

"Masters throughout the ages have taught us to come to the edge of our current belief system and take a leap of faith beyond the known. In *The Art of Uncertainty*, Dennis Merritt Jones not only offers us a clear road map to the edge, but makes the leap with us. If you are ready to expand your vision of a life worth living, this is a book you will want to read." —Gay Hendricks, author of *The Big Leap*



## The Art of Uncertainty

*How to Live in the Mystery of Life and Love It*



Dennis Merritt Jones  
author of *The Art of Being*

*A Four Week*

# STUDY GUIDE

*For Small Groups*

Based on the award-winning book

## The Art of Uncertainty

HOW TO LIVE IN  
THE MYSTERY OF  
LIFE AND LOVE IT

What if you could learn to accept "I don't know" and embrace the possibility that the future is full of mystery, excitement, and unlimited possibility...?

# *The Art of Uncertainty*

## *Study Guide*

HOW TO LIVE IN  
THE MYSTERY  
OF LIFE AND  
LOVE IT

© Copyright 2011 ~ DMJ Presentations LLC, Dennis Merritt Jones  
All rights reserved. Other than use in Study Groups no parts of this Study Guide may  
be reproduced, scanned, or distributed in any printed or electronic form without permission.

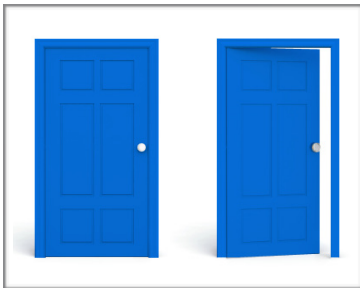
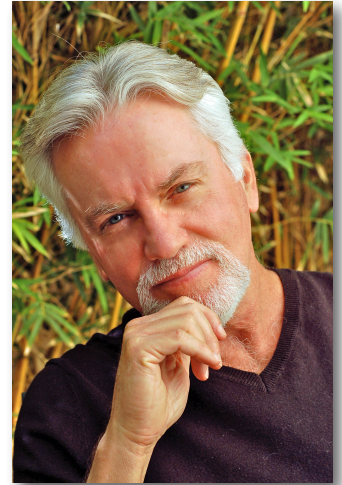
DMJ Presentations LLC  
P.O. Box 67348  
250 Corey Ave, St Pete Beach, FL 33706-1858  
[www.DennisMerrittJones.com](http://www.DennisMerrittJones.com)

*The Art of Uncertainty* is available through Amazon most major book retailers and wholesalers.  
Published by Tarcher Perigee, an imprint of Penguin Random House Publishing, in 2011.

**ISBN-13:** 978-1585428724

## A Note to the Group Facilitator

First, allow me to thank you for your interest in facilitating a discussion group based on my book, *The Art of Uncertainty - How to Live in the Mystery of Life and Love It*. I will assume that you have chosen to lead this study group because you have already read the book (or some portion of it) and found something in it that resonates with you. As the group leader you will have the opportunity to open that same portal of awareness for those in your group. In the process, you will actually



discover yourself coming to the edge of your own “uncertainties,” perhaps in new and exciting ways. Powerful things happen for everyone in the dynamics of a shared group experience - including the facilitator!

It has been said that one door never closes without another door opening. The theme of the book and, therefore, the theme that will be consistent throughout this Study Guide is that life will continue to offer us new doors through which we must pass if we are to stay engaged in our own personal evolution. The question is, will we have the confidence to step through the opening doors if we are uncertain what lies beyond them. There is no area of our lives where we are not forced to step through the door and onto the pathway of uncertainty at one point or another. This includes our relationships, careers, physical health, finances, and so on. So, why not enter the mystery consciously and intentionally every day? Becoming friends with uncertainty is a wise endeavor. As we make living in the mystery a daily practice, we prepare ourselves for the adventure regardless of whether we are pushed onto the pathway of uncertainty by inspiration or desperation, by pleasure or pain. In either case, *The Art of Uncertainty* is the perfect guidebook on how to step into the mystery of life and love it.

With its "Points to Ponder" and "Mindfulness Practices" at the end of each chapter, you will discover that the book actually does much of the teaching for you. As the facilitator, your job is to create a safe space for the sharing that evolves from each week's reading assignments. I honor and support you in your willingness to provide a safe and open environment wherein each participant will discover the value and meaning of living a life anchored in the awareness that one does not necessarily need to have all the answers *in advance* to advance on the pathway to a life worth living. In other words, we don't have to know how the mystery ends to enjoy the meaning and purpose that each day on the journey brings.

## Think of Yourself as a Guide

As the Study Group Leader, I encourage you to see yourself as a “guide” rather than as a teacher or an authority on the subject matter. Be mindful to create openings for each person to participate in the dialogue. Let it be your job to guide or facilitate the conversations, keeping them on point and moving forward, but never dominating the conversation. Be mindful to give each person the space to have their own opinions and experience of the journey you travel together.

## How it Works

- ☑ This course of study is divided over four-weeks. I recommend that the group meet for approximately two to three hours each week. In the Study Guide each of the four sessions will offer a guideline for discussion based on specific chapters. ***NOTE: It is recommended that each participant be advised to come to the first week’s study group having ALREADY read the Introduction and the first three chapters because they will be the basis of the discussion for the first week.***
- ☑ The first session is an introduction to the concept of living in the mystery of “not knowing” what lies on the other side of the door called “that which is yet to be.” In addition to the Introduction, the first three chapters will offer great opportunities for discussion about some of the biggest “land mines” that currently lie between ourselves and the life we intend to create by coming to the edge of our uncertainty.
- ☑ “A book, once written in, becomes a very personal thing!” It is recommended that each person have their own copy of *The Art of Uncertainty*, because they want to write in it and/or underline or highlight certain passages that are meaningful to them.
- ☑ At the end of each week’s Study Guide you will find a “Work To Do During The Week” assignment for the group. It will consist of a list of the chapters to be read *during* the following week as well as some additional recommended work which will vary week to week. It is important the participants be encouraged to make an effort to give extra attention to the *Points To Ponder* and to implement the *Mindfulness Practices* at the end of each chapter--it is only through the application of the concepts that

ideas become reality. The *Points To Ponder* are meant to help summarize the salient points in a manner that allows the reader to personalize them, and the *Mindfulness Practices* help to energetically activate specific ideas, taking them from the intellect to the heart where they may be experienced, emotionally and physically.

