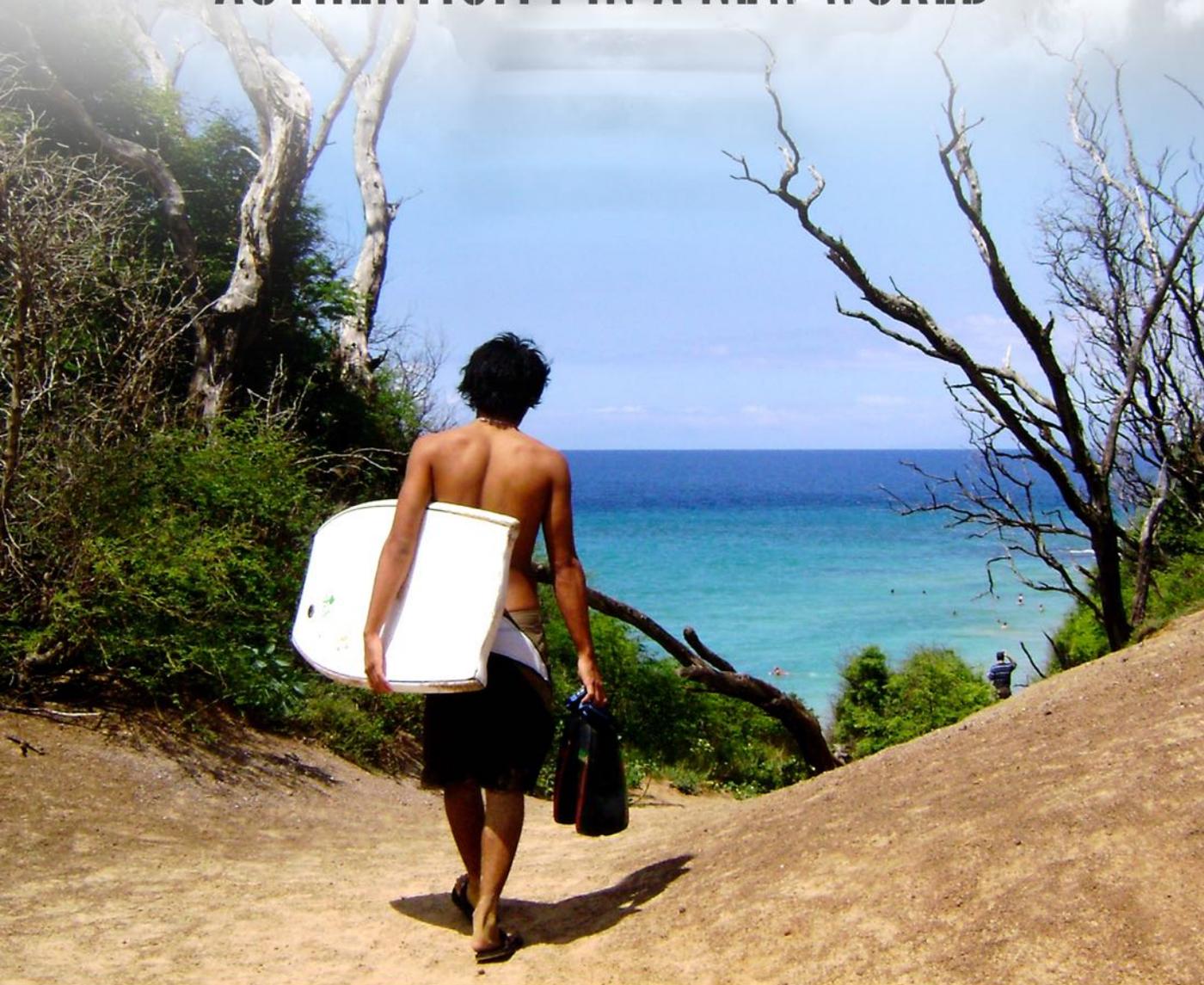


Paradise (re)Discovered

AUTHENTICITY IN A NEW WORLD



DR MARK A ARCURI

Author of Internationally Recognized

A LIFE ALIGNED

THE JOURNEY TO ALLOWING THE MAGIC IN YOUR LIFE

with foreword by Carlos Ramírez, MBA

Paradise (re)Discovered

Preview - Introduction

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Paradise (re)Discovered

You're All Right, The World's All Wrong

We humans are a stubborn lot even to the ultimate death of what we know as our species.

But even death can be celebrated in that it allows for rebirth. Death allows an opportunity to rediscover who we really are, and, sometimes, perhaps oftentimes, death is exactly what needs to happen. We die in a metaphoric sense everyday, from the cells in our body to the beliefs we profess. We shed our skin so that we can become more. And in dying to who we have become we may be born to who we really are, as if for the first time.

I am writing today in my home in Santa Fe, New Mexico on the day of Día de los Muertos in 2014, a traditional celebration of the dead and their continued journey.

I am reflecting on my own life and the many “deaths” I have experienced along the way. I came into this lifetime 53 years ago. Just months before, outgoing President Eisenhower had issued a warning to America about the emerging shift toward a “military industrial complex” and, a few months later, incoming President Kennedy began the process of establishing the Peace Corps. Soviets were building a wall dividing East and West Berlin while “Freedom Riders” traveled through the southern United States to promote integration. The Soviets won the race to space by delivering the first human to orbit and later in the year brought the first manmade vehicle to another planet when they landed Venera 1 on Venus. Alan Shepard became the first American in space in the same year.

The New York Yankees won the World Series in my birth year of 1961 and Ty Cobb died. West Side Story was taking theaters by storm; Ernest Hemingway shot himself to death. Electric toothbrushes were introduced. Frito corn chips appeared for the first time. And, finally, but certainly not least, Barbie got a boyfriend: The Ken doll was introduced on March 11, 1961.

I arrived into a rich world full of stark dichotomy on that July day, but I knew none of it until the well meaning people who would play the most important roles in my life taught me what the world was all about. I grew up mostly accepting what they taught until, gradually over time, things no longer felt quite right. I didn't understand for many years though that what I was taught and accepted as true was really only other peoples' versions of the world and that many other versions existed. Including my own. I also did not understand for a long time that the challenges I experienced in the course of my life were indications of the misalignment between their stories—the version of the world I was taught as true—and what I was discovering for myself as my own truth.

Eventually I began to unlearn others' versions of the world and write my own. I was challenged with such things as change, fear, love, loneliness, coming out, leaving home, and integrity. Each brought glimpses of who I really am according to my own new understanding of the world. I discovered that when I was born I was the purest expression of Source. I deduced then, that if that was true, I also must have already known who I was when I was born. After all, what Source does not know itself? I came to understand that, as I learned the stories of well intentioned others' experiences, I began to lose—at least consciously—what I already knew was true. I cannot describe my exhilaration when I began to rediscover who I really was. Suffice it to say, I called it Paradise.

No matter where in the world you call home Paradise exists. You live in a rich culture, one full of tradition, opportunities, and rich in its ability to nurture and support you. There is art and spirituality and celebration and joy. All around you possibilities abound, there for the taking. But not all of you see this. Instead you may see pain or suffering or poverty or oppression. You may experience these things or witness them for others. You may even inflict some of them. Where you live, the world may not seem like a perfect place. But there is only perfection. All experiences, when viewed through the eyes of Source and in

the context of your greater, highest good, are opportunities to discover a piece of the puzzle that in sum is who you really are.

If you have picked up this book intentionally or unintentionally know that it will help you to understand how to find and assemble the puzzle pieces that, put together, will be the purest expression of who you are. Allow me to share a personal story to illustrate the power of the journey you are embarking upon.

My mother's mother was Rosie. She was an independent, spirited soul who was widowed young and never remarried. Though not everyone experienced Rosie as I did, I found her to be loving and affirming; supremely supportive. She always encouraged me by her example to be who I was; to care not what others thought but rather to be guided by whether or not I felt good in my own skin. She took risks and went against the grain. She lived her life, well into her 90s, without apology and honoring herself every step of the way. I can remember from the time I was a little boy the words she spoke often to me and that to this day are ingrained in my being: "You're all right, kid. The world's all wrong."

I don't know if Rosie always lived her life in the way that I remember. Born in the early 1900s the Great Depression came along just when she and my grandfather were raising a young family. No doubt there was hardship but eventually the family did have a summer cottage on Lake Ronkonkoma so it seems they fared pretty well.

As she got on in years and I was old enough to understand her more, Rosie came across as a bit "different." She hoarded—no doubt a throwback to her depression days—while at the same time giving freely nearly everything she had. She died penniless but never wanted for anything. She lived a long, fulfilled life. In the latter years she became affectionally known by some of us in the family as crazy Rosie. But how crazy was she? Granted, living your life in alignment with who you really are isn't always the most popular

choice in the eyes of others. They just don't understand. But I'm not sure that was reason to call her crazy even in jest.

I believe that on the day she made her transition Rosie was quite ready to go on to the next chapter of her life. And in my memory, if there is one thing that I know for sure it is that after my grandfather died—when Rosie was probably not too much older than I am now—she was challenged with opportunities to remember, and to live into, who she really was. I believe that is why she never remarried despite the opportunity. Through the challenges of putting life together again after her husband's untimely death, Rosie rediscovered herself. In her many adventures—the very things that earned her the title of crazy Rosie—she found the pieces to her puzzle. And as she put the puzzle together, she rediscovered who she was—her paradise. Paradise (re)Discovered.

Shortly after Rosie died she came to me in a visitation. I remember being in bed but somehow also being with her at the front door to my apartment. I can still see her standing there and I get chills even today as I write. The bright, diffuse light around her, her flowing dress. She looked younger but that wasn't what struck me in that moment. As she stood inside my doorway Rosie and I hugged hard. What I remember most was the almost overwhelming sense of love that I felt. And I remember what she whispered in my ear: "Everything will be alright." And it was. For me, and for crazy Rosie.

It is my intention that this book will bring to you the opportunity to rediscover the paradise that is you. That by reading about some of the challenging moments in my life and of the pieces of my puzzle that I discovered as a result, you will see the parallels in your own life and better understand your own challenges, each as an opportunity to put in place a piece of the puzzle that represents the paradise that is who you really are. It is also my intention that in seeing life's challenges in this way you will come to know as I have the spirited meaning of Rosie's prophetic words: "You're all right, kid. The world's all wrong."

In the words of Abraham, there is nothing you can't be, or do, or have. No matter where you live in the world, whatever your culture and its nuances, regardless of the experiences you may have been born into or have encountered along the way, paradise is within you and it is yours for the rediscovering. And when you do, all the rights and privileges of true paradise will be yours. Forever.

So now, as the great poet Rumi once wrote:

*Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing,
there is a field. I'll meet you there.*

May I invite you then through this book, to that field; to our meeting place for rediscovery?

Dr. Mark A. Arcuri

1 November 2019

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