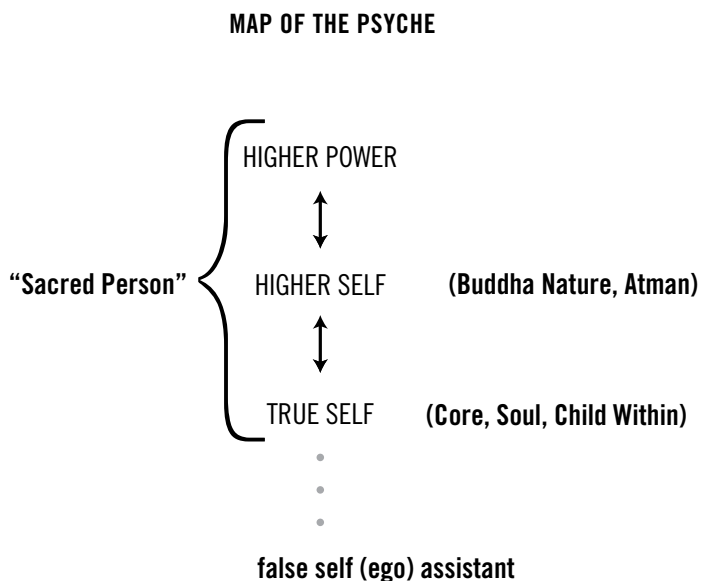


from meditation to childbirth to “hitting bottom” in a critical or desperate life situation. Some of these events have opened people to experiencing the painful yet often liberating Kundalini process.

Who or what is it that actually does the awakening? Is there a part of us that becomes more aware and opens to ourself, others, God? My sense is that it is a spiritual energy that starts to awaken us to our Real or True Self, and helps us learn about our ego or false self.

**WHO AM I? A MAP OF THE MIND**

Throughout the struggle of the human condition, many people have asked some important questions: Who am I? What am I doing here? Where am I going? How can I get any peace? While the answers to these questions remain a Divine Mystery, I have found it useful to construct a map of the mind or psyche. And while the map is not the territory, maps can be useful.



Other names for, or dimensions of, the True Self—who I really am—include the real or existential self, the human heart, the soul, chakras four and five, and the Child Within. They are all the same because they are our True Identity. I also have within me a Divine Nature, sometimes called a guardian angel, Atman, Buddha Nature, Christ Consciousness, chakras six and seven, Higher Self, or simply Self. And both of these—my True Self and my Higher Self—are intimately connected to my Higher Power, God/Goddess/All-That-Is, a part of which is also within me.

I see this relationship—True Self, Higher Self, and Higher Power—as being so important that I can also view it as being one person, which I call the Sacred Person. In a loving, supporting, and teaching way, pervading throughout the Sacred Person is the Holy Spirit (Kundalini, Chi, Ki, Ruach ha Kadosh, and Divine Energy).

As a part of the Mystery, my True Self makes or constructs an assistant to help me in limited ways as I live out this human experience. We can call this assistant or sidekick the ego, also known as the false self or codependent self. When this ego is helpful to us, such as in screening, sorting, and handling many aspects of our internal and external realities, we can call it positive ego. But when it brings us unnecessary emotional pain or tries to take over and run our life, it becomes negative ego.

This map of the psyche is more evolved than the maps of Freud, Jung, and their colleagues of up to a hundred years ago, when they used the term *ego* to mean both True Self *and* false self. Since the 1930s, the self-psychologists and the object-relations psychologists have begun to make this more precise differentiation between True Self and false self, and today we use *ego* synonymously with false self. (This understanding is in contrast with many writers who still lump the True Self and false self together and call it the “ego.”)

A contemporary holy book called *A Course in Miracles* says in its introduction: