ASK ALTHEA

MIND CONTROL

The Self-Guided Journey

THE GUIDEBOOK



FREE · AT YOUR OWN PACE

The Guidebook · Weeks One–Three

Begin when you’re ready. Return when you need.

NOVEMBER 15, 2026 EDITION



Welcome

Welcome. I'm glad you're here.

Most of us have finished a good book with half its pages underlined, felt something shift, and watched the old patterns come back within a week or two. That isn't a failure of the book, or of us. Insight is a beginning, and what makes it hold is practice, in your own life, over time. MIND CONTROL was written to be practiced.

The Self-Guided Journey is the Course's own thirteen weeks: the same chapter each week, the same companion essays and meditations, the same questions and the same morning and evening practice. What's different is who keeps the schedule. You begin when you're ready and go at the pace your life allows, on your own, with a friend, or with a few people you gather yourself. That puts you in the driver's seat from the first week, which is where the book wants you anyway.

Come with a big vision. If the thing that keeps getting in your way no longer ran your life, what might become possible? Write it down. Then begin small: a few minutes in the morning, a few in the evening, and one moment this week when you notice the old story and choose something else.

I can't promise what will change, or how quickly, and you'll decide what progress means. What I can tell you is that everything here was written for people doing this work in ordinary weeks, alongside jobs and families and everything else. I'm practicing it in mine.

With gratitude and Love,



Phil Van Winkle

What You Need

Your own copy of MIND CONTROL. A journal that's only yours, on paper or on a screen. A few hours a week for the reading, the writing and the week's meditation, plus a few minutes every morning and evening. If you're doing this with other people, add an hour a week to meet. That's all. There's nothing to buy and nothing to sign up for.

Nothing is submitted or tracked. Your writing stays yours unless you choose to share it.

This edition: November 15, 2026. It includes the opening guide and Weeks One, Two and Three. Further weeks will be added as their readings and meditations are published.

How a Week Works

Read the chapter at the start of your week. Each week's page tells you which one.

Read the companion essay. Each week has one in the Library, and it takes the chapter out of the book and into an ordinary day.

Practice the meditation. From Week Two on, each week has a meditation in the Library called The Seat and the Screen. It's the same theater every week with something new to explore in it, and it's the practice of the whole book in one sitting. Do it in the morning if you can, on as many days as you like.

How a Week Works

Write. Work with the Reflective Questions in Chapters 1–11 and its Practice in your journal. You'll find both in the book, and the Library's Reflective Questions journal and Practice Guide Companion gather them into printable files. Choose at least three of the questions and three of the practices, or do them all. Give each a few honest sentences, or as much as it calls for. There are no wrong answers, and no one is grading you.

Live it. Most of the week happens off the page: on Wednesday morning, when your One Thing shows up in the first ten minutes of the day, at the dinner table, in the meeting that goes sideways. Notice it there. That's the work.

Meet, if you're with others. Each week's page has questions for your group.

Week One is orientation. Chapter 12 has no Reflective Questions or Practice; in Week Thirteen, write your closing essay.

Your One Thing

When I interviewed 160 people about their self-limiting beliefs, almost everyone had one that stood above the rest, the one costing them the most. You probably have one too. It might be a belief about yourself, a Part, or a persona you've worn so long it feels like you. Whatever you call it, bring it. It's your through line for all thirteen weeks.



Your One Thing

Before Week One: your opening essay. Write about your One Thing in three parts: what it is, what it's been costing you, and who you are when it no longer runs you. Make that third part big. If your One Thing no longer ran you, what would be possible? What would you stop putting off? How would you meet the people you love? Use specific experiences where you can. There's no required length, and you don't need polished writing or a settled answer. One rule: tell the truth, especially about yourself. If you don't know your One Thing yet, sit with the question for a few days. Something usually keeps coming up.

In Week Thirteen: your closing essay. Write about the same One Thing in three parts that match the first: what has changed, or hasn't; what the work has given you, and what it has cost; and who you are now. Then read the two essays side by side. Some weeks you'll be sure nothing has moved, so measure backward, from where you started. That's where you'll see it.

Both essays are yours. Share them with your group, or with anyone, only if you choose.

Morning and Evening

Two appointments with yourself every day: one before you step into the day, one before bed. What you do in them is yours to choose: journaling, the week's meditation, a walk, yoga, something from the Practice Guide at the back of the book. Choose something you'll actually do. Start small and let it grow out of your own experience; there's no target length. If you miss a morning or an evening, begin again at the next one. You don't owe yourself a longer one to make up for it.



Doing It with Others



The Journey works on your own. It also works beautifully with a few people beside you, because it's much easier to see yourself clearly when others are doing their own work in the same room.

Your group. Two to six people, each with their own book. Meet once a week for sixty minutes, on a video call or around a kitchen table, on a day that suits everyone, and read the week's chapter and essay before you meet. Partners and close friends can certainly do the Journey together, though some people find the group work easier with people who have no history with them. If you're looking for people to practice with, the free Ask Althea community is the place to find them.

