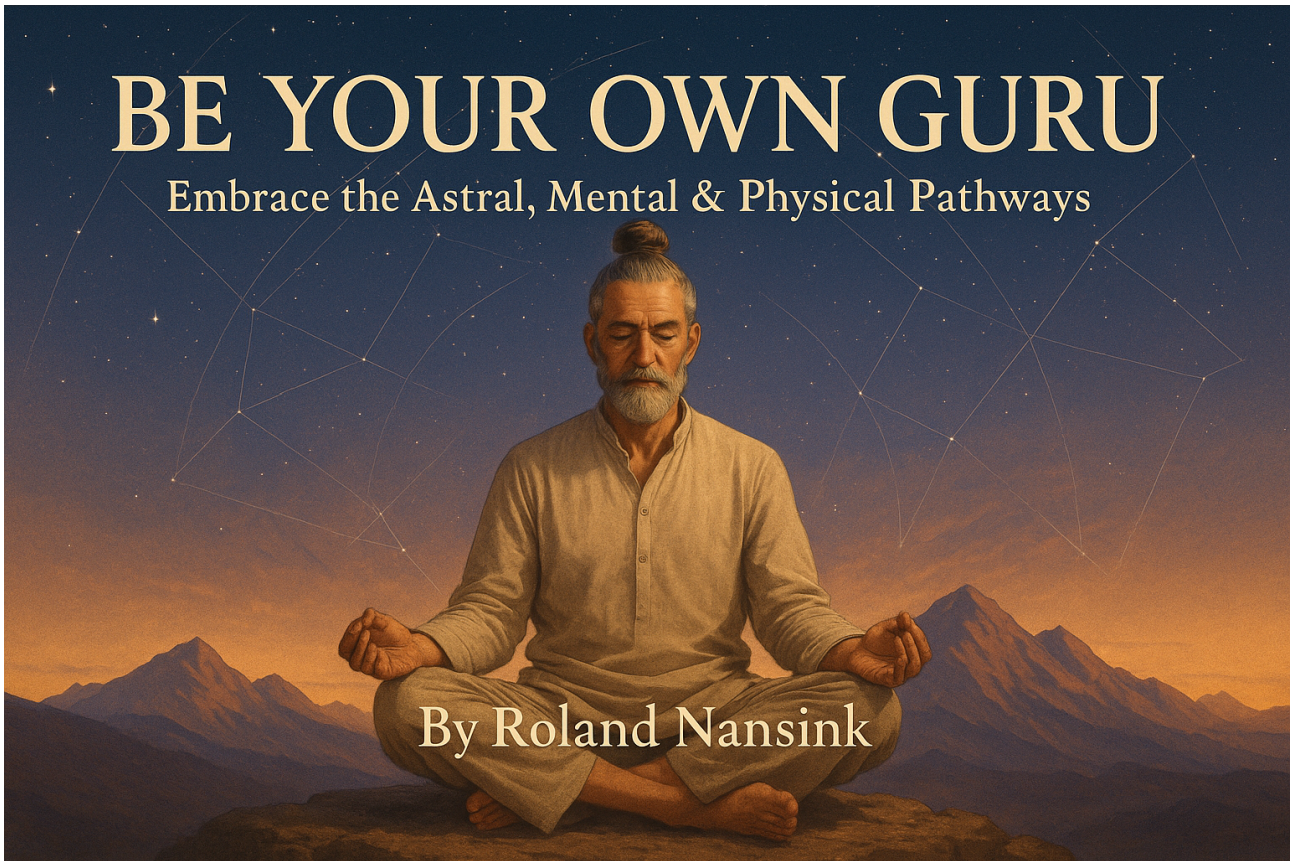


BE YOUR OWN GURU

Embrace the Astral, Mental & Physical Pathways



Be Your Own Guru: Embrace Your Inner Guide By Roland Nansink

In today's world we often seek answers outside ourselves, through gurus, media, or self-help fads. Yet, ultimately “there is no one better equipped to handle you than...YOU”. This book invites you to become your own guru by harnessing three foundational pillars – Astral (intuition and subtle awareness), Mental (self-esteem and identity), and Physical (body strength and presence) – in a unified framework. Drawing on timeless Eastern and Western wisdom, modern psychology, and movement-based practices, you will learn to trust your inner guidance.

