

Yes, But How? Three New Ways to Oneness

LIVIA KOHN

Abstract

All religions agree that there is only one underlying power in the universe that pervades all and manages life to perfection, and many traditions have developed methods to oneness. People today agree with the concept of original oneness but are at a loss about the path: Yes, but how? How can we attain oneness in our busy lives, in this technological world, in these particular times and culture?

Three recent American masters provide new paths. Joel Goldsmith (1892-1964) of The Infinite Way proposes a personal meditation on the question, What is God? Ed Carlson (b. 1941) of Core Health provides release of emotional and energetic tensions by focusing on the heart. And Gabrielle Roth (1941-2012) of Five Rhythms inspires people to dance to different kinds of music to release tensions and find inner peace.

The three masters work through the different dimensions of the human being: conscious mind, emotional heart, and physical body. Each sphere sooner or later impacts the others: Goldsmith's clients are healed physically and emotionally; Carlson's followers find health and practice a personal breath prayer in continuous meditation; Roth's dancers release emotions and come to see themselves and the world in new ways. They all pursue oneness and integration within the human being and thereby achieve oneness of heaven and humanity.

誠然，但如何為之？合一的三條新道路

Livia Kohn
孔麗維·柯恩

摘要

所有宗教都認為，宇宙只有一個根本的力量遍在一切，並使生命臻至完美，許多傳統都開展出合而為一的方法。現在的人也同意原始的合一的概念，但是如何致之，則是很茫然：誠然，但如何為之。在忙碌的生活裡、在科技世界裡、在這個特定的時代和文化裡，我們如何能夠達到合而為一。

三個美國的大師提供了新的道路。「無限之路」的喬爾·哥德史密斯提出關於「神是什麼」的問題的個人沉思。「核心健康」的艾德·卡森提出以專注心念的方式釋放情緒和能量的衝突。「五種律動」的加百列·羅斯鼓勵人們隨著不同種類的音樂起舞，以放鬆緊張，找尋內心的平靜。

這三位大師面對的是人類的三個不同向度：意識心智、情緒心靈和物理的身體。每個層面或早或晚都會影響其他層面：哥德史密斯的案主是以物理和情緒的方式得到療癒；卡森的信徒在連續的靜坐裡找到健康並且修習個人的呼吸禱告；羅斯的舞蹈可以釋放情緒，並且以新的方式觀照自己和世界。他們都在人類心裡追求合一和整全，並因而獲致天人合一。

Yes, But How?

Three New Ways to Oneness

LIVIA KOHN

All religions agree that there is only one underlying power in the universe that pervades all—creates the world, sustains its unfolding, is omnipresent and ubiquitous, and manages life to perfection. The Chinese call it Dao or *qi*; Indians, Brahman; Christians and Jews, God; Muslims, Allah. Buddhists speak of Buddha-nature or suchness (*tathatā*), indigenous religions describe it in terms of *mana*, and modern physicists call it quantum potential or implicate order (Talbot 1991, 39, 46). All these different cultures and religions have, moreover, developed various methods to attain oneness with the underlying power, not just by intellectually understanding and theoretically describing it, but also on the experiential level, by feeling it work through the person and manifesting it in all actions: mental, vocal, and physical.

People today are increasingly aware of the need for creating harmony of heaven and humanity, of finding true access to oneness in their lives and realizing the cosmos in their very own being. However, many traditional methods are either hard to understand, painful, or time-consuming. So, the question remains: Yes, but how? What is the best way to find oneness in the world today? What new paths and methods are available that suit our way, our culture, our needs? What venues and potentials can we open to reach the peace, harmony, and happiness that is rightfully ours as part of universal oneness?

In the following, I would like to introduce three recent American masters and their ways to oneness, working respectively through mind, heart, and body.

THE INFINITE WAY

The Infinite Way is not a message, it is an experience.

Be at peace. God IS.

