ASK ALTHEA

MIND CONTROL

The Course

THE GUIDEBOOK



JANUARY 2027 · BEFORE YOU DECIDE

Live $497 · Guided $997

Begins the week of January 4, 2027

JANUARY 2027 EDITION



Before You Decide

If you've read the books, taken the courses, and felt something shift, only to watch the old pattern come back a week or two later, you're in good company. I know that experience. For years I was reading the books, taking the courses, doing the work, and nothing held. Working out why took me a long time, and what I found became MIND CONTROL. Before I wrote its first word, I knew it would be the workbook for this Course. The book, the Course, and the community were conceived together for one outcome: change that holds.

This Course is reaching for a change in the trajectory of the rest of your life. How you understand yourself and choose what happens next reaches into everything: your relationships, your work, the way you love. If you join, come with a big vision. If the thing that keeps getting in your way no longer ran you, what would be possible? Write it down. Then begin small: a morning practice, an evening return, one moment when you notice the old story and choose.

This guide is here to help you decide. It tells you what the thirteen weeks are, how they work in each of the two formats, and what you'd be saying yes to. It's a real commitment, about four hours a week, and it's meant to change things. If this is your season, I'd love to have you. If it isn't, keep this guide, start with the free Self-Guided Journey, and come when you can.

I can't promise what will change, or how fast. You'll decide what progress means. If you join, I'll come prepared, make room for your questions, read both your essays, and tell you the truth, including when I don't know. I'll be practicing alongside you. I'm not done with this work either.
Thirteen weeks is our time together. The rest of your life is what we're practicing for.
With gratitude and Love,



Phil Van Winkle

THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

is what we’re practicing for.



Rachelle, on the summit.

Start Here

These pages give you what you need to decide. The arrows point you to the fuller explanation in the Full Guide.

Your Week

• The presentation: sixty minutes, three times each week. Tuesdays at noon, Wednesdays at 7 p.m., Saturdays at noon, Eastern. The same material each time. Come to one or more, or watch a recording. In Guided, your POD meets for sixty minutes each week. → The Schedule

• Read, then write in your private Course Journal. Chapters 1–11: Reflective Questions and Practice in Weeks Two–Twelve. Week One: reading only. Week Thirteen: closing essay.

• Every morning and evening: a practice you choose, with no set length. → Your Weekly Rhythm

• Make room: about four hours a week, including presentations, reading, writing, practice and your POD.

A free way to do the work. MIND CONTROL: The Self-Guided Journey follows the same thirteen weeks, free, at your own pace, with its own Guidebook at askalthea.community/self-guided-journey.

Start Here

Your Seat

- Live · $497: presentations, recordings and slides, Course space, Journal and Guidebook. Guided · $997 adds PODs and Guide sessions.
- Your own copy of MIND CONTROL is required. The book isn't included. Both formats are paid in full when you register. → How to Get a Seat
- **Your One Thing** is the pattern you'd bring with you: one essay before we meet, one at the end. → Your One Thing

Your Dates

- **After payment:** watch your email for your Course invitation and next steps. If you need help, email phil@askalthea.community.
- December 28, 11:59 p.m. Eastern: enrollment closes. Full refunds and Guided POD forms close then too.
- January 4–10: week zero; Guided POD meet-and-greet.
- January 10: opening One Thing essay due.
- January 12, 13, 16: first presentations.
- April 6, 7, 10: last presentations.
- April 11: Course ends.

The Schedule

Three presentations a week, the same each time: Tuesdays, noon to 1 p.m. · Wednesdays, 7 to 8 p.m. · Saturdays, noon to 1 p.m., Eastern. Course weeks run Monday to Sunday.

Week zero · January 4–10 · In Guided, your POD's meet-and-greet. Read the Preface, Orientation, and Part One, and write your opening One Thing essay by Sunday, January 10.

Week 1 · January 11–17 · Orientation and Onboarding · presentations January 12, 13, 16

Part One · Awakening · from passenger to driver

Week 2 · January 18–24 · Chapter 1 · The Power You Surrendered

Week 3 · January 25–31 · Chapter 2 · The One Who Sees

Week 4 · February 1–7 · Chapter 3 · The God Fractal

Week 5 · February 8–14 · Chapter 4 · Leading from Divine Awareness

The Schedule

Part Two · The Framework · from "this is who I am" to "this is how I was programmed"
Week 6 · February 15–21 · Chapter 5 · The Identity Triangle
Week 7 · February 22–28 · Chapter 6 · Choosing Your Identity
Week 8 · March 1–7 · Chapter 7 · The Wound That Points to Wholeness
Week 9 · March 8–14 · Chapter 8 · The Five Rs: Returning to Wholeness
Part Three · Conscious Creation · from understanding to living to authoring
Week 10 · March 15–21 · Chapter 9 · Conscious Creation
Week 11 · March 22–28 · Chapter 10 · Meeting Others from Love
Week 12 · March 29–April 4 · Chapter 11 · The Life You Choose
Week 13 · April 5–11 · Chapter 12 · The Rest Is Yours · presentations April 6, 7, 10
Read each chapter at the start of its week. That prepares you for the presentation and for your POD, whichever comes first. US clocks spring forward on March 14; the presentation times stay the same in Eastern time all the way through. If you're outside Eastern time, check your local time in March.

