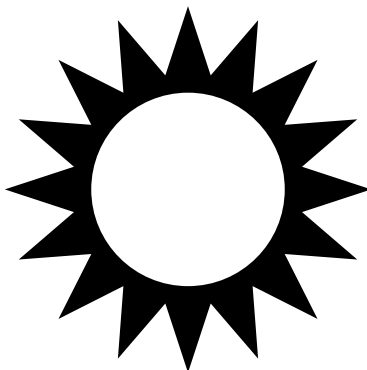


Chapter One: The Illusion of Hell

A decent into truth by Ascended Phoenix

(You awaken what's real)

"Hell was never beneath you. It was the blindness within you. The moment you see, the fire becomes light."



“What if hell was never a place, but a perception? What if the fire we feared was the light of truth breaking through the illusion?”

This chapter begins the unraveling. The remembering of who you’ve always been beneath fear, shame, and noise of the world. As you read, allow your heart to soften. Each word is a mirror, each silence an invitation.

Welcome to the first step of your rising.

You don't have to fan it into a wildfire yet. Just protect it. Honor it. That spark you found, that moment you stood in your truth, even briefly is enough. Because now that you've remembered your power, even for a moment, you'll never fit inside the places you used to shrink for. And that's good. Discomfort is proof of awakening. Resistance is proof of transformation. Because from here, we don't float upward in bliss. No. Now we descend into the very places that taught you to forget who you were in the first place.

Hell is not fire and brimstone...it is familiarity. It is the quiet agreements you made with fear just to survive. It is the voice in your head that isn't yours, programmed to doubt, diminish, and delay you. Hell is the system that taught you obedience disguised as goodness, silence disguised as peace, and self abandonment disguised as love. It is the roles you were praised for playing while your true self starved beneath the costume. It is the spiritual chains formed in the name of control, the societal standards you were conditioned to worship, the inner critic who speaks with the authority of every voice that ever shamed you. Hell is not somewhere you go...it is something you learn to live in. And most people call it normal.

No one walks into hell knowingly. You are slowly coached into it. Praised for being "such a good helper" as a child. Applauded for being low-maintenance, quiet, agreeable. Told that patience earns love, that obedience deserves safety. Later, you're admired for overworking, for holding everything together, for being the one who "never complains." You become the reliable one, the strong one, the understanding one. Not because you were born that way, but because your survival depended on it. Every time you swallowed your feelings to keep the peace, every time you softened your voice so you wouldn't be "too much," every time you

laughed at a joke that made your stomach turn, a brick was laid. They didn't build your prison for you. They trained you to build it yourself and call it virtue. You learned to measure your worth by how much you could carry, how well you could endure, how quietly you could suffer. And because everyone around you was doing the same. The exhausted mother holding back tears in the grocery store, the pastor preaching joy while his hands shake from burnout, the father who only knows how to love by providing, not feeling...you assumed it was normal. That is the trick of hell: it convinces you that imprisonment is responsibility, numbness is strength, and exhaustion is love.

Hell isn't always misery. Sometimes its sparkles. And that's how we stay there. You can be drowning in gold and still feel hollow. You can have the promotion, the accolades, the house in the "right" neighborhood, the marriage everyone admires, the ministry that draws applause and still feel like your soul is shrinking. The corporate executive who stays late every night to meet "expectations," the mother who keeps the perfect home while ignoring her own exhaustion, the pastor who preaches faith while his heart is quietly breaking, the influencer who smiles for the camera while her spirit screams for silence. All of them are still inside Hell. They are praised for being "called," "driven," "successful," when really they are obedient to cages built by others and reinforced by themselves. They decorate their prison with trophies, labels, and rituals of "responsibility." Convincing themselves that constant fatigue is normal, that emotional numbness is maturity, that self abandonment is loyalty. They polish the bars so carefully that stepping out feels almost ungrateful, even reckless.

