

# Alchemy of Life

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Dirk Oellibrandt

# Alchemy of Life

Realise your Life Project

Alchemy of Life

Alchemy of Life



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## PREFACE

Thank you to my parents who brought me here, to my wife and my children for their unbelievable love and support. To all friends, students, patients and colleagues, thank you for being such a source of inspiration. Thank you to all teachers, to nature, to the earth, to the Universe and to all the spirits who have made it possible for me to discover, to live and to share the *Alchemy of Life*. Thank you to all who have believed and trusted in my work. Thank you to those who helped me bring this book to life: Mieke van Zon, Mieke Bruneel, Christophe Vandecaveye, Gonnie Been and Katrien Laurens. Thanks to my stepson Bart Schutyser who took care of the layout and finishing of this book with dedication. Thanks to Alex Faudé for his beautiful illustrations, which have given the book the right tone. Thanks to the great *life*.

This book is a manual that teaches you how to connect the timeless wisdom of the spiritual world with the practical reality of the material world. That's why I chose two forewords. One from a spiritual master and one from a successful worldly leader.

## FOREWORD BY TAO MASTER CHEN YU MING

*Chen Yu Ming is the former Vice-Abbot of Mount Huashan (China) one of the most important Taoist centres in the world.*

Dirk and I met one another some ten years ago in Huashan. In that period I worked for the Mount Huashan Taoist Association, responsible for cultural exchange. I met Dirk as I was accompanying a group of European and American Taoism practitioners during their visit to the various temples in Huashan. I was in awe of Dirks presence and I immediately had the impression that we knew each other from somewhere. I was curious to investigate this connection and so we started talking together and to meditate together. It soon became a deep mutual feeling of timeless friendship. Also the trainings that Dirk organized for me were unforgettable experiences.

Dirk's respected alchemy method incorporates the essence of life. The method has a great and enriching social meaning and can change our modern way of life. It is very valuable for a broad spectrum of people. Dirk is willing to share his knowledge of Alchemy wisdom with anyone who in need of help, which I see as an important responsibility for someone who put importance on high moral values – this is why I am prepared to work with him.

*Alchemy of Life* will take you through Eastern and Western Alchemy wisdom and where not only will Dirk share the essence of his own research, but also his experience of everyday life practices. This is why I want to recommend this book to everyone.

## FOREWORD BY WOUTER TORFS

Wouter Torfs is CEO of Torfs shoes

*There is one thing I know for sure about myself, and that is that I don't really know "it" and that I am a seeker: a spiritual onion peeler, who, layer by layer, wants to get closer to his core. All the workshops that I have followed with Dirk, together with this book are the building bricks of my growth process and that ultimately never stops and I realise today that it is a life journey.*

*I am thrilled with this insight: the journey has no purpose, the journey is the goal. My wife and children will smile and confirm that I have already attended many workshops and courses during which I have worked on myself so to speak to acquire skills or fill a sense of lack. I look back with gratitude. There is, however, one big difference: *Alchemy of Life* builds from the potential and not the position of lack.*

From this promise, which of course, sounds like music to my ears, eight years ago I stepped into a personal Alchemy process: from a *desire* to fully discover and live my *full life* potential. " living " is connected to our self created reality. " Life " is the intelligence of nature, the sky and the Earth, and our innate ability to connect with them.

Step by step I discovered that my fairly mentally planned life was not the one I really wanted. I was and am still really curious about the life that is meant for me. I left on a path of mastery that never finished and where I have the following questions: " Has the path I walk a soul?" "Does it match with my soul?", " Does this path connect me with the bigger picture ?" The path of the alchemist is all about making inner gold with the ingredients that are present in your life essence. A pumpkin seed will never grow pears, but will grow juicy pumpkins, if this seed is planted in fertile soil and tended with care. This is what *Alchemy of Life* is all about.

So the art is for you to discover and honour your own seed. This is not a mental process, but one that grows from within your own body. For me this was perhaps the most confrontational experience in the whole process: rediscover my body ! I realised more and

more that I looked at my body as an object that had to perform what my "mind" decided and that I very carelessly coped with it to say the least ! The focus on the body takes away all the vagueness from the spirituality of Alchemy of Life: the body does not lie and does not play games. This book offers many concrete methods, exercises and meditations to work with your body and your mind. It's exciting, virtuous and sometimes very confronting.

