one consciousness appearing as many

A FIELD GUIDE TO THE ARCHITECTURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The Desmic Lattice

the magazine edition

POWER, NOT FORCE

How the framework distinguishes alignment from pressure

THE CRUCIBLE CALLED EARTH

How mortality, forgetting, polarity and embodiment shape a life

ONE SELF, MANY LIVES

What a return to a larger self might mean

SPECIAL EDITION · MMXXVI

BEFORE WE BEGIN

What this is, and what it isn’t

I started with a question I couldn’t quite set aside. If consciousness is fundamental, why does it feel so convincingly as though each of us is here on our own? The Desmic Lattice is my attempt to work through that question. The pictures give us a way to follow it together.

Three things before you start.

Meditators, philosophers, researchers and people who’ve come close to death use very different language for consciousness. I began putting their accounts together when I recognized something in one that gave me a way into another.

I’ve arranged those connections around a few images you can carry from one page to the next. Start with the dream and see where it takes you.

Think of it as a borrowed pair of binoculars. Look through them and see what comes into focus for you.

Picture a single life as one way a larger consciousness can learn something from the inside. On Earth, that means living through one body, making choices with limited time and caring about what those choices mean for someone else.

Lattice is the web those lives belong to. Desmic comes from the Greek desmos, a bond or binding. What I want the name to hold is the tension between belonging to that whole and experiencing your life as yours.

Hold the map lightly.

FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK

IN THIS ISSUE

03 **The Thread**
the argument in ten stops

04 **One Dream, Many Dreamers**
the central image

05 **Power vs Force**
the spine of everything

06 **The Map of Consciousness**
reading the scale

07 **Why Does Earth Exist?**
four pressures, one purpose

08 **The Diamond Under Pressure**
the mechanism, pictured

09 **The Reducing Valve**
your filtered mind

10 **The Cartographer**
Robert Monroe’s field notes

11 **The Dial of States**
focus levels as tunings

12 **One Self, Many Probes**
death, reframed

13 **The Crucible Cycle**
the curriculum of pressure

14 **Who Actually Lives Here**
five nested levels

15 **The Two-Mode Transition**
the choice being made now

16 **What You Carry From Here**
and your next step

THE ROUTE THROUGH THIS ISSUE

The Thread

I've arranged the issue around ten stops. Each one picks up a question the last one leaves open. You can come back here whenever you want to see where you are.

01 **One Dream, Many Dreamers** P.04
A dream gives us a way to picture one consciousness taking many forms.

02 **Power vs Force** P.05
Force pushes. Power draws people or parts of a system toward alignment.

03 **The Map of Consciousness** P.06
Hawkins' scale places courage at the turn between force and power.

04 **The Crucible Called Earth** P.07
Four pressures shape the experience of a life on Earth.

05 **The Reducing Valve** P.09
Huxley's reducing valve pictures how a wider awareness might narrow.

06 **The Cartographer's Atlas** P.10
Monroe organized the states he described into Focus levels.

07 **One Self, Many Probes** P.12
In the Lattice, what a life gathers returns to a larger self.

08 **The Crucible Cycle** P.13
A cycle of pressure and release gives a person another occasion to choose.

09 **Who Actually Lives Here** P.14
Follow a life outward through five nested levels.

10 **The Two-Mode Transition** P.15
The framework imagines two ways a collective transition could unfold.

You can return to the Thread at any point.

THE CENTRAL IMAGE

One Dream, Many Dreamers

→ *The dream is the image I use to introduce the framework. Start with what it feels like from the inside.*

Imagine you are dreaming. There are people in the room, someone is talking, and the weather outside seems as real as the conversation. Then you wake up. Where did the room and the people go?

A moment ago, you could have told me where each person was sitting. You could have described the room. And yet the whole scene, including the person you understood to be you, was taking place within one consciousness.

Now consider what the same arrangement might look like on a much larger scale. What if a life could feel entirely its own from the inside and still belong to a consciousness it no longer remembers?

Maya, Zhuangzi's butterfly and Plato's cave each give the question a different form. A contemporary reader may recognize it in The Matrix. I'm interested in what these images help us ask about the reality we experience from within.

The pages that follow explore what that reality might look like if we took the dream as our starting point.

In a dream, you can sit across from someone and experience them as another person, even though the whole conversation is taking place within you.

HOW TO USE THIS ISSUE

01

Read the map lightly

Keep what helps you see more clearly.

