

An excerpt from

TRANSITIONS

*Pathways to the Life and World
Your Soul Desires*

by Bonnie Hutchinson

From chapter
You, transformed

You at your finest

Before you begin reading this chapter, stop. Remember something: you at your finest. Right now, think of a time – even if it was only for a few moments – when you *know* you were magnificent. You were strong, you were sure of yourself, you were demonstrating your best qualities. You were in the moment, in the flow. You were not thinking about happiness, but you were happy. You knew you were doing the right thing for that moment. Perhaps sometimes when you remember that experience, you almost cannot believe it was really you, but it was.

Now I want you to *really* remember the experience of you at your finest. Right now, I invite you to re-experience you at your finest. Don't just remember; *relive* the experience of you at your finest.

- **How does your body experience you at your finest?** In your mind, begin at the bottom of your feet, and notice how your feet experience you at your finest. As you relive you at your finest, notice what your ankles, calves and knees experience;

your pelvic area, hips, lower back, abdomen. What do you at your finest experience in your mid-section, your chest and upper back; your hands, arms and shoulders? Reliving you at your finest, what do you feel in your neck, face, scalp and the top of your head? Relive how you experience you at your finest in your entire body.

- **What emotions do you experience when you're at your finest?** How does your heart feel? What kind of thoughts do you think? What does your spirit experience?

Savour all that. Take it in. Really *feel* you at your finest in body, mind and spirit. Let every cell, every nerve ending, every emotion and every thought *exalt* you at your finest.

That is you, transformed. Except it's not a transformation. You are already there. You cannot *not* be that person. You *are* that person.

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## **You get to decide**

The most important thing about you, transformed, is your experience. You get to decide who you are now, what you treasure about yourself and how you want to evolve next.

In this chapter I'm going to mention some things I've observed in people I consider to be highly evolved. I'm also going to list three of my working hypotheses about being a highly evolved person. In addition, because I love reading and love to share treasures, at the end of this chapter I've listed four of my favourite authors on this subject.

## **Characteristics of highly evolved people**

So here goes. Here's what I've observed in highly evolved people. You'll probably recognize yourself. You might also think of characteristics I haven't listed.

**Fully responsible.** This is where it starts. Highly evolved people take full responsibility for every aspect of their lives. You won't hear them blaming circumstances or other people for anything. If they've been in tough circumstances, they don't wallow in blame, however justified. They acknowledge the challenges and choose what they will do with the circumstances. If they make a mistake, they own it, do what they can to repair any damage, and move on.

There is a bigger belief at play here. Whether or not they are into metaphysical pursuits, highly evolved people believe they create their own reality. They know there are forces beyond their control, but they choose to accept full responsibility for how they respond. They accept responsibility for their words, actions, thoughts and intentions and whatever else is within their power. For this reason, they are empowered. That makes them safe to be around.

**Absolute integrity and authenticity.** Highly evolved people are who they are. They tell the truth, keep their promises, honour their commitments and do the right thing *because* it's the right thing. And so they are comfortable in their own skin. That too makes them safe to be around.

**Intentional.** My sister's Ph.D. research was about men who grew up in violent abusive environments, witnessed violence against their mothers, and grew up to be healthy positive men. They are in healthy long-term relationships with women, they are incredibly competent and creative, they contribute to their communities and the world, and they have wicked senses of humour. If you met them, you'd like them right way. My sister's research question was, "What went right?" She called her dissertation *Living Intentionally*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> H. Beth Balshaw, *Living intentionally: A study of nonviolent men who witnessed spousal abuse in childhood* (1993), Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Calgary, Calgary AB Canada.

Intention was the most dominant characteristic of the men in her study. At an early age, these men resolved to be different from the way they were brought up, and they went in search of “What does different look like?” As adults, they are intentional about how they use their time, where they live, their work, what kind of people they allow into their lives, their relationships and their volunteer activities.

That is another characteristic of highly evolved people. They are intentional about every aspect of their lives. Favourite questions are, “What is my intention in this situation? What is my intention for the results of this decision or project?” As leaders, highly evolved people ask those questions of their teams, and therefore raise the bar for everyone involved.

**Intention to focus on what’s positive and possible.** We can probably all do a spectacular rant with the general theme of “Ain’t it awful?” A few years ago, a saying was going around my community: “Life’s a bitch and then you die.” I thought it was funny. It perfectly captured the prevailing attitude of some people who lived in my life-is-tough rural community.

