

# **The Spirit of Love: Heart Intelligence and Emotional Evolution**

Dana Tomasino

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## **Overview**

The evolution of human civilization to this point has seen impressive advances in the development of technologies that enable us to interact effectively with our external world. However, as a whole, our relationship with our internal emotional experience has remained comparatively immature. This next crucial phase of humanity's evolution will invite a shift in focus inward—to develop new *internal* strategies by which we can learn to regulate, modulate, and direct the vast and largely untapped resource that is our emotional energy. To build this new relationship with our emotional experience will require a source of intelligence beyond the familiar but limited awareness of the mind. Heart Intelligence embraces an integrated awareness that includes input from the body, mind, emotions, and spirit—the larger aspect of our consciousness that connects us to an energetic domain beyond space-time constraints. Practices that engage the heart by activating states sourced in Love, in individuals and in community, can help cultivate Heart Intelligence and generate new levels of self-awareness and emotional mastery. The collective maturation of our ability to intentionally track, focus, direct, and modulate our emotional energy will naturally facilitate the development of humanity's intuitive and co-creative capacities. This heart-directed evolution of consciousness will transform our relationship to ourselves, our fellow beings, and our Planet, leading to greater levels of self-responsibility, cooperation, compassion, connectedness, and Love.

*The more, as an irresistible effect of technical progress and reflection, mankind becomes conscious of the immensity, and even more the organicity, of the world around it, the more the necessity for a soul makes itself felt: for a soul that is capable of maintaining and directing the vast process of planetization in which we are involved. The more, too, it becomes clear that the only form of spirit capable of producing this soul is that . . . sustaining and impelling the universe in the direction of progressively better forms of arrangement: . . . the spirit of greater love and greater consciousness.*

—Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1972)

*Activation of Energy*

## A Focal Shift

Over the course of the last millennium, the evolution of the human race on the Planet has undergone a momentous acceleration. Largely, this development has concerned itself with knowledge, ideas, and technologies that have revolutionized the way in which we, as individuals and as a species, interact with the external landscapes of our world. The rapid accumulation of knowledge that characterized the scientific revolution and the advent of groundbreaking new technologies that emerged from the industrial revolution have allowed us to exert more control over our external environment than was ever conceivable before. Now adding to these developments the exponentially burgeoning capacity to store, process, and access information that are a product of the current information revolution in which we live, the bounds of our collective technological potential are indeed difficult to place. Even as few as a hundred years ago—let alone a thousand—it would have been virtually impossible to envision the current reality we have built for ourselves on the foundation of these advances.

Yet we may reflect on exactly where this dexterous ability to manipulate our outer world has brought us as a species. Notwithstanding the countless benefits offered to society by modern science and medicine; ingenious developments in mechanical technologies that lift the burden of once-grueling manual work; and the information processing power, convenience, and digital interconnectivity furnished by the computing industry, we are left with an unshakable sense that something is missing. There is a vast emptiness within and among us that remains unfilled by these externally oriented advances and all that they have brought us. And, with unfortunate irony, even the very ends for which these developments were supposedly created—improved health and healing, enriched quality of life, increased connectedness with one another and our Planet—remain, all too frequently, sadly unfulfilled.

The source of this growing sense of incompleteness is a seemingly fundamental imbalance in the direction in which humanity's evolution has thus far been focused. To illustrate, we may consider the following question: Over the time period that we have built towering cities, transported ourselves around the globe and even into space and back, looked inside the cell and

the very subatomic particles that comprise it, and erected networks of super-powerful computers that function at lightning speed—in this *same time*, how much have we done as a species to bring about a corresponding development in the world in which we all live every moment of our lives—our *internal* world—the landscape of our emotional experience?

It is an awkward truth to acknowledge that while most of us now take for granted the ease and consistency with which we can manipulate aspects of our outer world with a simple turn of a key or push of a button, human civilization as a whole still lives for a large part at the mercy of unmanaged (and, in our perception, unmanageable) emotional stress; automatic, conditioned judgments and reactions that we accept as “self”; and energy-draining feelings, thoughts and behavioral patterns that are primarily sourced in ego-driven states of fear. Indeed, fear-based patterns of greed, judgment, intolerance, and blame dominate and underlie much of the societal chaos we experience in our world. And at the individual level, “stress,” and the emotional and behavioral responses it engenders, run our lives to a greater degree than most of us are even aware of, leading to diminished quality of life, strained relationships, burnout, physical illness, and, in some cases, even precipitating death.

Certainly, we also experience uplifting feelings that enrich our lives—moments of love, joy, gratitude, compassion, connection and communion with others. But, for society at large, we may ponder how many of these internal feeling experiences remain primarily dependent upon fleeting arrangements of external circumstances outside our full control—just as relief from uncomfortable feelings for many people also appears mainly at the mercy of some change occurring outside themselves. And we must also ask to what degree, as a society, we are *truly conscious* of the subtle, nuanced emotional energy dynamics that govern our perceptions, motivations, and interactions—for it is only in the light of such consciousness that self-willed change is possible. In sum, taking stock of the mass level of emotional awareness and empowerment the human race currently embodies, we find that the large part of the population possesses only a surface-level awareness and understanding of their emotional nature, and only a very limited ability to consciously modulate their emotional world.

Quite ironically, while we appear endlessly driven to continue to invent new and improved technologies to manipulate our external reality, we have collectively come to accept this largely disempowered and unconscious state relative to our internal emotional reality as natural and a “given.” We barely give it second thought as we move through our lives, regarding it simply as part of the “human condition.” But what if this so-called “human condition”—our collective emotional landscape and our relationship to it—is not static at all, but marks the locus for the next huge step forward in the evolution of our species? In a startlingly short space of time humanity has lived through the scientific revolution, the industrial revolution, and now the information revolution. But we cannot move forward in a true wholeness sense without a fundamental shift in the focus of our species’ development. A focal shift to the inner realms heralds the new revolution that is now in order. The next revolution is an emotional revolution; and it has already begun.

