

Capitalize your Self

shift from ego self to True Self



Michiel van Mourik

Capitalize your Self - *shift from ego self to True Self*

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ISBN: 9789402194616

First edition September 2019

Printed by Brave New Books

www.bravenewbooks.nl

Cover design by Michiel van Mourik

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Acknowledgments

This book would not have been here if it weren't for the wonderful people I have met along the way. Many of them may not even be aware of their contribution because oftentimes the impact of certain inspiration, occurrences and encounters take a while to take root before they flourish into meaning. I am grateful for all of it.

Other people have contributed in a more tangible way by sharing their support, insights, wisdom, friendship, warmth and love. I feel humbled walking this path of awakening with you, Moena de Jong, Victoria Hyndman, Katrien Franken, Anne Vida Ikeda, Ingeborg Timmerman, Shari Iskandar, Jonas Nathan, Matsyendra., Anne Leung, Rafia Morgan, Turiya Hanover, Quirine van Maanen, Michiel van Ast, Roeland de Graaf and my ever supporting parents, brother and family.

I am also deeply grateful for the writings of some many authors that became like guides to me in this journey. You will come across some of the titles in the pages to follow. It feels like I am standing on their shoulders, too.

And, from a distance, thank you for your continued inspiration and joy, Deepak Chopra, Mark Knopfler, David Letterman and Jay Leno.

Michiel,
Amsterdam,
Summer 2019

Prologue

From the outset this was never going to be a hefty book. I just don't have it in me. That is because I prefer to reduce things to their essence. Even my thesis in college only just met the minimal required amount of pages. And in my legal career I also felt a constant urge to bring my writings down to the essentials. So it was inevitable to end up here with a book containing quite a lot of information in quite a limited number of pages.

I could not help noticing that a lot of writers of business books and self-help books present their central idea in the first 20 or so pages to subsequently elaborate on that idea for another 300 pages. The power of repetition, you know. This book is a bit different in the sense that the repetition is not so much in the book itself. I prefer the idea of putting the power of repetition in the hands of the reader.

Because of my tendency to reduce things to the essence, I wouldn't be at all surprised if this book might not land with you all at once. It took me some 10 odd years to go through the stages of personal growth that I describe in this book, from my first steps of waking up to a higher reality to highly metaphysical, spiritual experiences. I don't expect you to 'get' all of that at once, obviously. There is no way these 180 or so pages will serve as a shortcut to your personal growth. I don't believe there is such a thing. What is more likely to happen is that what is currently closest to your state of mind might will resonate the most. And perhaps from there you will find joy in letting this book grow with you along your journey of personal growth by repeated reading. Or not, of course. Putting it aside is always an option. It doesn't make much of a doorstep, though.

PART 1 - Introduction

There is so much to tell you. I really would love for you to hear all this. Not because I need it so badly to tell my story, but because I would love it if you would feel invited to tell a similar story yourself one day.

Over the last couple of years I have spoken so many corporate professionals, either (or both) successful or struggling, both junior and senior, both male and female, about their state of happiness. For the main part of my former career as a legal counsel I advised corporate legal teams on an ad interim basis. Being a temporary colleague moving from one assignment to the next, it happened often that my temporary colleagues felt safe to open up about their ups and downs in their careers and even in their lives. Something you don't necessarily want to do with your more permanent colleagues. I have always had a bit of a developed sense for spotting someone's struggle in finding joy in life. When I then open up about my first steps on my journey of personal growth, I almost every time get the same response by my colleagues. It goes something like this:

“This career-oriented life is not fully fueling my passion. It is what I started doing out of college and something I have grown accustomed to. It is OK-ish, I mean, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with my job. It provides for my mortgage and my lifestyle. There are days that are not too bad. But generally it feels like the parking brake is on a little bit, you know? A sort of inner resistance. A bit like a grey cloud that is over me. I admit I would rather do something completely different. I just have no clue what that would be, though. Maybe something creative. I used to be pretty good at that. But that is just not going to happen. At least not now. I have got to be realistic. I have just too many responsibilities at work and at

home. So many balls to keep in the air. And even if I would know exactly what I wanted to do instead of this job, I don't think I would do it. I just don't have the possibilities to step out of this career. Not with this pay grade. I can't just quit my job without having something else lined up first. I could be up for promotion soon and that would be nice financially. Of course, if I would win the lottery, I would be out of here tomorrow. Then I could start doing the things that I would really love to do and be free. That would be great."