Your Weekly Rhythm

If you join, this is what a week looks like.
The presentation. Sixty minutes on the week's chapter, and the conversation that comes out of it, offered three times. Come to whichever fits your week. Camera on whenever you can; it's a class, not a webinar. Every presentation is recorded and posted in the Course space the same day, so if you can't make one live, watch it when it fits your week.
The Course material. Each week has a short essay and a meditation to practice, in the Course space and the Library. The meditation is the same theater every week, the seat and the screen, with something new to watch on it. It's the practice of the whole book in one meditation.
The written work. Read the chapter, then work with its Reflective Questions and its Practice in your Course Journal. Give each a few honest sentences, or as much as it calls for. There's no wrong answer and nobody's grading you. I read the Journals; nobody else does unless you choose to share.

Your Weekly Rhythm

Morning and evening, every day. Two appointments with yourself: one before you step into the day, one before bed. What you do in them is yours to choose. Journaling, meditation, a walk, yoga, something from the Practice Guide at the back of the book. 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.

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

In Guided, your POD. Sixty minutes once a week, on the day and time your POD meets, with the same five or six people for the whole Course. Cameras on. Never recorded. A short pause to arrive, a round where each person speaks uninterrupted, ten minutes on the week's POD questions, and a close. The leader changes every week, and everyone takes a turn. → Your POD

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 self-limiting belief, a Part, or a persona you've worn so long it feels like you. Whatever you call it, it's the through line for the whole Course.
Finding yours. Think about where you hold back, the thing you keep not saying, and what it has cost you this past year. Notice where it shows up most, and with whom. Then ask the bigger question: if it no longer ran you, what would be possible?



Your One Thing

If you join: 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. There's no required length. You don't need polished writing or a settled answer. One rule: tell the truth, especially about yourself. It's due Sunday, January 10, and it's private: I read it, and no one else does unless you choose to share it.

At the end: your closing essay. In Week Thirteen you 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.

You can start now, whether or not you've decided.

What You'd Be Saying Yes To

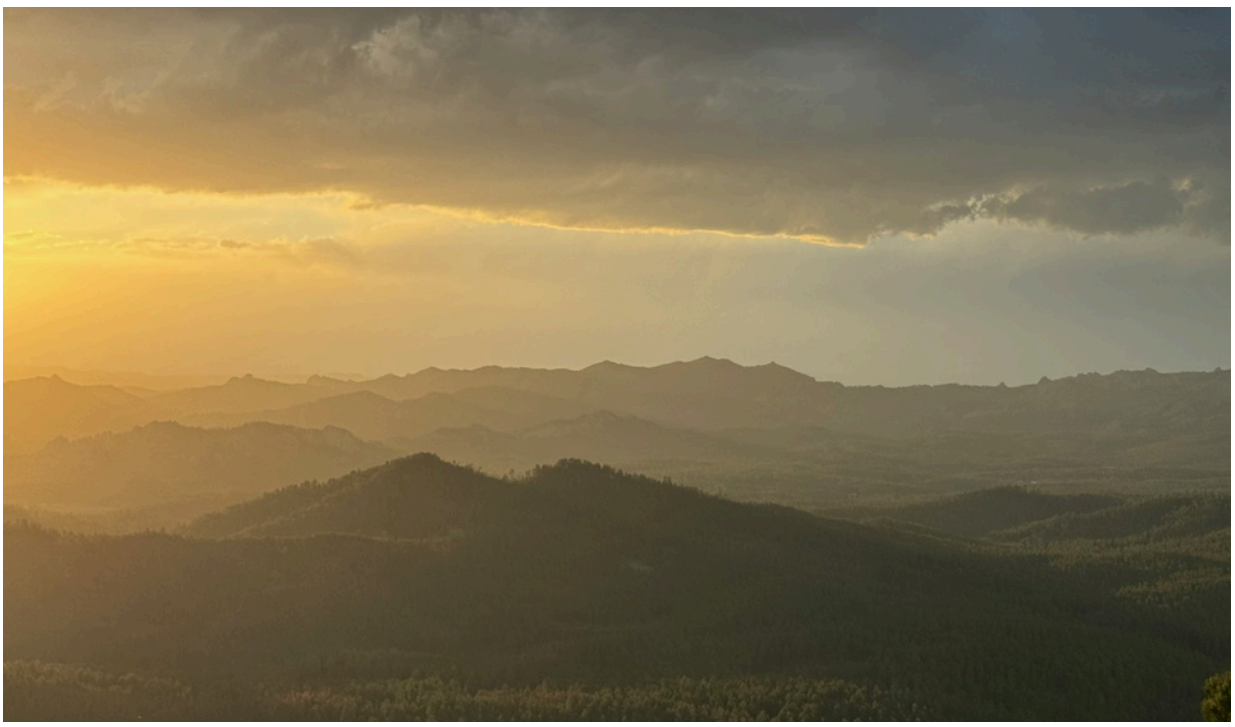
To finish the Course and receive your certificate:
Each week's reading, with its box ticked in your Course Journal. Week One has no weekly writing. In Weeks Two to Twelve, submit the Reflective Questions and Practice for Chapters 1 to 11. In Week Thirteen, submit your closing essay. There's no required length, and nobody grades or judges what you write.
Your One Thing essay by January 10 and your closing essay by April 18.
At least ten of the thirteen weekly presentations, live or by recording.
In Guided, at least ten of the thirteen weekly POD meetings, live.