## An Untapped Resource

*Emotion is the chief source of all becoming-conscious. There can be no transforming of darkness into light and of apathy into movement without emotion.*

—Carl Jung (1938)

A next milestone in humanity's growth trajectory will involve the recognition and broad acknowledgment that one of the most powerful yet untapped resources available on the Planet lies within us. Although we live nearly continuously at its whim, as a race we remain as yet in our infancy with regard to our capacity to consciously regulate, organize, and direct this hugely potent force. Given this, we are effectively unacquainted with its fully realized power. This resource is our emotional energy.

It is important to realize that emotional energy is not just a concept, but a real, measurable component of the bioenergetic field projected by our body, which continuously interacts with our environment and all that surrounds us (Bradley & Tomasino, 2011; McCraty, 2004; McCraty, Bradley, & Tomasino, 2004-2005). Like the vast, though largely unutilized energy inherent in the oceans of our Planet, the wave patterns formed by our emotional energy—when coherently organized—have the potential either to wreak tremendous destruction or to act as a powerful creative force. While the pure energy of emotion itself is neutral (neither “positive” nor “negative”), it is the *movement of emotional energy* that underlies significant movement in virtually all aspects of life—in our physiology, in our decisions and behavior, in our relationships with the people and situations around us. Yet much of this movement is unregulated and undirected, reactive rather than proactive, with a large part occurring beneath the surface of consciousness. We often become conscious of the emotional motivations of our behavior only “after the fact,” and sometimes these may never surface to the light of awareness. Further, it is rare that the inherent potency of coherently organized emotional energy becomes accessible to us; for the most part, this power is dispersed and diluted in the chaotic spikes, unchecked leaks, energy-draining loops, and the often subconscious flows of emotion that characterize our moment-to-moment reactions to the challenges of everyday life, along with the more deeply engrained emotional patterns and attitudes we hold.

Many of the formal and informal strategies people currently use to “manage” or “regulate” emotions attempt to impose the “rationality” of the mind to exert control over the emotions. For example, a common assumption is that if we can will ourselves to change our thoughts about a situation, our feelings will obediently follow suit. While such cognitively-based approaches may in some cases yield positive change, experience tells us that too often our deeply held emotional feelings and attitudes continue to predominate and color our reality despite our most strenuous mental efforts to think the “right” thoughts. Often this emotional subterfuge occurs at a level beneath our conscious awareness, leaving us at a loss to explain our limited progress despite our best efforts. Furthermore, thinking alone generally does little to penetrate the powerful psychoneurological defense strategies put in place at a very early precognitive stage of our lives to protect us from emotional sensations our body then experienced as overwhelming.

Science on the primacy of emotion validates experience (Zajonc, 1980; LeDoux, 1996) showing us that in fact emotions do not always follow thought; they may emerge independently of cognition and may even stand in conflict with our conscious “rational” thinking: operating at a higher speed than our thoughts, our emotional feelings frequently bypass the mind’s linear reasoning process entirely—a phenomenon that gained recognition as “emotional hijacking” (LeDoux, 1996). Moreover, studies of the neural pathways linking the cognitive and emotional centers in the brain provide neuroanatomical evidence that emotional signals exert a far more powerful influence on cognitive processes than cognitive activity does on emotion (LeDoux, 1994, 1996), explaining why it can be so difficult to “turn off” a powerful emotion, and why “positive thinking” alone may not always have its anticipated impact on our emotional world.

It is the mind (and by this I mean the familiar awareness of our normal, “everyday” mind that thinks, reasons, computes, perceives, assesses, believes, and so forth) that has assumed the driver’s seat thus far in our evolutionary journey. However, it is also the mind—what I call the “reactive mind”—that part of our conscious and subconscious mental process that is governed largely by the ego’s narrow perspective and fear-based patterns of personal and cultural conditioning—that has kept humanity quagmired in the current mass level of consciousness of relative emotional immaturity in which our world lives.

The next steps in humanity’s journey of emotional maturation will not be led by the mind: a fundamental shift in consciousness cannot be accomplished by the same force that created the *status quo*. It will require an awareness and intelligence beyond that of the familiar mind—quicker than our linear reasoning and broader than our habitual perception—to chart the deep, uncharted waters of our emotions and produce sustained change in our relationship to our emotional energy. And it will require an intelligence and power much deeper to teach us how to *consciously* focus, direct, and modulate this vast, untapped resource within us—for it is indeed our growth in this capacity that marks the next phase of humanity’s evolution.

## Heart Intelligence: An Innate Capacity and Undeveloped Potential

*Heart intelligence is the flow of awareness, understanding and intuition we experience when the mind and emotions are brought into coherent alignment with the heart. It can be activated through self-initiated practice, and the more we pay attention when we sense the heart is speaking to us or guiding us, the greater our ability to access this intelligence and guidance more frequently. Heart intelligence underlies cellular organization and guides and evolves organisms toward increased order, awareness and coherence of their bodies’ systems.*

—Doc Childre, Founder, Institute of HeartMath

I use the term *Heart Intelligence* to describe a larger source of awareness, beyond that of the mind, which we will increasingly integrate and embody as this shift in consciousness progress. I

see this as a source of intuitive insight, wisdom, and understanding naturally accessible to all human beings, which can be drawn on to deepen knowledge of self and others, guide emotional, relational, and spiritual growth, and inform choice and action across all spheres of life. Most of us have had experiences in which we have spontaneously accessed this source of awareness, as when we may have experienced a deep, intuitive insight about ourselves, another person, or a situation important to us that surpassed our previous cognitive understanding; received an unprecedented “download” of creative inspiration on a project; or even experienced a sudden, clear intuition about a loved one on the other side of the world. Yet, while sporadic access to this larger aspect of our intelligence does occur, it is still rare that we are able to consciously activate it at will and intentionally apply it to the challenges and opportunities in our lives.

