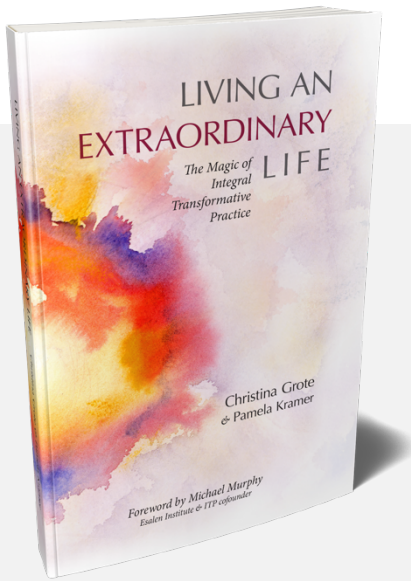


Living an Extraordinary Life

The Magic of Integral Transformative Practice

by Christina Grote & Pamela Kramer

with a Foreword by Michael Murphy



“This is the first book that provides a comprehensive overview of our past, present, and future activities and it gives the fullest account yet of experiments ITP has made to foster supernormal functioning.”

—Michael Murphy, Esalen Institute and ITP cofounder

WHAT IF THERE'S MORE TO YOU THAN YOU KNOW?

Living an Extraordinary Life is about the vast potential living inside us all and a practice to explore it for yourself. Created in 1991 by human potential pioneers George Leonard and Michael Murphy, Integral Transformative Practice (ITP) is designed for people with busy lives as a practical path for personal transformation and positive social change. In this book, Christina Grote and Pamela Kramer expertly guide you through this dynamic practice—a flexible roadmap to discover your gifts and live an extraordinary life!

With this book you can:

- Explore your many-sided nature, and capacity for transformation—both ordinary and extraordinary.
- Discover new ways to be balanced, vital, and healthy in body, mind, heart, and soul.
- Learn to stay grounded, centered, and relaxed in response to life's ups and downs.
- Design a practice for your lifestyle, interests, and needs.

“If you are looking for a time-tested guide to living with integrity, health, connection, and joy, look no further. Pick it up, start practicing, and get ready for a beautiful journey.”

—Cassandra Vieten, PhD, director of research, Arthur C. Clarke Center for Human Imagination, University of California, San Diego



What is the book about?

Living an Extraordinary Life presents Integral Transformative Practice, created by George Leonard and Michael Murphy and designed to develop, balance, and harmonize our entire being—body, mind, heart and soul. The book features both the practice and the evolutionary worldview that forms the basis of ITP—the spark of the divine in all that is seeking greater expression.

What makes the book unique?

Integral Transformative Practice was created in 1991 by two human potential pioneers in the field of human transformation—George Leonard and Michael Murphy—to explore our vast potential as human beings, with the ultimate goal of creating more peace, love and joy in our own lives, and in our society. Three decades later, Christina Grote and Pamela Kramer present the evolution of ITP to a new audience. *Living an Extraordinary Life* details the evolutionary worldview and practice of ITP and includes a Personal Inventory and Practice Design Workbook with guidance on adapting ITP to suit the reader's lifestyle and interests.

What are the benefits from reading it?

Living an Extraordinary Life provides an inspiring vision for humankind and our evolutionary potential. With an introduction to the philosophy that underlies ITP and a full description of the practice, as well as numerous resources in the book and online, readers can engage with the book to bring balance, harmony and joy into their lives while discovering their own unique gifts. This book is a complete introduction to ITP for newcomers and includes ideas and practices to inspire those already practicing.

Who is the book for?

This book is for anyone seeking a practice that will help them become more balanced and resilient in their lives; anyone who senses there is more to them and to our world than we can see now; people who are hoping to find a worldview that celebrates human potential and takes a long-term view of our evolutionary process. For people who are looking for an open-ended, flexible path to grow and develop that is not tied to any particular established tradition.

"If you have an interest in integrating body, mind, heart, and soul and thereby reaching your full potential, this is the book for you. *Living an Extraordinary Life* presents a philosophy and practice that could be truly life-changing."

—Emanuel Kuntzelman, social entrepreneur, philanthropist, writer and philosopher

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Christina Grote is the board chair of ITP International and has been a practitioner of Integral Transformative Practice since 2003. She is a licensed massage therapist and her interest in natural healing led her to explore ITP and include it in her work. She founded ITP Columbus in 2004, which continued on for many years. She has designed and taught ITP workshops and planned numerous conferences with longtime friend, collaborator, and ITPI president Pamela Kramer. Christina lives in Columbus, Ohio, with her husband Jim.