What You'd Be Saying Yes To

The Course feedback form, each of the three times it comes.
Everything else is the practice: your morning and evening. None of it is counted. All of it matters. Anything you miss, except POD meetings, can be finished through Sunday, April 25, and you graduate as soon as everything is in.
What it isn't. Therapy, or a substitute for it. If you're working with a therapist or counselor, keep going. → If You Need Help
If that's a yes, the next page is how.

How to Get a Seat

Get your own copy of MIND CONTROL. Each person needs their own, including partners taking the Course together. The book was written as the Course Book, so it's also the best preview of the work.
Choose your format and register at askalthea.community/course: Live at $497 or Guided at $997, paid in full.
Watch for your welcome email from phil@askalthea.community. It brings your Guidebook, your way into the Course space and, in Guided, your POD availability form.



How to Get a Seat

Read the Preface, Orientation, and Part One before the first presentation on January 12.
Your seat is fully refundable through Monday, December 28, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern. If you start in Live and want a POD, you can move to Guided for the $500 difference through December 28.
Bring your person. Partners and close friends can take the same Course. In Guided, they join different PODs on purpose, so each of you does the POD work with people who have no history with you.
The Course Material
Each week has a short essay and a meditation, in the Course space and in the Library on the Ask Althea site. The meditation is the theater: you take your seat, and you watch what plays on the screen, without judgment, with curiosity. The seat never changes. What I ask you to watch changes with each chapter. Read the essay, then practice the meditation in your own quiet time, in the mornings if you can, through the week.
All thirteen weeks are open from the first day.

Privacy and Support

Your Course Journal and essays are private: you and me, unless you choose to share. You decide what to put on the page. You can pass in a POD round. If your camera or any part of the work is a real problem, tell me.
Your profile and introduction are visible to the community. Your POD's space is for your POD and me. Presentation recordings are for Course members only: don't download, record or share them. PODs are never recorded.
This is self-leadership, not therapy. If what comes up needs more support, reach for it. → If You Need Help



The Full Guide

These pages explain the work more fully. Explore them before deciding, or return to them as questions arise.



The Journey

Your One Thing

How the Course Works

Your POD · Guided

Guide Sessions · Guided

The Ask Althea

Community

How to Show Up

What Graduating Opens

If You Need Help

Questions

This Is the Beginning

The Journey



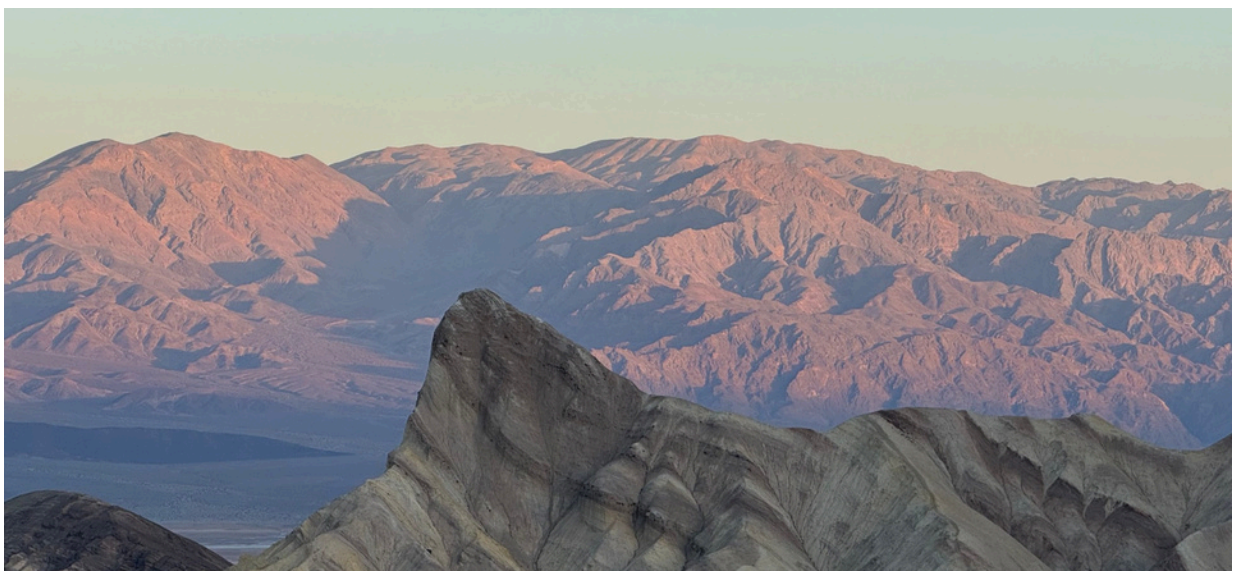
The book has twelve chapters. Chapters 1 to 11 include Reflective Questions and Practice; Chapter 12 has neither. I wrote it that way, as the workbook for this Course. There's no hidden curriculum. The weekly essays and meditations are there to help you live the chapters, not to add to them. The whole point of the Course is to get the book off the shelf and into your life, with a class around you and me in the room.