02

Watch one distinction

Notice a moment this week when you push for a result and another when people come into alignment.

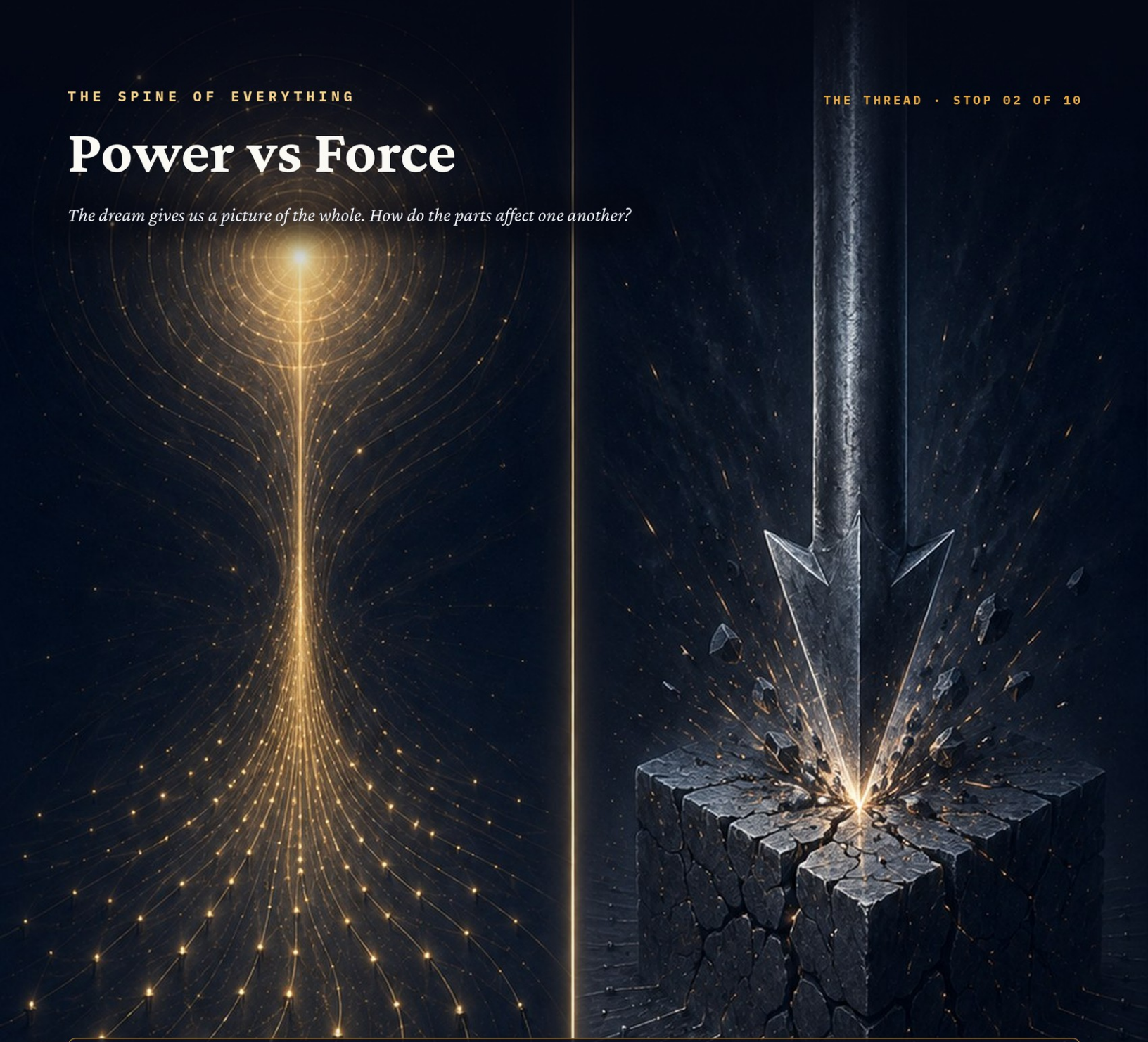
03

Take your anomalies seriously

Write down an experience that surprised you before deciding what it means.

Power vs Force

The dream gives us a picture of the whole. How do the parts affect one another?



IN PLAIN WORDS

Force pushes. Power draws things into alignment.

FORCE IS PUSH

A bulldozer needs fuel to keep moving. In a conversation, force can look like pressing someone until they give in. Both take effort, and the resistance can outlast the push.

