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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: Society is a reflection of its people. As we are transformed, so is our society. We believe that personal growth and spiritual awakening co-evolve and are intricately related and that such growth is facilitated by *thoughtful reading*. *Lotus* hopes to energize, stimulate, and inform readers on their journeys of self-awakening and inspired living. *Lotus* is dedicated to providing resources for personal and spiritual development. Our purpose is to provide our readers with the most thoughtful writings available, current and time honored.

We chose the name *Lotus* because it is one of the most sacred symbols from antiquity. The seeds of the lotus contain, even before they germinate, perfectly formed leaves, the miniature shapes of what one day as mature plants they will become. This is a powerful reminder of the vast potential within us to manifest our essence, to be the grand men and women we were meant to be.

From the Editor..

When you hear the word *goodwill* you may think of the Christmas holidays as that is the only time our culture advocates goodwill. Yet goodwill has power enough to transform our lives and frequently warrants our consideration.

We all hunger for goodwill and thrive in its presence. We suffer from a lack of goodwill in our culture and are deeply moved when it is extended to us. We remember acts of kindness and become more loving when we are touched by goodwill.

Goodwill is cheerful willingness and an inclination to do kind or charitable acts. Susan Page, in her book *Now That I Am Married, Why Isn't Everything Perfect*, defines goodwill as the spirit of generous kindness. She suggests focusing on positive aspects, being grateful, accepting qualities that you don't like in family and friends, respect, trust, and the desire to give freely as aspects of goodwill.

Goodwill is present when we focus on the positive and de-emphasize the negative. Goodwill teaches us to relate to positive aspects in people and relationships. It reminds us that we can choose which thoughts to support. We decide what to think about and what to dwell on. Focusing on thoughts causes them to grow. With goodwill we choose to nurture the best in ourselves and others.

We recognize goodwill when we give or receive the benefit of doubt. In relationships it means being on the other person's side and knowing that they are on your side. When two people share goodwill their spirits are open to each other and they experience mutual fair play. With a foundation of goodwill we behave in reasonable ways even when upset, because we have empathy with the other person's point of view. We are as concerned with meeting our beloved's needs as we are our own. Even in disagreements we assume the other means well.

Goodwill fosters gratitude. We become thankful for our life, health, and loved ones. To cultivate gratitude, spend time talking about the good things in life; this is easy since it is a pleasant activity. Goodwill breeds tolerance. Rather than nagging, belittling, or criticizing dear ones we encourage and support them, realizing that we all have limitations and struggles. Trust and respect flourish as we come more accepting. Our interpersonal environment becomes kind. We feel emotionally safe with one another and intimacy increases. Goodwill makes us generous, giving love and lightheartedness freely, wanting nothing in return.

Let's invite the spirit of generous kindness to heal and guide our lives.

Welcome to Lotus.



Mary NurrieStearns
Editor

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Letters



Following are letters from our readers. We encourage readers to share stories of growth as they inspire others. Your feedback and input are important and welcome.

REFRESHING TO READ

How refreshing to read articles (like Henryk Skolimowski's "Taking Responsibility" and Harold Becker's "Responsible Choices" in your Summer 1994 issue) that extol the virtues of self-reliance and personal responsibility. In an age when so many so-called self help practitioners push the concept of external or "magical" solutions to life's obstacles, LOTUS is to be commended for consistently publishing articles that promote self discovery and the tapping of inner resources.

The "Success Stories" column is an excellent example of this. Thank you for passing along these much needed insights and please continue the fine job you are doing.—*Scott Shreckhise, Roanoke, Virginia.*

WOULD OWE FRIENDS APOLOGY

I was very embarrassed to receive your last issue of LOTUS with the nude couple and sensational titles on the front page and sex tapes for sale on the back page. Many of the articles are interesting and thought provoking. Certainly the authors of these articles deserved a better cover than the one you chose.

I read a lot and share a lot of my reading material with family and friends. I would feel like I owed friends an explanation if I loaned out this issue... actually, an apology.

There are many good magazines available. Please keep yours one of them. You don't need to resort to sleazy covers to sell what you have to say... do you?—*Pamela J. Ellwanger, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina.*

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2/3 page ad
Living Lake Books

Letters

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LEAVES ME OUT

Please cancel my subscription. I never expected a magazine full of sex when I ordered this book, and if sex is what gives you personal transformation then that leaves me out. I believe sex is for a man and a woman in their private relationships, not spread on covers of magazines or flaunted as a wild passionate thing as in movies and TV. I realize it is part of life but I don't think the whole world should be able to watch or see. I don't believe self awakening and inspired living is a nude body or sex.—*Dorothy Nickens, Benton Harbor, Michigan.*

*DOGS IN THE
MANGER?*

It was with humor that I read in your most recent issue's Letters to the Editor complaints about advertisements in the magazine for sex videos and tapes and articles on sex and intimacy. Could these letter writers in their wildest imagination have foreseen the editorial emphasis on the subject that would be carried in the very issue that printed their complaints?

What must they be thinking now? All humor aside, I think I detect a "dog in the manger" attitude in those people complaining about the inclusion (to say nothing of focus) in the media on this particular topic.

Can the complainers not recall a time when they were dearly interested in finding out everything they could about sex? Will they carry moral wounds forever from gaining familiarity with the subject? Have they lost all empathy with others so that they are unable to

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John Kenedy University

North Star

Feldenkrais Guild

Letters

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imagine anyone having interest in something that they do not?

Come, come, let's dispense with tongue clucking at mentions of sex. Let's congratulate LOTUS on giving a little editorial perspective to the subject.—*Boo Jones, Minneapolis, Minnesota.*

N O R O O M F O R R E P A R T E E

The "Letter" section is the weakest part of your magazine. Do you ever get letters that are not syrupy, tautological praise for LOTUS? Although I agree with the sentiment of these letters, I do not think that the sole purpose of a letters column is self-serving aggrandizement. Worse, are we all the same? (Being "one" with each other and being the "same" is not one and the same.) Is there no room here for repartee, dialectic, query, contention, discourse, ambiguity?—*Marina Shampaine, Annapolis, Maryland.*

A W O R D A B O U T P H O T O S

One of the qualities that sets apart the wise and wonderful articles in your magazine is your appropriate selection of photographs. They encourage me to read certain articles and they drive home the message of the article.

Your illustrations were especially meaningful in "Learn from Love" (Vol.3, No.4); however, I found the photos chosen for the "sexuality" article to be stilted. I appreciate the difficulty you must have had just finding suitable photos. But was this the best you could do?—*Bette Moore, Des Moines, Iowa.* •

Success Story



Without Breasts A Woman

L A N A A L L E N

This chapter of my life begins when I was faced with a double mastectomy. I had suffered for many years with swollen, lumpy, painful breasts. My first surgery at age 26 was to remove a fibrosytic and benign lump. Following the mastectomy in 1983, the pathological report read, "Multiple sections of breast confirm an extremely dense fibrous structure, with relatively scant amount of fat"; 75-80% of my breast tissue was fibrosystic.

My doctor didn't give me a choice of implants but even if he had, I would have trusted his judgment. What would I have known? The implants that were used were suppose to be the best on the market, Natural Y with Optoman design. It was not told to me that the silicone was surrounded with polyurethane foam, the same material used in making couches and pillows. The polyurethane foam would grow to your skin and the implant would not encapsulate and seem very natural. The foam did grow to my skin and literally bonded with it.

A week after my surgery, I stood in my full view mirror and my breasts looked like Frankenstiens bride's breasts. They were swollen, dimpled, and discolored. I was very depressed.

By January 3, 1984, the implants had literally popped out of my breasts close to my nipples. You could see the implants. Small pimples appeared approximately six weeks after my implants had been put in. My doctor put me on antibiotics but the pimples ended up becoming holes which my implants seemed to wear through.



Lana Allen, Pompano Beach, Florida.

Feldenkrais

Light Institute of Galisteo

from vol 3 #4 page 14

strip in the stuff below in their up coming events

July 24-August 6 **Kids Venture** Kids Venture runs for two weeks for children between the ages of 8 through 12. The participants will have workshops created especially for the needs and characteristics of their age group.

August 7-13 **Sexuality** Broaden your experience of the divine force and allow shame and seduction to surrender to joy and freedom. Sexuality is not what separates us from enlightenment; sexuality is an inherent quality of our Earthly existence which will merge us into enlightenment.

August 14-20 **Dance Of Relationship** Uncover not only the male and female incarnations you have experienced, but also the genetic coding of your true yin & yang energies. This unification allows us to communicate genuinely with the men or women in our lives.

August 26-28 **Awakening The Fearless Self** Identify the ways in which we use fear as a stimulation and give in to 'survival stress'. Through consciousness exercises you will feel the strength of surrender and come to accept your power.

August 29-September 3 **Soul Lessons Through The Body** Discover the soul lessons of AIDS, Cancer and other life threatening illnesses. Dis-ease is not a punishment, but rather a path to self awareness and enlightenment.

Success Story

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I was visiting a friend near Aspen so I called my doctor in Austin. He told me I would have to have my implants removed and wait six to eight weeks until the infection healed before having others inserted. I asked for a referral in the area as I planned on staying with my friend. Since I had no more insurance, this Doctor agreed to remove them giving me drugs to anesthetize the pain, but I was fairly conscious. This turned out to be an experience I wouldn't forget.

The implants had done their job well. They would not come out. The doctor tugged and pulled and tugged and pulled. The polyurethane plastic had grown to the skin. Finally, he got the silicone implants out leaving the shells of plastic in my skin. Reading the report from the doctor years later, I realized this was not a dream. He wrote of the difficulty he had in removing them.

In February, 1984, another set of implants was put in. Once again I wasn't given a choice but I also wasn't aware enough to ask. At this point I still did not know that polyurethane foam rubber implants had been used the first time. The Double-Lumen by Coxuphoff was the next choice. These were silicone with an outer shell of saline around the silicone.

Very shortly thereafter the scenario worsened. The polyurethane was doing its best to work its way out of my breast just as slivers of wood work their way out of your skin. For the next three years I was in and out of the doctor's office. The doctor would deaden my breast and then proceed to "pick" the foam out of my breasts. Infection after infection, antibiotic after antibiotic—nothing seemed to work. There was one more surgery to remove a rather large piece of foam.

In 1985, my left breast began to look smaller. When I reported this to the doctor he told me that the outer lining of the implant which had saline in it, had broken but not to worry since it was saline. I was visibly smaller on one side. In addition to

having multiple scars and disfigured nipples.

Believe it or not, I was married in 1984 during all of this. Unfortunately I was paying a very high price emotionally. I was abusing alcohol and had almost overdosed on pills. Every time I went into the doctor's office to have a mini-surgery, I would get a prescription for two or three 10 mg. Valiums. I would buy a half-pint of vodka or bourbon, take the pills, and go unconscious. It was immediately after a surgery and a whole bottle of pain pills that my new husband found me overdosed. I kept thinking I could not live like this forever but I didn't want to die either. We were only married one year. He had his own issues to work through with women but my rage and anger with my health didn't help. I then started counseling which probably saved my life.

My former husband urged me to go to a lawyer. I had grown so close to my plastic surgeon after what we had been through I didn't want to sue him. In my heart of hearts, I still believe he had no "intent" to do anything wrong and was doing everything he knew to make this thing right. We did check into product liability. Supposedly, the lawyers investigating the Natural Y implants found they were the best on the market. Unfortunately they did not do their job well. I have since found that the Heyer-Schulte Corporation, a California based manufacturer of medical devices, gave away the patent with no charge as far back as 1970.

My life in those years was paradoxical in some ways. I meditated morning and evening. My spiritual hunger was strong but my desire to not feel my feelings must have been stronger. The paradox is that meditation brings up everything that is hidden and alcohol covers it up, so again I was pretty depressed.

Interestingly, within six weeks

Expanding Light

McClelland Music

College of William and Mary

Intuition Magazine

after my divorce my breast healed. Shortly thereafter I applied for admittance to seminary to follow my dream of becoming a Unity minister. In 1987, I moved to Kansas City, Kansas, thinking my breast problems were behind me.

I found that I continually got respiratory infections and was diagnosed with pleurisy. I really didn't think too much about this because I was living in a colder climate and colds seemed normal.

After moving to south Florida, I was still sick regularly. I felt like I had low level flu and mumps. I never got so sick I couldn't work but I often felt bad. Once again I was having respiratory infections. I lost my voice on occasion, had difficulty swallowing and sinus irritation. People in my congregation wondered why I was sick so often and so did I.

I began to hear about the specific problems that the implants were creating. Who would have thought respiratory problems, flu-like symptoms, and the feeling of having the mumps (due to lymph gland swelling) would have anything to do with implants? I read an article about a blood test called ANA, Anti-nuclear-antibodies test. When my test came back positive my doctor referred me to an Rheumatologist.

After much ado and a lot more money, I was diagnosed with SLE, Systemic Lupus Erythemtosus and silicone adjuvant immunological disease with serological autoimmunity. Was there a choice about having my implants taken out? It didn't seem so. I consider myself a young woman at age 45, and the thought of going breastless didn't seem like an option. I soon found that there really were no options. The saline implant is in a shell of

silicone. I didn't have enough fat anywhere on my body to rebuild breast. I was really scared.

One night after scheduling the surgery to remove my implants, I had a dream. In the dream I participated in removing my implants. I held them in my hands and realized that I was not angry or resentful towards them. After all they were just bags of silicone. Then I looked down at my now nonexistent breasts and said, "This isn't so bad. I can live with this." The dream was very healing and affirming. January, 3, 1994, ten years after the original implants popped out I had my implants removed. I am awaiting another surgery to remove my nipples, take out the excess skin, and re-attach the nipples. This will leave me totally flat.

The miracle is that I have been feeling wonderful. I have not felt so good emotionally and physically in years. I am surprised at how much better I feel. The low level of depression that hung over me has been lifted. I am amazed at how well I am living with my decision.

Through this process I have noticed some feeling of shame. Why my breasts? Do they represent something in my unconscious that is unresolved? Possibly and probably yes, but what is still not clear. I trust in the process to unfold as it should.

Life goes on. I have been clean and sober for many years and I do want to live. My dream of being a minister has come true. I was ordained a Unity minister in 1989. I currently am the minister for Unity Church of Pompano in Pompano Beach, Florida. My congregation loves and supports me.

If anyone would like more information I suggest reading *The Silicone Breast Implant Controversy*, Frank B. Vasey, M.D. and Josh Feldstein.

The following is a poem I wrote

TURN TO PAGE 90

Alchemists Ad

MOON BEAR AD

Success Story



Celebration of Change

M I C H A E L K I N G

I was eight years old, drinking Old Crow whiskey, and I was drunk. I learned early to pattern my behavior after my father. The victim's role I learned from my mother. These critical parts of my personality would cause years of struggle, as I attempted to deal with my life. I learned to use Old Crow to deaden my emotions, to make me feel good when I felt bad, and to help ease the difficult periods of growing up in an alcoholic home.

Even now there are times when I question whether the trauma and craziness really happened. The self-doubt and questioning are there because I want to conclude that everything was all right. The reality is that it wasn't all right. It was a home where love wasn't expressed openly. There was conditional love but I was never sure what the conditions were.

My drinking continued from that early age through high school and college years, and my tolerance for alcohol grew with continued use. The earliest blackouts occurred when I was sixteen. I could drink more than most of my friends and that was a badge of honor that I wore with pride.

As I entered the work world, married Janice, my high school sweetheart, and became a father the drinking patterns were somewhat dormant, but definitely there.

A family tragedy was critical in changing the pattern of my alcohol abuse. Janice and I lost an infant son. My inability to fulfill the roles of consoling husband and father and take charge/pillar of strength, together with an overwhelm-



Michael King, San Ramon, California.

ing sense of unresolved grief, had a profound impact on me. I didn't understand the grieving process and we didn't get the kind of support that we needed to be able to cope with, and understand, the tragedy that we had just been through. In an effort to hide the pain I turned more heavily to alcohol.

My abuse of alcohol turned rapidly to full blown alcoholism and I was on a downward spiral. More and more I lost touch with the world around me and the chasm between my family and myself was becoming wider and more impossible to bridge.

On July 7, 1977, I was very ill. I was overweight and my face was puffy. My eyes were darkened from interrupted sleep and my nervous and metabolic systems relied on alcohol in order to function somewhat "normally." Spiritually I was lost. I had tried to take control of my life away from God and give it to alcohol.

Emotionally I was running on empty, and had been for some time. I loathed the person I had become. I was a drunk and close to reaching the limits of my endurance. A decision had to be made to change my life and try to start anew or avoid making a decision and continue toward certain self-destruction.

I called my cousin Jim, who had been in recovery for a number of years, and in a drunken fog told him that I desperately needed help. Jim told me to go to bed, get some sleep and promised to be at my house the next evening. That night I collapsed into my alcoholic stupor and slept until the alarm clock went off the next morning. I was sick and scared and filled with an overpowering anxiety. I wasn't sure there were any reasons to continue to want to live.

