



(opening intro music begins)

Intro Text: Welcome to the spiritual intelligence podcast, Awakening your inner power with Daniel Martinez Stahl, where we will explore, discover and integrate different aspects of our spiritual and human nature, so that we can all thrive and live life with more grace and ease, instead of struggle.

(intro music fades away)

**(SQP-Ep.006 ~ Connecting With Truth ~ w. Michael McDonald)**

Editor Note: Minor edits have been made from the original audio recording for easier reading.

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Daniel: Welcome to the Spiritual Intelligence Podcast once again, today I am with Michael McDonald. Michael McDonald is a friend of mine, also from the Three Principles community, however he has been exploring and expanding his own journey through energetic healing, which is the reason that I was really interested in bringing him on board to these conversations. Because we've been having a lot of conversations around the Three Principles or are Three Principles based, and I am going to be including other members as well that are not Three Principles based, Michael is one of those people that plays in both camps, so I wanted to have that conversation with him and get his thoughts on how they relate, and how they support each other, and also how they contradict each other. Because, in my own experience playing in the spiritual world and playing in the world of Three Principles, there's some areas where some people might believe that there's conflicts, and I see them as collaborative or supporting each other, as opposed to conflicting, but there could be that perception. So that is the reason that I wanted to bring Michael McDonald into the conversation this early on in the podcast. But I will let him introduce himself. So, Michael if you can talk a little bit about you and then we can go from there.

Michael: So rare that I'm actually talking about myself. So, I'm Michael McDonald. I'm a Transformational Coach; been coaching professionally for maybe 10 years; have done a wide variety of transformational work. I was actually originally a software developer, so I came originally from a world of being very left-brained, very methodical, organized, detail-oriented, able to figure it out and having to dot all the I's and cross all the T's. And as a human, gradually realizing that I was unsatisfied with my life and then really dove into more and more personal development, so much that I started to love supporting other people and became a coach along the way. And now, I've continued to explore different branches of work. So I've been in the Three Principles for maybe six years. I've been in energy healing training for about the same amount of time, in parallel with Three Principles. I do Byron Katie's school for the work, lots of ontological coaching, lots of business coaching, action coaching, focus on habits, like everything from the practical to the past-life, to just recognizing being present in the moment and the magic of what's possible there. I'm always fascinated to see which direction I will go in any given moment when I'm working with someone.

Daniel: Oh, that's great. That's great. So, as a starting question, what would you say to the idea that we have inner power? What does that mean to you?

Michael: Inner power. I don't use the word "power" much. Yeah, so if I heard that I would go like, "Hm? What do you mean by power?" (Daniel begins to laugh and then Michael begins) Um, but I'll lead to something tangential, which feels important and inner. (both begin laughing again)

Daniel: Within your integrity. (between laughter)

Michael: I am a really huge fan of wisdom, inner wisdom, inner genius, inner guidance, inner knowing. That sense of, (pause) like there's something — to use the word powerful — there's something even more powerful than me trying to figure something out; using my computer programmer developed brain, in order to try to anticipate what's going to happen and create a plan, or make sure that something is going to work, or figure out what's the right way to do something.

There's something more powerful — it's kind of inside — that I can, when I let go of trying to figure something out, that starts to come to the fore more. Like when I stop trying to figure things out, I know what to do. The more that I try to figure something out, the more stressed out I get, the more effort I put into it, and the less creative I become. And, yeah, especially for the most important things in my life, like, I tend to overthink them. Until I stop overthinking them and then I know what to do, and cool things start happening when I follow this inner wisdom.

So, especially through Three Principles and to a degree through the energetic work as well. They both point in this direction, that there is — if you get you out of the way, if you get like, the thinking out of the way, the personal thinking, there's an intelligence there that you can follow, And I've been reaping the rewards of doing that more and more in my life, especially over the last couple years.

So not sure if that is what you meant by inner power, but it's an intentionally open question I believe. (both begin laughing)

Daniel: (in a joking tone as he continues laughing) No, that's wrong Michael. That's wrong, that's not what I meant at all.

Michael: God damn! (jokingly and both continue laughing) Quick, let me try it again, maybe I can figure out the right answer. (laughing continues)

Daniel: What I wanted to say, that I thought of as you were describing that, is the — anyway. I lost it, it'll come back. (pause) The idea that we have, about where our experience comes from, tends to have an influence on how we experience life. And as you were speaking, and I forgot the phrase that

you said but you said something that made me think about how — when I, and I use the terms my human experience versus my spiritual experience, and when I am caught up in my human experience, in my thoughts, in the content of my thinking, in the experience that I'm feeling, it's harder for me to allow and to recognize that there's more to life than what I'm perceiving. (Michael: hm)

So, the idea of waking up to the fact that there's more to my life than that external experience that I'm living in the moment, but I'm believing to be real in the moment, opens me up and aligns me more with the energy of life, with my higher self, with however-you want-to-speak-about-it. (Michael: hm) And that's what I thought about as you were finishing off your description.

Michael: Yeah, one of my favorite metaphors, that I pretty much end up using with all my clients, is the ladder of consciousness. I sort of adapted this from Steve Chandler, who adapted it from Colin Wilson, maybe some other teachers. Everyone seems to have some similar thing for, "Here are the levels of consciousness." But, one way I think of it is, at lower levels of consciousness and it's — like the more caught up in our personal, habitual thinking, the more caught up in our very fixed-thing-like ideas about who we are, and the ways that the world is, and what's right and what's wrong. Like, that's the stuff that weighs us down and brings us further down the ladder.

And we can recognize the experience, like further down the ladder it's, it's more dramatic. It's more like Shakespearean drama, it's dark, it's serious, it's urgent and it's you versus the world. Like you are absolutely right and your perspective is absolutely right, and that is wrong. So there's like, even more protective and when you are most intent on fixing something, and "Oh my God, this needs to be changed, right now!!!" and "I have to do this!!!" is when we are least creative and have the least perspective, and we're most likely to regret taking any sort of action from that place.

Daniel: (sarcastically) That's the best place, the best place to be. (chuckles)

Michael: Yeah, and, like a lot of my work has been, um, compassion and reflection, recognition of what it's like when you're caught up, like, what it's like when you're down the ladder. People higher up the ladder don't really need as much help. But I have a lot of compassion because when someone's there, like whatever level of the ladder that you're at, it feels completely true. Like the experience is **real**, wherever you're at. If you have a fight in your relationship and you're thinking, "Oh my God, it's over, this is unresolvable, this is it." Acknowledging that the experience of that is so vivid, and the chemicals are running through the body, and the tension, and you're suddenly conveniently remembering all of the stories and memories and views that support this particular dark view.



And there's a lot of — you get more righteous when you're further down the ladder, like you're very right, and there's this strong urge to fight and to fix further down the ladder. So, compassion for like, "Yes, the experience is real," but the more you have experience of actually watching yourself, at different levels of the ladder — cuz we naturally bounce back and forth — it's really really helpful to remember that when you're down there, yes the experience is real, but it's not a true reflection of the world. It's not wisdom talking to you. It's when you're just really caught up in the horror movie playing on repeat in your head.

Daniel: So, before we go any further, can you go over what you share with your clients about the ladder? Because you referenced it, but you didn't really share what you say.

Michael: One way to describe the ladder, it varies, but some of the spiel I've already given, at each level of the ladder, and I don't really have like specific names, it's not a specific sequence. But at each level, like that's what seems true, like what you believe creates your reality at that level of the ladder. Towards the bottom, it's like just victim psychology, the world is against me, the world is pushing me down. A little bit further up, maybe you can push back, maybe you can strive to get a little bit better, but it's like life is a struggle. Maybe somewhere in the middle, it's more just problems to be solved, like, "Okay, there's this, so I'm going to go fix this," it's a little bit more rational, just fixing things. Above that there is, life is a challenge, life is a learning opportunity, like every single thing is an opportunity to grow. But there's things like higher and higher perspectives where you are, you're actually seeing more, you're taking more into account. You're holding on to your thinking less tightly, so you also take in more perspectives. There's more openness to new ideas, new thought, creativity. Towards the top is where things just sort of miraculously, magically happen. You kind of just want something and you just sort of start playing in that direction — sometimes you work hard and sometimes you don't — and it's like you get really lucky, and there's lots of synchronicities higher up on the ladder.

And, one of the qualities of the ladder is, it's fairly easy to look down the ladder. Like, if you were really triggered an hour ago, you can look back, it's like "yup, I was just really in a state; sorry, sorry for any damage; yeah like that just wasn't good." But, it's difficult to look up the ladder, which includes when you're triggered — even includes like wherever you're at as a norm in your life — it's hard to conceive of what the next higher level of consciousness might be like.

One of the things I like about using this as a metaphor is both the compassion that it gives people, like they recognize that they're caught up. Often with clients who usually have a lot of thinking they at least — this at least helps them become less reactive, if they get really angry, if they get really afraid,

they'll at least have the wisdom when they're down the ladder to not act on their feelings, to not believe what they're thinking. To hold their thinking a little bit more lightly, even though they're in a very vivid experience.