I learned to shift my focus from my traditionally strong horizontal, worldly and emotional connection with other people to a vertical connection in myself with the earth, of which our body is a part, and heaven that is connected to our brain in our heads. As I learned to activate and strengthen this new state of being in myself and to consciously connect with "my" nature, my "horizontal" relationship with people around me also changed. Cultivating that inner space is an ongoing process and forms a solid foundation for the next step in the process.

That step was the search for my core virtue, based on the questions: "What do you have to do in this life? What have you come to show mankind? The core virtue (there can also be two) is the unique quality and colour of your soul and the key to get into it. You will get to that pit that will make you produce pears or pumpkins.

My core virtues are love and consciousness, which is completely different from 'being nice'. Throughout this evolution, my 'horizontal relationships' with the people around me also changed. Where before "Mr Nice Guy, my personality, sat on the throne, it now made way for King Soul, who is called 'love and consciousness". He sees clearly and can lovingly tell others the truth and can hold a mirror without the constant need to please or fight.

Further on in the process I learned what leadership means to me. I have always known that I have a strong male dimension in my leadership: decisiveness, and also a female dimension: carrying capacity. What previously appeared to me to be a paradox became an experience of an internal love dance of my yang and yin nature. I learned to understand the meaning of the "white ball" in the dark yin field and the "black ball" in the white yang field. The two are each other's opposites and the presence of the "ball" is the incarnation of the desire for the other. Wise leadership arises when those two poles merge and reinforce each other.

I tell this part of my personal process to make the bridge to my/our life's work: to make our family business into a gold nugget, not in the financial sense, but in the spiritual sense. Through my own process, I increasingly realised how my core virtue and leadership are connected to what I want to put into the world. It is no coincidence that for the past 8 years Torfs Shoes has been named "Employer of the Year". My personal Alchemy process aligns my vision with that of the Company and company culture. At Torfs Shoes where 95% of the workforce is made up of women, my leadership and the leadership style of our Company, unites and cultivates the integration of Yang and Yin energy. Internally, we speak of "decisiveness" and "carrying capacity".

What I had intuitively felt before became clearer and more explicit. I'm convinced that it really can be different. Frederic Laloux says: "*Our deepest longing is wholeness*". So let us no longer look at our "employees" as economic agents who hire out their time and get paid for it (a pure business transaction). Let us accept and nurture them as flesh and blood, with a brain of course, and also with a heart and a belly. As Dirk so strikingly describes: we have three brains: our head, our heart and our belly. When a company allows everyone's full potential and initiates the alchemy process in its people - however modest it may be-, something substantial changes. People discover their potential and are given the full mandate to connect with each other around the soul of a company.

People are invited to discover and cherish "their pit" and to take initiative and undertake from there. They are first and foremost invited to investigate whether their soul matches the soul of the company. colleagues as opposed to employees become travel companions with whom you take the journey.

Compassion, connection and love , yes, I dare to use these words as a result of my process instead of hierarchy, power, control and fear. During the period where we were awarded eight times, the status of "Best Employer" (or rather: a Great Place to work, as we say internally), our turnover and profitability doubled. The latter was not our, or my initial and only plan, but a natural consequence of people who come to work feeling "inspired".

If the Alchemy in a Company bubbles, this will have an impact on the collaboration of colleagues. As a result of this philosophy, our Company is in the spotlight and this makes me happy. Workplaces with happy employees are the building blocks of a warmer and happier Company. Let it bubble !



Or how entrepreneurship and leading from my and our soul and core virtue can also be "external" alchemy and form a lump of gold in society.

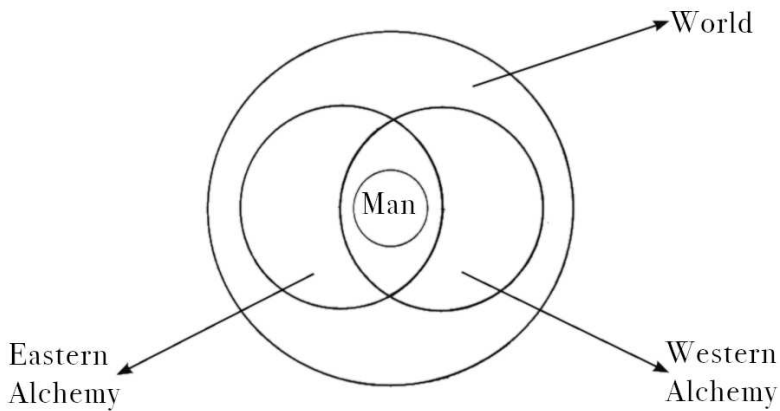
Dirk, I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart. You have played an instrumental role in my whole process and you have materialized this wonderful book thanks to your spiritual teachings and words. Thank you.