I believe that while Heart Intelligence is an innate capacity inherent in all of us, collectively as a species we are as yet in the initial stages of unfolding, exploring, developing, and truly understanding this potential. Thus, to define this concept precisely and exhaustively may at this point lie beyond our current capacity. Furthermore, because I believe that Heart Intelligence operates at the interface between what we may call our physical-material space-time reality and an energetic field-based domain that science has only begun to characterize, we also encounter the problem of the limitations of our current vocabulary to adequately describe some of the multi-level dynamics and processes involved. Still, my intention here is to outline some descriptive features of this phenomenon, gleaned from my own study, research, and experience, that together may point us in the direction of an initial acknowledgment and acquaintance with this capacity inherent in all of us. Some of the key qualities and characteristics of Heart Intelligence are summarized in the table below.

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### Qualities of Heart Intelligence

Transcends the ordinary awareness of the mind but interacts with it

Serves as a reliable internal guidance system

Integrates information from and about the body, mind, emotions, and spirit

Provides direct insights that are intuitive in nature, which can be experienced in the form of words, images, feeling sensations, and/or a sense of “knowingness”

Generally provides a more objective, encompassing, loving, and “wholeness-oriented” perspective on situations than we are able to access through cognitive reasoning alone

Can access and communicate information from a domain beyond the constraints of space-time reality

Often emerges naturally when the mind, emotions, and physiology are brought into a state of coherent alignment through heart-based emotional self-management practices

Can be developed and honed through the consistent application of such practices in daily life

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When contrasting the qualities of Heart Intelligence with the more familiar functions and capabilities of the mind, it is important to note that the heart and mind were never meant to be

opponents, but allies—interacting harmoniously while contributing complementary proficiencies to the “whole” that comprises human consciousness. Thus, the function of Heart Intelligence is not to supplant the faculties of the mind, but rather to help bring the mind into alignment and communication with a larger and more aware aspect of ourselves which can both observe and transcend the ego-driven influences that contribute to our emotional unconsciousness. It is then that the “reactive mind” gives way to the *awakened mind*, which, in its clarity, becomes a receptacle for insight, a locus of creative processing, and a powerful executor of inspired action (literally, action that is *imbued with spirit*).

To explore how Heart Intelligence can be accessed and developed, we turn now to the heart itself.

## The Role of the Heart

*The heart is the perfection of the whole organism. Therefore the principles of the power of perception and the soul's ability to nourish itself must lie in the heart.*

—Aristotle (384–322 B.C.)

*The heart, anatomically the midchest area, is at first a metaphorical center of meaning in life and gradually opens into a direct experience of a new dimension.*

—Richard Moss (1981)

*The I That Is We: Awakening to Higher Energies through Unconditional Love*

## An Intelligent System

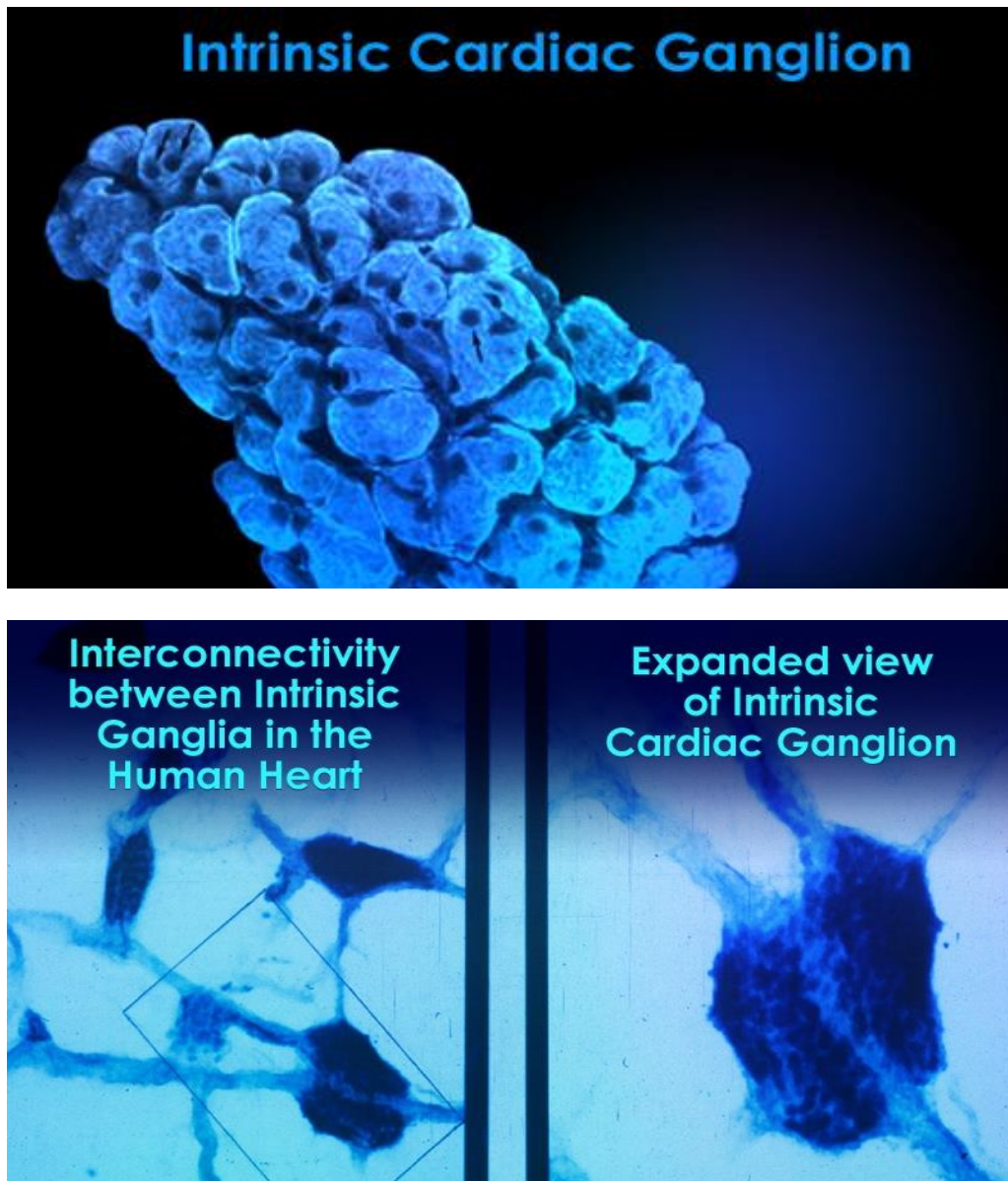
When speaking about the topic of Heart Intelligence I am often asked whether I mean “the physical heart” or what some variously term the “emotional,” “metaphorical,” “energetic,” or “spiritual heart.” My answer is that these two entities cannot really be separated; they are inextricably connected. How is it that the connection between the “heart” and our emotional, intuitive, and spiritual life has become so engrained in the expressions of our everyday language that most of us do not even think to question this association? Is this connection merely coincidental or poetic? It would seem not, as the link between the heart and loving emotions, wisdom, insight, and spirit can be traced back to the earliest human cultures and is, in fact, a common thread uniting virtually every major civilization and spiritual tradition that has existed throughout human history. Indeed, the Mesopotamian and Babylonian civilizations, the ancient Greeks and Egyptians, the early Chinese and Japanese cultures, as well as the Hindu, Buddhist, Shinto, Islamic, and the early Jewish and Christian religions all shared the conception of the heart as a conduit to an intuitive intelligence that transcends and yet also complements the perceptions and understandings of normal awareness. The source of this intelligence was seen to