In a daze I dressed and began my forty-five minute drive to work. I don't remember much about the

Reiki Plus Ad

Steven Nash Publishing

Dharma Publishing

EXPRESSIVE THERAPY

Success Story

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drive, but I vividly remember a three minute segment that will remain imprinted on my memory forever. I had reached the decision that I was not strong enough to face the world without alcohol. The only logical conclusion seemed to be to end my life. I was approaching a freeway overpass at seventy five mph and my full intent was to crash into the concrete columns. But I didn't do it. And I'm not sure why. My next memory is driving on the freeway about fifty yards or so past the overpass. I don't remember deciding not to do it nor do I remember steering my car so that it followed the safety of the road. Immediately there was a sense of relief, and at the same time a feeling of deep disappointment. I couldn't end my life and still didn't believe that I could deal with my alcoholism and rid myself of the overwhelming feeling of despair.

Jim arrived at the house that night and an hour later we went to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. That night I completely surrendered. I admitted with tears and trembling voice that my life was completely out of control, I was alcoholic, and I needed help. My pain was intense. But with the hurt came a release of feelings that had been pent-up for so long. It was the beginning of my recovery process. The joy of my recovery is that it hasn't been a lonely journey because there have been so many others who share my journey.

My best friend, the love of my life, is my wife Janice. It is because of her love and caring that I am here today. She believed so deeply in the man that she once knew that she was willing to fight to find that man again. Amazingly, she was able to care enough to enable change in me and still strong enough in her own right to not become trapped in the disease. Her love is the kind of which beautiful stories are written,

Jeremy Tarcher Ad

and I have been fortunate to be the one that she loves.

My cousin Jim has been a source of strength and healing for twenty years. His willingness to share his recovery was a critical step in turning my life around. His love, and our special relationship of respect and understanding, is one of the real treasures in my life.

My children were too young to realize fully the disease that was dominating their family. As they have grown, their love, patience, curiosity, and willingness to listen and learn have been so nourishing. They understand the disease and are working their way through the feelings and adjustments that the understanding calls for.

Alcoholics Anonymous saved my life. The magic of the program was embodied in its powerful simplicity and focus on survival. AA helped me through the mine field of early recovery and gave me a foundation upon which to build my future. My

counselor has been a blessing. She has helped me squeeze into the scary areas of memory and understand the dynamics of where I came from and what I am capable of becoming.

I owe a deep debt of gratitude to the hundreds of people who have been part of my life as active addicts, recovering addicts, and those who find themselves somewhere in between. It is through helping and understanding others who suffer from the disease that I have been able to continue my own journey of recovery.

My life is a celebration of change. It's so good for me to be able to remember those days when I believed with all of my heart that I could never function without using alcohol. The changes that I have made are truly amazing and I am very grateful. The best part is that I am able to continue to grow a little bit more each and every day. •

Holotropics Ad

strip in from page 28

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Success Story



Allowing Truth Into Our Life

R O B I N K O T O K

For those of us who grew up in dysfunctional families, truth had an elusive quality. It was denied, ignored, omitted, or spoken in whispered half truths, ostensibly out of the earshot of children. As a child I had a vague feeling that a sense of mystery surrounded our family and that secrets lay lurking about like a sleeping cat—quiet yet poised to strike at any moment. I survived as best I could living in the atmosphere of anxiety which results from an absence of truth. As an adult I tried to push this feeling aside and get on with my life, though a sense of uneasiness continued to plague me.

The truth finally began to emerge six years ago when my mother summoned the courage to share some of her pain with me. When my mother was ten years old, my grandmother, who had been widowed since my mother was an infant, gave birth to an out of wedlock baby who was put up for adoption. The shame connected with the incident was something my mother had not been able to make peace with. Furthermore, the child, now a middle aged woman, had contacted my mother, grandmother, and other relatives some years before when she accidentally discovered the name of her birth family. They all met and my mother reported it was “an unpleasant experience.” The woman continued to call her but my mother grew tired of her questions and terminated any further contact.

I often wondered about this woman, my aunt. The little my mother had told me caused me to sense some sort of con-



Robin Kotok, Penfield, New York.

nection, yet I did nothing. As my sister and I continued our own healing, we spoke of this often but could not quite summon the courage to take action.

I believe there are no coincidences and that events unfold when we are ready. Six months ago my sister, who lives in another state, accidentally ran into a friend she had not seen in several years. The friend told her that she had been at a family gathering in Canada where she met a woman who said she was our aunt. I felt compelled to contact her although I did so with trepidation. I spoke with my aunt briefly on the phone and we arranged a meeting at her house in a nearby city.

As I neared her house I wanted to run away—away from the truth, away from a part of myself. I approached the door trembling. It opened and a pair of arms reached out to hug me. As I looked up I stared in disbelief into my grandmother's eyes. As the afternoon unfolded joyously, I came to know a warm, loving, and intelligent woman who exemplified the art of forgiveness. Although she had her own difficulties in life, she was neither bitter nor angry and had no desire to inflict pain on anyone. We laughed a lot as we discovered we shared personality characteristics and interests and had a similar outlook on life. By finding my aunt, I felt I had found a part of myself as well as an understanding of the unhealthy family dynamics I had grown up with.

There is a Stevie Wonder song called "Used To Be" in which there is a line, "I believe the truth will set us free." I found that the truth freed me from years of speculating and imagining. Moreover, it enriched my life as I began a wonderful new relationship with a remarkable woman. Yet there was

more to be done. In order to attain complete freedom I felt I must reveal the truth to my mother.

Recently, I traveled across the country to celebrate my mother's seventy-sixth birthday with her. Gripped by fear and anxiety I felt uncomfortable from the moment I arrived. Yet in spite of the discomfort or perhaps because of it, I felt compelled to complete what I had begun. With gentleness, patience, and love I told my mother the story. Despite her surprise, my mother was moved by my honesty and understood my need to connect with my aunt. Although my mother stated she had no interest in pursuing a relationship with my aunt, she clearly respected and acknowledged my right to do so.

As we finished sharing our thoughts and feelings, I embraced my mother and told her I respected her enough to tell her the truth and, more importantly, that I loved her. With quavering voice she replied that she loved me and always had and then held me to her in loving silence.

Barriers then began to break down between my mother and myself. Years of resentments and misunderstandings crumbled until I now feel I have come full circle in my relationship with my mother. As I did when I was a child, I feel that I can now trust my mother to give me unconditional love and support and through my own healing, have come to a place where I am able to return those feelings. Moreover, I believe I have begun to set my mother free. She is beginning to rid herself of the secrecy and shame and make her peace with the past. By allowing the truth into our lives, together we are healing our relationship and individually we are healing ourselves. •

L O V I N G W E L L



PHOTO PROVIDED BY KUSHI INSTITUTE, CLYDE MOTOSUE/SHIATSU

Healing Arts

M A R Y A N N V A V A L E T T E

*"The greatest of all pleasures is the pleasure of learning."
—Aristotle*

The healing arts offer stimulation and nourishment along our transformational journey, helping us develop awareness, discipline, and a healthy self. There are many ways: dreams, dance, touch, body movement, visualization, meditation, prayer, or participation in age-old ceremonies and teachings—all healing through the integration of mind, body, and spirit. Listed here are only a few. Find something that you enjoy. The process of healing is self-discovery and re-education that only you can do.

- **AYURVEDA**, an ancient art of healing, is a Sanskrit word that means the "science of life." A system of life rather than a medical regimen, the Ayurveda philosophy teaches that health comes when the forces of body and mind are in balance. Restoring balance begins with an analysis of the individual's mind-body type and grouping it according to the predominance of one or more basic life forces, or doshas: (enthusiastic, restless) vata, (sharp, orderly, quick to anger) pitta, (easy-going, high stamina) kapha. Diet, exercise, and herbs are among treatments recommended. Deepak Chopra, MD, is one of the leading authorities on the mind/body connection and author of *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind*. To obtain the audiocassette program and the *Ageless Realities Guidebook* contact Nightingale Conant, 7300 No Lehigh Avenue, Niles, IL 60714. (800) 525-9000.

- **CROSS CULTURAL HEALING PRACTICES** utilize the universal methods of storytelling, dancing, singing, myth, and ritual as they relate to healing ourselves and our relationships. Angeles Aaron, cultural anthropologist and teacher, utilizes the wisdom's of ancient cultures and shows how they apply to our contemporary way of life. The tools of ritual, native American drumming journeys, Mayan symbolic art, stories from Basque and other cultures are used in this healing process. Held at Creative Energy Options Retreat Center in the Pocono Mountains. Call (215) 643-4420 for more information on this and other healing programs, including Wellness Counseling with Jeanne Achterberg and Frank Lawlis, exploring principles relative to the mind-body aspects of wellness enhancement and the healing process, integrating spiritual perspectives, transpersonal theory, psychology of the body, and psychology of meditation.

- **SHAMANISM IS AN ANCIENT HEALING TRADITION** involving healing through personal transformation as well as healing our family, community and environment. Ceremonial celebration, pilgrimages to sacred spots and proper daily living are part of achieving this balance between ourselves as human beings and our environment.

The "Dance of the Deer" a beautiful and intense sacred dance of the Huichols of Mexico, induces a trance state of joy and ecstasy. Brant Secunda, a Huichol Shaman, directs the Dance of the Deer Foundation, leading workshops and ceremonies throughout the US and Europe. Contact the Foundation at PO Box 699, Soquel, CA 95073. (408) 475-9560.

- **HEALING WITH SOUND AND MUSIC**, an ancient musical tradition, is an essential tool that brings people together, empowers attention, sustains deep states of healing and awareness, and purges illness from the body. Ancient peoples val-

ued music and sound for its profound affect on body, mind and spirit. Gregorian chant, Balinese dances, Bach masses, Tibetan prayers, and ethnic folk songs evoke states of consciousness that have healed believers for centuries. The Institute for Music, Health and Education is dedicated to the exploration of sonic arts in education and therapy. Director Don Campbell is a pioneer in the healing aspects of sound and the effects of self-generated tone. He is also author of "Music and Miracles" and "Music: Physician for Times to Come." For further information contact the Institute at PO Box 4179, Boulder, CO 80306. (303) 443-8484.

- **THE FELDENKRAIS METHOD** offers us a second chance to recapture the comfort and ease of living we knew as children. Developed by Moshe Feldenkrais, this work supports healing by teaching how to "use ourselves well," the results being that we sit, stand, lie, and move with greater ease and pleasure. Verbally-directed movement sequences and hands-



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C I I S A D



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on lessons effect improvements in the organization of our nervous systems. Dr. Feldenkrais demonstrated that when the brain recognizes a correct, more comfortable and efficient movement, it seeks that way in the future. For information and training programs contact The Feldenkrais Guild (800) 775-2118.

- **HELLERWORK** is a system of body, mind, and movement work. It relates physical structure to human function in the context of a healing relationship and is based on the principle that by balancing the

body's structure and freeing natural movement and expression, innate wholeness is revealed. Using connective tissue reorganization techniques, the body is realigned and natural ease emerges as awareness comes to body movement habits. Balance is a process of constant flux, a fluid expression of wholeness and ease. Alignment is physical, emotional and spiritual. For further information contact Northwest Hellerwork, 3418 Densmore Ave.N, Seattle, WA 98103. (800) 243-5194.

• **HOLOTROPIC BREATHWORK** is a method of self-exploration, personal transformation, and healing that comes from the word “holotropic” that literally means “moving toward wholeness.” It is based on and combines insights from modern consciousness research, depth psychology, and various spiritual practices. Through breathing, evocative music, and focused release work, non-ordinary states of consciousness are induced to allow the spontaneous healing potential of the psyche. Workshops with Stan and Christina Grof are offered in the United States and Canada. To learn more about Holotropic Breathwork, contact Grof Transpersonal Training, 20 Sunnyside Ave, Suite A-314, Mill Valley, CA 90494 (415)383-8779.

• **MACROBIOTICS** provides a way to make positive changes in our lives by opening the door to practical healing methods for body, mind, and spirit. That a balanced and healthy body and psyche precede the birth of world peace is macrobiotic thought. Spirit and nutrients from what we eat give us energy to combat illness and become a creative and spiritual force. Michio and Aveline Kushi established the Kushi Institute to offer macrobiotic educational programs and seminars, presenting the many dimensions of the macrobiotic way of life including the Art of Cooking, the Practice of Shiatsu, Principles of Diagnosis and Natural Home Gardening. They provide an ideal setting for this in the Berkshire Mountains of Massachusetts. Contact The Kushi Institute, Box 7, Becket, MA 01223. (413) 623-5741.

• **FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS** women have collected plants from meadows and woodlands to create healing medicines. Remedies to

Kushi Institute

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build and strengthen the body's natural immunity and defense mechanisms were tried, proven, and passed on from mother to daughter, from wise woman to apprentice. There are many books and teachers on this wonderful subject. Rosemary Gladstar, with 20 years in the herbal community as healer and teacher believes, "Though there are marvelous instructors, the best teachers of herbalism are the plants themselves." Contact her at Sage Mountain, East Barre, Vermont. (802)479-9825. Correspondence courses available. Herbal Healer Academy, HC32, 97-B, Mountainview, AR 72560. For herbal preparations, contact Wild & Fresh Herbal Products, PO Box 116, Cheshire, OR 97419. (503) 998-6236.

- MUSIC bears its own vibrational frequency which influences the state of mind. Frequency levels determine the impact of music on the human mind and even transform energies to bring us into altered states of consciousness favoring spiritual growth. Robert

Haig Coxon, professional musician and composer, has spent many years researching the effects of music and color on well-being at both physical and mental levels. He is the author of *Cristal Silence Trilogy*, used to diminish stress and negativity, and help the listener attain inner peace and a greater awareness. For further information contact Audio Alternatives, PO Box 405, Chappaqua, NY 10514. (800) 283-4655.

- RECONNECTING OUR VOICE with our mind-body coordination is a means to recovering our true self. The search for one's natural voice is a process of rediscovery and can touch a creative energy which is the true source of our sound. Muscular and psychological habits often get in the way of reflexive functioning and turn into protective defenses. Letting go of preconceptions of the way we think our voices should sound and becoming aware of mental and physical habits that hinder our true voices from emerging are also part of the process. For information and workshops, contact Jean McClelland,

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Music Health and Education

101 74th Street, #4, North Bergen NJ 07047. (201) 854-7483.

- REIKI is a method of energy healing and easy to learn. It is an effective tool to increase physical, emotional, and mental stamina by reawakening our spiritual connection with our Higher Self. David Jarrell, through his workbooks and seminars teaches techniques to promote healing, relaxation, and stress reduction by bringing healing energy and balance to the body. For information on retreats and seminars and the Reiki Plus Natural Healings Workbooks, contact Reiki Plus Institute, Rt 3, Box 313, Celina, TN 38551, (615) 243-3712.

- STEVEN HALPERN, composer and educator, focuses on healing powers of music. Although the mechanisms through which the healing powers of music operate are moot, there is evidence that certain kinds can assist the body in amplifying its own self-healing energies. This is the foundation for Sound RX, created to research, compose, and produce music that relaxes and heals. The body produces its own natural mood enhancers, called neuro-transmitters, and those that help relaxation are called endorphins. In a state of deep relaxation, brain wave patterns shift and electromagnetic energy fields come into alignment, contributing to the

healing process. For information and catalogues of Steven Halpern's Healing Power of Music, contact Sound RX, 212 Van Tassel Court, San Anselmo, CA 94960. (415) 485-5321.

- THERAPEUTIC SOUND school with Don Campbell, an intensive educational program on the use of sound and music in therapy, health, and personal transformation is presented by Creative Energy Options at the 50-acre retreat center in the Pocono Mountains. Learn and experience its history and application with tone, voice, trance induction, Tomatis Method, imagery, and music. 909 Sumneytown Pike, Suite 105, Spring House PA 19477. (215) 643-4420

- T'AI CHI CHUAN AND CHI KUNG, Chinese Arts with a history dating back thousands of years, embody a philosophy that can be applied to every aspect of daily life. They are practiced for personal growth and healing, developing inner strength, and maintaining good health, as they calm the mind, promote natural self-discipline, and help unfold the human potential. T'ai chi movements are based on observation of the natural world with emphasis on animal movements of grace, power, and playfulness. At the Omega Institute in countryside of Rhinebeck, NY, throughout the summer/fall season,

Sound RX



the day opens with this practice. Various workshops are offered including a Chinese Culture Retreat, Calligraphy, Chinese Medicine and Chi Kung. For a listing of workshops call Omega (800) 944-1001.

For "T'ai Chi in Paradise Retreats" call Chris Luth, Solana Beach, CA. (619) 259-1396.

