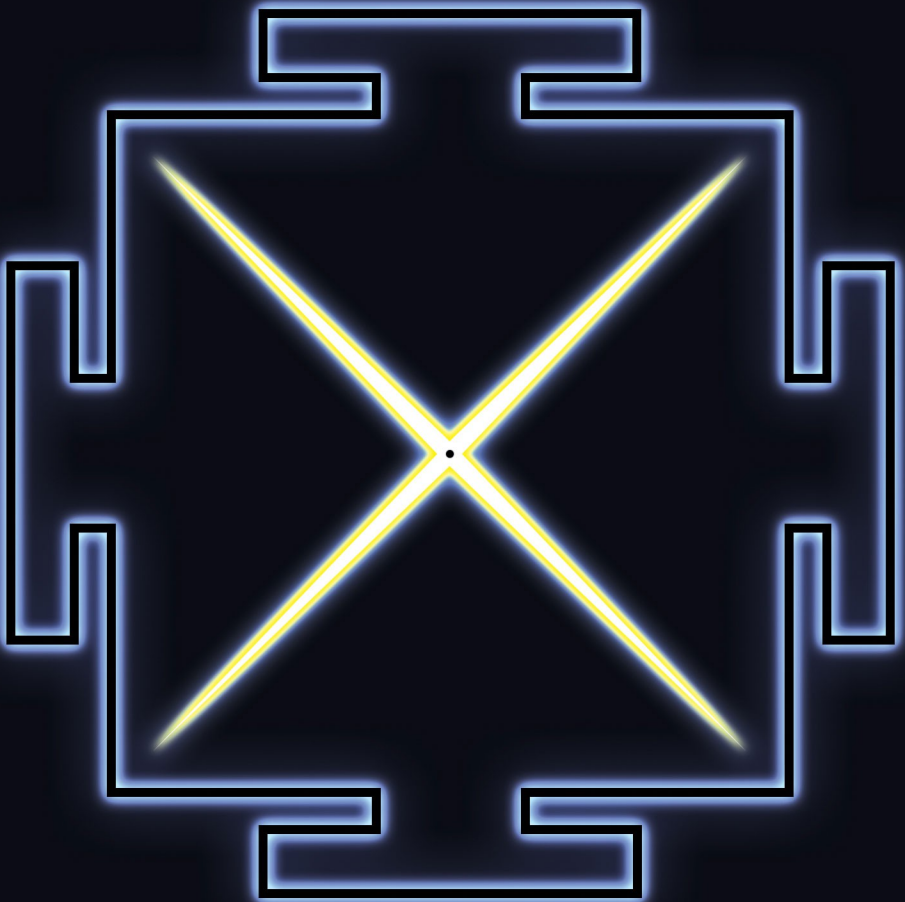


STEPHEN D'AMICO

THE INCREDIBLE STATE OF
ABSOLUTE NOTHINGNESS



A PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF
SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT

Praise for *The Incredible State of Absolute Nothingness*

“*The Incredible State of Absolute Nothingness* is the work of a contemporary spiritual master, one of those extremely gifted mystics that comes along maybe once in a generation.”

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President, Meditativeminds.com

“This book has a presence, it has an effect – perhaps the best way to describe it is that it is ‘psychoactive.’ The X on the cover is very powerful indeed.”

John N. Inglis

Artist & Author, *In Quest of a Countenance*

“I highly recommend this book if you’re interested in reading about the journey to Enlightenment by a true spiritual teacher. It radiates spiritual energy to the reader from the pages.”

Claire Elek

Visual Artist & Activist

“A truly fascinating and honest account of a life affected deeply by Spirit. The descriptive language that Stephen has so eloquently honed helps to unfold this autobiographical journey in ways that transcend many other accounts of enlightenment I’ve read.”

Carson Foster

Founder, Viewniverse.com

“*The Incredible State of Absolute Nothingness* is a fascinating read. Stephen D’Amico’s journey has intersected with practically every spiritual technology and category out there. Read it and find out how deep the human mind can go. This is a rare and wonderful book!”

Jeff Warren

Author, *The Head Trip*

“This book gives some very clear signposts for those of us on the spiritual path. I’ve read many of the same insights elsewhere; however, Stephen has integrated all these insights as different aspects or stages of one spiritual journey, which is amazing. I’m sure the world will benefit from this book.”

Dashen Kamalanathan

Coordinator, Zeitgeist Toronto

Praise for *Stephen D'Amico*

“Stephen D’Amico is one of a refreshing new breed of spiritual teachers and guides whose personal breakthrough represents an extraordinary state of permanent nondual awareness that his ordinary humanity shows is an increasingly accessible stage of human evolution for us all. When it comes to moving past the psychological and emotional obstacles on our path, his work represents another evolutionary breakthrough. Rather than allow us to stay ‘organized around the wound’ in the name of healing on the one hand, or foster a ‘spiritual bypass operation’ that disregards our human development on the other, the laserlike clarity of his consciousness penetrates the egoic mist, no matter how thick, and then lets it naturally dissolve and lift in the clear light of awareness. No matter where you are on your journey of awakening, I recommend Stephen as a professional guide for the kind of grounded soul work that has become so urgent in our increasingly polarized world.”

Cedric Speyer

Clinical Supervisor, Shepell.fgi

“Stephen is a man who has done an incredible amount of personal and spiritual work. Because of this, he operates at a very high level of vibration. Things often become clearer just by being in his presence.”

Bonnie Pedota

Author & Spiritual Psychotherapist

“Stephen’s presence alone was enough to trigger my own discovery of True Nature, and I would recommend his acquaintance to anyone serious about self-realization and its human actualization.”

Neil Jalaldeen

Guide, Liberation Unleashed

“Stephen emanates peace, consciousness and presence!”

Katia Millar

Founder, Positive Fabulous Women

“In my 25 years of investigations and studies on human evolution and esoteric spirituality, I’ve met more than ten enlightened teachers and find Stephen’s message to be both universal and unique. We are blessed to have his compassionate wisdom accessible.”

Sara MacHin

Holistic Lifestyle Consultant & Yoga Instructor

“I’ve met many spiritual leaders, and I have no doubt that Stephen is not working from within the confines of the ego. His gentle nature and open-heartedness are both apparent. I believe any work he does is for the betterment of humanity.”

Dee Dussault

Founder, Follow Your Bliss

“I am a scientist and have been on the spiritual path for over 30 years. I feel fortunate to have met Stephen. His teachings articulate the nature of the spiritual path with depth and clarity. People travel to the Himalayas to find a Master; here we have One in Toronto!”

Dilip Kumar

Managing Director, MD Group

“I have noticed much clarity occurs in any encounter where Stephen D’Amico is present. He is unshakable in his conviction about what happened during his awakening and it seems to inform his every moment. He appears to have little or no neurosis, and is ever ready, calm, and open as far as I can tell. It is without words that Stephen does much of his work. And his work is to wake us up, to humbly reveal what he has found. Like all the great teachers, he simply wants to bring relief and is excited to let us know about something beautiful and real that is available here and now.”

Gary Justice

Music Producer & Meditation Teacher

The Incredible State of Absolute Nothingness

A Personal Account of Spiritual Enlightenment

Stephen D'Amico



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Introduction

ONE NIGHT IN 1996, I went through a profound spiritual transformation that led to a permanent realization of my **true nature**. On the night it happened, I was lying in my bed when my awareness suddenly expanded, sort of like a camera panning outwards until it travels beyond the edge of space and time. Except in my case, I felt myself merge with this infinite spaciousness. Merge and stay. Permanently.

For the next few years, I lived in a totally transcendent but also perfect state of contentment. The easiest way to convey this change is with another analogy. After this transformation, I felt like a puppet master, directing the action down below, but no longer actually inhabiting my body. As liberating as this period was, I eventually came back down into the world and got re-embodied.

This book is a detailed account of that overall process, as well as an autobiography of my entire life so far, beginning with some of my earliest memories and mystical experiences. Many of the events are extraordinary and may challenge the reader's skepticism. All I can say is that I have written about my life as straightforwardly as possible to document my journey before, during, and after **enlightenment**.