POWER IS PULL

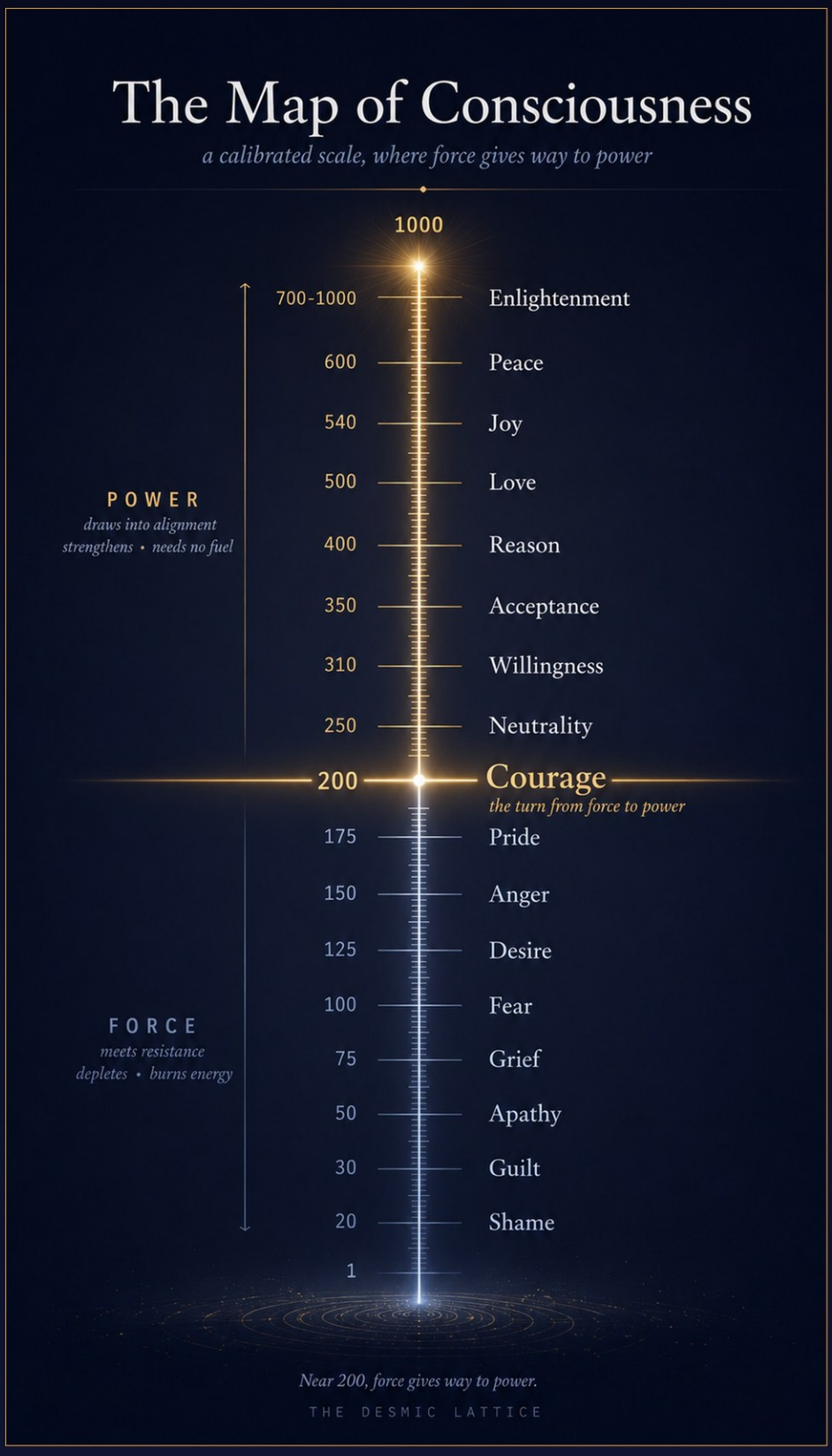
Think of someone you'd follow even if they had no authority over you. What is it about the way they understand the problem, or the way they treat people, that makes you want to act with them? That's the pull I mean by power.

WHY IT MATTERS

Two rooms can look equally quiet after a decision. In one, people have stopped objecting because it costs too much to speak. In the other, they've heard each other and can see a way forward. I'd want to know which room I was in before calling that agreement.