## WHY THIS BOOK ?

The process I will describe in detail in this book is the essence of what I have learnt myself; what I myself live and what I have been sharing with those who ask for many years. It is the preliminary product of a deep alchemy process, where I have discovered my own nature and true life. This process has really changed *everything* for me. From my early childhood I knew that the life that was given to me was not the real life. So I sat waiting for it to start. Later I actively went looking for it. But the big change came because I started to remember things. Whether you want to call this past lives or collective memory, I leave that to you. I remembered in any case something that nobody around me seemed to know. I felt that it was important, but I had nothing concrete other than this feeling. I felt alone and inexperienced, and in the beginning I doubted my own feelings and did not really dare to start the journey, until I felt I actually had no other choice. It was a quest to turn that vague but deep inner knowing into understandable language and a practical way of life.

*Alchemy of Life is a contribution to a world  
that is built on our collective human virtues  
and where those who consciously live these virtues,  
also feel at home.*

Because you may ask yourself where the information in this book comes from, I will give the following background. I have found back some of my spiritual roots, one is in Taoism. In my opinion, this is currently the most complete and best-preserved form of inner alchemy. The former Vice-Abbott (Master Chen Yu Ming) of one of the world's most important Taoist centres, Mount Huashan in China, is convinced that I used to live there. The masters of Mount Huashan often treat me as one of them. This intelligence lies for me strongly on the very surface and is recognizable throughout the whole book. Yet I call this matter " alchemy " and not " Taoism ", because alchemy reflects a more broader and accurate way, that it is a cosmic, timeless intelligence that is everywhere and available to everyone.



A second branch lies in western alchemy, which includes ‘the sword and the grail’ story. This ancient wisdom is as powerful as its oriental version, but has suffered much more from the religious inquisition. The information now available is seldom clear, consistent and well-founded. There is still much for me to discover, but in the meantime I have also gained access to this pure, original wisdom. It is essential for each of us in the West because it contains the true spiritual roots (more on this later in this book). Discovering, opening and connecting these two channels was for me a 25-year process, which continues to this day. Words fall short in expressing my gratitude to all masters, teachers, but also loved ones and friends who have contributed to this

The third form of alchemy is connected to my karma and I can't bring it back to anywhere in time and space. This form of alchemy has forced me to explore the underworld for a long time. That was a challenging experience, which gave me not only access but also insight into this world.

The fourth form is my own creation and a translation of the timeless Alchemy principles into today's modern world. *Alchemy of Life* brings the Eastern and Western Alchemy together in a way of life that greatly increases and balances your quality of life both internal and external. My experiences with this and with that of thousands of students and patients form the knowledge in this worldly Alchemy form. This is only in its infancy and still has a lot of growth potential. I'll leave it to you to discover this alchemy form for yourself. In this book, I will go into further detail and share how you can do this.

*One of the typical core elements of Alchemy of Life is  
that it connects your spiritual realization process  
and your worldly contribution.*

*That is why I experience Alchemy of life,  
as well as many who tested Alchemy of Life for quite some time,  
as a practical and directly applicable spiritual approach*

I do not know the answer to all kinds of major global issues. I know but the way to an individual and collective enormous life potential that we're just leaving untapped at a time when we need it the most. So I write this book because it's my job and I deem it necessary to share this information. If I specifically use other sources, I will always mention them. But the input of many other people, creatures and forms of intelligence has surely become unrecognisably fused in the distillate.

In this book, I want to share with you what the essence of *Alchemy of Life* is for me. In addition to the ideas I provide you with all kinds of exercises, meditations, insights, practical examples and ways to deepen your own state of being. Every chapter starts with a life story. The story of the king and his ministers is a story that took shape during my courses. All the other stories are personal experience which I consider to be special and life changing. These stories are always printed in Italics. I regularly add small pieces that I want to accentuate and these are printed in a different font. I write this book as a man and so it is in the masculine form. As a woman, adjust the text to the female form where necessary. I have not always mentioned both because this would disturb the quality of the text.