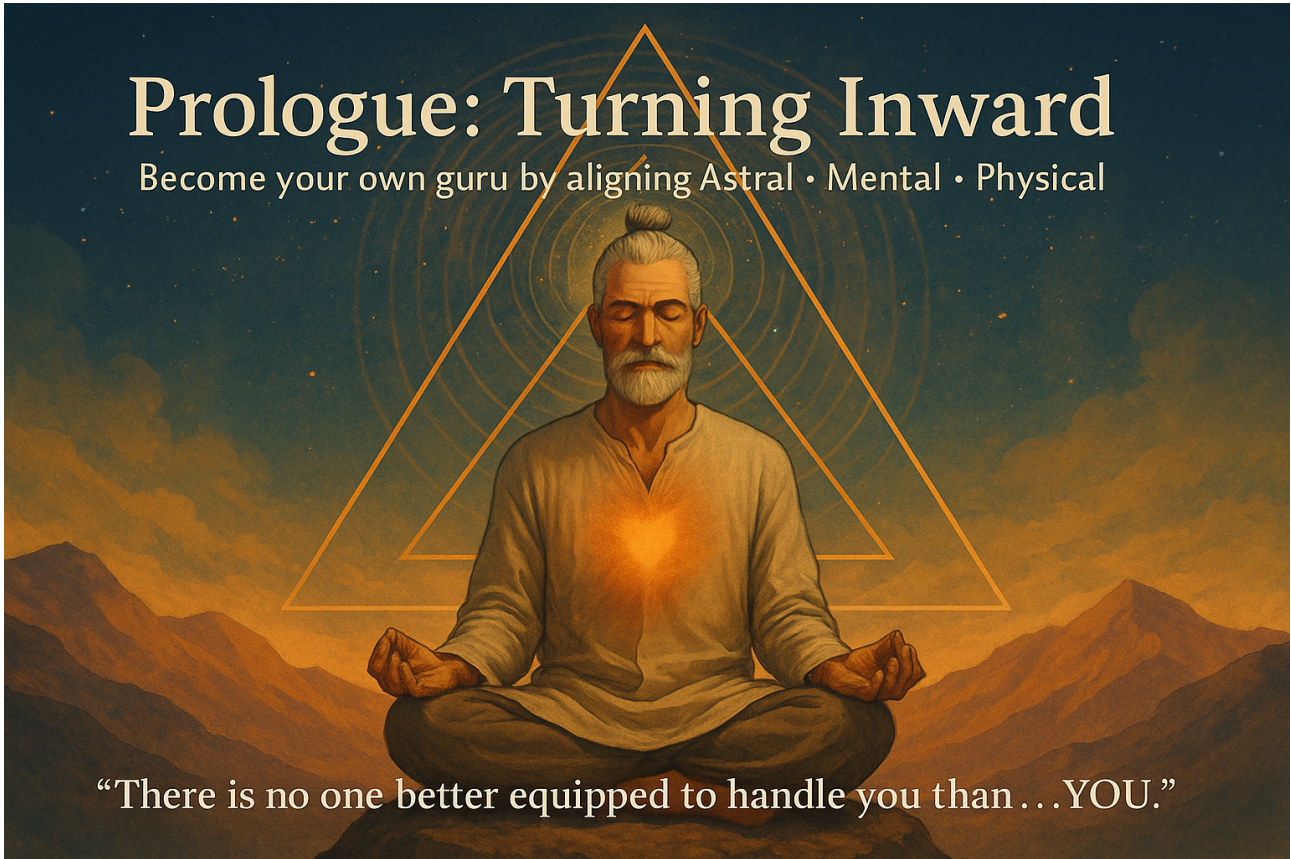
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Prologue: Turning Inward

Become your own guru by aligning Astral • Mental • Physical



“There is no one better equipped to handle you than...YOU.”

Prologue: Turning Inward

In today’s world we often seek answers outside ourselves, through gurus, media, or self-help fads. Yet, ultimately “there is no one better equipped to handle you than...YOU” spiritandmuse.com. This book invites you to become your own guru by harnessing three foundational pillars – Astral (intuition and subtle awareness), Mental (self-esteem and identity), and Physical (body strength and presence) – in a unified framework. Drawing on timeless Eastern and Western wisdom, modern psychology, and movement-based practices, you will learn to trust your inner guidance.

In the pages ahead, we weave philosophy and practical exercises together. You’ll reflect on thought-provoking questions and try embodied practices that build confidence, intuition, and vitality in concert. By book’s end, you will understand how these three dimensions of being support one another, empowering you to guide your own journey with resilience and clarity.

Introduction: The Three Pillars of Self-Guidance



Introduction: The Three Pillars of Self-Guidance

To become your own guru, we cultivate **three interlocking dimensions** of growth, each rooted in ancient traditions:

- **Astral (Intuitive Awareness):** This is the subtle, spiritual dimension of consciousness. In many Eastern systems (Yoga, Tantra, Taoism, Buddhism), the *subtle body* or “astral body” is a quasi-material aspect of the self filled with energy and perception en.wikipedia.org. It connects us to insight beyond the rational mind – intuition, creativity, higher consciousness, and the felt sense of inner knowing. Practices like meditation, dreamwork, and *pranayama* (yogic breathing) develop this awareness. The Astral pillar teaches us to perceive the “wind” of intuition and flow with life’s deeper rhythms.
- **Mental (Self-Esteem and Identity):** This dimension concerns your sense of self, identity, and emotional resilience. Research shows that a healthy **self-worth** – an inner sense of value independent of external approval – is crucial to mental well-being resiliencelab.us. It shapes how confidently you face challenges and guide your life. By strengthening self-esteem and cultivating self-

compassion, you train the mind to be your supportive ally. Reflective practices, affirmations, and mindful awareness of thoughts help you recognize your inherent worth. As one psychological review explains, higher self-esteem is linked to confidence in our abilities, better decision-making, and greater resilience under stress resiliencelab.us.

- Physical (Body Strength and Embodiment):** This pillar centers on the body – its health, movement, breath, and grounding. Embodied practices not only build muscular strength and flexibility but also sharpen awareness and integrate mind and spirit. For example, martial arts and meditative movement systems like Tai Chi or Taikiken train posture, balance, and breath while cultivating inner power thefeel.org [pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov). Breathwork and yoga calm the nervous system. Scientific studies confirm that slow, mindful movement and regulated breathing improve mood and reduce anxiety [pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov) [pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov). In the Physical pillar, we learn to inhabit our bodies fully, transforming attention into presence and vitality.