The Journey

So why a Course and not just the book? Because there's a list of things working against you when you try to change on your own, and nobody tells you about it.

The habit was more entrenched than you knew. Your environment didn't change. The people around you didn't change. The Stories underneath it all didn't change. Nobody explained how the mind really works, you underestimated how long new behavior takes to hold, and you tried to do it alone. The Course was built with every item on that list in mind. Thirteen weeks is long enough for something to take root. The framework is the piece that was missing. And this time you won't be doing it alone.

The book never asks you to take anything on faith, and neither does the Course. Try the practice for a week, notice what happens, and bring what you notice to the presentation and, in Guided, your POD. The evidence is your own experience.



Where the Thirteen Weeks Go

Part One, Awakening (January into early February). From passenger to driver. You'll build a daily practice, learn to catch yourself on autopilot while it's running, and get your first real taste of leading from Divine Awareness instead of being led around by your conditioning. The One Thing you bring into the Course is what you'll be practicing on.
Part Two, The Framework (February into March). From "this is just who I am" to "this is how I was programmed." The Identity Triangle, the Stories that wrote your Beliefs, the Parts that have been protecting you all this time, and the Five Rs that return them to wholeness under your own leadership. This is where your One Thing starts to make sense, and where the work gets personal.
Part Three, Conscious Creation (March into April). From understanding to living to authoring. Your relationships, your decisions, the life you choose on purpose. This is the payoff the whole book builds toward. The last chapter is a send-off, and by then the framework won't be something you read about. It'll be something you've been living for three months.



What You Can Expect

I won't promise you an outcome. The book doesn't either, and you're the only one who can judge what happened in you. What I can tell you is what the thirteen weeks are built to give you the chance to do, and the one thing all three legs of the stool were built for, because it's the only outcome I've ever cared about: change that holds.

To know your One Thing from the inside. Where it came from, which Part has been running it, and what it feels like to Pause and Return when it fires instead of getting carried off by it. To have a daily practice that's yours, not borrowed from someone. To have sat in a small room with people who told you the truth and heard yours. And to have carried the framework into at least one relationship and one decision that mattered, and seen for yourself what changed.

Some of that may happen in week three and some of it not until week twelve. Some of it will happen after the Course is over, and that's how it's supposed to work.

What You Can Expect

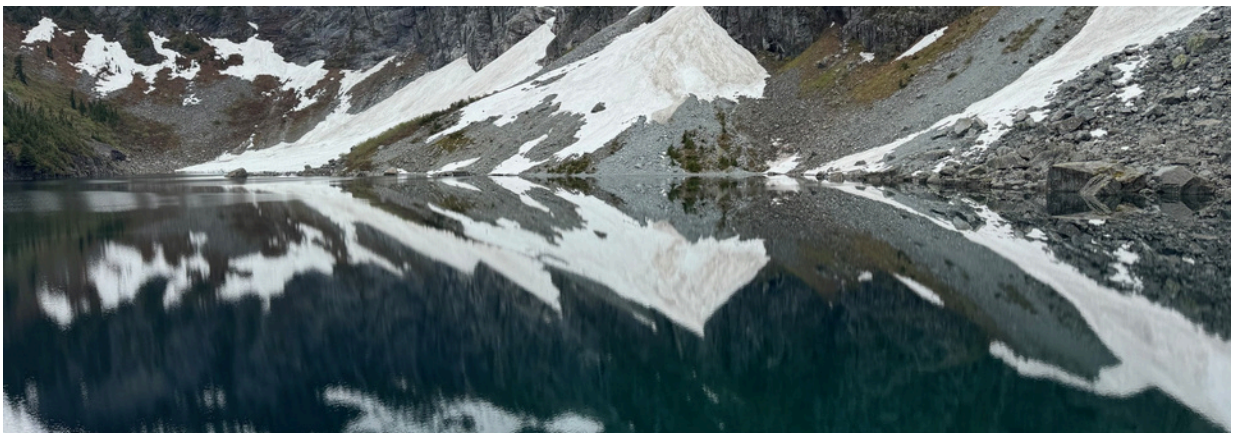
What This Is, And What It Isn't

This is self-leadership, not self-improvement. You were never broken, and you'll never hear me say otherwise. Your conditioning, the Stories you wrote when you were small and the Beliefs that grew out of them, can be reprogrammed, and that's work only you can do. I'm not the expert on your life. You are. My job is to walk alongside you, hold the structure, and point at what's already there.

This also isn't therapy, and it's not a substitute for it. The Course goes to real places, and real things can come up. If you're working with a therapist or counselor, good. Keep going, and bring what fits. If at any point you need more support than a class and a POD can give you, I would much rather you use If You Need Help than go quiet on us.