At certain moments in the book, I will indicate that there are some free photos, videos or audio materials available. Just like future updates of this book you will find these movies all on one webpage [www.lifeprojects.be/en/book/alchemy-of-life](http://www.lifeprojects.be/en/book/alchemy-of-life)



Maybe you think, if you look at the multitude of topics that I cover in this book: " that sounds difficult and complicated ", but you will gradually see that time and again the same principles are applied in a different combination or context. This learning principle is called "circular learning" which I will explain more later on. You should know that all I am doing is referring to the way and language of nature. And nature ... is never in a rush and always chooses the simplest and most efficient way.

*Visualize: a river that for thousands of years seeps  
through a granite rock and finally flows through;  
simply by being real water.  
That is what it takes to reap the benefits of  
Alchemy of Life: effortless intransigence.*

## THE STORY OF KING SOUL AND HIS MINISTERS

*One day there lived a King named Soul who inherited the throne from his parents. This happened as a result of a tragic accident leaving him at the age of sixteen to sit on the throne, without ever really wanting to, nor ever having had to do anything for it. He felt uncomfortable on the throne. That came mainly due to the endless conversations about politics, finance and war, not to mention the extremely boring visits of other kings, ministers and ambassadors. King Soul then sat on the throne staring in front of him, whilst surrounded by ministers to his right and left and behind him. Every few minutes the king had to turn around and ask for advice to his ministers, which was a somewhat of an embarrassing experience for a King. To limit these uncomfortable situations, he took care that he was not in the palace too often. He was whenever he basically could occupied with the fun things of life, such as parties, ceremonies, travel and hunting. That was not bad in itself, because his ministers were very experienced and arranged everything for him. Minister Ego took care of Home Affairs and National Security and Minister Personality took care of Foreign Affairs and Trade Relations. They were two old and loyal servants of his parents, and they both meant well for King Soul and the kingdom. Minister Ego often told King Soul that it was not wise to be so little in the palace and to so rarely sit on the throne. He did this in his typical rough way. Minister Personality often helped King Soul with his foreign visits, but also spoke as well as possible in the king's name if he was not present and with his expressive character, that was a task that he enjoyed taking on. He had in fact, no trouble with the King's prolonged absences; actually he loved being the center of attention. Both ministers had a sense of duty towards their country and they fulfilled their duties with complete dedication. Even though Minister Ego rarely was in his quarters by the water anymore, and Minister Personality didn't get around to stroll through the city, friendly chatting with whoever he happened to encounter. That was a good thing too, because otherwise many would certainly have told him that they were not happy to live in the kingdom of young King Soul.*

*People were dissatisfied, lazy and uninterested. The streets looked boring and crime flourished abundantly behind the apparent order.*



*King Soul knew nothing about this and let things continue the way it was. As a young boy, how could he add something of value to the decades of experience of these two ministers? Because of that sense of uselessness, King Soul stayed away more often and longer. Even when he was in the palace, he seldom sat on the throne, and he usually asked his ministers to speak for him. This ensured that the the bond between the two ministers grew stronger and less and less was shared with the king about what was really going on in his country. The ministers were as one on the throne, even though they knew the king would not like this at all. But he was rarely there anyway. They agreed that the King understood less and less of what was really going on in the country, and even less of what needed to be done. So they made their own version of "playing King together" and that worked fine. The King still did not notice. However, life on the throne and the exuberant style that went with it, made it increasingly difficult for the ministers to fit on the throne together. That was often a whole push and puff game.*

*The years passed by and the two ministers sat together on the throne more often. They still wanted the best for their beloved country, but the unique opportunity to sit on the throne themselves was a gift they would never have dreamed of. Sometimes their food was simply served while they sat on the throne. Sometimes they fell asleep there. Even if there were discussions with other guests, they just sat. The king had heard of it, but had just laughed it away while he was living his life outside the palace. Until one day another king came to visit unexpectedly and felt offended by the inappropriate reception and quickly left. In a letter, he confronted King Soul with the appalling situation. He wrote 'that his parents would be ashamed of him in heaven'. This affected King Soul right into his ... soul. He felt that the situation had gotten out of hand and wanted to put things right quickly. He furiously rushed into the throne room, where the two ministers were playing chess together on the throne. They were now so good in working together that there was plenty of time for entertainment, while everything just kept on running smoothly. The two ministers were not at all impressed by the arrival of the king - they asked in a well mannered way: "Can we do something for you, sire?" This without even taking a moment to get up. The king roared that they should immediately get off of his throne or there would be trouble. But the two ministers saw no king before them, just the furious son of their old, respected friends. They smiled understandably and suggested that the king just continue for a while with .... whatever he was doing. The king thought in his anger that he would have them executed, but realised that they were the only ones who knew how to govern the country. Powerless as he felt, he burst into tears and rushed out.*

