

Praise for The “And” Principle

“Giving permission for life’s polarities to co-exist, *The “And” Principle* is a portal to freedom.”

— Al Secunda, author of *The 15 Second Principle*

“We are human beings on a spiritual journey, and we are spiritual beings on a human journey. *The “And” Principle* helps us on our inner journey of integration, where the joining of black and white is not grays, but vibrant colors.”

— Barry Vissell, MD and Joyce Vissell, RN, Ms, authors of *The Shared Heart, The Heart’s Wisdom, and Meant To Be*

“*The “And” Principle* is a wonderful invitation to embrace all of who we are both individually and collectively. It helps us to expand beyond the limitations of our language and conditioning.”

— J. Tamar Stone, MA, *Voice Dialogue* Facilitator and Trainer, Creator of *Body Dialogue*

“This book contains layers of depth, nuance, and wisdom that will provide inspiration for a lifetime.”

— Lilibeth Filgueira, Marriage and Family Therapist

“*The “And” Principle* is amazing and brilliant, and its overall concept is quite simple. I savored each page.”

— Elaine Rosenson, Marriage and Family Therapist, Director of the *Valley Voice Dialogue Training Center*, Encino, CA

“Stunning in its clarity and wisdom, *The “And” Principle* is a tender source of guidance and consolation.”

— Candace Wheeler, MA, Counselor

“*The “And” Principle*, in a seemingly effortless flow, transported me into my own deep, personal being. I was carried on the wings of its poetry, both simple and sublime.”

— Diane Miller, Massage Therapist

The “And” Principle

Also by Bill E. Goldberg

Prose

*Protecting the Diamond, Communication Skills to Create and
Maintain Intimacy in Your Life (CD)*

Poetry

Catch the Current

Be Like the River

The Journey

The “And” Principle

Celebrating Self-Acceptance

Reflections, Poems, and Questions
on Leading an Authentic, Integrated Life

Bill E. Goldberg



Catch the Current Publishing

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Catch the Current Publishing

To the beauty, inspiration,
and wisdom of nature.

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Introduction

The “*And*” Principle is about the freedom, power, and love that come from self-awareness and self-acceptance. It takes great courage to honor all aspects of ourselves, especially those that we wish to deny. Yet I have discovered, over many years of searching, that such acceptance has been my only hope of having any real peace and fulfillment in life. *Acknowledging all feelings, selves, and dimensions of our being is The “And” Principle.* It is to me a warm embrace and one of the biggest welcomes I have ever received. It sees the gift in each of our emotions, and recognizes the strength that comes from knowing our inner family of selves. *The “And” Principle* is about being attuned to spiritual energy and the transcendent, while also being honest in regards to the real challenges of being alive. It is a book that deals with living in the light and the darkness, integrating the polarities and paradoxes of existence. In our often fragmented, denial-oriented society, this book is a breath of fresh air.

The “And” Principle is a creative expression that contains reflections, poems, and questions on leading an authentic, integrated life. There are nine chapters, and each one begins with a reflection that presents an overview and context for the poems and questions that follow. The poetry presented here was written over the last ten years. Previously, I was never much interested in poetry. In fact, I didn’t like most of it. What I had read, I simply couldn’t understand. It took too much effort and I often walked away feeling empty. Yet ten years ago another type of poetry entered my life like an unex-

pected visitor. Its entrance was not part of my plan. It began with an inspiration that I felt just beneath the surface of my consciousness. When I sensed its prompting, its invitation, I found myself taking out paper and pen and just writing. What came forth I found titillating and full of surprises. At times it was funny and usually it was full of wisdom. I often felt to be the witness of a wonderful unfolding process that was much bigger than me. And as I continued to write more poems, life began to expose me, through books, to a larger poetic tradition that was unlike the words I had read before. I began to see that in the literary world a vein of gold existed that contained poems I just couldn't get enough of. They were easy to understand and penetrated my heart and enlivened my spirit. I considered this kind of writing to be condensed wisdom. My hope is that *The “And” Principle*, along with some of the books it references (see “Footnotes and Further Explorations”), will serve as a portal for you to enter this textured, deep, and soulful tradition.

