



GUT THEORY

BY MATTHEW KLEM

Gut Theory

by Matthew Klem

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to anyone and everyone who has ever searched for answers about themselves and the world around them. We all want to find purpose and meaning and I hope this helps you in your search.

Preface

In the beginning... I was a believer in a traditional god. In fact, I know there are parts of me that still believe that way. I was raised with your typical Christian values but I never went to church. I was always taught that God was "up there" somewhere and that he was watching me and that as long as I was a good person, I'd get to meet him one day. Those core Christian values helped me become what I believe to be the "good" person that I am today. Occasionally, I would go into a church and listen to the minister's sermon, just to see if I could understand their interpretation of what God wanted. Each and every time I went, I found that I was more insulted by the minister than appeased. It always seemed that somehow I was being made to feel guilty because I didn't go to church, or that I didn't pray everyday, or that I didn't ...whatever. There seemed to be all of these "rules" that I was supposed to be following and depending on which church I went into, the rules were different. One church tried to tell me that nothing I have in my life is mine, not even my children. Everything I have and everything I do is for God and I should never think that anything I have is my own because that would be selfish. Another minister told me that my chance to get into heaven may have already passed and since I didn't live a life he felt was Christian worthy, I was doomed to spend eternity in damnation. All of these experiences combined pushed me away from traditional religion and into a system of beliefs that I thought made more sense for me.

I wanted to believe in a god that was compassionate and caring, and

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one who was watching over me. One that I could sit down and talk to when I was feeling alone or lost. I spoke to him when I was feeling down or alone and needed guidance. He didn't speak back to me but I always seemed to find my way and I thanked God for it. This personal relationship with my own god has helped me throughout my own life but I do not for one moment believe that what I perceive as God is anything like what many Christians believe. I hold no ill will towards the Christian religion or any of its variances, but I do question any religion that uses fear as one of its means to convert its subjects. There are many things that Christianity teaches us that are the basis for a good and moral society. It is these values that I do hold dear and true. What I am bothered by is how in addition to those values, people are told that if they don't do as the bible tells them to do, they will spend eternity in the afterlife burning in the depths of hell. But hey, as long as you do what the bible tells you to do, you're going to heaven where everything is just peachy keen. God is supposed to be seen as our father but why would any moral "father" want to be so incredibly one sided with his children? How many times in your own life has it ever truly been "My way or the highway"? There are always other options and these other options seemed to be deemed "blasphemous" in the eyes of most churches. This has become the single biggest reason why I have chosen not to participate in any local church. My "version" of God doesn't fit with what most churches seem to preach.

My God, the compassionate and caring one who never judges you and just lets you lead your own life while pointing you in the right direction, seemed to be a bit off the map for church so I just kept it to

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myself. I have no interest in starting my own religion or really even talking about my beliefs because it is such a volatile subject with many people. I kept my thoughts of God to myself, and maintained my own relationship with him.

Over the course of the last few years, I've begun to really wonder if what I perceived as God was true. I knew that there had to be something else to where we came from and why we are here, but I had a hard time buying into the whole snap my fingers and here's mankind belief. I also refused to believe that our existence was merely an accident of evolution. There's no way something as incredible as the human body could have come into existence purely by accident. So I started thinking more and more about what could the answer be. What made the most sense for me with what I wanted out of my God.

This book started as merely a means to put down into words all of the things that have gone through my head about how things could be and why. Why is it that my gut tells me things and it's always right? How is that possible? Why does it seem that when one bad thing happens, something good happens later? There seems to be this connection between what my gut tells me, and the balance of things I see around me. Is it possible these two are connected? By sitting down and writing it all out, I've been able to come up with what I believe to be another means of explaining why we are here, where we came from, and where we are going.

I by no means have the answers, and of course I have no way to know

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whether or not any of what I have written is true. But the fact for me remains that to me, much of what I have written here seems to make sense and it comes pretty close to giving me the kind of God I wanted from the beginning.

What you'll read in the pages that follow is merely my own thoughts, feelings, and observations about the world around us, and how I have begun to see that by following one's instinct, one's "gut", I seem to have stumbled upon a way in which I can be happy, believe in something more than what we are, but still remain grounded in things that make sense, without going too far into the unbelievable.

I decided to share this with people because I wondered if there were others like me that maybe want to believe in something, but couldn't find the right match for them. Maybe what you'll read in here will work for you. It seems to for me.

- Matthew Klem, January, 2010.

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Chapter 1: Perception

Imagine for a few moments that you are not a human being at all. You are a fish. You have been a fish your entire life. You've lived your entire life in the ocean and know nothing more than what it's like to live in the ocean. You also are only aware of the life that exists in the ocean itself. Other fish, whales, snails, frogs, octopuses, crabs, etc. You know nothing about man, or the kinds of life that lives on land. In fact, you don't even really know what exists above the water line. You know something is there because if you jump out of water, you can get a glimpse of it, but you can't stay above water, because you'll die.

So, you live your whole life as a fish, then one day, you're on your way home from your fish job, and everything goes dark. The sunlight coming through the water disappears and it gets very dark and hard to see. You hear some strange noises, and all of a sudden you feel something grab you. You try to swim around but find yourself trapped and barely able to move. In fact, you're being pulled upward towards the surface of the water. You push around with your body but feel something against you that is preventing you from getting away, but

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you are still moving upward. You are getting more scared because you know you can't breathe above water, and you don't really know what's up there.

Terrified you are going to die, you feel your body pop through the top of the water line. You try to hold your breath knowing that you won't be able to for long. You've got your eyes shut as hard as they can be and you feel your heart pounding. Still scared, you manage to open your eyes to see what is around you and what's happening. You see sunlight and you see the top of the water. You also see some kind of mesh that's all around you. Inside the mesh, you find yourself, and a bunch of plants that somehow got caught in this mesh around you. Through the holes in the mesh, you see a strange object that looks a lot like some of the sunken monuments you've seen underwater but this one doesn't look damaged. It looks normal. You see strange creatures moving around. They don't look anything like you, but they have some of the same things. You see that they have eyes but instead of being on either side of their head, the eyes are together. You also see a mouth, and some other odd things attached to where their head is. You also see strange limbs that they seem to have on the side of them, and underneath their body. Two of the limbs seem to support their whole body, and you don't see any gills, or fins.

You feel the mesh moving hard and you see the base of the monument coming closer very fast. You slam into it hard, and you hear one of the creature say something but you don't understand what it is. The creature pulls away at the mesh and grabs you. You still can't breathe but you're so terrified you're not even thinking about it. The

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creature pulls at you, and seems to inspect you on all sides, while speaking something to one of the other creatures. He throws you down and moves away. You see your chance to get free since you are no longer in the mesh but you can't get anywhere. You can't swim because there's no water so you just flop around useless. Gasping for air, you hope that maybe you might be able to breathe but your fear is growing because you know death is coming soon if you can't get air.

One of the creatures comes back and grabs you and throws you into some kind of chamber or container. It contains water so you are finally able to breathe. You can barely move in this chamber but have enough freedom to be able to turn around. You look around and the creatures are distorted and dirty from the view you are at. You can barely see it, but you see another fish that's been cut open and it's insides exposed. Just as you take a few more breaths, you see one of the creatures approach you and with it's limb, it grabs you and throws you back into the ocean. Everything is still black, but then you hear a loud rumble and the water gets real rough, and the sunlight reappears. You swim home, exhausted, and thankful to be alive.

You go home and tell your friends and family about your experience. No one believes you. They think you made the whole thing up or are just pulling a bad joke. You're still shaking from the experience and leave to be alone. You later discover that some other fish do believe you and tell you stories that are similar. Being taken out of the water against their will, and being put somewhere strange, and then being forcefully sent back into the water. The tales are frighteningly similar to yours and you soon feel that you are not alone,

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and that what happened was real. You live the rest of your life out knowing what happened to you and sharing it with others like you, but keeping it from others who you know would mock you. – The End

In reading that little story, you put yourself into the position of a fish living underwater. Your entire world is the water and this is all you know. The events that transpired to you would almost seem supernatural in nature since you are not able to explain most of what happened. You know that there are many other people out there who have experienced the same thing, and you know that you aren't crazy, but to the general populous, your story of being "above water" seems ludicrous.

As a human being, when you read that story you likely see it from a human beings point of view. From our view, the fish in the story was caught by a local fisherman, thrown into the boat, thrashed around on the floor of the boat until the fisherman picked him up and put him in a bucket. From the bucket, it's likely that the fish saw the man's lunch on the deck of the boat. The fisherman grabbed the fish out of the bucket and threw him back into the water, most likely because he was a sport fisherman and he doesn't keep everything he catches.

For the most part, nothing about that seems abnormal. In our society, the idea of sport fishing is quite common and many people participate in this on a daily basis. It's not a big deal. But from the fish's perspective, it would be quite terrifying. The same could be true if mankind itself was the fish. All those stories of alien abductions talk about being taken to a strange place, seeing strange creatures, and being returned home. Most common folks take the abduction stories to be myths or hearsay because there's no "proof". What if mankind itself

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was in fact the fish and the aliens are the fisherman? From their perspective it would seem that they are not doing anything wrong, but from ours, it's quite terrifying.

I tell this story as the introduction to Gut Theory because in the pages that follow, you will be asked to leave many of the conventional perceptions about religion and God behind. There are many references throughout this book made to "god". Merriam Webster defines the term god to mean "the Being perfect in power, wisdom, and goodness who is worshipped as creator and ruler of the universe"³ The fact that one of the most prominent dictionaries in the world defines the word "god" to mean "perfect in power" and "goodness" purely showcases how you likely have the same perception of the term "god". You may or may not believe in such a being, but pretty much any person out there who hears the word god thinks of god as a supreme being of some sorts. This is the type of perception that you will need to challenge when reading this book.

The story of the fish showcases how the human condition automatically assumes certain things. In reading the story, you likely already knew exactly what was happening to the fish before the story ended. You knew that he wasn't being harmed or attacked, but simply being "fished". It likely never occurred to you that something we hear in pop culture (alien abduction) may actually be the same thing as fishing, but simply from someone else's perspective.

With that, I give you "Gut Theory".

Chapter 2: Faith Vs Science

Purpose. Do we have a purpose? Does your existence have some meaningful purpose. For most, we want to know that there is some sort of reason or purpose behind the actions we take every day. We all want to feel that our lives have worth and that worth needs to be measured against something. Whether we measure it against our own set of rules and guidelines, or use religion as a means to find purpose, we all need it. If you don't have a reason to live, or some purpose behind the things you do everyday, then why are you even here? No purpose means you have no reason to exist and since you exist, you must have a purpose.

As far back as anyone can remember, man has strived to find what the ultimate purpose of his existence has been. This search has allowed for many different philosophers to ask countless questions about the nature of life itself. Where did we come from? Who created us? Why were we created? Were we always like we are now? Why am I here? What makes me so special that I exist? Is the life that we see today the only life that exists?

Although many have not been able to answer the question of purpose, time has yielded two very different answers about the origin of man itself. The first and foremost theory about the origin of man is

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known as Creation Theory or the Creation Myth. Creation myth states that a supreme being of some sorts willed mankind into existence for some reason. God created man, the earth, and everything around us and it is this "supreme being" that is responsible for everything that we see around us today. The creation myth was used to explain the existence of mankind of centuries.

In the mid 19th century, an English naturalist by the name of Charles Darwin challenged the creation myth with his own version of creation: natural selection. This theory was the basis for the concept of evolution. In evolution, mankind evolved from a lower form of species. In the very early stages of development on Earth, there were very tiny organisms that lived in the seas. Those eventually became land dwelling animals which eventually became animals similar to human beings. Those animals eventually evolved into the modern day man that we know today. All of this evolution took place over millions of years and "proof" of this has been displayed to many by showcasing the various stages of human development throughout the ages.

The introduction of the theory of evolution transformed the belief in life's origins. The two sides of the origin coin became not one of creation versus evolution, but science versus faith. It ultimately appeared that those who believed in the theory of evolution could not believe in a god. The concept of a god, or a higher power, seemed too irrational and evolution seemed more practical. More scientific. To creationists, the idea that man itself was created purely by accident and without purpose seemed too much of a stretch. To them, man had to have been created for a purpose and it was only through faith that we

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would find what that purpose is. Divine intervention of some kind would eventually lead us to all of our answers.

Now although evolution seemed to provide an out for those who could not believe in a higher power, those who did believe in a god took it to many extremes. These extremes were witnessed long before the birth of evolution. The birth of religion gave most creationists a means to explain our origins and our purpose. The catch was, the basis for those religions was always man's interpretation of some supernatural being. It is this inexplicable "god" that has turned many evolutionists down the path of natural selection. The world is filled with many individuals who either do not have the capacity to, or simply refuse to admit, that there are things that science and rationality cannot explain. For these people, a clear and concise explanation of how we got from point A to point B is needed. For them, if they can't see it, hear it, touch it, and know it, it cannot be real. These individuals do not believe that mankind in itself has a greater purpose. Our purpose is just that we were created simply by chance and that we are free to do anything we wish without a greater purpose behind our actions. For them, the idea that you would believe something without proof is pure hearsay.

Religious followers are typically those who do not need proof of our heritage. These are individuals that go on pure belief and simply because they "believe" something to be true, it must be true. However this seems to be somewhat contradictory as there are many different religious groups out there all of whom think their version of events is in fact the right one. Believers are not swayed by overwhelming scientific evidence that contrasts their beliefs. Instead, they seek out

Chapter 2: Faith Vs Science

opportunities to poke holes in the scientific theory. They believe that the human race could not have simply happened by accident, or by some random chance of cells interacting. These people believe that something greater than our level of understanding has created the human race for a specific purpose and that each human being that exists on this earth exists for a specific function. They use various religious texts (discussed later) as a means of setting their rules and providing the history of man. But as the centuries go by, these rules and origins tend to change with every generation, leading evolutionists to further believe that the creationists are wrong about our origins.

It would seem that this battle of evolution vs. creation / science vs. faith / fate vs. free will is one that will go on in perpetuity. As long as the evolutionists have some physical evidence that they believe substantiates their claims, and as long as creationists continue to tell stories about eons passed, this debate will continue. However, it would seem that there is room for the two sides to both be true. When you break down each side to a single item, it would appear that the evolutionists biggest problem with creationism is that it suggests that something "supernatural" created us for a specific reason and there's no scientific proof to back up that claim. That one big issue for them is the largest strength for their opposition. On the other side, religious believers biggest problem with evolution is that it would mean that God doesn't exist, and that we are truly alone and were brought into the universe without purpose. For them, this makes them feel as if we are alone and there's no one "out there" to help us.

Gut Theory is a bridge between both worlds. In the pages that follow, you'll see that there are some scientific interpretations that

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would allow for the existence of a god, but not the god we typically think of. What follows is a theory that provides purpose and reason for all individuals. It may not provide all the answers, and is of course just one more theory among many, but you may find that if you've ever questioned either side of the origin coin, what you're about to read may help.

If you see yourself as a person who believes that man was put here for a purpose, the pages that follow will entice you about possibilities but will challenge your belief in a god. If you're someone who believes that man evolved from lower life and we have no purpose, some of what you'll read will be challenging but even for the most hard-nosed evolutionist, there are still some things that even you cannot explain but you believe anyway. Try to keep that in mind as you read further.

Chapter 3: The Bridge

To the evolutionists:

Much of this book focuses on faith, belief, and many other concepts that to someone who is a strong believer in evolution, are just not feasible. It is extremely difficult for you to either grasp or comprehend how an individual would be able to believe something that there doesn't seem to be any scientific proof of. Even more so when there seems to be proof to the opposite yet these individuals persist. For you, life is indeed a journey but it is one that is driven purely by your own desire and not by some other supernatural force. I wrote this part as a means to sort of build a bridge between your belief in evolution, and what I believe to be our purpose and origin.

The name of the book is "Gut Theory". It doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize that this book is probably going to deal with what many people refer to as one's gut. Your gut is that feeling inside of you that governs certain actions you take. For some it's a voice in their head and for others it's a feeling in their stomach. Regardless of what your beliefs are, you are undoubtedly familiar with the concept of one's gut. Whether or not the idea of your gut is scientifically sound or not is irrelevant since everyone at some point has experienced a "gut

Chapter 3: The Bridge

instinct". I surmise that your gut is in fact your instinct. The concept of instinct is addressed in this book heavily. Examples of pure animal instinct are plentiful out there and there are many scientific studies that have shown how an animals instinct drives them to do certain things or perform certain tasks. There is nothing religious or faith related about having instinct. Man itself is born with several instincts such as knowing to hold your breath underwater. No one teaches us instinct, we just know it.

That having been said, as a believer in evolution, you are driven to believe only things that you can prove. Since we know that instinct is in fact something that has been proven, it would only make sense that it would be among the things that you would also believe. It's not even a matter of belief at all. It's scientific fact. While you know that instinct is in fact real, the pages that follow in this book talk about what drives the human instinct, and how instinct has a major influence on our day to day lives. It's not a supernatural force but it is a force that exists in nature and mankind is a part of nature. When reading about how your gut tells you to do things and so forth, try to remember that it's an animal instinct that I am referring to.

