



# The Power of **Vital** **Force**

ANCIENT SECRETS TO  
TRANSFORM HOW YOU  
THINK, FEEL, AND ACT

Rajshree Patel

Foreword by Dave Asprey

## Praise for *The Power of Vital Force*

*"The book you're holding in your hands right now contains an incredible distillation of what you might learn through years of studying many different Eastern traditions. But the single most precious thing you will get out of reading it is the knowledge that unconscious mental resistance and struggle makes everything you do harder than it needs to be."*

— from the foreword by **Dave Asprey**,  
founder and CEO of Bulletproof

*"In this age of rampant burnout and stress, Patel shares a refreshing perspective on how we can use time-tested practices to seriously boost our energy, vitality, and well-being. Rich, practical, and life-changing wisdom!"*

— **Emma Seppälä, Ph.D.**, author of *The Happiness Track*

*"Human beings have labored immensely to explore the outer world; the continents, the oceans, the cosmos. Our creative enterprise and inquisitiveness has focused on the external—and we have failed to map the most mysterious terrain of all, the internal. . . . This book by Rajshree provides easy-to-use tools that actually optimize the internal landscape—our mental and emotional faculties. It provides the missing link to thriving both inside and out. It's the simple way to switch off your busy mind and turn on your power."*

— **Jason Silva**, filmmaker, futurist, and former host of the Emmy-nominated *Brain Games*

*"I had my team learn the tools to harness life energy and we found that with less effort we could achieve more. . . . High energy equals high impact. It naturally translates to greater self-empowerment, accountability, and generosity. One of the core statements at Panda is to 'Make Happy Happen.' The Power of Vital Force provides practical wisdom and techniques that naturally make happy happen."*

— **Andrew Cherng**, founder and CEO of Panda Express

*"A powerful guide full of actionable tools and practical timeless wisdom. If you are ready to think less and live more, read this book."*

— **Bernardo Bonjean**, founder and CEO of Avante and entrepreneur

*"If you are looking to change your life using meditation, don't settle for gimmicks and hype. Pick up this book and discover how ancient, time-tested tools of breath and meditation can bring vitality and clarity to your life."*

— **Michael Edelstein**, former president of NBC Universal International Studios and executive producer of *Desperate Housewives*

*"Neuroscience is finally catching up to what the wisdom of the East has been telling us for thousands of years. Vital force is the key to wellness. This book can up your game in every aspect of life."*

— **Naveen Jain**, co-founder and CEO of Viome and author of *Moonshots: Creating a World of Abundance*

*"The Power of Vital Force is exceptional! . . . A true masterpiece that blends the 'art and science' of consciousness and what it takes to energize the human soul, to learn how to truly thrive in a way you could have never imagined."*

— **Peter Cooper**, founder of Cooper Investors

*"Finally, a book that gives the how-to's, not just what-to's. This book is filled with tools, practical insights, rooted in timeless wisdom that can enhance the physical and mental faculties with ease . . . and Rajshree with her deep wisdom and experience is the perfect exponent of these ancient truths."*

— **Chandrika Tandon**, business leader, humanitarian, and Grammy-nominated artist

*"A practical guidebook for anyone who would like to supercharge their life. The honest guidance is not only actionable, but refreshing and personable. I only wish I'd had a book like this when I started my career."*

— **Rathi Murthy**, SVP and Chief Technology Officer of Gap, Inc.

*"The Power of Vital Force compiles all of Rajshree's wisdom and grace into easily applicable lessons. . . . Honestly, reading this book is the next best thing to working directly with Rajshree."*

— **Jeremy Larnier**, founder and president of JKL Worldwide and angel investor

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Rajshree Patel



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*To the innate resilience of life itself*

# Foreword

For the past two decades, I've worked to become a higher-performing, better human being by any means possible. At first, that meant doing the things that are supposed to work in a place like Silicon Valley. Working harder. Studying. Pushing. Staying up late. Getting an Ivy League MBA. Making millions before I turned 27. Unfortunately, I was exhausted and miserable, not to mention angry, without even realizing it most of the time.

I went on to spend more than \$1 million improving my biology at every level, from the sub-cellular all the way to the highest spiritual levels I could find. Along the way, I created the modern field of biohacking: the art and science of changing the environment inside and outside of our bodies so that we have full control of our own biology.

It even led me to create Bulletproof, my company dedicated to human performance (and butter in coffee) that has served about 200 million cups of brain-enhancing coffee. I've written best-selling science books about the brain, interviewed hundreds of researchers on consciousness and biology on Bulletproof Radio, my Webby award-winning podcast, and started a neuroscience facility for upgrading the human brain.

The deeper essence of the things that powered that learning and achievement—and the connective tissue behind all forms of biohacking and personal growth—are here for you in this book.

At the start of my path, I began by pushing the limits of what I'd learned as a computer hacker. I went to doctors and psychologists and exhausted the things that were supposed to work to give me energy and health. I ended up more successful

but still angry for no apparent reason, still tired, and no happier. One day, an engineer from India I worked with at a startup told me about a new kind of meditation he thought I'd like. Figuring it was worth a try, I showed up. There were flowers and candles and I arrived with a skeptical computer hacker mind. Even though there was something valuable dangling right in front of my face during the course, I rejected it because I judged it through my preconceived Western notions.

And then I rediscovered it two years later, when the CEO of the startup said, "Dave, come to this meditation training for executives at the home of one of the top executives from Intel." Who turns down an invitation like that from the boss? I spent a weekend learning what tools from the Vedic tradition, specifically The Art of Living Happiness Program, could do for me. As a result of that weekend, I added those exercises to my "stack" of high-performance behaviors and practiced them daily for more than five years.

At 7 A.M. every Saturday morning, I'd meet a dozen other executives to do the Vedic breathing and meditation exercises. My friend Prabakar, a well-known CTO, put it best when he said, "I can't explain why breathing in a group like this works, but it's like taking a mental shower for the week. I'm nicer at work."

Those breathing and meditation exercises were my introduction to the vast science of energy management recorded in the ancient teachings of the Vedic tradition. As you'll learn in this book, the wisdom of Vedanta goes far beyond daily practices for performance and stress relief. The powerful meditation and breathwork techniques that I learned barely scratch the surface of what's in the book. Included within this book, you will find a comprehensive system for physical and mental enhancement and human thriving.

You might even think of the Vedic tradition, as the book says, as "ancient biohacking." While our technology and understanding of our own biology have advanced by quantum leaps since the time of the Vedas, these thousands-of-years-old principles and techniques are still unparalleled in terms

of the wisdom and tools they offer for upgrading the mind, body and spirit.

The book you're holding in your hands right now contains an incredible distillation of what you might learn through years of studying many different Eastern traditions. But the single most precious thing you will get out of reading it is the knowledge that unconscious mental resistance and struggle makes everything you do harder than it needs to be. With great wisdom and a sense of humor, Rajshree Patel will help you to understand how your "machine called mind" is creating problems in your life—and how to turn off your busy mind to turn on your true power.

What I've found through years of biohacking, and what this book describes with great clarity, is that mind and energy are two sides of the same coin. When you're effectively managing your own mind, your energy levels skyrocket. And when you're keeping your energy levels high, your mental performance—including thoughts, emotions, awareness, and outlook—naturally increases. Your mind-set shifts from one of resistance and struggle to one of acceptance, gratitude, and strength. This virtuous cycle is one of the greatest secrets to high performance, and in this book, you'll learn how to master this two-pronged approach to excelling and thriving.