And, it helps them, like knowing that there's a ladder, they can start to get curious about what might be higher up. Like just the idea that, "Wherever you're at, there's more above you as well," and that curiosity actually has people looking, in a bit more like pattern recognition of what it's like to be identifying with your thinking. What it's like to be holding a certain view of reality as if that's it. There's more "what if" and there's more not knowing, (Daniel: hm) and there's more surrender, and like that good feeling as you go up the ladder.

Daniel: Yeah, and I find that it also gives people a reminder when they, like you were saying, when they get caught up, the fact that they know that there's a ladder, they got prompted as a reminder, "Hey you're, you're on the ladder." (both begin laughing)

Michael: Yeah, like, "Where are you on the ladder right now?" It's like, "Oh, yeaahhh." (chuckles)

Daniel: What, if you can, can you share a little bit about your energy work, your energy healing work?

Michael: It's been fascinating because I recognized, in terms of energy healing work, I'm a really strong intuitive for what to do. I don't have a lot of tracking. I've got a lot of friends who were like "there's this happening in your body right now, it's coming from this past life and this pattern, this pattern because these things happened, and this is how it's playing out in — like as they call it, it starts moving. It's like, "Oh my God, I didn't even know it was there," and then you see it.

In a way, I went into the energy healing work because I wanted even more super powers. (Daniel begins laughing) Like whatever additional ways I could be helping people, and like I had done stuff where sometimes just laying my hand on someone or just intuitively placing some pressure. Or the energetic quality of how I'm being, how I'm holding space for someone and having the experience of, I could do like tiny little shifts in my intention, like I could bring a little bit more heart into an interaction, where I don't even know what that means, but someone across from me would be like, "Oh my God, that's like, everything's just changed!"

So I became really curious about that. I became really curious about subtle energy, this whole territory where we can't see clearly, it's not distinct, it's not even, it's not easily defined, and there's a lot of power. Like it's territory where like all sorts of things are happening, all things, all sorts of things

are possible. Like long distance healing, spontaneous healing, some people just seem to be so much more energetically resilient and other people tend to just be energetically disturbed by anything and everything.

And, it's things that are, and I'm kind of wondering whether I would classify this as a subset of psychology or something separate than psychology, cuz it's still form, it's still the content of experience. Like Thought, as we would talk about it. So, I've explored that work in parallel with Three Principles and it's been fascinating because they both point at each other and there's certain aspects where they agree, and sometimes one side actually feels more like an embodied version of it, than the other side. And there's also things where they'll point towards the other side, some of the conclusions and practice over there and say just, "don't do that thing, that's bad." Like in Three Principles I hear a lot, "Don't go into the past, don't go digging up stuff, cuz you'll just create it more," in their experience. And then in the energetic healing, there's still a lot of influence from early psychology where, "Make sure you go into the past, make sure you go up, and go in, and dig up and experience all that stuff in order to heal." That's like the biggest conflict between the two.

Daniel: There's something I'd like to add to this because that's part of where — that's part of my own development and my own journey has given me insights around some of that. So, and I'd be curious to see if you agree with my theories, cuz these are just my theories. (both begin laughing lightly) So, one of the things that I started exploring in my early years of looking in the direction of the Principles was the models that we use inside our unconscious to create our responses to things, and they're thought based. But we — that's just the way that, again, the way that we interact with life; we create references so that when we see something, we respond a certain way because of our patterns, because of our beliefs, because of a number of different things. So, we have all of these models that we create, that then result in unconscious responses to things, which drives a lot of how we respond to things without our awareness. Where we just respond to somebody saying something, we go into a state of insecurity because it reminds us of something that our father told us, or our girlfriend says something that all of a sudden we feel unheard and unimportant, or whatever, because again it references something in our past.

So, I do agree and recognize, and believe, that there's a lot of truth in what's discussed in the Principles about not going into our memories and our past. So the idea of healing my inner child and all of that stuff just, I just don't see the value in that anymore. However, I also see that within these — we have, (pause) we have thoughts that come to us that are out of our control. We've always said that and recognize that in the Three Principles community. That is a part of our experience, that we

have thoughts that come to us that are out of our control.

And a lot of the people that I've spoken to that talk about their patterns, is, "All I can do is wait until I see it more clearly and until then, it's just my pattern." (this last quote was added in post production because the original audio was unrecognizable) Well, if my pattern happens to give me mental distress, why wouldn't I want to do something to help alleviate the frequency or the intensity of that pattern? So that it stops affecting me. I stop getting as many of those patterns prompted. And yes, I recognize that if I understood the Principles deep enough, and if I understood that Thought is everything, deep enough, then none of this would matter. But the reality is that I don't, (both begin to chuckle) I don't see it as clearly as Sydney Banks did.