Because this book is as much about my personal journey as it is about the nature of the spiritual path, some readers may wonder how accurate the information is. This is one of the biggest challenges when writing about spirituality: how to distinguish what is universally true from what is subjective.

I'm aware that my individual consciousness or **soul** has influenced the way I've experienced many of these events, but I'm equally aware that a much larger mystical reality girds my personal journey.

How do I know? William James, one of the great fathers of modern psychology and mystical experience, called it the *noetic* aspect of knowledge. This is a mode of knowing that works with the mind's eye and provides an inherent kind of certainty that is the **phenomenological** foundation of mysticism. Basically, once you're plugged in, it has more authority than any scripture from any tradition, although parallels can often be found for added confirmation, which is something I have done in this book.

Part of my reason for doing so is to provide some extra context and external validation for my experiences. But more importantly, matching my experiences with the same or similar ones found in the spiritual literature of the world demonstrates that there is a common thread of mystical wisdom and universal truth that recurs in every epoch and culture, something known as the **perennial philosophy**.

One of my purposes for writing this book is to share some of this knowledge using my experience of enlightenment and attainment of **self-realization** as an opportunity to do so. Connected with this intention is an even more important function of this book, which is dedicated to facilitating this same awakening in the reader. To that end, I have included a handful of simple and effective techniques for you to try that I discovered during my childhood or later on. Plus, I encourage you to emulate any of the other spiritual activities I engaged in on my path, which you'll come across as you read about my journey. And, finally, I hope that my unfolding will arouse your own **inner guide**, so that you can find your unique way on the path of awakening and enlightenment.

Also, the descriptions of my spiritual experiences in this book were written from the same states of consciousness being described. Words that are written from a particular state

of spiritual realization have the power to awaken the same state of realization in the reader. In other words, this book can help transform your consciousness by reading it – if you're open to receiving this kind of awakening transmission through the written word.

Reading this book can assist you in one more important way. It can help you to see where you're at in your own journey. Think of it as a tool for orientation. Right now you may be at one of these three stages on the spiritual path: aspiring to make contact with your **higher self**, realizing this transcendent dimension of being that unites us all, or returning to your body to live as a self-realized human being in the world.

Strap yourself in. Here we go.

Chapter 13

The Moment of Enlightenment

THE WALK FROM THE CAR to my house was a short one, but it was so cold that night that I was freezing by the time I reached the front door. Shivering, I turned the doorknob as quietly as possible, trying not to wake my parents. I heard my mother get up and followed the sound of her footsteps as she walked across the upstairs hallway.

“It’s just me, Mom,” I whispered in anticipation, as she made her way to the top of the stairwell.

“Oh, Stephen, thank God you’re home,” she said with a deep sigh. “I was worried. I wish you would call me when you know you’re going to be out so late. You have no idea how hard it is for me to fall asleep when I don’t know where you kids are. You know how I worry.”

It was a familiar phrase to which I replied with my usual ineffective reassurance. “You don’t need to worry about me, Mom. I’m fine. Go back to bed. Love you.”

“Okay, sweetie. Love you, too.”

I went to the living room, sunk into the sofa, and turned the TV on. I stared blankly at the images on the tube, lost in thought. A short while later, I rolled onto my back and stared at the ceiling, letting my awareness widen into witnessing – the deeper state of mind that had become such a predominant presence in my search for enlightenment.

I began reviewing the various lines of my inquiry, which coalesced into an intensified longing for truth, for liberation, for final understanding. This prompted a subtle phenomenon to emerge.

I saw my thoughts coming up from the depths of my subconscious mind. On the surface, they were passing by like a train made of words all chugging along to create the meaning

of my musings. At the same time, I could see each thought rising up from the subconscious depths, gathering various ideas, images, and associations stored in the data banks of memory.

I also had the ability to trace my thoughts back to their source by following them down to where they began. Once there, I found another subtle form of consciousness, which I implicitly recognized as an unmodified thought-form, or the anatomical mechanism that enables human thinking.