*He remembered that his parents also had an old friend, a woman: a white magician named Spirit, who lived somewhere high in the mountains. He knew he had to go there and set off immediately. Spirit laughed when she heard the story and said to the indignant king: "Your ministers are actually right. You are indeed not a king yet". But don't be too hard on yourself. You are very young and you miss your parents very much. I will help you to awaken the true king in you. Your royal light, your unconditional love for the country, the people, it is all there already. Rest assured, it will be alright. " That evening and many other evenings*



*thereafter, King Soul fell asleep with his head in the lap of Spirit. One night, he had a turbulent dream, and from that he realised that he had actually neglected the throne and so the two ministers had led the kingdom instead. He stayed for a month with the old Spirit and felt himself sink into a place within himself which he had never experienced before. He now felt conscious that he was king... yes, he was King Soul. The land became his body, the people his being, the heaven his spirit.*



*When he got back to the palace, King Soul took a quiet walk in the throne room and immediately came across the two still half-sleeping ministers. Shocked, they desperately tried to jump off the throne, but that did not succeed immediately. The king got a lame smile when he saw the two struggling ministers. He looked at them smiling and beaming, opened his arms and said, "Friends, I am back. Thank you for taking care of our kingdom with so much love and dedication. " He put his hands on their shoulders. Both ministers knelt and bowed deeply. They immediately felt that the true king had arrived. The king sat down and the two ministers took their proper place again, on either side behind the king. They were just in time for the daily series of discussions and visits. This was different than usual. These were unusually quiet, clear and effective. That was because now everyone sat in their pre-determined place and therefore there was a sense of unity, respect and trust. Soon the news of the return of the king spread throughout the kingdom, and other royal houses also heard the message. The people felt safe again, and more connected to one another thanks to this new spirit in the land. The whole country flourished ! Multiple princes came to visit, fascinated by the stories, but also by the wisdom and tranquillity that the king and his ministers radiated.*

## FULL-OF-LIFE AND THE FIVE PHASES OF LIFE

The above story is a summary of the philosophy of *Alchemy of life*. Later in the book I will further elaborate on the metaphor of the king and the ministers. For now it is enough to keep in mind that each one of us is a *King Soul and has two ministers (Ego and Personality)*. Recognizing these three archetypes, and which of the three is leading and who is following makes the difference between Full of Life living and living in a zombie mode. Discover all the parts of your life potential and connect them, so that the magic of alchemy arises – this is what I present to you with this book. In the rapid human evolution we are forgetting important parts of our human potential.

*We are frantically trying to get a grip on the derailed world...  
we have created together.*

*However, it is not about fast, smart solutions,  
it is about the connection between who we really are (identity),  
our creation (World) and our place and task in the great life.*

Due to the nature of my work, I come into contact with all the layers and colours of society. That is a true privilege! Even though the differences between all these layers and, therefore, between all these people are very large, there are a number of aspects that I encounter everywhere. They have to do with human nature or human potential and this wherever I come, whoever I'm dealing with. This is regardless of origin, age, sex and status. In the depth of the eyes of each of these people, I see it when there's a moment of conscious silence. I call it *the memory of true humanity*. But many with whom I speak about this talk about *the desire to be fully alive*.

I usually use the words *full-of-life* because this is about both the intensity (full) as well as the pleasure (enjoying yourself).

For most people this is still a vague, indescribable longing that does not (yet) make them move, just like a raindrop that evaporates before it falls into the sea. You can be a good cook, however if you put water in the pot and do not turn on your cooker, your culinary skills are of no use. In other words, if you do not connect the different parts of your *being human* with each other your life never really gets going. Or you fall asleep on a path that is comfortable ... superficial, but actually not fulfilling at all.