- ☑ The suggested Homework will be the basis for the discussion the following week. Keep in mind that the reason for the study group is to create space where common experiences can be shared. In the process, each one participating will learn something from the others that deepens their own experience of the general reading, *Points To Ponder*, *Mindfulness Practices* and the ensuing discussion.
- ☑ The format for the Study Guide is presented in a simple outline form. Each group meeting will have a beginning, a middle and an end. However, don't feel like you have to adhere strictly to the Study Guide. You may discover there is far more material offered than your group will find time to use every week, or that only one or two questions become the focus for the discussion during a particular week. Try to be sensitive to the rhythm of the group and let the process flow organically. As is sometimes the case, it may be that your group will want to extend their time together beyond the four weeks to cover some material in more depth.
- ☑ To begin the discussion each week, I have provided a series of quotes from *The Art of Uncertainty* (with the page numbers for easy reference) followed by specific questions you can ask as written or reframe in language that is more your style. In each of the study group sessions the discussion will prime the pump for a number of brief "optional" experiential processes or workshops I have designed. Again, there are probably more processes than you'll have time for so pick and choose what works best for your group.

Again, thank you for joining me on this amazing journey into the mystery of that which is yet to be. If you have questions about this Study Guide, or if you wish to contact me directly regarding other study guides, workshops, mentoring services, or keynote speaking, please feel free to contact me at [www.DennisMerrittJones.com](http://www.DennisMerrittJones.com).

Peace, *Dennis*

# ~ The Art of Uncertainty ~

*How to Live in the Mystery of Life and Love It*

## STUDY GUIDE

### Session One

Welcome all participants and begin with a quick ice-breaker by asking them to introduce themselves and *briefly* share what it was that caused them to decide to join *The Art of Uncertainty* Study Group.

#### Discussion Points for Introduction

1. ***On the day we are born we enter the Earth School, as my friend Gary Zukav refers to it, not knowing a thing. The soul may come overflowing with wisdom accumulated along the eternal journey but the intellect is a blank slate.*** (pg. XII)

Can you relate with the premise that you were a “blank slate” when you arrived and have actually been living in the mystery as you have evolved and matured?

If you go back in your mind to your earliest memories, can you now see that what got you to where you are today was your willingness to step into the unknown?

2. ***Our consciousness is the filter through which the unlimited potential of the universe flows. It determines the size of the box we live in. If we want to create a larger life, we must expand the size of the box, that is, come to the edge and lean over.*** (pg. XVIII)

What is the box you have been unwilling to step out of? Perhaps it is in the area of the type of work you do or your relationships. Maybe it has to do with where you take your vacations, the type of food you are “used” to, the educational course you are perusing, or the job by which you earn a living.

- ☑ Can you sense how the mystery of that which is yet to be is awaiting you with open arms? How does it “feel” to even contemplate stepping into the unknown?

Discussion Points for Chapter One  
**Coming to the Edge of Uncertainty**

*Pushed by pain or pulled by possibilities*

1. ***We were born to be free, to expand our horizons by going where we have never gone before, and not to hang out in the relative comfort and safety of the nest, the known. There is a place within us that is courageous beyond our human understanding; it yearns to explore beyond the boundaries of our daily life.*** (pg. 5)

- ☑ Like the birds preparing to leave the nest by coming to the edge of uncertainty, do you trust that the Intelligence within them that already knows “how to fly”, lives within you as well?

- ☑ Are you willing to *consciously* invite that Intelligence to accompany you into the mystery of what is “next” for you in your growth and personal evolution?

2. ***Ernest Holmes referred to that inner impulse to push out as the “divine urge.” It permeates every living thing, and its voice perpetually whispers in our inner ear, “Grow, grow, grow...I have to be more tomorrow than I was yesterday.”*** (pg. 6)

- ☑ The Universal Imperative is “Grow or Die.” Can you pinpoint any area of your life (relationships, career, school, and so on) where you have witnessed the Life Force that originally sustained you so well, begin to withdraw? By this I mean, the diminishing of the “juice or passion” that is so vital to your existence and well-being.

- ☑ As you look back at your life, what has been the primary motivating force for the major changes in your life? Have

you been pushed by pain or pulled by the possibilities that lie in the unknown? In other words, do you respond better to desperation or inspiration?

3. ***The key to our continued learning and personal evolution lies in the unknown, and curiosity and inquisitiveness unlock that door.*** (pg. 8)

- Can you relate with Mac Doodle's (the dog) ability to be curious in his desire to fearlessly go *beyond* the boundaries of his known environment? While Mac can be curious, he can't be inquisitive. You can be inquisitive. Are you ready and willing to ask yourself the difficult questions, knowing there is "something" within you that seeks to expand and push out; are you open to seeing what it is and where it wants to go?

**Optional Process:**



**There is great power to be found in hearing oneself declare to another person their intention to grow!**

- I. Break into dyads and invite each partner (without any crosstalk), one at a time, to share one place in their life where they know they are being "called" to come to the edge of the unknown and to lean over into new possibilities.
- II. The "listening" partner responds by affirming, "I hear you, and so does the Universe. I support you in stepping into the mystery this week." Once this process is complete, partners switch roles and repeat the same process.
- III. Ask them to exchange phone numbers or email address with the idea of "checking in" with each other at least once during the following week, just to share their progress in coming to the edge.