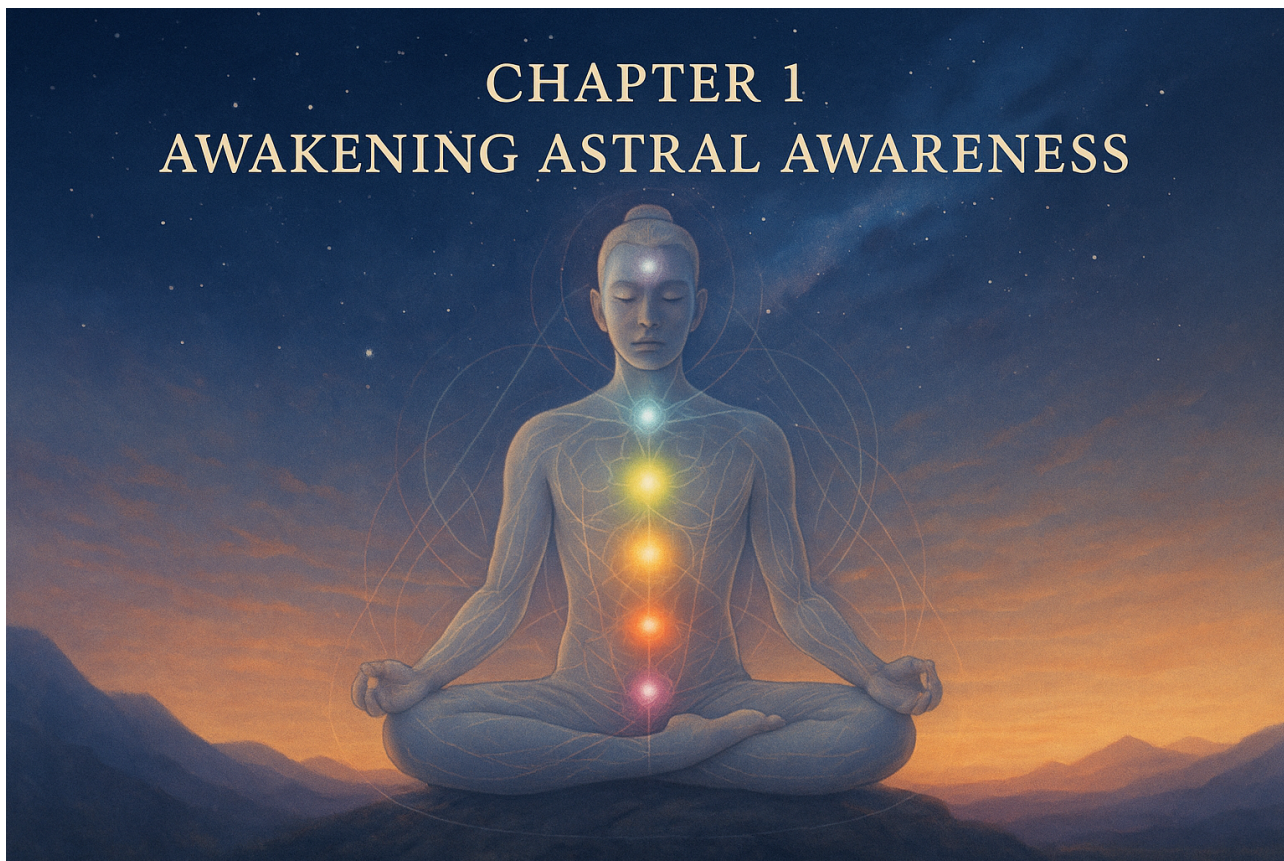
Together, these pillars form a **holistic framework**. Just as an ancient Taoist would harmonize *qi* (life energy) through both meditation and movement, we integrate spirit, mind, and body. The table below highlights their focus and practices:

Pillar	Core Focus	Key Practices	Outcomes
Astral	Intuition, higher awareness, subtle body en.wikipedia.org	Meditation, visualization, dream journaling, chakra	Heightened intuition, spiritual insight,
Mental	Self-worth, identity, emotional resilience resiliencelab.us	Self-reflection, affirmations, journaling, mindfulness	Confidence, inner guidance, emotional
Physical	Body health, movement, breath, grounding pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov thefe	Yoga, Tai Chi/Qigong, Taikiken stances, breathwork	Vitality, embodied presence, stress

Each chapter below explores how specific teachings and exercises nourish **all three pillars together**. Along the way, you will answer reflective questions and try practical exercises.

CHAPTER 1

AWAKENING ASTRAL AWARENESS



Chapter 1: Awakening Astral Awareness

The first step in becoming your own guru is tuning into your **inner wisdom and subtle intuition**. Ancient yogis and meditators speak of a *subtle body* that interpenetrates our physical form en.wikipedia.org. This subtle body (called *sūkṣma-śarīra* in Sanskrit) is the seat of prana (life-energy) and intuitive knowing. By developing this layer of awareness, you begin to perceive guidance that transcends ordinary thoughts.

The Power of Subtle Perception

Eastern spiritual texts from the Upanishads to Taoism emphasize the importance of inner vision. For example, Taoist practices aim to harmonize *qi* by balancing body and mind, ultimately leading to a state of “furen shuten,” where body and mind become symbiotic with life energy thefeel.org. In practical terms, this means learning to feel beyond the physical senses. The “subtle body” model describes layers of energy (chakras, nadis) through which intuition flows en.wikipedia.org. When you meditate, visualize, or simply pay attention to impressions, you are exercising this astral faculty.

In our experience: notice the difference between *thinking* through a problem and *sensing* an answer. Intuition often speaks as a quiet “knowing” or a body-felt response. As one teacher put it, cultivating this awareness is like “intuition in action, meditation in slow motion, coordinating body and mind” thefeel.org. When you slow down and tune into your body’s subtle signals, even walking or standing postures become opportunities to listen inwardly.

Practices to Strengthen Astral Insight

- **Mindful Meditation:** Sit quietly and focus on the breath or a single point of awareness. Over time, you will begin to notice thoughts and feelings arising in consciousness without judgment. This builds subtle awareness beyond the chatter of the mind.
- **Dream Journaling:** Upon waking, immediately jot down any vivid dreams or intuitive flashes. Over time, you train yourself to recognize symbolic messages from the subconscious (astral) mind.
- **Visualization:** Practice simple energy exercises (e.g., imagine a warm light moving through your body). This engages the imagery center of the subtle body.
- **Breath Awareness:** Watch the sensations of breathing into different body parts. Techniques like alternate-nostril breathing (pranayama) are said to balance the subtle energies of the left and right channels.

Reflection: When have you trusted a gut feeling that later proved true? How can you create quiet moments to listen to your inner voice?