Who you are is a being of infinite power and potential. Unlocking that potential isn't about self-improvement or self-help. Instead, as Patel writes, it's about *self-awareness*. It's about upgrading from the "small mind" of conditioned thinking, emotions tied to the past and future, and limiting mind-sets to what Vedanta calls the "Big Mind" of unlimited intelligence, love, and potentiality.

By contemplating and applying the precious knowledge in these pages, you will learn to make everything in your life easier than you think is possible. Relationships. Jobs. Family. Creativity. Happiness. And maybe even doing something more game-changing than you've ever thought possible. It doesn't come from hard work or more effort. It comes from embracing

## THE POWER OF VITAL FORCE

the power that is your birthright: the energy of life itself, the power that gave you life and that keeps you alive. That energy is *vital force*.

I invite you to step into these pages with an open mind so that you can learn how good it feels when things in your life happen with ease and excitement.

Dave Asprey

Founder and CEO of Bulletproof  
and *New York Times* best-selling author

# Introduction

## My Story and Your Journey

The great passion driving my life has been the mystery of a single question: *Who am I?*

Even as a child, I wondered what it is that makes people go through the same circumstances in completely different ways. I suppose I came to this inquiry by growing up observing the harsh realities of life in rural India, seeing many who regularly went to bed hungry—myself included—later go on to thrive in their lives, while others who seemingly had it all lived in a state of constant struggle. I asked myself: *What is it about ourselves that seems to determine the quality of our lives?*

I have spent the last 30 years of my life traveling around the globe working in the field of human potential as a teacher, speaker, and coach. I've been exploring, at an experiential and practical level, the mystery of the Self, both in my personal life and with others. This simple question—*Who am I?*—has transformed not only my own daily life, career, and relationships but also the lives of hundreds of thousands of people around the globe, from Fortune 500 CEOs to homemakers to students to actors and artists to war veterans. I have watched one individual after another effortlessly harness their deeper potential, power, and presence to thrive in their lives on a physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual level as they discover who they really are. That's why I wrote this book: to share with you the wisdom and tools that have proved invaluable to me and countless others along this journey of Self.

One of the first things that I discovered along this journey is that we have all been fed a great lie. Our parents, teachers, and society, knowingly or perhaps unknowingly, have fed us the biggest bunch of B.S. you can imagine. That great lie is this: We have to effort, we have to work hard and think hard, in order to do or have anything great in our lives.

What I've learned over all these years is that being truly happy, connected, dynamic, and thriving has very little to do with thinking or hard work. Look around, really look! Most people who achieve true success in life (and I'm talking about *life*, not just work) aren't killing themselves toiling day and night, nor are they wasting their time strategizing their way to the top. What they've created and how they live is not only, or even primarily, the product of hard work. It's something else—something much bigger than effort on a physical or mental level.

What is that something? It's a certain magic quality, an indescribable magnetism, that we feel in the presence of those who are truly successful inside and out; those who are vibrant, alive, and dynamic. We might describe it as *mojo*, *chutzpah*, or just plain energy. It's the ability to go for it—whatever “it” might be—without hesitation or doubt, with full clarity and a *yes* mind. This is not something that comes from outside. It's something that we, *you*, were born with. As children, we all had this inner presence, power, and *aliveness*. You don't need to achieve it, you just have to reclaim it.

The secret to thriving is not hard work or strategic thinking. It's the effortless power of life itself—the life that you were born with. It is the innate energy and intelligence that surrounds and interpenetrates every particle of our existence. It is who and what we are. We simply have to know it, claim it, and it will work for us and with us.

The intention of this book is to empower you in your journey to reclaiming that power. My wish and intention is that it will offer you valuable guidance and support along your path of self-discovery, as you move ever closer to the perfection that lies within you.



When I was younger, I first started asking this question of who am I on the level of my cultural identity. Born in Uganda and raised between rural India and New York City, I was a first-generation American immigrant. *Who am I, Indian or American?* It progressed to asking who am I as a woman: *Who am I as a daughter, a sister, a potential wife?* After I graduated from law school, I would ask myself, *Who am I as a lawyer? Am I a prosecutor or a defense attorney?* The question moved inward from there: *Am I just my body? Am I my thoughts? Or am I something beyond that?*

In my younger years, it felt like a burden to ask this question of who I am because I felt caught between two cultural identities. I didn't really fit into either. On the one hand, I was raised in America, to choose a life partner whenever you wanted (and that's if you even wanted one); on the other hand, my Indian background said that getting married and having kids was the only possible life path. Saying no to marriage and kids wasn't much of an option.

As the only living daughter in my family, I felt a lot of pressure and expectation from my parents about who I had to be, and let me tell you, I was anything *but* the model Indian girl. I was always independent and rebellious, with a sharp tongue and a temper. When I was seven years old, my aunt got married in a village in Gujarat, where I grew up. In those days there was a practice of the bride's family having to offer a dowry to the groom's family. Each time the couple circled around the fire in the process of taking their vows, the bride's family would offer something of value—perhaps a watch, or a gold chain, or a silver bracelet. I was sitting by myself on the top of the roof watching the whole spectacle. Suddenly, in the middle of the ceremony, the groom's mother said, "We don't want *that*, we want *this*, or else this wedding will not happen." My grandmother couldn't afford what was being demanded, which obviously put the family in a tight spot. When I saw what was happening, I shouted down from the rooftop, "We don't want to sell our aunt! Take your son and go away. You should be giving *us* money!" My uncle came running over and dragged me away.

Most parents have some expectations for their children, and Indian parents tend to have a *lot* of expectations. You probably won't be surprised to hear that I fought against my parents' expectations for years. My parents wanted me to get married before I went to university or did anything else with my life. They were afraid I would become "too independent" and break tradition. Instead, I went to law school, without their approval, and took out student loans to pay my way through. In my early twenties, at their behest, I actually went to India to consider an arranged marriage, and I gave up after six days of asking myself what the hell I was doing there! Those six days set the direction of my life. I decided to go against their wishes, fight the cultural battles. I stayed single, completed grad school, and ultimately moved across the country to work as a federal prosecutor in California and later as a prosecutor with the Los Angeles District Attorney's office. A few years later, my life took an even more dramatic and unexpected shift when I left behind criminal law for what you might call "natural law"—the study of our inner world of mind, emotion, and spirit.

It has not been easy to let go of the hardwiring that told me who I was supposed to be, the conditioning that led me to put myself into boxes like "Indian," "daughter," "high achiever," "immigrant," and "lawyer." My childhood, my gender, my ethnicity, my traumas, and my accomplishments—like yours—have all shaped an identity and belief system that have served me well to achieve and succeed by conventional standards. But these identifications also became the limits and boundaries of my own potential. It has not been easy to "lay down," as the sages and mystics say, and to step out of the comfort zone that I once knew as myself. But I now know that for anything truly great to happen in our lives, we must rediscover who we really are. We must rewire our identities to be more than the sum total of our experiences that have come and gone. We have to rewrite the programs of our minds that have been conditioned to think, feel, perceive, and believe a certain way.

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I have never been one to accept anything at face value. As a lawyer, evidence is everything to me. The only language of spirituality that ever worked for me was my own experience. Throughout my own journey, I have had to experience for myself who I am in a larger sense, beyond my cultural identity, beyond the roles I've played in my life, beyond matter, beyond thoughts, and ultimately beyond my own mind. Along the way I have discovered a power and potential that serves to uplift and support not only my life but the lives of tens of thousands of other people I've been fortunate enough to work with. Today, *Who am I?* is not just a question for me, it's a wonder.