Pamela Kramer is President of ITP International, a nonprofit organization that stewards ITP and the work of its founders, George Leonard and Michael Murphy. Pam is an ITP Mastery teacher, is on the faculty of Esalen Institute, and presents workshops at venues in the US and abroad. She is engaged in training ITP teachers, forming ITP groups and bringing integral principles and practices to the workplace. Pam is an executive coach and consults with organizations and their leaders in the San Francisco Bay Area.

“I can think of a hundred, a thousand, texts and traditions that explain why we should not develop our supernormal powers and fuller human nature—powers and natures that appear every day all around us, screaming, crying for our attention. I can think of very few texts and traditions that explain why we should pay attention and act on that attention through community, intention, imagination, and responsibility. This book is one of them. Christina Grote and Pam Kramer are our teachers of the human as the superhuman. They lay out in these pages not just why we should do this (because we already are it), but how we can do it.”

—Jeffrey J. Kripal, author of *The Superhumanities: Historical Precedents, Moral Objections, New Realities*

Further Praise for *LIVING AN EXTRAORDINARY LIFE*

“Outstanding. Providing humanity with an evolving curriculum for the development of who we can be and who we will be—this is the impactful and realized goal of *Living an Extraordinary Life*. In a phenomenal translation, transformation, and extension of the already transformative work of mystics worldwide, this is a book/workbook/playbook from which we can teach—and learn—about our own magnificent superpowers and how to live within and with others in harmony. It’s a world-saver.”

—**Julia Mossbridge, MA, PhD, affiliate professor, Department of Physics and Biophysics, University of San Diego; cofounder of TILT: The Institute for Love and Time**

“If Knowledge brings Power, then Practice brings Wisdom. In this masterful book, authors Christina Grote and Pamela Kramer offer an integrated path through both deep inquiry and integrated personal practice, so that we can joyfully enjoy the journey toward limitless wholeness—for ourselves, and for society.”

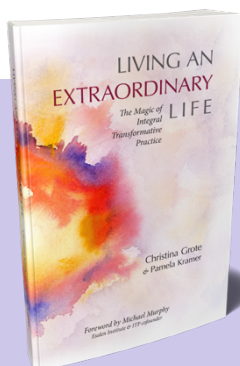
—**Dr. Shamini Jain, PhD, author of *Healing Ourselves: Biofield Science and the Future of Health*; founder and CEO, Consciousness and Healing Initiative**

“The book gently guides you through the process of integrating your body, mind, heart, and soul which makes reading an experiential activity. You feel your body sensations, listen to your mental constructs, sense your feelings, and hear the call of your spirit. In this way the words jump off the page to form a living path toward transformation.”

—**Charlotte Hatch, ITP teacher and practitioner**

“This book could only have been written by individuals who have had personal long-standing experience of the practices involved and have themselves witnessed its evolution. They well describe how the vision of its two founders—George Leonard and Michael Murphy, who were driving forces in the rise of the human potential movement in the 1960s—created a method that would effectively activate those potentials in the time to come.”

—**Adam Crabtree, author of *Evolutionary Love and the Ravages of Greed***



Publication Date: February 13th, 2023

Publisher: ITP International Press

Price: \$22.50

ISBN: 979-8987491706

Contact: ITP International, 888-366-9213, LAELbook@gmail.com

itp-international.org/laelbook

What is the Magic of Integral Transformative Practice?

