

WHERE ARE YOU? HOW DID YOU GET HERE?

Every time I visit a new town or city, the first thing I do is find a directory displaying a map of the area. The critical component is that red dot with the label “You are here.” Without that dot, the map is useless. The dot places everything into context by instantly showing me where I am in relation to where I want to go and what I want to see. This is exactly what I would like this book to be for anyone with a desire to learn more topics related to religion, spirituality, who we are, and how to navigate our lives. Whether your current faith satisfies all your needs and you are curious about other viewpoints and ideas, or if you are looking for alternatives to organized religion to continue your journey, like me, these lessons will provide some help.

These lessons grew out of my passionate life-long search to understand God and spirituality, beginning in

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my teenage years. When I was growing up, our family attended a Lutheran church, where I first learned about God through the lens of this Protestant religion. I participated in the worship services and classes the church offered, paying attention to every lesson and taking notes on the sermons. Then my older brother introduced us to the born-again evangelical Christian movement, and I dove in headfirst, learning all about theology, the Bible, and many aspects of the conservative Christian faith. After several years of trying to reconcile the narrow perspective of this theology with friends, classmates, and coworkers, I joined the Presbyterian church, which holds a less rigid view. I devoted many hours to teaching Sunday School classes, running the youth group, and serving on various boards. Whatever church I was involved with, I did so with everything I had.

Then it happened. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, a sadness crept into my life. As much as I wanted to shove it to the recesses of my heart and mind, it would not go away. Even more so, it got worse. Then my life crashed into the ground like a plane at full throttle. This devastation was followed by divorce, financial ruin, depression, and a night of suicidal ideation.

What the hell happened? Where was my God? Where did He go? Was He even ever there? What about all the things I did over the years? All the hours spent in prayer, working and teaching others about the love of God? I was lost.

From that point, I began to rebuild my thoughts and beliefs about God, religion, and spirituality from the ground up. Over the next thirty years, my ideas solidified into a few distinct lessons. These ideas came after years

of studying psychology, specifically human and spiritual development, and the physical sciences through research in prayer, meditation, and quantum physics. As a result, I developed these *12 Lessons* as a new path forward. They do not represent a new belief system, but rather a review of fundamental topics to consider when deciding on what you choose to believe.

So that's where I am and how I got here. What about you? Where are you in your journey? Are there aspects of your faith that you have been wondering about? Do you have questions relating to the effectiveness of prayer or how we decide what we believe is true? Do you wonder if there are other sources of information available to us about God, other than ancient sacred texts? Are you curious about the Law of Attraction and how it might work? If these questions interest you, this book will help you find answers. Whether you agree with all of them or not, at the very least you will be better able to say, "I am here."