Doing It with Others

Your first meeting. If you're new to each other, make the first meeting a getting-acquainted hour before Week One: read the welcome together, then take turns with your name, where you are and what brought you here. In Week One you can get straight to the work.

Leading the meeting. One person leads each week, and everyone takes a turn; no one leads a second time until everyone has led once. Leading doesn't mean teaching, summarizing or fixing anything. It means holding the shape of the hour so everyone else can do their own work: start on time, read the welcome aloud, say the agenda and how much time each person has, share the time fairly, bring the conversation back when it drifts, agree on next week's leader, and end on time.

Your Sixty Minutes

3 MINUTES	35 MINUTES	10 MINUTES	12 MINUTES
PAUSE	ROUND	REFLECT	CLOSE

Pause, about 3 minutes. Read the welcome, then take a Sacred Pause together: hand on heart, one breath, I am here.

The round, about 35 minutes. Divide the time evenly among the people there: about seven minutes each for five people, about twelve for three. Each person speaks uninterrupted about where their One Thing showed up this week, and what the week's practice did or didn't do. The silence after someone finishes is part of their time. Let it sit.

Reflect, about 10 minutes. The week's group questions, as open conversation. Choose whichever one the group needs.

Close, about 12 minutes. One sentence each: what you're taking into the week. Then agree on next week's leader and time, and end on time.

Your Group's Welcome

The welcome. Read it aloud at the start of every meeting:

Welcome, everyone. Before we start, let's remember what we've agreed to. What's said in this group stays in this group: we don't repeat anyone's story outside this meeting. We don't record, take screenshots, or use AI note-taking or transcription tools. Each of us shares as much or as little as we choose, and anyone can pass. We listen to understand, not to fix: no advice unless someone asks for it, and no judging anyone's experience, including our own. One person speaks at a time, and the time someone has is theirs. This is a practice group, not therapy. If something comes up that needs more support than we can give each other, we reach out to a professional.

If something comes up. If someone keeps talking past their time, step in kindly: "I'm going to pause you there so everyone has time to share." Saying the time allowance at the start makes this easier for everyone. If someone becomes upset, give them room; they can pass or take a moment. If you're worried about someone afterward, check in with them privately, and make sure they know about the help below.

If You Fall Behind

You probably will at some point; most people do. A week fills up with work, or illness, or a child home from school, and the chapter sits unopened. Pick up where you are. There's no deadline here, no one keeping score, and nothing to lose by taking three weeks over one chapter, so the week you're on is the right week. Don't try to catch up on everything at once. If you've been away a while, reread your opening essay before you start again; it will remind you why you began.

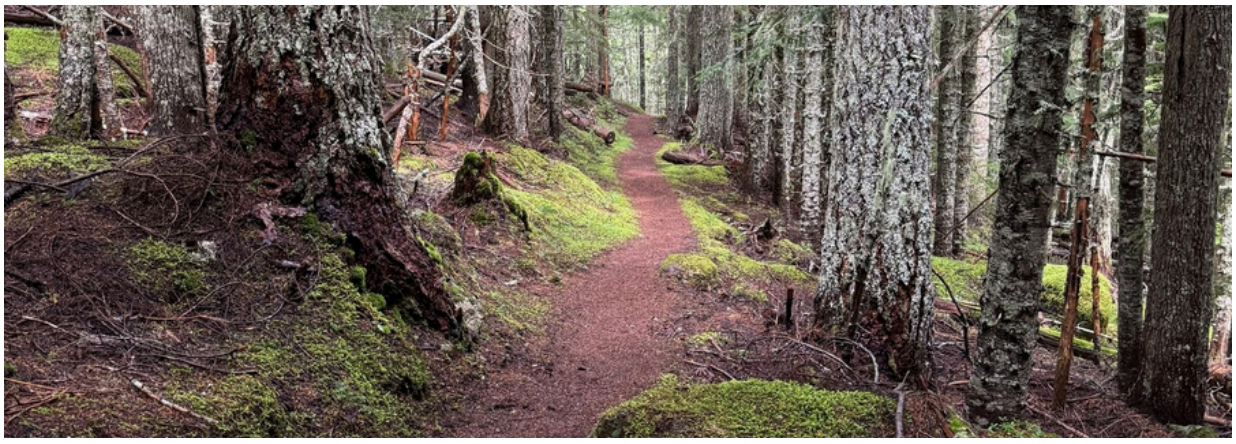


If You Need Help

The Journey is self-leadership, not therapy. It's a place for practice, not treatment. The work goes to real places, and for most people that's exactly the point. But if what comes up is heavier than you can hold on your own or with your group, reach for more support rather than going quiet.

If you're struggling right now, you don't have to carry it alone. In the US, call or text 988 to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, any hour. Outside the US, findahelpline.com lists free, confidential lines in your country.

If you're already working with a therapist or counselor, keep going. Tell them what you're doing here, and bring to them what belongs with them.



