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Any serious look at human history will show how frequent and important altered states of consciousness (ASCs) are. Sometimes some can be pathological, but some are sources of great insight and inspiration, and often ASC experiences were the keys that started spiritual disciplines which became our great religions. Ordinary, apparently rational, consciousness is wonderful for many tasks, but too often it rejects the very existence of ASCs, much less understanding that they are real, they can be valuable if used properly, and they can be trained and cultivated.

Ordinary consciousness tends to overvalue the physical, the material, at the expense of the spiritual. As any thinking person knows, overpopulation, greed, and ignorance are seriously threatening material progress. People can intellectually appreciate this and wish to change, but often it is the deep spiritual insights possible from ASCs that are what is needed to create real change in people. We can all agree intellectually that we should be considerate of and kind to each other—but when there isn't enough to go around and our animal instincts demand we take care of ourselves at the expense of others, it's hard to resist them from intellectual conviction alone. If a person has had the kind of ASC experience, on the other hand, where they KNOW at the deepest possible level of their being that we are all one in a real way, it's no longer that you *should* be nice to others, it's the obviously sensible thing to do!

Thus I am very pleased at the formation of this website, dedicated to increasing our understanding of ASCs, and wish the website and its creators and contributors the greatest success!

— **Charles T. Tart**, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, Palo Alto, California, U.S.A.