be an individual's spirit or soul, and the heart was regarded as a portal to this essential and eternal aspect of our being (Godwin, 2001; Tomasino, 2011).

On the scale of human history, it is only relatively recently—with the advent of modern science in the West—that the “physical heart” became considered a separate entity, divorced (at least from the mechanistic scientific perspective) from the other broader capacities to which it had always been linked. Yet, with great irony, it is now science itself that has begun to reaffirm the validity of this ancient conception of the heart—for the first time linking this larger concept of what we may call the “emotional energetic heart” with actual capabilities of the physical heart (McCraty et al., 2009).

New discoveries at the cutting edge of science confirm that the heart is in fact not just a mechanical, muscular pump, but a complex information processing system with its own intrinsic intelligence. Research in the discipline of neurocardiology reveals that the heart functions as a sophisticated sensory organ, possessing an intrinsic nervous system of over 40,000 neurons whose structural interconnectivity resembles that of the neural networks in the brain (Armour, 1991, 1994; see Figure 1). Indeed, this “heart brain,” as scientists now call it, is known to sense diverse forms of input, process and encode information internally, and make functional decisions independently of the brain in the head (Armour, 2003, 2007; Armour & Kember, 2004). There is evidence that the heart's brain possesses the capacity to learn and even has a form of memory. Moreover, afferent (ascending) neurological signals transmitted from the heart to the brain continuously interact with the brain's higher cognitive and emotional centers. In this way, information originating in the heart itself constitutes a major and consistent influence in the very processes underlying perception, cognition, and emotion (McCraty et al., 2009). In sum, it appears that even at the physiological level, the heart not only possesses an innate form of intelligence, but, through its extensive communication with the brain, is intimately involved in the way we perceive, interpret, feel, and respond to the world.



*Figure 1. The "Heart Brain"*

The heart's intrinsic nervous system, composed of interconnected clusters of nerve cells (ganglia), in many ways mirrors the structure of the cranial brain. (Photomicrographs by Dr. J. Andrew Armour.)

### *The Intuitive Heart*

Perhaps even more fascinating is the recent, growing empirical evidence of the heart's prime role in nonlocal intuition. Experimental findings in this area, now replicated in different laboratories around the world, consistently show that the heart responds to a *future* event *before* it happens. More specifically, these experiments demonstrate that the heart exhibits an

electrophysiological response to a randomly selected stimulus from *4 to 14 seconds*, on average, before the stimulus is actually presented to research subjects (McCraty, Atkinson, & Bradley, 2004a, b; Bradley et al., 2010; Tressoldi et al., 2009; Bradley, 2011).

These findings suggest that the heart effectively accesses tacit information about nonlocal objects and events from a domain beyond space-time constraints (McCraty, Atkinson, & Bradley, 2004a, b; Bradley, 2011). While its details are beyond the scope of this article, a theory has been proposed that draws on the principles of holographic organization to explain how this type of nonlocal intuitive perception accesses a field of energy in which information about “future” events is spectrally enfolded (Bradley, 2007; see also Bradley’s chapter in this book).

This electrophysiological evidence of the heart’s ability to access information about the future clearly stands in contrast to the usual space/time-based framework within which most of us relate to and interpret the world. However, the heart’s apparent capacity to act as a conduit for field-based information that typically exists “outside” normal conscious awareness directly recalls the ancient cultures’ shared conception of the heart as a source of intuitive insight and wisdom extending beyond our regular perception. Thus, these scientific data may be seen as providing objective evidence for an innate intuitive intelligence that humankind has known—and used—for many millennia (McCraty, Atkinson, & Bradley, 2004a).