As you get further into the book and come to the sections about how mankind is a part of something else, approach the subject with a scientific eye. Imagine yourself as a doctor who is examining the "body" (referenced later in the book) and trying to determine how everything inside works. From looking at man and the universe from this perspective, the idea that we're driven by instinct via something else does not seem that far fetched and in some respects, quite logical and methodical. Once you have reached this part of this book, it is

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definitely helpful to imagine oneself outside of things and looking in as another observer. By using this method, it may make it easier for you to analyze the theory and concept explained in this book from an evolutionists stand point.

Lastly, if you're biggest issue with the concept of there being a god has to do with the idea that you can't accept that there's a supernatural version of us watching everything we do, then I definitely invite you to continue reading as you'll find that is not what Gut Theory proposes at all. It's something else entirely and in fact may fall in line with what evolution dictates, depending on your point of view.

To the creationists:

To those of you who have believed all your life that something much larger and more powerful is responsible for our existence, many of the concepts addressed in this book will not be a stretch. The challenge to you will likely be in how God is perceived.

It has been my experience that those who believe in God believe in a supernatural being that willed us into existence. They don't need "proof" of his existence because their belief provides them all of the proof they need. Believers tend to see meaning in things that others may see as purely random acts of chance. The birth of a child shortly after the death of a loved one might be perceived as God's way of maintaining order in the world. A man stripped of everything he has might be viewed as God's punishment to him for his past transgressions. All of these "beliefs" are purely your interpretation of what you believe God is doing to make the world a better place.

Chapter 3: The Bridge

The challenge in this book will not be of belief, but of perception of what God is. I have spent the bulk of my life believing in something greater than myself, but I have never been able to accept that the rules given to us by God's messengers are meant to be absolute. I've also struggled greatly with the conflict between one interpretation of God's wishes to another. How is it that a book such as The Holy Bible could have spawned numerous faiths based on its teachings? How can anyone possible say that The Holy Bible is the true depiction of our origins versus Islam's Qur'an, or the Jewish Tanak? What makes one version more right than the other? It falls back once again to belief. What you choose to believe is your choice, and because man as a race has the free will to choose and believe what he wants, the origin and purpose of mankind has been splintered into countless variations.

Your perception of what God is will be challenged in that you won't be asked to give him up; You'll be asked to view God from a different point of view. Most would look "up" to God because he is a higher power and much more than any man on Earth. You'll be challenged to perceive God as something that is indeed very powerful, but not as supernatural as you might believe. As you get further into the "guts" of this book (pun intended), you may find it difficult to accept my perception of God and thereby have a hard time following my theory. If you find yourself lost, I implore you to use an analogy of God vs. Mother Nature. Mother Nature is a concept pretty much everyone is familiar with. The idea that the Earth and living things on it (trees, animals, water, etc) have a way of managing itself and keeping itself in balance with everything around it is something most

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people can identify with. Animals adapt to their surroundings when weather patterns change. Sea dwelling creatures change as their food supplies change. All of these things are very natural elements to our world, but overall, most people don't believe in a supernatural being called Mother Nature who controls all that. It's purely a term used to describe a phenomenon. If you find yourself scratching your head at this book's idea of what God is, try to compare it with that of Mother Nature. It may help you find common ground between this book's theoretical principles, and your own creation beliefs.

Chapter 4: Pondera (A sense of balance)

For centuries, man has used various forms of religious texts to inspire some sort of greater purpose for all of mankind. Whether it be Christianity, Catholicism, Buddhism, Islam, Hindu, or countless others, they all have had a role in defining a purpose or meaning behind our lives. In my own upbringing, I was raised with the basics of Christian values: don't lie, don't kill, be a good person and you'll be rewarded. But as I grew older, I started to find my own path. Many people start in one religion and move into others because their beliefs change over time. Many abandon religion entirely and many whom didn't embrace religion at all become great believers. Within this book, I'll make some references to the Christian faith as it is likely the one that is most familiar to people, but this is by no means a book about Christianity.

Although the differences between each religion are quite vast, many of them all focus on the teachings or writings of a single person or entity. This “person” is usually deemed to be the God of that specific religion. In the case of Christianity, Jesus Christ is given as the saviour of man and the son of God himself. All who call themselves Christians would follow the teachings of Jesus. Jesus would be their “god” and that whom they would all worship as such.

Chapter 4: Pondera (A sense of balance)

Religions that depict the existence of a god tend to depict this figure as someone very similar in nature to the people it is being taught to. God's are typically all knowing, all seeing, and are the ones who are somewhat responsible, or somehow involved, in our day to day actions. They allow us free will but give us "signs" along the way as to what we should or should not be doing.

Knowing what the right and wrong thing to do is based on each religion and usually taught through a book that contains all of the teachings and knowledge of a particular faith. Christianity teaches from the Holy Bible; Islam is taught from the Qur'an; The Jewish have the Tanakh , and so on. Many of these religious texts contain many stories and life lessons but are usually written in some sort of literary allegory and not to be taken as exact fact. A talking snake would not be a literal talking snake but a metaphor to be interpreted by others. Each text has it's own set of rules and guidelines and provides much of the history of how man came to be. In some religions, the origin and purpose of man is not the focus. These texts typically provide you with the major lessons of life and how you should lead your life. Regardless of the specifics of the religion, they all share a common theme in that they want you to believe in a higher power, or that of a specific deity.

The book is taught to the religious followers typically through some sort of religious figurehead. A minister or priest would give a sermon to a church of Christian followers. This minister would have studied and interpreted the bible into such a fashion that it can be understood by a regular person. This same model applies to many different religions and ultimately becomes the one common thread that has created the mass difference in viewpoints regarding religion:

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Man's point of view. Since man carries many points of view, the interpretation of these texts vary from person to person.

The world is made up of millions of different kinds of people and therefore each person can view a single written page differently than the other. This ultimately is why there are indeed so many "versions" of religions. In Christianity alone, there are countless variations of the same principle but each variation has different sets of rules. One sect of Christianity doesn't allow you to wear certain clothes, where another one might say not care about clothing but dictates what kind of food you eat. This subtle differences may seem minute, but they ultimately showcase how one person's point of view can completely change the meaning of a particular text. Although minor differences are inconsequential, major differences can have life altering affects on the subjects of that religion. Many zealot cults are formed as a result of one man's extremely skewed interpretation of a religious text. It is this splintering of religious belief that also helps to further perpetuate the belief in evolution since it is one that has remained relatively unchanged since it's introduction.

Ultimately, what is the purpose behind these religious texts? It's to provide a sort of instruction manual for life. Mankind exists but it has no knowledge of why it is here. Scientists would say that we have evolved over time and that we simply exist because we are here. But for many, we need more than that. We need to know why. What is our purpose? What should I be doing with my life? Does my life have meaning? When you find that the religions of our modern day world don't quite answer those questions for you, I provide a differing point of view.

Chapter 4: Pondera (A sense of balance)

Although Gut Theory is the name of the book, I sometimes like to refer to the overall concepts addressed in here as Ponderan (pawndare-an) Theology. It's a term I coined to refer to the belief that instinct and balance are the true path to finding one's purpose in life. By following your instinct, or your "gut", you find true happiness and completeness in your life, but not without a sense of balance. You can't ever have too much or too little of something in your life without it throwing something into chaos. This is where the idea of a "well balanced life" comes into play. The word pondera is Latin for balance. I believe that in order to have the best life you can have, you need to have a good balance in your life and that balance can be achieved by following your instincts, your gut.

Evidence that life is truly about balance can be seen everywhere. In fact the concept of karma is greatly rooted in the need for balance. Do good things and good things happen. Do bad things and bad things happen. Gut Theory shares many of these types of beliefs but has its own variation on the reason and purpose behind it. Balance itself can also be seen in nature. There are countless news stories out there that talk about how when one organism was removed from a particular area, it created a biological upset. Nature in itself is quite balanced. Mosquitoes are eaten by frogs everyday but they are an annoyance to human beings. If you killed off all mosquitoes in the world, frogs would have no food and then die off quickly, and thusly depriving other animals of frogs in their diet. This could feasibly have a major impact in some biological areas. Over time, somehow nature would find a way to balance itself out again.

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For those who choose to look for it, the concept of world balance is out there and in plain sight. It has been for a long time. The history of our planet is filled with countless scenarios where nations of great power continued to rise and the thirst for power offset the balance of the nation and eventually caused it's undoing. The Roman empire is a prime example. Throughout history we have seen that when nations or people stray too far in one direction, the balance is offset and somehow nature itself seems to set it back to how it should be. It's amazing that despite how many times this has happened over the course of human history, we continue to see this offset/reset event repeat over and over again. Some would say that the wars we have seen in the last 100 years are another example of the world trying to balance itself.

To some regard, you more than likely have experienced this kind of balance in some fashion within your own life. How many times have you had something bad happen to you, only to have something good happen later, or vice versa. Have you seen anyone from your family experience an extreme high of good things and then watched them fall when they thought too much of themselves. Was there someone in your life who reached an all time low and just when they thought their life was at it's worst, something happened and their life was changed for the better. We see this all the time in our friends and family. There's been various stories in the media about how people who have won huge lottery jackpots have squandered their winnings only to end up with nothing in the end. One extreme to another but showcasing how balance is played out in everyone. Let me provide you a simple example from my own life.

Chapter 4: Pondera (A sense of balance)

I've worked with computers for pretty much all of my life and have been slowly working my way up the ladder to obtain a good career in a field that I enjoy. I've always tried to be honest and be the best person that I can, but like many I have my faults and have made mistakes and I acknowledge those mistakes and learn from them. I wasn't always like that. I spent a lot of time blaming others and being mad at the world, but I eventually came around.

Shortly after the turn of the century, I was working a somewhat dead end job but was doing well enough that I could support myself and my family. I didn't like the work I had and I did not have much luck in finding work outside of the place I was employed at. No matter how hard I tried I never seemed to be able to get a chance to get into any of the "good" places where I could earn more money, enjoy my work, and really launch my career. I had gone to college twice and graduated both times, worked in several good places, but circumstances always seemed to take me away from the good opportunities. It seemed that I had worked very hard to get nowhere.

A friend of mine, who was as gifted as I with technology, but who had almost no education or work experience suddenly seemed to land a high paying job for one of the "good" companies in my town. He was making a good money doing easy work, had someone special in his life, nice material things, and what would seem to be everything you could want. Why is it that the guy who didn't put any effort or work into getting the good job was being rewarded where I had worked so hard and was stuck in a rut? I was extremely jealous for a long time and even a bit mad. What was I doing wrong? Was God mad at me or was there some other reason why I wasn't being given that

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chance? I didn't know all of the facts at the time but there was a reason behind all this.

At what seemed to be the peak of "the good life", my friend's tables had turned. He lost his good job and struggled to find consistent work in his field. His personal relationships seemed to be failing, and the material possessions he had acquired seemed to disappear. The choices he had made in how he conducted himself, how he treated others, and how he perceived himself had finally come to fruition. He was now seeing the results of the actions he had taken over many years. At the same time, I was coming out of my divorce and landed a good job at a solid company. I seemed to come out of the dark and into a place that I was happy at.

Looking back at those years now, it is crystal clear that balance played a huge role in both mine and my friends life. I was at a low point where I did not feel my life was going anywhere while he was at a high point. He experienced his life bottoming out while I in turn experienced an almost rebirth of my own life. In some ways, it almost felt like the old adage "What comes around goes around". Since then, my friend has moved on and now has a family of his own and seems quite happy. The balance in his own life seems to have come through and having acknowledged that, he's a much happier person. If far more people did the same, we'd see a lot happier people out there.

It is examples like this that made me consider that perhaps life is not all about one extreme or the other, but rather a well balanced mixture of both highs and lows. Life itself cannot really be experienced in full unless you go through both the good and bad. I had my first revelation of this concept after watching a television program

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several years ago. The program was always known for touching on the most sensitive of subjects but for this one episode, one of the lead characters was dumped by his first love. Experiencing all the lows of having been dumped, this character goes through a major depression and joins up with a bunch of self-hating goth kids who write poems about death all day. As he dwells in misery, a friend of his actually falls in love with another girl. He too gets dumped and our goth character finds him crying in the street and offers to let him join the goth group so he too can dwell in pain. The friend, although quite distraught, comes out with what I believe to be one of the most profound things I had ever heard on television. He tells his goth friend that he'd rather not dwell on pain and be miserable and the goth kid doesn't understand why not. The friend explains to him, and this is paraphrased, "Right now I am sad. But at the same time, I'm happy that something could make me feel that sad. It makes me feel alive, human. The only way I could feel this sad now is if I felt something really good before. So I have to take the bad with the good. So I guess what I feel is a beautiful sadness"¹.

What he says struck a big chord with me because at that time, I was struggling very hard with some of my own personal issues that had arisen from a relationship. It was at that time that it really came to me about how both the good and the bad help a person to achieve a full life. It was also when I truly understood how experiencing different types of adversity can actually help people find a more fulfilling life.

A person who has never experienced tragedy, death, or negativity in their life would never truly be able to appreciate or

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understand the things that they have. Many parents try to instill this in their children by showing them that they need to “work” for something. If you don’t ever earn what you have, then you never truly appreciate the things that you do have. In situations where things are simply handed to someone on a constant basis, that person would never know how to fend for themselves, nor would they understand the merit or value in working towards a goal. This is also true if they never experience tragedy, death, or obstacles in their life. If everything "bad" is hidden or removed from someone's life, they'll never truly appreciate what they have, and they'd never be able to handle real obstructions when they come along.

In the late 1990’s, I worked as a pizza delivery guy making just over \$5/hr. It wasn’t great work but it was a job. During that time, I set a goal for myself to see Toronto, New York, Los Angeles, & Vancouver before I was 25. Within the three years I worked there, I saved my money and I took three trips. One to Toronto, one to New York City, and one to Los Angeles that I returned home via Vancouver. This trip was funded purely by my savings of my wages and my tips from delivery customers. No one gave me a penny towards that trip but none the less, I made it and did it all on my own. Had someone handed me the money and told me to go, I probably would have taken it but I would never have had the satisfaction of knowing I worked for the money and the trip all by myself. Looking back now, I have a great sense of pride that I worked as hard as I did to accomplish a goal. Had someone just handed me the money to go, I would never have truly learned how rewarding it is to work for something.

Chapter 4: Pondera (A sense of balance)

By recognizing that a balance of both good and bad in a person's life provides a more fuller life, you can truly begin to appreciate everything around you. But balance itself does not provide you with meaning. It does provide you a means to give yourself a full experience of life, but it does not provide the purpose. The purpose is provided elsewhere.

Chapter 5: Purpose

What is my purpose? Why am I here? What am I supposed to be doing with my life?

Those questions are questions that every person in the world at some point in their life will ask themselves. Whether you believe in a god or not, every human being has a fundamental need to know that they have a purpose. Even those who denounce religions and the concepts described in many religious texts would have to admit that deep down inside themselves, they too want to know “why am I here”?

The question itself has been asked throughout the centuries and many religions and cults have attempted to explain this in many ways. Most religions believe that some sort of god like figure created man and therefore has created us for a specific purpose. Others believe in the concept of evolution and that we, and everything that we are today, is purely just luck that one animal evolved into another which eventually created mankind. The theory of evolution would have us believe that we technically have no purpose and are purely here by chance. I however believe that we all have a purpose and we all have a means to discover it. I also believe that our purpose is instilled within us much like other primal instincts we have.

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Learning your true purpose in life is not like opening an instruction manual and starting at the beginning. Your purpose in life may not be revealed to you until moments before your death or it might be revealed to you in a dream, or after some serious self-evaluation. Knowing the exact purpose of your life is one thing, but knowing you are heading in the right direction is another. There's a saying that life is about the journey and not the destination and I believe this to be very true. That doesn't however mean that you can't learn more about where you are going by looking at things around you. A lot of people do this already and many use religion as a means to learn their purpose.

Many people follow religions because it seems to provide them with a certain set of rules and guidelines that they can use in their daily lives. These people are unsure as to how to go on in their life so they turn to religion for guidance. Religion has more or less shaped the world into “good” and “bad” people. Good people are the ones who are kind to others, do good deeds, don't lie, don't cheat, don't murder, etc. The people deemed as being good people are the ones that are generally following a certain set of morals that seem to exist out there. These morals have been translated into rules or guidelines in many religions (i.e.: the ten commandments) but they fundamentally share the same thing: be good. “Bad” people would be the opposite of this. Those individuals would be the ones who go against the good people and therefore cause “bad” things to happen. The concept of good and bad would also seem to line up perfectly with that of the balance in Gut Theory.

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Religions work very well because they are usually quite direct in what you should and should not do. If you go ask a minister for help on making a decision in some fashion, they usually give you guidelines and other suggestions that help you, but typically you will be swayed in one particular direction based on what you are told. Humans beings by far and large need direction in some fashion and they prefer it to be as clear as possible. Go to the store and buy a carton of milk. Accept the job offer. Divorce your spouse and move on. These are definitive answers to the things that people need an answer to. Many have a hard time looking within themselves to find the answers they seek so they choose to seek those answers from religion. Ultimately however, those answers are always within, and thus provides you with your purpose in life.

Instinct. The word itself refers to an “inborn pattern of behaviour often responsive to specific stimuli”. For example, if someone falls underwater, the instinct is to hold your breath. If you touch something hot, your instinct is to move your hand away. These are actions we take that are purely involuntary but they happen anyway because that’s what instinct is. The only way we can counteract our instinct is to use our minds to force ourselves to not do something we know we should. If you tell yourself that you’re going to touch a hot stove and not move your hand you’ll be fighting your instinct to not get hurt. In all likelihood, you’d burn your hand and move it anyway. How hard would it be for you to dive into a pool of water and not hold your breath? It's almost impossible to do because your instinct, your gut, makes you do something else entirely. Your instinct is very powerful. There is nothing mythical or magical about

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your instinct. You may not be able to identify it as an organ in your body, but it is a feeling and it is very real.

Of all of the animals that exist on our world, mankind is one of the few creatures that has the free will to do against what it's instinct tells it to do. A frog eats a fly because it needs to eat and it just does it without thinking. It doesn't have the capacity to think about eating the fly. It just eats the fly. A lion will protect it's young because it has the instinct to protect. It doesn't think about it, it just does it. The cells in your body do what they are made for and don't think about what to do because they can't. They exist purely on instinct and nothing else. It is the driving force behind all living things.

Take a look purely at white blood cells within the human body. These are microscopic cells that exist within every human being. The fact that they are cells means they are alive. However, they have no consciousness and exist for a very specific purpose. Their purpose is to fight off disease and infection within the human body. This is how we are able to fight off the common cold.

Since they are not self-aware, and have no free will, those cells operate purely on instinct. They are created by the body for the purpose of fighting disease. So when a foreign body is introduced into a human being, those cells kick into action and serve their purpose, and never "think" twice about it. It is purely instinct. They serve a very specific purpose and do it for the most part quite well.

Now, for a moment let's imagine that those white blood cells somehow were able to choose whether or not to help fight a disease. Their instinct is to help because that is what they were created for. But because they now have free will, they can choose to go against their

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instinct and not do what their true purpose is for. How would this affect the body? It likely would result in your immune system not working as well as it should, and your body would then try to produce more white blood cells to help with an infection. This would result in an ongoing battle between what is supposed to be done and what the cells want to do. Ultimately, the body would likely suffer since the cells are not performing the tasks they were intended to do.

This is an imaginary example but I believe the point can be shown quite clearly. When something that is alive goes against what it's instinct is telling it to do, things go wrong, and more problems arise. In this example, the "body" would likely be more sick or sick for a longer period of time. It is an example of how the following of instinct is very important to not only accomplish a greater goal, but to actually have fulfillment in one's life. Those blood cells have no feelings but if they did, when they fight off the disease they'd probably feel pretty good about it. They would feel good because they accomplished their goal, their purpose. Whereas the ones who didn't would not have such a feeling.

Although human beings are self-aware, have free will, and would appear to be the most intelligent race on the planet, I believe that we too are driven by an instinct to perform or do something with our lives and that it is only through the following of this instinct that we find our lives going in a direction we want it to. It is the following of your instincts that allow you to experience true happiness, and a more fulfilling life, without feeling a lack of direction. It is only our free will that counters this instinct and although free will gives us

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options, we need to choose to do what our instinct wants us to do in order to find success in our lives.

What does your instinct tell you to do? Maybe you don't realize what it is, but we all know we have felt it inside of us in some fashion. Most people refer to it as their "gut". A mysterious, unexplained feeling that we get inside of us that pushes us into one direction versus another. That nagging voice in the back of your head that tells us we are doing something wrong or that you should be doing something else. That gut feeling is your instinct talking to you and this is where "gut theory" comes from. The real key is being able to identify what it's telling you.

There have been countless instances where I have been told, or heard others say, that they want to go with their gut instinct but they don't know what that instinct is. They seem to have an inability to determine what it is their gut is telling them so they simply "guess" at it and hope they are right. It is my opinion that your gut feeling is always as clear as crystal. It's merely the expectations and weight of our worldly responsibilities that interfere in our ability to read our gut correctly. Whether it be the pressures of your work environment, or your personal relationships, all interactions with the world around us influence our behaviour and thusly affects how we interpret what our gut is telling us. Since we also have free will, perhaps your gut is telling you to do one thing when in fact you really want to do something else. How many times have you had a feeling inside that was telling you that you really should go do task A but instead you did task B or decided not to do either task. You ignored what your gut told you because it conflicted with the things you personally wanted to do.

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When you think back on those instances, how did it turn out for you? To illustrate this point, I give you this story.

Many years ago, a man named "Dale" was briefly married to his first wife. During their time together before they got married, he constantly kept asking himself if this was the person he was "meant to be with" and it always seemed as if nothing ever told him she wasn't. Dale therefore interpreted this as his gut telling him that it was in fact the right thing to do. He even questioned himself on the day of his wedding and despite his in trepidations, he went ahead with it anyway. He thought that his insecurities about himself and his future were simply wedding day jitters and he shrugged them off. A little more than three years later, Dale and his wife split up, and he knew that he should never have been with her in the first place. Looking back now, Dale realized that it was in fact his gut speaking to him in various ways through his body, and he simply was not recognizing the signs. Since then, he's found a means to know what his gut tells him, and has followed it ever since, and now is truly happy.

So how did Dale know that his gut was talking to him and not jitters, or self-doubt, or some other external factor? It comes down to the simple fact that you are the only true person out there that knows yourself. You know all of the good, and not so good things about the person you are. You know in vivid detail about the things you are good at, the things you need to work on, and the things that you are not going to do. You know more than anyone else the things that make you the most happy, the things that sadden you the most, and the things you anger you the most. Whether you choose to admit these

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things to yourself is another fact entirely but only you can truly know yourself.

In order to be able to truly listen and know what your gut feeling is, you need to come to a point in your life where you have acceptance about yourself. You need to know that you are the person you are, and that is ok, and there is no need for you to try and be something your not. Everyone knows, whether they admit it or not, what their strengths and weaknesses are. Myself, I know I have a strong will and am very compassionate, but I also know that I hate confrontations and will do pretty much anything to avoid it. Many people either do not want to, or are not prepared to be brutally honest with themselves. It is not until you truly open yourself up and accept all of the good and bad things about yourself, that you will be able to know definitively what your gut is telling you. For some people, this may never happen because they just do not want to accept the faults in themselves. Remember that no one is perfect and no one expects you to be perfect and if someone thinks you should be perfect, they are the ones with the issue, not you. You have to find the strength within yourself to be able to accept that you are who you are and there's nothing wrong with that. If there are things about yourself you want to change, that's all fine and dandy but you have to be prepared to look at yourself and be completely honest, without holding anything back. Self-honesty is the most important factor in being able to identify what your gut is actually telling you.

When Dale had all of those misgivings about getting married, that was his gut talking to him. He didn't realize it at the time because he wasn't quite happy with himself in general. He didn't know how to

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read the signs around him or read his own body to know what his gut was truly telling him. Along with that, he did not have the strength of character at the time to be able to simply stand up and recognize that this was not something he wanted. Knowing that calling off the wedding would cause a major disruption and inconvenience to the family was too much for him, so he simply went ahead anyway and despite what his gut told him, he got married. When the marriage ended, he'd finally realized what he should have done because he had come to know himself much better over the course of time. He had learned how best to read himself and know what his gut was saying and hence he removed himself from a bad situation and things got better.

The story of Dale is actually an analogy to my own life. I spent a great deal of time trying to understand what had happened in my own life but it wasn't until after all of the unpleasantness had passed and I had a clear head that I realized my gut had been talking to me the whole time. I chose to ignore what my instincts told me because I didn't want to let other people down. I didn't want to look like a failure. I didn't want to confront those who I was not happy with so I just kept on going. Despite my gut telling me over and over again to get out, I put myself through a great deal of emotional turmoil because I felt it was the "right" thing to do and I didn't want to confront myself or my spouse, about how I really felt. Eventually, my gut became strong enough that I got out of the situation. I found a way to read myself right and although it was extremely difficult to deal with, it made me a much happier person. There was also a shift in balance with this. I had spent several years being unhappy and now having

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come out of it, I found happiness. A low point was countered with a higher point.

You might ask, "How do you know what your gut is saying?" There's a myriad of ways that I "test" myself to know whether or not a decision I am making is the right one. Like many things in life, some are easy to do and others are not. Some decisions you just know without thinking that there is a particular course of action you need to take. Other decisions are in a much larger gray area and require a bit more thought. It's those decisions that require you to really examine your gut, and see what your instinct is telling you. Many times it is very difficult to distinguish between what your gut is telling you, and what your mind is telling you. A lot of times your instinct seems to tell you something that contradicts what you want to do so you ignore it but you always having this nagging sensation that you need to do what your instinct tells you. It stays with you until you finally decide to follow your gut and do what you need to do. You may not like it, but you know it's the right thing for you to do.

After my divorce, my life went through some ups and downs but I eventually came to a place where I was happy. However, I had held a lot of ill will towards my ex and blamed her for a great many things in my life. As time passed, I saw things in a different light and I always felt like there was never any real sense of closure from my old life to my new life. The only way I was ever going to be able to truly close the door on my past was to go see my ex and "bury the hatchet". Every fibre of my body told me to stay away. Despite how I had overcome much of my resentment, she still represented an emotional connection to a great deal of distress, and the last thing I wanted to do

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was to go see her and have a conversation. But, deep down inside me, there was this little voice telling me to go see her and put it all behind me.

I got in my car and went to her apartment. I got buzzed into her building and when she came to the door to talk to me, she was extremely surprised, but we had a very pleasant conversation. I gave her a few of her old things and we cracked a few jokes. Standing there in the hall, she told me that I didn't need to bring her that stuff. I told her that I had to just because I needed to see her. I didn't say it was about closure, but my body language and voice made it perfectly clear. My knees were practically knocking, my hands shaking, and head sweating like crazy, but I confronted my fear, gave her my best wishes and left.

I got to my car feeling quite relieved that this stressful situation was over. But then a huge feeling of contentment came over me, and every ounce of animosity I had ever had to her seemed to be gone. That little voice in my head and in my gut told me that I had done the right thing, and this was my reward. It was a very scary thing to put myself through but by listening to my gut, I was able to release a lot of negative emotion and stress I was carrying and thusly made me a stronger and better person. But what exactly did my gut feeling feel like?

It comes in different forms. Sometimes it's a voice in my head that is very loud saying DON'T DO THAT! It's the same voice that I hear if I try to put my hand on a hot burner. Sometimes, I feel this weird sensation right in the center of my chest. If you put your finger on your chin and run it down your chest in a straight line, just before

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you hit your belly you'll hit the spot where your ribcage ends. I get the feeling there a lot. It's not a physical sensation like a burn or scratch or other feeling. It's more like an internal feeling than anything. It almost feels like something is hovering inside of me but I know there's nothing actually there.

Many times it feels much like when I put my hand on a burner. I can feel it in my body that there is this resistance even though I am not sure where it is coming from. I have taught myself how to distinguish between my nerves and my gut by simply observing the situation I am in. That resistance is normally my gut talking to me.

Other times, I feel it in my shoulders. It's like my shoulders feel differently. They aren't tired or sore and are more like tingling but not in a conventional sense. There's a feeling there telling me something. It's trying to figure out what it is telling me that's usually the biggest hurdle. How do I figure that out? Ask yourself questions but remember that you NEED to be honest with yourself. If you lie to yourself, you know you are lying and so does your gut. I ask myself things like "Is there anything around me telling me that I shouldn't do this?" and if I don't feel anything different in my body after asking that question, it's usually a good sign that I am on the right track. Examine the facts about the decision you are about to make and see if it makes sense. Even if it doesn't make sense, but there's some part of you that says to do it anyway, that may be your gut. I have been scared to death to do things but my gut told me it was the right thing to do and it has never failed me.

When you decide one way or the other, let your body feel the weight of that decision and decide whether or not it's a good feeling.

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Generally speaking, even the hardest decisions, which can result in difficult consequences, will feel good to you in some respect. If you make a decision and nothing about it seems like it is the right thing to do, then it's not likely the right thing to do at all and that's your gut telling to not go that route. Try to remember that you can be nervous, scared, or even terrified of doing something your gut tells you, but you can still know that it is the right thing to do. I have been in countless situations where I have been very nervous about doing something, but every time I want to "chicken out", there's that small part of me that just tells me I need to do this despite my fears. That is my gut talking and as long as I listen to what it has to say, I never fail. It's not always easy, and sometimes it's downright terrifying, but my gut never lies to me.

Some folks would say that “my gut told me to do ...” and that their gut failed them. I do not believe this to be the case. I believe that in making that decision, that person would have had some part of themselves that was telling them it was the wrong thing to do. When you make a wrong decision, you will always have a feeling somewhere within your body that you made a mistake or that you should have done things differently. Some people might refer to this as guilt or regret, but ultimately, it's your gut trying to course correct the decision you made by reminding you that it was the wrong decision, and you need to do something about it. You also can have a situation where you may have done exactly what your gut told you to do, and things still went badly. The key there is to realize that things may have needed to go in a direction you didn't want them because it's what you are supposed to do. Remember that your gut isn't always going to go

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along with what you want. It's going to tell you what you are supposed to do. Sometimes the two are the same but in a lot of cases, they are far apart. It is your free will and desire that will push you away from your gut but more often than not, your desire leads you away from your instinct because in most cases, the things you want to do are not as hard as the things you need to do.

When I was in my first marriage, there were countless times when I felt like something was not right but I chose to ignore it and continue on. In ignoring what my gut told me to do, I forced myself to go through a very unpleasant experience. Now mind you, I believe that experience in itself did serve a purpose, but I think had I listened to my gut in the first place, I would have learned those lessons without the excessive emotional baggage.

Another interesting thing about your gut is that sometimes there are instances when you know your gut is absolutely right, but you choose not to take action because you know that there are other forces that are just not prepared to deal with it. Your gut will bug you quite often that you should go do this one specific thing, but time and time again you choose not to because you feel that your gut is also telling you that no good will come of it. How can your gut tell you one thing that seems to contradict itself? This is perhaps one of the hardest things to try and decipher about yourself. It seems that your gut tells you one thing and at the same time it is also telling you the exact opposite. I can't say that this applies to all situations, but I think this is most commonly seen in situations where other people are involved. For myself, I have had a situation for a few years now where my gut has been telling me that I need to go confront someone and get some

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answers that I need. My gut tells me that this is the only way I will ever be able to let go of certain things. At the same time, my gut also tells me that having that confrontation now would serve no purpose and actually make me feel far worse. So how am I supposed to follow my gut when it seems it is telling me two completely different things?

The answer is to wait. In many of these situations, another individual may be involved and they are the reason you need to wait. The reason you need to wait for them is that this other person is not in the proper state of mind for you to be able successfully move ahead with what your gut is telling you. To illustrate this, I give you the Santa Claus Quandary. When do you tell your kids that Santa Claus is not real? Most parents will wait until they feel that their child is of the right age to be able to accept the fact that Santa is not real. You may want to tell them right off the bat when they are young because you might feel that lying to them isn't right. But in wanting our children to experience the innocence of being young, we wait and wait until we know the time is right. Every child is different, but eventually all kids learn the truth. Now if you told your child the truth when they were 8 years old, you might have wanted to tell them the year before but you didn't. Why? You just didn't think the time was right yet. This is the same thing with your gut telling you two different things. You know you need to do something but you also know that you need to wait until the time is right, and in most cases, this is because someone else whom you have no control over, is involved.

I bring this up because sometimes it seems that your gut tells you two completely different things and it can be hard to figure out which one is the right thing to do. In some cases, both are absolutely

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true, but only when you let some time pass does it become clear when action should be taken. For me, I know it will likely be a long time before I can take action so I accept that limitation and I don't let it affect other parts of my life. In my case the waiting is tied to another person so I have to wait for them to be ready. Your situation may be different.

Your gut is your guide. It knows exactly what your purpose is and will do whatever it can to insure that you fulfill that purpose. Your mind however allows you to decide whether or not you choose to follow your gut. I believe this is where the world has gone wrong in that not enough people do as their gut tells them. Where does that gut feeling actually come from? Is it something you do to yourself, or is it influenced by something else. I believe the latter to be true.

Chapter 6: Origin

For those of us who have followed our gut feelings or instincts for a good portion of our lives, we've come to understand that it does indeed seem to lead us in a direction that is meaningful, and fulfilling. You have likely noticed that when you go against your natural instinct, there always seems to be some sort of hurdle, or obstacle, or other intrusive force that seems to get in your way of achieving what it is you wanted. The moment you accept the fact that your instinct is correct, and do accordingly, things seem to move much smoother. Even when there is great adversity against you, if you persist and continue to follow your gut, you always seem to come out on top.

Have you ever wondered what drives human instinct? Is it purely something within your own body or soul that pushes you in a certain direction? If this is the case, then how could you explain how following your instinct affects others, or seems to place you at the right place at the right time? If it were purely driven by your own internal mechanisms, there would be no way to coincide your gut feeling, with someone else. For example, if you've been set up on a date with someone through one of your friends, and your gut is telling you that despite being nervous, you need to go on that date, and then you go through with it. Let's say in this example, the person you meet

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turns out to be your soul mate. Well, your instinct pushed you to go through with it despite your nerves. However, instinct most likely has some sort of influence on the other person as well, insuring that the two of you would meet, and become soul mates. Is it purely coincidence or did some other force connect the two of you together?