Maybe this sounds a bit familiar? Or maybe you would even have given me the exact same answers if I would have asked you about your present state of happiness. I can fully understand if that would be the case. So many of us ask ourselves the question what it is that we are doing here on this planet, in this lifetime. *"Why are we here exactly? What is the purpose of this life? Why has my life taken its present shape? Why am I doing what I am doing? Is this it? Or is there more than this? When is my life really going to take off?"*

If the above sounds familiar to you, you are the exact reason why I wanted to write this book. I have had the same doubts and asked the same questions for a long time myself. Step by step, I have found some beautiful answers and guidance towards a more liberated, joyful and desired life. Step by step, I am managing to gently let go of the parking brake resistance. I would love to encourage you to experience that too. Because, if I can do it, so can you. And I am here to tell you there is so much you can do to incrementally increase your sense of happiness and freedom without the need for a big bang (which could either mean quitting your job tomorrow or burning yourself out). I am here to tell you that you don't have to worry when you feel like you are struggling a bit in your

professional or personal life, secretly wishing for a grander life. That secret wish is nothing but a wonderful reminder and even a promise of the Universe that such grander life is actually awaiting you. It is all here for you in this lifetime, even if it seems very distant to you now. That is actually what this book is about. It is about unlocking a grander version of yourself; it is about awakening to living a truly successful life with effortless ease.

By the way, do not let the title of this book fool you. I know that the word ‘capitalize’ primarily has a financial connotation, but I use it in a far broader sense than that, as you will come to see. *Capitalize your Self* is not (just) about becoming financially successful. To me, success is a state of effortless ease and joy in doing the things you love doing. That is true success. So from that perspective, yes, capitalizing on your inner strengths and authentic qualities and experiencing success in its broader meaning is certainly within the scope of this book. When you genuinely *Capitalize your Self* you live with less resistance, less struggle, less worry, less anxiety, less stress and less doubt. When you sincerely *Capitalize your Self* you live with more ease, more joy, more inner peace and more flow with the Universe. All because you are simply doing the things you want to do. Or better, you are being the person you feel you are meant to be.

Such a promise can make you a bit skeptical. It might perhaps remind you of a New Age kind of deal. A *pie-in-the-sky* promise made by someone with long hair wearing a long gown. Is that it? Well, sure, I know, when it comes to spiritual growth and enlightenment you might feel a certain hesitation because at first sight it seems so totally unrelated to daily life. Which probably makes that you feel that it isn’t for you. And sure, I know that some spiritual words and concepts do not land easily. Some things

sound a bit floaty or hollow. For example, everything seems to be ‘mindful’ these days. And although it is a wonderful concept, mindfulness seems to lose relevance just because it is used as a container term. You can even knit mindfully today. That means knitting your own patterns. That is a mindful joke. I couldn’t resist. Anyhow, should you feel any hesitation or discomfort by words and ideas of spiritual growth, personal growth, awareness, consciousness, inner journey, enlightenment and, yes, mindfulness, let me try to comfort you with the three consolations I mention below. Because in the end spirituality is not so complicated or far fetched as it might first seem. Think of it as looking at life through a straw, limiting your view to a specific part of your life, e.g. your career. Now think of taking away the straw and suddenly seeing the whole picture. In this widened view, from this expanded viewpoint you are automatically less fixated on the image that was in your narrow view before. Just think of this expanded view every time you hear the phrase ‘expanding your awareness’ or ‘raising your consciousness’. Basically, the spiritual journey comes down to removing the straw that we have put in front of us ourselves. This is what’s meant with words like ‘expanding your awareness’, or ‘raising your consciousness’ you might have heard before. That doesn’t sound so strange, does it? And on top, I will elaborate on why I am convinced that enlightened people have the future. Also in the corporate world. No, make that: especially in the corporate world.

The three consolations

Maybe it is an idea to earmark the next page. It could very well be that reading this book will challenge your open mindedness because I will introduce some ways of thinking that are a bit beyond what your logical mind is conditioned to digest. If at any time you are about to lose me in

elaborating on certain theories and concepts, just revisit this chapter by finding comfort that in true spirituality:

1. *Nothing is expected of you;*
2. *You don't have to search for anything; and*
3. *You can't fail.*

Consolation #1 - Nothing is expected of you

One of the things that might come to mind when you think of enlightenment, is that you are expected to make a radical change. You may have the impression that people that move towards a more genuine and meaningful life decide to quit their job overnight in order to do something complete different. And that idea alone is so radical, unrealistic and “out there” for you, that your mind automatically decides that spiritual growth is not for you. And thus that becomes an easy but understandable excuse to never think about enlightenment again. It might even strengthen your belief that life just has no grander plans for you, or to put it better: you deem it unrealistic to have grander plans for your life. Well, I think that is simply the wrong conclusion, caused by a misconception of - what I call - the radical change theory.

It is my belief that you do not necessarily need a radical change at all to experience personal and spiritual growth. You don't even have to quit your job. I will tell you more about how I continued my career as a legal counsel for many years whilst growing spiritually. The radical change theory falsely assumes that you are completely on the wrong track in your current life and that the only way to resolve that is a 180 degree turn. Of course, it can be that you are completely unhappy in your profession, that you are exhausting yourself and that you are one week away from a

serious breakdown. In such case, please take immediate action, take good care of yourself and seek professional guidance. It is however a lot more common that your unhappiness is over you like a little haze. Like a grey cloud that you can still see through, but that always seems present wherever to go. Not necessarily in an unbearable way, but definitely something that dims your mood and you would wish would disappear, to clear up so to say. If that sounds familiar, find consolation in the fact that shining light on this might very well bring you the relief your heart desires. The presence of a cloud does not mean the sky itself is grey. It's just a cloud.