Each chapter then ends with a set of questions to assist you, the reader, in entering into a conversation with the particular theme presented. My intention is that these questions will actively involve you in an exploration of yourself, increase your self-awareness, and deepen your level of self-acceptance. I love great questions. I actually collect them. A great question can act like a seed in your consciousness, which once planted and cultivated can sprout and offer delicious fruit. If truth be told, I wrote this book, in part, to retrieve “the lost art of curiosity” through the asking of powerful questions. I am convinced that asking the right questions is a road to great understanding and revelation. This “retrieval,” while important to learning in

general, is highly applicable to our relationships and our experience of intimacy. I am astonished at how few people are curious about others and ask them questions! My wish is that this book effectively raises this issue, and fosters your desire and ability to be curious about life and fascinated by others.

Before you fully launch into reading this book, I want to briefly share a little about my core philosophy and how *The “And” Principle* relates to it. After many years of psychological and spiritual exploration, my thinking simplified and coalesced around a core philosophy that was revealed to me while spending time in nature. For many years, I had considered nature to be my primary teacher and ultimate sanctuary. My core philosophy came from observing rivers, and followed the adage, “The river that continues flowing is the river that remains clean.” Put another way, it was “Keep it all moving.” I realized that this movement was the essence of physical, emotional, and relational health, and I saw it evidenced in many ways. Emotional acceptance and expression, communicating effectively, practicing forgiveness, physically moving and breathing deeply, dancing, being creative, taking risks, meditating, and being of service all seemed to create a fluidity and grace in living. They are flowing tributaries that feed this vibrant river. *The “And” Principle* fits in with this philosophy through its inclusive, tolerant, accepting nature. For what we resist persists, and denial and judgment tend to keep us stuck. This principle allows things to be the way they are without pretense, and as we accept our experience, our lives inevitably move and shift.

This philosophy and principle also informs my professional life. I have been a practicing psychotherapist for more than twenty years. And as I have applied this philosophy and princi-

ple to my clients, I have seen them move towards empowerment and wholeness. They have become more self-accepting, compassionate, capable of intimacy, adventurous, and self-assertive. As a psychotherapist, I have also dedicated much of my career to children and how they are raised, believing that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. I have applied *The "And" Principle* to the raising of children and have seen them more easily discover their authenticity, preserve their love, and realize their potential. In this spirit, Chapter Six is entitled "Freedom and Discipline: Parenting from *The "And" Principle*," and is devoted to the sanctity of the parent-child relationship.

This book, then, presents much of what has worked in my life and in the lives of those whom I have had the privilege to help. I suggest as you continue reading that you exercise discretion and try on the ideas and practices that appeal to you. If they work, incorporate them in your life. If they don't, put them to the side. I have often thought that life is more like a scavenger hunt than a banquet table. We find what is useful here and there as we travel this wide world. All that we need is usually not neatly arranged in one place and offered to us. My sincere hope is that on your search here you will find some gold that will in some meaningful way enrich your life and ease your way.

It is my pleasure to welcome you to *The "And" Principle*!

The “And” Principle



HEAVEN
and
EARTH

Reflection on

HEAVEN and EARTH

*“My soul can find no staircase to heaven
unless it be through earth’s loveliness.”*

Michelangelo

The “And” Principle was born partly out of my search for a community that embraced the light of spirit and honored our humanity, a community that would lift me into the realm of the eternal while also addressing issues of emotional injury, human conflict, and healthy sexuality. Throughout my life, I had experienced that you cannot transcend what you repress, and that denial breeds all sorts of physical and emotional difficulties. I was not about to forsake my integrity and humanness for a sense of ungrounded joy. I yearned for a community that was real and solid, with its roots deeply seated in the earth, and its sense of possibility open to the heavens.

My search for such a community was often frustrated. Some were filled with spiritual power yet simplistically advocated being happy all the time. Others faced human suffering but lacked spiritual inspiration. In my frustration, I fancifully thought of creating my own community. This community would be called

The "*And*" Spiritual Center. Creativity would be its sacrament. Song and dance would be at its core. There would be no split between spirit and flesh, and the body would be embraced completely. The foundation for this center would be a nature-based spirituality. Our building would be in the wilderness where sermons would often come from the mountains, rivers, and trees. This community would have great respect and reverence for the earth and turn to it for inspiration and guidance. Meditation and stillness would be practiced, transporting us into the clear lake of spirit. Through mindfulness, this center would exemplify "divine ordinariness" bringing the holy into the mundane and heaven down to the earth. Washing the dishes, planting your garden, and listening to a friend would be sacred acts. It would provide classes on issues that concern people, like relationships and intimacy, parenting, and physical health. Realizing that service dignifies a spiritual life, this community would balance self-exploration and personal evolution with volunteerism and dedication to values that go beyond self. Transcending the mind that creates dogma and separation, it would be a place of tolerance for all spiritual and religious paths. It would bring people together, knowing the spirit that unites all.