Philosophers and religious teachings have been wrestling with this question for centuries. Some believe that God is responsible for these things. God knows what is best for you and directs you and causes things to happen so that you will see your path and follow it. God can't force you since you have free will, but he can definitely give you signs and help you along the way.

God is typically thought of as more or less and supernatural version of a human being who simply watches and directs everything in existence. He knows all and can do all and that is how we lead our daily lives. This belief of God however seems to change with each person's interpretation of him. What one person perceives to be the actions of God, another one sees as something else entirely. How could one single being be able to know and do everything for everyone all of the time? There are of course questionable actions that happen in the world which people would ask "Why would a God who is supposed to be compassionate allow such a thing to happen?" Most believers would simply recite the same text that has been spoken for more than 2000 years, "God works in mysterious ways".

Pure believers would say that atrocities witnessed in our world are merely tests of faith against man. Can man continue to believe in God after witnessing such horrible things without divine intervention? Does it seem right that a child who is beaten repeatedly by his father

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should be used as a means to prove your faith in a divine entity? What moral god would allow thousands of innocent people to die for the purpose of proving their faith? How is that compassionate? Once again pure believers would simply say that although those are horrible things, people need to be shown that even in the darkest of times, they need to believe in something greater than themselves. Although I do agree that people need to believe in something bigger, I do not think for a single minute that any moral "god" would allow these things to happen. This is where I believe the idea that God shares the same thoughts, feelings, and values as we do is flawed. There seems to be this paradox that exists when talking about what God wants and what he does. He wants you to believe and he wants you to be "good" and help others, but God himself is fine with letting all kinds of horrible things happen in the world. How do you reconcile his actions with what he supposedly asks of his subjects? Purists would once again say that he is God and we should not question that.

Some would say that because many of these horrible things are actions taken by man and not sanctioned by God that God chooses to sit on the sidelines and not interfere. Let mankind learn from it's own mistakes. If God jumps in and takes over then we as a species don't learn anything. I think this is a very noble approach and one that I wholeheartedly agree with. I don't however think that if we are meant to learn things on our own than why would God be involved at all? If God does not wish to interfere in what we do then why does the Holy Bible exist? Why are there rules and things we should and should not do written in his text? If we are meant to find our own way, why are we following the words of a book from God? Purists again would once

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again come up with some other explanation that would ultimately either be that we are being tested or that God simply works in ways we cannot understand.

That has never been an answer that has been acceptable to some. Why is it that things that are defined as “evil” are simply explained away as God’s way of doing things without explanation? Those who have the purest of faith do not question what God says, but deep down inside of every human being who would call themselves a believer, there is a tiny part of them that wonders why God would allow such things to happen if he is indeed as compassionate and as warm as we are led to believe. It is this doubt that has led me to believe that what people perceive as God is in fact something else entirely.

When you get to the real root of what people perceive, or what people want God to be, they want him to be a supernatural version of a human being. They see God as something that is more powerful, more knowledgeable, and greater than anything that has ever existed. They see him as such because to them it is the only thing that makes sense. Only something that is that powerful could create something as complicated as a human being. Nothing on earth can create life from nothing and if God can do it, he must be some powerful. It is this preconception of what God is that I challenge with this book. I believe that the reason man is convinced God is like man is because they can't see him as anything else.

Imagine for a moment that you aren't human. Imagine that you are in fact a horse. Despite being a horse, let's imagine that you have free will and can think just like a human being does, but you are still a

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horse. Would you, as a horse, believe for one moment that God is anything other than a horse? Would you as a horse think that God is like a fish, or a camel? Why would we as human beings believe God to be anything other than something like a human being with thoughts, feelings, emotions, actions, regrets, and everything else that we have?

We wouldn't think otherwise because we all create God in our own image. We think that because we exist as we do that God must be somewhat similar. But remember, if God in fact created everything, then why would God be like mankind instead of a flower, or a cow, or a dolphin? He created all of those things too. We don't think about those other creatures because they are not intelligent like we are. Since mankind is intelligent and self-aware, it only makes sense that God must be similar to us.

It is this limitation that holds people back from realizing that perhaps God is in fact something else. Is it possible that what we perceive to be God could in fact be something much more simple than a human being? People want to define God as being "supernatural". This meaning more than what we see in nature. Almost like a god-like version of a human being except they are a super-father to the human race. If God created us, he must be more powerful and more knowledgeable than anything we have ever seen.

The question I would pose to you would simply be: Why? Why does God have to be so much more powerful and more everything than man itself? Is it in fact possible that God could in fact be far less complicated, and far more simple than any human being? By simple, I am referring not to what God's physical or metaphysical form would be. I'm referring more to the thoughts and emotions that we all have,

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that we perceive God to have himself. I've already said that most people think God has emotion like we do. What if that were not true?

I've been hammering down the concept that instinct itself is what drives a human being and that it is purely mankind's free will that causes the issues we see. If in fact instinct is what should be driving us, then would it not make sense that in some fashion, that what created us is driven purely by instinct? Perhaps that is how God himself operates. He's not thinking, or feeling, or making decisions, or using free will. He's simply operating purely on instinct, and that mankind is a result of God's gut.

This would go purely against most religious teachings about God forgiving you, and God having empathy, and all of the other judgments that come along with worshipping a modern day God. It would however seem to make sense that if that which created us operates purely on instinct, then perhaps that is exactly what we should be doing. If this is the case, then what exactly IS God and how did we come into existence? To answer this question, I would like to use an analogy to the human body.

Inside the human body there are literally millions of cells. Blood cells, muscle cells, fat cells, skin cells, and more types of cells that I am not qualified to even talk about. Each of those cells has a specific task. They don't think, but they are created by the human body itself. Blood is created through a natural process within the human body. The body takes certain elements that it receives and converts them into blood cells. It creates life in the form of cells, albeit small life, each cell is still considered alive. The body is somewhat self-sustaining in that as long as you provide it nourishment, food and

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water, the body will continue to live until it has reached a point when it is too old to function and it dies.

Now each of those cells that the body created have a very specific purpose. Since they can't think and don't have free will, they simply do as they were designed to do. Even though they are very simple in nature, they still were created and given an instinct of some kind to perform some very specific task that the body needs. A great example of this would be antibodies(white blood cells which were mentioned previously). Antibodies are created to fight off new diseases and infection that are found within. Each time we are exposed to something new, the body tries to find a way to fight it by producing different kinds of antibodies. These antibodies do a pretty good job of keeping us healthy. Yes, there are diseases that the human body cannot fight naturally, but one could argue that many of those diseases may not have existed naturally, and may have been inadvertently created by mankind through various means. In other words, they weren't supposed to exist in the first place so that's why we don't have a natural ability to fight them.

Regardless, the human body still produces cells for specific purposes as it needs. What if God is in some way like the human body? God created mankind for some specific purpose that has yet to be identified. Man itself is like an antibody or other cell that is supposed to have a specific purpose but because when we were created something very special happened. The creation of mankind may have been to fulfill a specific purpose that God had in mind, but when he created us somehow we were endowed with free will and consciousness. Never before had something like mankind been created

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and thus the first time we were created we had a specific purpose. That purpose was clear, concise, and meaningful and granting free will to man was a necessity in order for our purpose to be fulfilled. Mankind started off living full lives, filled with purpose and reason, but once we realized that we had free will and the choice to do as we wished, we began to stray away from our instincts. The story of Adam & Eve from the Holy Bible is a prime example of this. Adam's purpose was clear in that he was to tend to the garden and Eve was to be with him. When Adam & Eve went against what they were supposed to do, they faced the consequences. Whether those consequences were good or bad can be debated, but the story rings the same.

Using the "human body" analogy, imagine that God is like the entire human body, and we as human beings are simply cells that were created and exist within that body. To further complicate this, imagine that the "body" itself is in fact the entire universe. Every planet, star, moon, rock, and living entity throughout our whole universe is all part of one living entity that has in fact created everything. Simply put, God is in fact the entire universe and everything in it. The sheer size and complexity of it would seem far beyond anything a person could imagine. How could something that large exist? How is it even possible that a single living entity could manage all of that? Easy, religion says God does it all the time. It's no problem for this mythical being to have the power to manage everything in the entire universe so how is this much of a stretch?

To continue along with the human body analogy, yes the universe would seem to be massive and therefore the sheer size and complexity of such a creature would seem unfathomable. But once

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again think of a single cell within the human body. How small is that cell? Small enough that we need to use a microscope to see it. Now, if you are that cell, and you are in fact that small, how massive would the human body seem in comparison to the size of a single cell? The human body would seem absolutely unfathomably large. But yet it is very real, and in fact the human body is merely a very tiny portion of something that is much larger.

This would seem to coincide with what many people have thought for generations; That we are yet a small part of something much larger and much more vast than anything we could possibly imagine. Many present day religions attempt to force the belief on others than we are in fact the only life in the universe and that it is because of this, we need to cherish the life we have. I believe that it is this type of teaching that has blinded us to the possibility that mankind itself is in fact just a small portion of something that is much more vast, powerful, and amazing than any human could possibly comprehend at this stage in our development.

It's not to say that we are cells in some massively large organism. This is just a comparison. It's to say that all things and everything are connected together by a common element and it is this force that has driven us in various directions. It has influenced us to do various things throughout our life because something somewhere else has a need for it. This force, which you can call God or the universe or whatever you want, has a means of knowing what everything in the entire universe needs or will need, and it has the means to make it happen in some fashion. Let's look at the story of Jake.

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Jake is hungry but has no food. He walks into a corner store and buys himself a turkey sandwich. He pays for his food, goes outside, sits down at a bench, and eats his food. This seems like a perfectly simple transaction but in fact many factors came into play for Jake to get his sandwich. Imagine for a moment that the universe somehow knows that on this day, Jake needs to buy a sandwich in that store. In order for that exact sandwich to exist, a lot of things need to happen. A turkey farmer somewhere has to provide the meat that will end up on his sandwich. That farmer will have to sell his turkey meat to someone who will eventually put it on a sandwich. The mayo on the sandwich comes from another farmer who produces the eggs and other goods to make mayo. There's also an additional farmer who made the wheat grains and dough that make up the bread the sandwich was made on. All of those farmers sold their respective goods to someone who then had those various elements end up at sandwich factory where Jake's sandwich was made. The store owner then buys the sandwiches from the sandwich maker and sells them. You also have the company that made the bench Jake sat on outside. That bench came from somewhere and the city would have bought it from them and placed it in that exact spot for him to eat his sandwich.

Now, if it was Jake's destiny or purpose to eat that sandwich, then the universe itself had to make sure that everything was in place to allow him to get that sandwich. The universe made sure that the turkey farmer, egg farmer, and bread farmer's goods all ended up in the right spot to have Jake's sandwich made. The universe also made sure that the store owner bought sandwiches from the right supplier, and made sure the city put the bench in the right spot. The universe

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does this by influencing the individuals involved via their instinct and gut. Now, regardless of the fact that everyone had free will, the universe's goal was to get Jake to eat the sandwich and in this case he did. He fulfilled his purpose and Jake's hunger is gone.

Does Jake know anything about the chicken farmer who made the eggs that make up part of the mayo from his sandwich? No, but he is connected to that farmer because something that farmer did had an impact, albeit a very small one, on Jake's life. This is where the idea that the universe is influencing our instincts to do certain things comes in. If I was the farmer making the wheat for the bread, I probably have no idea that one of the reasons I make bread is so that some guy named Jake can enjoy a turkey sandwich. That doesn't change the fact that I still feel compelled to farm my wheat. I have a purpose and although I don't quite know all the details, my gut is telling me that this is what I need to do so I do it.

It is my belief that the universe itself operates very much like this example does. It is aware of many things far beyond our current level of understanding and because of that, it uses our instinct to influence us to do certain things that will have an impact on something else. We may not be able to see it right away, or maybe we never know what the purpose is, but ultimately there is a reason behind it. When we go against this influence, go against our instincts, we feel compelled to return to them. We feel something inside of us that tells us we're going the wrong way or doing the wrong thing, and we feel pulled back to what we know we "should" be doing. It is only through free will that we decide either to accept our purpose, or deny it and live with the denial our whole life.

Chapter 7: Time

The example of how Jake wanted to buy a sandwich is a good segway to how it is that the universe knew he needed to eat that sandwich. Within that example, I said that the universe is aware of many things that we as humans are not capable of seeing yet. I think the biggest hurdle in this is our concept of time.

For most people, we don't think about time at all. The only thing we notice is the time on the clock and whether or not it is time to eat, or time to go to work, or time to go to sleep. We don't spend much time (pardon the pun) thinking about time itself. What exactly is time? Time is defined as a measurable period between an action, process, or condition. So you can measure time by how long it takes you to make your breakfast, drive to work, go for a swim, talk to your friends. We use clocks to define certain points of time within a day and we use calendars to define each day of the week. Regardless of how we measure time, as this has changed somewhat over the years, there is one common thread that all mankind has seen with the perception of time: it only flows one way.

For us, time moves forward. You can't go back in time and make changes to things that have happened in the past. For us, yesterday is now a memory and it's something we can never go back

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to. To further illustrate this, let's you an example of a car driving on a street.

You are sitting in the passenger seat of a car driving down a one way street. You are not driving and therefore you have no control over the car. You don't have the ability to exit the car but you do have the ability to interact with people on the street. As you drive down the street, you see a man and a woman sitting on a bench. You surmise that they know each other very well and they seem to be very close. The man seems a little nervous while the woman seems curious and a bit confused. As you get closer and begin to pass them, you see the man get off the bench and kneel down on one knee. As he is kneeling you see him pull out a small box from his pocket and although you cannot hear what he is saying, you infer that he is going to propose marriage to the young lady. The car passes the couple and you continue on along the road. You tell your friend who is driving the car that you just saw a man propose to his girlfriend and it reminds you of how you proposed to your spouse. As the car drives further away, the man looks through the back window and sees the happy couple. The farther they get from the street, the harder it is for the man to see them sitting at the bench until eventually they are out of sight.

The analogy of the car versus time is a means to illustrate how man perceives time. We see time as something that is always moving forward. The car moves forward on the street and cannot turn around or go any other direction. It simply moves forward. The man looking out the window at all of the things he sees on the street represents us seeing and experiencing various things as we move through time. He sees the man propose to his girlfriend and this is a specific event that

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he will witness while passing them in the car. It is a single event and no matter what happens now, once he passes them, he won't ever be able to see that proposal again. This is the same with time. Once an event has passed, you cannot go back to it. Even if our observer was able to get the car to take a side street to turn back and come up our one way street a second time, the proposal would have passed and he would not see the same event again. Remember, the car is always moving forward. When he passes the couple and looks back through the rear window, this is a comparison to how we as human beings look back on our own memories. He sees them for awhile but then eventually they fade, much like human memory.

The purpose of this example is to show you a different point of view on our perception of time. Because we perceive time as being linear, or one way, this is the only means for which we know how to exist. That is not to say that it is the only way we can exist, and I believe that the universe itself perceives time differently than we do. It is because of this different perception it is able to know how events should and will play out, and therefore adjust things accordingly.

If you are sitting in that car and you only know about moving forward on that one street, then you would not be aware of any of the side streets, lights, stop signs, yields, merges, etc, that may exist ahead. You only see what is directly in front of you and you remember what was behind you. What if the universe itself has the entire road map? If the universe had the entire road map to the city you are driving in, it would know exactly when you need to stop, turn, yield, etc. It would have far more knowledge about where you are and where you need to go than you would because it can see the whole map, whereas you can

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only see what is directly in front of you. If your task is to get to a restaurant on the other side of town, you only know to follow this one road, but the universe knows that in about 5 minutes you're going to need to turn onto the highway. Knowing that, the universe insures that you can see the road sign on your street that tells you an exit is coming up, and therefore directs you to take the right turn. The universe doesn't force the car onto the exit, it simply points you in the right direction. You need to make a conscious decision of what to do.

The map the universe has is nothing more than time itself. Unlike mankind, the universe does not perceive time as a single one way street. Instead, it perceives time as a constant. Past, present, and future are all plainly visible on the universe's time "map". Since it knows that in the future you need to get to place X or perform task Y, it insures that you see the proper "signs" along the way to guide you to where you are supposed to go. Those "signs" could be physical signs in your life, or simply your instinct telling you to do something. If the universe knows that you need to be somewhere for something specific, then it knows that long before you ever do and therefore it sets forth a chain of events to allow that to happen. In the case of you getting to the aforementioned restaurant, the universe knows that you need to see a sign telling you to get on the highway so it makes sure that the road sign is where it needs to be and is clearly visible to you when you pass by. That means someone has to make the sign, move the sign, hook the sign up, and make sure the sign is visible. All of these events are clearly visible to the universe but to you, you're only trying to get to the restaurant.

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The universe sees your life in much the same way. It knows that there are certain things that you need to see or experience in order for you to get to a certain point or perform a task that the universe has in mind. It is this chain of events that I refer to as your life's road map. You should be able to connect various points of your history to where you are now and by looking back at even the simplest of things, you can see how the universe set in motion one event which triggered another and so on. Only by the universe being able to perceive time as much more than a one way street is it able to guide us to where we need to be.