The pragmatist in me has been curious about what science as much as mysticism has to say about this question of who we are. Of course, I'm neither a scientist nor a mystic, but after 30 years of empirical observation and study, I do know this much: there is more to life, more to us, than just what we see, hear, touch, and feel. I know that we are both matter and energy. We are both body and mind. We are both intellect and emotion. We are both seen and unseen. We are both solid and space. We seek both success and significance through meaning in life.

The problem is that we have been conditioned to experience life in a purely material way. We barely stop to recognize feelings and emotions, let alone the field of energy and consciousness underlying all of life that scientists and sages around the world have spoken of for thousands of years. We have not been trained to turn within. It wasn't always this way: traditionally in India, young people were educated for 12 years in the material sciences—math, science, reading, and language—and simultaneously for 12 years in the inner sciences of spirit, heart, mind, energy, and consciousness. This second school was called

*gurukula*, the schooling of mind. Study of nature, mind, and spirit was prevalent in many ancient civilizations. In India it was present from ancient times up until the colonial period. But that tradition has long been lost. In our modern lives, we are taught to pay attention only to the surface level of reality, and as a result, we've shifted our center of identity to what we can see, hear, touch, and feel. We are absorbed in the world of matter, with eyes open and our attention turned outward most of the time. With eyes closed, we are asleep to the deeper, unseen reality of life that lies beneath the surface. But we have to look inside to tune in to the frequency of who we are, to recognize our greater potential and the field of possibilities that underlies our external material reality.

Usually we turn within only in moments of crisis or hardship, or because of a stroke of luck. In my case it was both.

My stroke of luck came on a spring evening in Los Angeles in 1989, when I was in my mid-twenties. I was on my way to what I thought was a music concert. You can imagine my surprise when I arrived at the "concert" to discover not the Indian sitarist Ravi Shankar but instead the spiritual master Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. At that point in my life, I had no interest in gurus or spirituality, but by the time I caught on to my mistake, it was too late to leave without making a scene. So I sat there rolling my eyes and making silent judgments about what the master was saying for most of the talk. His comments about life, success, happiness, and the nature of reality were nice ideas, perhaps, but to me they felt cheesy and idealistic, somehow disconnected from real life down here on planet Earth. I'll tell you the whole story of that fateful first encounter a little later on, but for now, just know that I decided in spite of my "better judgment" to join a workshop that Sri Sri was leading the following weekend.

In the workshop, I started learning the philosophy and tools of the Vedic tradition of India, in particular a breathwork practice that had been passed down since ancient times. On the second day, something happened that I suppose you could describe as a metaphysical experience—something that I still to this day don't have language for. Although words fall far short, what I

can tell you is that I had an experience of *who I am* beyond every possible identification, boundary, and limitation. For the span of perhaps a few moments, I experienced an explosion of unlimited energy, unlimited awareness, and a sense of love and gratitude so immense that it could not be contained—a love without a particular object, a love that knew no bounds. I was weeping internally but without sorrow.

Or at least I thought it was internally. I didn't realize in that moment that I had been crying out loud during breathing meditation. I thought it was all in my head! It felt like I was dreaming, but with eyes open. It was that vivid. When I finally opened my eyes, I noticed that everyone was sitting up; they had shared their experiences with one another, and now they were all staring at me, my face flooded with tears. As I looked around the room, I honestly didn't know if I was outside my eyes, looking in, or if I was inside my body, looking out of my eyes. Imagine being in a room where the entire wall is a window, so you almost don't know if you're inside or outside anymore—that's what this was like. I had just had the clearest experience that *who I am* is energy that is full of love and awareness beyond belief. I felt that I could be in any place at any moment. I understood for the first time that there is something that travels faster than light—my mind. It's me! It's *us*. Our minds, our awareness, can be anywhere at any time; we just don't see it because we're focused on the body. In this moment, I knew without a doubt: I am not just my body. I am something much more powerful and indescribable that is housed in and around this body.

I had no way of explaining this to myself. The result of the experience—that I could explain. It was a very clear sense of an almost superhuman self-empowerment. Once I saw this deeper power and potential within myself, all my limiting beliefs dropped. Just like that, they were gone. Without even being consciously aware of what was happening, I stopped saying *I can't, I won't, I don't do that, I don't know if it's possible*. I was suddenly redefining myself—and not based on another belief system. I suddenly saw myself beyond anything I could ever imagine or anything I have ever seen in another person. I have

admired a lot of people who are role models and visionary leaders, from dear friends who survived years in Auschwitz, to my father who had the spirit of a lion and overcame the most adverse situations in his life, to people like Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King, Jr., who lived with a resounding spirit that said anything is possible. That weekend, I had the sense that whatever they have, I have in me. I suddenly had confidence, clarity, and a sense of myself that was beyond anything I could have imagined.

Now, bear in mind that my lawyerly brain still wasn't interested in anything metaphysical. As powerful as the experience was, part of me blew it off as some strange fluke. But what *was* interesting to me was what happened at work the next day and over the course of the next few weeks. From that Monday onward, my efficiency was through the roof. Case files that had previously taken me four hours to analyze, process, and put together I could now complete in an hour. I'd finish 25 files by myself in the same amount of time it took my colleagues to complete maybe 10 or 11. The mental chatter, the noise in my mind that was so normal to me, all but disappeared. I was so in the zone that I would put together the file without even knowing what I was doing.

Even so, begrudgingly, I took another step and signed up for a 10-day silent retreat at the insistence of the friend I'd brought to the course. I didn't go on the retreat thinking it was about spirituality. My main motivation was my newfound productivity and imagining how much more efficient I might become if I did the work for a full 10 days. Yet, while I went into the course with that goal, in the background I was trying to figure out what I wanted. I was scared to death about the notion of marriage based on what I'd seen of traditional marriages in India with fixed roles of husband and wife, along with the divorce rate I'd witnessed in America. My dad was still calling me at the office every week with a new marriage prospect, but I kept resisting. *Do I want to focus on my career and not have kids at all?* I didn't have any good answers to these questions.

I remember going to a popular bookstore in L.A. called The Bodhi Tree and seeing a wall of saints and sages. I wondered to myself, *If one of these people existed in my lifetime, would I see life differently?* But I was certain that those stories of yogic masters were just fictional stories of imaginary times past, like Noah's ark or the loaves and fishes. I never really thought that it was possible for one to be self-actualized on this planet.

This gives you a sense of my state of mind when I embarked on that silence retreat and suddenly had one of the rudest awakenings of my life. Primed by my experience at the first workshop, by the end of three or four days I had discovered a whole new world that was far bigger than anything I could see or possibly understand. I experienced a wake-up call that rang through my head like a loudspeaker: *Reality—the world I see, touch, feel, and experience in front of me—is nothing more than my internal perception of it.* I saw that each one of us is walking around inside of our own reality. In some sense, this made reality not a reality at all. What I heard in the silence was that whatever was happening around me—no matter how fixed and determinate it seemed—was a reflection of what was happening inside my own mind. It was my mind, more than anything else, that determined how and what I experienced in my life.

It was at that moment I began my journey inward, but it was not without conflict. That journey has meant fighting tooth and nail to break free from my mind's conditioning and limiting belief systems. The sages say that you have to "lay yourself down" to discover, to do, and to be great. Well, let me tell you, it has been *hell* to lay myself down because I have such a strong left brain. My rational, skeptical, lawyerly mind fought me every single step of this spiritual journey as I've been pushed to expand from the I-achievement-oriented, I-results-focused, pragmatic Indian girl that my parents taught me to be. I was trained very, very well by my parents to achieve in the external world. That training has served me well and continues to serve me. But what has accelerated my success, deep joy, and sense of significance in my life much further is adopting a new set of tools, outlook, and wisdom to help me navigate my inner world.