The Infinite Way is the teaching of Joel S. Goldsmith (1892-1964), born in New York as the son of English emigrants turned successful merchants of imported lace. Nonpracticing Jews, they were not particularly religious, but Joel exhibited questions of identity and cosmic unfolding from an early age. When he was 23 years old, in 1915, his father was taken gravely ill during a business trip to England. After over two months of gradual decline, the hospital sent word to the family to get ready to pick up the body. Joel put his mother on the boat to England and went to call on a friend to explain why he had better cancel their dinner date. His friend's father was a Christian Science practitioner and suggested they pray for Joel's dad. When his mother arrived in England, he was up and about, and lived healthily for another twenty-five years (Sinkler 1973, 8-9).

In the following years, Goldsmith got involved in Christian Science and Esoteric Masonry, and engaged in an active search for God in the war-torn and corrupt times of his world. Due to economic changes after World War I, the lace business went downhill and eventually collapsed. In addition, Joel developed tuberculosis and was given three months to live. Again, the prayer of a Christian Scientist came to the rescue (1973, 13). Once recovered, he started his own business, again working with garments, traveling widely, and gradually becoming quite successful.

At age 36, in 1928, he had a major spiritual experience—a healing of a cold, again with the help of a Christian Science practitioner, that led to an inner opening to God (1973, 16). This set him on the path to spiritual healing. As he says, “Within thirty-six hours, a buyer who was customer of mine told me that if I would pray for her, she could be healed. The only prayer I knew at that time was, ‘Now I lay me down to sleep. . .’” (Goldsmith 1959, 14). Rather than pray in preformed phrases, Goldsmith would take a few deep breaths and set himself into a place of open stillness, where he would simply speak to god. For example, “Here I am, Father, listening for Your voice. My inner ears are open. I have no requests, no demands, no hopes, no ambitions. I do not ask You to do

anything You are not already doing. I await Your word of Grace. I am the servant of the Most High” (Goldsmith 1959, 30; also 1962, 20).

The customer was healed promptly, and more people came to him for healing. This went on for a year and a half, when his business associates pointed out that in one morning he had twenty-two calls: “Not one is from a customer. All these calls are from people asking you to pray for them. They want to be healed! Why don’t you wake up?” (1959, 15). He duly set up an office as a healer and never looked back.

In 1947, when he was 55 years old, he published his first book on how to find spiritual health, *The Infinite Way* (Goldsmith 1956a), followed by transcripts of recorded lectures and a variety of other works. He never started a religious group and rejected any form of structure or organization for his teaching, although today some groups provide workshops and systematic training in his system (www.joelgoldsmith.com).

His core practice is a form of contemplative meditation—defined as “an act of conscious awareness” to make contact with “the storehouse of our lives” (1961a, 20; 1956a, 31). For him, this essentially consists of asking the question, “What is God?” The practice unfolds in seven steps. First, sit comfortably, erect and with straight spine, feet firmly on the floor, hands relaxed, eyes closed, breathing naturally (1956b, 50). Next, repeat silently or audibly, “I turn within to the Christ of my own being,” establishing a relationship with the divine principle within and of one’s own accord reach out to Grace and establish truth within (1956a, 41, 43). Third, allow thoughts to happen and respect them for what they are: an expression of life flowing through you.

Fourth, ask the key question, “What is God?” and begin to look at the world, seeing God’s hand in all of nature and humanity (1956b, 57). Fifth, assume a listening attitude as if you were waiting to hear the answer to your question, allowing it to arise from within. Remain patient and calm, feel the inner rhythm of the universe, and allow it to speak to you (1956a, 97; 1956b, 141). Sixth, find a deep inner peace, a resting in oneness with God. “It is as if you were escaping from something, as if a burden were dropping off your shoulders . . . you are so full of the spirit that you will get right up and do the work that lies ahead for the day” (1961a, 39). Seventh, never stay in meditation for more than ten minutes at a time, but return to it whenever possible, many times in the course of a day.