### *Heart and Soul*

Venturing briefly beyond the confines of science’s current measurement capability, it is my view that the neurological and electrophysiological indicators of the physical heart’s information processing function and involvement in intuitive perception are reflections, at the physical-material level, of a deeper order that exists at an energetic (nonmaterial, field-based) level of reality. I believe that at the energetic level, the heart is indeed the principal point of connection with the nonmaterial, eternal aspect of ourselves—our unique spirit or soul—whose broad awareness encompasses not only profound self-knowledge but also direct access to a universal field of information outside the bounds of space-time. It is through the heart that we can consciously increase our connectivity and integration with this larger aspect of our being and grow in our ability to draw on its vast and loving awareness.

### Love

*Love is the most universal, the most tremendous and the most mystical of cosmic forces. Love is the primal and universal psychic energy. Love is a sacred reserve of energy; it is like the blood of spiritual evolution.*

—Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1931)

*The Spirit of the Earth*

*The state of unconditional love becomes the “air” into which conditional consciousness leaps in order to behold a new dimension.*

—Richard Moss (1981)

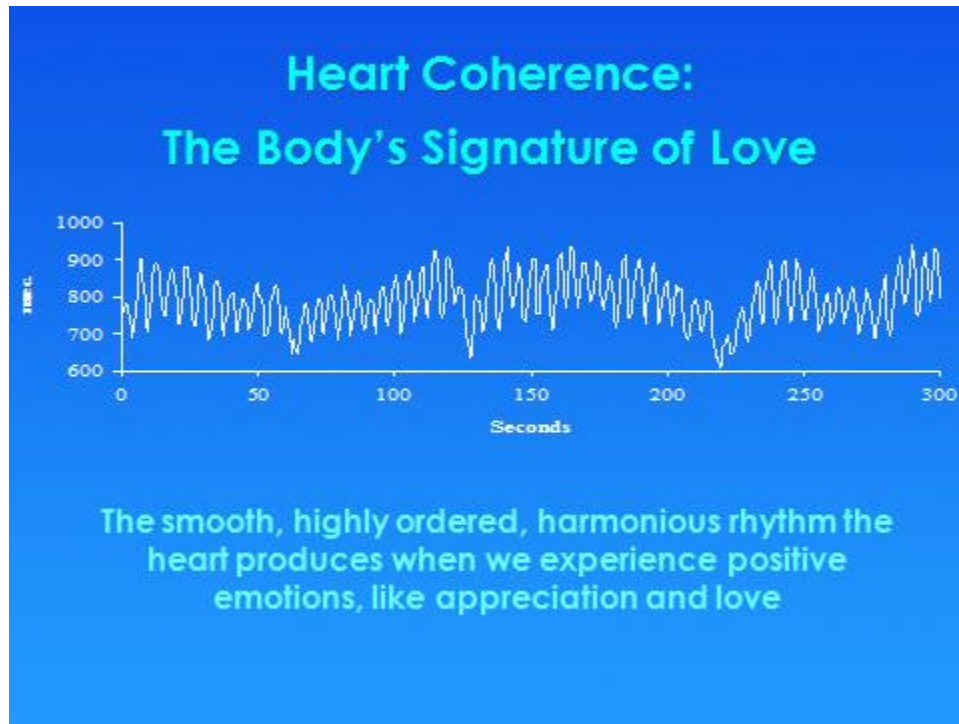
*The I That Is We*

If the heart is a doorway to another dimension of perception and awareness, then Love is the key that unlocks that door. In capitalizing the word “Love” here, I use the term to encompass a range of emotions, feeling states, and attitudes that arise from the heart and are sourced in love, such as gratitude, appreciation, compassion, forgiveness, kindness, and personal love for others—as well as a larger, impersonal Love that transcends the realm of everyday emotion and relation.

While the core teachings of virtually all the world’s religions have long recognized Love to be the “access code” to higher consciousness and spiritual awareness, we can now begin to explore the scientific basis of this understanding. Research shows us that heart-focused, loving states appear to shift the heart and entire body into a highly synchronized and harmonious mode of function in which awareness is expanded, perception broadened, and emotional stability facilitated (McCraty & Childre, 2004; McCraty et al., 2009). Individuals trained in heart-based techniques to self-generate and sustain such states not only exhibit improvements in many objective measures of health, emotion regulation, cognitive function, and well-being (summarized in McCraty, Atkinson, & Tomasino, 2001; McCraty & Childre, 2004), but also frequently report a sense of gaining increased access to internal guidance and insight—relative to both their internal emotional dynamics and to situations and challenges in their outer world (Childre & Rozman, 2002, Tomasino, 2011). Typically, the enhanced capacity to draw on this source of intuitive discernment leads to outcomes such as deeper self-awareness, improved emotional balance and mental clarity, more effective decision-making and problem-solving, greater competence in professional practice, and improved quality of relationships. These outcomes suggest that the use of heart-based techniques that enable people to self-activate and sustain feelings such as love, appreciation, compassion, and gratitude may be one practical means of cultivating Heart Intelligence.

At the psychophysiological level, the practice of intentionally shifting into a feeling state sourced in Love produces a very different internal milieu from that in which we typically live. Such a shift produces a profound change in the rhythmic pattern of activity generated by the heart, which immediately becomes more *coherent*—highly ordered and resembling a sine wave (McCraty et al., 2009; see Figure 2). With this shift in the heart rhythm, there is a corresponding qualitative change in the information sent from the heart to brain, as well as in the structure of the electromagnetic field emanated by the heart, which is believed to be involved in the reception and transduction of nonlocal intuitive information (Bradley, 2007). Since the heart is the body’s most powerful biological oscillator, furthermore, its rhythmic shift to coherence also pulls other biological oscillatory systems into entrainment or synchronization with it—including the respiratory rhythm and the brain’s alpha waves—resulting in a *body-wide* state of increased synchronization and harmony in psychophysiological processes, facilitated by the heart itself.