- SHAMANISM has survived primarily among people emerging from primitive cultures. It relies on special, personal power supplied by guardian and helping spirits. From a shamanic point of view, illnesses usually are power intrusions, unnatural to the body. If you are powerful, you will resist them; the maintenance of one's personal power being fundamental to well-being. Anthropologist Michael Harner offers workshops with emphasis on the classic Shamanic journey to restore spiritual power and health and application to contemporary daily life. He also provides a handbook on practical shamanism—what it is, where it came from, and how you can participate — "The Way of the Shaman." He is founder

and director of the Foundation for Shamanic Studies, PO Box 1939, Mill Valley, CA 94942. (415) 380-8282.

- THE EARLIEST CONTACT EXPERIENCE that a human being receives when it comes into the world is through touch. Touch has a vast language all its own. A system of touch, movement, creative expression, and contact with the healing forces of nature to integrate body, mind, emotions, and spirit has been developed by Ute Arnold. It is called the Unergi Method - Unity and Energy. It harmoniously integrates the work of Gestalt Therapy, Feldenkrais, the Alexander Technique, Rubenfeld Synergy, Nature and Art with the belief that the practice of self-care is essential. Healing emotionally, physically, and spiritually returns to unconditional love as the ultimate expression of self-care. Unergi uses experiences to lead to the discovery that one is already whole. For information on workshops and training programs or a personal interview with Ute Arnold, contact Healing

Circle, Crystal Road, Colmar, PA 18915. (215) 822-0729.

- YOGA, the word comes from the Sanskrit root which means to join. It is a union between body, mind, and spirit with its roots in the Hindu culture of India. Hatha Yoga is the art of healing the physical body through the use of postures (asanas) and breathing techniques (pranayama). Yoga gives the body flexibility and develops inner strength and clarity of mind. It offers us an opportunity to deepen our self-understanding, enabling the body to function in harmony and experience a sense of well-being that comes with relaxation on all levels—physical, mental and emotional. Mount Madonna Center overlooking the Monterey Bay in California offers a beautiful setting and an established community for many Yoga programs. (408) 722-7175. In the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, The Expanding Light retreat at Ananda provides a serene, beautiful environment with daily meditations and yoga classes. (800) 346-5350. •



Love and Healing

L A R R Y D O S S E Y

If scientists suddenly discovered a drug that was as powerful as love in creating health, it would be heralded as a medical breakthrough and marketed overnight—especially if it had as few side effects and was as inexpensive as love. Love is intimately related with health. This is not sentimental exaggeration. One survey of ten thousand men with heart disease found a 50 percent reduction in frequency of chest pain (angina) in men who perceived their wives as supportive and loving.

TONY FREEMAN/PHOTO EDIT

Larry Dossey, M.D., is the author of "Space, Time and Medicine" and "Meaning and Medicine." A physician of internal medicine, he served as a battalion surgeon in Vietnam and was Chief of Staff of Medical City Dallas Hospital. He is currently chair of the National Institutes for Health Office of Alternative Therapy. He is a lifelong student of religion, philosophy, meditation, parapsychology, and quantum physics.



The power of love to change bodies is legendary, built into folk lore, common sense, and everyday experience. Love moves the flesh; it pushes matter around—as the blushing and palpitations experienced by lovers attest. Throughout history "tender, loving care" has uniformly been recognized as a valuable element in healing.

David McClelland, Ph.D., of Harvard Medical School, has demonstrated the power of love to make the body healthier through what he calls the "Mother Teresa effect." He showed a group of Harvard students a documentary of Mother Teresa ministering lovingly to the sick and measured the levels of immunoglobulin A (IgA) in their saliva before and after seeing the film. (IgA is an antibody active against viral infections such as colds.) IgA levels rose significantly in the students, even in many of those who considered Mother Teresa "too religious" or a fake. In order to achieve this effect in another way, McClelland later discarded the film and asked his graduate students simply to think about two things: past moments when they felt deeply loved and cared for by someone else and a time when they loved another person. In his own experience, McClelland had been able to abort colds with this technique. As a result of his personal experiences and research, he became an advocate for the role of love in

Love, empathy, and compassion somehow make it possible for the mind to transcend the limitations of the body. Love is a kind of exalted but unspecialized telepathy—the simplest and most universal expression of that mutual gravitation or kinship of spirits which is the foundation of the telepathic law.

modern healing. He once told a group of his medical colleagues,

I can dream a little about changing hospital environments, one that relaxes you, gives you loving care, and relieves you of the incessant desire to control and run everything. A healthful environment. Certain doctors, nurses, social workers—all of us—can learn ... that being loving to people is really good for their health. And probably good for yours too.

But can love and caring do more

than act *within* a person? Is it powerful enough to act at a distance *between* individuals, overcoming separation in space and possibly in time? Can love unite people over geographical distances even when the "receiver" is unaware that love is being offered? This is a way of asking if prayer works, because when one person prays for the welfare of another, the person who prays is extending compassion, empathy, and love. Can these qualities genuinely "reach out"?

One of the greatest scholars and researchers in the history of parapsychology, F.W.H. Myers, was struck by the fact that people who were "telepathic" with each other—people who could share thoughts at great distances—were frequently connected emotionally with one another deeply and lovingly. Myers concluded that love, empathy, and compassion somehow made it possible for the mind to transcend the limitations of the body. Love was so important in this process that Myers honored it by giving it a place in a natural "law." As he put it, "Love is a kind of exalted but unspecialized telepathy—the simplest and most universal expression of that mutual gravitation or kinship of spirits which is the foundation of the telepathic law."

Virtually all psychic healers who use prayer agree. They claim uniformly that distance is not a factor in the healing power of prayer, and most of them state emphatically that love is the power that makes it possible for them to reach out to heal at a distance. During attempts at healing, healers generally feel infused by love and transformed by caring. This feeling is so pronounced that they typically describe "becoming one" with the person being prayed for. In his landmark study of psychic healing, *The Medium, The Mystic, and the Physicist*, psychologist Lawrence

LeShan—who is perhaps the greatest living authority on the subject—reported the observations of several famous healers:

In Agnes Sanford's words, "Only love can generate the healing fire." Ambrose and Olga Worrall have said, "We must care. We must care for others deeply and urgently, wholly, and immediately; our minds, our spirits must reach out to them." Stewart Grayson, a serious healer from the First Church of Religious Science, said, "If this understanding is just mental it is empty and sterile" and "the feeling is the fuel behind the healing." Sanford wrote, "When we pray in accordance with the law of love, we pray in accordance with the will of God."

In addition to the beliefs of healers that love is vital if prayer is to "get through" and facilitate healing, considerable evidence, both laboratory-based and anecdotal, suggests that empathy somehow connects distant organisms. These entities are of a vastly different variety, ranging from microorganisms to human beings. This fact is important. If empathy indeed connects a vast range of living things, it may be a built-in feature of the natural world, not just a human quirk or perhaps an erroneous observation.

EMPATHIC CONNECTIONS

Empathy, compassion, and love seem to form a literal bond—a resonance or "glue"—between living things. The following observations suggest that when empathic connections are present, feelings experienced by one entity may be felt also by another, in spite of considerable spatial separation.

J. B. Rhine and Sara Feather, of

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the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke University, collected fifty-four "returning animal" cases. Some of them are quite astonishing because there is no obvious way the animal could have known the way back home. Thus these are not "homing" events as demonstrated by pigeons. An example is the case of Bobbie, a young female collie. She was traveling with her family from Ohio to Oregon, the site of their new home. Although the family had made the trip previously, Bobbie had not. During a stop in Indiana, Bobbie wandered, became lost, and could not be found. Finally giving up the search, the family proceeded. Almost three months later, Bobbie appeared at the doorstep of the new home in Oregon. She was not a "look alike"

dog; she still had her name on her collar in addition to several identifying marks and scars.

In another case, a young boy named Hugh Brady who kept homing pigeons as pets found a wounded pigeon in the garden of his home and befriended him. He nursed the bird back to health and gave him an identification tag marked #167. The next winter Hugh suddenly became ill, was rushed to a hospital two hundred miles away, and underwent surgery. While he was still recovering, on a bitterly cold, snowy night he heard a tapping at the window. Hugh summoned a nurse and asked her to open it. In flew a pigeon, which landed with a flutter on Hugh's chest. He identified his bird immediately by sight, which was confirmed by the tag number. Pigeons are well known of course for their homing ability; but #167 was not homing. He was traveling to a place he had never been.

Not only does empathy influence relationships between living things, it is apparently involved in human-machine interactions. In a series of experiments extending over the past decade, researchers at the Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research (PEAR) Laboratory at Princeton University have studied the ability of people to influence the behavior of random physical events occurring in different mechanical devices, such as a microelectronic random event generator (REG). This device produces a string of binary samples, or bits, at a rate of one thousand per second, in trials of two hundred bits each, and counts the number that conform to a regular positive or negative alternation. A human operator sits in front of this device, views on a display the sequence of numbers, and tries to influence the output distribution in either a positive or negative direction—in other words, trying to will the machine's output up or down. In addition to the

REG, many other mechanical devices are employed in the PEAR Lab experiments. Over the years fifteen pairs of individuals have been tested in 256,000 attempts to influence the REG. Their results have been compared to those of ninety-one individual operators, who have generated 2,520,000 trials on the same device. The results indicate overwhelmingly that both individuals and couples working in concert can influence the REG, steering its output from sheer randomness toward a particular pattern. The most successful pairs are couples who are deeply attached emotionally and empathically to each other—so-called “bonded” couples.

This database, the largest of its kind ever collected, is impressive evidence that empathy and emotional closeness allow the emergence of a power that is capable of shaping physical events “out there” in the world. This is supportive evidence for the claims of the prayer healers above. “Love [empathy, compassion, caring, bonding] is the fuel behind the healing.”

Does empathy help prayer “get through”? “Getting through” presumes that there is such a thing as a separate person fundamentally isolated and distinct from every other. This concept may be flawed. As the eminent researcher in parapsychology Stanley Krippner has stated,

Another posture could be taken... namely, that *all* consciousness is basically “group consciousness.” An individual’s awareness, attention,

memory, etc. is socially constructed. Without group interaction, an individual



would never achieve “identification” with anyone or anything. From this viewpoint, “group consciousness” is the fundamental matrix from which “individual consciousness” emerges.

We have for so long defined ourselves as separate personalities that we have fallen into the hypnotic spell of believing that separation, not unity, is the underlying reality. But if *unity, not separation, is fundamental*, then at some level of the psyche, *nothing* may be “getting through” because there are no separate parts for something to get through to.

If this is so, the connections we feel with others during prayer are “nothing special.” We do not have to establish or invent these connections because they already exist. Prayer is not an innovation; it is a process of remembering who we really are and how we are related. From this point of view, there is good reason to rid prayer of its aura that it is some rare state we enter only on certain occasions. If the unity it connotes is not the exception but the rule, there should be no celestial halo surrounding prayer.

This also implies that at certain levels of the psyche, there is no such thing as “understanding” healing because there is no distance separating people that must be overcome. This means that healing of another is in some sense self-healing, for the spatial distinctions between “self” and “other” are not fundamental. Perhaps that is why it always feels good to love another and why our prayers for others are also good for us.

LOVE'S PARADOXES

Of all the trivialized concepts in this so-called New Age, perhaps the greatest involves love. Books pour from the pens of well-meaning patients and doctors alike, attesting to its phenomenal power in healing. Love melts away tumors, cures addictions, banishes fear, catalyzes miracles, transform lives—all this we are told *ad infinitum*. If we could only learn to love and forgive ourselves and others and let go of all our fears, grudges, and hatreds, our health would be better. Paracelsus's

dictum, "The main reason for healing is love," frequently becomes distorted into "The *only* reason for healing is love." The frenzied enthusiasm surrounding love has led to one of the greatest ironies of the New Age, namely that significant numbers of sick people are made to feel guilty in the name of love for not being well.

About ten years ago, a patient of mine developed a breast lump and had a mammogram and breast biopsy which revealed cancer. Considerably shaken, she sought help from a psychological counselor well known for dealing with newly diagnosed cancer patients. This man was deeply convinced that all physical ailments reflected emotional and spiritual shortcomings. On my patient's first visit, the counselor, without bothering to inquire deeply about her history and psychological makeup, stated abruptly, "There are only three possibilities for why you have cancer. You either don't *love* yourself enough, you have some deep seated *fear* you're not in touch with, or you are not *trusting* enough of yourself and others!" Deeply introspective, my patient felt the counselor's observations were simply wrong. "Having cancer is difficult enough without the guilt trip," she said. She rejected his analysis and found help elsewhere. Ten years later, after using orthodox cancer therapy as well as continued inner psychological work, she has no trace of illness.

This is not to suggest that I do not believe in the role of love in healing. As I have explained, I believe it is vastly important, particularly in prayer-based healing. I only want to point out that love should not be enshrined as some magical, monolithic principles in health and healing. When it is, the sick person often pays.

At some point one wants to stand up and demand of all the love merchants, what do you *mean* by

love? There is a tendency in holistic health circles to regard it simply as an emotion that has something to do with unconditional caring, compassion, and empathy. This is fine as far as it goes, but it is only a partial picture. The ancient Greeks, for example, believed that love was the domain of Eros—and Eros was above all mysterious and paradoxical. As Jung explained, "In classical times when such things were properly understood, Eros was considered a god whose divinity transcended our human limits and who therefore could neither be comprehended nor represented in any way." In contrast to most New Agers, the Greeks recognized that many of Eros's qualities were decidedly not nice. Jung agreed. As a result of observing the actions of Eros in the lives and dreams of thousands of his patients, he concluded that Eros was a "daimon whose range of activity extends from the endless spaces of the heavens to the dark abysses of hell ... [and which contains] ... incalculable paradoxes..."

A lot of New Age literature has stripped love of its complexity and sanitized it into something nice that can be made into a simplified formula everybody can understand. Love's mysterious, darker qualities are relegated to the shadows or completely ignored.

The Old Testament story of Job is about the shadow side of love and how one can be victimized by a loving God. Job's story should be required reading for those who today insist on linking spiritual perfection and health, for it shows that horrible things can happen to blameless people and that the currently popular love formulas for health are sadly incomplete.

We are told at the outset that Job was "perfect and upright" (Job 1:1). In other words he did nothing to deserve his fate. But in spite of his perfection, God allowed terrible

things to be done to him—his ten children were killed, his wealth destroyed, his health replaced by disfiguring, painful disease. If we believe that "God is love," then we are forced to conclude that love must be an extremely complex phenomenon—Jung's "daimon" in action.

Things haven't changed much since Job's time. People who are highly spiritual, God-realized, and "enlightened" still become ill. In order to "keep God's skirts clean" as Alan Watts once put it, we hear various rationales for these troubling events. Some say that the sick person only *appears* loving, trusting, and free of fear but deep down, real problems exist which he or she isn't "in touch" with. Or that the sick are living out their karma and "paying back" for transgressions in past lives, or that they "chose" this illness in a previous life, and so on. One gets the feeling that these are desperate, ad hoc attempts to preserve the love-model of health rather than confront the obvious: the model is flawed; love is no guarantee of health, longevity, or anything else but paradox and deep mystery.

What do we really *know* about the place of love in healing? What can we say without undue fear of contradiction? We can demonstrate experimentally that love, compassion, caring, and empathy catalyze healing events and that this power operates at a distance and outside of time. But we know also that love is compatible *with* illness—in the same sense in which Jesus said, "Love your enemies," not "Don't have any."

Love occupies a majestic place in healing. Lying outside space and time, it is a living tissue of reality, a bond that unites us all. •

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HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

J A N E T W O I T I T Z

What does a healthy relationship look like? What does it feel like? How do I get one? How will I know if I have one?" These are very important and real questions that need to be addressed. Wanting to be involved in a healthy, intimate relationship is a universal condition. And defining just exactly what "healthy" is, is a universal question. You know you are in a healthy, intimate relationship when you have created an environment where: I can be me. You can be you. We can be us. I can grow. You can grow. We can grow together.

DONNA DAY/ALLSTOCK

Janet Geringer Woititz is the author of "Adult Children of Alcoholics." She has written several other books, including "Life Skills for Adult Children," "The Self-Sabotage Syndrome," and "Healthy Parenting." Janet is the director and founder of the Institute for Counseling and Training in West Caldwell, New Jersey.



Essentially that's what it's all about. It's paradoxical that a healthy relationship frees me to be myself—and yet I don't know who I am because acquiring self-knowledge is a lifelong process. Although you may not have a strong sense of who you are, you recognize clearly when you are NOT being allowed the freedom to be you. It is clear when you are feeling judged. It is clear when you feel that you are walking on eggs. It is clear when you worry about making a mistake. In effect, the freedom to be you means that your partner will neither interfere with nor judge your process of being and becoming.

You offer your partner the same freedom that you are asking for yourself. And you accept your partner as he is, and do not try to use the power of your love to turn him into a swan. You do not get caught up in your fantasy of who you want him to be, and then concentrate on making that happen. You focus on who that person really is.