So, I am going to be affected by things that trigger aspects in my life, and what I found is, especially with my work with past life regression, what we end up doing is we have patterns from our past, and you can go as far back as different lifetimes if you want or just even within our childhood, but we have patterns in our past that have created a reference point, that we have either forgotten the details of the source of that experience, or we aren't familiar with the details of the source of that experience, and so we're creating inferences and associations based on that faulty information. And as a result of that we end up... God, I'm complicating the shit out of this. (both begin laughing) It seems so simple in my mind. I've never actually tried to describe this. (continue laughing) I apologize.

Michael: That's why Syd says, "Don't listen to the words." (both continue laughing)

Daniel: God, It's just so complicated. Anyway, I'll try to simplify. So, there's actually a case study that I'm working on (WHICH I'LL INCLUDE IN THE DESCRIPTION OF THIS EPISODE) that talks to this, where — there was a person that I worked with that had a previous life experience where she felt abandoned and rejected by her family. When she went back to revisit that experience, which led to her death she started recognizing, and her spirit guides also highlighted this specifically, that she sacrificed herself so that her family can survive. She's the one that chose to be left behind so that her family could escape the threat in the situation that was occurring, and because she forgot that in her future lives, she only remembered the abandonment and the resentment, and the fear that she felt.

What she was bringing into her relationships with her parents and her siblings was this influence of resentment and fear, (Michael: hm) and as soon as she got exposed and remembered the full story of the fact that she chose that past life, just as a sacrifice, as a sacrifice out of love. All of a sudden her issues with her current family disappeared. The tension, the emotional strain, the energy that she was approaching her relationships instantly disappeared. (Michael: hm)





So there's an element were going into the past in order to understand the full story and remember the full story seems to have a healing aspect, so that the models that we create in our current life are less muddy, are less cumbersome, are less emotionally dysfunctional, for lack of a better way of saying it. So, God that's — I apologize for the complexity, I hope it makes some sense.

Micheal: Yeah, I was able to follow it to a degree, because I recognize it in — it's one of the signs of — yeah, I start to trust things less as they get more complicated now, just like "that sounds like a lot of thinking or a lot of explaining," but I also like, there's a lot of profound transformation, a lot of profound healing that happens through that work, through that approach. And like, that's the inquiry that I've been in, like bouncing between these worlds, cuz I could recognize and I've experienced, and I've seen and I've done, where people are profoundly transformed by going into the past and by — as if something was there to be released.

One of the ways that I've been able to resolve this is recognizing that whatever was there, like whatever energy has not been moving, energy that's been thing-a-fide into habits or trauma or patterns of psychology, that's — It's made of thoughts, so we're still playing with the Play-Doh within the Three Principles world, it's it still all thought, and, (pause) yeah there's like both like the gift in the risk.

One thing I've recognized through, by looking at different healing modalities, is something in common, independent of whether they go into the past or not, independent of how they work, there is some point where there's an inflection point. There's those discrete moments, where something shifts within someone. Where, like, that's the point where they start crying or they relax or they laugh, or they just have this awestruck, "Oh my God, I never saw it that way before." Like, totally different experiences at different times from using different modalities, but there is a shift that's happening when, when quote unquote, "healing" is happening. I started becoming more and more interested in that. Like, what's that!? Independent of how you got there and independent of what happens after that. (Daniel: hm)

And two of the traps that I've seen in healing modalities, where there's really a focus on "how to do healing," having a proper — having prescriptions like "how to heal, how to heal better." The two traps that I've seen, one is "what did they do in order to get to that point?" For example, like going into the past or this or this or this or like tapping or whatever, and the other trap that I've seen is healing modalities that get fixated on what it looks like just after that shift happens.

I think there's like a lot of stuff in like the late seventies or so, where they're really big on catharsis.



Like if someone is laughing, crying, shaking, it's like "more of that, more of that." Like, whatever has more of that energy moving, that's healing. I saw some unhealthy versions of that where people just took that to an extreme, where they didn't — they had no recognition of whether it was healing or hurting. If someone was emotionally expressing, they just considered that to be good, and it became sort of a power trip. It's sort of like some dark aspects, like some of the dark corners of transformational worlds started taking on that overly simplistic view, of more catharsis means good.

And the trap of, especially going into the past, the more people focus on the story in the past or where something came from, or like the why, or what it was, what it means, how long it's been around, it turns it into more and more of a thing. It turns it, like, it turns it more and more into — it makes it a stronger habit. Rather than releasing it, you start to identify with it and give it more attention, more power. Suddenly something that was just kind of a vaguely uncomfortable memory, that you didn't, weren't quite aware of — people who do healing work a bit too much, past oriented healing work, is like, "Let me find out what that is," and they will go into it and then all the sudden they'll spend a couple of weeks in terrible drama and health issues for something that wasn't really an issue. Like, the power to create additional drama and pain, in the name of healing. Like, I think that's the dark side of going too much into the past.