One more thing before you go on. Think of the one person you'd want beside you for something like this. Your partner. Your closest friend. Hold onto that name while you read. I'll come back to it.

Your One Thing



Your One Thing doesn't have to be bigger or harder than anyone else's to matter. This is your life, and there's no ranking it against the room.
When I interviewed 160 people about their self-limiting beliefs, 158 of them could name theirs. You may have heard me say that before. What I haven't said as often is that almost everyone had one that stood above the rest. The one that was costing them the most. The one they'd been circling for years.
You probably have one too. It may be the reason you're reading this. It might be a self-limiting belief. It might be a Part. It might be a persona you've been wearing so long it feels like you. You may have your own name for it, or no name for it yet. What you call it doesn't matter. What matters is that you bring it with you, because every chapter, every practice, every POD conversation gets to be about this one thing in your real life, not about the framework in the abstract.

Your One Thing

Think of what this pattern has asked you to give up. The conversation you avoid. The decision you keep postponing. The part of yourself you make smaller to keep someone else comfortable. Your One Thing matters because your life is on the other side of it. You don't have to know how to change it yet. You only have to be willing to see it clearly and begin.

The Two Essays

The prompts and the dates are in Your One Thing at the front. Here's what's behind them. I want the first essay before the first presentation, because I want to know what's in the room before we start. The third part, who you are when it no longer runs you, is the one to make big: not who you think you should be, but who you really are, in your own words, when this thing has lost its grip. If it runs long, let it. For a lot of people, the second and third parts will be the first time any of this has ever been written down, and that alone can move something.
Both essays are yours. I read them, and no one else does unless you decide to share them.

Your One Thing

The closing essay matches the first one part for part, so you can put the two side by side. Honesty is the whole point. A true "it's still here, and here's what's different about how I meet it" is worth more than a victory lap, and a "who I am now" that doesn't match the person you wrote about in January is worth reading closely, not fixing.

One measuring stick, if you want it. Chapter 4 names the Three Freedoms: Freedom of Mind, Freedom of Action, and Freedom from Emotional Dependency. As you write, hold your One Thing up to each one. Can you see it now, where in January you were it? Do you choose, where it used to choose for you? Do you still need anyone's approval for it to be okay? You don't have to build the essay around those questions, or answer them at all. But keep this close:

I notice. I return. I choose. I overflow.

That is the whole practice in four simple sentences, and the closing essay is a good place to feel which of those are yours now.

Whether or not you've decided, you don't have to wait to start. If you already know your One Thing, start writing. If you don't, that's what the weeks before the Course are for. Read, notice, and let it show itself. It will.

How the Course Works

The book is the Course Book. The Reflective Questions and Practice in Chapters 1 to 11 are the weekly work, exactly as printed, for Weeks Two to Twelve. The Course adds a weekly presentation with me and one place where it all lives, and the Guided format adds a POD and Guide sessions one to one. Your Weekly Rhythm gives you the schedule. Here's what's behind it.

The Presentations

Every week I give the same sixty-minute presentation three times: Tuesdays at noon, Wednesdays at 7 p.m., and Saturdays at noon, Eastern. It's the same material each time, and the conversation is shaped by whoever's there. Come to the one that fits your week. Come to more than one if you'd like. There's nothing to sign up for. Camera on whenever you can manage it. This is a class, not a webinar, and it's a lot better when we can see each other.

All three are on Google Meet, and all three are recorded. Each recording goes up in the Course space the same day, showing how many people were there and how long it runs, so you can choose which one to watch. If no one has joined a session in its first ten minutes, I end it, and that one has no recording.

How the Course Works

The Written Work

Write in your private Course Journal. I read your work; nobody grades or judges it. There is no required length.

For Chapters 1–11, aim for three Reflective Questions and three practice exercises, or more if you want. Any response counts. The week-by-week requirements are in What You'd Be Saying Yes To. The meditation prompt is optional. Sharing is your choice.



Your Morning and Evening Practice

The Course asks you to make two appointments with yourself every day. One in the morning, before you step into the day. One in the evening, before you go to bed. This is where the practice comes alive.
What you do in those appointments is yours to choose. Journaling. Meditation. Quiet reflection. Yoga. A walk or a run. Something from the Practice Guide at the back of the book. What matters is that you enter it on purpose: you give yourself the time to be present, to practice being in Divine Awareness, and to experience it for yourself. This is where the muscle gets built.
The commitment is to both, a morning practice and an evening one. The form belongs to you, and the two don't have to look alike.
Start small. A ten-minute routine you actually do every day is worth more than a sixty-minute routine you never get around to. Choose something that fits the life you have and that you're willing to come back to tomorrow.



Your Morning and Evening Practice

Over the Course, let it develop on its own. You may want more time. You may find a different activity brings you into presence more fully. You may find that something simple keeps giving you exactly what you need. There's no target length and no requirement to keep adding more. Pay attention to your own experience and let your intuition guide you. If you miss a morning or an evening, begin again at the next one. You don't owe yourself a longer session to make up for it. Returning is what you're practicing. We'll set up your morning and evening routines together in Week One. As the weeks go on, bring what you're discovering to your POD: what helps you get present, what gets in the way, and what you're learning by coming back.