By gently practicing these, you “strengthen the antenna” of your astral awareness. Over time, decisions and creative ideas may seem to flow more effortlessly from within. Remember that intuition grows when you trust and test it. (Even start small: notice the first thing that comes to mind when asked a question, and see how it pans out.)

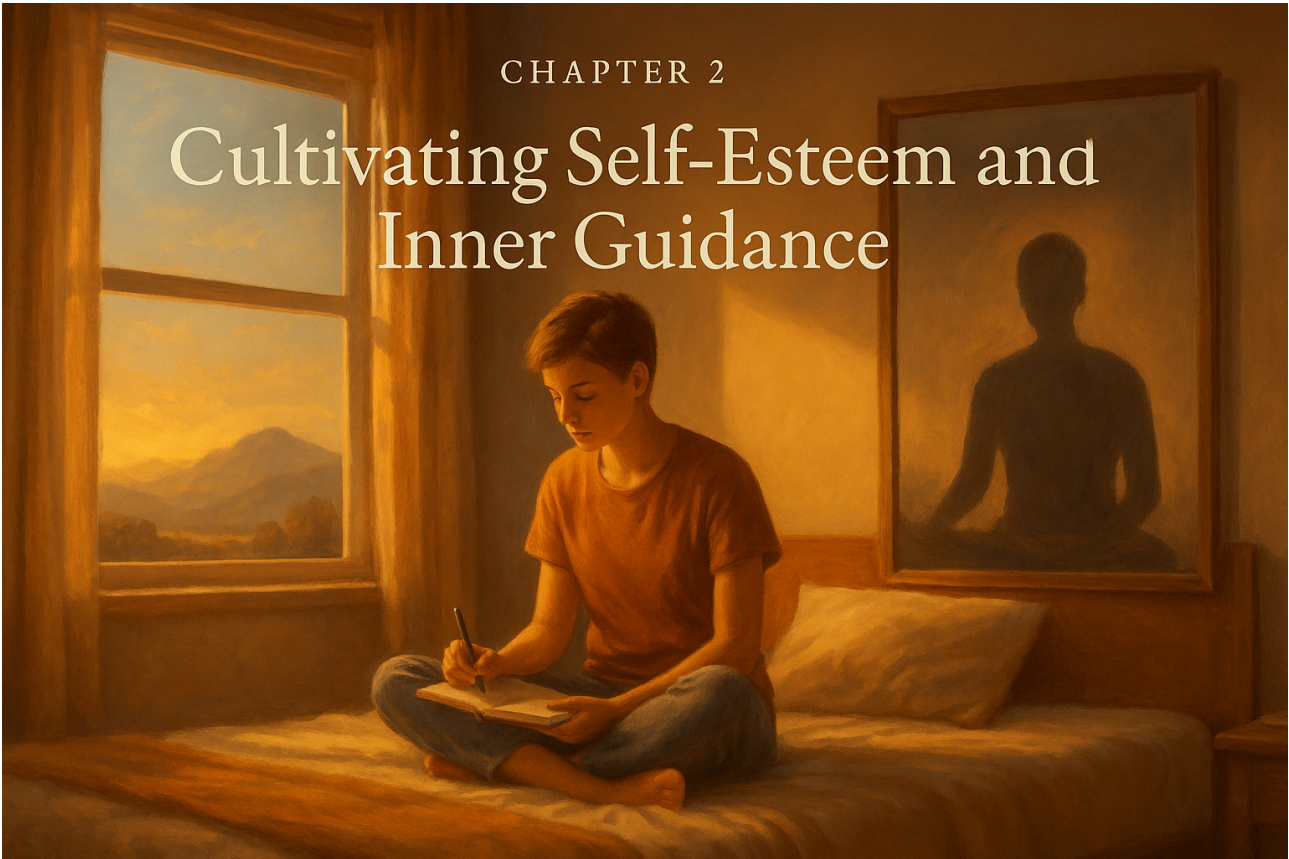
Astral Influences on Other Pillars

As your subtle awareness deepens, it naturally nourishes the other pillars. For instance, enhanced intuition often boosts confidence in your choices (Mental pillar) and calms the nervous system (Physical pillar). Meditative

stillness, as practiced in Taikiken's "standing Zen," can simultaneously relax muscles and open insight thefeel.org. In the next chapters, we'll build on this calm clarity to strengthen self-esteem and the body itself.

CHAPTER 2

Cultivating Self-Esteem and Inner Guidance



Chapter 2: Cultivating Self-Esteem and Inner Guidance

The Mental pillar is about **you – your identity, worth, and inner voice**. To be your own guru, you must become your own inner coach. That starts with **self-worth**. Psychologists define self-worth as a comprehensive sense of one’s own value, not contingent on achievements or others’ opinions resiliencelab.us. Healthy self-esteem acts as an “internal compass” guiding relationships and decisions resiliencelab.us. Conversely, a harsh self-critical mind can undermine confidence and resilience resiliencelab.us.

The Science of Self-Worth

Modern research confirms that acknowledging our inherent worth boosts mental health. Individuals with higher self-compassion and balanced self-esteem exhibit greater resilience to stress and fewer anxiety symptoms resiliencelab.us [pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov). For example, mindfulness meditation has been shown to shrink the brain’s fear center (amygdala) and thicken areas involved in emotional regulation [pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov) [pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov), leading to calmer reactions under pressure. In one review, participants reported “**reduced ruminations, enhanced emotional**

regulation, and increased resilience” after an 8-week mindfulness program [pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov).

Key Point: Self-esteem isn't about narcissism; it's a foundation for growth. When you genuinely feel worthy, you dare to try new things and bounce back when they don't go as planned.