## Discussion Points for Chapter Two

### The Anatomy of Fear

*Dancing with your demons*

1. ***Are you aware of this acronym for F.E.A.R: False Evidence Appearing Real. I have another one for you: Forget Everything And Run. Isn't that what we often do when a fear thought appears in our mind, triggering our emotions? (Pg.19)***

- Are you still running from the same fears you had as a child? If so, can you see how they may have kept you from stepping into the unknown throughout your entire life?

2. ***The practice is to understand it's not about slaying the monster; it's about learning to lead the dance. If we are to ever master the art of living peacefully, purposefully, creativity, courageously, and joyfully in the midst of uncertainty, there is no question that fear is the boogeyman we have to face first. (pg.19)***

- Considering whatever your fear may be as a monster, from which fear do you run the fastest?
- Can you imagine what your life might look like if you were to tame the fear that has been holding you back? How would you *feel* if you did?

3. ***The reality is that fear can't come from outside of us. Fear is a feeling that wells up inside us as a reaction to an outer stimulus. That stimulus can, and does, change constantly. But, it is generally attached to a concern about the loss of something in our world of people, places and things, such as a job, a lifestyle, a relationship, a reputation, a title, or a material possession. (pg. 22)***

- Can you identify what concern of loss lies behind your greatest fears? What "masks" might they be wearing? (This is a GREAT point for discussion)

4. **Someone once said, “Fear is the little darkroom where negatives are developed.”** (pg. 25)

- Are you willing to drag your fear out of the darkened recesses of your mind and into the light of day through courageous self-inquiry and logical, spiritually-grounded thinking?



**Optional Process**

**A guided meditation**

- I. Have one person slowly read aloud the first *Mindfulness Practice* at the end of this chapter, page 30, as a guided meditation. Ask all others to sit quietly with their eyes closed, breathing mindfully during the meditation. Explain that, while they have already read it to themselves, it can be quite a different experience when someone else reads the process aloud allowing them to become totally immersed in the meditation.
- II. Then open for discussion.

## Discussion Points for Chapter Three

### Like it or Not, This too Shall Pass

*The good news and the other news*

1. ***Can you recall the times in your life when you suffered the most? Regardless of when or where it was, the likelihood is that the suffering was attached to your desire to have something in your life stay the same when, in actuality, it was in the “process” of changing, or you were attached to wanting something to change before it was ready to.*** (pg.33-34)

Are you more attached to *not* wanting change to happen somewhere in your life, or wanting it to happen *before* it is ready? Can you see the futility in both and is the suffering it causes worth it?

2. ***There is great wisdom in the ancient saying, “This too shall pass.” It confirms that you can and should expect change and uncertainty as a natural part of your life experience because nothing (and no thing) lasts forever.*** (pg. 34)

Can you see the wisdom in understanding and honoring the Law of Impermanence as it operates *everywhere* in your life?

3. ***“...it is a universal principle that everything that has a beginning must have an end. This includes the moon and stars above and the earth below, the flowers in your garden, your beautiful looks, your car, your home, your bank account, your job, every positive and negative emotion you have, every relationship you have, everything in which you find pleasure or pain, as well as the physical body in which your soul essence is currently navigating the planet; it all has an expiration date.*** (pg. 35)

Do you agree that everything (and everyone) in your life has an “expiration date”? How does that make you feel?

Can you see how your attachments either hold you hostage to the past, where you can change nothing, or hurl you into the future, where you have no control? Knowing this, does it make sense to cling to your attachments?

4. ***We can wade out into the river and resist the current for a short period of time (known as our lifetime), or we can surrender to it and let go trusting that the current knows what it's doing and where it's going.*** (pg. 36)

- How comfortable are you with the idea of “surrendering” your attachments to the flow of life, trusting that the current will carry you into the unknown, taking you exactly where you need to be, when you need to be there?
  
- What role does your faith play in your willingness to enter the mystery of uncertainty? Does reading the *Serenity Prayer* (below) make letting go of your attachments easier, knowing you are not alone as you move forward on this life's journey?

***God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.***



#### **Closing Process:**

- I. Invite all participants to stand in a circle and one by one, declare one word, out loud, that they *know* they have embraced as the truth about themselves regarding the *Art of Uncertainty* and how it applies to their life.
  
- II. After all have shared, close with a brief prayer or statement affirming that what is true for one is true for all—leave knowing that together, you have begun the journey into the mystery of that which is yet to be, where all possibilities exist, awaiting their arrival.

Week 1

***Work To Do During The Week***

1. Please read the following chapters and come prepared next week to discuss:

Chapter Four

**The Wisdom of Knowing What and When to Let Go**

*Timing is everything*

Chapter Five

**Plumbing the Depths of Your Potential**

*The deeper you go the more you'll know*

Chapter Six

**Failure is Not an Option**

*The Yes factor never sleeps*

Chapter Seven

**Handle Your Habit Energy Consciously**

*Rising from the rut*

2. Create or buy a journal and carry it with you during the week. As you read *The Art of Uncertainty* and go through your day, be aware of your thoughts and feelings. If something “clicks” and you get an “ah-ha” about what living in the mystery of the moment means to you, log it in your journal. This will be useful later on.
3. Be mindful of those moments when you might be feeling too attached to wanting something to be a specific way and ask yourself if it is worth the suffering it is causing. If not, take a deep and conscious breath and let it go. Remember, one door does not close without another door opening!
4. Become witness to your emotions this week. If the “monster of fear” pops up unexpectedly, again, take a deep breath, look directly in its eyes and then ask it to dance. Listen to what message it has for you. Examine which “mask” it is hiding behind: I.E, anger, jealousy, resentment, and so on.
5. Spend a minimum of fifteen minutes daily sitting in silence, breathing and feeling one *with* the Presence (meaning Infinite Intelligence, God or whatever other word is meaningful to you) in the present moment because this is the only point of access to the mystery that awaits you.