The chapter changes every week. These two appointments stay with you for the whole Course, and, I hope, long after it.



Making Room for the Work

How Much Time. About four hours a week in all: a presentation or its recording, sixty minutes in your POD if you're in Guided, and time for the chapter, the week's essay and meditation, and your writing.
Your morning and evening routines are part of the commitment too, and their length is yours to choose. For a sense of scale, ten minutes each morning and evening comes to two hours and twenty minutes a week, before any reading or writing. That's an example, not a target.
It's a real commitment, aimed at how you live the rest of your life. Make room for it before we start, and give yourself extra time for the two essays.

Reaching Me

The Course space in Ask Althea is the front door. Post there, or message me there. When your question is one other people have too, the whole class gets the answer. Email is the second door, for anything private: phil@askalthea.community. Expect a reply within two days. If it can't wait, say so in the subject line.

Your POD



Five people, including you, and six at most. I build PODs around a shared schedule, from the availability form you send before the Course. During the first two weeks, you can ask to move if the time isn't working, and I'll do my best to find a seat that fits. After that, your POD stays together for the rest of the Course. Your POD is where the Course stops being something you're taking and turns into something you're doing, with people who see you do it. By April, the people in your POD will have watched you do the work, week after week, and you'll have watched them. A book can't give you that, and neither can I. Only a POD can.

Your POD

What A POD Is For

Four things, and they're not negotiable: connection, confidentiality, non-judgment, support. You'll notice what isn't on the list. Advice. Fixing. Diagnosing each other's Parts. Your POD isn't a place to get improved. It's a place to be seen while you do your own work, and to see other people doing theirs. If someone asks for your take, give it. If they don't, your job is to listen.

How PODs Are Formed

I form them from the availability form, by time zone and availability first, so every POD has a day and an hour its members can keep. If you register with your partner or a close friend, you'll be in the same Course and different PODs, on purpose. You'll compare notes at your own kitchen table. In the POD, you get people with no history with you and no stake in your story, and that's where the honesty comes from.

If your form came in on time, you'll hear who's in your POD, and its day and time, by December 31. If it came in late and was accepted, you'll hear as soon as you're placed, by January 3. Your POD has a calendar invitation with its Google Meet link, and the link stays the same every week.

Your POD

The Sixty Minutes

Sixty minutes. Cameras on; it's a small room, and if that's hard for you, talk to your POD. Never recorded. Here's how we'll spend the sixty minutes.

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

Open with a Sacred Pause: hand on heart, one breath, I am here. Three minutes to arrive.
Share the thirty-five-minute round equally, without interruption. Speak from your own experience; listening is enough if you don't want to share.
Spend ten minutes with the week's POD questions.
Close with what you're taking into the week, and agree on next week's leader. The leader names them on the short form before everyone leaves.
POD attendance is taken and tracked automatically from your POD's Google Meet link. Join signed in to Google under the name you enrolled with. If your POD meets off its own Meet link, the leader also reports attendance on the form.

Your POD

Week One is Orientation and Onboarding. You can share your One Thing in your POD, if you'd like. Keeping it private is always your choice.

Leading Your POD

Everyone takes a turn. No one leads twice until everyone has led once, or three times until everyone has led twice.
The leader holds the shape and the clock: start on time, read the welcome, open the Pause, share the round evenly, bring the questions, and name next week's leader on the form. End on time. You don't teach, summarize or fix.
The full leader's page is askalthea.community/pod-leader/. Its link is in your POD calendar invitation and the leader's reminder.

Your Commitment To Your POD

Your POD is at its best when everyone's there. The certificate asks for ten of the thirteen meetings, and most people find they want to be at all of them. The people in your POD look forward to seeing you. What you share, and when, is always yours to choose, and trust grows at its own pace. If something makes it hard to keep coming, tell me early, and we'll work it out together.

The Ask Althea Community



The name comes from a song, and it stayed because of what it means. Althea is a Greek name, from althainein, to heal. The community is for people healing from what their Stories, their Beliefs, and their Parts have been costing them, and changing in the process. To us, Althea is the healing wisdom already in you. The framework is the ground the community is built on.

The community is free, and the Course lives inside it. Your Course space holds the thirteen weeks of material, every presentation's recording, your Course Journal, and your POD's own space. It's on the web at members.askalthea.community and in the Mighty Networks app, and the app is worth installing, because most of the week's work happens in small moments, not at a desk.

I'll be guiding you through the Course. In the community, you'll find both Rachelle and me.

Rachelle



You've already met Rachelle. The book is dedicated to her. Its last page names her.
The framework in MIND CONTROL took shape over years of conversation between the two of us. She didn't take it on faith. She took it into her own life, where the patterns were oldest, and watched what happened. Her story is on the Ask Althea site, in her own words, next to mine, at askalthea.community/your-path. I hope you'll read it.
The dedication calls her my mirror and my whetstone. She shows me myself, kindly and without flinching, and she sharpens me. I'm better for it, every day.