Goldsmith’s entire system rests on the foundation of universal oneness. “I and the Father are one” (1971, 30), he says, “There is no power besides the I that I am” (1959, 38). He notes that we have to access our true “I,” our original self that is God. In essence life, love, and law, God already is everywhere—the world does not need fixing, we need not ask for anything outside ourselves, all we need is to rest in our birthright (1956a, 22; 1961a, 37-38). The only time, moreover, we can do so is *now*. “This moment—this now—we have the opportunity to reject our humanness and accept the divinity of our being” (1961b, 20), and we do so through our mind, “an instrument for something higher than itself, and that something is the One Self” (1961b, 65).

CORE HEALTH

The Key is to Be Free!

Live Long, Drop Dead!

Core Health is the creation of Ed Carlson (b. 1941) of St. Petersburg, Florida. The son of a dental technician, he grew up in a Baptist community and trained as a dentist. After serving in the Air Force in the early 1960s, he traveled around the world, engaging with the spirituality of different cultures and experiencing a sense of “true knowing” (Carlson and Kohn 2012, 94). Pursuing the question, “What is health?” he undertook silent retreats, trained in Tae Kwon Do, participated in journaling workshops, and joined various other artistic, creative, and spiritual groups. In the late 1970s, he convened a small group that met weekly to pursue inner development and came into contact with John Diamond, the psychiatrist who created behavioral kinesiology (2012, 97; see Diamond 1979; Hawkins 2002).

At age 50, in 1991, Carlson retired from dentistry and dedicated himself to the exploration of health—not by treating symptoms from the outside-in, but by expanding our perfect core from the inside-out. Based on the understanding that “health is union” (Carlson 2005, 116), he focused on “developing a practical and effective way for people to move internally to be completely free” (Carlson and Kohn 2012, 100). Using muscle testing as described in behavioral kinesiology, he developed the tool of energy measuring as a way to speak directly to the original life energy that makes up all existence. As long

as our arm (or leg or finger) is strong and has a bounce, we are whole—healthy on all levels, physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. When the limb goes weak, all cells shut down, and we lose the connection to life energy—the tangible manifestation of the inherent power of the universe which, holographic in nature, is ultimate oneness.

Just as Joel Goldsmith insists that we are originally divine but through consciousness have erected a barrier and created separation from God, so Ed Carlson states that an inborn core of pure health exists within each one of us: You and I are not broken and we do not need to be fixed—nor does the world. However, over the years, our core gets covered over by layers of conditioning and distortion from negativities in life. These layers are expressed into the body, mind, feelings, and into the world, leading to stress, dis-ease, and all sorts of difficulties. (2012, 1)

Rather than with contemplative meditation and a shift in conscious awareness, he resolves the issue by focusing on life energy, which pervades the entire body and every single of our 50 trillion cells. Its central agency, moreover, is the heart, which has its own independent nervous system and at least 40,000 neurons; it is, so to speak, a “brain in the heart” (Childre et al. 1999, 10). The heart, with its powerful agents “care, love, wisdom, intuition, understanding, security, and appreciation” (1999, 25), interacts closely with the brain, receiving and sending impulses. However, while it does not obey all orders from the brain, it gives directives that the brain inevitably follows (1999, 10). Heart rhythms, moreover, are indicative of emotional and energy health in the entire body: disjointed patterns signal disturbances and emotional upheaval; steady patterns show order and balance, a positive state that nurtures life (1999, 13).

Core Health practice, then, begins with relaxation, by breathing deeply into the abdomen and letting go of tiredness, tension, and confusion, then gently moving the attention through the body to relax each part in turn. Next, practitioners shower themselves with positive energy by visualizing cells light up in heart and brain and allowing this radiance to pervade and envelope the entire body. From here, they focus their attention on the heart and see it having lips, so it can speak. From the depth of the heart, they visualize various obstacles in their path (people, situations, institutions, objects), connect to the pure part in them and radiate a sense of love and oneness toward them, hug them with the arms of the heart, then release them to go off on their own path (Carlson and Kohn 2012,

141). They also see their own younger selves, split energetically off due to traumas or frustrations, reintegrate them and thus make themselves whole again.