The Thirteen Weeks

Weeks One, Two and Three are ready. A new week is added as each week's essay and meditation are published.
Week One · Orientation · The Preface, the Orientation and Part One
Part One · Awakening · from passenger to driver
Week Two · Chapter 1 · The Power You Surrendered
Week Three · Chapter 2 · The One Who Sees
Week Four · Chapter 3 · The God Fractal
Week Five · Chapter 4 · Leading from Divine Awareness
Part Two · The Framework · from "this is who I am" to "this is how I was programmed"
Week Six · Chapter 5 · The Identity Triangle
Week Seven · Chapter 6 · Choosing Your Identity
Week Eight · Chapter 7 · The Wound That Points to Wholeness
Week Nine · Chapter 8 · The Five Rs: Returning to Wholeness
Part Three · Conscious Creation · from understanding to living to authoring
Week Ten · Chapter 9 · Conscious Creation
Week Eleven · Chapter 10 · Meeting Others from Love
Week Twelve · Chapter 11 · The Life You Choose
Week Thirteen · Chapter 12 · The Rest Is Yours



When Resistance Shows Up

Sometimes falling behind is something else. Right around the time the work gets personal, it's common to find yourself suddenly busier than usual, or sure the chapter is obvious, or certain this isn't really for you. Often that's a Part doing its job, protecting you from change the way it always has, and you'll know it by its timing. Sometimes you're simply worn out, or your life has changed. Pause long enough to tell the difference. Either answer is allowed, and noticing you've drifted and coming back is the practice itself.

Stay Connected



The free Ask Althea community is open to everyone on the Journey: a place to meet others, find people to practice with, and keep going after Week Thirteen. The Ritual of Return, a short letter every Sunday, brings you one pause and one return each week; you can sign up at askalthea.community. And if you'd like the live presentations, or a small group kept for you, the Course runs three times a year, beginning in January, May and September. You'll find it at askalthea.community/course.

If you finish, write and tell me what changed, and what didn't. I'd love to hear it: phil@askalthea.community.

Week One · Orientation

The Preface, the Orientation and Part One

Read. The Preface, the Orientation and Part One. If you'd like to read further ahead, do; you'll come back to each chapter in its own week.

The companion readings. Start with The Whole of This Life, about what these thirteen weeks are for. Then the five Week One readings, which are five parts of one practice: Self-Leadership, on who's responsible for your life; Intuition and Finding Yourself in Divine Awareness, on where you look from; The Sacred Return, on how you come back when you've drifted; The First Habit: Creating Stillness, on making room to notice anything at all; and What to Do With What You See, on meeting what you find with compassion instead of judgment.

Week One · Practice

The practice. The theater meditation begins in Week Two. This week, start your morning and evening practice, and learn the Sacred Return: hand on heart, one breath, I am here. I am Love. The Sacred Return reading teaches it.

Write. Your opening One Thing essay, if it isn't finished. Once it is, read it through once more at the end of the week. There's no other writing this week.

For your group. Each person says their One Thing out loud, in their own turn. Then, together: what did you notice as you said it, and who was it that noticed?

Carry into the week. Notice, return, choose, and go easy on yourself in between.

Week Two · Chapter 1



Chapter 1 · Part One: Awakening

Read. Chapter 1, The Power You Surrendered.

The companion essay. The Journey of Non-Judgment, about the two ways we look at what we did, judgment and curiosity, and why only one of them can change anything. If Chapter 1 stirred something up in you, read this one first.

The meditation. The Seat and the Screen. Read it through once before you sit. You'll take a seat in a theater and watch one ordinary moment of giving your power away, with curiosity and no verdict. You'll come back to this theater every week, so this week is for getting used to the seat. Set aside twenty to thirty minutes the first time; you may use less.

Week Two · Practice

Write. Chapter 1's Reflective Questions and Practice.

For your journal. Write about what it was like to watch, not only what you watched. When did you notice you'd gotten caught up in what was on the screen, and what happened when you came back to your seat? If the Judge showed up, what did he say, and what happened when you watched that too? And for this week in particular: what did you notice about the ways you've been giving your power away?

For your group. When did you notice you'd gotten caught up in what you were watching, and what happened when you came back to your seat? What did you notice this week about the ways you've been giving your power away?

Carry into the week. When you catch yourself, try curiosity before the verdict.

Week Three · Chapter 2

Chapter 2 · Part One: Awakening

Read. Chapter 2, The One Who Sees.

The companion essay. You Are Here, on presence: noticing when you've been somewhere else, and coming back as who you are.

The meditation. The Seat and the Screen: The One Who Sees. This week the screen stays dark, and you get to know the one sitting in the seat. Give the seat more time than last week; ten or fifteen minutes there isn't too long, and a few minutes is plenty if that's what the morning has.

Week Three · Practice

Write. Chapter 2's Reflective Questions and Practice.

For your journal. What did you notice about the experience of being the one who sees? What, if anything, did you notice in your body? And, as every week: when did you notice you'd gotten caught up in something, and what happened when you came back to your seat?

For your group. When did you notice this week that you'd been somewhere else, and what brought you back? What was it like to spend time in the seat with nothing on the screen?

Carry into the week. You were here the whole time.



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CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY

askalthea.community/self-guided-journey/

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