It's also important to note that there are many things that happen in our life that have nothing to do with major events in our future. If going to that restaurant means that you'll meet someone specifically who will help you later on in life, the universe probably had a hand in you getting there. But if going to the restaurant yields nothing of any major consequence, then it's more likely that you're just going there to eat. You need to remember that not every single solitary action you taken has a specific purpose or consequence. I do not however suggest that the universe is setting things in motion for countless meaningless things such as going into a store to buy a sandwich. Since life is a mixture of free will and instinct, I believe that for the things in our life that truly matter, the universe is directing us in the right direction through our gut.

Chapter 8: Self-Evaluation

In realizing that the universe has the ability to see all events from any time period all at once, it does pose a simple question: What specific purpose was the universe trying to fulfill in willing us into existence? What was it that caused us to be created and thereby giving us the civilization we have now? How has our natural free will affected what the specific goal of the universe was and how has it changed as a result of that? To answer those questions, you need to look at everything you see around you, and attempt to find a meaning or purpose behind all things. Do all things have a purpose and what are they?

To follow one's instinct, or gut, is to live out one's destiny and accomplish the tasks that were, for lack of a better word, assigned to them. The universe created you for a specific purpose and that purpose can be found in all of the things you do. Unfortunately, free will plays into whether or not you actually fulfill your destiny. There are times when the things you want to do go against the things that you are supposed to do. When this happens, the universe has varying means to continue to push you in the direction that you are meant to be heading in. This can manifest itself in either an ongoing gut feeling that you

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need to change your life, or simply the introduction of new things which ultimately steer you in the direction you were supposed to be in.

As someone who's career has been centered around computers, the opportunity to go work for one of the largest computer firms in the world would seem to be the opportunity of a lifetime. In February of 1999 I was offered a job with IBM® to work as one of the developers for an internal project based out of Poughkeepsie (puh-kip-see) New York. It was terrifying to think that I would have to move so far from home, but my gut told me that this was in fact my big chance to launch my career. My original goal was to stay at IBM for 5 years and get a good pile of experience under my belt that would help me down the road. I moved down to the US, took my job, and did very well at it. I received many praises from my peers and even got a 15% raise within 3 months. Every fibre in my body knew that this was where I was meant to be and that my career was now taking off. By following my instincts, regardless of how scared it made me, put me into a fantastic situation that would seem to lead me into a life of being successful.

However, about a year into my job at IBM, circumstances changed. I made the decision to leave and return home to Canada. I had been offered a teaching position at the same college I had graduated from. My gut told me that I should stay at IBM and not go anywhere. IBM was where I was supposed to be and I should follow my instincts. But, I made the conscious decision to leave and come back to basically take a crap teaching job in a no name private college. The reasons I left are of a personal nature but I was greatly influenced by others to come home and leave my life at IBM behind me. As much as I wanted to stay, I came back to Canada. My gut knew I was

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making a mistake and I felt it all over me. On a daily basis I was wondering why I had left but at some point I just accepted the fact that I had made this decision and that I had to deal with the consequences of this. Interestingly enough, the teaching job only lasted 6 months. I actually left the company before I got another job. I was fortunate enough that I did land another job quickly, but that too was one that was nowhere near like what I had IBM. I settled into my life and accepted that this was my path and although I did not like the work I was doing, it paid well, and it supported me and my family.

This is a prime example of how going against your gut leads you into situations for which you are not happy about. After leaving IBM, I spent a good six years working in a couple of different jobs which paid well, but were never really that satisfying. I was trapped in the common situation where you are making good money at the job you do, but if you jump ship and go somewhere else, you'll have to take a serious pay cut. I had built my lifestyle up to where I was comfortable and did not want to leave that behind. In 2006, I landed a job at what was considered to be one of the best places to work in my home town. Anyone who was in the technology sector knew of this company and wanted to work there. I considered myself to be extremely lucky and was overjoyed with what I was given. Turns out the work itself was incredibly fun too so it seemed as if I had landed a perfect job for me.

As time passed, I continued to do well in my role but the company I worked for went through some major changes, including being bought out twice. However, the second acquisition proved to be a very significant one for me. No one else within the walls of my

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office would have seen things as I had because no one else would have experienced my history as I had. We were purchased by the third largest software company in the world, only topped by IBM & Microsoft®. Layoffs ensued but I survived through to be offered a full time position within the company. Many of my co-workers were very scared of what being merged into a company this large would mean, but for me, I saw it as a second chance.

I had felt it within myself for so long that leaving IBM was a mistake and that I had given up on a chance for something big. Here I was again several years later, and after watching some of my fellow co-workers leave the company, I was being offered a chance to work for a major corporate player. It was as clear as crystal to me that this was the universe telling me that this was another shot at working in one of these major companies. It was like IBM all over again. The decision to stay and continue on would always be mine, but the universe was being very clear in telling me that I was meant to be a part of something like this. I accepted the position and have been with the company ever since. Now, whether that means I am meant to stay there for a prolonged period of time, or merely as a stepping stone to something else, only time will tell. But the truth is, this is a prime example of how the universe can course correct your own destiny when free will interferes.

When looking back on the last 10 years of my life, it seems to me that the universe was trying to put me at IBM for a specific reason. But because of my own choices and influences from outside sources, I intervened and changed my plans. In doing so, the universe had to find a way to steer me back to where I was supposed to be. It took six

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years, but in those six years I gained a lot of valuable information and experience and it was only until I was ready that the right opportunity would be presented to me. I see this now because I am able to look back on my own life and see the real meaning behind it. I see now that my first experience with teaching would lead me to other teaching opportunities and strengthen my skills as a trainer. Since I train now as part of my current role, I would not have been as effective in it had I not trained in the past. My four years as a jack-of-all-trades computer guy gave me the people skills I needed to be able to communicate properly. If I had not experienced the ups and downs of dealing with troublesome users and managers, I would not be able to communicate with the clients I work with today. The universe had a plan for me but when I moved, the plan changed, so the universe changed how I would learn these various skills. I can see that now because I can reflect on my own history. It is lessons such as these that can only be learned in hindsight. When you're knee deep in situations it seems like they serve no purpose. A year or so later, you may look back at that same situation and it will be clear as to why you had to go through that situation. The human condition precludes us from being able to see the true purpose in things in the moment because our emotions are involved. It is only through regular self-reflection that you are able to learn these lessons and adapt your life accordingly.

For many, this is the single most difficult thing to accept. Many people ask themselves repeatedly why something is happening to them and want definitive answers now. The world that we live in today is one where people need answers and responses faster than at any point in history. At one time, mailing a letter got you an answer in weeks or

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months. The phone gave you answers sometimes immediately or within days. Email gives you answers within hours. Instant messaging, and social networking provides answers almost immediately. When we are so accustomed to being able to get answers so quickly, and we're told that we need to wait, we typically don't bother. We give up or simply forget about what it was we wanted to know because we become distracted with something else.

It is for this reason that people need to be aware that the passing of time is one of the greatest teaching tools ever. Experiencing something now will always yield a much clearer answer to "why" when a sufficient amount of time has passed. That amount of time varies depending on the question, but time will always provide an answer. Without fail, eventually at some point in time, meaningful experiences in your life will come into focus if you allow yourself to reflect and think about them. This is where many people falter.

There are a great many folks who forget, either by choice or neglect, about the experiences they have in the past. Whether the experiences are good or bad, they all shape us in some way. If you choose not to look back and reflect on things that have happened to you, and what has happened since then, you will never learn the real reasons you were put through those experiences and therefore never understand your true path. I'm not just talking about having a quick conversation with one of your friends about the good ole days. I'm talking about remembering the biggest turning points in your own life. Look back to some of the biggest experiences, or perhaps the biggest pitfalls that you either conquered, or failed at. Compare those experiences to what you are doing now in your own life and see if you

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can find understanding in how the past has shaped you into what you are now.

For myself, my first marriage was used to help me learn more about what I wanted from a spouse. Getting fired from one job taught me that I need to pay more attention to detail, and realize that every step I take in one direction is leading me somewhere. Working as a pizza delivery guy allowed me to further appreciate the trials and tribulations the service industry goes through. Teaching at my old college helped me rid myself of the fears of talking in front of an audience. All of these things had meaning and a purpose but it wasn't until enough time had passed that I was able to see and appreciate it.

How did meeting someone else in your life affect you? Did taking one job offer versus another change how your career has progressed? What was the result of the heated office argument you had with one of your co-workers? How did getting dumped by someone affect your future relationships? Did biting your tongue and not saying anything to someone make your situation better or worse? How did having kids at a young age change how your life turned out?

All of these questions could apply to anyone, but they are simple, good examples of things you could pose to yourself to try and figure out what the purpose behind it was. Perhaps by meeting one of your friends it opened doors for you in your career. Maybe the heated office argument resulted in you being dismissed from your position and having to evaluate how you express yourself to others in a work environment. Perhaps you chose not to tell one of your friends they were making a major mistake in their life, and you had to watch them go through something horrible. Maybe you experienced a horrible

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personal relationship that forever changed how you treat other people. Maybe having children when you were very young made you feel robbed of your youth. These are all mere examples but the point is quite clear. By looking back at the things you have done in the past and questioning the motives, you can better determine the purpose behind them, and in turn determine your true purpose. It is this purpose that I believe does not become clear until a large amount of time has passed. But I do believe that clues can be picked up along your journey.

In order to understand what your ultimate purpose is, and how it came to be, it is very important for you to do some of your own self-evaluation and self-reflection. However, for many of us, we are not quite sure where to begin or how to even go about looking at your own life. Whether you're 20 years old, or 60 years old, the process is still the same. The older you are, the more you will have to examine, but what you'll need to do remains the same. For those who need a little helping hand, I'm going to provide you with a means to look at your own life and see what the universe has been telling you.

To start, you will need a pen and paper. You should be sitting somewhere comfortable and somewhere where you will not be interrupted. For those busy parents, I know this can be a challenge but it is important for you to be able to sit down and do this self-examination without being interrupted by day to day challenges. Once you are comfortable, the next step is to break your life down into several pieces. At the top of page, write out the earliest memory you have. It can be anything. Whether it was a birthday party, or going to school for the first time, or whatever it is, write that down. This is the

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earliest version of the person you were. Simply write out in whatever fashion you are most comfortable with, the first memory you think you had. That's the easy one.

From there, it's a matter of breaking your life up into smaller chunks. Regardless of how old you are, you need to divide your life up into chunks of years. The most common "chunk" would be a about a five year period. Now, if you're much older this will of course create a much longer chart, so if you know that there are regions of your lifespan that had little activity, you may want to use larger periods of time. I don't however recommend this for the first time since you really want to chart out the biggest things you can remember. Also keep in mind that even small events that you may not think are important may play out later so try and jot down as much as you can.

That of course is the point of this exercise. For every chunk of time, you need to write down as many events about that time period that you can remember. Where did you live, what grade were you in if you were in school, who were your friends, what was your family life like? Did you have any major tragedy or excitement in that time period that you remember? Did anyone close to you pass away? Did you meet someone special during that time? Where did you work? Did you travel anywhere? The key here is not to have excessive detail, but to simply plot out the biggest things that you can remember about each time period. You don't necessarily need to remember every single thing that happened to you, but when you think real hard about that particular time in your life, you should be able to pick up on at least a few things. Try to at least write down five different things that stick out about that time period. Write down more if you can but try to put

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at least five. The most important thing to remember about this exercise is that you need to be completely honest with yourself. There may be things you don't want to think about and you know they happened at certain points but you want to exclude them because they're unpleasant. Don't! Those are even more important than anything else. You need to include absolutely everything whether it be good or bad, as long as you can remember something about it. Along with events, try to write down any emotions that come to mind when you think of that period of time in your life. Sometimes people associate specific emotions with parts of their past. Try to incorporate this into your writing.

If there is a specific year or a specific event that you know definitively had a huge impact on you, be sure to include that in your roadmap. If you have to create a single year or a single day entry for that event, go ahead. Many people recognize that there are certain days/events in their life that had a huge impact so it is important to make sure those are highlighted. Marriages, deaths, graduations, and things of that nature can be significant events. Also keep in mind that if you happen to think of other things that may not be "big" events but they are clear memories, write those down. Many times small events make memorable impressions and therefore you remember them for a long time. Sometimes these are the moments that lead to other things in your life. Don't exclude them.

When you are done, you should have your life's roadmap. This is the map of all of the major events and things that have happened in your life to date. Obviously for those who are older, you'll have a much longer map, but the principle of it remains the same. Now comes

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the next step. Looking at each chunk of your life, see if you can connect one event to another event in another time period. Does it seem like one thing may have led to another? Are there connections between certain events from 10 years ago to today? As a simple example, perhaps when you were very young you met someone who became a good friend. Then five years later you were still friends but now you were on a basketball team together, and then five years after that, you graduated university with them and started a business together. There would be a very obvious connection between each of those time periods through this person. See if you can connect any of the events from your past to one another. They don't have to be in adjacent chunks of time but in most cases there's something that connects them. Also, if you find that there are some events that you think are important but they don't seem to link to something, see if you can remember anything that happened that may have influenced that event, but you haven't written them down already and write them down. This will give you a connection.

Once you have "connected the dots", look through your map and see if there are any gaps. Did you connect one period of your life to another with nothing in between? If you did, try and think hard about those events and see if you can think of anything that happened in between them that may be related. Sometimes the connection can be very small but it is still important to try and identify it. Usually people remember certain events but a lot of detail goes missing over time. Take whatever time you need to try and remember anything that you feel may be appropriate.

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When you have completed this task, you will hopefully have outlined some of the biggest and most influential events in your life. Hopefully you will be able to trace back how those events started and you will see a pattern of behaviour moving forward. It is this pattern that you are looking for. Whatever the pattern is, you should now be able to see how one event led to another forcing you into a specific direction for a certain reason. Maybe you never understood why you ended up going to college in a foreign country but when you look at your map you realize that when you came home, you met your spouse through conversation about your foreign experience. By mapping out how many of these major events came into play, you begin to see how your life has been shaped into what it is today. Depending on how your map looks, you may even see what your ultimate purpose has been all along. The flip side to this is that in evaluating your past, you may come to realize that the type of behaviour you have been exercising is not a healthy one. Sometimes people don't realize the things they are doing until it is pointed out to them in some fashion. Perhaps when looking at your map, you find that you've had a lot of struggles in your life and it somehow seems to be connected to problems you had with your family early on. You may not have even seen it before but your roadmap makes it clear. Revelations like this can be a little disheartening but it is important to make those realizations so that they can effect change in your life.

Many people do not take the time to look back at their own life and see how things have affected them. This exercise makes you sit down and look at all the major points in your life and see how they are connected. Once you see the connection, it is very hard to deny that

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there was a reason for each event happening the way it did. It is this self-examination that helps each person find what their purpose is. You may not nail it down exactly, but you'll be well on your way to understanding far more than you did before.

For example, if your gut told you that you should be a doctor, and everything about you tells you that you should be a doctor, then the universe obviously decided to create you for the purpose of helping others. Your roadmap might show that purpose through various connections. Since doctors come in many forms, perhaps you are meant to find the cure for cancer. Or perhaps your purpose is much smaller in that you are simply there to help the people around you and insure general health. Whatever the case may be, the clues would be all around you. If you're meant to fight cancer, perhaps you'd see a lot of cancer in your life through your friends and family. If you were meant to help the blind, maybe you experience a terrifying loss of sight for a short period of time which inspires you to help others with vision loss. It is those clues that we need to look for in order to find true purpose. At the end of your life, if you have followed your instincts and done as the universe wanted, your purpose here would be clear to you. There is however evidence that suggests that there are many people in the world today that do not appear to help the world around them, and so many would wonder what purpose the universe has for them.

Chapter 9: Without Purpose

I've said that our purpose has been determined by the universe and that by following our gut, we will find purpose. What if you never, ever followed your gut? What would the consequences of that be?

Let's say "John" was born and the universe decides that his purpose is to become a carpenter. He's supposed to work in construction building various things. For whatever reason, the universe needs him to be a carpenter so that he will eventually create something that the universe needs. This is his ultimate purpose and his instinct will always be to become a carpenter. The universe also decides that because of the specific needs it has, John will focus on his carpentry his whole life and should not get married, nor bare children. He is not destined to have any kids. The universe has also created Jane. Her purpose will be to console others who are in deep emotional distress. She's meant to be a very good counsellor and she would be able to help many people if she follows her destiny. The universe also decides that in order for her to fulfill her destiny in the way that the universe needs, she will also not have children.

John & Jane both grow up and feel the urge to take on their respective occupations, but because of free will, both of them choose to ignore their instinct and pursue some other career. They both always

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feel the pull toward what they are supposed to do, but they ignore it and continue. Eventually, John & Jane meet, get married, and have two children.

In the original plan the universe laid out for both of these individuals, neither of them were to have children. But, because of free will, they have produced two children for whom they both love very much. If one is born to this world from people who were never meant to have children, does this mean that you don't have a purpose?

Yes, and no.

Since the universe creates life for a specific reason, all people are supposed to do what they are destined to do. Unfortunately, many people don't and John & Jane are examples of this. The two children they have produced were not something the universe meant to create. In fact, the universe didn't create them at all, they did. Therefore, since they have now been born, the universe needs to once again find a means of course correcting to allow things to happen the way they are supposed to.