Another major feature of the practice is Perfect Moment—a time in childhood when we feel in harmony with life and the world, a moment of experienced oneness: riding a bike, playing with the dog, baking cookies, and the like. Everyone has such a moment or moments; everyone lights up from the inside when they go back to it mentally. Core Health means being in the perfect moment: the world is at peace, energy is complete, life is whole, health is union (2012, 116-17). The key to being free, then, is that one can choose to rest in a perfect moment internally no matter what the world is doing on the outside.

The goal of Core Health is to live as part of universal flow, to be whole in the underlying power of the universe—God, Dao, life energy, quantum potential. The point of the practice is to get ourselves out of the way into a state of nonaction, so that the natural power of the universe can be forever present to participate and share with us. The practice makes it possible to shift into a state of permitting “yes” from the universe, to allow the universe to play in and through our lives (2012, 3). As does the Infinite Way, so Core Health opens the individual to cosmic oneness and allows universal goodness to emerge fully in everyday life. It does so quickly, joyfully, and with ease—from heart and energy rather than mind and consciousness.

FIVE RHYTHMS

*Energy moves in waves.
Waves move in patterns.
Patterns move in rhythms
We are the dance.*

A yet different path to oneness centers entirely on the body. Five Rhythms is a form of spiritual dance that goes back to Gabrielle Roth (1941-2012). Born in San Francisco, she experienced her first urge to dance at age seven when she saw a ballerina through the window of a dance school (Roth 1997, xvi). She found a book that showed the ballet positions and started to practice in her bedroom, eventually coming to have ballet lessons. Self-conscious and insecure, she was terrified of being judged, especially also by the nuns in her strict Catholic school, and developed an eating disorder and sexual tension in

her teens. “Someone had taken sex out of God and God out of my body. I wanted to put myself back together again” (1997, xviii).

Rock ‘n roll was her solution: alone, with no one watching, the music cranked up high, she could release all the tensions and insecurities and be fully herself. This laid the foundation of Five Rhythms. She continued to train in traditional dance methods, but hated that she had to imitate someone else (1997, xix) and came to work with all different kinds of music: fundamentalist Christian, Spanish gypsy, and African. After college, in the mid-1960s, she lived and worked in Europe for three years and hurt her knee so badly that, at age 26, she was told that she needed surgery and would never be able to dance again (1997, xx).

Depressed, she moved to Big Sur, and started working as a massage therapist at the Esalen Institute, an alternative health and spiritual community overlooking the coast. She missed dance terribly. “I had been cruelly cut off from a deep and beautiful part of myself, the only part I really loved” (1997, xxi). Gestalt psychiatrist Fritz Perls came to the rescue. He heard that she had once taught movement at a mental hospital and asked her to guide groups in movement therapy. The room had windows, so people could look in, and her students were too self-conscious to move. So she had them lie on the floor and rock their pelvis to a rock ‘n roll rhythm: they collapsed into sobbing heaps, deep-seated tensions and insecurities, depressions and resentment pouring out (1997, xxi). This way, she came to see the body as the prime resource for personal healing and spiritual unfolding. “My mission was clear: to seduce people back into their bodies, into their God-given power” (1997, xxii).

When an “eccentric crew of live drummers” appeared at Esalen, she herself forgot all about her injuries and limitations and danced to the utmost: “I surrendered, holding nothing back” (1997, xxii). It was a revelation. “God had spoken to me without saying a word” (1997, xxiii). She found that her knee was fine, the long rest had eased its recovery, and she let herself disappear inside the dance, over time—and even throughout her pregnancy—finding different rhythms that would connect to different dimensions of her being. Five Rhythms was the result, a systematic wave of dance that brings out the “spark of the original light of creation” we each hold deep within and lets it shine forth to the greater good of all (1997, xxvii).

As her fame spread, she moved to New York where, in 1977, she founded The Moving Center together with her son, Jonathan Horan(www.5rhythms.com/who-we-are). Over the years, they certified over 400 Five Rhythms teachers and made the practice global. Besides serving as dance leader, she also directed various theatre productions at The Culture Project in New York and was music director of the theatre company *The Mirrors*. With them, she performed and recorded over twenty albums, some full of powerful energy and intense rhythm, others more meditative and trance-inducing.

