



Becoming More *Alive* through the Senses of the Soul

by Neale Lundgren PhD



MEET THE AUTHOR

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When you do things from your soul,
You feel a river moving in you, a joy.¹

RUMI

There is a field of consciousness that includes everything perceivable by our five ordinary senses, including the mental faculties of elementary reason, naive belief, and reactive emotions. This field of consciousness is the domain of the material mind, which occupies the narrowest range of human experience. Let's call this *low-range awareness*.

Through the ages, although a useful and necessary survival strategy for the physical body and nervous system, the material mind has proven ineffective for any sustained sense of fulfillment. It is the nature of the material mind to be in a constant state of dissatisfaction. It perceives everything as an object of interest or disinterest.

To gain lasting joy, self-awareness must move beyond the first three layers of consciousness (of the sleep, dream and ego-awake states) if it is to realize the mind's full potential. We become more fully alive through the experience of the higher ranges of awareness. The senses of the soul are gateways to expansive consciousness.

There is a broader field of perception beyond the material mind that can accommodate this evolutionary pull that desires both transcendence and a joyful life in the world. When we establish a regular practice of basic meditation, we can access this fourth layer of consciousness (or *mid-range awareness*).

A tried-and-true method is to first attach your awareness to the breath. Then, simply observe the pull of your grasping and avoiding mind that gets caught up in the unprocessed past and worries about the unknown future. More specifically, you can focus your attention on the nasal openings, feeling cool air as you breath in, and warm air as you breath out. Be in your body.

After some practice, your mind will gradually identify with the non-judgmental witness within. When you establish yourself in the non-judgmental

witness, you are seeing with the expansive mind of the soul. At this fourth layer of consciousness, you are no longer stuck in the constrictive mind of the ego (or *low-range awareness*) that inhibits the soul's sense of joy.

The late east-west sage, Bede Griffiths, believed that access to this fourth layer of consciousness (or *mid-range awareness*) remains "the supreme achievement of the human race."² When the mind attains the ability to observe inner thoughts without bias and over investment, perspective broadens and deepens.

This shift from ego-centered perception to awareness-centered perception begins the epic adventure of fourth layer consciousness. Here we develop intuitive knowing. Albert Einstein based his theoretical inductions on this intuitive capacity of the mind "to know that what is impenetrable to us really exists."³ There are numerous levels and kinds of intuition, from the felt sense we have in our gut to the more complex seeing into the living structures and architecture of consciousness, the seeds of all creativity.

From basic to elaborate, intuition is the ever-deepening ability to perceive with the soul. As soon as we become aware of the soul mind, the seat of consciousness, powerful senses of the soul are activated. We are moved by the soul's sense of touch, for instance, when we resonate with the vibration of empathy received or given. We are enlivened by the soul's sense of hearing when we attune ourselves to the voices of ancient wisdom. We are delighted by the soul's sense of taste when we savor the sweetness of unhindered presence.

Over time, the cultivation of the soul's senses may allow for a glimpse or a taste of the unified field of pure consciousness extending beyond the mid-range into the fifth layer of *high-range awareness*. In this field, we gain access to oneness consciousness, that deeply sensed kinship with the interrelated web of energy connecting all of creation.⁴

Such glimpses and tastes of higher states of consciousness occur when the soul's senses are honed. Everything begins to light up when we begin perceiving things from the perspective of the soul's senses. Western wisdom speaks of the path of *purification* as the refinement of perception. We will feel our perceptive abilities begin to strengthen as we get established in the fourth layer of meditative consciousness. William Blake's now famous phrase, "If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite" well describes the potentials of fourth level or mid-range awareness.⁵

As already noted, the soul sees, but it also feels, tastes, smells, hears and so on. The faculties of the soul fortify as we open more to the varied textures of the subtle. For instance, when we say that we are "touched" by this or that experience, it is not only our skin but our hearts that are contacted.

A similar case can be made for the physical sense of sound. To really "hear" someone when they are sharing with us, is not about the words, but about listening with empathy and resonating with the frequency and pitch of another's being.