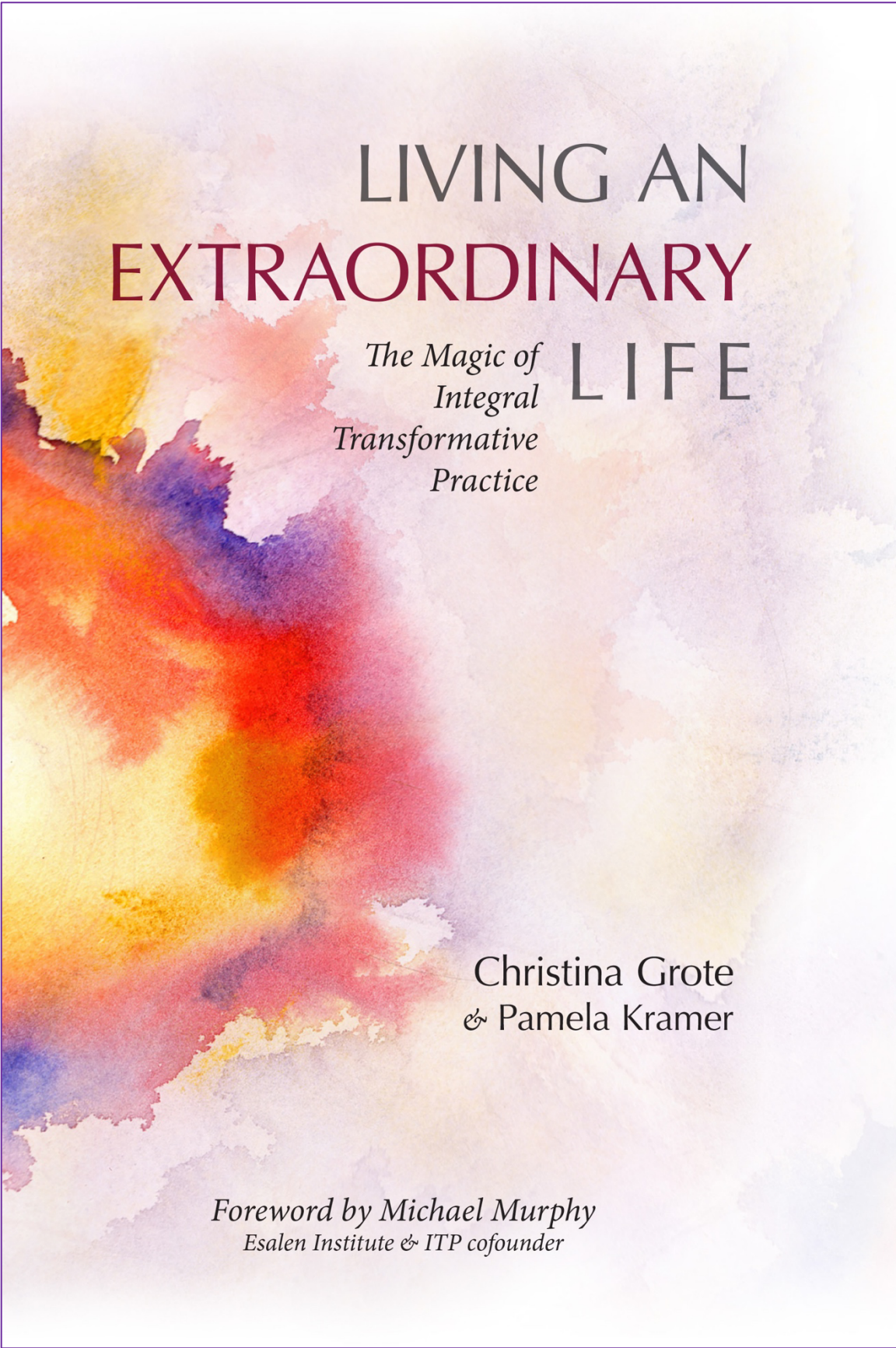
ITP is a life-giving practice that works through us and beyond us—supporting humankind in its evolution toward a more peaceful, loving, and joyful condition, and helping us to be better stewards of all of life. As we connect more deeply with ourselves, each other, and the cosmos, we may come to experience the cosmic interconnection that unites us, awakening to a greater expression of human possibility.



“Christina Grote and Pam Kramer present a masterful exposition of ITP, Integral Transformative Practice, Michael Murphy and George Leonard’s inspired brainchild for an embodied, conscious exploration of the connection between mind, body, and spirit. Grote and Kramer lay out the nuts and bolts of this practice in a wonderfully clear map, grounded in a deep study of this practice, one that is friendly for the neophyte as well as the well-traveled practitioner.”

—Loriliai Biernacki, professor, Department of Religious Studies, University of Colorado at Boulder

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LIVING AN EXTRAORDINARY

*The Magic of
Integral
Transformative
Practice* LIFE

Christina Grote
& Pamela Kramer

*Foreword by Michael Murphy
Esalen Institute & ITP cofounder*

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Foreword

If, borrowing from Buddhist language, we view the Integral Transformative Practice (ITP) described in this book as a Dharma-stream, we could say it flows from many sources. George Leonard (who first proposed that we create ITP) and I, then, can be said to stand at the headwaters. (George liked to say my book *The Future of the Body* and his book *Mastery* would be our primary texts). But if that is the case, the headwaters itself includes many sources, among them contemplative texts East and West; shamanism studies; evolutionary theory; Western philosophy; meditation research; transpersonal psychology; and much else. And since ITP's founding thirty years ago, even more streams have flowed into its program. New practices have been added. New methods have been tried. Evolutionary love proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce and Adam Crabtree, as well as conceptual delineations of our basic philosophy, have been given more prominence. We continue to foster our fertile relationship with Esalen Institute. And we have initiated studies with Stanford researchers on psychological attributes conducive to spiritual experience.