The Ask Althea Community

The Culture

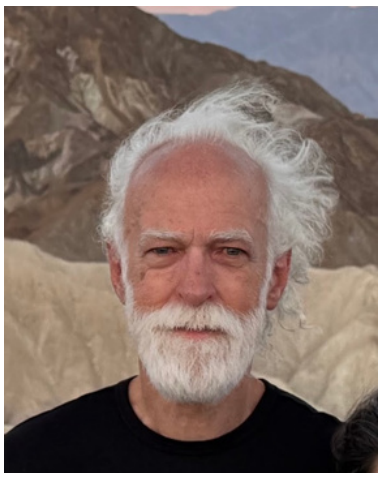
A few things, and they hold everywhere in the community, not just in your POD. Share generously. Your story may be exactly what someone else needs to read today. Speak from your own experience, not about other people's. No advice unless someone asks for it. Nothing anyone shares here leaves here. No selling, no recruiting, no politics, and no sports. And be kind. That one isn't optional.

Bring The Ones You Love

The community grows one invitation at a time, and yours counts for more than anything I could post. When someone in your life asks what you've been doing this winter, send them in. Rachelle and I will be there to welcome them. The book is the best first step. The community is free, and it's where the practice keeps going long after the Course ends.



How to Show Up



What I Am, And What I'm Not

Nobody can do this for you, and I won't try. The book puts the framework in your hands. The Course gives you thirteen weeks, a class, and a POD to practice it in. What happens inside you over those weeks is yours to lead.

You aren't students, I'm not a teacher, and I'm certainly not a guru. I'm your guide. I'll walk beside you and point things out. What you see when you look is yours. If something I say doesn't match your experience, your experience wins. Say so, in a presentation or in your POD.

How to Show Up

One more thing, and everything else stands on it. You are on a journey no one else is on. Not your partner, not the people in your POD, not me. There's nobody to compare yourself to, because there's nobody on your path but you. That's why comparison is a dead end and judgment has nothing to stand on. And it's why you are always the final authority in the Course: no one else can be. We're not here to measure each other. We're here to witness each other.

I still slip into my old stories, by the way. Every day. I'm just a lot quicker at noticing now, and the returning is the practice.

Think of it this way. The book puts the framework in your hands. In the Course you're practicing the framework day by day, and the practice is your life.



When Resistance Shows Up



It will, and probably right around the time the work gets personal. You'll be busier that week than usual. The chapter will seem obvious. The POD will feel like a lot. You might notice yourself deciding the Course isn't really for you after all. A lot of the time, that's a Part doing its job, protecting you from change the way it always has, and you'll know it by its timing. But not always. Sometimes you're worn out, or your life changed, or this isn't right for you right now. Pause long enough to tell the difference, and bring the question to your POD or to me. Either answer is allowed.

When Resistance Shows Up

If it's resistance, here's what to do about it. Make the commitment now, while it's easy, and write it down. When the week comes, use whatever willpower it takes to get to the chair. Willpower is a good tool for getting to the chair. It's just not what makes the change hold. And once you're in the chair, don't fight the resistance. Pause. Return. Then bring it to your POD, because resistance isn't a detour from the work. It's the work showing up right on schedule, and it's usually your One Thing in disguise.

What This May Do To Your Life

When you change, the people around you feel it. Some of them will love who's showing up. Some will push back. Often it's only that the old you was easier to predict. Sometimes it's something worth hearing. The book is honest that awakening costs something, and so am I. Some relationships deepen, some rearrange, and a few don't survive the change. Chapter 10 is where we meet all of that head on. Until then, go gently with the people who knew you before.

How to Show Up

Bring Your Person
Remember the person you thought of earlier. Your partner. Your closest friend. The person who sees you most is the person whose relationship with you will change most over these thirteen weeks, and when you're both doing the work, with the same vocabulary, the change is something you share instead of something you have to explain.
If they aren't in this Course with you, give them the book, and tell them about the next one. The Course runs three times a year, beginning in January, May, and September; the next begins the week of May 3, 2027, and there's a waitlist on the Course page at askalthea.community/course. Partners take the same Course in different PODs, by design. You do the work beside each other, and the POD work with people who have no history with you.
If you fall behind, and most people do at some point, don't try to catch up on everything at once. Come back to the current week. Tell your POD you're back. And if you'd like help choosing what to go back to, ask me. Above all, don't judge yourself for it. Noticing you've drifted and coming back is the practice itself.

What Graduating Opens

Graduating from the Course means something, and it should. The requirements are in What You'd Be Saying Yes To. This is what's on the other side of them.

First, the thing itself. Thirteen weeks of practice, with people watching, on the one thing that's been running your life. Most people never do that once.

Second, your voice in what comes next. The feedback forms after Week Four, after Week Eight, and at the end are where you tell me what's helping, what isn't, and what you'd change. I'll be reading them while the Course is still running, so what you tell me in February can change March.

Guide Sessions · Guided

When you need time one to one, you can book a Guide session with me. Each one is thirty minutes on Google Meet, available throughout the Course to members who are in a POD.

A Guide session is for your own practice: where you're stuck, what you're noticing, what you aren't sure how to meet. It isn't a private lesson on the week's material, and it doesn't take the place of the reading, the written work, or your POD.

