

THE BIG IDEAS

Spiritual Growth: Physics
+ States and traits.

Step 1

See the God Force within you.

Rat DDT

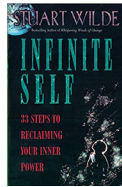
Escape to Empowermentville!

Discipline = Power

A chat about ego, id and superego.

Serenity

Your new superpower.



Infinite Self

33 Steps to Reclaiming Your Inner Power

BY STUART WILDE · HAY HOUSE © 1996 · 240 PAGES

“Looking around at our Western nations, you can see that the quality of people’s lives is going down the tubes. They are getting worse and worse, sicker and sicker. So you’ve only got two options. You can sit around and get physically and emotionally ill, or you can do something about it. The first step of this journey is desire. How strong is your desire? Will you consolidate it and become free, and perceive the world in a different way? Can you let go of where you find yourself today? You don’t have to go over the top like I did and walk out of your house. But you do have to have the desire, and you will have to act to change things.

You make the first move. Spirit never comes down to fetch you. It doesn’t wander around saying, ‘Anybody here want to get realized? Anyone need to transcend?’ It’s not whistling in the marketplace trying to drum up business. It sits there, passively waiting for you to come and get it. So a part of your process is to reach up for it.

Put your arms up, reach out and say to that infinite God Force inside of you—in whatever way you want to describe it: Buddha, the Christ consciousness, Krishna, the Tao—reach up and say, ‘Hey, I want to change. I want to go beyond where I find myself now; because if I don’t, I’ll bore myself to death.’ You’ve got to want to change—that’s the first move. I wanted to. I must say, I had a lot of desire and a lot of tenacity. A lot.

So if you’re coming along on this journey, make the commitment. If you don’t want to make the commitment, throw this book out the window.”

~ Stuart Wilde from *Infinite Self*

*“You are the God Force.
Never forget that. It’s
important to remind yourself
that the Infinite Self is
dynamic and fast-changing, and
your life will begin to reflect
that nature so it can rest in
a perpetual state of dynamic
change and not-knowing. But
that won’t bother you as
you’ve learned not to hold on
to things.”*

~ Stuart Wilde

I got this book after reading a quote from Stuart Wilde in [An Audience of One](#). It floored me.

We’ll talk about it more in a bit, but here it is: “Messy surroundings and an untidy life reflect a weakened metaphysical and psychological state. If you are powerful, you will dominate your life, you will find time to clean up and order things, and you will want to do that as a part of your personal discipline. Mess is the external manifestation of the ego’s disquiet and laziness.”

So, the next time I was online, I went straight to Google to find out where that quote came from. Enter: This book. I read it a couple days later. (Thank you, Amazon.)

Stuart Wilde was a leading a figure in the self-help movement. In the 1990’s, he was giving lectures with Louise Hay, Deepak Chopra and Wayne Dyer. He’s a really funny guy.

This book was written in 1996. It features “33 steps” to tapping into the infinite within you. In some ways, it’s like a Taoist version of [Eric Butterworth’s](#) (Christian) take on it in [Discover the Power Within You](#). (Get a copy of the book [here](#).)

Of course, it’s packed with Big Ideas. I’m excited to share a few of my favorites so let’s jump straight in!

"If you say to yourself that you will do something, do it. Don't make promises you won't keep, and don't make promises to others if you can't or won't follow through. Become immaculate. Be honorable. ... By making your word law, you develop power. ... Most people are not used to their word as law. They are used to wimping out-slip-sliding away if conditions don't suit them. It weakens them, for the mind knows you're full of bull."

~ Stuart Wilde

THE PHYSICS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

"Looking at yourself can be uncomfortable. It's difficult to learn to control the ego and discipline the mind without it reacting. However, it is a vital part of the journey and you have to raise your energy gradually, over a period of time. I don't buy the idea that something or someone is going to descend upon you one day and raise you up—a great guru, Jesus, or some angelic being—that they are going to touch you on the forehead, and suddenly you'll be elevated to a higher plane. I'm sorry if that contradicts your beliefs but energy seeks its own level. Even though something or someone can inspire you or teach you, in the end the only way you will sustain a higher energy is to create it for yourself.