This correction could be manifested in several ways. The universe may find another need that it has not fulfilled yet and therefore deems that the children's purpose are to fit that need. Maybe in this case John & Jane's children's destiny becomes that of their parents: the carpenter and counsellor. The universe sees that John & Jane are not willing to do as they are supposed to do so it bestows their original purpose to their children instead. It may also decide that they will have a purpose but it has yet to be determined so they are to live

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their lives as anyone else, but without purpose until the universe gives them one. You could almost think of them as people who are being lined up to fill a specific position. They weren't created for a specific reason, but they've been queued up in line to have a purpose given to them. Think of it as destiny's waiting room. If the universe does not have a specific need to be met, and let's say the waiting room is full for now, then it's very possible that those children would have no purpose and are simply a result of mankind's freewill going against instinct.

Interestingly enough, that in itself is a purpose, albeit not a very pleasant one. Of all the topics discussed in this book, this particular one is the one that disturbs me the most, but is still vital to the concept of a balanced life.

A complete and full life is one that has both positive and negative aspects to it. I'm sure you have heard at least one time in your life that "You can't have the good without the bad". I've already discussed how negative events in one's life can create positive outcomes. However, in order for the world around us, and in turn our lives, to be completely balanced, there has to be a counter to things positive. People who were born of free will and not of instinct would be placed in this counter position.

They are not bad, or evil, but they simply exist as a means of showcasing that which we don't want to become. They exist in every walk of life around the world and could be anyone from a homeless person on the street, to an arrogant CEO of a large corporation. These are people who were created by mankind's freewill and not the universe itself. The universe wasn't able to find a place to put them or

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a means to give them purpose, so their purpose becomes to offset others around them and to show us that it is that type of person you do not want to become. Here's a story about Charles the student.

Charles was an average high school teenager. Forever obsessed with girls and being popular, Charles spent his weekdays going to school despite the fact that he hated it. School had been a sore topic between him and his parents. Charles was convinced that staying in school was a waste of time. He'd seen countless friends quit and get jobs working in local call centers and making good money at it. He was sick and tired of math problems and book reports and wanted to make some money. After a big fight with his parents, Charles grabs his book bag and tells his parents he's heading to his friends place to study. He doesn't go to his friends place and instead heads downtown to apply for a job. A few blocks from the call center, he walks into a store and buys himself something to eat and when he exits the store, a man grabs him and pulls him into an alley. The man has a gun and points it at Charles and asks him for his backpack. Charles tells the man to take whatever he wants but to just not hurt him. The gunman taunts Charles about him being "too good" to help someone on the street. Charles tells the man that he'll do whatever he wants but to just put the gun away and not hurt him. The man rifles through Charles' bag and can't find the cash. Shaking the gun in his face, the gunman yells at Charles asking where he can find the money. Charles points to a pocket on the bag and the man takes out a wallet. The man sifts through the wallet and grabs the cash but notices Charles' student ID card. He chuckles and says "Nice picture. I gave the cameraman the finger when they took mine". He throws the bag back to Charles and

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runs off into the alley. Breathing heavily, Charles is relieved that he got out of the situation alive and turns back home. On his way back to his house, he thinks about the comments the gunman made about his ID card and realizes that he must have been a student at the same school. As he gets closer to his house, he wonders whether or not that guy had quit school and how he ended up needing to mug people for money.

In this example, our gunman is the offset. Charles was so determined that school was not for him and that he should be doing something else that he made a rash decision to quit. Although getting mugged by the gunmen was terrifying, it was a very effective means to make Charles understand how important it is for him to remain in school. The gunman served a purpose in that he was used to show someone else what their true purpose was. Charles was motivated by the gunman because he saw what he could become if he didn't stay in school. The universe used the gunman as a means to show Charles his true path.

I mentioned previously that one's free will can sometimes alter the universe's purpose and plan for you or make course corrections to put you back on the right path. This is also true for people who's purpose has been to be the offset of others. Since being an offset is meant to deter others from becoming like you, then if an offset individual were to make a conscious effort to change their life for the better, then the idea that they could be used as an offset would no longer apply. If our gunman suddenly decided that his life of crime was not worth it and decided to turn his life around, he would not have been able to serve as the offset for Charles because he would never

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have robbed Charles in the first place. Since the gunman used his free will to forcefully change his life for the better, the universe would then find a more meaningful purpose for him. This is how many people who reach the “bottom of the barrel” manage to turn their life around. They realize that the only way they can make things better is to force themselves to change, and in doing so, the universe recognizes this change and gives you a more meaningful purpose.

It is important to understand that for many of those offset individuals, they have simply given up, or choose not to change themselves for the better, and thus the universe chooses to use them to offset the rest of us. It’s not a punishment but a means to keep everything in balance.

Although these individuals may not have a defined purpose given to them by the universe, their purpose is still one that is very important to concept of a balanced life and they have now become an integral part of our world. The world around us has built up and expanded with both a combination of instinct and free will. In doing so, the universe has again and again course corrected itself to allow things to proceed the way they should. Mankind has existed for long enough that to remove all of the elements born of free will now would be catastrophic. Because of free will, the universe has created many things and set many actions in motion for the sake of working with what free will has also produced. This is how both instinct and free will have become interlocked in such a fashion that you simply cannot remove one without destroying the other. Our life now exists as a balance of both instinct and free will and the universe accepts this. The universe may have produced us purely from instinct, but since a full

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life cannot be experienced without a counterbalance of some sort, we were given free will. Our free will is the counterbalance to the universe's instinct. Even in creation, the universe could not avoid a sense of balance.

Chapter 10: The Afterlife

Our goal in life is to follow our instincts so that we accomplish the things we need to do and were intended to do, but also use our freedom to do the things we want to. Hopefully when life ends, you're life here has come into focus and you can leave it behind when you pass away.

Much of what has been discussed so far has focused on the purpose of our life that we know now. But what happens to us when our life is over? Is that truly the end for us or is there something else? I believe that the origin of our life can not only tell us where we come from, but where we go when life is over. It's my belief that the universe that we know is a single living entity that created us to fulfill some purpose for itself. I also believe that perhaps what we perceive as death is merely a transformation from the life we have now, to something else entirely.

Many religious texts refer to the concept of an afterlife. A place you go when you die. In some religions, if you lead a good life you go to heaven and if you lead a bad life, you go to hell. This of course is purely subjective and may in fact be some means to coerce individuals into believing a certain way. If you tell a mass crowd that if you do something good you'll be rewarded and if you do something bad,

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you'll be punished, they'll all want to do something good so that they will be rewarded. After all, who wants to be punished? It's the "good" that tends to be subjective depending on the faith you follow.

The concept of good and bad does not really apply to a life that is directed by instinct. If a salmon dies while returning to the stream where it needs to spawn, is it judged for not getting there? No, it simply was trying to do what it's instinct was directing it to do. By doing your best to follow a life that is driven by instinct, you pretty much guarantee that you're not going to be judged in some fashion when your life ends. This "judgment" is a common thread in many religious texts and it is this judgment that determines how you will spend eternity in the afterlife. Since following instinct would seem to negate this judgment, then what would the afterlife in fact be?

When deciding to write this book, it was the concept of the afterlife that I struggled the most with. Not so much with what I believe happens to us humans beings, but how that transformation fits in with everything else that has been discussed. If mankind was created by the universe to fulfill a specific task, then it would seem that if you complete that task, there would be no reason for you to continue. If that is in fact the case, it would seem that the concept of the afterlife would be meaningless. Why would you continue to live once you have completed your purpose? That's when it started to make a bit more sense to me. It's the transformation from living a life that's driven by instinct, to living a life that's driven by desire.

To illustrate this, think of what most people do on a day to day basis. In order for most people to live in the world we have today, we need to work. Whether we work in a job we like or not depends on the

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type of person we are, and the choices we have made within our life. But the fact remains, that if we want to have food in our stomachs, clothes on our back, and a roof over our head, we have to work to earn money to pay for those things. If you're lucky, the work you have is work you enjoy and therefore you feel good about your life.

Regardless, "work" is something we have to do in order to do the things we want to do. If you want to travel the world, you need to work so you can save money and afford to travel. If you want that shiny new car, you need to work to get that car. In all walks of life, there is a need to work to get something you want. The concept of "work" is something you can't get away from (despite the fact that many people try hard to do it) and you will always work until you retire.

When you retire, you no longer need to work so it frees up time to do the things you want. Many people want to rest and simply kick back and enjoy the fact that they are no longer bound by work. Others choose to spend their retirement years visiting family and being close to the ones who matter the most. Whatever retirement brings, it has a sense that the things you "needed" to do are over and now you can do the things you "want" to do. Now mind you, a lot of what you want to do in your retirement depends on money, but that goes back to what you needed to do while you were working. If you want to travel the world when you retire, then you need to save money.

As far as the afterlife is concerned, think of it as the universe's retirement home. The universe gave you a purpose and you spent your life trying your best to fulfill that purpose. Now that your life has come to an end, you can spend the afterlife doing whatever it is you always

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wanted to do. You are no longer bound to any specific purpose and your "instinct" is released, allowing you to choose to do anything you wish on a different plane of existence. It is this transformation from a physical body to one of energy that allows you to live a completely different kind of life.

You might ask what happens to those who don't fulfil their purpose while they are alive. Since my analogy of retirement is supposed to be about being released from instinct and embracing a life of complete free will, these individuals would exist in a sort of limbo. They have transformed into another form of life, but they are still bound by the original purpose they were given. It isn't until that purpose is fulfilled that they move on and experience a life of complete free will. They are not being judged by the universe or by any other entity. It is merely a choice that the individual has made and that choice placed them into the situation they are in. If you choose not to embrace your destiny, whatever that may be, you won't ever be released from it. This is why these individuals remain in a sort of cosmic limbo and not able to move on.

Whether you believe in them or not, you've probably heard stories about ghosts. They are souls that are stuck on earth and are not able to enter the afterlife because of something they have not completed here on Earth. This falls directly in line with what I'm discussing here. If your life on Earth is about embracing your instinct and your destiny, and the afterlife is about being released from that, then it would make sense that if you die without completing your ultimate purpose, you'll be left in limbo until you find a way to accomplish it. It's not about being judged. It's about finishing a job that

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was started and experiencing the rewards of your completed work. To continue with the retirement analogy, imagine that when the company throws you your retirement party, they give you a key. That key opens up your cottage at the retirement home. Fulfilling your purpose in life gives you the key to enjoy a life of complete free will.

The only ones left in question would be the ones who never had a purpose to begin with. Remember John & Jane who had the two kids? Those children were not something the universe wanted and therefore the possibility that they would have no purpose in life became very real. Some were given a purpose, some waited for a purpose and eventually were given one, but some were left out and were given no specific purpose at all. How could those people end up in the afterlife if they have no purpose to begin with? They did have a purpose remember? They served as a reminder to others of the kinds of things to avoid. Remember, I said that they serve as the offset to keep everything in balance. If they served that purpose well, they also would leave their life here on Earth with the ability to enter the afterlife.

One key element that I feel is very important to stress is that the afterlife is not a members only club. In some religions, particularly in Christianity, followers are led to believe that if they don't do as the church instructs them to, they don't get to go to heaven. Heaven is defined as being the great place filled with good things and ever lasting happiness. If you don't follow the church, or you're not a "member" of the church, you can't get into heaven. They also further perpetuate the myth by saying that the afterlife is in fact made up of two clubs. Heaven and Hell. If you don't get into heaven, you're going

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to hell which is nothing more than a horrible place filled with pain and suffering for all eternity.

My belief is that there is no members only club. Continuing with the retirement analogy, regardless of what kind of person you would have been, if you put in your days and made it to retirement, you still get the keys to the cottage. You could have been the nicest guy in the world, or the biggest jerk around. You still did what you needed to in order to get to retirement and now you get the keys. That's what the afterlife is. Once you complete whatever purpose the universe set out for you, you are free to embrace your own life without the limitations of a physical body.

Lastly, some might ask whether or not it is possible to fulfill your purpose while you are alive but long before you actually die. If the afterlife is a life that is not driven by purpose, but purely by free will, is it possible to attain this while you are still alive on Earth? I believe that the answer to this question is no. Although the universe may have given you a purpose while you are here, and you may seem to have accomplished this while you are alive, I believe that a person's full and complete purpose is measured by the sum of their life. It is not a single task that you perform that meets the purpose given to you by the universe, but a series of tasks, human interactions, and other items that ultimately fulfill your destiny. You may have a pretty good idea of what you were meant to do, but the totality of it is not realized until you are near your end. Perhaps this is why some people remain in limbo after dying. They realize what they should have done but only after it is too late. They remain in limbo until they find a way to fulfill their destiny and move on accordingly.

Chapter 11: Miracles

Much of what I have written thus far would seem to preclude the possibility of a god who is generous or compassionate. In fact, it would seem that the god I have defined would have no emotion whatsoever. For scholars and believers in a god such as the Christian god, this would seem to contradict with what we have witnessed or been privy to regarding the concept of miracles.

The dictionary defines a miracle as "an extraordinary event manifesting divine intervention in human affairs"² It is the divine intervention that comes into question. For evolutionists, they would believe that this is in error and it is simply some non-understandable scientific principle that has manifested the so called "miracle". But for believers, they cast no doubt on the belief that God has intervened and performed the miracle. They believe that because God is a caring god and because he wants to take care of his children, he has directly influenced either a person or event by using some sort of supernatural ability. The most common form of miracle praised by believers is that of a cure from a disease or illness. Many people claim to have fallen to a deadly disease and that doctors have not been able to rid them of the disease or provide them any comfort. When they have run out of options, they typically turn to God and pray to be healed through the

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magical hand of their deity. For some, they would inexplicably become cured and no trace of the disease found anywhere. Others, although they have prayed to their god for help, do not receive the blessing of a miracle and therefore go on fighting the disease in a more conventional sense. Why does one receive the blessing and not others? Believers would tell you that God can't do everything for us because then we would never learn anything or be able to do anything for ourselves. Although that belief is noble, there doesn't seem to be any logic or reason behind why person A receives a miracle over person B.

If the universe is in fact God and he doesn't have any emotion or compassion, it would seem that the concept of miracles would be a moot point. How could miracles possibly exist if our God does not feel sympathy for those who are suffering? A god does not need to experience emotion to perform a miracle, but the interpretation of who receives the miracle does need to change. By our current interpretation of what a miracle is, it would seem that for the majority, a miracle seems to be a means of relieving one of pain of some sort. Since you are relieving someone of a pain they are experiencing, this would seem to be an act of compassion. But the fact that not all folks who request a miracle receive one would seem to contradict the idea that God is sympathetic. Why help one individual over another?

Despite the fact that humanity would seem to want all individuals to be treated equally, and that every human life is as important as the next, the reality is that this is not the case at all. Although I believe that all people should be treated equally, many cultures in our world deem people of a certain gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, or nationality to be "less" of a person than

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someone else. Along with that, regardless of what you may believe, there are many individuals from both our past and present who would seem to have played a much larger, and more powerful role, in our current society. It is not to say that these individuals are any "better" than others. It simply means that their contributions to the world around us have had a much more profound affect than most. There are literally millions of people around the world who will be born, live, and die, while having very little impact on the entire globe as a whole. Yes, these individuals will have an impact to those close to them, and those who knew them, but in the grand scheme of things, these individuals go relatively unnoticed to the rest of the world. That's just math. When you have as many people in the world as we do, more and more people go unnoticed. It's not to be cruel or mean but it's just simply a fact.

There are also a finite amount of individuals born who represent something much larger. They represent those individuals who's contribution to society will be forever remembered. Whether those contributions are for the greater good of man, or for the detriment of man is inconsequential. Those individuals will be remembered as people who caused a change or other significant impact on the world around us. Albert Einstein, Martin Luther King, Christopher Columbus, Genghis Khan, Julius Caesar, Jesus Christ, and Adolf Hitler are all names that everyone reading this book have likely heard of. Each of these individuals contributions to the world have been significant and no one could deny that because of each of these individuals, the world we live in today is much different than it would have been had they not existed. Whether their actions were honourable

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or deplorable the result is the same in that many things in our world changed because of what these individuals did. If something had prevented them from existing, or being able to do the tasks they did, the world we know today would be vastly different. What would the world we know today be like if Adolf Hitler had never existed? How different would modern science be if Einstein had never been born? These are individuals just like the rest of us but because of what they did or what they accomplished, the world around us is very different.

That having been said, let's create a fictitious scenario depicting one of those famous characters. Let's say for example that Martin Luther King was diagnosed with a deadly tumour. This diagnosis came long before the revolution of African American equality. This diagnosis came long before anyone knew much about him or where he came from, or even his goals. The doctors tell him that he has this deadly tumour but he has at least a year left before it will take his life and that there are several surgeons around the world who can successfully remove the tumour. But since these surgeons are extremely busy, he has to be put on a waiting list but the doctors assure him that he has at least a year to live and that he won't be on the list for longer than six months. King agrees. Three months later he gets a call informing him of the date of his surgery. He's told he has another month to wait but that his surgery is confirmed and his doctor will be ready to remove the tumour with very little effort. It would seem that things are going well for King. A week before the surgery is scheduled to begin, the surgeon is involved in a hunting accident. This accident causes permanent damage to the surgeon's hands and as a result of this, he can no longer perform surgeries. There are no other surgeons

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qualified to operate on King's tumour so he goes back on the waiting list. Two days after King was originally scheduled to have surgery, the tumour causes a bad reaction within King's blood and invokes a heart attack, killing King in his home.

