



### Daniel Ingram: Skillfully Navigating the Dark Night



Dr. Daniel Ingram is a physician, meditation teacher and practitioner, author, co-founder of the Dharma Overground, researcher, and organizer of the Emergent Phenomenology Research Consortium. Plumb the depths of the Dark Night of the Soul in this irreverent exploration of spiritual phenomena.

**TOP EMBODIMENT TIP:** Keep a sense of humor about this stuff if you possibly can.

#### The Dark Night: Fear, Grief, Misery, and the Desire to Change Your Life

- The Dark Night generally follows a peak experience, breakthrough, or arising and passing away event.
- If you don't have expert guidance, find support in real life or online.
- You may need to stop or modify your spiritual practice during the Dark Night. Assess for yourself, there is no one-size-fits-all approach.
- If the Dark Night has you fixated on yourself, think about helping others. Being of service can shift your perspective.

#### Self Care: How To Keep Yourself Going

- If you feel off kilter, try reality testing. Ask yourself: Am I OK? Am I safe?
- Grounding into your body can be helpful, but may be triggering for those with dissociation or derealization.
- Use rapture as an anchor: appreciate the sensuous beauty of simple joys, invite a sense of fascination and wonder.
- Practice skillful distraction: exercise, eat good food, and get plenty of sleep. Bodywork such as massage is helpful.
- Be careful with substances and addiction. If you feel you may relapse, seek help.
- Protect your mental health. If you are reactive and freaking out to the point where you can't function, seek help.
- When speaking to loved ones or mental health professionals about your experience, scale your language to the general population; avoid spiritual jargon that may be misunderstood.

#### Transformation: Change and Growth Involve Resistance

- Remember this is not a linear process. You will repeat the cycle many times, becoming more competent each time.
- Spaciousness, perspective, and clarity are helpful. It is worthwhile to learn skills to help you get through this time, as they will translate to crises and hard times in all aspects of your life.

#### Resources

- ❖ **Books:** *Mastering the Core Teachings of the Buddha*
- ❖ **Podcasts:** [The Monk on a Motorbike](#), [Chaotic Thinking](#)
- ❖ **Websites:** [theEPRC.org](http://theEPRC.org), [mctb.org](http://mctb.org), [Spiritual Emergence Network](http://Spiritual Emergence Network), [cheetahhouse.org](http://cheetahhouse.org), [dharmaoverground.org](http://dharmaoverground.org)
- ❖ **References:** *The Body Keeps The Score* by Bessel van der Kolk, *On Grief & Grieving* by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross & David Kessler, *Mindfulness in Plain English* by Henepola Gunaratana, *A Path With Heart* by Jack Kornfield, *Loving Kindness* by Sharon Salzberg, *Spiritual Emergency* by Stansilav Grof, *Breaking Open* by Jules Evans



**Daniel Ingram**





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