I will get back to this in far more detail later. For now just be open to the idea that not everything in your professional or personal life is grey. Try to distinguish the grey cloud from the sky. What I mean is that there are always good things going on too. There are always opportunities, even in your current job, that could match with a grander version of yourself. For example, if you are a bit like me, it can feel rewarding to you to bring people together or to bring a more friendly or human approach to the table. I bet you can find an outlet for such 'grander' behavior in your daily life. Including your corporate career. Especially when you realize that a corporate environment is in essence a conglomerate of individuals, of human beings, that all want to be respected and cared for. And who basically just want to have a joyful day, right? Even the most machine-like corporate individuals, let me rephrase that: especially the most machine-like corporate individuals are behaving like they do out of a need for love and respect. They are just a bit clumsy in expressing that need, that's all.

My point here is that you can make your own agenda for spreading your sincere friendliness, your support to others, your care, your kindness, your

love, or whatever trait that comes natural to you, on a daily basis without having to change your job. You might even discover that your job gives you the perfect platform to radiate as your 'grander' self. And in doing so, magic might start to happen sooner than you would think. It might be in the form of colleagues that feel empowered by you, or in the form of a position opening up that you are suddenly qualified for now people have seen you shine in qualities that come natural to you. And because you have thus begun to shine in genuine self-confidence and uniqueness, you get to distinguish yourself from the crowd and become more visible.

As I will explain later, my career took a change the moment I changed its form. Instead of being just one more lawyer in a large law firm, I chose to become an independent legal counsel to offer direct assistance in files that needed immediate attention. That form allowed me to express myself more, to bring my own style to the table. The conformity of being a big firm lawyer felt a bit constraining to the kindness that I wanted to express, but that is different for every body of course. I have always tried to approach a new case as an interpersonal matter rather than a pile of paper. In having created the freedom to do my legal work more autonomously I suddenly felt a liberty to bringing traits to the table that matched with my first next grander version of my self. In my case, by smoothening relationships. And that also strengthened my joy and self-confidence in what sometimes could literally be the exact same work that I did before as a lawyer. Suddenly, I was in an upward spiral experiencing a more genuine, free and therefor successful version of myself without a dramatic career change.

Perhaps, like me, you too may discover that there are opportunities in your profession or even in your other daily life activities to incorporate the

virtues, traits and behavior that feel sincere to you. If the idea of a radical change puts you off, my consolation to you is that you can forget about that idea completely and focus on incremental steps towards self-realization, meaning creating more and more outlets for your uniqueness in your daily life. You set your own pace on this journey. It might give you a sense of relief that nothing revolutionary is expected of you. And on the plus side, in taking the first steps in incorporating your grander self in your daily activities you will feel so much better already. That discovery in itself is already a little magic, but don't be surprised if there is more of that coming your way now that you have opened up for the grander plans the Universe has for you, or the grander plans you have for your life.

So that is my first consolation for you: one little step a time on this journey of spiritual, personal growth and enlightenment might very well do it. Plus you will most likely discover that your current position in your professional and personal life is the perfect platform to discover your uniqueness and develop a grander version of yourself. Just let go of the burden of expecting radical changes from yourself if that feels unnatural to you. *Incremental steps will do perfectly.*

Consolation #2 - You don't have to search for anything

I like to call this consolation 'the misconception of needing to know what your passion is'. Perhaps you are like me, in the sense that I never had a clear picture of my passion or ambition in life. And perhaps the lack of such specific picture has made you believe that personal growth is not available to you. You may think that personal growth has to start with a fire in your heart for a specific life purpose or specific activity worth devoting your time to. You have seen people with passion and you have

come to believe that only such people are eligible for personal growth. My consolation to you is: no, that isn't true at all.

Let me get into this 'passion' thing first. We probably all have one or more friends that speak passionately about something they do. Passion in itself is wonderful. Passion ignites. Passion points towards a genuine part of your self that makes you experience joy and happiness. Some of us experience it while doing sports, writing, making music or cooking. Some of us experience it in their work. That is wonderful. A lot of us however might not experience a specific passion in their lives at all. If that is you, the word 'passion' alone might cause a little bit of an itch to you. Or maybe envy. If not plain resentment. It might sometimes feel to you as if passion is all everyone can talk about. To the point that you start to believe that passion is such an overrated word. If that is you, I can totally relate to you. I have for a long time felt an itchy feeling myself when I heard or read about passion. But thanks to the noble art of distinguishing there are two things I would like to point out that might help turning your resentment for passion around.

First, not everyone who talks about passion is actually experiencing true passion. With true passion I mean experiencing your unique and genuine inner fire in the act of creating the first next grander version of yourself. In doing what you love to do, in being who you love to be. Such experience should not be confused with the so-called passion that many people boast about. In my opinion a lot of the times when people say they are passionate about something, what they really mean is that they have found a nice distraction from their daily routine in which they like to submerge themselves. That is not necessarily true passion, but more of a running away from reality by creating an activity to 'kill time'. Killing time is not