But that inflection point, I think of it as when someone makes contact with Truth. Like, that's when healing happens, and it happens naturally unless you try to get in the way and think that there's a certain way for it to look. Cuz that's what I noticed between all the different modalities, like if someone had a past trauma, like a lot of the work is actually to get them to realize it's not happening right now. They get more in contact with the truth, like more of their body, more of their awareness gets in contact with, "they are safe right now." But yes they're having the thinking, this imagination, this memory, this experience, all this stuff is happening in the body as a result of that, and in this moment they're safe, they're held and nothing's going on. Nothing's actually hurting them the way that that experience is communicating, and when you get to hold both of those, you get more in contact with reality, and that's when things start releasing. Like, "Oh, that's not real, oh, I'm okay," and sometimes there's a big energy release. My favorite healing reaction, honestly, is just the, like sigh and relax, like "hhhaaaaagh, whooh, wow, it's like I've just been carrying around a house and I got to just put it down." (Daniel: yeah, yeah, yeah) So, that's what I think of when I think of healing now, is that, contact with truth.

Daniel: I like that. (pause) There's a lot of questions that I get in my own mind about all of the different modalities, especially because one of the things that — and I'll speak for myself, though it's also

common within the Three Principles community — but one of the things that I have believed, and still do to some degree is, because the Three Principles are pointing to a fundamental truth of our experience that influences and affects every experience that we have, there's a totality within that that I also find limits me when I come across other approaches and other ideas.

So, I'll use the reference of the inner child once again. Because I understand how the mind works now and I understand where my experience comes from, and I understand the value and strength and power of being present in the moment, that my healing is a recognition of my innate well-being, what happened to me as a kid is irrelevant. You know, my father beat me up when I was seven in the back of a car that was horrendous. So what? And this is something that my mother and I have had conversations about, where she's still like, "Oh my God that was horrible," and I'm like, "Yeah, yeah so it happened, so what, no big deal." I know it's how I'm living my life and how I'm responding to my experience of life is what matters. What happened to me in my childhood doesn't matter, so there's that aspect of it.

Of course, it influenced me and you know it led me to different ideas, beliefs and blah blah blah. But when I understand the bigger picture of things, all of a sudden I recognize the innocence of my father in his actions, I understand the innocence and my interpretation and etcetera, etcetera, etcetera, and it snowballs out into an understanding of forgiveness and acceptance and understanding. So when I hear people talk about, "Oh, you need to do inner child work." I like, roll my eyes and go, "No, you don't, you don't." And so I've been really questioning, and I would love to get your thoughts on this. I've been really questioning this limited view of, "No, inner child work is a waste of time." Because it's so black and white that it's making me question, "is it really?"

I recognize that the idea of having to do inner child work is playing off of an old psychology, which is limited by its misunderstanding of where life comes from and how experience comes from and I recognize that. But there's still a lot of people that have moments of healing when they do child work.

Michael: Yeah...

Daniel: So, it's that kind of balance of, "You're going — you're looking in the wrong direction, but hell if it helps you, then go for it."

Michael: I think part of the crux of this conversation is, I mean we're comparing something with — we're comparing one thing which is amazing and powerful, with something which I think is even more powerful. Like it's not even right and wrong, like this these are both really really good options. It's just

that...

Daniel: Yeah, I just can't, I can't get past the "Yeah, but this one's better." (both begin laughing) I cannot get past that. You know it's — so, it's been really fascinating because a lot of my friends in the spiritual community, you know, they they work on practices, they have their meditation practice, they have their affirmation practice, they have their XYZ practice and all I can think about is, "Wow, all those practices are taking you away from your true self. They're innocently creating more thought content to separate you from your essence of well-being, and so it's just hard because I have this idea and but at the same time I'm saying to myself, "What you think is true, isn't, you don't know."

I don't know. You know, and Sydney Banks and other Mystics have always said that there is no one truth, there is no one way that's right. Sydney would talk about how the description that he gives of the experience of life is an undeniable truth, and I would agree with that. There are facts that we cannot deny. We need to have life force in order to exist, we need to have awareness in order to recognize, we need to have thought in order to interpret. We cannot function or have any experience without any one of those three. Fact.

