



# The Future of the Body: Explorations Into the Further Evolution of Human Nature

[Michael Murphy](#)

In the oral and written histories of every culture, there are countless records of men and women who have displayed extraordinary physical, mental, and spiritual capacities. In modern times, those records have been supplemented by scientific studies of exceptional functioning. Are the limits of human growth fixed? Are extraordinary abilities latent within everyone? Is there evidence that humanity has unrealized capacities for self-transcendence? Are there specific practices through which ordinary people can develop these abilities?

Michael Murphy has studied these questions for over thirty years. In *The Future of the Body*, he presents evidence for metanormal perception, cognition, movement, vitality, and spiritual development from more than 3,000 sources. Surveying ancient and modern records in medical science, sports, anthropology, the arts, psychical research, comparative religious studies, and dozens of other disciplines, Murphy has created an encyclopedia of exceptional functioning of body, mind, and spirit. He paints a broad and convincing picture of the possibilities of further evolutionary development of human attributes. By studying metanormal abilities under a wide range of conditions, Murphy suggests that we can identify those activities that typically evoke these capacities and assemble them into a coherent program of transformative practice. A few of Murphy's central observations and proposal include:

- The observation that cultural conditioning powerfully shapes (or extinguishes) metanormal capacities.
- The proposition that we cannot comprehend our potentials for extraordinary life without an empirical approach that involves many fields of inquiry and different kinds of knowing.
- The notion that a widespread realization of extraordinary capacities would constitute an evolutionary transcendence analogous to the rise of humankind from its primal ancestry.
- The proposal that all or most instances of significant human development are produced by a limited number of identifiable activities such as disciplined self-observation, visualization of desired capacities, and caring for others.
- The idea that a balanced development of our various capacities is possible through integrated practices.

In *The Future Of The Body*, Murphy states that such practices can carry forward Earth's evolutionary adventure and lead humanity to the next step in its development.