"I accept you unconditionally, and you accept me unconditionally." That's the bottom line. It does not mean that changes in personality or actions are undesirable or impossible—it merely means that you begin by accepting your partner as he or she is.

"We are free to be us." Each couple defines their own relationship built on shared values and interests. First, they must decide what they each value as individuals and then they can build a oneness out of their separateness. Some of their differ-

A couple also grows together by developing mutual goals and working together on ways to achieve them. Interestingly, it is the journey toward the goals and not necessarily the goals themselves which help the relationship grow.

ences are unimportant and can be either ignored or resolved. For example issues such as, "You always leave the cap off the toothpaste," or "I hate church socials," can be worked out easily.

Other differences are significant and need to be worked out if the relationship is to remain healthy and survive. Examples of more critical issues are, "I don't want any children," or "I'll never have anything to do with your mother again."

Many experiences are enhanced because the two of you are a couple. Enjoying together the beauty of a sunset, a walk on the beach, a well-prepared meal are examples of the "us" that make a partnership desirable. I am enhanced when I have me, you have you, and we also have us.

A healthy relationship creates an environment where I can grow. In this climate of support, I also encourage you to do the same.

Through the directions of our individual growth, we develop together as a couple.

A couple also grows together by developing mutual goals and working together on ways to achieve them. Interestingly, it is the journey toward the goals and not necessarily the goals themselves which help the relationship grow. Whether or not you attain a goal is part of the process toward the next shared experience.

Intimacy means that you have a love relationship with another person where you offer and are offered validation, understanding, and a sense of being valued intellectually, emotionally, and physically.

The more you are willing to share and be shared with, the greater the degree of intimacy.

A healthy relationship is not a power struggle. The two of you don't have to think the same way about things.

A healthy relationship is not symbiotic. You do not have to feel the same way about all things.

A healthy relationship is not confined to a sexual relationship which must end in orgasm, but one that celebrates sharing and exploring.

INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS: TRUTH VERSUS MYTH

You have been living with many myths generated and perpetuated by your family system. Because of this you put such enormous pressure on yourself that you wonder whether having a healthy, intimate relationship is worth paying the price.

You are torn apart by push-pull issues which may be illusionary to others but are very real and sometimes paralyzing, to you.

"I want to become involved. I don't want to become involved."



"I want to meet someone. I don't want to meet someone."

"I want to get to know you better. Please, simply go away."

These issues interfere with your ability to get what you want out of relationships. If you want to change this, there is a process to follow.

Your first step is to take a good, hard look at these myths. Acknowledge them. Reject them. Then replace them with what exists in the real world. This is by no means a small task because you have been living with these myths for a long time. They will not vanish overnight. Simply becoming aware of them is the place to begin.

RELATIONSHIP MYTH:

"We will trust each other totally, automatically, and all at once."

RELATIONSHIP TRUTH:

In the real world, trust builds slowly.

UNDERLYING ISSUE: TRUST

It is natural for children to trust others. From infancy, they trust that their needs will be met. If this early trust is denied, they die; as they are completely helpless and depend on others for nurture and care. Trust is so natural to children that even in a typical family they must be taught when not to be trusting. Children must be taught not to go with strangers, that it is not safe to run into the street, or to touch the stove. Children in their naivete want to love and trust all people and all things.

In a troubled home, the child's needs are not necessarily totally unmet but they are inconsistently met. This means that trusting people will mean being hurt and therefore that trust is inappropriate. It means that the child must learn how to take care of himself. In order to survive, the child learns how not to trust, that he can depend only on himself. If someone is trustworthy, it is the exception rather than the

rule. When there is an expectation, it is most often met by frustration and disappointment. "Don't trust" is something that the child learns very early and very well. However, it is contrary to the child's nature. It is an adaptive response to a maladaptive situation.

The discussion here is about how to build a healthy relationship. A major element—a necessary prerequisite for a healthy relationship—is trust. Without it, the relationship cannot prosper; it simply will not develop and grow. Trust is not easy to accomplish because you have to unlearn many negative responses and feelings to do it. You have to go all the way back to your early childhood and once again begin to trust.

In a group of adult children, a young man named Lawrence said, "I have just started a new job. I like everyone I have met so far but I am not going to trust anybody just yet. They are going to have to earn my trust."

The group agreed with him.

I said, "Why not trust everyone

and then discount those who violate your trust? It will take much less energy. It doesn't mean you have to act in any particular way. If you decide to trust, you don't have to behave any differently than if you decided not to trust. It would just make it easier for you."

The group was fascinated and wanted to learn more about this approach which was a new one for them. "It costs you nothing to trust automatically," I said. "You end up at the very same place. If you don't trust and someone behaves in a manner that is untrustworthy, then you have affirmed and reinforced the fact that you can't trust anybody. If you do trust someone and he turns out not to be worthy of it, yes, you will be disappointed but you will not be devastated. Disappointment is something that you have learned to handle very well. Affirming the fact that it was a good idea not to trust in the first place does not mean you will not be disappointed. That is the reality of it."

This was a very curious idea to them—something, given their backgrounds, they could not have thought of on their own.

What does trust mean in a relationship? There are several components. First, trust means that your partner will not abuse your feelings and that you will show your feelings. Right there you are stymied as you are already entering into an arena outside your range of experience. Trusting others is one of the primary things you have guarded against since childhood and now I am telling you that it's not going to work anymore.

One of the things that makes a good, healthy relationship so scary is that trusting is the opposite of what you have learned to do. You must trust that the person you care about will not want to hurt you and you must show some of yourself. This is the beginning of getting to

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know someone in a very real way. Trust also means that you will not abuse your partner's feelings and that he will be able to show them to you. It goes both ways.

Secondly, trust means honesty: the other person will say what he means and mean what he says and you will do likewise. Honesty allows you to trust the other person not to lie to you deliberately. When you reciprocate, this helps give substance to your relationship. You will know when you reach out that your hand will touch a solid arm belonging to someone you can depend on. Your relationship won't be "fly-by-night" and you won't be confused.

Third, trust means that your partner will not willfully hurt you and that you will not willfully hurt him. If it does happen, you will want to discuss ways to make sure it doesn't happen again. We cannot always know when getting to know

another person what will be hurtful. It is extremely important to be able to say, "It hurt me when you said that," and for the other person to say, "It's important for me to know that; I don't want to hurt you. I will try hard not to let it happen again."

For many, trust means the promise of no physical abuse. I get angry every time I hear that adults had such terrible childhood experiences that when we talk about trust, it automatically means they want to be rid of the fear of physical violence. Physical abuse is inexcusable in any relationship. Therefore, it is non-negotiable.

Fourth, trust means the freedom to be yourself without being judged. It means that you do not have to walk on eggs, that you can be who you are, and that the other person can be who he is. You are both okay. Not judging yourself and not being judged is a whole new experience, glorious and exhilarating. It is also scary as hell.

Fifth, trust means stability. There is a certainty about the other person and about the relationship. It means that tomorrow's behavior will be similar to yesterday's, that you can count on things, and that you can plan in advance. It means you know that if on Monday you make arrangements to go somewhere on Saturday, when Saturday comes you will be able to do it. Stability, being very inconsistent with your childhood experiences, may be difficult to learn and to accept in another person.

Sixth, trust means commitment to the relationship to the degree that the couple has agreed to be committed to the relationship. If your partner has said, "I will see only you; you are the only one with whom I am going to bed," you need to be able to believe it.

Likewise if you have offered the same thing, you need to behave accordingly. If you are to feel com-

fortable in a relationship, it is important to feel sure that agreements will be kept.

Lastly, trust means that confidences will be kept. You won't have to worry about anyone else knowing your secrets. Neither will you share the secrets of your partner. It is especially important when you have an argument to know that these confidences will not be used against you.

Because trust is different for different people, in addition to these seven points it can also mean whatever a couple decides it means to them, individually and together.

Marlene is an emergency room surgeon in an inner city hospital. Her job is challenging and tough even while it is rewarding and once in a while she comes home feeling as if she's been sleep-deprived and punched repeatedly in the stomach. But she knows that when she's not feeling well, Hal's response will be, "What can I do for you?" It can be 2:00 p.m. or 4:00 a.m. when she wakes him out of dead sleep but she knows that whenever she does, he will be a great source of comfort and security. One day when she got back from the hospital, she went up into the Jacuzzi he had made and he brought her up brunch and just sat by the tub. She can trust that he will be available to her, and because they've been together for so long, she also knows she can say to him, "I need to be in my own space," and he will honor that, too.

This wasn't always so automatic with Marlene and Hal. It is something that they have worked on and discussed over the years—how to be there for each other in ways that are non-intrusive but supportive. In Marlene's first marriage, her husband was never there for her and if she was in need he'd be abusive. As a result during the early years of their relationship, she would always arrange to have a backup, somebody else she could call upon so that

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when inevitably he let her down, she wouldn't fall flat on her face. Hal never let Marlene down but it took her years to be able to trust that. It's something she had to work on consciously. She worked on it by being aware that she needed to work on it. And that works.

The facets of trust I have discussed here, although essential to a healthy relationship, are difficult to build. Trusting another person doesn't happen overnight and you needn't criticize yourself because you find it difficult. Perhaps one of the easiest ways a couple can begin to trust each other is to discuss the difficulties they have with trust and acknowledge that it is something to aim for. You need to commit yourselves to working on trust on a step-by-step basis as the relationship develops. It is very important for you to recognize that trust is not something you can give automatically to another person in the depth

that has been discussed here. It is important for you to know that developing trust is an essential part of the process of building a healthy relationship. At this stage, you may only hear the words and not have any idea of how to put them into practice. This is not unusual, but eventually you will learn to trust.

RELATIONSHIP MYTH:

"You will instinctively anticipate my every need, desire, and wish."

RELATIONSHIP TRUTH:

In the real world, if needs, desires, and wishes are not clearly communicated, it is unlikely they will be fulfilled.

UNDERLYING ISSUE: EXPECTATIONS

You have learned in the process of growing up that it is not in your best interest to have expectations. If you have an expectation, you will at the least be disappointed or at most devastated. It depends on what the promise is and how much it means to you. Unfulfilled promises run all the way from "I'll buy you an ice cream cone" to "I'll send you to college."

You learned that the only way to protect yourself is not to expect anything from anybody. It's a rough way to live but it's safe. You cut your losses.

But—that ever-present "but"—you also cut your gains.

Healthy relationships involve expectations. Not only do they involve expectations, they involve a shared commitment to fulfill them. The shared part is very important because it means that you have to tell your partner what you want and there is an agreement to attempt to meet your needs. To want flowers for your birthday and then become

devastated if you don't get them is not fair to your partner if he had no idea you expected flowers. If he knew and didn't fulfill your expectations, it is important to talk about it because it may be a signal of difficulty in your relationship.

Many people want their partners to please them by being mind readers. That is a setup and comes out of your fears and your questions about whether you are worth anything. If he anticipates your desires when you don't ask, you don't have to suffer over the issue of your value. If he doesn't and you don't ask, you can then put yourself down and lock in your negative feelings about yourself.

If you decide that you will express your desires and they are fulfilled, that is wonderful. But you will probably find the situation stressful because it is unfamiliar. The body does not differentiate between dis-stress (bad) and eu-stress (good) and you as a result may be inclined to sabotage the relationship if it is going too smoothly. That is a response to reduce the stress but there is the risk that you will once again begin to judge yourself negatively. After all if you were a good person, you wouldn't do that. Good things take getting used to. Give yourself a break by allowing some time for the adjustment.

If you make your wishes clear and they are not met, it is important to understand what is going on. If the desire seems reasonable to you and it was not met, you need to find out why. You need to check it out. You may not have been clear. Your partner may not be listening to you. Your partner may be caring about you in terms of himself and not in terms of you. You may have made a demand that he could not fulfill. You might say, "If you care about me and do not express it in ways that are meaningful to me, your caring is not useful to me. It

does not enhance me; it only enhances you." Once this is understood, if there is no attempt to accommodate your needs, it is a sign that the relationship is not developing in a healthy way. Either your demands are too great for your partner to meet or your partner is too self-centered to accommodate you. This is important for you to know regardless of how the relationship is progressing. If you require a lot of nurture, you will not be satisfied in a relationship with someone who is aloof. It simply won't work.

Mutually agreed-upon expectations are essential to a healthy relationship. Explaining away continual disappointment will not get you what you want. People do disappoint those they care about, even in healthy relationships. But it does not happen often.

Harry, an American, married Yael, an Israeli, and the couple came to live in this country. Yael made it very clear to Harry that she needed to return home at least once a year. This was an expectation she had—after all, she was going to leave the land of her birth to make her life with him. Since they knew this from the beginning, they were able to plan for it and it became a part of the way that they lived their lives together.

Sometimes people don't express their desires to spend time with their families and don't set up ground rules for how to do it that can work out and that leads to conflict, the results of which can be serious.

If you grew up in a substance abusing family and attended a support group such as Al-Anon, one of the things that you probably learned was that you could not have expectations of someone who is suffering from the disease of alcoholism. You needed to learn this in order to protect yourself emotionally. This is an emotional pattern

that is very helpful to you in that kind of situation. However, the idea in developing a healthy, intimate relationship is to allow yourself to become vulnerable. And one of the ways in which you become vulnerable is to have expectations of each other.

For example, if you were making plans with an alcoholic and he said, "I'll pick you up at 3:00 PM to take you to the store," you would also need to have an alternate plan to protect yourself from the inconsistency. If you are in a healthy relationship and your partner says, "I'll pick you up at 3:00 PM," then you need to be able to assume that he will. And if he doesn't, that is something that you can talk about and resolve so that expectations will be met. Realistic expectations are important in developing a framework for a healthy relationship.

Many of you do not know what a reasonable expectation is. Is it reasonable for me to ask him to come to my door rather than sit in the car and wait for me to come out? Is it reasonable for me to want him to wear a tie if we go out to dinner? Is it reasonable for me to ask her to share some of the expenses? A typical reaction is, "Since I don't know what a reasonable expectation is and since I don't want to look like a jerk, perhaps I should just keep my mouth shut and see what happens."

That attitude may have some validity but it is also a way to avoid confronting an even bigger fear. Confronting the discomfort is a big step toward developing healthy intimacy. Couples develop their own norms and fulfill mutual expectations. But first, the expectations need to be expressed and discussed. •

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A New Way of Working

T A R T H A N G T U L K U

Most people work primarily for the income they earn. Of course work fulfills additional needs as well: the status of a professional identity, the approval of others, a sense of power and mastery, social interaction, and the simple satisfaction of keeping busy. What all these rewards share is that they are extrinsic to the process of working itself. We work to accomplish particular goals but we seldom find value in the process of working itself.

TOM MCCARTHY/PHOTO EDIT

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This way of working is impoverishing at a very deep level. When work as an activity is not valuable for its own sake, we rarely work with real enjoyment or a sense of deep fulfillment. Such moments do come but they soon pass, leaving only the memory of well-being.

Perhaps this is why people who have worked hard and successfully for many years sometimes come to a point where they question the value of what they have been doing. Their effort has given them a degree of material security and comforts, but has it helped them to develop as human beings? Has it deepened their sense of meaning and purpose? Has it allowed them to get any closer to fulfilling their goals in life? These are not easy questions to have to face.

When we work without real willingness, work is ultimately not very rewarding. We have to force ourselves to do what we do, and this internal conflict leads to exhaustion in spirit and mind that numbs our senses and deprives us of pleasure in the rest of our lives as well. Working with resistance, we are naturally inefficient and our work tends to head in the direction of mediocrity and failure rather than excellence and success.

Even if we work for a cause that we believe in, this same pattern persists. Although we may work with much more energy and commitment, we look past the actual activity of working to its results. Seldom do we consider that work

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itself could be a chance to learn something fundamental about ourselves or give us the opportunity to demonstrate compassion or be an example for others.

Most of us take for granted that we are working for our own benefit, but in fact we do not seem very skillful at satisfying our own needs and wants. We have settled for a lifestyle in which most of our time is dedicated to an activity that we find only partially rewarding. We look for real satisfaction outside of work, putting our lives on hold during the time we are doing our job. Seeking happiness in the margins of our lives, we wind up supporting such negative patterns as addiction and escapism. Work may

give us temporary forms of ego gratification but there is another, deeper part of ourselves that we are failing to nourish. No wonder so many people sense that something is out of balance in their lives.

The culture that I come from offered a clear alternative to these ways of working. Although ordinary occupations were respected, those who sought a more meaningful way of life could choose to withdraw from worldly concerns completely, pursuing a way of life devoted to religious practice and inquiry. Such individuals often seemed to find a special joy and inspiration in what they did, an inner sense of spiritual peace and well-being more meaningful than success in the practical realm.

In this society, alternatives to the world of work are also available. Even if few people today withdraw from the world completely, there are always some who devote themselves to a more spiritual path, whether it is linked to religion, art, service, or the pursuit of knowledge. Rejecting material pursuits and the practical world of business, they seek rewards that they consider more closely linked to the fundamental significance of human existence.