"Force always needs something to push against. Power needs nothing at all."

The Map of Consciousness



IN PLAIN WORDS

Hawkins uses a scale to describe a change in how people relate to the world.

→ *The turning point in his model is courage.*

Hawkins proposed a logarithmic scale from 1 to 1,000. Each named level describes a characteristic orientation.

THE LINE AT 200

He placed courage near 200. Below that point his map emphasizes responses that drain energy or meet resistance. Above it he describes a growing capacity for alignment.

READ IT GENTLY

I find the scale most useful when I bring it back to a moment I can actually remember. When I felt defensive, what did that do to the conversation? What changed when I found the courage to stay with it?

THE OLD LADDER

Older traditions also pictured development as an ascent. Hawkins gave that image a numerical form of his own.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Think of a choice you made under pressure. What changed in the relationship afterward?

Why Does Earth Exist?

→ *Why would a larger consciousness take on the limits of a single life?*

The Lattice pictures Earth as a crucible. Four pressures act together here, shaping what a person can learn from choices made within the limits of a lifetime.

Imagine making the same decision with an unlimited amount of time and with only one afternoon left. Even if the options stayed the same, the decision would feel different. Mortality is one of the pressures I mean. Forgetting, polarity and embodiment each add another kind of limit to what it feels like to live here.

The diamond gives me a picture for that change. The alchemists used a related image, solve et coagula, dissolving and recombining. In the Lattice, what changes through the process is the person's capacity to respond. What a life learns in that way is what returns to the larger self.

In this picture, the choices you make under pressure are part of what a life takes with it.

MORTALITY

You know the time available to you is limited.

FORGETTING

You begin without a memory of the larger self.

POLARITY

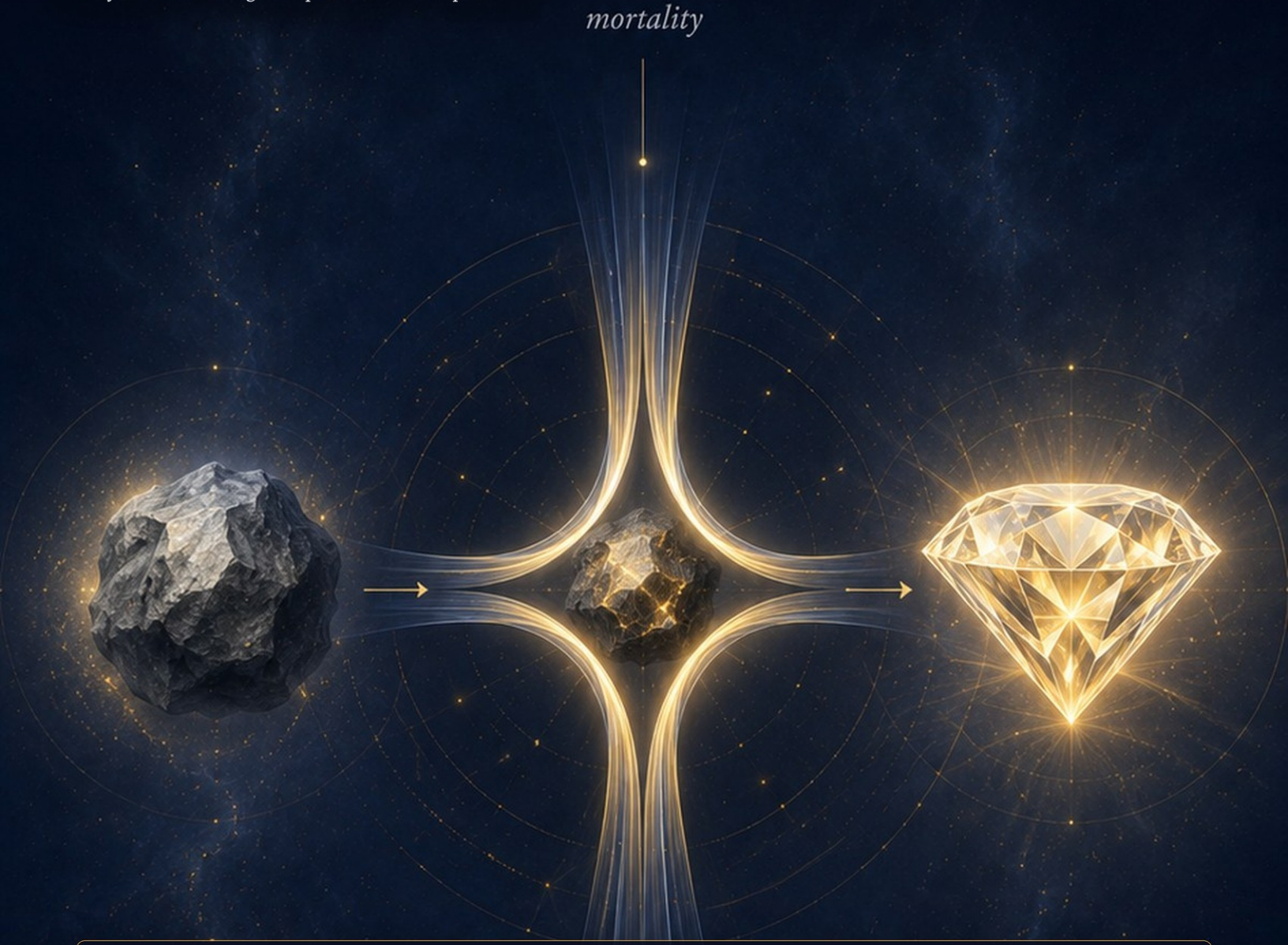
Love and loss, fear and courage can each feel intense.