*As Wouter Torfs mentioned in his preface:*

*"A pumpkin seed will never produce pears."*

*It is completely useless to even try.*

*It is wiser to cultivate the unique, best possible pumpkin  
from the pumpkin seed.*

*Many challenges on our life path arise because  
we do not use our true life potential.*

This book is written to show you *how* you can discover, release and live your life potential. It combines timeless wisdom which lies at the root of every spiritual tradition, with a modern outlook on life and the world of today. It teaches you how you can materialize your dream. It is a magical journey with five logical phases.

**Phase 1 is about conscious suffering:** This is the state where you become aware of your own suffering and unconsciousness. It is about a shift from unconscious to conscious suffering. It is the phase that seems worthless and we all would prefer to just skip it. But one of the laws of life is that you have to accept things before you can change them. It's like waking up after an anaesthetic that is easing off and you start to consciously feel the pain. You have no idea who you really are or what you are doing here. You feel that your life is not quite right, that you are living in the flow of the past and the expectations of your environment. That can only be done by having a subtle reminder of how it is meant to be. It is only an awareness phase, without actively starting your search or the willingness to change your current life.



*1. conscious  
suffering*



*2. truly  
incarnate*



*3. values-  
soul phase*



*4. worldly  
contribution*



*5. self-realization  
immortality*

*The flower bulb of the most beautiful flower ever imaginable ...  
is one worthless tuber,  
as long as it is not planted in good soil.*

**Phase 2 is about truly incarnating:** Your own conscious life starts with consciously experiencing and allowing your soul essence to sink in (your king). During this incubation period you learn to consciously bring your life gift together in a core, deep in your body, and to arrive at your life potential. Once your core has enough nutrition (energy) and consciousness, it will ignite spontaneously. In other words: you get a clear, stable core from which you live.

**Phase 3 is about the Soul Virtues phase:** This is where the heart centre opens and the male and female pole come together again. This causes more balance and inner peace. Emotions and thoughts are also becoming more balanced and connected to the soul core and the accompanying virtues, making your message more and more clear in the outside world and a different quality of human relationships and social contacts arises.

**In phase 4 you can consciously contribute to the world from the depth of your "humanity":** It is a process by which you go beyond the attachment to matter and the world of form and live and share from your deep human virtues. It is similar to the salmon that swims upstream to the source to spawn there before it dies. By the enrichment that this gives at the soul level, coupled with a further deepening of your inner cultivation, your growth process will continue as a person.

**In phase 5 you let go of the world of form and existence even further:** This path of compassion and unification, in combination with further development of consciousness, brings you deeper and deeper into your inner alchemy process, so that you once again become *one* with the original source from which you originate. This state of self-realization and becoming *one* with the *all* again is called in the alchemist language "immortality".

*All of these phases describe "the path of the alchemist."*

*In this book they will help you discover  
and utilize your life potential.*

*We also help you to see the distinction between illusion and reality,  
between what you should not give energy and what you have to do.*

*Know, however that reading and knowing are just the start.  
It will only work if you apply it in a practical manner to your life*

# PART I.

WHAT IS ALCHEMY OF LIFE ?



## ORIENTAL MARTIAL ARTS AND MEANING

*When I was just thirteen years old, my father brought me to the local jiu-jitsu club (Japanese martial arts). He spoke to me about the club trainer (who was his friend) with such admiration that I also wanted to discover this for myself. What a good move from my father. I quickly found what I didn't find behind the school desks. Although I could not immediately put my finger on what it was exactly, it certainly had to do with a memory of the "martial arts spirit" and definitely with dignity, meaning and freedom. In a nutshell, I soon felt a connection with the spirit of the Eastern martial arts.*

*I was pretty good at jiu-jitsu and about thirteen years later I participated for the third time in the Belgian national championships. My performance was judged to be top by the jury and so I was partly to my own surprise awarded with a gold medal on the national podium. I still vividly remember what happened then. Contrary to what you would expect, I felt just a little proud and mostly uncomfortable being on stage. My own trainers, for whom I had a lot of appreciation, were not in the jury, but quite a few other, unknown people were. I personally thought my performance was good, but not really good enough to get a national gold medal for it. My ego cheered and my soul withdrew. I knew that I had not shown the spirit of the Eastern martial arts and yet was rewarded. Moreover, I suddenly knew for sure that I didn't really understand that spirit. My trainers did not understand my reaction. In short, it was a bizarre feeling to drive home with a heavy feeling and a gold medal.*