Defying my parents once again, I suddenly left my career in law—and I mean *suddenly*. After the silence course, when Sri Sri invited me to join him in India, I made plans to spend six weeks there as a kind of “break” before I entered my thirties and got saddled with all the responsibilities of adult life. Well, six weeks turned into five years studying and teaching meditation, breathwork, and Vedic philosophy in India. My parents thought I had gone mad. *You did WHAT?! You walked away from your profession? That’s insane!* And I went to India, of all places! They’d left India to be in America, and here I was, going back to some podunk village to sit in silence and do nothing all day. That’s what it looked like to them.

Over the course of the years that followed, I went on to launch and grow Sri Sri’s organization The Art of Living, a foundation dedicated to sharing the wisdom and techniques of the Vedic tradition to help people live happier, more successful, and more peaceful lives. I established an infrastructure that led to opening, in rapid succession, one Art of Living center after another throughout the world, leading to significant growth. From India I would go to Hong Kong, Japan, South America, Europe, the U.S., and Canada, establishing more and more new centers, studying the Vedic tradition and setting up events. As soon as one center was set up, I’d move on to the next city or country, the next new center. The years flew by as I traveled across more than 35 countries spreading Vedic teachings, opening hundreds of meditation centers, and impacting thousands of people’s lives, all the while with that little voice of my parents in the back of my head saying, *Who the hell does that, following some unknown guru and setting up centers for him all over the world? And as a single woman?*

There was a greater power that was propelling all of this, and I was connected to it. My energy was pulsating and vibrating at a frequency I’d never experienced before. My radio was tuned in. I would meet the right person, and the thing that needed to happen would happen. With no events coordinator, no marketing, and no resources, I was organizing and teaching three courses a day, with over 300 people showing up for each course.

Within a few short years, a “start-up” organization called The Art of Living expanded from India to a global operation serving hundreds of thousands of people of all ages and all walks of life. I went on to become the trainer of trainers, as well as to develop and lead more targeted programs on corporate culture, leadership, conscious parenting, relationships, and other advanced courses designed to expand human potential and power. Today, the little start-up I once knew has grown to more than 150 countries, with tens of thousands of teachers around the world.

It’s difficult for me to even quantify how all of this happened. Art of Living started with an unknown guru and four teachers. I was fortunate to be one of the four. Now, we have 50,000 teachers in India alone. Today, Sri Sri, who was known to only pockets of people in his home country, is internationally beloved and celebrated by millions—not only as a yogic master but also as a humanitarian. He’s become an ambassador of peace throughout the world, working with heads of state and even aiding in peace negotiations in countries like Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Colombia.

For this to happen, I had to continually move myself beyond the limits of my own thinking. At the beginning, it could never have occurred to me that Art of Living would become a massive, global operation that would make an impact not only on people’s internal lives but also outwardly through social impact programs in such areas as prisoner rehabilitation (IAHV Prison Program), inner-city youth empowerment (YES! for Schools), post-traumatic stress relief for war veterans (Project Welcome Home Troops), disaster and trauma relief, and grassroots efforts providing food, clothing, clean water, and electricity. The list goes on: planting over a million trees to combat climate change, supporting women’s empowerment, and much more. The organization today is a far cry from my little idea of a guru and his disciples sitting in a straw hut in the mountains somewhere. It’s an organization that has had a tremendous social impact on all levels, one that defines spirituality and its mission by seeking to create a stress-free, violence-free world.

*“Vital force,” or “life energy,” is the fundamental energy within and around us that gives us life and sustains our lives. When we’re tapped into that source, we bring more energy—more life—to everything we touch.*

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But again, it wasn’t just *me* that was making all of this happen. I was connected to the energy of life itself, and it was guiding me at every step to create a life beyond anything I had ever imagined for myself. That may sound a little woo-woo, perhaps even a little cheesy, but I’ve never stopped being a pragmatic person. Even today, I translate the connection I’m describing into a way of being more alive, vibrant, and productive. This force of life that I was tuned in to in Sri Sri’s workshop was the same thing that was helping me process my case files faster. It was the same energy that was making me happier, more vibrant, more enthusiastic and energized in my daily life. It was reducing my stress levels and making me more mindful and aware. Everything I wanted was coming from the same source. This force that I’m talking about is what the Vedic tradition calls “vital force,” or “life energy.” It’s the fundamental energy within and around us that gives us life and sustains our lives. When we’re tapped into that source, we bring more energy—more *life*—to everything we touch. It’s an extremely powerful force that’s behind all our physical and mental functions.

## **Your Journey through the Book**

My big wake-up call back in 1989 taught me that while we look for answers outside of ourselves, both the cause and the solution of what we’re experiencing lie within. We constantly seek to regulate our inner landscape of thoughts, emotions, mind, and perception by managing the things and people around us. We look for reasons, cause and effect in things, situations, and people outside. Looking through our own eyes, through the

lens of our own conditioning, we never consider that perhaps we are creating the results that appear in the world around us. We never stop to ask whether the limitations we experience are coming from within rather than from without.

When we do acknowledge this possibility, it forces us to take responsibility for the way we are creating our reality at all times. It can be a painful truth to face, but with it comes a great secret: We can influence the nature of our reality and results by changing the way we look out of our own eyes. We can change the conditioned “I” that has its existence based on other people’s passed-on notions of reality, truth, right and wrong, should be and should not be. We can break through the limits of our own beliefs and thought patterns to take in this greater force of life that wants nothing more than to support and uplift us.

This book is filled with simple, effortless tools designed to melt the conditioned “I,” what I call “the iceberg of the mind,” so that you can tap into the greater force of life within you. It’s a practical pathway to the unlimited source of energy and intelligence that exists beyond the thinking and reasoning mind. It is a way to get out of your own way, to “lay down,” so that great things can happen in your life—so that you can tap into the energy of life within yourself to re-create your life, your reality, your Self.

What do I mean by Self with a capital S? I’m talking about the part of you that is unlimited, that is pure potentiality. The Vedic tradition says this Self has three qualities: unlimited energy, unlimited intelligence or knowingness, and the unlimited potentiality of what we can call “love,” “connectivity,” or “belongingness.” It describes these three qualities by the word *satchitananda*, “existence, consciousness, bliss.” It’s the experience that I had of existing beyond my body, my thoughts, my emotions, my own catalogue of memories and life experiences. What I tapped into during that experience was this Self with a capital S: the sub-subatomic aspect of who I am, below even the quantum level of my own identity.

As powerful as the experience was, my rational mind couldn’t help but dismiss it as some kind of strange momentary fluke. But when I started to see this same experience of Self happen to

thousands of people, I could no longer deny its power. I saw it happen to people of every walk of life in America, in Germany, in India, in South America, and all over the world. It's undeniable that we are far more than what we measure—but to realize and experience our unlimited nature, we have to explore the ways that we have become limited by our own thinking.