EMBODIMENT

You experience the world through one body over time.

The Diamond Under Pressure

The four ribbons bring those pressures into one picture.



IN PLAIN WORDS

The diamond illustrates how pressure can change the way something holds together.

NOT DAMAGE, TRANSFORMATION

Graphite and diamond give the illustration its starting point. The same element can take very different forms. In the framework, what a life goes through can change how that person responds.

THE FOUR RIBBONS

Follow any one ribbon toward the center. It represents a condition you can recognize in your own life. What makes Earth a crucible in this framework is that you live with all four at once.

THE REFINER'S FIRE

The refiner's fire and Rumi's reed flute offer two older images of transformation. I bring them alongside the diamond because each asks what becomes possible through a change of form.

The diamond is a way to picture change under pressure.

The Reducing Valve

Huxley offers a picture for how a wider awareness might narrow to what a person can use.



IN PLAIN WORDS

The reducing valve lets some of that awareness through.

THE BRAIN AS FILTER

In Huxley's proposal, the brain limits what reaches ordinary awareness. The Lattice uses that image to explain why a life may feel separate even if it belongs to a larger consciousness.

WHEN THE VALVE OPENS

In this reading, some experiences in meditation, mystical states or near death may feel like a widening of awareness. Blake's image of the doors of perception helps explain what Huxley had in mind.

THE DAILY PRACTICE

If you'd like to try this for yourself, sit quietly for twenty minutes. What do you begin to notice when you give your attention time to settle? Whatever your experience, start with a description of what actually happened.

In the valve image, an opening changes how much can come through.

Robert Monroe’s Field Notes

→ *Monroe spent forty years describing states that were unfamiliar to him. His field notes give the Lattice much of its vocabulary.*

In 1958, Monroe began reporting experiences in which he felt he had left his body. A businessman trying to understand what was happening, he started taking notes.

Monroe founded an institute, developed audio methods for exploring these states and revisited earlier interpretations as his accounts changed.

One idea matters especially here. He came to describe Robert Monroe as one expression of a larger consciousness, which he called his (I)-There.

Monroe’s image was a chord. Each note is distinct, but the notes can sound together. A life might therefore unfold one event at a time for the person living it and still be present alongside other lives from the perspective of the larger self.

What stayed with me about Monroe was his willingness to change his account when something he experienced no longer fit what he’d written before.

Monroe kept revising the map as his experience changed.

THE CAST OF CHARACTERS

The Lattice
The Lattice is the whole web of consciousness in relationship.

A Node
A node is a site of compression in the web. Earth is one example.