ITP, in short, is still evolving. From our very beginnings we hoped that would be the case. During our first two years, for example, we conducted studies of its efficacy in hopes that we could improve it, and we have in various ways explored its strengths and weaknesses ever since. Though we draw upon practices that have stood the test of time, ITP does not model itself directly on disciplines and doctrines of the

past. We incorporate promising new insights and practices even if they seem unconventional or contrary to the religious, intellectual, and cultural worlds from which they came.

We embrace this complexity because we aim to help further our world's many-sided actualization of its hidden divinity, and also because it is *practical*. Countless studies of transformative practice have shown that the simultaneous embrace of body and mind enhances programs for human growth. And because the world today possesses more knowledge than ever before about human transformative capacities, we sometimes draw upon insights and methods that were beyond the reach of our predecessors.

This is the first book that provides a comprehensive overview of our past, present, and future activities and it gives the fullest account yet of experiments ITP has made to foster supernormal functioning. Christina Grote, this book's primary author, has been the faithful and very generous chair of ITP International, the organization that fosters ITP in America and abroad. In this she has been assisted by Pam Kramer, ITP International's president, who has been the organization's creative and enterprising leader since its inception. I am grateful and deeply impressed by the two of them and by their many accomplishments. I recommend their book to both long-standing ITP practitioners and beginners.

Michael Murphy
Mill Valley, California, December 2021



Introduction

*Whatever your age, your upbringing, or your education,
what you are made of is mostly unused potential.*

—GEORGE LEONARD, *MASTERY*

Have you ever sensed that there is more to you than you are able to express? That there are wider horizons for you to explore but you don't quite know how to begin? Have you felt an urge pressing in on you, a calling to become more fully who you know yourself to be, or perhaps a longing for a deeper connection with others and the universe? The urge for transformation can show up in our lives in many ways, sometimes as a persistent feeling of dissatisfaction, a quiet—or not so quiet—voice inside of us that prompts us to grow and change as we work toward what we sense we could be, even though we may not know what that is. We may feel a yearning that we cannot name. We just know there is more, not just for our own lives but for our society as well.

This book is about the more—the vast potential that exists in you and in all of us, natural human capacities waiting to be explored and developed if we choose to. Every one of our natural attributes, or abilities—for example, the capacity to perceive, to move, to communicate, and to love—is capable of positive transformation. The seeds of your potentials exist in you here and now; that is why you might be feeling them stirring inside you, pressing to be known. In this book, we offer

a vision and practice to guide you as you explore your own natural capacities and activate your potential for a deeper, richer life.

Before the rise of the human potential movement there wasn't much talk of humankind's greater possibilities. But in the 1960s something new was emerging in Western culture, and George Leonard and Michael Murphy were at the forefront of this movement. In 1992, after decades of research and experience with human transformation, Leonard and Murphy, with fellow teachers Annie Styron Leonard and Eric Riswold, launched an experimental program. Integral Transformative Practice, or ITP, was designed to explore a grand possibility—whether or not ordinary people are capable of transformations, both ordinary and extraordinary, in body, mind, heart, and soul. The program they created consists of nine core practice intentions (formerly referred to as commitments). These practice intentions are meant to engage and develop the whole human being, physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. They wrote about the results of the experiment, and the worldview that gave rise to it, in *The Life We Are Given*, first published in 1995. ITP provides a balanced structure, or framework, with which to live your life, a practical path of development and a foundation for the exploration of the extraordinary. ITP has a structure, but there is freedom in the form. You choose how to incorporate the practice into your life!

ITP is comprised of four legs, or branches: Practice, Theory, Research, and Community Support.

- The **practice** itself is comprised of nine elements that address the development and integration of body, mind, heart, and soul.
- The **theory** refers to the philosophical worldview and evolutionary vision that informs and underlies this approach to human transformation.
- As an evolving practice, ITP greatly values **research** and supports ongoing scientific exploration of the benefits and outcomes of the practice.
- **Community support** is key for creating and sustaining positive transformation. ITP International fosters numerous opportunities to

practice in community in person and online such as practice groups, a variety of programs and workshops, as well as regular newsletters.