So, there's this essence of truth that I think is undeniable, but I'm also opening myself up to being less black and white about other approaches. I still think that a lot of them are innocently misguided, and are not as powerful as they could be if they were pointing in the right direction. But there's — that's where they are, that's where the individual is, that's what they're recognizing within their own truth and if doing inner child work is what makes them live a better life, then absolutely, go for it. It's just not what I would do, given what I have learned. But, you know.

Michael: ooh, there's a lot of, (chuckles) a lot of different directions that I want to go, all at the same time right now. (both laughing)

Daniel: All right, go! (both laugh) Get started.

Michael: Um, one of the little things that jumped out is just like, "You can totally deny the truth."  
(Daniel: yes) You totally have the free will to not see the truth, like that's part of the amazingness of this experience.

Daniel: Which happens all the time, I might add.

Michael: (laughing a bit) Yeah. It kind of defines us.

Daniel: The amount of people that I speak to, that I share the understanding of where our experience comes from and they say, "no, (in a gentle dismissive tone) that doesn't make sense to me." I'm like, how can...?, I just don't get it. (Michael: yeah) But that's their choice.

Michael: I noticed, that my own approach to — is split between when I'm learning and studying and trying to figure out, like updating my mental models, versus when I am actually working with someone, in a healing or coaching capacity one-on-one, and especially over the last couple years and I think it just has subsided over the last couple of months. I think I hit an inflection point, a little while ago, but before that I was very much trying to find the right way like, "Is it this or is it this, should I go into the past or shouldn't I?"

I've been influenced by a lot of internal family systems, within the energy healing that I do. So I was using that a lot in my coaching and my healing and wondering, "Should I not do that, should I refuse to do that?" So, there's a lot of figuring it out, trying to find the right way, and trying to resolve the language and the judgments going back and forth between the camps. Now, fortunately when I actually worked with people, I didn't go into that mode. I wasn't like "should I do this or not?" I would just do whatever came to mind.

So, in a way, like I was breaking all the rules of both camps. Like both camps would be completely unhappy with what I was doing. (both laugh) I was going back into the past talking about, like child parts and like bringing in the parent, and like resolving. And I was telling people, while they were deep in a past life that it's just their thinking. I was just like violating the rules on both sides, cuz it's whatever occurred to me to help them. (Daniel: yeah, exactly)

One of the patterns, I think one of the things that I've enjoyed and some of the extra capacity that I've gained by studying so many different things, I get to use whatever methodologies seem to work to help me meet them where they're at. So, sometimes that time management, sometimes that's child parts, sometimes that's the nature of the human experience. And having a variety of modalities helps me, like, make contact.

And, I do notice that some of the most, some of the most powerful healing sessions that I've given, I'll go in and do like energetic work and sometimes I might go into the, like, as if it's the past. But when they have the healing moment and they come up, and they're not identified with parts, they are not identified with thinking, they're present, then it's a really good time to point out "Okay, what you're experiencing now, this is you." They can actually — they have the altitude to see what they were



caught in before was just thought.

So, in a way, it's just a very non-Three-Principles way of doing Three Principles pointing, (Daniel: yeah) and there's other times where — I mean the Three Principles, it doesn't even have a modality, really. (Daniel: no, it's not) But, there's the perspective that they should understand the Three Principles from Three Principles coaching. But there's times, like if I'm doing that and it's like, I'm either not good enough at that or it's just not really meeting them where they're at. So, I can step away from that to see whatever creates more transformation. Whatever — my measure's actually, does it raise them up the ladder? Are they higher up the ladder of consciousness after we work than where we started? Like that's my metric, and sometimes like Three Principles sometimes can shoot people to the top of the ladder, really high up on the ladder, so I do try to look for openings there.

Daniel: Yeah, yeah. (longer pause) So what else came up that you wanted to share?

Michael: There's one more distinction that I would like to share, it's come from my bouncing between subtle energy healing work and the Three Principles understanding of how the human experience works. I think there's a lot of confusion out there between subtle and spiritual.

Daniel: What do you mean?

Michael: Um, (pause) and the language translation is what's helped, I needed to make this distinction because it didn't make sense until I had this. In subtle energy work, they refer to it as spiritual work, like if you are — whether you're healing inner children or whether you're clearing out chakras and moving energy or cutting off entities, like I actually did a fire cleansing earlier this week where we removed entities from someone's back and then later on I was doing a Three Principles coaching session. It's kind of cool they can do both. I no longer consider subtle — I no longer consider any of that to really be spiritual work, per se. I've redefined for myself what spiritual means.

Lots of people define spiritual as religious, lots of people define spiritual as something that they add on top of psychological, it's almost like, okay, taking care of the body, taking care of the beliefs and the psychology, then on top of that we have like, quote unquote, spiritual practices. I orient — I have more of the Three Principles orientation towards Spirit now where, Spirit is that constant, Spirit is that center, Spirit is unconditional, it is the formless intelligence, it's the source, it's in and of everything.