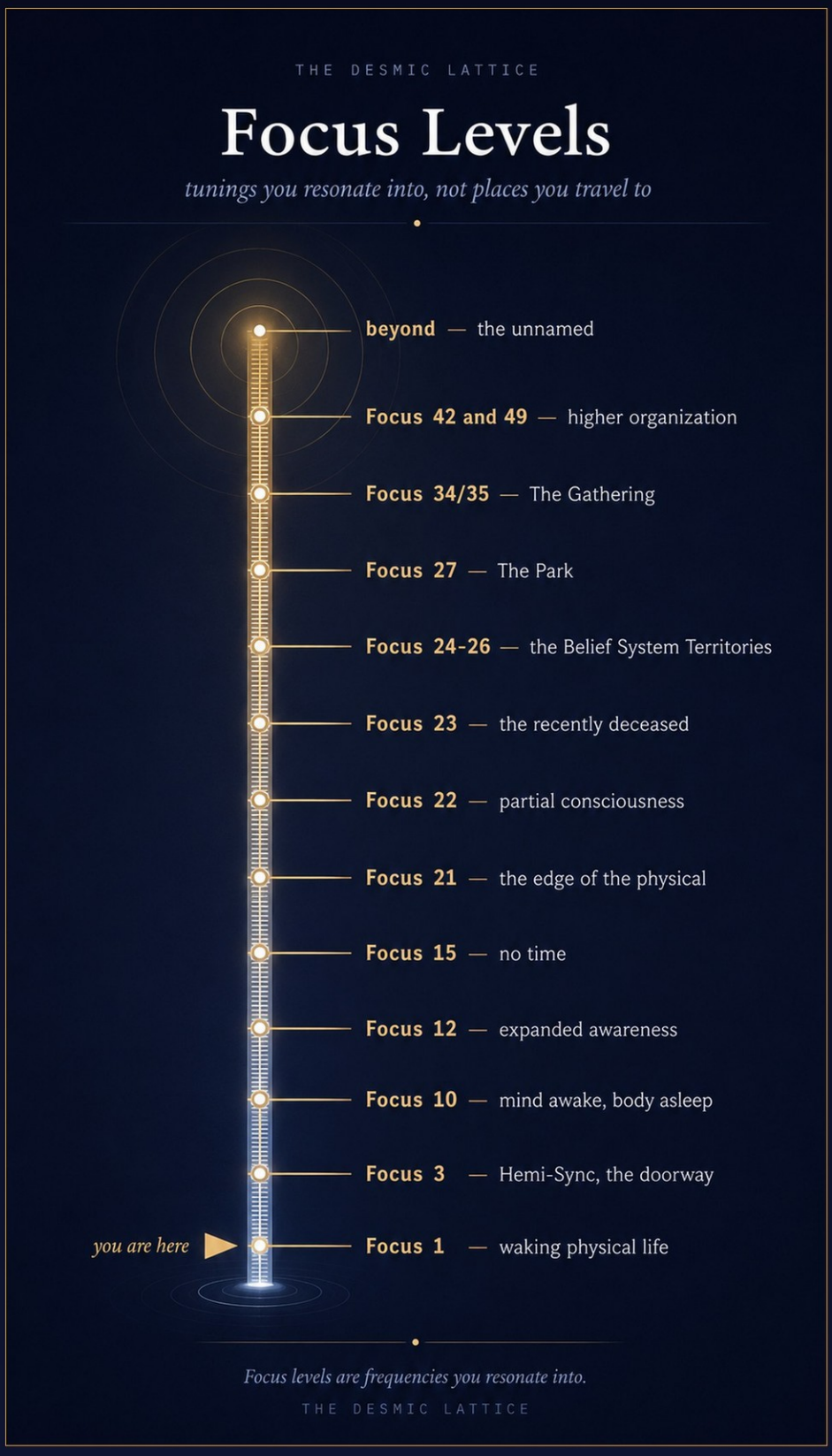
A probe
A probe is one embodied life.

The (I)-There
The (I)-There is Monroe’s term for the larger self to which those lives belong.

The H-Band
The H-Band is the surrounding field of human thought and emotion in Monroe’s account.

The imaginal realm
The imaginal realm is the structured domain of images, dreams and visions discussed in the framework.

The Dial of States



IN PLAIN WORDS

Monroe pictured a change of state as tuning a radio.

→ *The dial brings his field notes together in one image.*

He used Focus levels to organize states he described, from ordinary waking awareness to states he found difficult to name.

TUNINGS, NOT PLACES

If you turn a radio dial, you stay where you are and a different station becomes audible. Monroe used that distinction to describe a change in awareness. What shifts in his account is what becomes available to experience.

THE STATIONS

Focus 10 is his training threshold, with mind awake and body asleep. At Focus 15 he describes a loss of ordinary time. Focus 21 marks the edge of the physical in his map. Beyond it he places the recently deceased, Belief System Territories and the Park.