To access the deeper potentiality that is at your core—and to create any kind of real change in your life—it's not enough to just think about it on the surface of your mind, as a concept in your intellect. First you have to erase the mind's old, backed-up hard drive. You have to make some space in the memory. You need to create a tiny crack in the iceberg where the ocean can flow through. If you take a dip in the ocean of consciousness that surrounds the iceberg, it will go 10 times as far in supporting you to float. The tools in this book are designed to create not just cracks in the iceberg but a rift the size of the Grand Canyon. Read the book, and then, if you wish, visit [RajshreePatel.com](http://RajshreePatel.com) to learn about an online course that will guide you to integrate this wisdom into your daily life. Even if you use just one or two of the tools, you will already be transforming how you think, feel, and act. You will find a way to control your inner landscape of thoughts, emotions, and sensations. You will experience what it means to have less stress, more efficiency, and more ease. You will live in the moment by letting go of what is dead and gone. You will enhance your performance by becoming more mindful and connected to yourself and those around you. As you learn to better manage your own mind, you will conserve and enhance your energy, and as your energy rises, your mind will be naturally and effortlessly uplifted. It's a virtuous cycle that we'll explore in depth in this book.

What we're talking about here isn't self-help or self-improvement. It's more a process of self-realizing. We're not trying to make ourselves better, because we are already perfect. We're just reconnecting to who we really are by peeling back the layers of conditioning that cloud the perfection that exists at our core. The first step to living from our core essence, our innate *consciousness*, is to become aware of what's clouding it and getting in the way.

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*We're not trying to make ourselves better, because we are already perfect. We're just reconnecting to who we really are by peeling back the layers of conditioning that cloud the perfection that exists at our core.*

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We begin in Part I, “Turn On Your Power,” by reacquainting ourselves with this thing called “vital force,” the energy of life within and around us. You’ll learn about how this energy is different from what you’ve been taught to think of as energy, and you’ll discover why it’s so important to recharge your own internal batteries. In Part II, “Brain Drain,” we’ll look at the biggest energy hog of our entire system—the machine called “mind”—and we’ll closely examine how the workings of our mental machinery are draining our batteries and reducing our potentiality.

In Part III, “Reboot and Recharge,” you will learn how to get your mojo back using a set of simple and effective ancient tools for conserving and recharging the battery of your innate life force. These techniques have been passed down for thousands of years to help us tap into the *source* of energy itself in order to uplift us on every level: physically, mentally, emotionally, creatively, and spiritually. What we’re talking about in the broader sense is not just enhancing our energy and becoming more effective in all we do, but embracing our true power as co-creators, working with the energy of life itself to manifest our desires on a material level. When we align ourselves with the flow of life, we can start to organize and reorganize the particles of matter around us based on our own intentions. The embodied practices of the *yama* and *niyama* described in Chapter 9 will create the driving force behind the intentions that we seek to manifest. These embodied practices help us to open our hearts and operate from a place of uplifted emotion and attention, strengthening our intention and giving us the force to reconfigure our reality.

Armed with these tools, we’re ready to go even deeper. In Part IV, “Upgrade Your Operating System,” we’ll explore the two

core mind-sets that we spend most of our lives operating from and that are responsible for all of our unhappiness. We'll learn to shift and transform these mind-sets through the power of our awareness, to return the mind to its most expansive and uplifted state: a beginner's mind that is totally in the flow of the present moment. In Part V, "The Big Mind," we'll arrive at our core: consciousness, or what Vedanta calls *satchitananda*. In the Vedic tradition, energy and consciousness are two sides of a coin. By enhancing our innate energy, we are also expanding our consciousness. And as our consciousness expands, we find what we're really seeking in life: to feel connected to the whole, to be a part of something greater.

I'm grateful to you for joining me in this journey of Self that's been my mission for the past 30 years. To succeed, all you need is an open mind and an open heart. Expect the unexpected. Deep self-reflection is a critical element of this process, so please take your time and allow yourself the space to digest these ideas and see how they apply to your life. Be willing to completely change the way you see yourself as your awareness begins to transform, and, of course, remember that everything you need is already there inside of you. You're not fixing any part of yourself or introducing anything that's not already there. You're simply reconnecting to the unlimited power and potential that is your human birthright.



PART I

TURN  
ON YOUR  
POWER





## CHAPTER 1

# Energy Is Life

Long before I began my study of the inner world, a rather extreme moment in my early legal career became a pivotal point in my journey of Self. When I was around 24 years old, I went on a field trip to a coroner's office as a way to better prepare myself to handle murder trials. I had never been to one before and arrived there without any expectations. As I was led down the stairs, I noticed lots of what I presumed were covered bodies on either side of me. I didn't think much of it. Then, I arrived in a room, in the center of which was a table supporting the body of a woman who appeared to be eight or nine months pregnant. The coroner began an autopsy with a traditional Y incision. As he continued cutting, examining and measuring each organ, I was perplexed. To me, this woman looked as if she were sleeping.

At one point, the coroner removed the woman's uterus and cut it open to remove the body of a baby boy. He pulled him out by one of the legs and placed him on a scale, saying out loud, "Seven-point-three pounds." Now my brain was really short-circuiting. *Why is he grabbing the baby like that? What is going on with this woman?*

The cause of death was a ricocheted bullet that hit her heart and then traveled to the baby's heart. Part of me knew she was dead, as was the baby, but the death wasn't computing in my brain. She looked just like any other pregnant woman. I felt

somehow disconnected from the reality that she was not alive. At this point my mind began rolling into a stream of questions around the difference between life and death—not in some esoteric way, but on a practical level, about what it really means to be alive, to *have life*. All of this woman's organs and the baby's organs were healthy, but she was not living. She just looked to me as if she were sleeping, but clearly any level of movement, consciousness, or vitality was absent. I couldn't help but ask myself, *What is it that makes us alive? What is the difference between being alive and just existing?*

And I couldn't help but begin to ask the same question about myself. *What am I doing with my life? Am I walking around fully alive, or am I somehow asleep?* I thought about how the woman had lived her life before it was gone. I wondered, *Did she really live her life, or did she just go through the motions of it? To what degree was she really alive while she had her life? How alive am I as I walk through my own life?*

Before we go on, I would like you to ask yourself the same question I asked myself: *At this moment, how alive do I feel?* Do you spring out of bed full of life and excitement to see your partner next to you, challenged by the day ahead and grateful to be on this planet orbiting in space, or do you drag yourself out of bed already stressed about the day ahead? The way you answer these questions is a direct measure of the quality of not only your external life but the life within you.

## **Fuel for Life**

The experience at the coroner's office rather unexpectedly triggered a deep line of inquiry about what it really meant for me to be alive. I had it "all" in my life, but somehow I felt there was something lacking. It didn't occur to me at the time, but the quality of our inner life, what's going on in our minds, is directly related to the level of energy that we have. I hadn't realized it, that this energy that keeps us alive and vibrant—what the ancient

traditions call “life energy,” or vital force—is a fundamental force that we can all easily tap into. It’s a simple equation: the more energy you have, the more *alive* you are. Energy is life, and life is energy! The more energy you have, the more positive and expansive your state of mind is and the more you thrive.

I’ll fill you in on a big secret: *everything is energy*. We know this from modern physics, and long before that, we knew it from the wisdom of the ancients. Human beings—and all living things, in fact—are made up of physical units of electromagnetic energy. Your cell membranes are designed to conduct electricity. Your heart and brain are electrical systems, and doctors can measure their wave activity using EKG and EEG machines. On the most macro scale, it’s electromagnetic energy that determines the movements of the stars and planets. On the most microscopic scale, the tiniest particles, atoms, are made up of protons and electrons that have a positive or negative energetic charge.

If you stop for a moment to think about it, you’ll see that energy provides the fuel for everything in life, from plants and animals to iPhones to light bulbs to the human body. It’s obvious that everything we do requires energy, from blinking our eyes to walking, talking, thinking, digesting food, or having a creative breakthrough. We require energy to function on every level of our being: physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and sexual. The more optimally you want each level to function, the more vital fuel is required. But for the most part, we’ve never stopped to look at the connection between this energy of life and the quality of our lives. It may sound obvious, but no one has ever taught us, not at home or in school, how to maximize our performance and quality of life by harnessing it.