# ~ The Art of Uncertainty ~

*How to Live in the Mystery of Life and Love It*

## STUDY GUIDE

### Session Two

Welcome all participants and begin with a quick check-in. Invite them to share any “Ah-ha” moments they may have had during the week, as well as an “Oh-no” moments. How are they doing on their journal writing and “Homework”? The subject matter being studied is bound to stimulate some interesting conversation for the group. Please reinforce the necessity that each participant not only read the assigned chapters but that they do the “Homework” as well.

### Discussion Points For Chapter Four

#### The Wisdom of Knowing *What* and *When* to Let Go

*Timing Is Everything*

1. ***When undesired ‘shift’ happens in our lives, it can be difficult to see the appropriateness in that change. If we were able to take a large enough step back and view the universe at work, we would be able to see the appropriateness in the natural rhythm of change moving through all that is; no one and no thing is exempt.*** (pg. 51)



Can you pinpoint any times in your life when “shift happened” in a manner that was unwanted? Did you struggle and resist the change at hand, or surrender whatever it was, knowing it was time for it to be released?

2. ***The wisdom of letting go has been taught throughout the ages. It has been said that there are no voids in life because the universe abhors a vacuum. While a quantum physicist could explain it in scientific terms, suffice it to say that the moment we let go of something, energy in one form or another must rush in to fill the void.*** (pg. 54)



The widower Stan wanted a new relationship but resisted releasing his attachment to his beloved deceased wife. Can you see the wisdom in creating a momentary vacuum (or void) in your life by consciously releasing thoughts, memories and material items that no longer allow you to live a full life?

3. ***Knowing who and what to let go of trying to control, and when to do so, is fundamental to our happiness. It seems to be an earth reality that most of us have “control issues” somewhere in our life that need to be dealt with if we ever want to achieve authentic inner peace--the kind of peace that passes all understanding.*** (pg. 55)

Can you identify any “control” issues you may have in your life? Can you now see how any attachment to controlling anyone or anything leads to your own ultimate suffering?

Would “here and now” be an appropriate place and time to release any attachments to trying to control that, which in truth, you can’t really control anyway? If so, make a declaration of it NOW to your study group members!

4. ***The power to begin a new life awaits each of us, as well, when we cease telling the stories that keep us stuck.*** (pg. 60)

Do you have a “special” story that you have been telling for any length of time? If so, can you see how it has kept you stuck in the past or projects you into the future?

If you have a “story” are you willing to stop telling it and enter the mystery of the here and now where a new life awaits you?

5. ***Opening and closing, receiving and letting go, is the natural pulse beat of Life itself. It is the universal Intelligence behind the heartthrob that animates, sustains, prospers, heals, grows, and evolves all things alive.*** (pg. 62)

Are you willing to trust that in the mystery of that which is yet to be, there is something wonderful awaiting you? If so, come to the edge by declaring to the group, one thing you know it is time to let go of and breathe!

**Discussion Points For Chapter Five**  
**Plumbing the Depths of Your Own Potential**  
*The Deeper You go the More You'll Know*

1. ***What we shall discover on the pathway of uncertainty is that creating a life worth living has no borders, boundaries, or barriers around it, other than the ones we erect ourselves...***(pg. 68)

- What beliefs might you have grown up with that, ultimately, became the borders and boundaries which have kept you in the box of the known (aka the Rut)?

2. ***Inherent within us lie the yet unrealized seeds of possibility for anything of which we can conceive.*** (pg. 69)

- Understanding that the seeds that grow in consciousness must eventually sprout in your outer life, what seeds are you *currently* nourishing with your focus of attention and thought energy that may be less than life affirming?

- Conversely, what type of seeds shall you choose to nurture Now and in all future “Nows” as you enter through the gates of uncertainty and into the mystery of that which is yet to be?”

3. ***When we look at people who have done or are doing great things in the world, it is obvious that they have, one way or another, accessed the seed potential of greatness from within and brought it to the surface.*** (pg. 74)

- Can you name a few people you believe have demonstrated the principle of Infinite Potential? Can you see that the same principle lies within you as well?



4. ***Regardless of how old we may be chronologically, it's never too late to redefine who we believe ourselves to be. It may require we walk through an emotional mine field of uncertainty to get there but the effort is well worth the undertaking.*** (pg. 81)

- To discover who you are you must first discern who you are not. As you mature spiritually, you can choose to peel away the labels that don't honor who you discover your real self to be: Can you identify some of the limiting labels that may have been placed on you, by you or others, that have covered over your Infinite Potential? If so, which ones are you willing to peel away and discard for "good."
  
- Do you live in fear of receiving disapproval from those who may not like it when you start peeling away your unwanted labels? Are you ready to "sing your song" for you?



### **Optional Process**

- I. Read the visualization of "Lake Potential" (page 69) as a guided meditation. Again, remind them that, while they have already read it to themselves, it can be quite a different experience when someone else reads the process aloud allowing them to become totally immersed in the meditation.
  
- II. Then invite the group to share what their experience was. Were there any new insights regarding the accessibility of limitless good?

## Discussion Points For Chapter Six

### Failure Is Not an Option

*The Yes Factor Never Sleeps*

1. ***...how many of us actually stop and take time to look at those areas in our lives that appear not to be working as well as we might like, and then realize we really are succeeding at failing.*** (pg.94)

Can you pinpoint any area of your life you have labeled as a failure and see how the Yes factor has been operating flawlessly, producing negative results, perhaps because you were unaware of the impartial Law of Cause and Effect and how it operates?