Building Your Inner Supporter

- **Self-Talk Coaching:** Notice your inner critic. If you would comfort a friend when they're down, do the same for yourself. One simple rule is: *calm yourself down, seek solutions, and reassure yourself that things will work out* spiritandmuse.com. Replace harsh judgments (“I'm stupid”) with constructive ones (“I can learn from this”).
- **Affirmations and Gratitude:** Begin each day by naming qualities you like about yourself, or things you accomplished yesterday. These positive statements gradually rewire self-perception.
- **Journaling:** Write freely about your feelings and challenges. This brings mental patterns into awareness so you can compassionately reframe them. For example, if you catch yourself thinking “I never succeed,” counter it by listing even small successes from the week.
- **Therapeutic Practices:** Techniques like cognitive-behavioral exercises or even guided imagery (from Eastern traditions) can reveal unconscious beliefs. For instance, imagine your ideal wise mentor – let that image give you advice. Over time, you learn to channel your own inner wisdom in a similar way.

Reflection: In moments of self-doubt, what does your inner voice say? How might you turn that voice into a supportive coach instead of a critic?

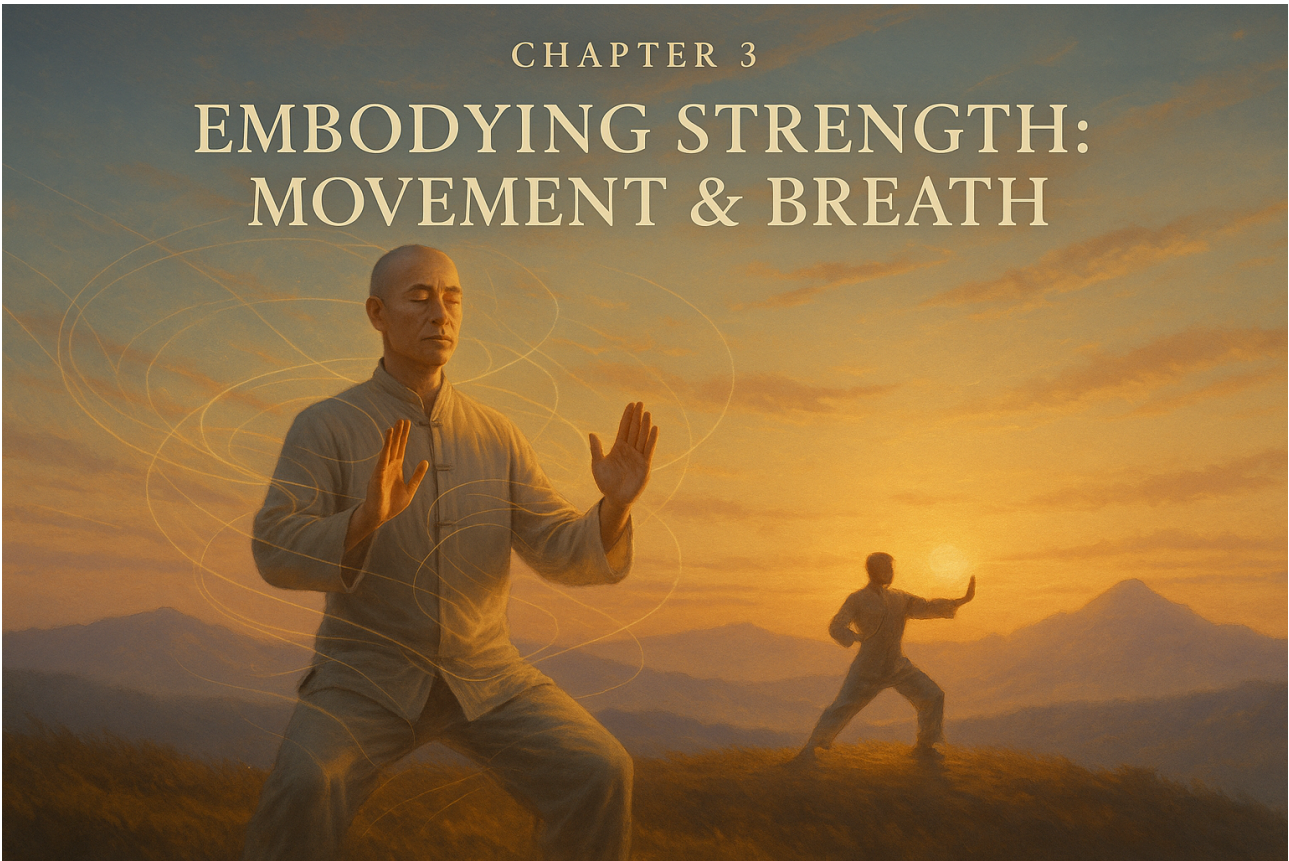
As you practice this inner coaching, your sense of identity and worth strengthens. You begin to see yourself as a capable, growing person rather than a fixed idea (“I am the anxious one”). This mental resilience then feeds back into the Astral and Physical realms: a more confident mind allows you to trust your gut impulses (astral) and to commit to taking up physical challenges without fear.

Example Exercise: Mirror Work

Stand before a mirror, look yourself in the eyes, and say aloud a positive affirmation (e.g. “I am worthy of love and growth.”). You may feel awkward at first, but psychological research shows that such acts can increase self-esteem. Combine this with a few deep breaths – feel the words resonate through your chest. Over time, your subconscious hears and believes this support.

CHAPTER 3

EMBODYING STRENGTH: MOVEMENT & BREATH



Chapter 3: Embodying Strength – Movement and Breath

The Physical pillar grounds us. A strong, aware body supports a strong mind and spirit. Movement practices from Yoga, Tai Chi, or Qigong not only improve health but cultivate mindful presence. Scientific studies of Tai Chi/Qigong find that **flowing movements and postures coordinated with breath** have measurable benefits for psychological and physical health pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov. These “meditative movements” train posture, balance, and breathing together, engaging body and mind.

The Wisdom of Embodied Practice

Consider the martial art *Taikiken*. Its core exercise, called **Ritsuzen (standing Zen)**, is simply standing still in a relaxed, aligned posture thefeel.org. At first glance it seems uneventful – but internally it is rigorous: you cultivate “**the body’s internal alignment, breathing, balance, and mental focus**” thefeel.org. Masters say that Ritsuzen builds a reservoir of energy (ki) and forms the root of all power in the art thefeel.org. In short, the body becomes a living, sensing being.

