



On the Verge Q&A with Author Cara Bradley

What is *On the Verge* about?

On the Verge is a call to wake up and be fully alive. By learning to shift beyond your busy mind—distraction, drama, doubt, and fear—you arrive, or show up, in this exact moment. This allows you to tap into your limitless potential to shine by directly experiencing your natural clarity, vitality, and confidence. .

What is the verge?

The verge is this moment. In this exact moment there's a gap, a split second of time, when you're not quite in the past and not quite in the future. In this moment you are on a threshold, you are on the verge. The verge is where you feel awake and fully alive. The verge is where you feel clear, bright, and available for life. It's where you wake up, show up, and shine.

What does it mean to live on the verge?

Living on the verge is not about *doing* more, but about *being* more. It isn't about *achieving* more; it's about *experiencing* more. It's not about being someone different, as there's no "better version of you" on the horizon. You experience living on the verge when you shift beyond your busy mind and directly experience the sense that everything you're searching for is available to you right here and right now.

Why did you feel compelled to write this book?

I've discovered from teaching fitness and yoga for the past thirty five years that it's easy to get caught in the cycle of striving and searching and to forget to recognize we already have many of the attributes we're searching for. I feel compelled to help people get out of their own way, wake up to how they're living, and have more energy, clarity, peace, joy, and confidence on a daily basis.

Where did the contents for this book come from?

On the Verge is based on my curiosity about human potential and my own direct experience of being awake and alive. The insights I share in the book flow from my own investigation and discoveries. My intent for this book was not to try to rehash the words of great masters of philosophy, science, and religion. I offer a raw and unfiltered expression of how it feels to break free of the confines of a cluttered, often chaotic mind and to be conscious in a human body in a busy world.

You call yourself a human potential junkie. Can you explain?

During an extraordinary peak experience in the course of a college track race when I was 19 years old, I experienced an exhilarating sense of aliveness beyond anything I'd ever encountered. I became hungry for answers, sparking a lifelong curiosity about human potential. Over the years I've taken thousands of yoga classes, sat in meditation for hundreds of hours, spent days in silence, chanted, prayed in sweat lodges, had my chakras cleared, read countless books, studied the great world religions, bungee-jumped, zip-lined, and walked on hot coals. I searched outside myself until I let go and allowed my intelligence and aliveness to emerge from within.

In your book you talk about being awake and fully alive, can you tell us about this?

Being awake and fully alive is a direct experience of life exactly as it is in the moment. I call it living in *high definition* with *high voltage* energy. Living in high-definition is engaging in the world with all your senses. It feels crisp and clear. It's like seeing life through the eyes of a child again, when you recognized the smallest details of life and where everything appeared bright and vivid. High voltage energy is your aliveness. It's the powerful source of energy running through you right now. It feels like having the wind at your back and an extra spring in your step and it's available to everyone in every moment.

What is the busy mind and what happens when we shift beyond it?

"Busy mind" is a catchall term I use to include anything that pulls you away from showing up in this moment. Your busy mind includes the thoughts, emotions, stories, and perceptions that often trap you into stressing and overthinking your way through life. Simply put, your busy mind is an overwhelming place to live. The mental junk drains you; the drama and distraction always leave you feeling exhausted. When you are settled and calm, you shift beyond your busy mind and recognize there's a better way to live. In this space you experience a sense or state of clarity, vitality, and confidence — your natural state of being awake and fully alive.

Explain more about our natural state.

Your natural state is ordinary and always available to you. It's a state in which you're present and simply living in the moment. You don't need to improve anything. You don't need to change. You experience this very normal and natural way of being when you show up in this moment, aware of your senses and surroundings. You tap into your natural state in the space that lies just beyond thinking. It's in this space where you experience yourself as having a clear mind, bright body, and open heart. In your natural state your mind and body connect or synchronize and you feel awake and fully alive.

The verge practices and strategies are an important aspect of your book. What are they?

The Verge Practices are easy-to-use tools that help you get to know your busy mind and shift to the space beyond it where you'll recognize glimpses, short moments, of your natural state. They include mindfulness techniques, movement methods, meditation practices, and reminders to show up. The Verge Strategies are more than practices; they help you experience your natural state more often by helping you navigate your life and maintain balance. They include ways to synchronize your mind and body, make friends with yourself, and let go of forcing and fixing.

Tell us more about the verge practices.