When it comes to what the world labels as either “success or failure,” are you willing to take total responsibility for yourself, realizing that, because of the Yes factor, you are *always* a success in becoming ‘cause’ to our own effect?

2. ***The problem with identifying too closely with what’s wrong with our life and the world is that, when we buy into that belief, it is like baiting the trap of a self-fulfilling prophesy into which we then step.*** (pg. 100)

Do you ever catch yourself “arguing for your limitations,” justifying why things are the way they are rather than looking to the possibilities that exist in the mystery of the unknown?

3. ***...when you start referring to yourself as a success, the universe doesn’t ask in what way are you a success, it is merely waiting for you to make that decision and place it in the projector of your mind.*** (pg.102)

What image of yourself are you currently projecting onto the screen of life?

What ideas about a life worth living will you bring to the edge of uncertainty knowing you cannot fail?

Discussion Points For Chapter Seven  
**Handle Your Habit Energy Consciously**

*Rising from the Rut*

1. ***...a rut is like a grave with no ends. While there is a certain amount of comfort to be found by staying in the rut, where redundancy is the way of life, if we do we will never enter the mystery of the unknown where new creation, purpose, and meaning awaits us.*** (pg. 107)

Becoming aware that you are in a rut is the first step to identifying where “habit energy” is having its way with you. Can you pinpoint any areas in your life where you are stuck in a rut?

Can you identify with the metaphor of a rut being “a grave with no ends on it”? If you have been stuck in a particular rut for some time, what might your “headstone” read? (i.e. “Here lies the fear of finding a healthy and fulfilling relationship.”)

2. ***The habits operating in your life, conscious or unconscious, good or bad, are serving you in projecting your current self-image onto the screen of your life.*** (pg. 109)

What do your current habits tell you about how you feel about yourself?

If it applies to you, are you willing to observe your habit energy that determines the food and other substances you choose to put into your body and learn from it through self-inquiry, asking yourself why you choose the food and substances you do?

Are you willing to observe your habit energy that determines the quality of the relationships you have in your life and learn from it, even if it brings you to the edge of uncertainty?

3. ***...a habit, in and of itself, is neither good or bad. It is only energy you have utilized either consciously or unconsciously to a point where it no longer requires your intentional direction. What will determine the quality of the habit is whether it is motivated by inspiration or desperation.*** (pg. 118)

- Remembering that a habit is formed by the regular repetition of a specific thought followed by a corresponding action, in what NEW way will you direct the impartial energy of life available to you today?



### Closing Process

**Discussion: For most people it is far easier to commit to a change in behavior as a “test” before making it a lifelong choice.**

- I. Divide the group into dyads and invite each partner to declare to the other, one habit they currently have that they are willing to be vigilant in changing for *the next week only*.
- II. The point is, if you can change your behavior for a week, you can choose to then change it for two weeks, and then three weeks, and so on. There is power in having someone else witness your declaration.
- III. Exchange phone numbers or email addresses and check in with your partner during the week. We can all use a cheerleader when it comes to initiating any change that brings us up and out of the rut.



Week 2

***Work To Do During The Week***

1. Read the following and please come prepared to discuss:

Chapter Eight

**Are You Committed or Just Interested?**

*The Power of the 3 P's*

Chapter Nine

**Patience Is Far More Than a Virtue**

*By the Inch Life is a Cinch*

Chapter Ten

**Setting the Altitude of Your Attitude**

*What type of Mystic Are You?*

Chapter Eleven

**Abundance Is the Gift Already Given**

*How Big Is Your Bucket?*

2. Continue to use your journal and carry it with you during the week. As you read *The Art of Uncertainty* and go through your day, be aware of your thoughts and feelings. If something “clicks” and you get an “aha” about what living in the mystery of the moment means to you, log it in your journal and bring it to the next study group session.
3. Continue to work on being mindful of those moments when you might be feeling too attached to something. If you catch yourself resisting change or trying to force something to change before it is ready to change, try to access your sense of being one with the moment and align with the Universal Presence that knows the appropriate rhythm of all living things. Open yourself to stepping into the mystery of total surrender and trust the process.
4. Become the observer of which seed potential within desires to grow. Be mindful that the Yes factor is agreeing with whichever seeds you choose to bring to fruition.
5. Give yourself permission this week to be the silent witness of how habit energy operates in your life. Just by observing it you will be reclaiming your power to redirect that energy.
6. Remembering that it is the *only* point of access to the mystery that awaits you, spend a minimum of fifteen minutes a day in silence, breathing and feeling one *with* the Presence in the present moment.

# ~ The Art of Uncertainty ~

*How to Live in the Mystery of Life and Love It*

## STUDY GUIDE

### Session Three

Welcome all participants and begin with a quick check-in. Invite them to share any “Ah-ha” moments they may have had during the week, as well as an “Oh-no” moments. By this point the subject matter being studied (and being applied in real time) should have created some “shift” for many of the participants. Have some fun with this and see who has had the most “shift” hit the wall of resistance.

### Discussion Points For Chapter Eight

#### **Are You Committed or Just Interested?**

*The Power of the 3 P's*

1. ***Be it with desires concerning our health, physical fitness, diet, career, relationships, or other interests, without deep commitment and the tenacity to move forward into the unknown, the tendency will be to stop short of our goal and set up camp, settling for less than what in our heart we know we want and deserve.*** (pg. 123)

- Understanding that it is the same qualities of passion, perseverance and persistence that make commitment work in every area of your life, in which area(s) do you find making commitments most difficult to honor?

2. ***The most powerful aspect about being 100% committed to anything is that it sends a signal to the universe that we are serious about being the place where authentic power reveals itself in the human condition.*** (pg. 126)

- What signal are you *currently* sending to the universe?

- ☑ Being 100% committed means going *beyond* the comfort zone and to the point of no return: Can you see the infinite possibilities that lie waiting for you in the mystery on the pathway of uncertainty when your commitment takes you beyond the road sign marked “the point of no return”?

