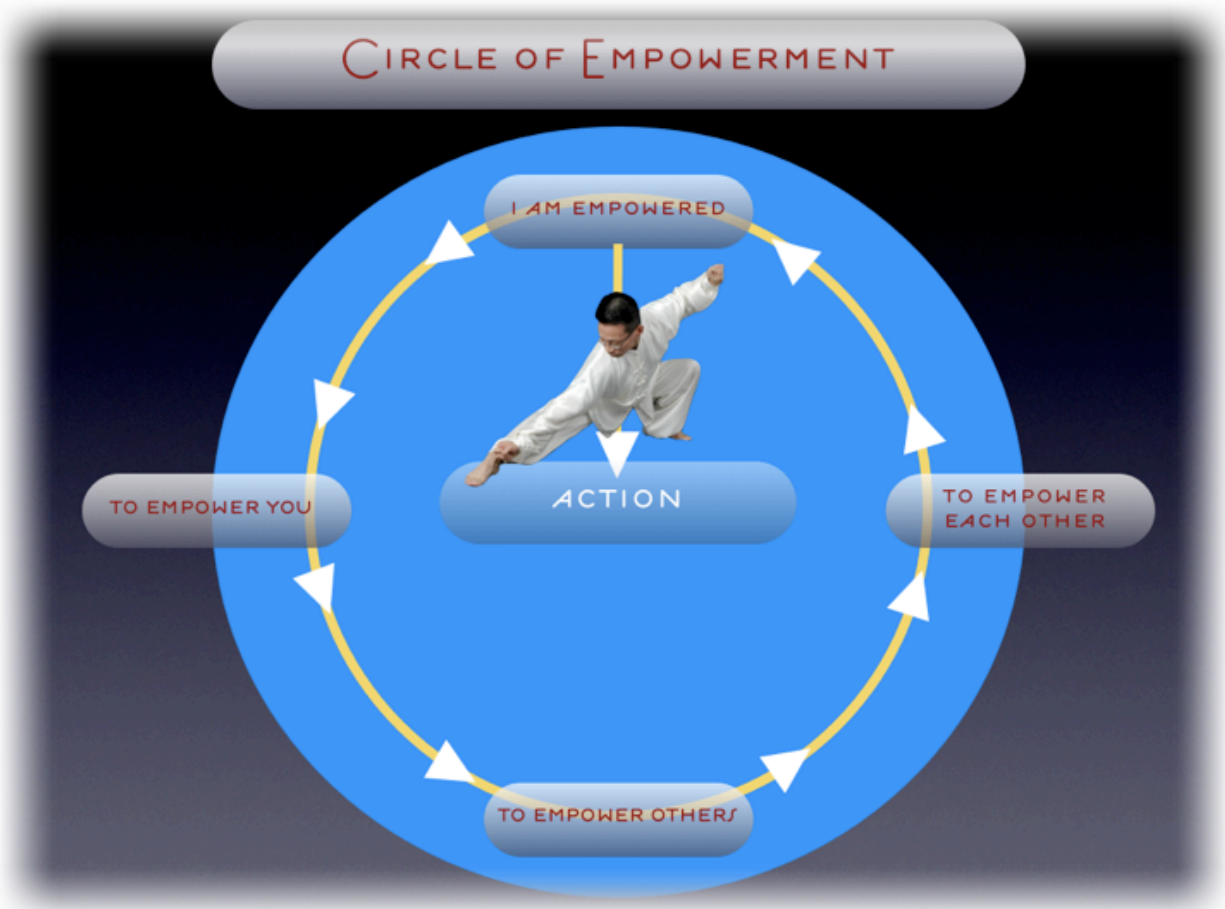
'Cellular Commitments'

1. **Exploring Consciousness**—using multiple ways of knowing (my senses, intellect, feeling, and intuition) to *understand* and *experience* the nature and potency of consciousness.
2. **Communicating Consciousness**—writing and teaching what I learn about consciousness from science, philosophy, personal experience, and spiritual practices.
3. **Career in Consciousness**—earning a sustainable living by sharing what I learn through writing and teaching.
4. **Conscious Relationships**—to be in mutually supportive relationships with others who share my passion for consciousness and transformation.