This unifying spirit is in some traditions referred to as the Self. *The "And" Principle* comes from the point of view that this Self resides within every person. It exists beyond the mind and emotions and is a source of great vitality, serenity, grace, and beauty. To experience the Self is to know love without an object. It is contentment that is independent of outer circumstances. *The "And" Principle* is about how to live from the context of the Self in daily life, while integrating our humanness. This pursuit is a way of celebrating heaven and earth.

HEAVEN AND EARTH

Be rooted in the earth
if you are going to reach for the heavens.

Feel the fecund moist earth between your toes
and be grounded in the practical ways of the world
before you entertain merging with light,
entering subtle realms of mist,
and transcending into oneness.

Knowing separateness makes oneness safe.
The earth supports heaven.
A strong ego allows for glimpses of the divine.

Otherwise your house lacks a foundation,
and a hurricane of light will demolish thin walls.

THE SILVER LINING AND THE CLOUD

He who sees the silver lining
and not the cloud
gets rained upon.

And he who sees the cloud
and not the silver lining
also gets rained upon.

BOTH

Seeds germinate in the darkness
and blossom into the light.

Honor both.

ILLUMINATION

Illumination is like taking a faded rainbow,
brightening and intensifying the colors,
adding some texture.

And then realizing
we are also the light
that moves so beautifully through the prism.

TWO SPIRITUALITIES

Two spiritualities,
one the road less traveled,
one the road more traveled.

The road less traveled
is a wide road that embraces it all,
every season of the heart.
It is a road for the courageous
who have the strength to be with the fullness of life.
Loving the light, embracing the darkness.
Comfortable with joy and accepting anger.
Surrendering to love and able to grieve well.
Knowing the transcendent and navigating with fear.

The road more traveled is a narrow road.
It is really the difficult dance of denial,
not wanting this feeling and pursuing that one.
It's a dance that will leave you tired.
It is a road that embraces heaven but denies the earth,
that talks of love and light but forsakes our humanity.
It is a road taken by those who fear attachment
and are petrified to feel their pain.

AND

There is a place in me that has never been injured,
and there is an injured place in me that I acknowledge
and respect.

I take responsibility for my life and healing,
and I find hurtful what I experienced when I was vulnerable.

There is a transcendent awareness in me that exists beyond
time and space,
and I experience temporality living in the world.

I celebrate my spirit,
and I embrace my thoughts and feelings.

I pray for guidance,
and I take initiative and act in my life.

"Either or" is half the truth.
"And" honors me completely.

IF IT ISN'T HERE, IT ISN'T ANYWHERE

If it isn't here,
it isn't anywhere.

If it isn't watching your child go into peals of laughter,
if it isn't letting the taste of chocolate linger on your tongue,
if it isn't watching the sky change color inviting in the night,
it isn't anywhere.

If it isn't enjoying the silhouetted tree against the sky,
if it isn't feeling the comfort of a warm embrace,
if it isn't seeing innocence in a baby's face,
it isn't anywhere.

What is right before us
contains all the beauty,
mystery, and majesty
that we'll ever need.

A BEAUTIFUL PLACE

The birds frolicked in the sky
like little children playing.

The sunlight filtered through the trees
with a scintillating beauty.

The mountains surrounded me
releasing my heart.

I took another step on soft soil
just feeling good in a beautiful place.

CHAPTER 1 – QUESTIONS TO PONDER

1. What are some of the most courageous choices you've made that exemplify the road less traveled?
2. If you could grant yourself two prayers to be answered, what would they be?
3. Describe several of your most cherished spiritual experiences.
How did they change your life?
4. Reflect on your connection to nature and the earth.
How does this connection affect your life?
What are the qualities of nature you most appreciate?
5. How does your spiritual or religious orientation view your humanness, including your emotions, sexuality, and challenges?
Is your humanness to be embraced, transcended, rejected...?
6. What is sacred to you, and why?