3. ***This seems to be how the universe works as well: Living things that persist, both thrive and fulfill their potential; but, living things that don't persist just sort of endure and survive, merely getting by until it's time to die, but never really “living.”***  
(pg. 134)

- ☑ In what areas of your life are you just surviving (getting by) as opposed to truly thriving? Can you see the relationship between deep commitment and thriving and the role persistence plays?



#### Optional Process

**Discussion:** To help embody and energize the feelings behind passion, perseverance and persistence have one person read aloud the Mindfulness Practice at the end of this chapter as a guided meditation. Instead of using pencil and paper they can use their minds to visualize. (pg. 139)

- I. Remind the group that while they may have read it during the week, doing it again as an experiential process can be very empowering.
- II. Take time to move through the meditation in a manner that everyone can experience the *feeling* of moving past “just being interested” to being truly committed to creating a life of purpose and meaning with passion, perseverance and persistency. Focus on your breath and *being* in the present moment, experiencing the Presence.
- III. Afterward invite discussion regarding the process: Were there any ah-ha's? How did it feel to *see and feel* yourself move past your perceived obstacle? The secret is to “key in” (embody) that feeling so it may be recalled when needed.

Discussion Points For Chapter Nine  
**Patience is Far More Than a Virtue**

*By the inch life is a cinch*

**1. A lack of patience is an interesting dynamic because, in part, it deals with many of the core elements that we have come into this incarnation to learn to transcend, such as a need to control everyone and everything. (pg. 145)**

- Considering the fact that fear is generally attached to an underlying concern of loss of some sort, can you see that impatience is actually the fear of losing control of someone or something in the present moment? If so, can you share an example from your own life.

**2. There is no shortcut to the fulfillment of a life worth living, and sometimes it requires great patience and perseverance, as well as humility, to take the small steps necessary when the temptation for instant gratification is compelling. (pg. 152)**

- Where in your life might you catch yourself following the pathway of instant gratification rather than the high-road of delayed gratification? Diet, exercise, chores, etc.
- Can you see how impatience, laziness and ego based thinking undermines you on your journey to a life worth living?

**3. Learning patience is a foundational element in mastering the art of uncertainty because it keeps us from trying to stare too far down the road ahead where the mystery of that which is yet to be awaits our arrival. (pg. 155)**

- How can the wisdom of “by the inch life is a cinch” best be applied in your life? Share with the group what “little steps” (aka: actions) you are willing to take today, faithfully inching you closer to the edge of the unknown.



**Discussion Points For Chapter Ten**  
**Setting the Altitude of Your Attitude**

*What type of mystic are you?*

**1. Ultimately, your attitude determines how you interface with life...Monitoring your attitude on a regular basis will assist you in reaching your destination.** (pg. 164)

- Are you willing to be conscious and present enough in the moment to witness the altitude of your attitude as you move through your day and make intentional “course corrections” if needed?

**2. Achieving a life worth living is more than possible...it is inevitable. With the right mental attitude you are unstoppable, and it starts by learning how to manage the dynamics of your attitude with conscious optimism.** (pg. 165)

- If there are two types of mystics, which are you; an opti-mystic or pessi-mystic? Do you tend to see the preverbal glass of life as half full or half empty?
- Knowing how the Yes factor works, which type of mystic would you prefer to bring with you onto the edge of uncertainty?

**3. The idea that we bring happiness with us wherever we go is not the way most human beings are conditioned to think because we have been taught that happiness is a condition at which we arrive when everything is as it “should be.”** (pg. 172)

- Have you been waiting for something to change in your life before you can ‘be’ happy?
- Can you relate with the idea that happiness is an attitude *you bring with you* on the journey?

Discussion Points For Chapter Eleven  
**Abundance Is the Gift Already Given**

*How big is your bucket?*


**1. Abundance is the gift already given; we don't have to earn it. Prosperity is the demonstration that we have accepted the gift.** (pg. 184)

- Understanding that Abundance is a universal principle and prosperity is how you demonstrate that principle in your daily life, what size is your “bucket” (consciousness of abundance) at this moment?
- Do you tend to look to the world, i.e., the economy, a job, the lottery, your partner, your parents, and so on, as the source of your abundance and supply, or do you look to Universal Source as the provider of the good in your life?

**2. The Law of Giving and Receiving can't work differently in one area of our life than another. That includes everything from the consideration and respect we give others, to the hugs, smiles, and time we offer others.** (pg. 190)

- Are you a better giver or receiver? If it differs from one area of your life to another can you see that it really is the same law of circulation in action in both areas?
- Does your giving ever have “strings” attached to it, or do you ever avoid receiving from others because of the implied “obligation” to reciprocate?

3. *When you truly love what you do, you do it with love. From a spiritual perspective, loving what you do transforms your 'doing' into 'Being.'* (pg. 196)

-  Do you love what you do? If you don't, knowing what you now know about the universal principle of Abundance, are you willing to come to the edge of your uncertainties and lean over and begin to explore the infinite possibilities that exist in the unknown?



**Closing Process:**

**Today's study group discussion was focused on:**

- a. The meaning of commitment,
  - b. The value of patience,
  - c. The importance of attitude, and
  - d. The availability of abundance.
- I. As a closing process have all participants sit in a circle and ask them to go into a brief period of silent contemplation, exploring all four points of focus, while paying attention to their inner voice.
  - II. Then, one at a time, invite each person to share their name and orally declare to the rest of the group which of the four areas of focus rises to the top of their awareness as the most important for them personally.
  - III. Then invite the entire group to affirm in unison, (Name) "\_\_\_\_\_, I stand with you this week as you live in the awareness of your spoken word in a manner that honors your journey forward on the path of uncertainty."
  - IV. Close with a brief affirmative prayer.