A VERY OLD ATLAS

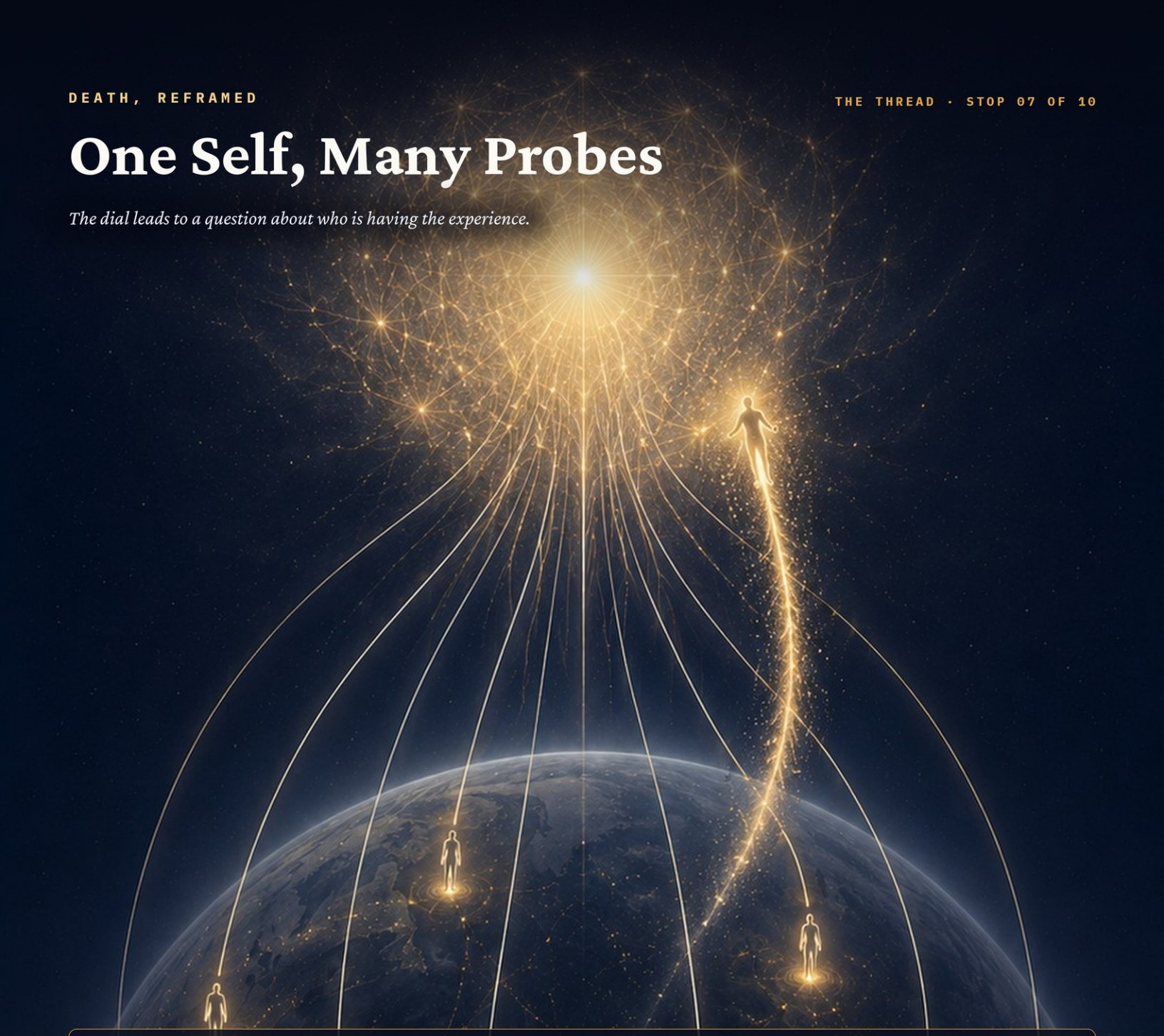
Vedanta's koshas, Buddhist jhanas and Dante's spheres give earlier examples of experience organized into levels. Each comes from a different tradition.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Follow the dial as a map of Monroe's descriptions.

One Self, Many Probes

The dial leads to a question about who is having the experience.



IN PLAIN WORDS

In the Lattice, what a life gathers returns to a larger self.