In the laws of physics, a subatomic particle can borrow energy for a millisecond, moving to a faster orbit around a nucleus. However, the particle can't keep that borrowed energy indefinitely. So whatever energy is borrowed in this second has to be paid back a split second later, and the particle returns (decays) to where it is comfortable, at the energy level it had before.

Spiritual growth follows the same rules. You can be inspired by a hymn, by a fantastic sermon, words out of a book; but you can only borrow that inspiration. In the end, raising your energy involves discipline, which means working upon yourself. There is no particular time when you can say, 'I've done it, I've finished.' Embracing the Infinite Self is a perpetual process, unfolding within you forever and ever. That is the only way you can sustain yourself indefinitely at a higher level."

Those are the last words of the introduction before we move on to Step 1.

One of the things I like about Stuart Wilde (in addition to his sense of humor) is the fact that he's able to combine some pretty esoteric ideas with a REALLY strong sense of discipline.

Of course, we talk about this all the time, but it's always nice to revisit the fact that a) tapping into the best within ourselves requires discipline, b) that's an incremental process + c) that process never ends. (As in NEVER ends.)

As *The Tools* guys say, thinking you will one day "get there" and then be exonerated from all future discipline/hard work is probably the story that gets us in the most trouble. (Closely related to the story that we should *already* "be there.")

As I reflect on the physics of self-development, I'm reminded of Ken Wilber's ideas on states and traits. Short story: We can have an elevated "state" experience when we're "inspired by a hymn, by a fantastic sermon, words out of a book." That's nice.

BUT... As I'm sure we've all experienced, that state will "decay" shortly after you get back from that weekend workshop or whatever it is that fired you up. We must, as all the great teachers say, DO THE WORK to convert that "state" into a "trait."

How? A lot of hard work. Discipline. Diligence. Patience. Persistence. Aggregating and compounding a ton of little incremental optimizations day in and day out for a long, long time. More precisely: Forever.

STEP 1: SEE THE GOD FORCE WITHIN YOU

"The first of the 33 steps is called *I Am God*. You may wonder, 'Who's this little twirp saying, 'I am God'? What I mean by it is that you have to accept the idea of the God Force being within you.

Obviously, if the God Force is everywhere, it must be within you. But most people either have no concept of God at all, or they externalize God, creating a God *outside* themselves. Engaging the intellect to comprehend God, they are required to project the idea away from themselves. So they'll say, 'This person is God, these ideas are God, money is God, glamour is God,' whatever.

“Visualize yourself there in your hometown, standing across it like you’re 300 or 500 feet tall, and you’re big. The little things of day-to-day life don’t bother you. You are beyond them; you don’t mind a little rain. You don’t mind a few people giving you a hard time in the supermarket. You don’t mind the guy in the post office who was rude to you. You don’t mind the car that cut you off in traffic. You’re not in a rush; you’re eternal. You’re bigger than these things.”

~ Stuart Wilde

“You get them to see that the only way up is when they’re enthusiastic about their life and their evolution on this earth plane. When their desire to achieve and perceive and create more is greater than the ego’s self-indulgence, obstinacy, and destructive ways—then, and only then will people change.”

~ Stuart Wilde

The God Force is within. Internalize that God Force and accept that it is flowing through you. When you perceive God as a force outside of you, you can’t really use its energy properly. Once you internalize the force, and it is not just a vague intellectual concept of the God within, then you can move to actually *feeling* the God Force inside of you. At that point, a truly awesome power of perception and goodness enters your life.”

Welcome to Step 1. Want to tap into your Infinite Self? Look within.

And, if you feel so bold, declare: “*I Am God.*”

As I said in the intro, this book reminds me of Eric Butterworth’s *Discover the Power Within You*. Here’s how he puts it: “*The more we understand the concepts of Jesus, the more we realize that the only time we can truthfully say, ‘That’s just the way I am,’ is when we are referring to the divinity within us. You have a great potentiality, a divine self within you that needs to be released. This is what Jesus really taught.*”

Butterworth also echoes both the “Infinite” and the “I Am” wisdom when he tells us: “*But you must still make that great decision to affirm your unity with the Infinite. You must still believe that I AM, and then work tirelessly to act the part. You must claim your freedom, realizing that it does not mean doing what you like, but becoming what you should.*”

Step 1. Recognize the divine within. Step 2. Work tirelessly to act the part.