Energy is the fuel that runs not only our bodies but also our minds and emotions. We vibrate with it. We project it into our words, actions, thoughts, looks, and feelings. This energy of life, this vital force, is *aliveness* itself. To the degree you are tapped into it and accessing it, to that degree you thrive—*thrive* meaning you are growing, flourishing, blossoming, and evolving. To the degree that you are depleted of it, to that

degree you struggle, become weakened and ineffective, and get stuck.

Let's face it: when you're tired and depleted, when you don't have the energy to get out of bed or you feel overwhelmed by the demands of your day, it really doesn't matter what's going on in your life—the glass is going to look half-empty. You will not feel fully alive and vibrant. Your body, your brain, and your mind are not going to be functioning anywhere close to 100 percent.

We do so much to improve ourselves and our lives. We go to school, get the right job, work hard, read self-help books, attend workshops and seminars, study spiritual practices, go to therapy, experiment with diet and exercise fads, and endlessly tinker with our minds and bodies under the guise of “biohacking.” But we never think to tap into the very thing that is the source of our bodies, our minds, and life itself.

The problem we often encounter in our self-improvement efforts is the fact that to make changes in any aspect of our lives requires a certain amount of energy to begin with. The bigger the change you want, the more energy you will need! To change anything—from your diet to your workout habits to your attitude and mind-set to your career—requires resilience, stamina, commitment, initiative, and endurance. All these words are simply descriptions of a state we can characterize as being fully charged with energy. If we don't have energy, we don't have any of these qualities. Instead, when we're low on energy, we use words like *stuck*, *unmotivated*, *unproductive*, *ineffective*, *hesitant*, *burned out*, and *overwhelmed*. We don't have the energy to get past our old ways of thinking and doing, so the brain keeps defaulting to what's easy and comfortable. What I'm starting to get at here is the idea that the positive qualities and positive states of mind that have served you in your life are connected with a state of *high vital force*, whereas the negative qualities that have caused you to struggle are connected with a state of *low vital force*.

Our body-mind complex is basically a rechargeable battery. We've taken this for granted, and we haven't learned

to use it to improve our lives. We recharge ourselves in the obvious ways—through food, sleep, and exercise, and artificially through the use of stimulants—but we’ve never learned how to increase our access to the unlimited source of energy within that is keeping us alive in every moment. Let’s take a closer look at the critical role that this force of vitality plays on every level of who we are.

## Physical Battery

We’ll start with the obvious fact that your body runs on energy. You know that energy is a mechanical requirement for the movement of your body. The body is not only chemical but electrical, and energy is what fuels any physical activity, from sitting to walking to blinking to breathing to metabolizing food to building muscle and growing physically. It’s what enables your body to engage in all of its internal and external functions.

Most of us have been led to believe that the energy that fuels our system comes from three sources: food, sleep, and exercise. When you eat, it gives you not only calories and nutrients but electrical energy. It provides fuel for your mitochondria, the “brains” of your cells. When you sleep, your body temporarily goes into “rest” mode and replenishes its energy reserves. And when you exercise, the physical activity triggers a release of chemicals that brings a jolt of energy. But notice that there’s a limit to how much you can energize yourself with food, sleep, and exercise alone. Eat too much, or eat the wrong foods, and you’ll feel more tired and depleted. Sleep too many hours, and you’ll be groggy and dull. Exercise too aggressively, and you’ll barely have the energy to move. And, of course, if you don’t have time to sleep or go to the gym or eat properly, then that much less energy is available to your body to do all it has to do.

In fact, food, sleep, and exercise are not the only way to recharge the system. They’re not even the most efficient way. You drink your green juice, you go to the gym and sleep eight

hours a night, and yet you still feel tired and run down, or maybe just not functioning at your highest capacity. That's because you're not generating enough energy to replenish the whole system, which also includes your *mind*.

## Mental Battery

It's not just the body that requires energy to function optimally. Your mind also requires energy to fuel its constant activity. The number of activities the mind performs on a daily basis is even greater than the body. To have any thought requires energy. To perceive, to be alert, to be mindful, to formulate ideas, to make decisions or judgments, to strategize or analyze, to recall information—it's all electrical activity that requires an incredible amount of fuel. We've all experienced the way our cognitive functions fail us when we're tired. When our vital energy is low or not available, our minds stop working properly.

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*A busy mind is the biggest vital energy hog of all. It's a monster machine that burns up fuel like there's no tomorrow.*

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When you say that you're feeling tired and run down, ask yourself what *part* of you is tired. Ninety-nine percent of the time, it's the mind, not the body, that's exhausted. We work the body-mind system during the day, and we refuel the body with food, sleep, and exercise, but it's not enough to recharge the mind. We almost never get a break from mental activity. Even when we're sleeping, the mind is still going, replaying the worries and anxieties of the day.

A busy mind is the biggest vital energy hog of all. We'll be exploring in depth the many ways that a runaway thinking mind drains our energy in Part II. For now, it's enough to know that this computer that we call "mind" is constantly running, and just like any other computer, it runs on battery power.

James Kozloski, a well-known computer neuroscientist, states, "The brain consumes a great amount of energy doing nothing." If that's true of every brain to begin with, imagine how much *more* energy is consumed by a brain that's spinning in doubts, judgments, frustrations, and endless rumination. Your brain consumes more fuel than every other part of your mind-body complex combined! It is engaged at every moment in thinking, thinking, thinking, planning, planning, planning, worrying, worrying, worrying. It doesn't shut up. You can't get it to stop thinking, no matter what you do. The mind is running even when there's no reason for it to be. It's a monster machine that burns up fuel like there's no tomorrow, and it needs to be plugged into a power source on a daily, or at least regular, basis. The more drained you feel in life, the more urgently you need to address what's going on inside your own head. This is the difference between being alive and walking around as if you are asleep in life.

How does your mind operate when you're exhausted? One of the first things that happens is that your perception becomes negative. Then your thoughts become negative. Over time, your beliefs about yourself and others become negative. Your mind goes into stress mode. You become less fluid and adaptable, less willing, more cranky, and often more adamant, fixed, and rigid in your beliefs. The lower your mental energy, the less room you have for the unexpected and the more you want things to be comfortably predictable. You need things to go "your way." You react rather than respond to situations. Your willingness to shift gears and collaborate screeches to a halt.

To challenge your own assumptions and beliefs, to look at things from a new perspective, to *respond* rather than *react* to a situation, requires mental space, some empty room in the mind. Mental space is just another way of saying "available energy." If you are fully charged, you're more patient, willing, agile, cooperative, and available to change your mind and approach as the situation requires. Your mind is more "reasonable." If you're not fully charged, your mind gets stuck in old ways of doing things.

That's when you end up in therapy or coaching, spending huge amounts of time, money, and energy trying to change your own stubborn point of view.

A depleted mind has little room to expand and let something new come in. It's like when your laptop's hard drive is full and it becomes slow, unpredictable, and prone to crashes. You move further and further away from operating in a state of present-moment awareness, in a state of "flow"—the most powerful state of mind that there is. Presence, awareness, mindfulness, flow: these qualities are all a result of high vital force on a mental level. Like computers, when our batteries are charged, we notice that there is less chatter in the mind, without us "trying" to be mindful or present. Naturally and effortlessly, we turn off the thinking mind and turn on the power of our deeper awareness, intuition, insight, and clarity.