The Verge Practices are easy-to-use tools to help you get to know your busy mind and shift to the space beyond it where you'll recognize glimpses, short moments, of your natural state. The practices include:

- **Notice This Moment:** A toolbox of mindfulness exercises to help you recognize your direct experiences in practice and in your daily life
- **Move My Body:** A way to synchronize your mind and body through movement and discover how rhythmic movement settles and calms your mind and nervous system.
- **Meet My Mind:** A way to synchronize your mind and body through silence and stillness and become familiar with how your mind operates.
- **Notes to Self:** Reminders, questions, and intentions to help you consistently wake up, show up, and shine.

Tell us more about the verge strategies.

The Verge Strategies are more than practices; they help you experience your natural state more often by helping you navigate your life and maintain balance. The Verge Strategies include:

- **Be in Sync:** Tuning into your mind and body to maintain clarity and balance and turning to silence, stillness, and rhythm to stabilize and synchronize.
- **Be Kind:** Making friends with yourself by invoking kindness, tenderness, and humor.
- **Let It Go, Let It Be:** Letting go of your need to force, fix, or flee in order to become available to experience exactly what is happening in this moment.
- **Be Aware:** Checking in with your mind to recognize when you are not aware.

In your book you share your belief that “life is not a spectator sport”. Can you tell me more about this?

Life is too precious to treat like a spectator sport. Instead of sitting courtside watching the game happen in front of us, I encourage people to wake up and show up right here and now and directly experience their lives fully. As I explain, we can experience life in different ways. Some are direct, some are secondhand, and some are muted. Secondhand experiences are someone else's interpretation of an event or encounter. A muted experience occurs when you're mentally distracted or emotionally drained and can feel like looking at life through a distorted or blurry lens. Direct experiences happen in present time; they're your full sensory experience of whatever's happening right now. For example, you smell the ocean, you feel cold, or you see the blue sky. Your direct experiences feel vivid, like seeing life in high definition. They put you in the center of your game of life and make you feel awake and fully alive

In your book you write about how drama drains my energy and focus fuels it. Can you explain?

I use the word “drama” to describe the destructive emotional traps you get caught in when you live from your busy mind. Whatever form it takes, drama will drain your energy and suck the vitality right out of you. In today's culture of overdoing, it's easy to feel depleted. Spend twenty minutes surfing social media, and you'll feel the energy sucked out of you. Get emotionally involved in someone

else's family issues, and you'll find yourself caught in the web of drama. There's a better way to live that goes beyond words. Drop the drama before it drains you. You can interrupt a potentially destructive moment by pausing to sit still or to take a few breaths. You'll shift beyond your busy mind and experience your ever-present high voltage energy.

You write in your book that making friends with yourself is essential to living on the verge. How can I learn to be kinder and more patient with myself?

Feeling unworthy is taking you on the long road to nowhere. Judging and comparing yourself to others is a royal waste of time. Beating yourself up for not working out, for eating the pint of mocha fudge ice cream in the freezer, or for quitting early during meditation practice is useless. Unless you stop judging yourself and start making friends with yourself, you'll keep spinning your wheels on the proverbial road to nowhere. I offer easy strategies to start making friends with yourself including observing the way you speak to your pet or small child, what I call your "love object," and speaking to yourself in the same sweet and patient tone, or tuning in and noticing your inner dialogue. If the dialogue is unkind or downright mean, you interrupt it with a kind word, a tender gesture, or some comic relief.

You use the word shine throughout the book. What does it mean and how do I shine?

Shining is a metaphor for what happens when you directly experience life with all your senses. It's the result of being 100 percent engaged in this exact moment right here and now. When you shine, you do everything better, with attentiveness and excellence. Your words are truthful and genuine. You're available to others. You radiate a brilliant sense of peace and possibility. Wake up from the trance of your busy mind, get out of your own way, drop the drama, and you're on the verge — in this exact moment — where you're already shining.

Were you really a professional Rollerblader? Tell us about that.

Yes, it's true. I was a member of the performance group Team Rollerblade. I was based in New York city and traveled around the world performing hip-hop shows and teaching people to in-line skate to raise the awareness of the sport and to promote the company, Rollerblade. It was amazing to be a part of the fast growing and trendy in-line skating world and to connect with enthusiastic skaters around the world. Now I skate for fun. It brings me incredible peace and joy. When I skate I feel awake and fully alive.

As an entrepreneur, do you have any advice to those who want to start a business?

I've been a lifelong entrepreneur having started and closed over a dozen businesses. My current business, Verge Yoga, a yoga and meditation center in suburban Philadelphia has kept me busy for the past twelve years. My advice for those yearning to start a business is simple. Get clear on exactly why you are passionate about your service or product. Take the time to dig deep into why you're willing to spend your countless hours and energy on this particular business. Ask yourself how your service or product will make your customers feel and how it will improve their lives. Knowing the "why" brings a positive energy to your product or service. Without it you're business will lack the vitality necessary to be sustainable.