The separation between these two ways of life has long gone unquestioned but in today's world, such a division is simply no longer workable. The strict hierarchies and shared beliefs that supported it in the past are vanishing. Spiritual communities and individuals cannot afford to leave worldly affairs to others, for they can no longer count on support from the larger society. Nor do most individuals working in the world draw sustenance from the efforts of those who attend to the concerns of the spirit, for the sense of deep connection between the spiritual and the worldly realms is lacking.

As the trend toward social frag-

mentation accelerates and spreads to every part of the world, the consequences of this split between spiritual and worldly are severe. On the one hand, spiritual values become increasingly marginalized. It becomes ever more difficult for those concerned with spiritual matters and questions of ultimate concern to find the material support that will let them pursue this path. On the other hand, the tremendous accomplishments of this culture in the material realm come to seem hollow, undermined by a growing sense of meaninglessness and dissatisfaction and a suspicion that the social fabric is close to unraveling.

Based on the experience that I have had since coming to the West twenty-five years ago, I am convinced that this split between the world of work and the concerns of the spirit is not necessary. Work itself can have inner meaning and value that make it part of the spiritual path. Anyone who does any kind of work can taste the sense of deep inner fulfillment that has always been considered the fruit of a spiritual way of living, even if he or she feels no sense of religious vocation. There is no need to put up with the pain and emptiness that so many people experience today, and there is a far more meaningful alternative to our increasingly desperate attempts to fill the hole within our hearts.

What is more, learning to integrate spiritual values into work can be a powerful way to assure that our work will be successful on its own terms. The more fully work expresses the beauty of an inner ethic, the more effective and productive it can be.

Work does not have to be a painful necessity or a dirty word. If we use work to challenge our limits, to perfect awareness and deep concentration, then work can open into knowledge that makes us more successful while also nourish-



ing us at the deepest levels. By letting work guide us toward deeper knowledge, we can end each day with a sense of enjoyment and a feeling that we have accomplished something of real benefit. We can achieve our own goals and set an example that has the potential to transform society.

THE INNER PRACTICE OF WORK

The organic link between work and spiritual values becomes more clear as soon as we ask what it is that people really want out of life. At this fundamental level, there is really little difference between the business world and the spiritual realm. People want to be happy, to accomplish something of value in their lives, and to live in a way that

is healthy and balanced. Though the language used to describe business and spiritual goals and the vision of how to achieve these goals may be very different, this fundamental connection is there.

The means for attaining these goals are also closely related. Happiness and the ability to achieve something of value both depend on the capacities of the mind. Without knowing how to educate, nourish, and discipline these inborn capacities, we can accomplish little in either the spiritual realm or the business world.

For example, the power of prayer depends on an ability to focus the mind. To develop this ability, we must learn contemplation, going deeply into a feeling or an image or concern without relying on words and reasons. This same skill under a

different name is equally vital to business success.

Once we recognize these similarities, we see that nothing prevents work from being a path to knowledge. The study of mind has traditionally been the province of a small minority in society, but in today's democratic times we can see it quite differently. We are all human beings aiming at similar goals; by the same token, we can all direct our efforts toward attaining knowledge, each in our own ways.

I have found this link between spiritual values and work to hold in every area. When we join work and spiritual practice, there is progress in both directions. This is no marriage of convenience, but a union that can help us fulfill our life's destiny. Success in one area goes together with success in the other, for the knowledge essential to both is one and the same. Walking both paths at once, we can let that knowledge flower and gather its rich nectar.

This seems to me to be a major discovery or perhaps a rediscovery of knowledge that has been lost in our time. True, a long tradition of Western thought holds that daily work can be charged with spiritual significance. Yet this way of understanding sanctifies work in terms of its role in a divine order, rather than as a spiritual path in its own right. In any event, there are many people today for whom this form of religious belief no longer carries conviction.

The approach suggested here is quite different. Work can be united with our ultimate concerns more directly, as a path of exploration and discovery similar to the path of prayer or the path of meditation that might have been followed in other times and places. Working in



this way, we can develop the tools for success in whatever we do.

When we rely on work as our practice, we get direct, immediate feedback that is remarkably useful on any kind of spiritual path. The "bottom line" mentality of business, with its focus on action and results, makes it very difficult for us to fool ourselves. What more, the steady challenges of work force us to develop more knowledge. For example, the need to be effective in dealing with others means that we have to become students of mind. The need to improve on our mistakes means that we have to be honest about our own strengths and weaknesses.

Choosing not to use our work as a training ground this way is not a real option. When people fail to

learn from the lessons that work teaches, they sow the seeds for failure and dissatisfaction on the practical level, and lose the opportunity to find real meaning and deep fulfillment on the spiritual level. Perhaps many of us do live in just this way, but there is no reason that this has to continue.

When work becomes a path to realization and fulfillment, our actions become meaningful from moment to moment. We cut through the paralyzing sense that time spent working is time taken away from our real concerns and interest, and win back control over half our lives.

Now we can really look out for ourselves. Instead of setting ourselves up for disappointment and frustration, we can serve our own best interests in all that we do.

At the same time, we lay the groundwork for a natural transformation in the nature of work. Without giving up the focus on success, we learn to work in ways that are more humane, more fulfilling, and more cooperative. We learn to act in harmony with our own deep concerns, to respect the environment that shelters and provides for us, and to care for the needs of others.

The lessons we learn from work often have to do with our mistakes and failures, but these can be the most important lessons of all. Perhaps what we see are the ways that we cheat ourselves in working:

TONY FREEMAN/PHOTO EDIT

the excuses and the laziness, the tension and worry, the backing down and putting off. If so, we can profit tremendously from our experience. Aware of what we are doing, we can form the intention to change and develop the discipline to do so. At that point, work becomes our life-line to transformation—the means through which we can improve our way of thinking, our attitudes, our relationships, and our actions.

Through work we can test immediately whether the changes we put into effect are effective. We can see what works and what does not, and we can put into practice whatever is most effective. At the same time, we learn the power of a positive attitude and outlook. How could we ask for a better schooling?

Work has value for every aspect of human being. Through our work, we can invite a rich and healthy way of living, founded in the abundance of awareness, concentration, and energy. The wealth that comes through this way of being banishes for all time the sense that our lives are impoverished. Whatever our external circumstances, we are ready to go forward, moving steadily toward fulfillment.

The path of inquiry that work opens is available even if our daily responsibilities seem to offer no outlet for our natural creativity. Perhaps our present job is not suit-

ed to us; perhaps we have no job. Still, we can learn from what we do not have as well as what we have. We do not need to look for some special set of circumstances or for the perfect job; we can start right now.

For example, we are all familiar with the fears and tensions, the anx-

digest well the suggestions made here, contemplating their meanings, visualizing the different steps of each process, and applying the resulting insights in your work, then your daily life will become knowledge, the activity of skillful means.

The final responsibility is yours.

If you think that change will come by doing what someone else has told you to do; if you try to follow a plan that an author imposes on you, you will never fulfill your own destiny. Instead, stay with your own understanding. By cultivating awareness and concentration and energy, you will touch the integrity of your own being and take control of your own life.

I am convinced that what is written here can help you. But in the end it is up to you to write your own story, drawing on your intentions, your commitment, and your growing understanding. As you activate knowledge, you can shape these elements through action and accomplishment. You can embark on a heroic journey of vast dimensions. •

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ieties and self-doubts that eat away at our well-being and undermine our ability to be productive. Right now we can take steps to cut through those hopeless and helpless ways of being. Like an athlete training for competition, we can train ourselves in awareness, concentration, and energy, so that we will be prepared when circumstances allow us to manifest the power of our intrinsic creativity and knowledge.

Perhaps these sound like lofty goals. But we do have the resources we need, and they are available right now. If you bring into your life the ideas, practices, and ways of working presented here, tension, worry, and other barriers to achievement may loosen their grip on your consciousness. If you chew and



Coming into Our Own

M A R K G E R Z O N

In the second half of life, our old compasses no longer work. The magnetic fields alter. The new compass that we need cannot be held in our hand, only in our heart. We read it not with our mind alone, but with our soul. Now we yearn for wholeness. We yearn to remember the parts of ourselves that we have forgotten, to nourish those we have starved, to express those we have silenced, and to bring into the light those we have cast into the shadows. On this quest for wholeness, we must let go of clichés of adult life, both positive and negative. The standard maps of “growing up” and “growing old” will not serve us well. Using the best information available, each of us must find his own way.

RICH IWASAKI/ALLSTOCK

Mark Gerzon is the author of "The Whole World Is Watching" and the groundbreaking study on gender, "A Choice of Heroes." As speaker, writer, workshop leader, and activist, he has been an influential, thoughtful voice in public affairs. He lives with his wife, Shelley Kessler, and their three sons.



To varying degrees, all of us are trying to break out of what Yale psychiatrist Daniel Levinson, in *The Seasons of a Man's Life*, called the "life structure" that we have built during the first part of our lives. "Every life structure necessarily gives priority to certain aspects of the self," wrote Levinson, "and neglects or minimizes other aspects." No wonder then that the second half is the time when these parts of ourselves that have been neglected, ignored, or otherwise suppressed begin to emerge. It is now—or never.

"In this phase of life—between thirty-five and fifty—a significant change in the human psyche is in preparation," concluded Carl Jung, after years of clinical research and reflection. "At first it is not a conscious and striking change... Often it is something like a slow change in a person's character; in another case certain traits may come to light which had disappeared in childhood; or again, inclinations and interests begin to weaken and others arise to take their places."

But what the measured prose of psychiatrists and the carefully calculated statistics of social scientists rarely capture is the experience of inner struggle. These "significant changes" do not occur automatically. In fact, they must often fight against our resistance. In this sense, mid-life is a drama more worthy of a playwright than a scholar. We are characters in the play, caught at the opening of the second act, and we do not know what will happen next.

*Our quest is
waiting for us. If
we ignore our
questions and act
as if we are still in
life's first half, we
do so at our own
peril. Whether you
begin your mid-life
quest on purpose
with your eyes open
or against your will
with your eyes shut
tight, it will one
day begin.*

Jung wrote more than fifty years ago that when we begin the second half, "The elements of the psyche undergo in the course of life a very marked change—so much so, that *we may distinguish between a psychology of the morning of life and a psychology of its afternoon.*" Although my friend Peter Goldmark had never read Jung's words, he wrote these lines of poetry at the age of forty-five:

*If life is a day, in mine it is after
one
And only until dusk will day-
light last.
If life is a year, for me August is
come.
The young green afternoons of
June have passed.*

Just as Jung predicted, Peter had

noticed a shift within himself. Noon had passed. He had entered a different part of the day about which he knew very little. But he was aware of crossing the threshold. He was aware of the quest.

Our quest is waiting for us—but only if we listen to these questions. If we ignore our questions and act as if we are still in life's first half, we do so at our own peril. Whoever pretends that the second half of life is no different from the first wrote Jung, "must pay with damage to his soul." If you don't find the time, the time will find you. Whether you begin your mid-life quest on purpose with your eyes open or against your will with your eyes shut tight, it will one day begin.

Indeed, without your knowing it, it may already have.

We share a quest for wholeness. Have you ever heard of anyone upon their deathbed who said, "If only I had specialized more narrowly in my field?" Have you ever heard of a last will and testament in which the deceased said they wished they had not made love such a high priority; that they had not spent so much time with their children; or that they had not taken such good care of their health? Have you ever heard reports of wise elders who looking back upon their lives said they wished they had spent more time in the office, paid more attention to other people's expectations of them, or been more cautious in exploring new parts of themselves?

We never hear such regrets because the second half of life is a quest for wholeness. It turns the tables on the first half. It weighs the balances in favor of integrity. It asks us not to defend who we are but to be open to the mystery of what we have not yet become, the mystery of coming into our own, whoever we may be. It connects us to a quest that goes far back beyond our time, long before the phrase

adult development was ever coined. Dante opened *The Divine Comedy* with the famous lines:

*Midway upon the journey of our life
I found myself within a forest dark,
For the straightforward pathway
had been lost...*

The quest for wholeness in the second half is ancient and universal. Joseph Campbell defined it well in his classic study of world mythology, *Hero with a Thousand Faces*. He showed that in virtually all the world's myths could be found a shared quest for meaning and transcendence, a "heroic" quest that took place during the years we call adulthood. According to Campbell, the drama of the quest itself was far more than a mere extension of our personal or family psychohistories. It was a joining with the cosmic and timeless tales—what Jean Houston calls "the Larger Story"—that is crystallized in dreams and codified in myth.

"So these old stories live in us?" Bill Moyers asked Campbell during one of their interviews.

"They do indeed," Campbell replied and he went on to outline the challenge of the second half.

As a child, you are brought up in a world of discipline, obedience, and you are dependent on others. *All this has to be transcended when you come to maturity*, so that you can live not in dependency but in self-responsible authority. If you can't cross that threshold you have the basis for neuroses.

Unfortunately, too many of us are locked into the "certain program" of life's first half. Physically, socially, economically, psychologically, and spiritually, the agenda of the second half of life varies greatly from the agenda of the first. And yet, lost under the bland generality of "adulthood," we continue to treat each other and ourselves as if nothing has changed. We turn the sec-

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ond half into a "mid-life crisis" by pretending that everything is supposed to stay the same—only to discover to our surprise that nothing does stay the same. Possibilities for growth and change in the second half that we never knew existed now emerge.

Unlike the conventional view of the "mid-life crisis," the quest does not necessarily begin with a tumultuous upheaval in one's life—an affair, or a red sports car, or a move to a new job. Whether we know it or not (and usually we don't), it often begins with resistance to change. It begins with our pulling against the future and clinging to the past. It begins with our unconsciously saying, "No, not yet!" to what is happening inside us.

Denial is a kind of quest in reverse. We are actually trying *not* to journey. We think our challenge is to stay young and so we pretend that we are still in life's first half,

that the transformation isn't taking place. We cling to our youthful selves with all the determination of a shipwrecked sailor gripping a piece of driftwood. Sometimes it requires suffering the loneliness of watching others leave us behind as they set off on new paths. It involves blocking out the sights and sounds and smells that suggest new lands and new possibilities. It demands that we silence our questions, doubts, wonderings, and inner yearnings.

The word *mid-life* itself for example often produces an adverse reaction. Most people in their thirties and forties (and even many in their fifties) assume that it refers to someone older than themselves. Thirty-five-year-olds think it begins at forty; forty-year-olds think it begins at forty-five; forty-five-year-olds push the entry point back to fifty; and so on throughout our final years. When Katharine Hepburn tells Henry Fonda in the film *On Golden Pond* that they should get together with another "middle-aged" couple like themselves, her cantankerous husband replies, "We're *not* middle-aged. People don't live to be a hundred and fifty!" We resist applying the word *mid-life* to ourselves because it acknowledges two interconnected truths: that we may no longer be "young" (whatever that means to us) and that since life has a *mid*-point, it must also have an *end*-point—and it is not one hundred and fifty!

While in this period of denial, we tend to dismiss these internal signals and wait for them to go away. This is another form of denial: postponement. Postponers accept that they are beginning a journey into a new phase of life but they arm themselves with the illusion of control. They "decide" that their entry into life's second half will begin at a later date. It will happen when they reach a certain

age (usually five to ten years ahead). It will happen when they reach a certain income (usually significantly more than they currently earn). It will happen when their children leave home or when they reach some other landmark that like a mirage always recedes into the distance. They dismiss what is happening inside themselves as premature, as if such feelings were permissible only in "old people." (The title of one comedic book expresses this feeling well: *Who Needs Mid-life at Your Age?*)

So if you feel you are in this stage of denial, do not immediately assume it is inappropriate. It does not necessarily mean you are being lazy, or obstinate, or otherwise stuck. In fact, you may be working very hard just trying to resist the change you sense is coming. Resistance may be your way of allowing yourself time to prepare for what lies ahead.

Sadly though, denial is not just the first stage of the quest for some people; it is also the last. They sense the possibility of a journey, usually unconsciously, and postpone it indefinitely. They do not feel prepared for such a quest—and who can blame them? None of us is prepared for the unknown. It is frightening, unpredictable, the first step toward losing control. That it is also the first step toward finding our deeper selves, we do not know. Since it preserves the status quo, the incentives for denying, for waiting appear great. Since it involves upheaval and uncertainty, the incentives for moving forward on our quest appear small. Until this changes, we stand still. Sometimes we even regress. We make one last

stand, trying to avoid leaving the familiar land of the young and journeying toward the unknown country ahead.