Now I choose to be driven by another saying: “Life’s a blast and then you evolve.” It’s not as funny but it is how I choose to live. Most days, it’s my prevailing attitude.

What I notice about highly evolved people is that, even if they slip into downer mode for a moment, they quickly switch the focus to something positive. Whether they know consciously that what you focus on expands, their natural inclination is to focus on the positive. That is the place of power, that is where they can make a difference, and so they are effective.

**Learning, growing, evolving.** When you know you’re right, when you think you know absolute truth, you are no longer teachable. Highly evolved people are not just teachable, they are non-stop soak-it-up-like-a-sponge learners. It’s not only that they

take classes, participate in workshops and read and watch and listen. They have a learning mindset. They are curious. They ask, "What, why, how?" Every experience is grist for the mill. They consistently reflect on "What can I learn from this?" and "How can I apply it?"

The fact is, because they are always learning, they are always growing and evolving, until the last days of their lives.

**A desire to contribute in the best possible way.** In the 1800s, Dr. David Livingstone, a scholar, musician and physician, worked in Africa for many years. At a graduation ceremony he told the graduates, "I do not know what your destiny will be but this much I know. The only ones among you who will be truly happy are those who have sought and found a way to be of service."

Highly evolved people love to contribute. They like to make a difference. They are not martyrs, wanting everyone to know (and feel guilty about) their sacrifices. Neither are they egoists, wanting everyone to know (and admire) their contributions. Highly evolved people are thoughtful about their contributions. Wherever they are, they take time to learn what would be most useful for the circumstances and the people involved. Wherever they are, the place is better because they are in it.

**Respectful of the past, fully present, and future oriented.** A dear friend did an experiment the year she turned 65. She began asking everyone she met, "What do you notice is different about people in their sixties compared to people in their forties?" She asked friends, family and colleagues. She asked people in the grocery line, taxi drivers and passing strangers.

The answer that shocked her most came from a young esthetician in her twenties. As my friend was getting a pedicure, she asked the esthetician, "What difference do you notice about people in their sixties compared to people in their forties?" The young woman was quiet for a few moments. (My friend guessed

that hardly anyone asked her this question!) Then the young woman said, “Well, people in their forties are usually talking about something that’s coming up or their plans for the future. People in their sixties mostly talk about things in the past.” My friend pondered that answer for several months.

Highly evolved people are future oriented. It’s one aspect of wanting to contribute. We cannot change the past but we can learn from it. We can help to create a preferred future by envisioning it and having faith in it. The only place we can influence is right here right now in the present. Whether they are sixteen, sixty or one hundred and six, highly evolved people learn from the past, are interested in the future and act in the present.

One of my relatives, knowing he was in the last few days of his life, planted daffodil and tulip bulbs that would not bloom until the following spring, and a tree sapling that would not mature for a decade. That’s future oriented.

**Filled with gratitude.** In her nineties, my mom commented that in the assisted living facility where she lived, when people were asked, “How are you?” they often answered, “Grateful!” They were glad to be breathing for another day.

Highly evolved people practice gratitude, appreciation and celebration like breathing. It’s just part of who they are.

### **Three working hypotheses**

**Life is an adaptive challenge – and that’s fun.** Mostly.

**We cannot *not* evolve.**

**You never arrive and you have arrived.**

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The chapter explains these.
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## **Our real job: Us at our finest**

You undoubtedly have responsibilities and obligations, goals and objectives, to do lists and tasks and all of that. Me too. Those may be our focus many days but they are not the main event. Actually, we have only one job: to be the best version of ourselves we can be right now.

Everything else is detail.

## **And finally**

I have come to believe that for many of us, whatever else might be at the front of our minds, our deepest desires are at the soul level – the desire for meaning, for connection with one another and unity with our divine nature. We want to experience and express our highest selves in human form. We want to contribute to making the world a better place.

We are all a part of an evolving and uplifting human consciousness. When we are in that flow – no matter the messiness – being in that flow is one of life's most deeply satisfying experiences.

Perhaps like you, I keep having wonderful experiences that show me – even while we take full responsibility for ourselves, our thoughts, emotions, words and actions – we can **allow for Grace**. We humans do not have to do it all or figure it all out. Universal wisdom is bigger than all of us, and it will carry us along in ways we could not have predicted.

And so it is.