And yet, even inside this glittering prison, there is always a crack. A flicker of recognition that something is off, a whisper that the life you've been living doesn't quite fit. You notice it in the exhaustion that never fully leaves, the quiet dissatisfaction that no success can soothe, the way your

body tightens when you say yes out of obligation instead of desire. These small signals are the beginning of seeing the bars for what they are. Not walls you must obey, but constructions you were taught to maintain. Awareness is the first act of rebellion. It doesn't free you immediately, but it shows you the possibilities that you can stand differently, speak differently, and choose differently. That, even here, rising is possible.

Hell works because it wears many face, and most of them feel familiar. For one person, its the relentless critic inside the mind the whispers they aren't enough. For another, the the family, the boss, the institution, or the community that insists they shrink to keep everyone else comfortable. For some its the spiritual doctrines that taught them fear is devotion, obedience is love, and guilt is a sign of care. And for nearly everyone, its all of these combined. The inner voice amplified by external expectations, polished with ritual and habit until it feels unbreakable. The beauty of this Hell is in its relatability: everyone can recognize it in themselves, yet few notice that it is optional. Most carry on thinking it is reality, because everyone else is carrying it too. That is why rising is such a shock...it is not just leaving a place, it is leaving what everyone believes is "normal."

The first step of breaking free is simple, though not always easy: notice. Notice the voices, the rules, the "shoulds" you have carried without question. Notice the exhaustion, the tension, the little compromises you make every day just to fit in. Name them. Speak them. Write them down if you have to. Awareness is your flashlight in the dark, your first crack in the polished bars. It doesn't free you instantly, but it shows you where the weight is and where your energy has been siphoned. From there, you begin to see choices. Small at first, that remind you: you are not required to shrink, you are not required to obey silently, you are not required to sacrifice your truth for the comfort of others. Rising begins in this noticing.

Chapter One Practice: Noticing Your Hell

1. Physical Awareness Anchor

- Sit or stand quietly. Close your eyes and scan your body for tension, tightness, or heaviness.
- Notice where you feel restrained. In your shoulders, chest, jaw, or stomach.
- Place your hand over those areas and breathe deeply. This is your body *recognizing the weight you carry*.

2. Internal Audit

- List the “voices” you hear in your head. The rules, “should,” and expectations that pressure you.
- Name them specifically: “I should...”, “I must...”, I’m not enough because...”
- Writing them down externalizes them; speaking them aloud gives them less power over you.

3. Daily Micro-Observation

- For one day, notice every time you shrink, soften, or compromise to avoid conflict or discomfort.
- Journal these moments, noticing how your body feels and what your mind is thinking.

4. Boundary Check-In

- Identify one small boundary you’ve been ignoring or bending to please others.
- Practice enforcing it gently and saying no, asking for space, or pausing before agreeing.
- Notice how it feels. This is the first taste of acting on your own power.

5. Reflection Prompt

- At the end of the day, write or speak: *“Where did I notice myself shrinking today? Where did I reclaim even a small piece of my power?”*
- Recognize even tiny victories; they are the **foundation of rising**.

6. Integration Breath

- Close your practice with three deep, intentional breaths.
- Imagine your energy expanding outward while staying grounded inside.
- Feel your awareness of Hell and your small acts of reclamation coexist.

This is your first active stance toward freedom.

These practices are small, but they matter. They are the first cracks in the polished bars, the first breaths of power you’ve allowed yourself to take in years. Do them consistently. Notice, name, act. Even in tiny increments, and the weight of Hell will begin to shift. This is not the end of the journey. It is only the beginning. Because now the you have seen, even glimpsed, the ways you have been confined, it is time to act. Time to move. Time to rise with force. The next stage is coming. Prepare yourself...the bulldozer stage awaits.

You've just walked through the fire. Not to burn, but to see clearly. Let this awareness settle into you before you continue forward.

When you're ready, the path continues in

Chapter Two: The Bulldozer Phase

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