Similarly, yogic traditions include *asana* (posture) and *pranayama* (breath control) to unite physical form with subtle energy. Western science supports this: regulated breathing (like slow diaphragmatic breaths) activates the parasympathetic nervous system, countering stress pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov. Mindful breathing even changes brain activity to enhance focus and calm. In one review, guided breathing techniques were shown to reliably reduce anxiety and improve mood pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov.

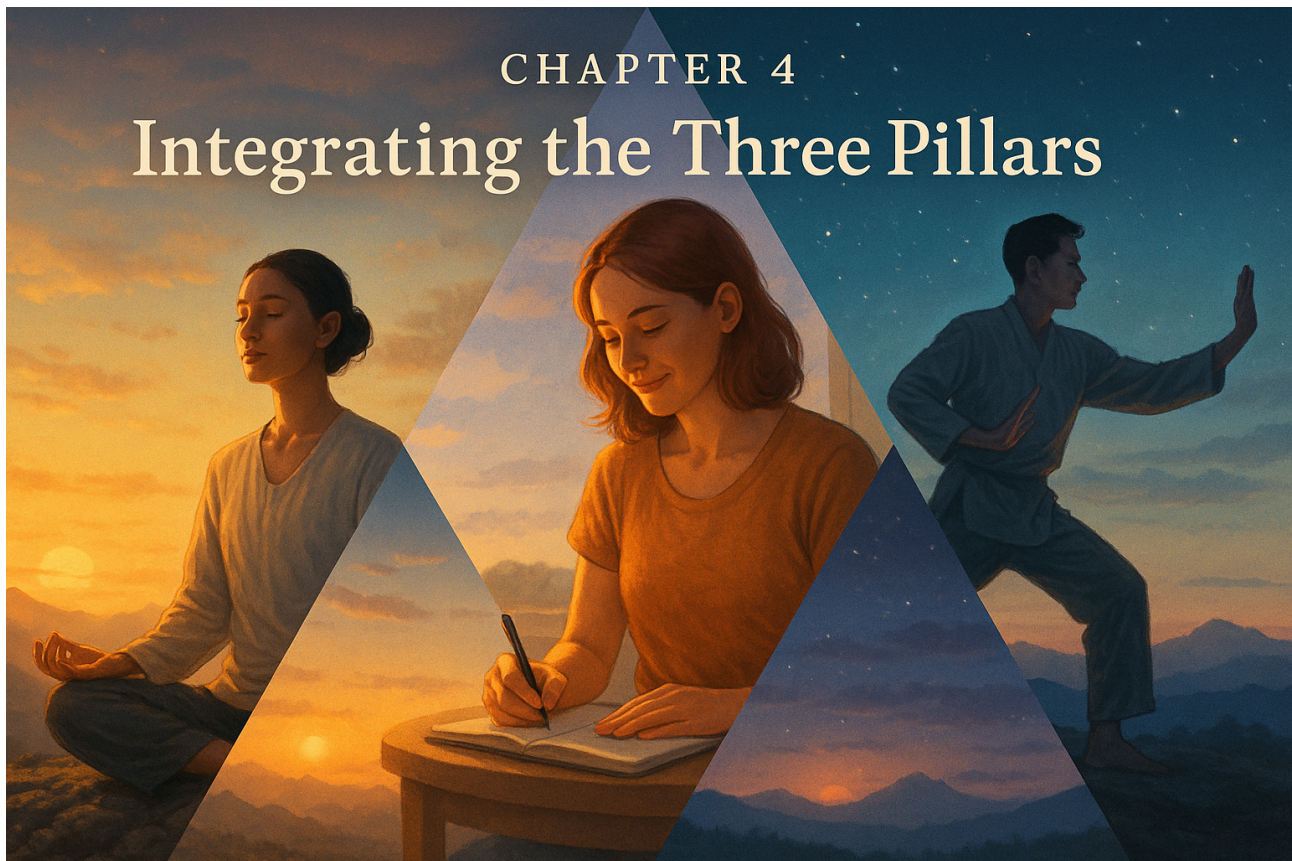
Practices to Strengthen the Body

- **Morning Movement:** Start with gentle stretches or a short Tai Chi/Qigong sequence. Focus on slow, deliberate motions and a steady breath. This awakens body awareness and warms you up physically and mentally.
- **Breathwork:** Try simple breathing exercises. For example, inhale deeply through the nose for 4 counts, hold 1-2, then exhale slowly for 6-8 counts. This kind of slow, rhythmic breath reduces stress and centers the mind.
- **Postural Awareness:** Throughout the day, periodically check your posture. Are you slouching or tense? Take a moment to stand (or sit) with a straight spine, relaxed shoulders, and breathe deeply. The mind follows the body: an aligned posture naturally uplifts confidence and clarity.
- **Mindful Exercise:** Whether it's walking, yoga, or weight-training, bring full attention to the body. Feel muscles engage, notice the sensation of feet on the ground, synchronize each movement with breathing. This turns exercise into moving meditation, blending physical and mental focus pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov.

Reflection: How do you feel in your body right now? Notice any tension. Imagine breathing life into that area with each inhale – this simple practice can increase bodily awareness immediately.

By treating your body with respect and attention, you build a sturdy foundation for your spirit and mind. You prove to yourself that you **can** take positive action. Over time, you'll notice mood improvements and greater energy (as confirmed by research pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov). This

vitality feeds your confidence (Mental pillar) and also makes subtle practices more accessible (Astral pillar); for example, a calm, strong body makes it easier to sit still in meditation and feel energy flow.