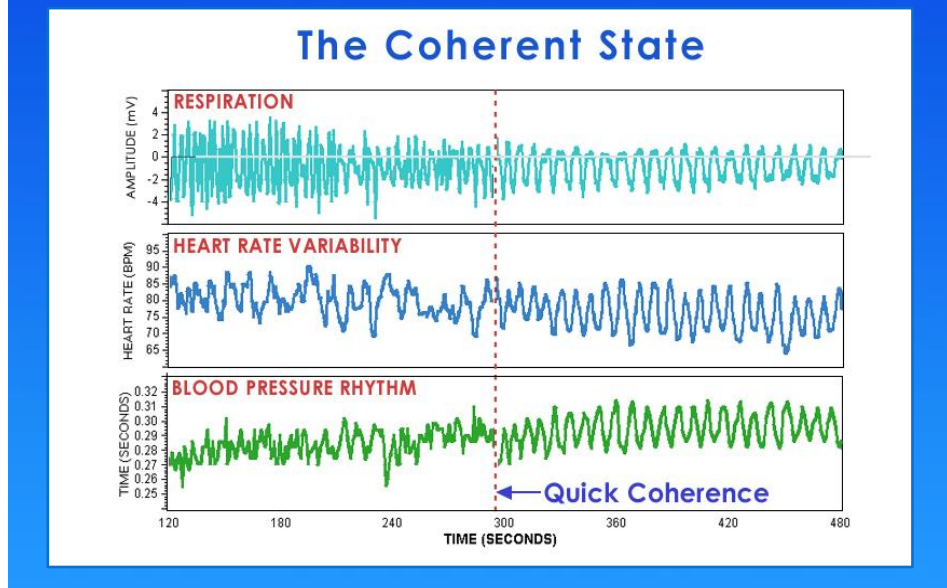
This state has been extensively characterized and termed *psychophysiological coherence* (McCraty et al., 2009; see Figures 3 and 4).



*Figure 2. Heart Coherence: The Body's Signature of Love*

Example of the highly ordered, harmonious pattern created in the heart rhythm (heart rate variability pattern) during the sustained experience of love, appreciation, and other heart-based positive emotions. (Real-time recording by the HeartMath Research Center, Institute of HeartMath.)

# Love as a Synchronizing Force

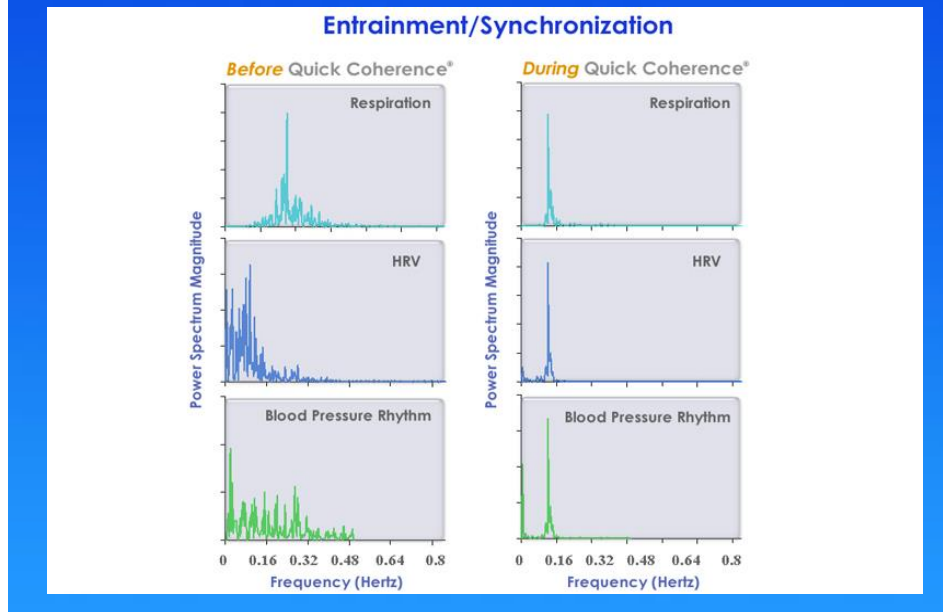


*Figure 3. Psychophysiological Coherence: A Body-Wide Shift*

These real-time recordings show an individual's heart rhythm activity (heart rate variability pattern), pulse transit time (a measure of beat-to-beat blood pressure), and respiration rhythms over a 10-minute period. At the 300-second mark (dotted line), the individual used a positive emotion-based technique ("Quick Coherence®") to activate the psychophysiological coherence state, causing these three physiological systems to come into synchronization and entrainment. (Adapted from Tiller, McCraty, & Atkinson, 1996.)



## The Fundamental Frequency of Love



*Figure 4. System-Wide Energetic Synchronization During Coherence*

These power spectral graphs provide a frequency analysis of the real-time physiological recordings shown on each side of the dotted line in Figure 2. Note how the frequency distribution of energy in each of these physiological oscillatory systems, while scattered and unsynchronized at baseline, coalesces and entrains at a focused peak at the body's resonant frequency of  $\sim 0.1$  Hz when the individual makes a shift into the psychophysiological coherence state. (Adapted from Tiller, McCraty, & Atkinson, 1996.)

At the psychological level, in this state of system-wide coherence, one experiences a distinct quieting of the extraneous inner “noise” generated by the normal stream of unregulated mental and emotional activity and often a fuller and deeper sense of well-being. It appears that, through mechanisms of resonance, this movement to increased order and harmony at the mental and emotional as well as the physiological level may heighten sensitivity and receptivity to field-based and nonlocal information normally outside the range of conscious awareness (Tomasino, 2011). It has been postulated that such a psychophysiological shift enhances connectivity with spirit (Childre & McCraty, 2001). Effectively, in this state of highly organized function, where distortion typically generated by unregulated emotional/psychophysiological energy is minimized, it seems that one naturally becomes a clearer conduit to receive and integrate information from this larger aspect of our awareness.