THE CHORD, NOT THE LINE

Each thread of light in the picture stands for a life. The larger self holds those lives together, as a chord holds notes that can sound at the same time.

PROBE RETRIEVAL

What would it mean for a life to return? The Lattice proposes that the larger self receives what the person learned from inside that life. The choice that was hard to make, the person they came to love, the things that took years to understand all matter to what comes back.

WHAT IT CHANGES

If you've lost someone, there are things about them you miss that no framework can give back. What this picture offers is a way to consider where the life they lived might belong, including everything you learned from being part of it.

What a life gathers returns to a larger self.

The Crucible Cycle

What can a single life contribute to the larger self?



IN PLAIN WORDS

The spiral follows a person through pressure, choice, release and integration.

THE SPIRAL, NOT THE CIRCLE

The illustrated cycle moves through confinement, intensification, a low point, emergence and integration. The framework draws on the pattern of birth and asks where a similar sequence recurs over a life.

THE FORK AT EVERY TURN

Think of a disagreement you've had more than once. The second time around, you may see an option that didn't occur to you the first time. You can still push for the same outcome, or you can do something with what you learned. That possibility is why I draw the cycle as a spiral.

SUFFERING WITH A FUNCTION

Equanimity and surrender are ways some traditions describe meeting a difficult passage. The value of the image is the question it gives a person about their response, even when the pain continues.

"The compression is the curriculum."

Who Actually Lives Here



IN PLAIN WORDS

The picture places one life inside five nested levels.

→ Start at the center and follow the relationships outward.

In the framework, one embodied life belongs to a larger consciousness.

FIVE LEVELS, ONE BEING

A probe belongs to its (I)-There. These larger selves contribute to a species-mind. The species-mind belongs within the Lattice, and the Lattice within Source.

EACH LEVEL LIFTS

Look at the innermost circle again. If what happens in one life can become available to the larger self, that circle does more than occupy a place inside the others. What it learns can change the whole it belongs to.

CENTER AND EDGE

Read from the center and you see one life in context. Read inward from the edge and you see how the framework imagines a larger consciousness coming to experience a single point of view.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Follow one life outward, then read the same picture from the edge back in.

The Two-Mode Transition

The last stop takes the question about how we respond under pressure to the scale of a society.



IN PLAIN WORDS

The framework considers two ways a collective transition might unfold.

A TURNING, NOT AN ENDING

The Lattice reads the tension of the present as a possible developmental passage.

TWO COMPLETION MODES

Under pressure, a community can start treating its differences as something to suppress. It can also learn to hold those differences while people work on what they share. The two paths in the picture take those possibilities to the scale of a species.

CHOSEN NOW

The question becomes practical in ordinary decisions. When a disagreement gets harder, what would let the people involved stay in relationship while they work through it?

The choice takes shape in how we respond to one another.

CONCLUSION

What You Carry From Here

If you forget everything else in this issue, these three are the load-bearing pieces.

ONE **Consciousness is primary, and you are more than you experience yourself as being.**

If a life belongs to a larger consciousness, an ordinary day is already part of how that consciousness learns. Which part of today would you understand differently if you held that possibility in mind?

TWO **Power, not force.**

Think about a time you got the answer you wanted and still felt there was something unresolved. What would it have taken for the other person to tell you what they actually thought? That's one place to look for the difference between force and power.

THREE **The compression has a purpose.**

It can take years to understand what a difficult period changed in you. The crucible leaves room for that time. The person best placed to say what the experience has meant is the one who lived it.

YOUR NEXT STEP

The Professional Reference Edition takes all ten stops further and brings 31 theories and related questions into the picture. You can start with whichever idea stayed with you here.

REMAIN SKEPTICAL, INCLUDING OF THIS

- Anyone who claims certainty about the unseen.
- Anyone who asks you to surrender your own discernment to their authority.
- Anyone who packages this material into a product, a hierarchy, or an in-group.
- Anyone, including yourself, who uses spiritual frameworks to bypass ordinary responsibilities, ordinary kindness, or ordinary truthfulness.

The framework is most trustworthy when held lightly, tested honestly, and revised when something better comes along.

READ THE ORIGINALS

Monroe, Far Journeys · Hawkins, Power vs. Force · McGilchrist, The Master and His Emissary · Kastrup, The Idea of the World · Bache, LSD and the Mind of the Universe · Huxley, The Doors of Perception

The full reference text is available when you want to go further.

Walk well.