This is the whole point of all of our work together. In my original Optimal Living 101 class (check out the full 10-hour class here), we discuss 10 principles. The 10th? en*theos or “God within.”

Everything we do is REALLY all about chipping away at the stuff that’s getting in the way of that divine energy flowing through us on a more consistent basis as we make ourselves the best conduit for that God Force (or whatever you want to call it).

Eat. Move. Sleep. Breathe. Focus. Conquer your digital addictions. Etc. Etc. Etc.

Why? Because *You Are God*. Let’s work tirelessly to act the part—becoming what we should.

P.S. For Christians, Stuart says: “*You can still be a good Christian and believe in Jesus Christ, but believe in a Christ energy inside you rather than outside you.*”

RAT DDT

“Certainly, someone can give you a hand up, but in the end, you have to buy your own healing. You either buy it with money because you go to a counselor or practitioner of some kind or you buy it with energy. Generate more energy, and you heal your life.

Raising people’s energy by picking them up from above doesn’t work. On an energy level, if you reach down and pick people up, their legs lose contact with the ground. They become disconnected with the reality of where their energy is. They lose sight of what is true and real and feasible—what is do-able today, given their energy.

Now you find that you are responsible for them, and you’ve got to keep holding them up. God forbid if you ever let them down again and say, ‘Hey, I helped you for six months, now you’re on your own.’ If you do that, they’re going to get extremely pissed off, and they’ll tell everyone what a rat you are. You’re going to think, ‘Hang on a minute; that doesn’t seem just. I’ve been helping this guy all the time, and now he’s saying what a rat I am.’ The fact is, you reached down and picked him up. He wasn’t necessarily ready. So you infringed upon his evolution by trying to accelerate his perceptions, trying to accelerate his energy without him asking for it. Or perhaps he did ask for it, but you didn’t show him how to hold himself up, so eventually he fell back to the energy that is comfortable for him, just like subatomic particles do.”

That’s from Step 5: Accepting Negativity As a Learning Experience.

"As you grow more self-confident and become spiritually mature, you'll soon reach a point where you can release most of the tribal ideas without too much apprehension and fear. Then you are free to become an individual, a true spiritual being with a spiritual destiny of your own."

~ Stuart Wilde

"I'm sure you understand now that the journey toward the Infinite Self is one of discipline. It isn't an easy journey. On TV, people promise you the world. Send \$39.95 and you can have thin thighs in 30 days. You can have this, you can have that; they tell you it's effortless. The spiritual journey is not effortless... It involves discipline. How much discipline you can impose is up to you. ... But without discipline, you really don't have much of a chance."

~ Stuart Wilde

Have you ever had that experience? Me, too. Recently, in fact! (Laughing.)

I think the best way to wrap our brains around what's going on here is to revisit David Emerald's great little book [The Power of TED*](#).

Check out those Notes for the full story. (Seriously, if you aren't familiar with this model yet, I HIGHLY recommend you get familiar with the ideas and start seeing your life through this lens.)

Short story: David tells us we can live in one of two "triangles": The Dreaded Drama Triangle (DDT for short) or The Empowerment Dynamic (TED for short).

Now, as with all good triangles, both DDT and TED have three points. They mirror each other but are very different. At the top of the Dreaded Drama Triangle we have a Victim. At the top of The Empowerment Dynamic, we have a Creator.

The Victim triangle has a Rescuer on the bottom right and a Persecutor on the bottom left. The Creator has a Coach and a Challenger in those spots.

So... The Victim is, as you'd guess, playing the role of Victim. That involves two other characters: They're always (but only always!) looking for someone (or something) to "rescue" them and, at the same time, there's always someone (or something) "persecuting" them. Just step back and listen to people incessantly blaming, complaining, and criticizing. That's DDT.

The Creator, on the other hand, takes responsibility for their lives. Although they're open to having a Coach support them in their heroic quest, they don't look for people to "rescue" them per se. And, rather than being a Victim to all the "Persecutors" in their lives, they see challenges for what they are: opportunities to grow and to CREATE the next-best version of themselves.

Now, back to Stuart: Want to become someone's persecuting rat? Just try to rescue them. (Hah.)