Likewise, we often use the word "taste" as something more than what our tongue and saliva produce. We speak about acquiring a "taste" for a particular kind of music or work of art and "savoring" the experience. We acknowledge someone who we say has "refined" taste. Like a good wine, the taste for the subtle is an acquired one.

Even our sense of smell, when raised to a particular intensity, allows us to perceive whether the atmosphere in an environment is positive or negative or a combination of both. There are places that emit a distinctive energy aroma. We are attracted to this or that soul because of a particular scent they give off beyond pheromones. Such a fragrance or odor communicates a person's "essence", and we will be either attracted to or repelled by that essence.

This is what the path of purification as the gradual refinement of perception is all about. Through the cultivation of the senses of the soul, we clarify the five physical senses, including our thoughts and feelings.

The path of purification naturally leads to the path of illumination, characterized by the fifth and sixth layers of consciousness. There are numerous enlightenments in store for the soul.



The art of becoming more alive is learning to experience every moment more fully.

Complete illumination is a term used to describe the moment when the soul experiences the world infused, not by sunlight but by infinite light, what Buddhism calls "bodhi" or full enlightenment.

An indication that we have tasted or glimpsed the frequency of this field is when we begin to "see" and to "feel" persons and things by the "light" of non-judgmental awareness, awe and wonder. Even though we often forget soul and get caught up in the dramas of the unconscious world, this condition of blindness to reality is only temporary.

As soon as we return to consciousness, to the soul that perceives all things as they are, we are enlightened once again. In and out of darkness our souls in physical bodies travel, in and out of sleep and awakening, in and out of forgetting and remembering. It is the gap of time that narrows between these moments that gives the soul a sure indication of its progress.

When the full flowering of the soul's senses happens, we are established without a pause or break in high range awareness. Oneness consciousness is that experience of no separation, no alienation between self and other. A helpful phrase of affirmation you can use to cultivate the preconditions to an experience of this highest state is this: As you inhale, say silently to yourself, "Infinite life is within me," and as you exhale, say silently to yourself, "and I am within infinite life."

Super-abundant life embraces all that we can imagine is possible for the limitlessly expanded mind and heart. It is best to not get bogged down in the idea of an "end game." The goal is the process: *satchitananda* (*sat*: infinite being; *chit*: infinite consciousness, and *ananda*: infinite bliss). Once the soul receives but a taste and glimpse of satchitananda, it experiences itself, everyone and everything as fully alive, as a mirror of unfolding creation on its way to utter fulfillment.

The art of becoming more alive is learning to experience every moment more fully. We can achieve this if we learn to perceive all of life through the finely tuned senses of our soul.

That is why satchitananda-in-the-

making is the experience of every moment as an enrichment of our being, seeds of that supreme achievement to come. That is why it is best to care less about the goal and more about this very moment. When we perceive persons, animals, nature, physical objects, the earth and heavens—everything—with an attitude of satchitananda, from the approach of satchitananda, everything takes on a different hue. Everything becomes more vivid in color, vibrant in touch, resonant in sound, sweet in taste and aromatic in smell.

Ready now to begin the next leap of our soul's evolution, we open to satchitananda, that state of our soul loving the body that it's in, and loving the earth that our soul intimately inhabits. When you allow the senses of your soul to stretch and illuminate your material mind, every moment becomes not only worth living but compelling, brimming over with the very source of life itself because now "you feel a river moving in you, a joy." 

NOTES:

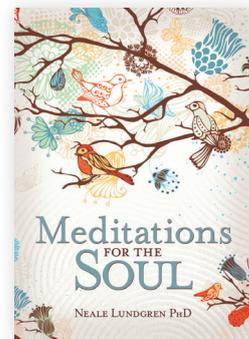
1 *The Soul of Rumi*. Trans. by Coleman Barks (HarperSanFrancisco, 2001), p.79.

2 Bede Griffiths. *A New Vision of Reality*. (Templegate Publishers, 1990), p.48.

3 Albert Einstein in *Living Philosophies* (Simon and Schuster, 1931).

4 According to this ancient wisdom of the East, there is also a sixth and seventh layer of consciousness that exemplify getting increasingly established in oneness consciousness.

5 William Blake. "The Marriage of Heaven & Hell." *Blake* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), p.191.



Bookshelf

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