But the time comes when denial no longer works. Looking back on



what she called "the most painful year of my life," Jane Fonda reflected, shortly after her divorce, on the choice she had made between denial and moving forward. "You can either pretend," she said, "...avoid [the pain], stay real busy, numb yourself through drink or drugs or promiscuity, use your kids as a battlefield, stay angry... Or you can say, if God is having me feel this much pain and suffering, *there's got to be a reason.*"

Indeed there is a reason. But we cannot find it yet. Only one foot has crossed the threshold. We are not in our old world but we are not in the new world either. We are in a gray area, neither here nor there, living

in two worlds at once. In this twilight zone, we experience confusion (*fundere*, "to pour"; *com*, "together"). We are con-fused because two worlds are indeed becoming fused: the personality that in the first half

of life we grew accustomed to calling "I" and the self that is trying to break through into consciousness in the second half. Finally when the change becomes so massive that we simply can no longer deny it, we awaken as if from a dream. We accept the truth that we are in fact lost. We don't know what is happening to us. Inexplicable exhaustion, mysterious pain, insomnia, uncontrollable crying, profound dissatisfaction at work—whatever our personal symptom may be, we begin to question ourselves, to seek the wound that is not healed, to identify the source of our pain.

Recalling his own quest, Jung called this his "confrontation with the unconscious." Today many contemporary psychologists are shedding new light on the process and naming its various dimensions. Jungian analyst Murray Stein calls it "the return of the repressed." John Bradshaw calls it the "wounded inner child," who is finally demanding to be heard—and healed. Maureen Murdock, speaking of women, calls it "the descent to the goddess," when a woman "meets the dark mother within and reclaims the discarded parts of herself." Robert Bly, speaking of men, calls it "taking the road of ashes" when we feel that our dreams have turned to dust and we are forced to confront "the long bag we drag behind us." Perhaps Connie Zweig, in her prologue to *Meeting the Shadow* puts it most

directly. "At mid-life," she wrote, "I met my devils."

But whatever we name the shadow, the fact is that we can't just talk about our anger, pain, or hurt anymore. We are now compelled to live it. We can't observe it; we are it. What in the first half of life we decided was not us now comes back to *become* us. Two selves, the I and the not-I, are now pouring together inside us. The question is: What is this new compound, this new self, that will emerge? And at this point, there is no answer—only confusion. The form that it takes usually depends on what parts of yourself you have neglected or minimized—that is, whatever you are least ready for.

For each of us, the parts of ourselves that we have hidden are unique. But they can be summarized by Jung's deceptively simple concept of the *shadow*. We forge our identities in adolescence by highlighting parts of ourselves that Jung called the *persona*. This is what we show the world, what we claim as "me." We define ourselves by keeping the shadow in the dark. As men define their masculinity, they tend to place their feminine side (or anima) in this shadowy underworld, just as women submerge their masculine side (or animus). What may superficially appear to be a "mid-life crisis" is the much deeper, long-term psychological process of our shadow seeking the light.

This process is confusing because at least two voices inside us are now claiming to be the I: the old persona, the identity formed in the first half of our lives that is determined to disown these new elements in our psyches, and the awakening shadow, asking—sometimes demanding—to be let in. As the crack widens between who we are and who we are perceived to be, it can be more than confusing. It can be totally disorienting. If we have had the courage to embrace

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lives.*

these new parts of ourselves, the alchemy of the second half can combine these two into a new I that is more whole, more wise, and more compassionate. But at this point, all we feel is confused.

In this confused and questioning stage of our journey, the Self is barely glimpsed. At this point, we are divided against ourselves. As Ralph Metzner points out, the metaphors abound. "We may be 'shattered' by an experience; we may think we are 'falling apart'; 'coming apart at the seams,' or 'falling to pieces'... feel 'torn' between conflicting demands, be 'crushed' by a rejection, 'crumble' under stress, until (the) mind 'snaps.'" It is a time when we speak forlornly about wishing we were "more together," but it is in reality when we feel—and couples do—"split up."

We are likely at this stage of the quest to describe ourselves as torn between alternatives. We may feel torn *between lovers*, unable to decide

which to choose, or even wanting both. We may feel torn *between jobs*, one that offers security and prestige and another that offers challenge and uncertainty. We may feel torn *between life-styles*: for example, an urban existence with all its rewards and stresses and a new life in a rural area with lower income, fewer options but more beauty and peace. Ultimately, we are feeling torn *between selves*: who we have been versus who we are becoming on the quest.

Now suddenly the structure of our lives does not fit us, but we don't know why. Bargains we made, both professional and personal, may suddenly seem unfair. Relationships we chose may suddenly seem unfulfilling. Signs of aging in our faces suddenly seem prominent. A car, home, or community that once brought pleasure may now seem utterly inadequate. A life-style that seemed satisfying or at least bearable now grates on our nerves and becomes increasingly intolerable. Goals that seemed so clear may now become complex or blurred. Rewards that before seemed destined to bring pleasure now seem empty, not even worth the effort. A life-span that only yesterday seemed long now seems inexplicably abbreviated.

When we are confused, many of us act out in ways that reveal the undeveloped (or what Jung called the inferior) sides of ourselves. These emerging parts of ourselves simply do not fit within the confines of the self we constructed in the first half of our lives. Just as teenagers burst the seams of their old clothes, we are bursting at the seams of our old identities. Who we were and how we lived may now feel like prisons to us. We feel (usually unconsciously) a desperate need to escape. At this critical stage, we may speak of being "trapped" in a marriage, "tied down" to a family or job, "stuck" in a rut, "roped in"

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I Dream of Peace

Children's thoughts on war in the former Yugoslavia

A grenade had landed on our shelter. We had to climb over the dead bodies to get out. Meanwhile the snipers kept shooting at us.

My father was one of those wounded and was taken away to the hospital. We've not seen him since but I hope that he is still alive, perhaps in one of the detention camps.

I try not to talk about these things but I get so upset and keep having nightmares about what happened.—Kazimir, 13, displaced.



I had a new tricycle, red and yellow and with a bell... Do you think they have destroyed my tricycle too?—Nedim, 5, refugee.

War is the saddest word that flows from my quivering lips. It is a wicked bird that never comes to rest. It is a deadly bird that destroys our homes and deprives us of our childhood. War is the vilest of birds, turning the streets red with blood and the world into an inferno.—Maida, 12, from Skopje.



Mama, wait for me! Hrvoje, 11

*When I walk through town,
I see strange faces, full of bit-
terness and pain. Where has
our laughter gone? Where is
our happiness? Somewhere
far, far away from us. Why
did they do this to us? We're
their kids. All we want is to
play our games and see our
friends. And not to have this
horrible war.*

*There are so many people who
did not ask for this war or
for the black earth that is
now over them. Among them
are my friends. I send you
this message: Don't ever hurt
the children. They're not
guilty of anything.—
Sarldra, 10, from Vukovar.*

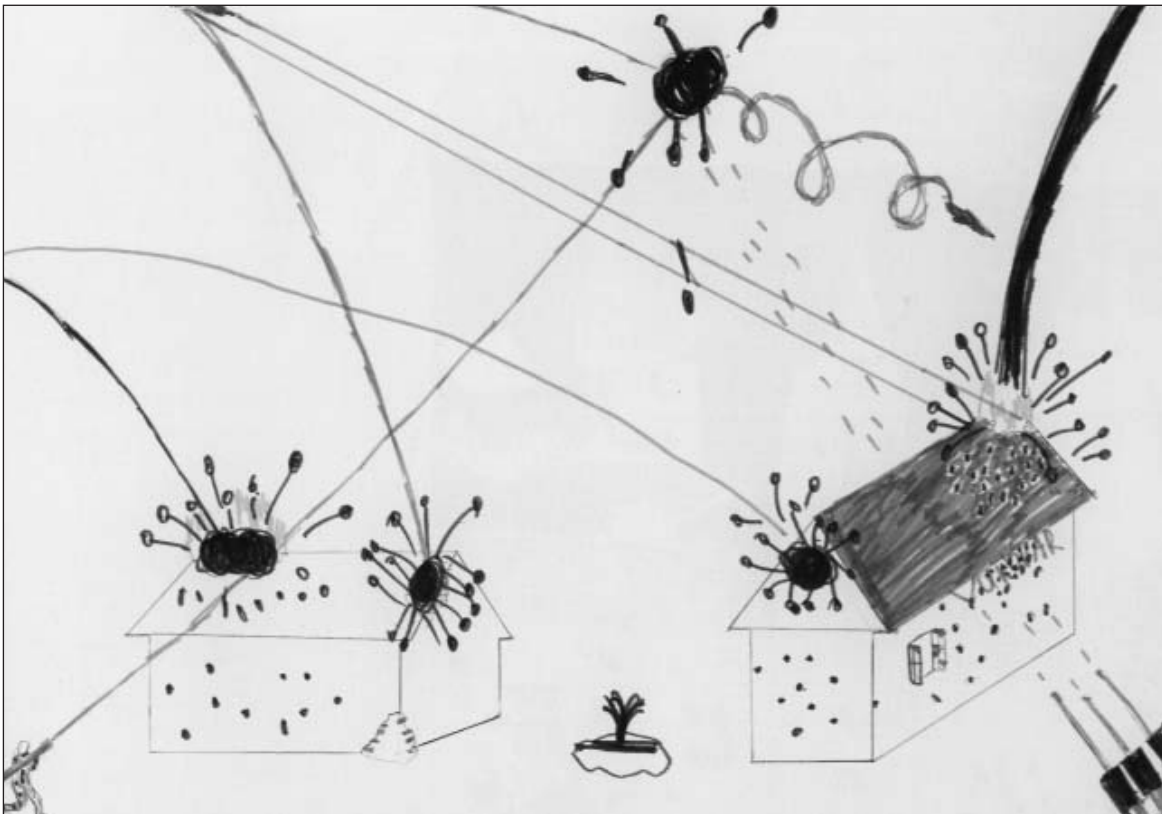


*The soldiers ordered us out of our house and then burned it down. After that, they took us to the train where they
ordered all the men to lie down on the ground.*

*From the group, they chose the ones they were going to kill. They picked my uncle and a neighbor! Then they
machine-gunned them to death. After that, the soldiers put the women in the front cars of the train and the men in
the back. As the train started moving, they disconnected the back cars and took the men off and to the camps. I saw it
all!*

*Now I can't sleep. I try to forget but it doesn't work. I have such difficulty feeling anything anymore.—
Alik, 13, refugee.*

Bombardment, Mario 10





War is here but we await peace. We are in a corner of the world where nobody seems to hear us. But we are not afraid and we will not give up.

Our fathers earn little, just barely enough to buy five kilos of flour a month. And we have no water, no electricity, no heat. We bear it all, but we cannot bear the hate and the evil.

Our teacher has told us about Anne Frank and we have read her diary. After fifty years, history is repeating itself right here with this war, with the hate and the killing, and with having to hide to save your life.

We are only twelve years old. We can't influence politics and the war, but we want to live! And we want to stop this madness. Like Anne Frank fifty years ago, we wait for peace. She didn't live to see it. Will we?—Students from a fifth-grade class in Zenica.



The writings and drawings in *I Dream Of Peace*, a new book from UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) published by HarperCollins, were created in 1992 and 1993 by children in schools and refugee camps on all sides of the conflict as part of UNICEF'S psycho-social program for war-traumatized children in former Yugoslavia. There are currently an estimated 281,000 children living in besieged enclaves and war zones, and 620,000 have been forced to abandon their homes. In Bosnia and Herzegovina alone, no fewer than 15,000 children have been killed, and over 35,000 have been wounded in the fighting.

All proceeds from the sale of the book will go to the UNICEF "I Dream of Peace Fund," created to support programs for children affected by war throughout the world.

The publication of the book grew out of a UNICEF emergency program, which began in November 1991, with the provision of essential supplies—including

blankets, clothing, food, and medicine—to the children caught up on all sides of the conflict. Recognizing that the ongoing violence was having a profound psychological effect on children, UNICEF, in cooperation with the ministries of education in each country of former Yugoslavia, established a special program to identify and support children who are traumatized by the war. UNICEF has helped develop a network of psychologists and teachers who are trained to recognize war trauma and to apply practical methods to limit long-term damage.

One element of the program involves offering children the opportunity to express their traumatic experiences through art activities and discussions. The remarkably expressive and poignant paintings and writings in *I Dream Of Peace* are the products of the children's art therapy. The book takes readers on a four-part journey into the hearts and minds of children whose secure world has been turned

upside down by ethnic hatred, violence, and war. Cruel war shows the immensity of destruction wrought on their surroundings. "The day they killed my house" is a more intimate look at the anguish when the war literally hits home. "My nightmare" vividly renders the horrors the children have been forced to internalize. The book's final section, "When I close my eyes I dream of peace" (the words of a 14-year-old boy burned by a Molotov cocktail) offers a moving affirmation of the resilience of children.

"When we first began working with these kids, many of them had been refugees for more than a year," says Lina Unkovska,

a psychologist working with children in refugee center in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. "Their drawings were of war, flames, and flight from home... Over time, as they have taken part in the therapy sessions, they have been able to progress and this is reflected in their drawings. Now we see pictures of animals, villages and normal life. When asked what they wished for, children who previously answered 'nothing' or 'I want to go home' are now saying 'I want to go to school or to Skopje on a day trip.'" UNICEF estimates that a 1.5 million children have been severely traumatized by this war.

I Dream Of Peace: Images of War by Children of Former Yugoslavia, HarperCollins Publishers, Price: \$12.95, ISBN: 0-06-251 128-9

For more information about the work of UNICEF in former Yugoslavia, contact: Julia Muggia, U.S. Committee for UNICEF, (212) 922-2637 or Shalini Dewan, UNICEF Division of Information, (212)326-7513•



Silent Sons

R O B E R T A C K E R M A N

Ludwig van Beethoven was a silent son. He was severely abused as a boy by his alcoholic father and he had an alcoholic mother who was sent away to a cloister. He suffered many of the emotional and physical injuries common among silent sons. Yet he functioned, survived, and thrived in spite of his past. Even now, his work survives him and adds great beauty to this world. Beethoven expressed himself through his music. He allowed his creativity to flow, even though he was constantly plagued by his past. He himself struggled with alcoholism and other problems but he went on to become one of the world's greatest composers.

DAVID YOUNG-WOLFF/PHOTO EDIT

Dr. Robert Ackerman is the author of several books and is best known for writing the first book in the United States on children of alcoholics. A professor of sociology at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, he co-founded the National Association for Children of Alcoholics. He lives in Indiana, Pennsylvania, with his wife, Kimberly, and their three children.



The worst thing that could have happened to a composer happened to Beethoven. He eventually went deaf as a result of the beatings he received from his father. He lived in silence, but this did not stop him from expressing himself. Instead of feeling bitter or angry, he reached inside himself and continued to write music. In spite of all that happened to him, he was still able to find beauty in this world and more importantly in himself. He was able to rise above his past and reach his potential. He was not to be denied. He composed by listening to his inner music. He composed by listening to himself. His last work was the Ninth Symphony and it was in this symphony that this deaf, silent son who knew pain, addiction, and despair included the immortal work "Ode to Joy."

I believe that there is some Beethoven in all silent sons. Inside each of us is a composition lurking right behind the silence. Can you hear yours?

As silent sons we have experienced much pain. Now it's time to work through that pain, learn to let it go, and take our rightful place as healthy men. It's time for potential, not for pain. We know how to be active, forceful, and powerful; now we need to redirect that energy into being healthy. It's time to take responsibility for our lives. We know where we have been and we know what we must do. We know what has happened and that we can't blame it on anyone. We are

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men who are going to take charge of our lives and determine where we are going.

How do you take control of your own life? I identify the ways silent sons I interviewed changed their lives. Regardless of how they did it, they all started by realizing that they wanted to change and that choices for change were available. More importantly, they all knew where change must begin: with themselves.

Dale, age 52, is an office manager. He says, "For most of my life I used this particular problem as an excuse for being an underachiever and feeling sorry for myself. Growing up, I felt I wasn't normal because my home wasn't normal. I felt an emptiness and inadequacy that I tried to fill outside of myself. When I got help I

started talking about this, and immediately realizing that I wasn't alone helped. Learning how all this affected me and how others dealt with the same thing helped, too. But the main thing I had to do was stop using it like an albatross—I had to get on with my life. I had to take responsibility for molding the clay of my life into the shape and substance that I could be and wanted to be. I needed to look around and see that everyone has some traumatic or dysfunctional "thing" in their lives, that nobody's life is perfect; that if it hadn't been this, it would have been something else.

Finally, I had to accept the fact that my parents did the best they could. My father learned his behavior from his father, but unfortunately for him he never had the benefit of help. My father never once kissed or hugged me. My father never once gave me a birthday or Christmas present. My father never once told me he loved me. My father instilled paralyzing fear in me by his massive bulk and aggressive, threatening physical presence. My father was very sick and in my heart I am saddened by his seeming lack of love for me, but I know that he was the ultimate loser, not me, and that is equally saddening. He died without ever experiencing the joy, love, or life of his son. He died as he had lived—alone. And that's sad, because it didn't have to be that way. It's so very important to let people know that I care, that I love, and that I am that way today because I choose to be. It means unlearning a lot of behavior. It means being vulnerable and risking pain and rejection. It means saying and doing a lot of things that feel unnatural or foreign. But I realize today that if what I learned was abnormal, then normal behavior

will feel foreign for a while even when it is healthy. Yet the choice is mine and only I, with the help of God and others, can break the patterns."

TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE

No matter how you go about taking control of your life, you like all silent sons will be faced with at least four major issues along the way. You will be challenged by your past as it attempts to pull you back into pain. You will need to make peace with yourself in order to have power over your life. You will need to make peace with your family to find lasting inner peace. Finally, you will find freedom and come face-to-face with your potential and be challenged to use it.

MAKING PEACE WITH PAIN AND REALITY

Whether we like it or not, those things that happened to us as boys did happen. As hard as it might be, we must face reality and move on.

I have come to realize that I have used my adult relationships and experiences as a stage to play out my unresolved trauma from childhood. I have done whatever I had to do throughout most of my life to escape my feelings because they were too painful to look at. This path of escapism has led me to alcoholism and drug addiction which very nearly killed me. In choosing recovery, I have changed my path. I have chosen to face my

feelings and go through the pain because I have discovered that the only way out is through it.

—Stan

It may be hard for you to accept reality, because it carries implica-



tions that you might not want to hear or face. Does admitting that you are a silent son imply to you that you are not "all right" because there is something negative about your parents that you would like to hide? Does it suggest that you can't be as successful as you think? Certainly, any and all of these implications can go through your mind.

But you cannot make peace with reality when you deny it. The goal of overcoming denial is to move on. The only thing that can make your

past worse is allowing it to negatively affect the present and the rest of your life. When it comes to a painful past, accept it, face it, deal with it—and then get on with it. Keep in mind the following goals to help you make peace with reality and your pain.

- *Assess where you are now.* Assessing yourself means taking a long, hard look at yourself and seeing in what areas you have been affected. You need to know your problems in order to handle them. Are you angry? Are you still trying to get over how your father treated you? Are you having trouble in your relationships, as a parent or at work? Or are you confused? Maybe the only thing you know is that you don't feel right about certain things in your life. If so, that's a good enough place to start. The key to working through your past begins with honesty.

- *Don't confuse acceptance with approval.* Just because you finally accepted your past doesn't mean that you approve of what happened to you. When we accept our past, we also can accept our accompanying emotions. Reality is a hard thing to deny but not as hard as the consequences of denial.

- *Stop wanting it to be different.* This is a waste of time. Wishing and wanting for the past to be different keeps you tied to it. You can't change what has happened. But you can change yourself.

- *Let go of the "ifs onlys."* "If only" statements keep you tied to the past

DENNIS MACDONALD/PHOTO EDIT

and tempt you to think you might have done something to ameliorate the dysfunctional situation. You were not in charge of your parents or guardians—it was supposed to be the other way around. “If only” statements keep you second-guessing and looking for answers to the past when what you should be looking for are answers to your present and future. Change your “if only” statements to “I will” statements. An “I will” statement means you are taking charge of your life now instead of feeling guilty about things over which you had no control.

- *Stop doing nothing.* Some silent sons do absolutely nothing toward recovering yet expect things to change. Change means taking action. No change will occur if you don’t take an interest in yourself, if you don’t share with other men, if you don’t seek help, if you don’t accept reality, and most importantly, if you don’t get any better.

MAKING PEACE WITH YOURSELF AND FINDING POWER

Too many silent sons are internally in pain and try to be externally at peace. But it doesn’t work that way. True peace comes from within and begins by learning to like yourself. How can you be at peace with someone you don’t like? Of the four stages involved in learning to let go of your past and growing as a man, I believe being at peace with yourself is the most important. Not only is it important for you, but it is an essential prerequisite for being at peace with others. You can’t give what you don’t have. A man at peace is not easily thrown off balance because he has power over himself. You know who you are and what you can do. Peace provides inner strength.

Making peace with yourself depends upon your ability to make

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peace with your feelings. For example if you are angry, you can’t expect to achieve inner peace until you resolve your anger. Your boyhood is over but its emotional impact remains. Have you kept the hurt locked up or has it locked you up? Power over yourself means freedom from negative feelings. It means you can stop wasting emotional energy on your past and start using your energy on yourself. It takes energy to learn to let go, but once you have done this you will find the energy necessary to grow. It takes energy to be a healthy man. The exhausted man is never healthy. He is only tired. How can you be free if you are dragging emotional chains? In order to make peace with yourself and your feelings you will need to learn how to the following.

- *Treat yourself with respect.* Making peace with yourself leads to self-respect. It’s time to start liking

yourself and giving yourself some respect. Once you begin to respect yourself, you will also expect others to treat you better and you will start believing that you deserve their respect. Treating yourself with respect will require changing some of your negative behaviors. It will mean that you no longer feel compelled to do things that make you uncomfortable or that you don’t want to do. It will mean doing things that make you feel good. It will mean saying *no* to negative demands and *yes* to yourself. It has taken you years to earn your self-respect. Don’t ever give it up again. It isn’t for sale and no one can steal it.

- *Let go of your negative feelings.* Negative feelings can keep you from being at peace. They can haunt your soul. Each silent son knows that keeping negative feelings inside leaves less room for inner peace. I have talked with men who have worked through tremendous pain in their lives but still cannot forgive certain people. No one can tell you to forgive. Each of us must decide how forgiving or not forgiving affects our quest for inner peace. Each of us struggles for peace, but the more negativity we harbor, the harder the struggle becomes.

- *Make peace with all the parts of yourself.* Silent sons are faced not only with the issues of a dysfunctional family, but also with the issues of being men. For most of us these two are closely connected. Don’t forget that your dysfunctional issues have also affected many aspects of your male identity. This, too, will require resolution. Don’t try to pinpoint just one issue from your past as the key to all your problems. For example, don’t assume that just because you forgave your father everything else will automatically be OK. Being a silent son affects every area of your life and you need to make peace

with each and every one of them. If you are trying to gain control over your life, go for all of it.

MAKING PEACE
WITH YOUR
FAMILY

*Don't go back to your family
and stir up a "hornet's nest."*
—Marvin

Once you have completed the first two stages, you might want to or need to move on to the third stage trying to make peace with your family. Before you do this, it is important that you have made peace with reality and your pain. Don't skip these stages and start with stage three. Making peace with your family must always be an addition to your own growth, not a substitute for it. Your issues and potential *must* come first.

Making peace with your family can add greatly to your sense of inner peace and resolution over internal conflict. When I speak of family, I include your parents, siblings, spouse/partner, and children, but I believe that trying to make peace with your parents will have the greatest impact on your health. Making peace with your parents does not necessarily mean making peace with the actual people. Each of us has two sets of parents. One set is the parents you carry around inside of you. These are the inner parents. The other set is the real parents. Which set should you make peace with? Try the inner parents first. They are the parents whose emotional impact you are often trying to understand. They are the sources of troubling memories which can stay with you for years after the actual people are long gone.

How do you make peace with your inner or actual parents? By letting go.

A few safe assumptions about parents might help you. First, your

*Negative
feelings can keep
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can haunt your
soul. Each silent
son knows that
keeping
negative feelings
inside leaves less
room for inner
peace.*

parents are not likely to change unless they want to. You cannot wait for this to happen. Second, it is not your job to change them. However, what you can change is your emotional response to them. For example when you remember certain situations with your parents, what kind of emotional response do you feel? Do you feel anger, rage, hurt, disappointment, or rejection? Or maybe you feel nothing but a sense of loss. Granted, you have no control over what happened. It is done, but you can gain control over how you feel about it today. And if your parents keep pushing your buttons, learn to retrain your emotional responses. It takes practice, but it can be done. And remember, the reason they can

push you buttons so easily is that they installed them!

Making peace with your parents can also create mixed feelings. Obviously not all dysfunctional parents are dysfunctional all the time. There were probably also good times with your parents. The need to make peace with them does not mean that we have forgotten what they have done for us. We are trying to work through the dysfunctional things to appreciate further the positive ones. In fact, the more positive things you can recall, the easier it will be to make peace.

*What's helped me was being able
to get very angry with my father,
even though he died, and then see
that he was more than just an
alcoholic. Lately, I've been feeling
more appreciative of good quali-
ties I have that are similar to his.
I've forgiven my father and have
grown to love him like I never
could when he was alive.
Although he was sober for ten
years when he died, I wasn't
ready to make peace with him
until a couple of years ago.*

—Butch

In order to make peace with your inner or actual parents, try some of the following suggestions, adapted from Harold Bloomfield and Leonard Felder's book, *Making Peace with Your Parents*.

- Diffuse guilt. Don't feel guilty over what happened. You didn't cause it. You survived it.
- Retrain your emotional habits. You can learn new ways of handling old emotions by learning and using new ones. Achieving your potential means using your full range of emotions.
- Understand your parents' childhoods. If you want to be better understood for who you are today because of your childhood, then try to learn something about your parents' childhoods in order to understand them better. This will also make it easier for you to make peace



with them. It is easier to handle things we know something about.

- Break free of the approval trap. Don't waste your time trying to get approval from your parents if you do not approve of them. You're a man and your approval is what counts now.

- Visit without unrealistic expectations. Don't keep hoping it will be different this time. Be prepared and protect yourself. One of you has to be realistic. How about you?

- Develop your own support family. You're not the only one. There are many of us and there are many other people who will share with you. There are people who are more "family" than family will ever be. Use these friends for support and become a friend to them.

- The goal is not to change your parents. The goal is to change yourself into the kind of man you want to be.

- During changes, you may need to

maintain a "safe" distance. When we are changing, we are also vulnerable because we are taking risk. Protect yourself and know your limits around your parents if they are likely to lead you back into an "emotional relapse."

- Your life first, theirs second. This doesn't mean you are selfish. It means you can be healthy.

- Be at peace with all of the times that you had. In my family there were good times and bad. I remember them all. My parents taught me many good things and these things also help me make peace.

ACHIEVING YOUR POTENTIAL

When you make it to this stage, you are ready to fly. You will experience a freedom that you never thought about. An enormous weight will be gone from your shoulders. You will feel energy you thought you never had. One of the

most common things I hear from so many men who have made this journey is that they feel reborn. They feel a sense of power and peace about themselves. They have great self-respect. They know they will not be pulled down again. They know they have survived and they know what they can do. You can see it in their faces. They are men of peace but they are men of power. Do you want to be one of these men? If so, then seize your potential, seize the day, and let yourself fly.

How do you know when you are achieving your potential? You will know because your *life* will be different. I believe that when it comes to recovery or achieving your potential, you are your recovery. You either live it or you don't. If you are living up to your potential, you should be doing some of the following things:

- You like yourself.

- You can celebrate yourself and your survival.
- You no longer live in fear.
- You respect yourself and others.
- You have worked through your grief.
- You can handle your memories.
- You can say no.
- You can receive and give love and caring.
- You know where you stand on forgiveness.
- You can trust your emotions.
- You can embrace your masculine spirit.

SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality can be defined in many ways and can mean many different things to each of us. For me it has always been a feeling that I am not alone, that there is a sense of purpose in my life, and that I have a "spirit." It is not recovery per se that allows men to change, but rather the *spirit* of recovery. Many of us would like to recapture the spirit of our boyhood. Few of us would want our bodies back, but we would like to retain or find again that which was inside us then.

Spirituality is about finding yourself. Spirituality is not religion, although religion can help you find it. It is a feeling that occurs when you realize you are connected with things larger than yourself.

Men who have a strong spirit find balance in themselves. To find this spirit we must often surrender. We must yield our narrow ideas of masculinity, our beliefs that we need no one or anything, and that we are all-powerful. We can still be men and surrender to things that are greater than ourselves without losing our masculinity. We do not lose our inner warrior when we gain spirituality. If anything, we find it.

As I look back over my life, no matter the physical or emotional pain, no matter the level of despair, I know that the one thing that was never broken was my spirit. It was

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bruised, pushed around, and went into hiding once in a while, but it was never broken. When we have been pounded, it is our spirit that tells us to get up and it is our spirituality that allows us to do it. If the spirit is broken you don't get up. There were days when I went on and I didn't know how I did it, but I knew that I would not be defeated. I knew that my life was going to be better and that I was going to do what it took to get there. My spirit allowed me to maintain balance even when I failed.

I know I said that there is a little bit of the spirit of Beethoven in all silent sons, but I also think there is a little of the boxer "Rocky" in all of us, too. In the film, Rocky is a guy who doesn't have much who gets a shot at the heavyweight championship of the world. He gets pounded in the ring, but every now and then he gets in a shot that keeps him in the fight. Finally, in the fourteenth round he is knocked down by the champion, Apollo Creed. His own manager is telling him to stay down. But Rocky

won't. His vision blurred, his body wounded, his legs barely able to hold him, he drags himself up. He looks across the ring, not at Apollo Creed, but at life and motions with his swollen arms, "Come on, come on, I'm not done with you, yet."

It didn't matter to Rocky who won the fight. It only mattered to him that at the end he was still standing, and so was his spirit.

But whether it is Beethoven or Rocky, all men have searched for their spirits. Each of us can find ours. Each of us can go the distance. The quest for spirituality is in all men, and in all men there lives an eternal spirit.

I believe that each of us now has a second chance at finding the holy grail, the spirit that allows us to persevere. You had it once as a boy and probably didn't know it. The first time you found it, you stumbled upon it and didn't know what it was. You only realized what you had once it was lost. The second time you find the grail you must earn it but no matter how much you have to work, the effort will be worthwhile because now you know what it is. It is something that is inside each of us. It is the spirit that will no longer leave you or be denied. Silence has been passed from generation to generation of silent sons and men, but so has the grail. You have a choice, to hold on to your silence or to reach for the grail. You cannot wrap your arms across your chest to hold silence in and reach for the grail at the same time. Open your arms and let the silence fall, never to be embraced again. Reach out, grab the grail, and start a new legend. •

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Simplify Your Life

E L A I N E S T . J A M E S

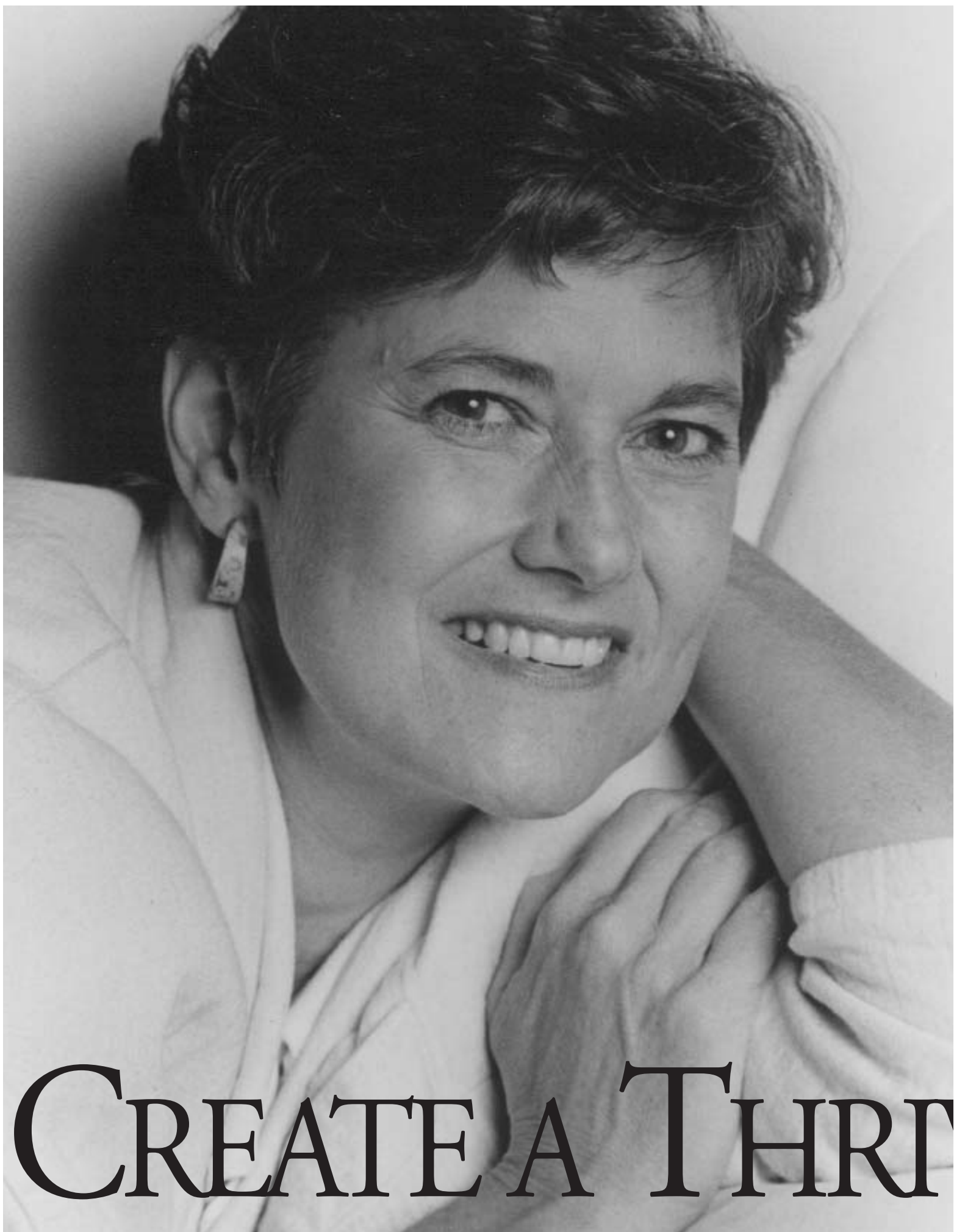
C L E A N U P Y O U R R E L A T I O N S H I P S

Creating a simple life isn't always simple. Some steps, like stopping the junk mail or throwing out everything but the aspirin, are easy and can be accomplished in a matter of minutes. Others, like moving to a smaller home or cleaning up your relationships, can take much longer and be among the most difficult things you ever have to do.