How it works. You book one session at a time; after it, you can book another. I set the times that are open, and you book at least a day ahead. When you book, you confirm that you've read the book through that week's chapter and that week's Course material. I take that confirmation seriously, and I trust you to as well. The booking page is in the Course space.

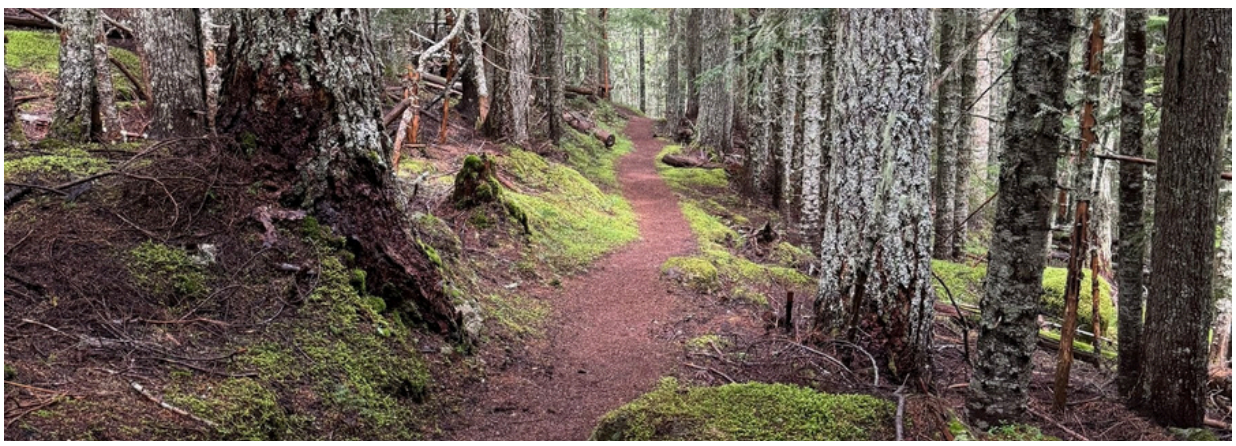
If You Need Help

The Course 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 a class and a POD can hold, I'd rather you reach for more support than go quiet, and no one here will think less of you for it.

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 the 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. Bring to them what belongs with them, and bring to the Course what belongs here.

And if something in the Course itself isn't working, in your POD, in the presentations, in you, tell me. Message me in the Course space or email phil@askalthea.community. I'd rather hear it in Week Three than find out in Week Thirteen.



Questions

What if I can't make a presentation? Come to another one that week. The same material is covered Tuesday at noon, Wednesday at 7 p.m., and Saturday at noon, Eastern, and all three are recorded. Or watch a recording whenever it fits your week. Live or by recording, ten of the thirteen weeks count toward your certificate. Your POD is the meeting you need to be at live.

What if I miss my POD? Let your POD know ahead of time if you can. You need ten of the thirteen weekly meetings live for your certificate; the meet-and-greet doesn't count toward that.

How is attendance counted? A presentation or a POD meeting counts when you're there for at least 31 minutes, more than half the hour. A recording counts when the Course space records that you've watched it. Join signed in to your Google account if you can, under the name you enrolled with, so your attendance is recorded automatically. Each feedback-form email tells you where you stand; if anything looks wrong, reply and I'll fix it.

Can I switch PODs? In the first two weeks, if the time doesn't work, tell me and I'll do my best to move you. After that, PODs stay together for the rest of the Course.

Questions

I missed the POD form deadline. Write to me with your reason. A late form may be accepted through January 3; after that, placement needs my approval as an exception. Guided completion still requires ten POD meetings.
Who reads my Course Journal and my essays? I do. No one else does unless you choose to share.
How do I book a Guide session? From the booking page in the Course space. One at a time, at least a day ahead, and you confirm you're caught up on that week's reading and Course material.
Can I get text reminders? Yes. Sign up through your welcome email; texts are optional.
Can I get a refund? Yes, in full, through Monday, December 28, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern. After that, seats aren't refundable. Write to phil@askalthea.community before the deadline.
Is this spiritual? Religious? Spiritual, deeply so, and not religious. It welcomes any faith or none at all.
Is this therapy? No. It's self-leadership, practiced in company. → If You Need Help
What if the Course isn't for me? Then leave with my thanks, no explanation needed. Just tell your POD first, so they aren't waiting for you.

This Is the Beginning



Thirteen weeks isn't the end of anything. It's the first stretch of a road you'll be on for the rest of your life, and the point of the Course is that you'll know how to walk it.

What continues: the daily practice, which is yours now. The community, which doesn't close when the Course ends. Your POD can keep meeting on its own, and I'd bet most of them will. And The Ritual of Return, a weekly letter: one pause, one return, every Sunday. You can sign up at askalthea.community.

What's coming: future trimesters of the Course, for the people you're going to want to send.

The book ends with a chapter called The Rest Is Yours. So does the Course. I hope to see you on January 12.

MIND CONTROL

The Course · The Guidebook

January 2027 · Live & Guided

Enrollment closes December 28, 2026.

EXPLORE THE COURSE

askalthea.community/course

askalthea.community

With gratitude and Love.