Heart-Directed Conscious Evolution: Steps along the Path

*Transformation begins with the embrace of love and leads to the first essential step, which is the transmutation of emotions. When you begin to tell yourself that your emotional stance in life is a distortion of your potential to love, then you have invited a flame into your life that will gradually destroy and transform you.*

—Richard Moss (1981)

*The I That Is We*

Let us now examine in more depth some of the key stepping stones on the pathway of humanity's emotional evolution, as we consciously draw upon Heart Intelligence to begin to build a new relationship to our emotional experience.

A first and vital marker will be the development of increased *emotional self-awareness*—which, in turn, begins simply with the ability to reliably identify what we are feeling in any given moment. While seemingly basic, so many people do not yet possess this important aspect of self-awareness, being largely “numb” and removed from their emotional experience. Yet to the extent that we remain unaware and disconnected from the flows and dynamics of our feeling worlds, we also remain cut off from our capacity to *choose* how to direct these energies. It is awareness that opens the door to choice. Emotional awareness in itself has many levels of development, eventually yielding an extremely fine-tuned, objective understanding of the often subtle emotional dynamics that underlie our attitudes, thought patterns, and behaviors. Along with this heightened awareness comes the felt-sense of being “more than” the changing flows of our thoughts and feelings, even while being able to experience them fully at the same time. As we expand our emotional self-awareness, a related capacity we are able to develop is *relational awareness*—the ability to accurately perceive, understand, and sensitively respond to the emotions of others around us.

*Emotional discernment* is a next stepping stone on the developmental pathway. This constitutes the ability to distinguish feelings that are authentic drives within us from those patterns that are largely rooted in conditioning by society's norms or by influences from our own personal past. It also provides a finely nuanced read-out of the degree to which ego-driven emotional patterns (generally grounded in fear) contribute to the layers of our feeling world, often coloring our perceptions, motivations, and behaviors. And this discernment enables us to learn to recognize the *qualitative experiential difference* between the emotional flows and reactive patterns that source from this limited facet of our awareness and those that we may call “spirit-directed” — emerging from a connection to a larger, unconditionally loving aspect of our awareness that provides a bigger-picture perspective. As we grow in this capacity for emotional discernment, we gain a beneath-the-surface view of the emotional dynamics underlying much of our experience that can then inform our choice to begin to bring formerly “automatic,” self-sabotaging patterns into the light of our conscious awareness and control.

Before anything that is resistant can truly move, it must first be fully accepted. *Emotional acceptance* is a vital step that is frequently overlooked by many schools of self-development and



personal growth. In many cases it is actually our resistance to fully acknowledging, allowing, and experiencing certain feelings that keep patterns sourced by these feelings stubbornly held in place. It is the act of fully accepting, owning, and embracing an immature or “childlike” emotional pattern, with unconditional love and without judgment, that disarms it—melts its resistance—enabling transmutation. Heart vulnerability, self-love, and surrender are important capacities inherent in this facet of emotional maturation.

Once we have developed and applied awareness, discernment, and true acceptance that is grounded in self-love, we have paved the way for *emotional modulation*—an act of conscious choice. This capacity to *choose* how we wish to color and direct our emotional energy can be applied in different ways. With this capacity comes the advanced ability to effectively “slow down” or “expand” a sequence of moments in which we would have typically exhibited an automatic, narrowly-focused, emotional reaction, and to instead choose a response that is informed by a source of broader insight and understanding (Childre & Martin, 1999). Choice can also be applied over a longer-term timeline, as when we commit to practices that facilitate our adoption of a new emotional attitude, so that it becomes familiar and instantiated as a new neuropsychological “set point” (Childre & Rozman, 2006; McCraty & Tomasino, 2006).

## Facilitating Emotional Evolution: Practices to Cultivate Heart Intelligence

*It's through learning how to decipher messages we receive from our heart that we gain the keen perception needed to effectively manage our emotions in the midst of life's challenges. The more we learn to listen to and follow our heart intelligence, the more educated, balanced and coherent our emotions become.*

—Doc Childre and Howard Martin (1999)

*The HeartMath Solution*

*To love effectively, we must consciously practice addressing life with love...*

—Doc Childre

Based on scientific research on the heart's holistic, multilevel role in the human system (interacting across the physiological, mental, emotional, intuitive, and spiritual dimensions of experience) and the psychophysiology of heart-focused states, tools and practices have been developed that enable people to engage Heart Intelligence to begin to build a new relationship with their inner emotional dynamics. The system of heart-based tools and technologies developed by Doc Childre and the Institute of HeartMath utilize the heart as a point of entry into the psychophysiological networks that underlie emotional experience (Childre & Martin, 1999; Childre & Rozman, 2002, 2006). These tools enable people to self-induce psychophysiological coherent states, and to become increasingly sensitive to the intuitive information available to us

as we access these states. Such practices facilitate both a deeper and more finely-tuned self-awareness as well as the ability to make more conscious choices to intentionally modulate, transmute, and redirect patterns of emotional energy.

In addition to individual practices, increased attention is being given to the intentional development and expression of Heart Intelligence in group-based contexts. In such settings, people choose to come together with an unconditionally loving focus and unified intention to expand into heightened states of consciousness in a safe and supportive container. From this dynamic emerges a resonant, amplified field, as both the individuals' and the collective's energy becomes more focused, coherent, and refined. This amplified, coherent field appears to create an energetic environment that heightens emotional self-awareness and the potential for emotional growth and development to a much greater extent than would normally be possible for an individual alone. Among those visionaries who have been exploring the dynamics of the group resonant field as a facilitative container for growth and transformation are Doc Childre, Richard Moss (1981, 1986) Tej Steiner (developer of the "heart circle" model; 2006) and Christian Pankhurst. In his book *The I That Is We*, Moss describes the dynamics inherent in this process:

*Focused group energy* refers to the *conscious* orchestration of a natural phenomenon whereby human energy joins and amplifies when it is gathered around a unifying principle. This process is the single most powerful way, except for the direct experience of Grace, through which the energies available to the ordinary individual are amplified. ...