*A few years later I participated again, this time in the European Championships, where I finished second. I felt that my "jiu-jitsu path" was slowly ending and I knew before this competition that it would be the last time. In the meantime, together with a colleague, I had my own club, where we could practice in our own way. My practice now consisted less of hard training, but more of meditation, being in nature and visualization. I still remember this day as the highlight of my*

*competitive junior career. Every time the opponent attacked me, I already had a counter attack. So I could respond before the opponent's action. Or as Bruce Lee says: "the way of the intercepting fist". For me, that opponent felt more like a supporter or an extension of me. I felt like in a trance. Participants were assessed via a point system (just like skating) and, even though what I did was highly effective, it didn't look pretty or spectacular. My trainers screamed and pulled their hair out ... Of course I didn't get a podium place, but that didn't matter to me. A few people came to see me knowing that something special had happened, but overall the reactions were very negative. And that was understandable too! I knew that I experienced the spirit of the Eastern martial arts and had shown that this was not the purpose of the competition and that it was time to move on. I drove home with a feeling of gratitude and peace. I knew that I had discovered a new path within myself. I felt gratitude to my trainers that they created the space for this experience. I still feel this gratitude today.*

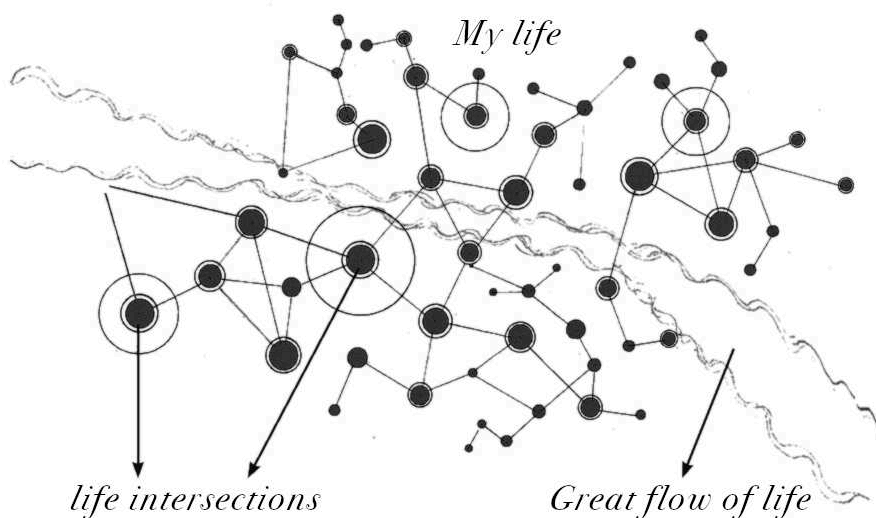
This story represents a moment when I consciously made a choice on a split on my life path. We all follow a certain path of life that is closer or further from the "great life-flow." Sometimes that is a consciously chosen path. Sometimes the path that we walk on is the recommendation of someone else. Sometimes we just walk with the others. Sometimes we don't want to walk a path... and is that our path. Because there is always a life path.

However, every person comes across many splits on his or her life path. At and through the splits we learn to make conscious choices and to connect with the great "life flow". Our life lessons also offer us an opportunity to transform karma (the burden of our past).

*For the life alchemist, living life as intended  
is one of the deepest driving forces  
and so to connect with his true potential.*

Life constantly invites us to become one with the great flow of life. At the junction there is always the choice to get closer, or to distance oneself from this flow of Life. However, we

don't always feel that immediately. Sometimes we come across a similar split several times before we get the feeling that, at this split, we can make a choice.



This process is not about right or wrong, but rather the consciousness and life potential used up to now, or the next depth or layer thereof. It is also usually not about a fully conscious choice, but rather about deep inner knowing.