A Practice for Our Time

Integral Transformative Practice holds a positive vision for humankind. With this hopeful vision comes a practice for living—balanced and resilient—in our times, a path that develops and integrates our many-sided nature, pointing us toward the realization of our greater capacities. Based on a foundation of love, ITP can assist us as we move forward into a greater life. The worldview of ITP draws from the wisdom traditions of the past as well as knowledge gained from scientific discoveries and inner research of the human psyche. This worldview offers a greater context for our lives, one of exploration and adventure. Humankind is seen as part of a universal evolutionary unfolding, and we each play our unique part in that unfolding. We can experience the joy of being fully ourselves and fully connected to the cosmic movement of which we are an integral part. Who we are and what we do matters!

Why This Book?

After two decades of involvement, both as practitioners of ITP and as leaders of ITP International, the nonprofit that emerged in 2005 to steward the practice, we, the authors, have become increasingly convinced of its value. ITP has evolved since its inception and we want to share the practice with you as it is today. In the midst of life's joys and sorrows, ITP has provided us with needed balance and a platform for continued growth regardless of circumstances. This, combined with a worldview that embraces the magic and mystery, and the awe and wonder of life, continually inspires us. The focus on evolutionary love, which you will learn about later on, reminds us to see all people in the

light of their fullest potentials despite our differences, and to see events as the unfolding of possibilities for future growth.

We'd like to share a little about our backgrounds and why we decided to write this book. Each of us will speak in her own words.

Christina Grote:

I grew up in Mill Valley, California, where Leonard and Murphy convened the first ITP group. Deeply connected to the natural world, I explored the outdoors and dreamed of becoming an Egyptologist. However, my explorations took a different path. In the 1970s, I traveled for several years in Europe, Afghanistan, and eventually to India where I encountered Tibetan Buddhism. Returning to the US, I became a wife and mother, practiced a variety of healing arts, played the washboard and sang in a bluegrass band, and created two large public art pieces that sit in metro parks in Columbus, Ohio, where I now live.

After two earlier encounters with ITP, in 2003 I became interested in starting an integral center. I contacted George Leonard to discuss my ideas and that fall, my husband Jim and I experienced our first ITP workshop at Esalen. In the winter of 2004, I started an ITP group in Columbus, and when ITP International was formed in 2005, Leonard asked me to be the board chair.

I am inspired and encouraged by the world-embracing philosophy at the heart of ITP, and sharing this philosophy was a major motivation to write this book. Murphy's research into the frontier of human potential and Leonard's conviction that, for all intents and purposes, human potential is limitless, gave me the confidence to begin to explore my own slumbering abilities. ITP is a living practice and has evolved in the thirty years since its inception, and with this book I hope to bring our work to a wider audience. Witnessing the positive changes that ITP has facilitated in people's lives as they open to their greater possibilities fuels my desire, expressed through this book, to make this practice accessible and available to everyone.

Pamela Kramer:

Since I was a little girl growing up in the Midwest, I have felt there was something more, and have spent the better part of my life as an explorer. My love of learning and desire for discovery took me places—to become a teacher, counselor, yoga instructor, organizational consultant, integral trainer, and nonprofit leader.

I attended my first ITP session in 2000 and was hooked. By 2002, I was an enthusiastic practitioner and began noticing positive changes in my whole being. I began to lead programs, organize community events, and later had the honor to teach ITP workshops at Esalen Institute and other venues. I joined the ITP International board in 2004 and accepted the role of president in 2007. My path has unfolded from there until this day.

Over the twenty years that I have studied, practiced, and taught ITP, I've been continually struck by its vastness and depth, as well as its possibilities for human awakening and development. I've witnessed how this practice changes lives for the better, and have heard countless stories from fellow practitioners about the ripple effects of their practice into their family lives, places of work, and communities. The potency of this practice in helping transform lives—specifically my own—inspires me to share the discoveries in this book. For those intrigued about the positive evolution of human potential and a transformative practice to realize your gifts and untapped capacities, welcome to the adventure of ITP!