The state of unconditional love becomes the "air" into which conditional consciousness leaps in order to behold a new dimension. The state itself is an experience that transcends and therefore ultimately disturbs the boundary-creating mechanisms of our personal consciousness. Just being willing to attempt to realize this state begins a major shift in consciousness. As we open toward this new experience the very intuition of it subtly generates an atmosphere which inspires the potential within the individual (Moss, 1981, p. 118).

It is likely that as the collective shift in consciousness continues to unfold, we will increasingly appreciate and draw upon the power of coherent community to facilitate individual awakening and expansion.

## Creating the New Dawn: A Vision of Our Awakening Potential

*Our duty, as men and women, is to proceed as if limits to our ability did not exist. We are collaborators in creation.*

*The future is more beautiful than all the pasts.*

—Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

As we step into a new mastery of our emotional energy and the ability to consciously repattern our emotional landscape, the implications will be vast. As fear and blame are progressively superseded by love and self-responsibility at the individual level, the fundamental driving forces that shape our collective society will also evolve—leading to greater levels of cooperation, compassion, and connectedness than our world has yet known. While technological development may continue, eventually it will no longer be primarily driven by motives of greed and domination, but by a collective drive to continue to evolve spiritually as a species and to further facilitate the expansion of consciousness.

This shift in consciousness will lead to significant changes in the way we perceive ourselves and the universe in which we live. I expect that we will grow much more attuned to the field-based nature of our reality, and the way in which we operate in the world will reflect this understanding. The “divide” that is currently perceived to exist between science and spirituality will also fade, as our scientific worldview expands to include the existence of spirit. It is likely that our scientific process itself will change and expand as we become more adept at directly accessing the vast store of nonlocal information that exists at the field level of reality. Finally, we will come to embrace a much fuller understanding of Love—not just as an emotion, but as an *Intelligence* inherent in the very fabric of the Universe.

In humanity’s present collective state of awareness, our emotional nature represents a vast reservoir of largely untapped and unfocused energetic potential. However, once we have begun to shift the immense power of our emotional energy from the unconscious sway of the reactive mind to the *conscious direction* of Heart Intelligence, the door also opens to develop other innate human capacities that utilize this energy in highly organized and focused ways.

Painting a picture of what this might look like, I expect, first, that we will see an expansion of our sensory capacity, stemming from a more consistent ability to access and utilize nonlocal intuitive perception. This is linked to the capacity to attune to a nonlocal object or event of interest by directing *passionate attention*—focused coherent emotional energy—toward it (Bradley & Tomasino, 2011; see also Bradley’s chapter in this book). The more agile we are in our ability to self-regulate our emotional energy, quiet our “everyday” reactive emotions, and consciously enter love-based psychophysiological coherent states, the more we will be able to draw upon and build this intuitive perceptual sense. Once more fully developed, this faculty will also enable us to attune more deeply to one another, giving rise to mature capacities such as “telepathic” information exchange among people, and even enhanced communication across species. As mentioned, I also expect that the maturation of this direct receptivity to nonlocal information will radically change the way in which we approach the process of scientific inquiry.

A second, related competence humanity will grow into is an enhanced co-creative capacity. Also termed *nonlocal agency*, this denotes the ability to actively influence aspects of our reality by directing *passionate intention*—coherent emotional energy coupled with a specific intentional focus—toward objects or events we wish to affect in some way (Bradley & Tomasino, 2011; see also Bradley’s chapter in this book). Again, our ability to work with this powerful ability will be proportional to our capacity to self-regulate and focus our emotional energy. Coming into a

mature co-creative capacity will constitute an immense step in the evolution of human consciousness and will radically change our relationship to countless spheres of human activity—not the least of which will be health and healing (of ourselves, our fellow beings, and the Earth’s natural environment) and technology. It is likely that an exciting new wave of highly sophisticated technologies will emerge that actively interface with human mental and emotional energy.

While intuitive perception and nonlocal agency will become highly developed and integrated at the level of the individual, it is also likely that increased recognition of the amplification effects of group coherent energy fields will lead to many more instances in which people gather in groups, for significant events, to further potentiate our intuitive and co-creative potential. Thus, collective intuition and collective agency will be increasingly drawn upon as human beings learn to work cooperatively at the field level of reality for the good of our Planet and the realms beyond it.

\* \* \*

We have reached a point on Earth where no amount of externally-focused technological development will yield the fulfillment it seeks to deliver until we have a new *internal emotional context* in which to apply it. Without the corresponding evolution and maturing of our emotional nature, the sum of our external development is at best unfulfilling—leaving us empty—and, at worst, dangerous to our Planet and ourselves. It is an imperative—our responsibility, to ourselves and to all of Life—to consciously, and with commitment, take on this next step in our maturation as a species. Heart Intelligence will lead and guide the emotional revolution, and nurture emotional evolution—the next step in the development of consciousness. This is a journey that can only be made through Love, by way of Love, and into Love—leading us into a new dimension of experience—a New Dawn of potential, where we will truly understand, embrace, and embody our role, in Teilhard de Chardin’s visionary words, as “collaborators in creation.”

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## About the Author



With twenty years research experience in the psychophysiology of emotions and the heart's role in consciousness, Dana Tomasino has authored numerous publications on heart-brain interactions and the heart's involvement in cognition, emotion, intuition, and energetic communication. Formerly as a researcher at the Institute of HeartMath in the U.S. and currently as Co-Director of Aorangi Moana Sanctuary and the Center for Advanced Research (CFAR) in Northland, New Zealand, Dana seeks to integrate science and spirituality to help evolve individual and planetary consciousness. She is a Heart Intelligence facilitator, providing heart-based tools and technologies to optimize health and performance and support emotional, intuitive, and spiritual development.