So, spiritual is not something you do; it's not something that you get to; it's not a state, it's very important, cuz I'm really big into Dzogchen and non-dual meditations from practices, but Spirit itself is

not a state; it is a fact. Like Spirit is truth. So, that's like this solid ground at the core of all experience. And subtle, is the territory of, like energetic work, healing work where, yes, there is long distance healing, there's whatever is happening in past-life healing, there's near death experiences, there's instances where cancer magically heals, where trauma magically releases in a moment. Like all that stuff is within, like there's a reality to it.

But I don't consider that to be spiritual. That's within the world of form. It's already formed when there is energy when there's experiences, even like in the really subtle magical things that we can barely tell and we're not sure if we're making it up, we're not sure if it's like, how much of it is placebo and how much of it is subtle energy, whatever that is. (Daniel: hm) But that's within the world of form so that's actually, that's not the same thing as Spirit. Like I had to really separate those because the language overlapped so much.

Daniel: Can I throw you a curveball?

Michael: Sure

Daniel: Spirit and form is the same, is it not? (Michael takes a deep breath) It's a manifestation of the same energy. If spirit is totality and it includes everything, that includes form.

Michael: Yeah, it's like Spirit as non-dual.

Daniel: So, I love the fact that you've got a distinction between them, but my, "concern" I think it's too strong of a word, (Michael chuckles) but the question, the kind of the flag that I pop up, is if you separate the two you're going to create a duality that doesn't exist. (Michael: yeah) That you know is true, cuz you know that both of them are the same energy. So, it's just an invitation to keep that mind of, go back to that, form and formulas are one, it's just a manifestation of energy in different ways.

Michael: Yeah, so I agree. Spirit as non-dual. Spirit as both form and formless. I want to keep the importance of the distinction between spirit and subtle then, so pointing out like, subtle is form, (Daniel: yes) subtle is not formless.

Daniel: Yeah, I can, I can buy into that.

Michael: Yeah, and I think one of the true reasons that people confuse the two, is that they're both things that it's really difficult to perceive. In fact it's impossible to perceive Spirit, but you can — it seems impossible to perceive subtle.



Daniel: Yeah, I think one of the things that I found really helpful in my own journey of identifying these definitions and things, was to recognize that, (pause) — and I'll actually bring in the Three Principles as part of this metaphor, this description. A lot of people in the Three Principles community will speak about the Principles as our human experience, (Michael: hm) and if you listen to Sydney he never says that. He's actually very specific. He says it **is** experience. It isn't our human experience.

When he says that we are born into thought, and I've never actually heard him say this but I heard somebody speak about this the other day, when we are in spirit form as long as we have a sense of awareness we're still going to have thought. So, our spiritual essence is still form, which is pointing to what you're looking — which is pointing in the direction that you're pointing at. Our spiritual essence is form.

Yes, it is made up of the energy of God or Intelligence of Life, or the Allness, or the Oneness, whatever terms you want to use. But as long as we have an identity of our individuality, have it be in spirit form or human form, we're going to have a distinction of awareness, thought, energy of life. (Michael: yeah) And that's something that a lot of people in the Three Principles don't recognize because they are so focused on it being a human description. It is not a human description, it is a description of Life, it is a description of experience, not human experience, we just happened to be part of that subset.

Michael: Yeah, I totally agree.

Daniel: So, that's what I think about when you're talking about form and formless and the relationship between all of these ideas of spirituality, and how they relate. And I don't know how they relate to your experience and your background because I don't have that language. Like the idea of subtle isn't a term that I have come across or even use. But the idea of recognizing the distinction between form and formless and that we are still form when we are in a formless state. It's just a different element of form it's a different structure of energy, but it is still a form. We are still separate, we are still individual, we are still a soul, as opposed to Oneness.

And what I heard someone say the other day which I actually liked a lot and I mentioned it in a recent podcast as well was, all of the ideas that we talked about it and listen to have it be our higher self, our guides, our council, all of these people that or the souls that oversee the Akashic records, the Akashic records themselves, all of these terms that people talk about, they are all Energy of Life. Going back to that, they are all One, and that's something that's hard for us, within our human experience to

understand and to accept, and to even comprehend. That Oneness is a totality that you and I are the same, you and I are the same energy, our spirit guides that help us are the same energy, our counsel, our council of advisors are the same energy, we are all the same energy. It's just a reminder of that Oneness.