What to Expect

In this book you will learn about the vision and practice of ITP, your many-sided nature, and your vast human potential. We will guide you in exploring your own unique genius and your extraordinary nature. We will share practical ways to stay grounded and resilient in your daily life, to better process energy coming to you in all forms—joyful as well as stressful—and to write a new story for yourself and who you would like to become. We will explore conditions for awakening our

hidden (and maybe not so hidden) talents through grounded practice, learn how scientific research validates the reality of our latent capacities, and celebrate the power of unconditional love in community with each other and the natural world.

Whether you are curious, just starting out, or a long-time practitioner, our aim is to provide you with the guidance and inspiration to engage with ITP in whatever way suits your life best at this moment and into the future. We provide a comprehensive introduction to the nine ITP core practice intentions and include numerous exercises and reflection questions so you may engage with the book as a participant, rather than simply as a reader.

The book is comprised of four parts. Part 1, Vision, will introduce you to the vision and foundations of ITP and unpack the name, as each word contains multitudes—Integral, Transformative, and Practice. We will discuss what we mean by body, mind, heart, and soul, and will introduce the evolutionary vision that guides the practice—a vision of the vast untapped potential that exists in all of us. You will also find reflection questions where we suggest you pause and consider what you have read as it relates to your own understanding before you move on.

Part 2, Practice, leads you into the exploration of the nine ITP core practice intentions which form the framework of the practice and serve as a launchpad for personal transformation. Each will be described in detail. The aim here is for you to learn how the practice is put together and then, if you choose, to experiment with and shape the pieces to your liking to create a practice that works for you and your lifestyle. In the last chapter of this section, we offer a flexible roadmap and suggestions for designing your own practice and tools for keeping it fresh and alive.

Part 3, The Further Reaches, ventures further into the exploration of the extraordinary human potentials that exist in all of us and offers ways to orient yourself and your practice toward developing your own extraordinary nature. We delve more deeply into the big vision upon which ITP was founded—a perspective that places our developing human capacities in an evolutionary context. We will explore the world-shaping capacity of the imagination, and in the last chapter we offer a beginning foray into the evolutionary edges of ITP, a practice we are calling ITPx.

In the last part of the book, Personal Practice Resources, we provide a variety of resources, such as the Personal Inventory and Practice Design Workbook where we offer questions about your current relationship with your body, mind, heart, and soul that can help you tune in to how you might pursue greater balance and greater growth. This inquiry will bring important learnings, a touchstone for you to refer to as you progress through the book. If you are ready, complete the Personal Inventory before proceeding to part 2. If not, you can complete it when it feels right.

In this section you will also find resources for the ITP Kata (a mind-body practice), including detailed descriptions and images of the movements, as well as information on Leonard Energy Training with two in-depth exercises. Lastly, there is information on the authors and ITP International.

As you read through what follows, notice how your body, mind, heart, and soul respond. We suggest that you keep a journal to record your reflections as there will be opportunities to pause and reflect. Take it at your own pace. You may wish to read through the text and skip the reflection questions and exercises and come back to them later. Or you may wish to engage with those opportunities as they are presented. It's up to you.

We believe that ITP has great value not only for those who engage with it but for society as well. Balanced, healthy people with a positive vision for their own lives, as well as a dedication to service, bring great benefit not only to themselves but also to their families, their communities, and our planet. With this book we hope to bring ITP to a new audience and to re-energize those of you who are already practicing by offering a simple roadmap for both ordinary and extraordinary transformations in your lives. In the chapters ahead you will find the tools you need to create and sustain a practice of your own, providing a foundation that will nourish your dreams. Our existence is far stranger and more magical than we may realize. The door is open. We invite you to walk through that door and join us on the ultimate adventure.

Where to Purchase *Living an Extraordinary Life*

You can buy copies at many online retailers, including:

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Publication Date: February 13th, 2023

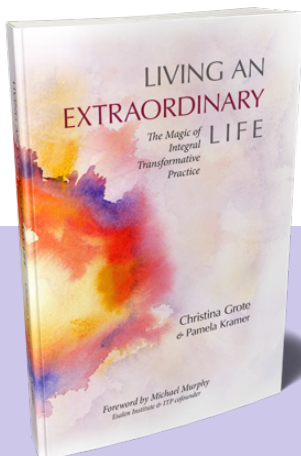
Publisher: ITP International Press

Price: \$22.50

ISBN: 979-8987491706

Contact: ITP International, 888-366-9213, LAELbook@gmail.com

itp-international.org/laelbook



“Expect nothing. Be ready for anything.”

—George Leonard, ITP cofounder