If this scenario had played out, King would never have began his quest for equality for African Americans. The equality that we see today may never have come to fruition. Perhaps equality was achieved but only after a much larger portion of time and many people had to go through needless suffering as a result of this. There of course is no way to know what would have happened if this fictitious story had played out in real life. But by showcasing this , it does allow me to illustrate how the universe could in fact invoke what we call a miracle.

I've stated all along that the universe has the ability to point us in the right direction, but that our free will can push us in other directions. Since the universe has the map of how things are supposed to be, it knows that there are going to be major events that will happen in history and that certain individuals will play key roles in those events. Those people cannot be replaced and the actions they will take will have repercussions for many years to come. If the above story had actually taken place, it would seem that mankind's free will interfered with what was supposed to happen. That surgeon wasn't supposed to be hunting a few days before surgery because if he hurts his hands, the universe knows that King will die a few days later. Therefore, since the surgeon's free will created a situation that does not allow him to do the work, the universe needs to intervene. It needs to intervene because it knows that in this specific situation, things have to play out as they were supposed to.

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Remember that for the most part, the universe is able to course correct mankind's free will by making other things happen. But sometimes there are no means to make this correction so in order for things to play out the way they need to, the universe directly intervenes. This is where I believe the concept of miracles comes into play.

The universe knows that King is important, and since there are no other means to "fix" the situation, the universe itself cures the surgeon's hands, or removes King's tumour. Either way, because King is important, the universe uses itself to correct the situation, but in doing so, it would seem somewhat supernatural in nature. Although the curing of a tumour or a hand injury may seem hard for us, the universe knows far more than we do and would likely have an easy time addressing this situation. Whether the result is produced by some natural ability the universe has, or through a technology we are unaware of, it does not matter. What matters is that the universe takes direct action which results in something that we cannot explain through conventional means and so we call it a miracle.

If you were to travel back in time 1000 years and perform CPR on someone who appeared to be dead, many around you would see you as supernatural because somehow you were able to revive the dead. It's not magic, but to people of that time it may appear so. I believe that when the universe performs a miracle, the same thing is happening. We are seeing the results of a natural or technological act performed by the universe but misunderstood by human beings as being supernatural.

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I also think it's important to remember that the universe is not judging anyone or anything. It's not saying that King is a better person or more worthy than others. It's simply reacting because it knows that in order for things to play out the way they need to, this person must be involved. Try to think of it in terms of when you are put into a situation where you know something needs to be done and you have tried every other thing you can think of and you have one last resort that you would rather not do, but you know you have to because it's the only way to get something done. I believe that this is the same thing the universe does when it performs a "miracle". It would rather use some other subtle means of correcting the issue but when there are no other options, it proceeds to intervene directly.

This interpretation would seem to place a higher value on the lives of certain individuals versus common folk. Why is it so important that one individual live over another? Why couldn't the universe simply cure all people of what ails them? Once again I remind you that we are going under the assumption that the universe does not have any feelings that would influence it's decision. It is operating purely on instinct and since it knows what the future plans are for our race, and our ultimate purpose, it must take whatever action necessary to insure this. It doesn't judge one person to be more important than the other but it is aware of what individuals will set certain events in motion and whether or not those events are of importance. It's not necessarily the person that is regarded as being "better" or more important. It is the events or actions occurred because of said person that is of significance. Remember, for our fictitious scenario, the universe may have in fact cured the surgeon. The surgeon itself is not a major

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character in how life played out, but the fact that it was that specific surgeon who operated on King made them key. Once again an action taken which results in a series of events transpiring allows life to go on in the way it was intended.

Whether you believe it is pure human will, or the hand of God, or the universe itself providing these miracles, the end result is the same. Miraculous events happen and it is up to you to decide how best to explain them.

Chapter 12: Influence

Although the primary focus of this book is to enlighten individuals to a new interpretation of our origin and purpose, I also think it is worth discussing how you can knowingly affect the environment around you just by living within it.

In Western society, life is basically broken down into four phases: Childhood, early adulthood, adulthood, and retirement. During childhood, most kids learn the basics of life like how to read, write, and interact with people. Most of our bare fundamental skills are taught at this age but children are not exposed to any of the necessities of life. They are not concerned about money or work or any of the high level responsibilities of life. During early adulthood, children learn more about the world around them. This includes the realities of having to carry your own weight, working for a living, the true cost of having and wanting the things you want, sexuality and the joys and pains that come with it, and generally beginning to understand what it is like to have to "be on your own". Many children go off to school and then head out into the workforce shortly thereafter. Many who do not go to school choose to start work right away. Regardless of their choices, all early-adults begin to enter the workforce and learn the daily regiment of being a "grown-up". During adulthood, we are aware

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of the heavy responsibilities of life and do whatever we feel is appropriate to deal with them. Generally speaking, people get up in the morning, go to work, do their job, come home, go to sleep and the cycle continues. People get married, sometimes more than once, have kids, have grandkids, and generally just live the cycle of their life until they either die or retire. During retirement, folks have finished their mandatory work for life and find solace in being able to finally sit back, relax, and enjoy the fruits of their lifelong labour before passing away.

This "typical" cycle of life is very common and for most of us in the Western world, we're fine with it. Getting a job to pay for the things we want isn't that bad when the rewards yield themselves. The problems typically arise when people become less than happy with their own life. They don't like their job. They don't make enough money. They just aren't happy. It is when you reach these crossroads that you have to identify the things in your life that cause you the most stress. It is also during periods like this that you need to evaluate how you can influence your own environment to achieve what you want. It is this environmental influence that may in fact yield you exactly what you want. The only catch is, you have to want to have it without wanting to have it.

That may not make a lot of sense but it will soon. One of the things I have learned as time has passed by is that if you allow yourself to become wrapped up in desire, you may never ever get the things you want the most. It's only when you acknowledge that there are things you want, but that you don't need to have them or that they

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really don't matter all that much, that these things are actually provided to you. Let me provide a very small example of this.

Several years ago I was on a business trip to the US and on that trip, upon arriving at the airport on Friday afternoon, my returning flight was cancelled. Normally a cancelled flight would only be a minor annoyance to me but in this case it was a major issue because I was expected to be home on Sunday for a funeral service. A long time friend of mine had passed away unexpectedly and I needed to be at that service. The next flight would be leaving on Saturday afternoon and knowing that many other flights had been cancelled (severe snow storm in the east US and Canada) I knew that it was looking bleak for me to get home for that service on Sunday. Taking a chance, I decided to rent a car and drive from where I was (Providence, Rhode Island) to Toronto, Ontario, Canada. My travel agent confirmed me on a flight from Toronto to my hometown on Saturday morning so as long as I was at the airport in time, there shouldn't be a problem. It was around 5pm and I knew it would be anywhere from 9-12 hours to drive there so I figured I could make it no problem. After driving for what seemed like forever (about 14 hours in bad snow conditions) I arrived in Toronto in the early hours of the morning where I crashed in my hotel room for a couple of hours and then proceeded into the airport to catch my flight.

Upon getting to check in, I was told that my travel agent had misinformed me and that I was booked on the same flight for the following day: Sunday. I told the agent that this was not acceptable and that I needed to be on that flight. She said she could put me on standby but there were no guarantees. I went to the gate anyway and

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waited but was not able to get on the flight. I had the option of staying in the airport for the next flight, or going somewhere else to wait. I was EXTREMELY mad. In fact, I would say that I was pissed off. It was very important for me to be home on Sunday but I also knew that with as many cancellations as there was, it would be slim to none for me to get on a flight via standby. I left the airport, checked into a hotel, slept off my anger, and woke up deciding to try for standby again. I knew the chances were slim but why not try anyway.

I got to the airport and they told me that they could put me on the list but it looked full already. I thanked them for their help and decided I would go for a walk to kill some time before the flight and maybe I'd get home that night. It was shortly after this I had a very pivotal moment in my life. I had my headphones on, listening to some music and as I walked through the airport, I looked up to the ceiling and noticed some of the cool art they had hanging down. It was at this time I came to the realization that I was a very lucky person. I had a job that allowed me to travel and see all of these interesting and unique things that I would never have seen otherwise. Here I was complaining about not getting home when I wanted, but not fully appreciating what I had already been given. I smiled, took a deep breath and felt an overwhelming sense of peace come over me. I felt that in that moment that I should appreciate what I had already been given and to not worry about these other things. If I was supposed to get home for the funeral, I'd make it home. If I didn't make it home, it would be alright because far worse things could have happened.

I worked my way back to the gate agents who then asked me if I was Matthew Klem. I said yes and they said they had been trying to

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page me. The agent handed me a boarding pass. I was going home on that flight after all.

On that flight home, I did a lot of thinking and I came to a realization about myself and my life. The whole time since I found out my original flight had been cancelled, I had been angry and mad and wondering why this was happening to me. I expressed a lot of anger and frustration and as long as I was doing that, it seemed the universe was against me. No flights available, the drive to Toronto taking longer than it should, and then getting there with no reservation for the morning flight. These were all things that seemed to be "against" me. Once I took stock of my situation and simply accepted that I was fortunate enough to have even been travelling in the first place, it seemed almost like magic that I got a seat on that flight home, enabling me to make it to the funeral after all. For me, once I sat back and evaluated the situation, I became convinced that if I had not had my moment in the airport and had not come to a sort of peace with it, that I would not have gotten that seat on the plane.

Now for those of you with a more methodical and logical mind, you would likely see the above story as mere coincidence. There is no scientific evidence to suggest that my own inner discovery had anything to do with getting on a plane. That would imply that somehow, unbeknownst to me, I was able to influence the other people who were on the same standby list as myself, or even the ticket agent who issued the boarding pass in the first place. There are too many factors involved in this to realistically allow for the outcome to have been controlled by myself. I would agree that scientifically it seems very illogical. However I maintain that it is in fact possible.

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The Law Of Attraction is known to explain how mere thought has the ability to influence chance. By simply thinking something, it can happen. Now I can't think to myself, "I'm going to win the lottery" and magically I win the lottery. It doesn't work like that. It's more like I can think to myself "I'm going to win the lottery" and accept that if I am meant to win the lottery, if the universe has in fact decided that I am to win the lottery, that I will win the lottery. I also have to release expectation from desire. When you want something badly, you expect it to come to you and anticipate that it should come to you immediately. I want to win the lottery so I expect to and then when you don't, you are disappointed because you were sure that you would win. If you can achieve a state of mind where you desire something but you also have no expectations of it, either positive or negative, you are more inclined to be successful.

This is not a scientific principle in any means but merely a way to finding a bit more satisfaction in your own life. I believe that since the universe does in fact encompass everything that we are, we are able to influence the world around us in ways we don't yet understand. Imagine for a moment that all of man is connected via water. If you create a wave near you, it affects others around you. Now we all don't live in the water, but that wave is still very real. There are things you can do with your mind and your body that affects the surrounding environment. By focusing your energy and attention, you can find a means to influence things to give you what you want. The only thing you need to remember is that if the universe is sure that something is not meant for you, there's nothing you can do to prevent it. Always remember to look deep inside yourself to find out whether or not your

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gut is telling you that this is the right thing to do. Your gut doesn't lie remember?

Chapter 13: Religion

Of all the topics discussed in this book, the topic of religion and it's role in the universe's plan is one that I was a little wary of writing about. The biggest reason for my reluctance has to do with my own interest in not offending those who follow specific religions. Whether it be Christianity, Judaism or any other faith, I am of no authority to tell anyone what they should or should not believe. In fact, I believe that no one has the right to tell anyone else what they should or should not believe. Every human being has the fundamental right to believe in whatever they want to believe because it is our nature and our right.

Regardless of how ridiculous some beliefs may seem to some, everyone has a right to believe what they want. If you want to believe that flying chickens from outer space gave birth to man, feel free to. You might not find many other followers but you are free to believe it if you want. I do not believe for a moment that I, or anyone else, has the right to tell someone that what they believe is wrong and that they are "on the wrong path". Some religions choose to share their beliefs with others and allow them to choose freely whether or not they want to follow. Other religions are a bit more heavy handed in that they

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seem to want people to "convert" to their religion because they feel they need to be saved. This is part of their religion. They tend to view those who do not believe as they do should be saved from eternal damnation by being shown the way to ever lasting happiness. This of course is purely their point of view and you may not share it.

I bring up the specific topic of religion within the pages of this book because this book does share one common theme with most religions: the need for answers. For those who do follow a particular faith, they follow it because in some fashion their faith has provided them with purpose and direction for their life. It's a common story to hear about how a man who's life was filled with crime found God and then turned over a new leaf and became a new man. He turned away from his life of crime and became one who helped others and completely changed his life for the better. This man would say that his faith in God changed him for the better and his following of God's teachings is what keeps him on the right path. Others find something in a particular faith that they identify with. Perhaps it's the specific deity involved, or the values expressed in the faith's teachings. Whatever it is that you identify with, it catches your attention and sort of "pulls you in" and all of a sudden everything in your life seems to make more sense. You find a commonality with others who also share the same faith and therefore you no longer feel alone in the world. You feel like you are now part of something greater.

So what does this have to do with Gut Theory? Well, if you found yourself reading these pages and thinking that what I've written here seems to make sense to you, then you might wonder why it is that

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religion in our world exists at all? It would seem that the universe had created us but where and how did religion come from, and how is it that there are so many varying degrees of difference between them? Does religion serve some purpose to the universe itself or does it simply exist as a result of mankind's desire to find answers? I believe both are true.

If we are to believe that mankind has been around in one form or another for as long as it has (anywhere from 100,000 years to one million years depending on what you read) then it would seem to make sense that even in the earliest days of man, we would have wondered where we came from and how things came to be. Many historians have shown that in many cultures, human beings worshiped things like the sun, or even other animals as gods. Where that came from is anyone's guess but at some point, someone decided that we came from somewhere and decided to write it down and teach it to others. This is where religion was born. How that person came to know or claim to know our origins is really irrelevant because the result was that the first religion was born. At some point in time, someone else decided that what was being taught as our origin was not the case and they believed it to be something else and they wrote down what they believed. This splitting of beliefs continued on into the various ages that have passed. You also have to keep in mind that civilizations throughout the world were very different and therefore it may have even started with several groups of human beings who believed differently but they simply resided in different parts of the world.

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Regardless of the specifics of how it started, the end result is what we see today. An endless combination of religious beliefs from many different cultures. Everything from believing in Jesus Christ, to worshipping of cattle, to the teachings of Scientology, all of these variations came from somewhere or someone. Ultimately, religion was man made. Even if God himself spoke to man, man still wrote it down and taught it to others and as the ages passed, it was translated and re-translated and re-taught to people over and over again, each time with subtle changes. These changes became more and more prevalent as time passed because over the course of time, man has changed. In the end, it was still man who took what they believed to be God's words, and wrote them down. Religion was born from man, not God.

I make this claim simply because if we look at the world around us, there are countless religions out there and all of them have their own set of beliefs, origin stories, morals, and life guidelines. If there is in fact only one true god, then how is it that we have literally thousands of theories and religions about our origins? We have so many versions simply because we have so many different people, with so many varying points of view. As time progresses, the splintering of religion will continue and by the time we are all long and buried, even more versions of religion will have popped up.

So with all of that, how does this affect what the universe itself is trying to do with us? If in fact my theory about the origin and purpose of life is true, then what purpose would religion serve for man and for the universe itself? Well, I've already given you the reason why man needs religion. We need it because we need to have a sense

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of origin and purpose. Again, since man is made of many different cultures, there will be many different versions of this. But what purpose does it serve the universe? How does God use religion to allow things to happen as they should? I've mentioned previously that because man's free will has interfered in the will of God, the universe itself has had to make changes in order to allow things to happen as they should. I believe that the universe has used religion as a means to both help and manage the population at large.

If you think about it, those who share the same set of religious values can be grouped together. These individuals, regardless of their background, can be counted upon to act and respond to actions in a certain way based on their religious beliefs. If a Christian witnesses what they believe to be a miracle, they will share the story of the miracle with other Christians. A Buddhist might believe that by doing good actions, good rewards will be given to them and thus they share that with others. Regardless of the specifics of the religion, the universe is aware of the details and how various actions will be interpreted by these groups. Knowing that, the universe is able to influence events and people through the use of religion. It helps to manage a much larger group of individuals by simply organizing them into smaller groups.

Let's say Jack is a manager in a large construction firm. He has been tasked with building an entirely new city from scratch. To accomplish this, he's been given a staff of 1,000 people. All of these people will be used to plan, design, and construct this new city. The large group consists of architects, plumbers, electricians, carpenters,

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designers, and every other kind of person needed to build a city from scratch. But in order for Jack to build the city on time and on budget, he needs to organize all of his staff into teams so that he can more easily manage them. One person managing 1,000 people for a project this large is virtually impossible. Jack decides to break the employee group down into 10 teams of 100 employees and assign a team leader to each of those 10 teams. Those 10 team leaders will report to Jack on a weekly basis to keep him apprised of the progress. Jack refers to his team of 10 team leaders as the "Plan" team. The "Plan" team have a meeting and realize that for each of them, managing 100 employees each is going to be difficult as well. So each of those team leaders decides that they will break their own team down into 10 teams of 10 people with one of those individuals acting as a team leader. This allows each member of the "Plan" team to only manage 10 employees instead of 100. The members of the "Plan" team refer to their own 10 team leaders as the "Build" team. The "Plan" team meets with Jack to let him know that they are ready to begin the city and planning begins.