Next, I clarified my "Life's Mission"—a three-tiered process for applying my "cellular commitments":

My Life's Mission

1. **Personal Transformation/Empowerment**—expressing what I learn about consciousness to support myself and others in the process of personal transformation in ways that generate a "Circle of Empowerment," which contributes to . . .
2. **Global/Planetary Transformation**—recognizing that global change begins with each of us taking responsibility for the choices and actions in our own lives. More than ever, it is clear we need to radically transform our relationship to the planet if we and other species are to survive.
3. **Universal/Cosmic Connection**—realizing that our beautiful planet Earth lives and moves in a magnificent, mysterious, and awe-inspiring cosmos; and that *something about the universe* is directing events here on Earth and guides the precious moments we call "our lives."



Context for 'Mission Consciousness'

In the last four hundred years, science has achieved almost miraculous mastery of the physical world—giving us the technology and systems that lie at the heart of modern civilization. However this immense achievement has come at a cost. We now face an unprecedented interlinking of civilizational and ecological crises.

To paraphrase Einstein: "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them." In short, the time has come for science and society to tackle the "final frontier." We now need to complement our mastery of matter with a comparable mastery of mind. Increased understanding of the physical world, without a matching understanding of the nature and creative potency of consciousness, will not be sufficient to address the crises facing the world today.

The "final frontier" for society, as for science, is to explore the very instrument of knowing itself. Because consciousness is ubiquitous—literally impacting every aspect of our lives—Consciousness Studies is, necessarily, interdisciplinary. At the very least, it involves, primarily, such wide-ranging fields as evolutionary psychology, philosophy of mind, neuroscience, cognitive science, anthropology, and, secondarily, the application of consciousness knowledge to other

fields as diverse as ecology, economics, marketing and business, organizational learning, political science, and educational systems themselves.

Understanding consciousness is useful and informative. However knowledge alone is insufficient. We also need to apply what we know in ways that also *transform* consciousness—creating new possibilities for future generations.

Understanding and Transformation

This two-fold approach—understanding and transformation of consciousness—has been, and continues to be, the focus of my career as a professor, international speaker, and author.

Although my formal academic training is in philosophy (specifically, philosophy of mind), I have always championed an interdisciplinary approach to consciousness—my studies and writings have covered, for example, neuroscience, cognitive science, anthropology, history and philosophy of science, history of philosophy, quantum physics, cosmology, theology, as well as Eastern and Western spiritual traditions. Using my background in journalism, I specialize in communicating profound and complex ideas in accessible language without compromising the integrity of robust scholarship.

My books explore the deep assumptions we hold about consciousness, collectively and individually. Exposing and engaging with our often unquestioned belief systems is not only central to any comprehensive and effective program in consciousness studies, it is essential for transformation at the personal and societal level. Perhaps more than ever before in human history, we critically need to develop tools and skills to accelerate transformation of our fundamental world views (one of the required courses I teach at John F. Kennedy University, "Paradigms of Consciousness," is designed explicitly to address this issue).

It seems clear to me that unless we (as a global society) engage in this deep work, we are unlikely to create the kinds of solutions needed to sustain our communities and civilization through the current century. Business as usual is no longer an option. We have reached a point in the evolution of our species where, it appears, we either make a profound shift in personal and collective consciousness or face the prospect of wide-ranging and increasingly complex crises that threaten the well being (perhaps even the survival) of our social, economic, political, educational, and ecological systems.

One way to help bring about this kind of change is to proactively build into our educational institutions new ways of thinking, understanding, and relating to ourselves, our communities, and our world. Based on rigorous interdisciplinary academic and extramural research, we can offer a portfolio of practices for "Consciousness and Transformation" designed to inform and inspire leaders in government, business, and media to embrace new possibilities and options—through creative application of our greatest gift: *consciousness* itself.