If you want your mind to not only get you through the day but reach a state of peak performance, eating healthy, exercising, and sleeping well may not be enough. If you want to be totally focused, alert, sharp, and efficient, you will need a steady, stable fuel supply to the brain. In addition, you'll need to determine what it is that's consuming all your mental battery power. You need to see what programs are running and what files are open in the background of your mind that you don't need at the moment. Then you need to learn how to shut down the unnecessary files that are using up your energy.

The thing to remember is this: it is your mind more than anything else that determines the quality of your life, and it is your energy more than anything else that determines the state of your mind. This connection between mind, energy, and quality of life is one of the most important secrets of the Vedic tradition, and one of the most poorly understood. It's arguably the single most important key to thriving in life. That's why we're going to be talking about the mind so much in this book. If you want to increase your energy or enhance your power and positivity, the first place to look is at your own mind.

## Emotional Battery

On any given day, in any given situation, you are experiencing a wide range of emotions, both positive and negative. You may not have stopped to think about it, but to feel these emotions also requires a lot of energy. To have, express, or experience any emotion (yes, even positive!) uses up battery power. Guess what? Negative emotions—as you’ve probably felt on many occasions—require and use up a *huge* amount of vital power. The more intense the emotion, the more energy it takes to move through it and step out of it. That’s why you feel so tired, unmotivated, and stuck when you’re depressed, sad, or anxious. All of your energy is going toward processing and “dealing” with that emotion.

But your emotions don’t just use up energy. They can also generate and increase energy. Positive emotions give us a surge of vitality in the form of enthusiasm, joy, gratitude, love, contentment, and excitement. However, to experience the positive emotion, we need some energy to begin with. It’s hard to feel happy, grateful, or excited when you’re exhausted, isn’t it? To laugh and live and love requires energy. If we’re running low on energy, the most beautiful thing goes unnoticed or the most amazing gift can’t be appreciated. Without sufficient energy, you are existing rather than really being alive—*alive* meaning able to experience the full range of human capacity, feeling, and emotion. Love, joy, happiness, gratitude, and enjoying and being present in whatever you’re doing in life all require energy. When you have enough energy to be able to experience these emotions, you also get to enjoy the increase of energy that these emotions bring. It’s a virtuous circle.

We need a fully charged battery to move through all of life’s emotions without getting stuck in them. We’ll learn in Part II how emotions wreak havoc on our energy levels and how low energy gets us more stuck in those emotions that don’t serve us, sometimes for years. The more we get trapped in our negative emotions, the bigger the energy leakage and the greater the strain on the entire system.

## **Spiritual Battery**

We also require energy to operate on a spiritual level. I'm not talking about religion; I'm talking about feeling connected to the whole, having a sense of fulfillment, meaning, and purpose in your life. I'm talking about not just living on autopilot. For many of us, the best moments of our lives are when we feel really connected to life and the people around us. This sense of connection and interconnection is what I'm calling "spirituality."

When we're depleted of energy, we notice that even the people we love the most and the things that matter to us the most seem to be a burden. We get caught up in the demands and busyness of life, we put all of our focus on the physical and material, and we quickly lose the sense of valuing what really matters. It takes energy to find meaning or purpose in anything we do. When we *do* experience a moment of connection and meaning, it brings a huge surge of energy, which makes us even more fulfilled and connected. It's another virtuous circle!

## **Creative and Sexual Battery**

Your creative energy, which includes your sexual energy and also goes beyond it, is your passion in life. In order to create and innovate, you need big energy. When energy is low, you're less inspired and passionate. You're more "in the box." You need to have more than a bare minimum of energy in your system in order to be able to appreciate music, art, literature, theater, and film, let alone create it. It doesn't matter how creative or talented you are; if your battery gets down to 10 or 20 percent, the well of inspiration is going to run dry. Whether your creative activity is sex, art, music, tech innovating, or creative thinking, low energy means that originality, excitement, and moments of breakthrough are low.

Heck, you even need a certain amount of energy just to recognize and express your sexuality or to engage in sex. If you're

tired, no matter how much you want sex or how attracted you are to the person in front of you, you're going to find yourself saying, "Not tonight, honey."

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*As you are reading this, there's a good chance that your energy system is running close to empty and that it's impacting everything else in your life.*

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As you can see, your body-mind complex, on every level, is essentially a rechargeable battery. The happiest, most successful people have the most abundant energy for life—and the most abundant energy *of* life. They know how to conserve and recharge their batteries. Nikola Tesla said that everything is energy, frequency, and vibration—tap into this force of life, and you can change everything. It's not just how cars and computers operate; it's how *you* operate. You've never been taught how to recharge your batteries, aside from the very basics of food and sleep. That's all that most of us know, but as we'll learn, there are much easier and more powerful ways.

## Running on Empty

As you are reading this, there's a good chance that your energy system is running close to empty and that it's impacting everything else in your life. When you are exhausted, tired, stressed out, impatient, dull, unmotivated, distracted, or burned out, your brain is sending you a clear message: YOU ARE OUT OF FUEL! Your battery is dangerously low.

The one thing I've observed over the past 30 years in my work is that most people spend the majority of their lives living in a state of personal energy crisis. They are stuck in permanent survival mode with barely enough fuel to make it through the day. That's like hoping your smartphone will last for another eight hours when your battery is at 10 percent and there's no charger in sight. You can get by this way for a short period of

time, but you will eventually burn out. We add caffeine, stimulants, and adrenaline on top of a depleted system to keep us going for a little bit longer. It might even feel like real energy, but in the long run, it's only depleting your inner energy reserves even more. Before long, your system will crash.

Your energy levels have a profound effect on the way you think, the way you feel, and the way you act, which, in turn, affects the way you move through the world and experience your life. Everything you do is infused with energy, and the state of your life will reflect the state of your energy. If you're alive and vibrant, then your life, your relationships, your business will be dynamic, radiant, and exciting. But if you're dull and drained, life becomes lukewarm. If I were to state the most precious lesson I have learned through the years, it's that where you are not thriving in life, there is always a lack of energy . . . always.

There was a time in your life when you had more energy than you knew what to do with. If you observe any child, you'll remember how much energy and vitality you had when *you* were young. Take a look at a child's face: it's full of mojo. You can see it in children's eyes, in their smiles, and hear it in their infectious laughter. You can feel it in the bounce of their movements. You know from experience that the amount of vital energy a child has—the amount of energy *YOU* once had—is far greater than any adult in the room. One child has enough power to wipe out all the adults in the family. You can hear the power of this innate energy in the simple, effortless gurgle of a baby that fills an entire room. The scream of a little kid is powerful enough to bring the house down! Just imagine what you could do in your life with this kind of raw power.

Toddlers barely eat more than mashed carrots and milk, and they certainly don't walk 10,000 steps a day. They don't have drugs, protein shakes, Red Bull, or Starbucks—just plenty of rest and an abundance of this power called “source energy,” or vital force. Once upon a time, we all had this power. You don't need a scientist to prove this to you. You know what I'm talking about because you have personally experienced it.

You were born with all the qualities that you require to be super successful in every aspect of your life. You entered this world as a bundle of joy, enthusiasm, confidence, resilience, agility, positivity, love, acceptance, power, energy, alertness, awareness, determination, and much more. You were made up more of vitality and energy than body mass. It's a great irony that we've built multibillion-dollar industries around self-help, spirituality, therapy, and leadership development, filled with tools, books, workshops, and programs on how to cultivate the very qualities that we were born with. All of this can be boiled down to one simple key: vital force. Learn to tap into the innate power of life within you and you are home free.