This structure was composed of two spheres – one black and one white – connected to each other by a single tube. I had actually followed a series of these “binary seeds” below the surface of my thinking mind, my attention moving down a kind of polarity ladder that shrank in size the farther down I went. At the very base of each of these ladders, I could see the place where all thoughts are born in the mind.

Looking across a formless field of mental energy, I saw an assembly line of these binary structures. They were waiting as potential thought-forms, marching dutifully like an army of worker ants ready to climb up through the tunnels of thinking in order to gather and generate meaning.

As this was happening, I knew that I was observing how thoughts and language function together in the human mind, which provided perceptual evidence for some of the musings that had informed the linguistic lines of my spiritual inquiry.

In the midst of this subtle mode of perception, my Mom stepped into the room. She said she was worried about my well-being, adding that she had been woken up by some bad dreams. Then she placed her hand on my forehead to check my temperature, a skill she had refined so well that she could instantly determine if a visit to the hospital was necessary or not. “Sweetie, you’re burning up,” she said with urgency.

The Moment of Enlightenment

I had warmed up pretty quickly after coming in from the cold, but I did not feel unwell. I felt a bit disoriented from the strange effects that were occurring in my consciousness, but I implicitly knew that the rise in my body temperature was not due to any physical illness. I surmised that the bizarre effects I was witnessing were most likely the reason for the rise in my body temperature.

Although I didn't know this at the time, extreme bodily heat is a well-known phenomenon that often occurs in people when they undergo the same sort of spiritual transformation I experienced on this night. All I knew for sure was that my mind was moving into some strange new territory, and yet, I trusted that whatever was happening was for the best.

"It's okay, Mom," I said reassuringly. "I know I'm hot, but I'm fine. I'll call you if I feel worse, but I'm okay for now."

After she left, I closed my eyes and turned my attention inward again, eager to continue watching the subtle machinery churning out the thoughts in my mind. Luckily, the same noetic perception was still available. So I kept going back and forth, from the top to the bottom, following my thoughts on the surface down to where they began as binary seeds below.

Eventually, the display dissipated, and I was left feeling absolutely certain about two things.

First, I understood that the primal state of every conceivable thought is nothing more than a play of opposites, and that the basis of the thinking mind to generate the meaning of one thing depends on the cognition of its opposite to create the necessary contrast for meaning to occur. And second, at an even deeper level of insight, I understood that this black and white object was a primordial form of polarized energy that reflected the principal of duality operating throughout creation.

The Incredible State of Absolute Nothingness

This second insight led to an epiphany. I realized that the numinous experience I was seeking could never be found in any thoughts, words, or ideas about the source of existence. No matter how profoundly or accurately conceptual knowledge expresses the indivisible mystery at the heart of creation, there is no mental substitute or equivalent for actually experiencing the source of existence. And more than anything else, I wanted to become one with that primordial dimension.

Feeling something huge was approaching, I went downstairs to my bedroom in the basement. I stretched out on my mattress and waited, alert. The room was pitch black. I dropped even deeper into witnessing, and once again I began contemplating the koan: *If I can be aware of myself as a looker, then who or what is this aspect of my awareness that is always looking?*

Finally, after months of self-inquiry and contemplation, a response to this question spontaneously emerged, though not in any form I ever would have anticipated or imagined. An unfathomable Presence filled my room. It was too dark to see it, but I definitely sensed its sublime magnificence all around me. It felt vast and eternal.

Then, using a mode of communication more direct than telepathy, the Presence conveyed that it was my inquiry that had summoned its appearance. It then proceeded to communicate something else directly into my mind without the need for words. It impressed upon me that if I wanted to reach the final goal of my spiritual quest, I had to fully surrender to the vast nothingness I felt all around me.

While considering the implications of what this act of surrender entailed, a familiar form flashed before my mind's eye. It was the X. It was only visible for a split second, just long enough for me to recognize it as such, before it transformed into another form: a luminous weblike structure.