And now I think that part of our, my — again this is just my idea but part of our spiritual development is a journey of reconnecting with our essence of that Oneness, through a deeper understanding of ourselves. (Michael: hm) So we're — if we think about — you know, I love the idea, it just boggles the mind, I love the idea of the fact that we are the spark of our higher self, as a spark of our higher self, our higher self is a spark of Source, and how far up that ladder that goes, I have no idea. (both begin chuckling) But...

Michael: It's both really far and right here (the latter said almost as a whisper)

Daniel: Right? How far up that ladder goes I have no idea. But, to even think about the fact that, if our individual souls are sparks of Source, and I've heard time and time again from different people that there are multiple Sources, we happen to be within one Source so we're within the the sparks of one Source. God or the Energy of Life is beyond that Source, that source is another spark of something higher, so every time that we go higher and higher.

It's just incredible to even think about, but what's fascinating to me is that we're at the end of that, and I heard — in one of the books written by Abraham-Hicks, there's a reference to that — that we are at the front lines, we're at the forefront of experience, of expansion. We are the end. We don't have little sparks that we've created, at least not that I know of, so we are we...

Micheal: Yeah, I think they are called children.

Daniel: (both chuckle) Yeah, exactly. We are literally at the the edges of exploration and of expansion, and of experience. (Michael: hm) That is the gift that we are living within, which is just incredible to even think about, and even try to understand.

Michael: I don't think of it as — I have a lot less hierarchy (begins to laugh) in my thinking (both laugh together). There's sort of like the end point, and there's the all. And I love the, like the ocean metaphor, which most people use. Just the beauty of getting to be the wave, getting to see the ocean, getting to see that it's of the ocean, getting to recognize itself in another wave, like that namaste experience between two waves.

Daniel: Yeah, yeah. I love that metaphor as well and the drop in the ocean, similar idea, yeah. So, I'm recognizing that our time is approaching the end, so I'd like to open up the opportunity for you to share anything that you would like, have it be something that we've spoken about or something completely different but, the floor is yours.

Michael: Yeah, one more bit of advice. Don't take metaphors literally. I think so much trouble is caused — cuz we use metaphors to describe Spirit, we use metaphors to describe the subtle, we use metaphors to describe ourselves and other people. Which is awesome, we have to do that. Like, that's how we organize our experience. That's how we're able to, really, simplify enough to operate in the world.

But never forget that they're metaphors. Never forget that it's a finger pointing at something that is dynamic and infinite and indescribable, and not really separate, even though it also seemed separate at the same time. So, allow there to be wonder, even with the most seemingly mundane things and you'll have a more honest experience of reality. Yeah.

Daniel: Beautiful. Really lovely, really lovely words. So, if somebody wanted to get in touch with you Michael, what's the best way for them to do so, and of course I'll have your details in the description of the episode.

Michael: Best ways are, I have a website which is [AuthenticIntegrity.com](http://AuthenticIntegrity.com) and you're free to email me at [Michael@AuthenticIntegrity.com](mailto:Michael@AuthenticIntegrity.com) for questions, conversations, shares, what did you see, what massively triggered you about this conversation...

Daniel: (begins laughing) What you hated?

Michael: What has you, what's really — what's the thing that was so confusing that it's painful to think about.

Daniel: "When Daniel was speaking." (both laughing)

Michael: Could have been either of us, in this conversation. It's like, (making sounds referring to doubt) "did he just say that?"

Daniel: That thing in the middle, yeah, unbelievable.





Michael: Yeah, so I would just love to continue this conversation with individual souls.

Daniel: Beautiful, beautiful. Well, Michael, thank you again for everything that you shared. As always, a pleasure and an honor to be in your company and I look forward to doing this again in the future.

Michael: Thank you, it's been a pleasure

Daniel: Take care, bye-bye

Michael: Bye

(closing outro music begins)

Closing text: Thank you for listening. Hopefully, you've heard something new that invites you to reflect, to go within, and deepen your own understanding of life, and of our universal experience. If you enjoyed this conversation, please follow the podcast series on your favorite listening app, and share this episode with others that you feel would enjoy it as well. Until next time, may we all soar with inspiration, explore with passion and live with love. ❤️❤️❤️

(outro music fades away)

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For more information about the episode and Michael McDonald:

<https://www.sqpodcast.com/ep006-michael-mcdonald>

Life  Beyond Form



Daniel Martinez Stahl works with people who want to thrive in this life, with the willingness and courage to question conventional ideas and a desire to look within to access the power of their infinite potential. People who are driven to improve their life by exploring what it means to be both spirit and human; who have a curiosity about life itself, of how the mind works and about the relationship between their body, mind and spirit. Fundamentally, someone who is committed to change their life to a new normal by aligning with their higher self, innate well-being and inner wisdom.