A child's mind shows us what it looks like to be in a state of high vital energy on a mental level. Think back again to the way you were as a child. Any child in their natural state is full of energy. (Children who are forced to endure extreme experiences of trauma or neglect, of course, often end up with a very different set of conditions that restrict this natural vitality very early on in life. What we're talking about here is the natural state of being that every child, without exception, comes into the world with.) When you were young and full of energy, you had so much more mental agility and resilience. You could screw up horribly and then move on in a matter of moments. When you were young, your mind was filled not with fears and regrets but with a sense of freedom, expansiveness, and positivity that was most likely exponentially greater than what you experience today as an adult. You weren't stewing over yesterday or worrying about tomorrow; you were in the present moment. Your mind was unstuck, free. Even when you felt sad or angry, you could let go of those upset feelings in a matter of moments. You were full of love and positivity, bursting with creativity and enthusiasm. You didn't doubt yourself, and you weren't afraid of failing or getting rejected. Your natural state was confidence, joy, and wonder. This state of mind—the child's mind, or what we could also call a "beginner's mind"—is a direct by-product of high vital force. The opposite is also

true: a vibrant, fully charged system is the natural result of a mind that's in the present moment.

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The qualities of a child's mind, a powered-up mind—that is, life, energy, positivity, confidence, joy, awareness, resilience—all become synonymous with what I'm calling “energized.” Tired, depressed, pissed off, doubting, insecure, fearful, and ineffective are just different ways of saying “depleted of energy.” The intensity of the emotion indicates the level of battery charge or depletion. Clinical depression is a fully drained battery, while being head over heels in love is a fully charged battery. In between is *I'm okay. Things are fine. Same old, same old.* There's a clear link between your energy level and your ability to attract and create the life you want for yourself. Life's challenges are solved when the mind is adaptive and resilient, which is directly related to the level of energy you have. You are resilient when there's energy. When there's no energy, you get stuck.

So what happened to this innate power of yours? Where did it go? That's a bit of a misleading question, because the truth is that you are surrounded by it at all times; you're swimming in an ocean of the innate energy of life. It was never taken away from you. It's just been depleted over time, for reasons that we will discuss in detail, but that doesn't mean you can't refuel to full capacity again. Vital energy is a renewable resource—you just have to learn how to connect to it, replenish it, and keep from depleting it again.

If the science is important to you, don't worry. We'll begin to explore this in the coming chapters. But for now, I want you

to begin by taking the time to actively notice what happens to your health, your ability to be focused and present, your performance at work, and the quality of your relationships when you're in a state of high versus low energy. This is important. Your own experience will act as a trusted guide as you explore deeper levels of your own innate life force.

## Tapping the Source

To really supercharge our mind-body complex and therefore our lives, we need to tap into a limitless source of energy, one that's bigger than supplements and exercise regimes. We are floating at every moment in a field of this power called "life force," vital force, *Shakti*—what we might think of as "source energy." It's a field, a force of positivity itself. We just don't know how to tap into it, and we haven't really discovered what drains it. If we could figure that out, then whatever we're doing, we could do it better, stronger, and faster. We would not only do what we have to do but also everything that we *want* to do.

This innate source of energy, the positivity that we are born with, is within us and all around us. There are simple ways to tap into it. This is where the ancient Vedic tradition of India and its thousands of years of wisdom and practice will act as our guide. The West gave the world electricity, the light bulb, the energy to power the activities of our external world. The East taught us how to light up our own inner world, giving us tools to ignite and sustain the electricity within.

The ancient Vedic tradition is what I like to call the original positive psychology. It offers thousands of powerful tools to harness our life energy to manage our minds, emotions, and spirit.

In this book, we'll examine three powerful methodologies to directly tap into the power of source energy, intelligence, and positivity.

1. Breath and its connection to our thoughts and emotions—a way to effortlessly reduce stress and to be dynamic in life with a mind that is calm, present, and joyful.
2. “Effortless meditation” and its impact on letting go of trauma and old thought patterns—to help us live from a state of positivity, clarity, and high energy.
3. Mind-set shifts—to become aware of how we’re operating and begin to rewire our minds.

We will explore how these three methodologies not only give us energy but also become the platform from which we co-create the vision, dreams, and life we want.

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*The West gave the world electricity, the light bulb, the energy to power the activities of our external world. The East taught us how to light up our own inner world.*

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Please keep in mind that the work we’re doing here is not about self-improvement, it’s about self-realization. People often make the mistake of classifying my work as a kind of self-help, which it is not. The whole concept of self-help suggests that there’s something to fix, that something is wrong with the way we are. What I believe—and what the Vedic tradition teaches—is that we weren’t born flawed. We were born complete: powerful, connected, joyful, vibrant, and creative. Our positivity is our essence, and that never leaves us. As we made the journey into and through adulthood, life’s challenges, losses, and setbacks drained our energy and drew a veil over the perfection of who we really are. The more exhausted we get, the further we move away from our center and the power we were born with. But that veil is just a cover. It can be removed.

I'd like you to just consider the idea that you were born with the very qualities you want in life. This is the great cosmic joke: We spend a lifetime of effort and resources in order to fix and improve ourselves, only to discover we've had what we wanted all along. What we don't realize is that this source energy is the way to reboot our entire system. When we do, then we naturally, easily, and effortlessly regain those qualities that we had as children—those qualities that we so need to navigate through the chaos and the challenges of life.

The goal of every self-help and spiritual technique is to get you back to that place, back to those qualities. I believe that the best answer lies in enhancing the vital energy that you were born with. That's all you need to do! Then the energy naturally goes where it's needed, and it manifests in the things that you want to cultivate in yourself and create in your life. It's a very natural and organic process—which is why you will hear me so often use the word *effortless*. In this book, you'll learn to connect and tap into that energy, and also how to harness it so that you release what holds you back. Even holding things back takes energy! The only difference is that you're using the energy against yourself instead of channeling it constructively. It takes a lot of energy to hesitate, to hold yourself back, to resist and avoid. This same energy could be used to propel you forward.

To dream big, you need big energy. To live big, you need big energy. This is the effortless road to transforming any aspect of your life. It's the easier way. Plug into source power, connect to it, and co-create the life you want and deserve.

# About the Author

**Rajshree Patel** is an international self-awareness coach, teacher, and speaker. She has taught hundreds of thousands of people in more than 35 countries the power of meditation, mindfulness, breath work, and other ancient tools for accessing the innate source of energy, creativity, and fulfillment within.

Born in Uganda and raised between rural India and New York City, Patel was working as a prosecutor for the U.S. Attorney's office and the Los Angeles District Attorney's office when a chance meeting with the renowned spiritual master Sri Sri Ravi Shankar changed her life. She left the practice of criminal law to explore the power of universal laws. She has spent hundreds of hours studying directly with Sri Sri the ancient wisdom of Vedanta. Since then, over the last three decades she has established more than 600 meditation centers and trained thousands of instructors with the Art of Living, helping expand the self-development and humanitarian organization into a global nonprofit.

Through her unique blend of intuition, humor, and ancient techniques, Patel has guided government leaders, families, Oscar-winning filmmakers, Fortune 500 executives, and individuals from all walks of life in understanding how the mind works, how to let go of stress, and how to be more resilient and fulfilled in their personal and professional lives. She has given talks and led programs at organizations including NBCUniversal, IBM, LinkedIn, Gap, The World Bank, Shell Oil, Morgan Stanley, Harvard University, IIT, the United Nations, UNESCO, and more.

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