In this example, we ultimately have one guy who needs to manage 1,000 different people in order to successfully complete a project. Because there are so many different people involved in this project, it was easier for Jack to break it down into small pieces to help him better organize his plan. By creating the "Plan" team, he reduced his work from managing 1,000 people, to 10. It is FAR easier for him to manage 10 people, than 1,000. For the "Plan" team, each member had to manage 100 employees which in itself is quite a task. To ease their effort, they split the 100 people up into groups of 10. All those

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groups of 10 were called the "Build" team. They went from having to manage 100 people, to only 10. By grouping people together with common tasks, they made it far easier to get the city built the way it should be than if they had simply let Jack manage everything himself.

I believe this is how the universe sees religion. It is not something that it had originally intended to create, but since mankind went ahead and made it anyway, the universe has since been able to sort of catalogue people by placing them into various religions. Even those who do not believe in a god or any other type of religion can still be classified as being in a religion that simply does not believe in religion. With more than 6 billion people in the world, it is far easier to manage that mass of people by grouping them together in logical groups, than to try and influence each one individually. Say for example, the universe needed to push science in a new direction because of something that is coming up in the future. Perhaps the universe would cause an event that would allow non-believers (those who don't believe in God) to further "prove" that what they believe is the actual truth. This would inevitably cause a surge of uproar from the religious community and may in fact urge change in one direction. If this is something the universe needed, it's much easier to influence a single group, then to influence many individuals. By causing one event to happen, and therefore causing a large group of people to act, it forces change in some fashion.

Bottom line, the universe sees religion as a means to group our large population of individuals into smaller groups so that when action

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on a large scale is required, very little work is needed to be done by the universe itself.

The universe is not concerned with the details of what each religion believes as far as how “right” it is. The universe is more concerned with how the beliefs, praises, and fears of each religion can be used to usher action when needed.

Let’s say that the universe decides that in order for a specific goal to be reached, it needs more evidence that the theory of creation is true. To accomplish this perhaps it uses the atheists to inspire the creationists. The non-believers suddenly uncover the infamous “missing link” in evolution. They see this as the nail in the coffin to the creation myth. Distraught by their findings, the creationists are inspired further to prove that God exists and in doing so, they uncover yet more religious texts that seem to further “prove” that God is in fact real.

By using religion to influence larger amounts of individuals, it makes causing action within our world much easier. The universe can focus much more on the larger tasks at hand when the need to influence only individuals is removed.

Chapter 14: Now What?

As you near the end of this book, you're likely wondering what it is you are supposed to do with all this new insight. Are you supposed to change your life entirely and now follow only your gut? Will you abandon your own religion and start preaching Gut Theory to all your friends? Will you put this book on your shelf and forget that you ever read it? Will it serve as an interesting topic of conversation at your next visit to your psychologist? Whatever you choose to do with what you have read within these pages is your decision, but I do have a few recommendations.

First off, the one thing that you need to remember is that what I have written here is merely my own interpretation of the universe, our purpose, and our origins. I didn't have some magic vision from God that told me to write this all down. I didn't decide that maybe I could make a fortune if I started my own religion. I don't have any proof that anything I have written in this book is true. All I have is what I feel and what I have learned so far in my life. I'm not a religious scholar and I'm definitely no Jesus Christ or Joseph Smith. I'm just a regular guy who calls himself a geek and has found a way to lead his life in a

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way that makes him happy. I have good days and bad days just like everyone else, but over the course of the last 10 years, I have seen and experienced things that I just cannot pass off as simply random acts of chance in life. I find myself finding meaning in many things that happen to me in my daily life. This book was simply a way to express my own interpretation of what all of this means.

If you've made it this far through the book, then it would seem that at least something within its pages has caught your eye. So that having been said, you ultimately have a few choices as to what you can do with the knowledge you have gained by reading through this book. You can decide that it was an interesting piece of fiction and move on to your next novel. You could shake your head and think that it was a waste of time and use the pages as fire starter in your wood stove. You might think that some of what I have written makes a bit of sense but it's just too far for you to go from what you believe now so you'll keep the book, remember some of it, but likely never look back. Lastly, you might think what I have written here makes a lot of sense and you want to use some or all of it in your daily life. Or maybe you'd like to believe it but you're not sure how to go about proving it to yourself. How do you do that?

Whether or not you believe all the stuff about the universe being God and us as part of something larger doesn't really effect how you can use Gut Theory to help you. If you genuinely want to know if your gut will lead you to a better life, then I implore you to put yourself through a gut test. It's not something that will take a lot of time, but it will require you to be completely, and totally honest with

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yourself. I mentioned before that you can't read your gut properly if you're not honest. So even if you have hidden your true self from the world for years, in order to properly test whether or not Gut Theory works for you, you'll need to at least be honest for a short period of time. Also, before putting yourself through this little experiment, I recommend doing it during a time period when you have no major life situations occurring. If you're in the middle of grieving because you had a close relative pass away, or are knee deep in career troubles, it's probably not the best time to play with how you decide things in your life. Use your best judgment as to when is a good time to try this. Hell, if you are in the middle of a personal crisis and nothing else has worked, feel free to try this. Here's what you need to do:

Make the conscious decision that for one week, you are going to make a sustained effort to follow your gut and your instincts regardless of your nerves or fear. The decisions you will make during that week will not be influenced by your friends, your family, co-workers, or anyone else. You will not go back on any decision you make based on your gut feeling regardless of what others may think or what your nerves may think. You will stick with your decisions and see the results. You will not seek help or input from anyone in making any decision that comes up during this time period. Instead, you will make the decisions based purely on what you "feel". What does your gut tell you is the "right" thing to do? Now, depending on your week, you may not have to make any major decisions so it might be an easy week. But for other weeks, big things might come up and you'll need to decide what course of action to take. If you find that a single week is not enough time, then maybe you should try a whole month. The

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key here is to alter the way you make decisions and look deep within yourself to see what your gut is telling you. If you constantly turn down those invitations to go out for coffee with your co-workers, try listening to your gut next time instead of saying no because of your nerves. It's all about changing your behaviour, not sticking with the same tried and true.

If you're unsure as to what your gut is saying, you can try a few different things. One method is based on a really old game. "Say the first thing that comes to mind whenever I say something". As soon as you are put into a situation where you need to make a decision, go with whatever the first thing is that comes into your mind, regardless of how out-of-character or nerve wracking it might be. For many people, their gut is the first thing to speak to them and therefore that is what they go by. It obviously doesn't apply to everything, but this method can be used to see if this is how your gut works in your body.

Another method which is a bit more time consuming, but may work better for others, is to make your decision and then ask yourself if 1) Did anyone else contribute in any way to swaying my decision in this direction? 2) Is fear or nervousness of the consequences of this choice causing me to choose something other than what I "feel" is the best decision? 3) Am I scared to choose a particular choice because it involves people and/or activities for which I am either unaccustomed to, or fearful of? 4) Am I choosing one option over another simply because the one I feel my "gut" is telling me to choose is too hard and the other one is more simple?

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Asking yourself any of those questions after making a decision may help you to define whether or not it is your gut talking, or your own self-conscious behaviour. Many people find that their gut tells them to do things that are uncomfortable or that force them into situations that they are unfamiliar with and therefore they shy away from. However, in many of those situations, forcing yourself to try something new and unknown opens up new opportunities and makes you realize that there is far more to life than the comfortable little zone that we all typically choose to live in. Remember that if you are reading this then you are likely looking for a change. Don't be afraid to simply dive right in and do something different.

At the end of your trial period whether it be a week or a month, sit back and evaluate what you did differently and how it affected you. How did making decisions based on your gut feeling change the situations that you were in? What positive and negative things happened as a result of the way you chose to decide your course of action? If you experienced some negative side effects, how will you deal with those and can you see how those might in fact help you later on? Remember, this is just a quick little experiment to see how changing of your decision making can affect your life. When all is said and done, remember that we all have free will so it's not always about doing exactly what your gut says. Sometimes for your own reasons you have to go against what your instincts are telling you, but as long as you are aware of that, you can effect change later when it seems more appropriate. Good luck!

Chapter 15: The End

When the time came for me to make a decision about whether or not I believed in a traditional god, I had only my own beliefs, thoughts, feelings, and own theories about human nature to help me. I chose to trust these as I have mentioned previously that my experiences with various churches has not been a positive one. As I got closer to the end of this book, I started to wonder how these pages would be perceived by someone who was a true believer in a more traditional god.

It got me to thinking about why I chose to believe what I have written versus traditional theology. I've mentioned this a few times throughout the book. Ultimately it really came down to me asking God that if what he wanted from his children was to follow his rules, then how come there are so many versions of them? The splintering of God's original words seems to have created a multitude of different religions, all based on the same book or the same original set of rules and guidelines.

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I kept wondering to myself about how anyone was ever supposed to get it “right” if there are so many variations on the same theme. That’s when I started thinking about how I treat my own children. If God is supposed to be the father of man, then he is supposed to be taking care of us, helping us, guiding us, and insuring that we have the best possible life we can while still allowing us to have free will and make our own decisions. That’s the type of father I am to my kids. Although mine are very young, I am going to do everything I possibly can to give them as many options as they have for their life, but instil into them good moral values so they will grow up to be good people. Even as children, I allow them to decide things for themselves, but I help and take care of them because that’s what a father does. In doing that, I need to make sure I am clear to them. You would think that if God is indeed our father, then he would be doing something similar. That’s when I started to think that perhaps the God we know from the Holy Bible is not in fact God at all.

If you do as the bible says, and follow the church, you’ll be rewarded by being granted eternal happiness in heaven when you die. Now, in order to follow the bible, you generally would need to be a member of a church and as I have stated previously, depending on which church you go to, their version of the bible will vary. Catholics versus Pentecostals and various other versions of this religion have their own differences. So at the end of the day, when you finally die, do you still get to go to heaven? If you were a Catholic, did you follow the right set of rules? What about a Baptist? What about a Mormon? What about....whatever? There are SO many different interpretations

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and variations on this single piece of text that there is no possible way any human being could ever know if they are following the right one.

That's when it made the most sense. None of them are right. If God truly is our father and he is setting down the rules for us to follow in our life, then how can we ever be expected to do things the way God wants us to when there are literally hundreds of variations of the same set of rules. It can't be done. You'd almost have better luck at playing the lottery than being able to find the exact set of rules and guidelines that God wanted us to follow. I cannot fathom how we are supposed to do the "right" thing, when depending on which priest/pastor/minister you talk to, the "right" thing will vary.

As a dad, if I tell my kids that they get to have ice cream for dessert if they clean their room, they know that they need to get their room clean to get dessert. That's their reward. There's no question as to what they need to do. The reward is quite clear, and the means to get to it are very clear. It's also very fair because they need to do something in order to get something. If I handed them a stack of 100 cards and said, "Pick a card and clean your room according to how the card tells you. When you're done, you get to have ice cream for dessert". They choose a card and proceed to do as the card says. Every one of the cards is different, but they all basically have the kids cleaning their room in different ways. They follow the cards direction and when dessert time comes, they show me their card. Am I really going to tell them that they don't get to have their dessert because they didn't pick the right card? They did the work, and they did as they were asked to. Why should it matter?

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For me, that's the biggest factor in choosing not to believe in a typical Christian god. There's simply no possibly way you could know that what you are doing is in fact the "right" way. So if you follow an entire faith religiously and then you die, and that faith wasn't the right one, what happens? You don't get to go to heaven? You burn in Hell for all eternity? How does that seem right? If I live my life to the best of my ability, treating others with kindness and joy, but I don't follow a particular faith, or I believe as I do in Gut Theory, then how does that seem right that I should spend eternity in Hell? Am I really to believe that if I don't happen to pick the right religion, or I decide to not believe at all, then I'm going to end up suffering for all time? I just can't accept that this is how it is supposed to be.

Conventional church followers would tell you that faith is all about believing in something. The ability to tell yourself that "this" is true, regardless of whatever else you see and hear out there. You need to still believe even when it seems that other things are telling you otherwise. Your faith tells you that what you believe is the "right" path and that you need to trust that faith. This unwavering belief is a test from God so that when your life here is over, you'll be accepted into the kingdom of heaven. So for each of those variations that I spoke of, you are supposed to just believe that the version you have chosen is true and hope that you get it right.

I'm all for religious diversity and I support any of my friends who choose to believe different than I do. But for me, the end result is that there's only one God. Whatever he/she may be, for all the religions in the world, the end result is the same. There's only one

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answer and when you look at something like the Holy Bible and all of the derivatives from it, it becomes virtually impossible to find the “right” answer.

This is why I chose to believe in something else entirely. There's a part of me that really wants to believe in the god from the Holy Bible. But to believe in that god, you need to be able to choose "which" version of the bible you wish to follow and for me, that simply wasn't possible. To see all of those variations out there tells me that there's no way I would ever be able to have any amount of security in knowing I was believing the right thing. I know that this is what faith is all about, but I also need something that works for me. After all, faith and spirituality are a very personal thing and you need to make sure that whatever it is you believe works for you, regardless of what others may think.

This is where Gut Theory came from. I needed a place to sit down and write out all of the various things that I was thinking and feeling about my purpose, my origin, and where it all came from. When I looked back at the last ten years of my life, I have found that my gut and my instinct gave me the most insight into my own life and purpose. In thinking that perhaps God is in fact the universe itself, it seemed that I had finally found something that I can believe in, that works for me, and makes the most sense. It may not for anyone else, but I knew I had to put it all down if for no other reason than to explain it to myself. I always sort of knew that I believed in something that was a little different, but never knew quite how to express it.

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This book was my attempt to explain it all. Not only did I manage to explain the fundamental concepts to myself, but in writing it all out and putting it into this book, I'm able to share my thoughts and feelings about life's purpose with others. I don't see this as the definitive answer to what the meaning of life is all about. I only see it as one possibility that seems to fall in line with many things we see around us. Do I believe that what I have written here is more right than any other origin theory? No. All I can say is that what I have written here seems to make the most sense for me today. Some time down the road, after I have had other experiences in my life, my perception of my life's purpose, and the origin of man may in fact be different, but for right now, this seems to work the best for me. Maybe it will for you too.

Although this book does touch on a few things that might be classified as the “unexplained” by many, I chose to leave out a lot of those things because I don't think that a single book or even a single theory is capable of explaining or theorizing everything that exists within our world. I think it is simply better to write down and join together the things that make the most sense, and let the rest remain open to interpretation by others.

Some would say that the ideas and concepts addressed in this book would seem blasphemous against the church. In fact I can imagine that some religious groups would see my thoughts and opinions of their God to be downright offensive. The truth is it has never been my intention to offend anyone with my thoughts or opinions. I believe that everyone is entitled to believe whatever they

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want whether it be in a merciful God who loves his children, or a flying thunder turkey who wanders the galaxy with fleas in his feathers. Regardless of what you believe, you have the right to your own thoughts and feelings about the nature of the universe. To those who would see my version of creation and purpose as offensive, I would ask why? If people are truly secure in their beliefs than those of us who believe differently than they do should not bother or impede them in anyway. In fact, you would think that they would want to know more so they can understand the differences. If you're angered by the things I have written, then I would wonder if deep down inside of you somewhere, your gut is telling you something you don't want to hear. Don't be afraid to listen to others. There's no shame in having an open mind. Just be sure that whatever you believe works for you and realize that everyone is different and because we're different, we'll have differing points of view. Especially on the meaning of life. Don't assume that because you believe so strongly in something that it makes it fact. No one really knows the absolute truth and that's why it's called faith.

I'm not a priest, a saviour, or even a prophet. I'm simply a human being that has been on a quest to find an answer to what my purpose is. I have spent my life thus far experiencing everything I can and trying to remain open minded about everything around me. But fundamentally I have always felt like there was something more to my life than just conventional day to day work and fatherhood. That's not to say that those are not admirable endeavours. It just always seemed that my gut was telling me that there was something else I was destined to do. Something important. This could very well be just the

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inner child within me wanting to be bigger than I ever have been. Or, it could in fact be the universe telling me that greater things are to come. My gut believes the latter to be true. Only time will tell.

References

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Matthew Klem is a self-professed geek who decided to share his insight into how he has changed his life for the better by following his inner voice.

Gut Theory is Matthew's thoughts, feelings, and interpretations of the world around you as seen by someone who's always wanted to believe, but needed something more.

Why am I here? What is my purpose in life? How do I know what I should do when I need to decide something important?

These are all questions every human being has asked and religion has tried countless times to try and answer them only to leave the logical minded behind. Science has attempted to explain our origins and purpose to satisfy those who aren't able to make a leap of faith, only to leave us without a real sense of purpose.

Within these pages, you'll find a "gut theory" which bridges the gap between science and faith by examining the one thing that neither side can deny: human instinct.

Gut Theory attempts to explain the nature of human existence by implying that one's "gut" is in fact the driving force behind your life. That instinctual feeling that everyone experiences is actually your inner voice that tells you exactly what you need to know in order to make the right decisions in your daily lives.

If you've ever wanted to believe in something, but most religions seemed to "confined", or perhaps only logic makes the most sense to you but leaves you feeling alone in the universe, Gut Theory will provide you with an answer that will allow you to lead a happy and fulfilling life, whether you are a believer or not.

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