Week 3

***Work To Do During The Week***

1. Read the following and please come prepared to discuss:

Chapter Twelve

**How Conscious Are Your Choices”**

*It's Choice Not Chance That Determines Your Destiny*

Chapter Thirteen

**Pay Attention to Your Intention**

*Your Vision Is Your Compass to a Life Worth Living*

Chapter Fourteen

**Remembering to Remember Who We Are...**

*Mindfulness Makes the Mystery Meaningful*

Conclusion

**The Journey to the Place We Never Really Left**

2. Continue to use your journal and carry it with you during the week being aware of your thoughts and feelings. If you find yourself becoming impatient at any time this week, with yourself or others, see if you can identify the fear that lingers behind the scene causing your impatience.
3. Become the silent witness to those moments when you might be tempted to give in to instant gratification, rather than stay the course of delayed gratification this week. It could be related to your commitments around diet, exercise, chores, work, school, spiritual practices, relationships, or even free time--it doesn't really matter. Just by being a conscious witness to your actions you'll begin to see that you are at choice as to which pathway you shall follow.
4. Put a rubber band on your wrist and wear it all week as a Mindfulness Practice regarding attitude. Each time you notice the rubber band, stop, take a deep breath and check the altitude of your attitude in that moment. If needed, make the adjustment and smile.
5. Spend a minimum of fifteen minutes daily simply sitting in silence and observing your oneness with an abundant Universe. Remember that abundance is yours now. Can you accept it?

# ~ The Art of Uncertainty ~

*How to Live in the Mystery of Life and Love It*

## STUDY GUIDE

### Session Four

Welcome all participants and do a final check-in. For those who have maintained their journals, have they been able to track any habit patterns or behaviors that have kept them stuck in a rut and, if so, what have they done about it? How about the “Homework”? For those who have done the work each week, can they see measurable results? Where, in real time this past three weeks, have they been able to witness themselves avoiding coming to the edge of their uncertainties?

### Discussion Points For Chapter Twelve

#### How Conscious Are Your Choices?

*It's Choice, Not Chance, That Determines Your Destiny*

1. ***The choices you make today have everything to do with who you shall become in the future as you continue your sojourn on the pathway of uncertainty. Every day you make countless choices, so why not ensure that they are conscious choices?***  
(pg. 205)

- Deductively tracing backwards from effect to cause, can you see how your life as it is today is largely the result of the choices you have made in the past? As an example, if you currently carry more body weight than you care to, can you trace that effect back to the choices you have made over a lifetime regarding the food or other substances you have put in your body? Now use the same deductive process regarding other areas of your life such as your relationships, career, and so on.
- Knowing what you now know, were the majority of those choices made consciously, with consideration of the consequences clearly thought out or were they made by default (auto-pilot mindset)?

**2. How often have you held back on making a choice to move forward with an idea or some action because you were uncertain or feared that in the future it might prove to be a mistake?** (pg. 210)

- Knowing what you now know about the power and guidance available to you when you come to the edge of uncertainty, would you have made a choice other than choosing to hold back based on the fear of making a mistake?

**3. Consider the idea that when you come to an intersection while driving your car, the choice as to which way you turn can literally determine what happens next in our life. The metaphor is that your life is always at an intersection. You are at an intersection right now; which way is your life inclined to go?** (pg. 210)

- If your life has been “stalled” at a specific intersection too long, have you made the effort to tune into your Divine GPS and listen for guidance? If not, would this time be a good time to make the effort? Can you describe how you will “tune in”?

### Discussion Points For Chapter Thirteen

#### **Pay Attention To Your Intention**

*Your Vision Is Your Compass to a Life Worth Living*

**1. Training our mind to pay attention is the first step to getting where we want to go...Often times the untrained mind can be distracted...focusing (obsessing) on what's wrong or not working--where we have already been, or where we don't want to go.** (pg. 228-229)

- Taking an honest look at your average day, is your mind more focused on what you don't want or what you do want?
- Using the metaphor of the automobile, do you focus more on “the rearview mirror” of where you have already been (the past) or is your attention on your intention of where you want your life to go?

2. ***Do you have a vision for your life? If you don't, it is never too late to create one. Are you willing to look into the depths of your own heart and see who it is you have come here to be?*** (pg. 238)



### Optional Process

- I. Divide the group into diads and invite each person to describe their vision of a life worth living to their partner. Remind them that they are dealing with an infinite and abundant Universe that operates solely on the “Yes” factor and that as they move forward on the pathway of uncertainty the only limits are the ones they set for themselves.
- II. Then read page 238-239 orally and discuss each of the qualities and components necessary upon which to build the foundation of a vision.
- III. Did each person include those necessary aspects in their description?
- IV. Are they willing to set their intention to move forward toward their vision even if they don't know all the “how to's” yet?
- V. Remind participants that the Universe is waiting for them to declare the “where” first, which can only come from the vision they hold. The “how's” are revealed as they are needed...but first they must step to the edge of that which is yet to be with a clear vision.
- VI. Open for discussion and sharing.

**Discussion Points For Chapter Fourteen**  
**Remembering to Remember**  
**Who We Are, Where We Are, and Why We Are**  
*Mindfulness Makes the Mystery Meaningful*

**1. Mindful living is a lifestyle. It's a way of consciously walking a sacred earth experience, incorporating purpose and an awareness of Divine Presence in all that we say, think, and do on our journey in this lifetime. (pg. 248)**

- How might your life be different if in every moment of every day, reverence became a conscious practice in the midst of whatever you are doing or whomever you are with?

**2. This quest, if we are to honor the calling, will require us to continue to come to the edge of uncertainty time and time again. This doesn't mean every few years, or even in those times when we may experience those unavoidable life changing events; it means every day of our lives. (pg. 248)**

- What would have to change in your life to mindfully practice the awareness of Presence in every sacred moment so that it becomes second nature to you?

