

# INTRODUCTION

*We make our world significant by the courage of our questions  
and by the depth of our answers.*

**Carl Sagan, Astronomer and Astrophysicist**

*Behold, I do not give lectures or a little charity.  
When I give, I give myself.*

**Walt Whitman**

*“The real work is the change.”*

**Andrew Goldsworthy**

**“Rivers and Tides”**



Passions — sweet, fierce, destructive, creative — I have known many in my life and loved them all — sex, love, music, reading, writing, nature, traveling. As I embark upon my eighth decade, I wish to share some of the insights I have gleaned from my explorations, for the insights in this book are gifts from the journeys I have taken, the successes and failures I have known, the people I have met, the states of mind I have visited psychologically, and the places I have visited geographically.

Extrapolated from e-mails I have written over the years, these letters contain some of the diamonds that sparkle and shine in the sky of my life.

The writings by no means encompass everything I know or have experienced. They simply offer some of the things I have observed, learned, and understood over the years, and shared with individuals whose life-experiences raised significant questions. Those questions tapped into principles and dynamics that concern many people, whatever their station in life. As such, my responses often soar beyond the personal and idiosyncratic, into the more broadly human dimension.

I am not trying to tell anybody how to live. More often than not, I simply offer insights and analyses, and leave it up to the individual to apply them if and when s/he chooses.

*Diamonds in the Sky: Extrapolations, Explorations, Transformations* consists of thirty-six chapters in which I discuss a spectrum of topics, perhaps especially in the domains of psychological development, spiritual expansion, and multi-dimensional forms of creativity.

For example, is creativity limited to the arts? What role does creativity play in our daily lives? Is creativity a pathway to self-actualization? How might we cope with physical and mental transitions — moving to a new city, growing older, shifting jobs, changing partners? What about love, need, desire, sex, heartbreak? Does perfectionism help or hurt us? How does our need for power and control create anxiety? What are the benefits of relaxed acceptance? How do reading and writing words, and playing and listening to music deepen and expand the quality of being and living?

What is our relationship with alcohol and drugs? How do they help? How do they hurt? What about addiction? Does our relationship with our parents affect our relationships throughout the rest of our life? How can we recognize and liberate ourselves from parental, social and religious conditioning? What is psychotherapy? Does it help? If so, why?

Is suicide a valid option? What are some of the differences between religion and spirituality? What roles do those two dimensions play in our personal and communal lives? Is it possible for us to expand our psycho-spiritual worldview? If so, how and why?

There is something very special about sitting down to write a letter and spending time, not with an abstract "general public," but with a specific person one cares about, sharing thoughts and feelings generated by the mood and circumstances of the moment.

Live conversations generate innumerable joys, of course — personal presence, audible tones in words and laughter, physical cues through sight and touch. In writing a letter, however, there is a slower pace, greater consideration of what one actually thinks and feels, and very often a depth and intensity of intimacy that live conversations rarely match.

As I told SL, “I feel deep empathy for others. I do everything I can to put myself in their shoes so I can feel through their heart and see through their eyes. I understand their thoughts and feelings with kindness and compassion. If they welcome my input in these letters, I do what I can to share whatever I may perceive and know. Merging with them, I offer whatever strength, beauty and encouragement I can that might prove helpful. . . .

“As you know, it is rare to find somebody, anybody, who accepts one unconditionally. In me, you have that person. You intuitively recognize the fact that throughout our correspondence I have encouraged you to accept yourself, love yourself, and express yourself fully whatever your feelings may be at any given moment. That's terrific. You are accepted and appreciated every way you are.”

In sharing these e-mails I do not violate the privacy of those who wrote to me in confidence. I do not divulge personal matters, nor do I give names, although I do provide initials. Sometimes I quote a few lines from their letters, but the body of these extrapolations is my own writing. I trust that by sharing my responses to other people's questions and concerns, the reader will understand in general what the

conversation was about. In many ways, the concerns in these letters become relevant to all. That is why I offer my insights, observations, analyses and perspectives in this book.

Because I enjoy taking liberties with language, I often intentionally form compound words such as “timestreams,” “heartsongs,” or “wisdomfire,” even as I enjoy inventing entirely new words, such as “horrideous,” “hypnotrantic,” or “dwaddle.”

I add a PDF link for those who might like to print out chapters instead of reading them on line.

One of my correspondents asked what she was giving to me in return for my letters. I replied, “I can say your willingness to express your hopes and dreams and doubts, questions and various complexities in your life stimulates responses in me that test my own courage and self-knowledge.

“I write these letters, not only to you, but to myself. Your struggles become my struggles. Your doubts and aspirations test my own capacities for empathy, compassion and insight. The deeper and higher the explicit and implicit questions you raise, the deeper the oceans and the higher the mountains I am called upon to scale. In effect, *you* give these letters to *me*, for which I thank you.”

To GS, who asked a similar question, I said, “Sitting down to write to you is immensely rewarding to me, because it gives me an opportunity to consciously examine and clarify my own thinking. Have I learned anything in my life? If so, what might that be? Is any of it potentially interesting or relevant or worthwhile for you or others? Are you the kind of person who might find these books and people and perspectives even remotely interesting? If so, which books, which thoughts, which music?”

“I share what I can. And as I discuss the subjects we have been talking about, I find the writing process itself deeply rewarding, for which I thank you still again.”

A few of my e-mail friends asked about my personal life. To SL, I replied, “For the most part I rarely deal with myself or others in terms of my personal likes and dislikes, my opinions, judgments, etc. Most of those perceptual lenses are behind me now. They no longer distort my vision and divide my thinking and my being into compartments, opposites, value judgments. My focus is not on me, which would literally be self-indulgent, but on the person I am talking to.

“[There is] not a public me and a private me. Not a person who speaks with you, and another person hiding somewhere else. . . . The things I share with you, inspired by the wonderful, deeply felt letters you share with me, are direct extensions of who I am, the whole person, not a fragment.”

When JC-E asked why I do not speak about myself directly more often, I said, “I just try to serve music, art, beauty, love, and other psycho-spiritual domains greater than myself. That’s why the focus in my writings almost never points to me, but to whatever subject is being discussed, usually in terms of the other person's thoughts and feelings.

“I’ll tap into my experience once in a while in order to help us explore whatever thought is under consideration. But for the most part, the many other aspects of my life are probably irrelevant to that thought, so I don't bring them in. To do so would only narcissistically distract from whatever we’re talking about.

”Overall, my outlook has been about service to love and beauty in general, to music and writing in particular. It is not so much a matter of ‘look at me,’ as it is a matter of ‘look at what comes *through* me.’ In other words, it's not about me. It's about the work.”

Meanwhile, for those who might be curious, there are a few letters written to various people in which I do speak primarily of myself and my history. They are included in the chapter entitled, “Personal/Transpersonal.”

*Diamonds in the Sky* is not “American” or “New Age” or rooted in any sort of social, political or religious ideology. It is simply a sharing of love, compassion and insight. All of us wonder, search, hope, suffer, enjoy, create, and pass away. For some it is a joyful dance. For others, it is a struggle. It is my hope that a few of the

wisdom-words in these passages might lighten the load, ease the struggle, expand self-knowledge, inspire confidence, and generate creative energy.