Here's to giving DDT to the rat and enjoying some healthy TED salad.

POWER COMES FROM DISCIPLINE (+ A WELL-INTEGRATED EGO)

"Discipline is important because without it, you can't control the mind. If you can't control yourself, you are always a victim of the brat within; instead of becoming a spiritual grown-up, you remain, in the spiritual sense, an adolescent."

So you have to start making yourself do things that help you exert control. Mention discipline and most people flee, like the Mongols are just about to come down off the hills. It's comical, the gyrations the ego will go through rather than accept your authority over it. I think it's best to creep up on it gradually. Invent things, one after the next—some disciplines of a minor nature, others more major, but get the ego used to the idea that you are going to get it doing things it doesn't necessarily like. It's got to buy the idea that you are in control. For the most part, it doesn't matter what disciplines you pick as long as you pick something."

That's from Step 9: Power Comes from Discipline.

Now, OF COURSE, I'm a big fan of discipline. And... Although I agree with the fundamental wisdom shared here, I do think we can split some hairs on the whole "ego" chat. So, let's.

Here's my take: The "brat" we need to deal with isn't actually your "ego" per se. In fact, we need to have a *well-adjusted* ego to tame the *two* brats in each of us: Our "id" (that impulsive part of us that just wants to do whatever we want RIGHT NOW!!) and the "superego" (that conditioned part of us that wants to make sure we're always making everyone happy).

Notice how we tend to bounce around from REALLY wanting to do something (whether that's impulsively checking our phone or impulsively saying something or whatever) THEN we feel REALLY bad as we imagine what others will think of us and how we *should* have behaved.

That's basically a never-ending fight going on between your Id and your Superego.

" Listen to your dialogue and watch your thoughts. See how much of it is bitching and moaning and expressing weakness, and how much of it has the God Force within it, expressing hope, gratitude, love, and well-being. Negativity kills you, never forget that. It's a weed that eventually chokes you to death."

~ Stuart Wilde

It's the well-adjusted, strong, disciplined ego that can get those two parts of you in line so you can function as a happy, healthy human being. You know, the version of you who *isn't* addicted to your phone (and email and news and social) who actually sticks to the training and nutrition and sleep routines you set for yourself. (aka: Your ego is strong enough to manage your Id.)

AND, the strong, healthy, disciplined ego-you ALSO knows how to step outside of the conditioning of our culture and trust ourselves as our own, iconoclastic taskmasters—dealing with the inevitable blowback from society. (Recall Emerson: *"For nonconformity, society will whip you with its displeasure."*) (aka: Your ego is strong enough to manage your superego.)

Now, of course, having a well-integrated ego isn't enough. You then need to move BEYOND your ego so you can live from your Infinite Self. But... It's a TWO-step process. First, you need to have a strong ego. THEN you get to move past it.

We can talk about this for a weekend. Check out [Pathways to Bliss](#) for [Joseph Campbell's](#) thoughts on the matter. For now, let's wrap it up with some more genius wisdom from [Ken Wilber](#). In *One Taste*, he tells us: *"But 'egoless' does not mean 'less than personal'; it means 'more than personal.' Not personal minus, but personal plus—all the normal qualities, plus some transpersonal ones."*

And: *"There is certainly a type of truth to the notion of transcending ego: it doesn't mean destroy the ego, it means plug it into something bigger... Put bluntly, the ego is not an obstruction to Spirit, but a radiant manifestation of Spirit."*

P.S. You know that quote that led me to this book? It was in this chapter. Here's the full passage: *"Another discipline I have found particularly important is to establish order in your life. Messy surroundings and an untidy life reflect a weakened metaphysical and psychological state. If you are powerful, you will dominate your life, you will find time to clean up and order things, and you will want to do that as a part of your personal discipline. Mess is the external manifestation of the ego's disquiet and laziness. Through mess, the ego exercises control over you. It's the brat within—obsessed with self, waiting for its mother to pick up after it. Or, sometimes, the brat from hell is just too important and special and full of itself to do mundane stuff like cleaning up and washing dishes. All the more reason to give it a whole pile of stuff to polish and clean. The more you accommodate the brat, the more it will make your life a misery.*

Make your life as immaculate as possible, and keep things zen and neat. Order helps you feel confident. Life becomes a prayer rather than the chaotic manifesto of an immature mind. The effort it takes to establish order is recouped in several ways. As an affirmation of control, it helps you feel more secure. It allows for a better flow of ideas and, most importantly, you don't waste energy hunting for things, stepping over a dead horse in the hallway every time the doorbell goes."