Chapter 4: Integrating the Three Pillars

Now that we have explored each pillar, the key is **integration**. Every teaching or exercise can nurture all three dimensions simultaneously if done mindfully. Below is a sample daily ritual blending them:

- **Morning Ritual (Astral + Physical):** Upon waking, spend 5–10 minutes in silent meditation or breath awareness (Astral). While meditating, notice bodily sensations (Physical) and any early morning thoughts. This simple practice simultaneously calms the mind, sharpens intuition, and loosens bodily tension.
- **Daytime Affirmation (Mental + Astral):** In a quiet moment midday, recall one thing you are grateful for about yourself (Mental). Reflect on how this quality manifests in your life, trusting that inner guidance led you here (Astral). For example, remind yourself “I am resilient” and feel how that belief lifts your spirit.
- **Evening Movement (Physical + Mental):** Before bed, do gentle yoga or a short Tai Chi sequence (Physical). As you move, internally affirm a positive thought (Mental), such as “I allow myself rest and

renewal.” Notice how the body’s release of tension also relaxes the mind.

Each activity above targets at least two pillars, showing their interdependence. Philosophically, this mirrors the famous doctrine of *non-duality*: by engaging one facet of ourselves, we touch others. For instance, the Asian concept of *qi*(prana) teaches that breath and posture are not separate from mind; together they form a unified flow en.wikipedia.org en.wikipedia.org.

Example Exercise: The Three-Pillar Check-In

Pick a challenge you face (e.g., preparing for a job interview, or dealing with a conflict). Spend a few minutes on each pillar’s approach:

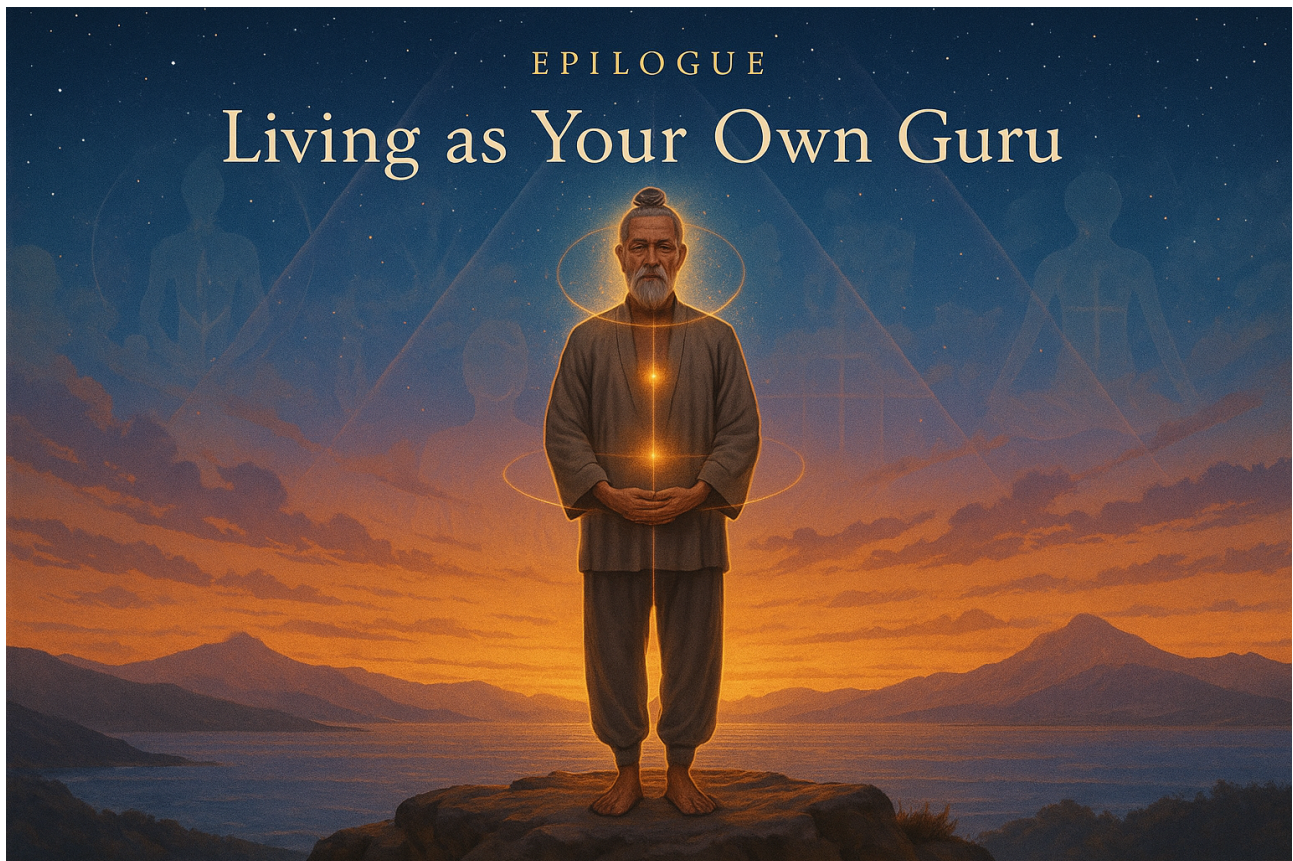
- **Astral:** Sit quietly and visualize yourself succeeding. Trust your intuition; what’s the first solution that comes to mind?
- **Mental:** Write a brief positive self-statement about this challenge (“I have prepared and am capable”). Reassure yourself as you would a friend.
- **Physical:** Do a power pose or a couple of Sun Salutations to energize your body. Take three deep belly breaths.

Notice how each dimension alters your state. Often a breakthrough or calm arises when all three work together.

Integration Tips

- Use **breath** as a bridge: whenever feeling stressed (mental) or scattered (astral), pause to take 3 slow breaths. This simple act grounds you physically while soothing the mind.
- Practice **mindful presence**: whatever task you do (washing dishes, walking, typing), do it with full attention. This cultivates unity of body, mind, and spirit in the mundane.
- Embrace **rituals**: consistent routines (like the daily ritual above) anchor the pillars. Over time, even small actions become powerful signals to your brain that all parts of you are cared for.