This new subtle form looked like a computer-generated vortex, which I admired for the geometric simplicity and beauty of its design. It was clearly a gateway, but to where or what exactly, I had no idea.

As I stared into this glowing vortex, I got the distinct impression that what the Presence meant by complete surrender was to let go of everything and plunge into this portal. This was accompanied by a powerful urge from the Presence that wanted me to stop resisting and let go.

I was actually quite hesitant because I had no idea if this Presence was a benevolent force or not. Subjectively, it felt like being at the edge of a black hole that was about to pull me into oblivion.

My heart started beating wildly, slamming against the inside of my chest. Throbs of blood pumped through my veins, filling my body with a primal fear far deeper and even more instinctual than the biological instinct to survive.

I knew deep within that if I allowed myself to plunge into the vortex, I would surely die the ultimate death. Not necessarily the death of my physical body, though that seemed possible. It was more of an existential death. Everything I could possibly identify with as “me” would die.

I paused for a moment to reflect on what was happening and to try to slow things down a bit. I’d clearly reached a critical crossroad on my path and knew an important decision had to be made. But I had no idea if the right way forward was to pull away from this vortex or plunge into it. It could have been a gateway to the very source of existence I’d been striving for, although I had my doubts.

I had no context for understanding any of this. No map of the inner terrain of enlightenment. No conceptual framework to predict the various stages of awakening. It was all a

complete mystery to me. My knowledge of the path was unfolding with each step I took. As a result, I had no idea what would happen if I surrendered, and I wasn't sure that I was ready to give up my very sense of existence in order to find out what would happen next.

In an attempt to buy some more time before making a final decision, I asked myself whether this was all occurring in my head or if this vortex had actually manifested in the darkened space of my bedroom.

Responding to my attempt to delay what was unfolding, the Presence revealed that trying to make such a distinction was unnecessary and that the only way to find out the answer to this or any other question I had was to surrender.

I continued staring into the gaping void, no longer able to ascertain if this subtle form was only appearing inside my mind's eye, or if an actual portal had opened up in the middle of my room, while at the same time knowing that it didn't matter. All that really mattered was to make the right choice.

There was no indication from the Presence either way. Inwardly, I hoped that the vortex would lead to the source of existence, but there was no guidance given from the Presence whether it would take me there, nor what the consequence of such an experience would be even if it did.

The extreme nature of the situation, combined with my lack of knowing, made my mind reel. Give up my very sense of existence in order to find the source of existence? It was so paradoxical. And the consequences seemed drastic if things turned out otherwise.

I hesitated for one last second, then finally figured that no matter what happened, the result would surely turn out better than continuing to live in the overall state of apathy I was in at the time. So I stopped resisting and let go.

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In this contemporary account of enlightenment, Stephen D’Amico describes how an enduring sense of destiny kept him absorbed in the formless dimension as a child in order to one day share the realization of oneness with others. In his youth, he deliberately relinquished his enjoyment of the enlightened state of being and embraced the unenlightened condition, knowing that he would reawaken at a later stage in life and become a wayshower.

This autobiography is very special because it contains a unique form of writing, one that uses words to transmit the energy of the spiritual realizations of the writer, allowing the reader to access those same states of consciousness while reading. Intended also as an instruction manual, this book includes several exercises readers can use to experience or develop the abilities they are reading about.

This fascinating real-life story is an important contribution to our understanding of how higher consciousness is integrated by a human being. Also a page turning travelogue of the spiritual path, this remarkable book will appeal to anyone interested in gaining mystical knowledge and living an awakened life in the 21st century.



Stephen D’Amico is a spiritual teacher, social activist, author, and poet. He is the founder of Global Awakening In Action (GAIA), an organization dedicated to pushing the spiritual evolution of the planet forward. He has been guiding individuals and groups since 2006, and many seekers have experienced significant personal and spiritual breakthroughs after spending time with him.

www.stephendamico.com



WARNING: READING MAY LEAD TO LOSS OF EGO AND OTHER CHANGES IN CONSCIOUSNESS CONDUCTIVE TO SELF-REALIZATION