<- If that doesn't make you want to clean up I don't know what will!

P.P.S. You know how I often point out the word that's used most often in a book? Well, the #1 word used in this book is ENERGY. As in, find all the little possible ways to build *your* energy.

SERENITY: YOUR SUPERPOWER

"Most don't see serenity as a discipline, but in a modern world you have to work hard to enforce stillness and quiet time on your own. Activity feeds the personality with gratification, and it makes the ego feel important. Quiet time, serenity, and silence disempower the ego and make the inner you more special. It's a nice balance. So turn off the TV, unplug the phone, play soft, ambient music, or remain in silence for an hour or two. If you can't manage that long because you really are too busy, at least try to manage ten or fifteen minutes each day. Stillness and quiet are the way to pray to the inner self."

" By being less rigid, having fewer absolutes and opinions, and working on your emotions and desires, you can eliminate 90 percent of the anguish in your life."

~ Stuart Wilde

“ Every rule and regulation is a fence post of the prison you create for yourself. There’s a huge difference between rules and disciplines. Rules are imposed from above by control freaks, the government, the IRS, the church, your family. Discipline is something you take on joyously and willingly because you know it raises your energy and quiets the mind.”

~ Stuart Wilde

Serenity. It’s a superpower.

I’m going to skip the subtle commentary on ego, id and superego in this context but get this: That was written in 1996—which just so happens to be the year I graduated from UCLA with a degree in Psychology and a minor in Business. Guess what? I had no smartphone and no email and basically no internet. And, somehow, I managed to survive.

I’m reminded of Nobel Prize winner Herbert Simon’s wisdom that: *“...information consumes the attention of its recipients. Hence a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention and a need to allocate that attention efficiently among the overabundance of information sources that might consume it.”* <- He said THAT in 1971! What would he and Stuart say today?!

Finally: I’m also reminded of our recent Note on [Lead Yourself First](#). Those guys echo this wisdom and tell us we need to create solitude in our lives so that we can tap into four things: Clarity + Creativity + Emotional Balance + Moral Courage.

btw: Another way to create serenity? Stuart tells us: *“As a part of your overall serenity, it’s important to disengage from arguments and all the antagonistic, adversarial positions you may find yourself in. It’s hard to go beyond tick-tock and embrace a more angelic way if you’re constantly at war with people. In the act of scrapping with others, you metaphysically hold yourself back. Your energy can’t rise while you’re busy arguing with the Neanderthals in the marketplace of life. It doesn’t matter if your cause is just or unjust; it’s the emotion and thought-forms of an argument that lock you in. Sometimes arguments are unavoidable, especially if you have a lot of social and financial interactions going on in your life. Sooner or later a few plates fall off the shelf, so to speak. But keep your disputes short and as unemotional as possible. If you have any outstanding situations with people, try to resolve them.”*

Here’s to having the discipline to create serenity and tap into your Infinite Self!

B

Brian Johnson,
Professional Optimizer

If you liked this Note,
you’ll probably like...

[Trying Not to Try](#)

[Discover the Power Within You](#)

[Spiritual Liberation](#)

[The Power of Your Supermind](#)

[The Tao te Ching](#)

[The Courage to Create](#)

About the Author of “Infinite Self”

STUART WILDE



Stuart Wilde was one of the real characters of the self-help, human potential movement. His style is humorous, controversial, poignant, and transformational. He wrote 20 books, including those that make up the very successful Taos Quintet, which are considered classics in their genre. They are: *Affirmations*, *The Force*, *Miracles*, *The Quickening* and *The Trick to Money is Having Some*. Stuart’s books have been translated into 15 languages. www.stuartwilde.com

About the Author of This Note

BRIAN JOHNSON



Brian Johnson loves helping people optimize their lives so they can actualize their potential as he studies, embodies and teaches the fundamentals of optimal living—integrating ancient wisdom + modern science + practical tools. Learn more and optimize your life at optimize.me.