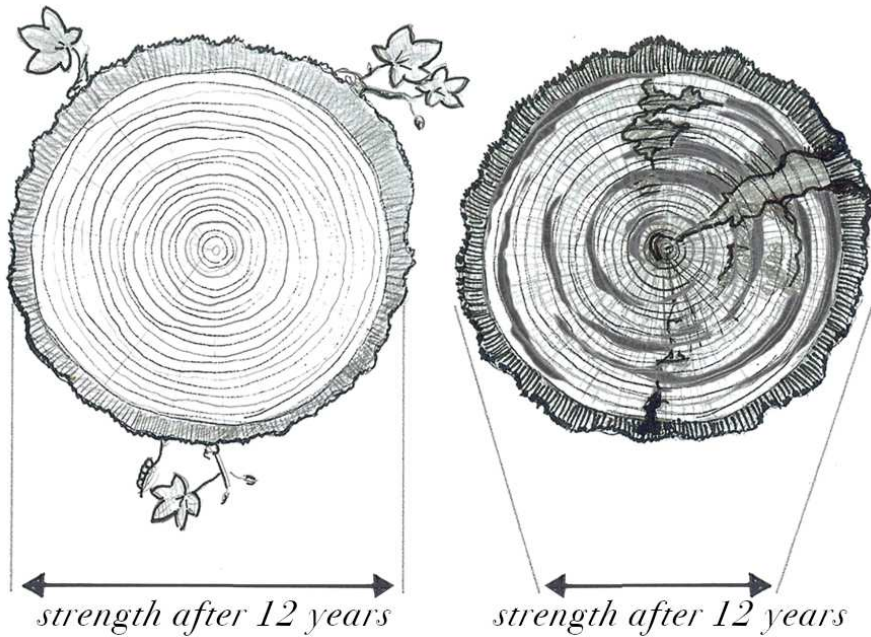
*By making conscious choice  
you learn to connect truth and freedom in one state of being.*

I realise that this sounds like there is only one right path and one right choice. But that's not true. It is true that the choices you make will largely determine the quality of your life. The various paths and options are all valuable. We all know the experience of being at the junction and not yet ready to choose the right path. Choosing the old (known) path because you are not ready for the new (unknown) is often painful, but at that moment it is the only right option. Choosing the new path if you are not ready is making the wrong choice and that can be particularly painful. If a young eagle jumps out of the nest before it is ready to fly – this can be fatal. Standing on the edge of the nest and feeling ready but still not doing

so until "the moment" is there, is part of the natural growth process. And every person knows, at a deeply intuitive level, when the right moment is there.

More important than the duality of good / bad or succeeding / failing is getting to know the intersections and feeling the right timing. *Whatever choice you make, do it consciously and take full responsibility.* In this way your life potential and awareness will increase step by step. In the above story about my jiu-jitsu period I outline this awareness of the split and also about fully choosing in a responsible way. This approach is still a vital part of my life even now.

*Over and over again, I've seen myself, and all the people I've been allowed to help on their path, that if we do something long enough, there is always value in that experience. You can best understand this as the growth of an ever growing tree. Each ring makes the tree stronger and more complete*



Even though you've experienced pain, loss and deception, deep in that experience is value, which can enable you, once you've integrated the load, to live more prosperously and more consciously. But that is only so if you accept the experience as something *you now* are going through and that in the now is the only way. All the experiences that you deny (forget, project, wallow in ...) form a charge that you carry with you, that eats energy and lowers your consciousness and joy of life. I show this symbolically in the drawing above. All the dark growth rings in the right-hand drawing represent denial of the experience. The full acceptance and integration of your life experiences make the difference between happiness and fulfilment on the one hand, or fear, chaos and failure on the other. Important to remember is that the value you give to your experience is independent of the meaning or value that your environment gives it.

*Only you know if something is valuable to you or not.  
This requires a deep listening to your inner wisdom,  
to the people who can really see you and to the support  
which is always there for you (nature, universe, god...).*

#### EXERCISE: ANCHOR YOUR LIFE IN THE *NOW*

Take a moment to think about your life from birth to now. Go through each different stage of your life, step by step and feel what it does to you. Focus on the phases and not on specific snapshots. Listen to your physical and emotional responses, as well as the thoughts that arise. If a strong physical or emotional response, or even an unexpected memory arises at one of the phases, you can assume that this phase is not yet fully integrated into your life *now*. This exercise works best by drawing a timeline with the different phases and colouring them with a light or dark colour to represent lightness and darkness. By paying conscious attention to this chunk of isolated life, awareness, insight, and vitality will soon be increased around this theme, which will in turn reconnect it with your life in the *now*.