**3. As we master the art of uncertainty, we learn the value and meaning of being present because in every "Now" moment there lies a silent blessing we might have otherwise overlooked. (pg. 253)**

- By being mindfully present in the Now, can you see the silent blessings in every sacred second of every day that you might normally miss or take for granted because your focus is elsewhere? Name one or two right now and share with the group.



Discussion Points For The Conclusion  
**The Journey to the Place We Never Really Left**

**1. If we fail to apply the core concepts of this book to the largest mystery of all, the miracle of Life, we miss the deeper meaning of our journey altogether. (pg. 266)**

- As you look at the miracle of your life can you see that from the day you arrived here you have *always* lived in the mystery of uncertainty whether you were aware of it or not, and whether you liked it or not?
- Since you began reading *The Art of Uncertainty* have you taken time to explore the greatest mystery of all; the miracle of your life--from where you have come, and what you are doing here?

**2. Because uncertainty is our invention, it is we who give meaning and power to it and, therefore, we can revoke that power. (Pg. 268)**

- At this point in our study have you been able to pinpoint the areas of your life where you may have given your power away to the fear of uncertainty and do you now feel better equipped to call your power back?
- Living in uncertainty will either empower you and set you free to explore and express life beyond your highest expectations and greatest dreams, or it will weaken you and hold you as a fearful hostage to the mystery of that which is yet to be. Which perspective do you choose for your life; fear or freedom?

## Closing Process

- I. Begin a brief closing dialogue by asking the group if they have been able to see the benefits of “coming to the edge” and leaning into the mystery of life and, if so, has it opened any new doors for them. Being the final group session, can they identify any specific area of their lives where the study of *The Art of Uncertainty* has been most beneficial and how are they applying it in their lives?
- II. Form a circle with the participants of the study group and then read the following quote from *The Art of Uncertainty* on page 269:

*“The most precious gift we have ever been given by the Infinite One is the miracle of Life, itself; what we choose to do with this Life is our gift back to the Giver.”*

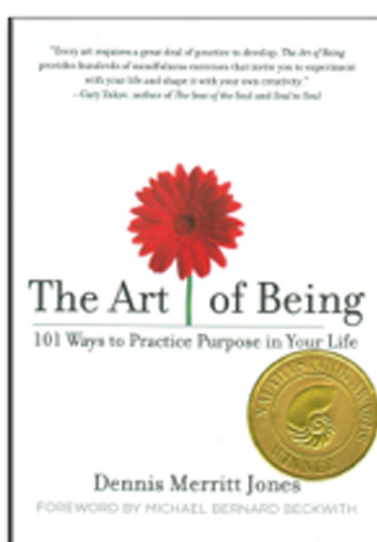
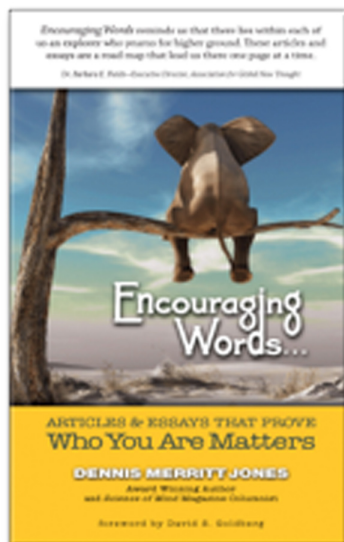
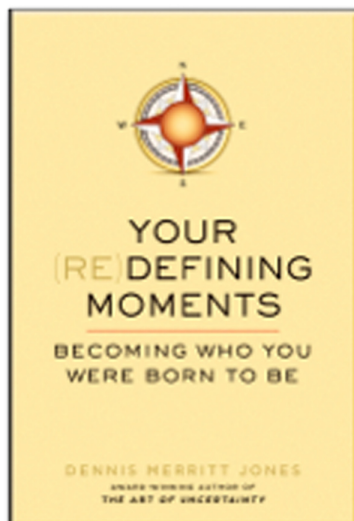
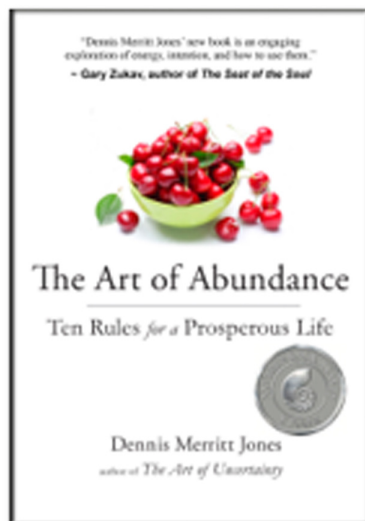
- III. After the quote has been read invite each person to individually share what, to them personally, is the *single* greatest gift they now know is theirs to give back to Life and how it applies to their newly acquired skill of coming to the edge of their own uncertainty and leaving over.
- IV. Close with a brief prayer or meditation based on the Zen quote, “Move and the way will open.”



*If you felt empowered by*

## **The Art of Uncertainty...**

**You will love Dennis'**  
**other books, all available in**  
**Paperback, Kindle, and on Audio.**



## **The Art of Abundance**

*Ten Rules for a Prosperous Life*

## **Your (Re)Defining Moments**

*Becoming Who You  
Were Born to Be*

## **The Art of Being**

*101 Ways to Practice  
Purpose in Your Life*

## **Encouraging Words**

*Articles & Essays That Prove  
Who You Are Matters*



Dennis Merritt Jones brings his vision of “Guiding People to Purpose” to the world through his books, keynote speaking, online seminars, retreats and mentoring. He may be reached through his website:  
[www.DennisMerrittJones.com](http://www.DennisMerrittJones.com)