The practice consists of free-style dance to five distinctive rhythms, called Flowing, Staccato, Chaos, Lyrical, and Stillness. Rather than having steps to follow, each rhythm is a different energy field, in which the dancer finds his or her own expression and choreography, stretching imagination as well as the body and revealing different aspects of the true self (Roth 1997, 38). Thus, for example, the first rhythm of Flowing represents the feminine or yin energy, round and soft, weak and gentle. Dancers focus on their feet, their stride, and their steps, feel the weight of the different parts of the body and surrender to it (1997, 61). In the course of the movement practice, they shift increasingly from inertia and heaviness to motion and lightness. Staccato, second, is masculine or yang in nature, sharp and choppy, distinct and angular (1997, 86). Its location is in the arms and hands that make chopping or drumming motions. More and more, as dancers feel the energy move through their body, it changes into a connective, rhythmical pattern.

Having engaged the fundamental yin and yang, feminine and masculine sides of the self, dancers next move into Chaos, the primordial power at the root of creation. Moving the entire body and especially the spine to wild, often heavily percussive music, they “plunge down into the ocean of being and marvel at the images floating around” (1997, 117). They release all holding and control, and surrender to the underlying energy of the universe, experiencing oneness in its rawest form. Lyrical, fourth, is the phase where this oneness emerges in a new self—the music is light and playful, easy and joyous. “Dance on your toes, whirling, twirling, skipping, barely touching the ground” (197, 161). Dancers move from shapelessness to form, from trance to self. Movement comes from within and is light and free: the self starts to take flight.

The Wave ends in Stillness, where all inner agitation calms down and the perfection of the true self rests in itself. It is a place of refuge, where the spirit is whole and all

remaining resistance to God and universe is dissolved. “Totally detached from the body, yet more deeply rooted than ever before” (1997, 177), one is being moved by the energy underlying the world, by the mother, the goddess, the divine, the all-embracing.

Another way of describing the five rhythms is in terms of opening (letting go of burdens), dearmoring (dropping tension and aggression), releasing (finding unity with the primal source), flying (experiencing the freedom of heaven), and grounding (resting in the centeredness of earth). To get a sense of what this looks like, please go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8cYYzcTzm6Y>.

Every class (usually 1-2 hours) or workshop (1-3 days) embraces a wide range of experience from first-timers to certified practitioners. Teachers follow the energy in the room and give gentle guidance—focus on the feet, slow down, express heaviness, ease in stillness. While the essential map follows the rhythms, each teacher places his or her own emphasis, shifting as the mood and state of the dancers require. The rhythms are gateways to thousands of movement landscapes; alive and vibrant, they catalyze the dancer’s movement expression in the moment. Each one is different every time they walk in the room, so is the group, and so is the teacher.

To practice successfully, it is essential to be true to oneself. Go at your own pace, be responsible for your own body, keep your eyes open so you can stay aware of others and do not bump into anyone. All dancing is done barefoot or in soft dance shoes. There is no talking and you choose how much communication with others you want. Ideally, the attention is inward: there should be no people watching, no comparison with others, no self-conscious shyness. Everything living has a dance: your only task is to find and express yours. In this uniqueness, in the special way your body is and moves and feels—that’s where you find the universe, the cosmos, the ultimate state of oneness.

CONCLUSION

The union of heaven and humanity, so central to traditional Chinese thought, is an ubiquitous theme in world religions and forms part of all cultures. This is so because it is part of the essential human experience: this sense of originally belonging to something greater and deeper, of having lost a wholeness, an integration that was ours before we came to live in this world and became aware of divisions and distinctions. Mystics, seekers, and

thinkers from many different times and places have described it, often in terms that were so similar that some speak of it as the “perennial philosophy” (see Huxley 1946). The quest for oneness, moreover, has not ceased in the modern West, but is alive and well, making use of new teachings and techniques and taking the exploration into new dimensions.

Still, it is different today. The work of the three masters presented here is open to everyone without barriers, tests, or examinations; they offer their teachings in public, on a mass market, through internet, books, and other media. Everyone can participate, everyone is welcome. They offer guidelines and a certain degree of structure, but there is no dependency on the master, no giving up of self, no rejection of family or withdrawal from community. Nor are there requirements to live a certain way—celibate, vegetarian, and the like—or specific moral injunctions. The understanding is that, as people find their true self, their healthy core, the God within, they will automatically become good and do what is right. As each person, moreover, finds more wholeness within, the entire universe becomes a better place. As David Hawkins says, one person of high energetic frequency can make up for as many as 70 million people in emotional tension and frustration (2002, 130).

Growth to such high levels must come from within. Characteristically, and in contrast to traditional systems, all three masters insist that the practice is entirely individual. Joel Goldsmith firmly states that no one else should induce meditation; Ed Carlson’s entire process focuses on the particular energy obstructions each individual faces; and Gabrielle Roth insists that movement remains uncontrolled in its expression of personal being. No one else can do it for you, and whatever you do from your inner core is your particular way. The three masters thus show an entirely new level of appreciation of uniqueness that goes far beyond the standardized models and teaching methods of the past.

Among them, then, Joel Goldsmith is both the oldest and the most traditional; his method echoes Christian forms of meditation and is steeped in the Bible, taking refuge in the Christ and seeing God in self and everything. Ed Carlson is the most analytic and scientific, using kinesiological measuring and quantum cosmology to effect the intended change. Gabrielle Roth is the most international and cross-cultural, engaging with music

from all over the world and uniting people of many different kinds and origins in the simplicity of physical movement.

The three masters work through the different dimensions of the human being: conscious mind, emotional heart, and physical body. Each sphere sooner or later impacts the others: Goldsmith's clients are healed physically and emotionally; Carlson's followers find health and practice a personal breath prayer in continuous meditation; Roth's dancers release emotions and come to see themselves and the world in new ways. Oneness of heaven and humanity thus is also oneness within the human being—each road leads to the integration of all different dimensions. None of the three is exclusive: I personally work with all three and enjoy them very much indeed. They provide support and release in different dimensions and from different angles, yet all create harmony in body, heart, and mind and open us to experience this world as a great playground where we frolic about as light rays of divinity, pure spirits having a delightful and enlightening embodied experience.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Carlson, Edwin. 2005. *Core Health Training Manual*. St. Petersburg, Fla: Energy Essentials.

_____, and Livia Kohn. 2012. *Core Health: The Quantum Way to Inner Power*. St. Petersburg, Fla.: Energy Essentials.

Childre, Doc Lew, Howard Martin, and Donna Beach. 1999. *The Heart-Math Solution*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.

Diamond, John. 1979. *Behavioral Kinesiology*. New York: Harper & Row.

Goldsmith, Joel S. 1956a. *The Infinite Way*. San Francisco: Harper & Row. Reprinted in <http://theunofficialinfinitemway.com/infinitemway/iw04.html>.

_____. 1956b. *The Art of Meditation*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

_____. 1959. *The Art of Spiritual Healing*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

_____. 1961a. *Living the Infinite Way*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

_____. 1961b. *The Thunder of Silence*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

_____. 1962. *Our Spiritual Resources*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

- _____. 1971. *The Mystical I*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- Hawkins, David R. 2002. *Power vs. Force: The Hidden Determinants of Human Behavior*. Carlsbad, Calif: Hay House.
- Huxley, Aldous. 1946. *The Perennial Philosophy*. New York and London: Harper & Brothers.
- Roth, Gabrielle. 1997. *Sweat Your Prayers: Movement as Spiritual Practice*. New York: Putnam.
- Roth, Gabrielle, and John Loudon. 1998. *Maps to Ecstasy: A Healing Journey for the Untamed Spirit*. Novato, Calif.: Nataraj Publications.
- Sinkler, Lorraine, 1973. *The Spiritual Journal of Joel S. Goldsmith, Modern Mystic*. New York: Harper & Row. See also www.valorfoundation.com/books/journey.html.
- Talbot, Michael. 1991. *The Holographic Universe*. New York: HarperCollins.