Reflection: Review a decision you made recently. How did your body feel? What thoughts were present? Was there an intuitive “hunch” involved? Recognizing how the pillars played a role can guide you next time.



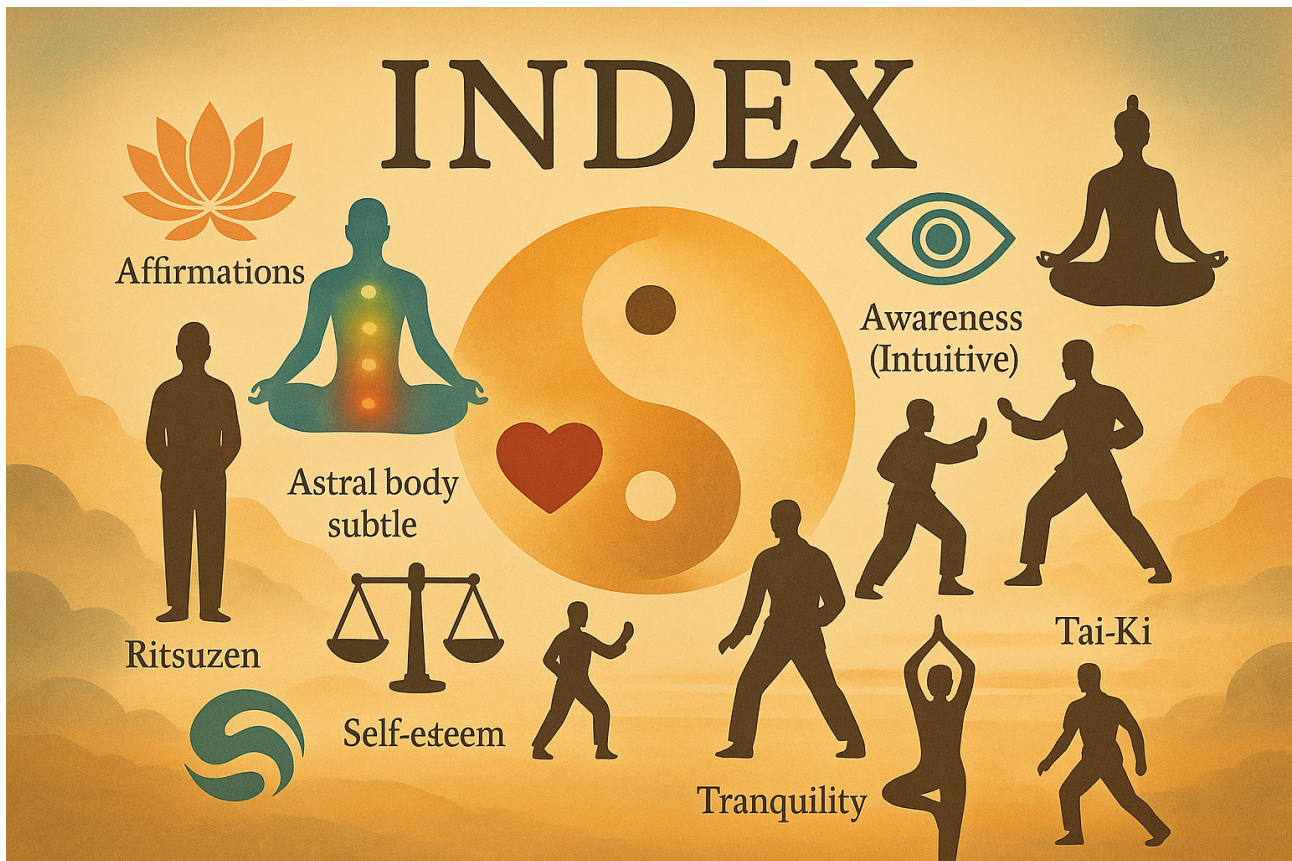
Epilogue: Living as Your Own Guru

Becoming your own guru is an ongoing journey, not a destination. It means continuously tuning into your Astral guidance, nurturing your Mental resilience, and honoring your Physical vessel. Along the way, draw inspiration from sages and science alike: the ancient Japanese martial artist Kenichi Sawai observed that “standing Zen (Ritsuzen) is not just adjunct to training – it is the training, the very root from which agility, power, and technique grow” thefeel.org. In other words, the stillness of mind and body is itself a source of strength. Similarly, modern psychology tells us that the strongest leaders are those who can be mindful, self-assured, and energetically grounded.

Carry these practices with you. When you read spiritual books or attend workshops in the future, ask: how does this feed my astral insight? My confidence? My health? Over time, you’ll notice patterns: ideas and exercises that resonate strongly will likely balance all three pillars. Be flexible – sometimes one pillar needs more attention than others (e.g., after physical illness, focus more on movement; during emotional stress, on mindfulness).

Most importantly, **be patient and kind with yourself**. The process of self-guidance is itself a practice. There will be setbacks and doubts. In those moments, turn inward and recall: *No one is more qualified to guide me through this than me* spiritandmuse.com. You have now a toolkit of wisdom and exercises to draw upon. Trust that, like any skill, inner guidance strengthens with use.

Keep revisiting these pillars, let them inform every chapter of your life, and you will truly *be your own guru*—wise, whole, and free.



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Sources: This guide draws on Eastern spiritual traditions and modern research. For example, it incorporates the concept of a *subtle body* from Asian mysticism en.wikipedia.org, emphasizes self-esteem and resilience from psychological studies resiliencelab.us pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov, and describes embodied practices based on martial arts and meditation (e.g. Taikiken and Tai Chi) pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov thefeel.org. These citations illustrate how the pillars of Astral (mind-spirit), Mental (self), and Physical (body) are supported by both ancient wisdom and evidence-based approaches.