I'm referring to a marriage or a relationship that isn't going anywhere and that is causing you stress or pain. If you're in such a relationship, and you've tried to fix it and you can't, get out. If you can't come to that decision on your own, then get help. Talk to a therapist or join a support group of people who are committed to your happiness and well-being. If you can't find such a group, then form one of your own. Meeting on a regular basis with people who are going through similar problems, and who are committed to growth, can provide a powerful impetus for you to get out of a relationship that isn't working.

Cleaning up relationships applies to friends, too. Perhaps it's time to think about moving on from a friendship that no longer works for you. Ending a friendship, unlike ending a marriage, doesn't necessarily require a major confrontation or discussion. Depending on your history together, sometimes it's easier to retreat and simply fade out of someone else's life.

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CREATE A THR

Susan Page began her career as a Protestant campus minister and has a background in both theology and psychology. Susan is the author of "If I'm so Wonderful Why am I Single," and "Now that I'm Married Why Isn't Everything Wonderful?" She lives in Berkeley, California, with her husband.



Lotus: *In your new book, "Now That I'm Married Why Isn't Everything Perfect?", You talk about thriving marriages. What is a thriving marriage?*

Susan: A thriving marriage is a perfect marriage. That doesn't mean there are never conflicts or that the two partners are absolutely compatible. It means they are thrilled to be with each other and that they have no ambivalence about each other, their relationship, or being in the relationship. This makes a staggering difference in the quality of their relationship. People who are in thriving marriages are delighted to be with each other and are not looking over their shoulder at somebody else. When conflicts or problems arise they are not saying, "Did I make the right choice?" Commitment and lack of ambivalence make marriages thrive. People have the attitude, "Isn't this wonderful," and so they want to make the relationship even better than it is. They are committed to moving through obstacles that they come up against, and they are successful because there is commitment to solve problems.

You said that in order to have a perfect marriage we need to change our mind set, not our marriage. What do you mean by that?

The mind set of thriving couples is, "This is a wonderful relationship and I am lucky to be in it." The mind set of many non-thriving couples is, "Marriage isn't supposed to

Many marriages fail and most Americans believe there is no such thing as a happy marriage or that couples who are happy are in heavy denial. Negative expectations become a self-fulfilling prophecy for many couples. They view problems in their relationship as evidence supporting their thesis that they can't be truly happy with each other.

be wonderful. The most we can expect is a mediocre relationship or a relationship that is wonderful in some ways and dreadful in other ways." Many marriages fail and most Americans believe there is no such thing as a happy marriage or that couples who are happy are in

heavy denial. Negative expectations become a self-fulfilling prophecy for many couples. They view problems in their relationship as evidence supporting their thesis that they can't be truly happy with each other.

Negativity about marriage is wide-spread. People often complain to each other about their relationships, the gender gap, and how men and women aren't supposed to be compatible. If couples buy into that negative mind set, they see the negative qualities in their own relationship, emphasize and feel sad about them, and don't focus on trying to solve problems. If they switch their mind set to what I think about marriage, which is if you believe in it, you can make it happen; then they can work toward having a thriving relationship.

People who have really happy marriages are not necessarily the people for whom the match was made in heaven. They have a mind set about their marriage. They want it to work, they are committed to making it work and believe that they can have a thriving marriage. Thriving couples are like other couples in most ways. They have areas of incompatibility and areas in their personalities that conflict. They have problems to overcome together and difficult times. The difference is mind set. They want to be happy together and do things that make them happy. They view themselves as a happy couple, emphasize the things that support that view and ignore or manage the things that don't support that view. My work with couples is to help them manage problem areas and focus on the positive parts of their relationship, that which gives them pleasure and excitement with each other.

You wrote this book on the basis of interviews. How did you find thriving couples?

I put the word out to a few people and my phone wouldn't stop ringing. People called me and said, "I want to be interviewed for your book, because we are a very happy couple, and I am thrilled that somebody is finally writing about happy couples." I ended up with more couples, just through the grapevine, than I had time to interview.

That is encouraging to hear.

It was revealing to me. I suspected that many people have happy marriages but they are not the ones authors write about. People who have problems and like to complain about their awful husbands or their dreadful wives get more press and air time. Those of us who thrive go along with a different reality.

The foundation is a desire to be happy, a belief that it is possible, and a commitment to do so. How can people deal with their ambivalence?

It is not realistic to assume that ambivalence will go away because you want it to. You can't will it away because ambivalence is there for good reasons usually. There is something that you don't like or some persistent worry that you have about your spouse or relationship. What do you do if you have hesitations about your spouse? Learn to act in the presence of your ambivalence. Learn not to give such importance to ambivalence. Put it in the back seat and get in the driver's seat with your positive feelings. Act as if you don't have ambivalence. This is not deception, it is deliberate, conscious behavior. Behave in loving ways because the behavior will eventually change your beliefs and attitudes. When you experience new behavior and new responses to your behavior, you change your reality. For five minutes or an hour

Don't keep asking, "Did I do the right thing?" When you relieve yourself of ambivalence, you experience freedom, inner joy, and commitment, which all are very pleasurable.

pretend that you love and enjoy your spouse more than anything in the world. When couples do that, they put their problems into perspective and gain that new mind set.

What are the benefits of being utterly committed?

Inner joy is the most immediate benefit of letting go of ambivalence. It is choosing to de-emphasize. Let me use an example. When a couple thinks about having a baby, they are often ambivalent. Babies take away your freedom and are a lot of work, yet most people desire to share love in this way and to experience raising a child. So there is ambivalence. Should we or shouldn't we have a baby? Together they make the decision and de-emphasize the other side of the issue. There are very few things that have no pros and cons, that have no shadow side. The secret to success is to make a decision and go with it. Let history make it into the right decision. Don't keep asking, "Did I do the right thing?" When you relieve yourself of ambivalence, you experience freedom, inner joy, and

commitment, which all are very pleasurable.

Other benefits also accrue. Many couples who do not thrive drive through marriage with their brakes on, meaning they don't give it the full measure of commitment. They emphasize and anguish over what they wish they could change about their spouse. During one interview, it came up that the husband criticized his wife for talking too much. He felt that she dominated social situations, and he belittled her in front of others, which she didn't like. I suggested that for a period of three weeks he not bring this up at all, in private or in public. If he were in a social situation and wanted to talk, he could non-judgmentally say to her, "Could I interrupt for a second?" or "Could I say something?" The transformation was almost instantaneous. He realized that he was creating the problem by complaining about something that is probably never going to change in this woman. She is vivacious, lively, and excitable. He loves her energy and is proud of her. He can't turn her into a wall-flower at social situations. As soon as he realized that he was creating the problem, it disappeared. He took his foot off the brake.

Please discuss unconditional love.

Many couples love each other conditionally and believe that is the natural state of affairs. I have heard people say that unconditional love of your spouse is an unrealistic idea and that it can't be done. I, and the thriving couples I interviewed, am here to testify we do it all the time. Unconditional love means you do not stop loving your spouse when he gets fired or fails to pick up his socks or whatever it is that causes stress. You don't love him less when he does those things. You shift what you consider to be negative qualities into endearing traits, "Isn't that sweet, he's doing his thing again,"

and deal with it with humor. Often the quality you don't like in your spouse is something that he doesn't love about himself either. It doesn't help to harp and it is a disservice to complain about something that your spouse also doesn't like. You need to be supportive and tolerant about that quality.

You define unconditional love as acceptance.

Acceptance and tolerance is the spirit of goodwill, the most important quality among couples who thrive that is missing in couples who don't thrive. Goodwill is giving the other person the benefit of doubt. It is putting the best face on a situation, expecting the best, and being tolerant, giving, and generous about things that aren't so wonderful and about mistakes that your spouse makes. Couples who bicker a lot, blame each other, and belittle each other could choose differently. They could recognize that people make mistakes and still be loving. The most wonderful gift you can give your spouse is to love and adore him when he is having trouble loving himself.

Having empathy for your spouse.

Yes. Getting on his case when he is having trouble is conditional love. That's saying, "I am only going to love you if you don't make mistakes and never kick into old



behaviors from childhood." To love only if another is perfect is useless love. It is like fair-weather friends. The love that really matters is unconditional love, love that comes when you are at a low point.

What about gratitude?

The couples I interviewed all feel grateful that they have what they have together and are in awe about it. This is true for couples who have been married many years. It is a quality you often find among newly weds. "How did we find each other? We are so lucky." These couples retain that feeling of gratitude. Gratitude also helps to paper over the difficult parts of their relationship. Another aspect of goodwill is to emphasize positive qualities in

the relationship and de-emphasize qualities that aren't so great.

How can couples develop goodwill?

Both have to understand what goodwill is and focus on positive qualities in their relationship. In the book I suggest specific exercises for helping people do that. One exercise is to write down all of the things they don't like about each other and make a pact with each other to not mention any of these negative things for a month or one week. Pay as little attention to them as possible. In the meantime, give your spouse five compliments every day. Mention and talk about the things you really like. That can make an enormous shift because it brings the awareness to emphasize the positive and de-emphasize the negative. Another experiment is to act as if you are devoted and have no hesitations. Behave in the

most loving way that you can towards your spouse. Do the experiment for five minutes, an hour, or a day. Couples who are negative with each other find it hard to do that exercise and may need to start with five minutes at a time.

How do thriving couples manage time?

It is simple. They agree that they desire and need to spend time together and do it. That is a big challenge for many couples. If you have small children and are both working, it can be virtually impossible to have time together. Even couples without children get busy and find it hard to carve out time together. Couples who thrive know

that they can't have a relationship if they don't spend time together. What is a relationship? It is spending time together. You have to be together to cultivate the different dimensions of a relationship and to have various experiences together. Couples spend a lot of time together when they first fall in love, then settle into their routines. They have separate work situations. When they are together at home, they tend the children, prepare meals and behave basically like singles who live together. Relationship requires time. To have a multifaceted relationship, you have to have a variety of types of time that you spend together.

What types of time?

Even daily exchanges get short-changed among couples who live separate lives but are living in the same household. It is important to find time every day, with rare exceptions, to connect. I talked with one couple, and asked them to look at each other because they had no eye contact during our conversation. The woman said to me, "I don't think that we ever look at each other." I paid attention in my own relationship and realized that often when we connect, we do not look at each other. We might fix dinner and talk, or drive together and talk, but not have any eye contact. Communicating when you are on the fly is better than nothing but it is not necessarily quality time.

Couples told me about rituals that they developed in order to get the kind of time that they need on a daily basis. For example, one couple telephones each other in the afternoon so that they can catch up on each other's day and have a leisurely chat before they get home and the children assault them. Another couple carves out a cocktail hour. They don't usually have cocktails; they have a little snack and call it their cocktail hour. It is a delicious time that they look for-

Going to routine jobs and spending much of our lives at somebody else's work is deadening. If people were tuned into pleasure, they wouldn't go to routine, boring, dull jobs. They wouldn't enslave themselves to a paycheck for their whole lives.

ward to. The children know to entertain themselves during that period of time and that the living room is off-limits for them. Daily exchanges happen over the phone, while fixing and eating dinner together, or before going to bed.

It certainly keeps couples tuned in to the details of their lives.

They have to tell each other what is going on in their separate spheres and what is important to them. These couples can really listen to each other.

Thriving couples take play time.

Play time is so important. Couples get together because they enjoy each other's company. It is critical that a couple keep scheduling play times together. This can be a wide variety of activities such as bowling, movies, hiking, reading together and collecting things.

Any enjoyable activity that is shared?

Anything that is shared, relaxing, and a break from the work routine. It also includes vacations together. Couples get so involved in their work that they become workaholics and don't play or go on vacation together, and their relationship suffers.

What about relationship development time?

Many couples, even thriving couples, go a lifetime without this. I wouldn't say that it is essential, but not having relationship development time is like going through life with a million dollars in your drawer and leaving it there. There are opportunities for increasing the depth, flow, and warmth between yourselves; many enriching activities are available to couples. If you spend two or three hours a week working on your relationship in various ways, it will have positive results. You will honor each other more, develop ignored areas of your relationship, compliment each other, and enjoy more warmth. Relationship development time is anything that examines the different qualities of your relationship and gives you an opportunity to expand your intimacy, depth, and warmth.

It could be reading books, seeing a counselor, or sharing some spiritual activity together?

Plus going to workshops for couples, discussing your relationship with friends who are couples, taking a quiz or reading a magazine article. I believe in using a marriage counselor for marriage enrichment rather than waiting until a relationship is close to divorce or has big problems. Thriving couples recognize that their relationship is a priority and are willing to invest time and energy in it.

You said that people who have wonderful relationships are alive

people. What do you mean by aliveness?

Aliveness is excitement and passion about life in general as well as about each other. Aliveness cannot be isolated to marriage. Aliveness and passion about life are qualities that people are attracted to in each other. People who are excited about life bring that into their relationship and it spills over from their relationship into the rest of their life. Most of the couples I interviewed are involved in exciting activities. Aliveness is feeling good a lot of the time. It is feeling a kind of excitement throughout one's life (not all of the time, obviously, but in general) and looking forward to things.

You defined aliveness also as the capacity to experience pleasure. How we can develop capacity for pleasure and why is it limited in our culture?

The capacity for pleasure is limited in our culture because our corporate and bureaucratic world of work wouldn't function well if we were oriented toward pleasure. Going to routine jobs and spending much of our lives at somebody else's work is deadening. Valuing pleasure means to have your body available to you, to experience feelings, to express yourself creatively, to breathe deeply, and to take in the fullness of life. If people were tuned into pleasure, they wouldn't go to routine, boring, dull jobs. They wouldn't enslave themselves to a pay check for their whole lives. Our system necessarily suppresses pleasure. It is a sad commentary, yet it is possible for individuals to develop capacity for experiencing pleasure in spite of having a job that isn't exciting.

You said that we develop our minds and our capacity to think, but there is no organized education to train our bodies to sense, move, breathe, and be expressive. We aren't educated to experience

Because pleasure is not valued, most people don't pursue it. We are such sheep, we go along with the cultural values. If you want to be a thriving couple, you may need to work against the mainstream culture, as it doesn't support thriving relationships.

our need for aliveness the way we are trained to experience and manifest our need for achievement.

It is appalling. Everyone has moments of feeling vibrantly alive when every cell in the body comes alive. It can happen after a massage, when falling in love, when running, when enjoying nature, or during an opera. What a tragedy that we actualize that capacity so little in our ninety years on the planet. As humans we have staggering potential to experience aliveness and pleasure.

Sometimes we confuse aliveness and achievement. How do we do this?

For the sake of discussion let's divide activities into two realms, achievement and aliveness. All of our needs can be described as the

need to achieve or the need for aliveness. Our culture is so oriented toward achievement that we forget aliveness. The real disaster is not that we over-emphasize achievement and devalue aliveness but that we confuse the two. We think that by achieving more, we will feel more pleasure, excitement, and aliveness. Often, the more we achieve, the more we enslave ourselves to some vision of success or achievement and the less alive we feel. Achieving requires shutting down the aliveness systems and participating in a system that doesn't serve our capacity for vitality and pleasure. In the book I quote a conversation between two men where one says, "Hi, how is every thing?" and the second answers, "I am doing great. I closed two new contracts and I am working late at the office, making more money. And I won the golf tournament last weekend." Then he asks, "How is everything with you?" The first man answers, "I took early retirement, take walks in the woods, do Yoga, and spend weeks camping with my wife." Most people would identify with and admire the achiever and not the man who valued aliveness.

Thriving couples value aliveness.

Because pleasure is not valued, most people don't pursue it. We are such sheep, we go along with the cultural values. If you want to be a thriving couple, you may need to work against the mainstream. It is an up-stream swim because the culture doesn't support thriving relationships at all.

These couples view problems as opportunities and they understand and accept their relationship rhythms. Please discuss this.

If couples don't have a long range perspective of living through the ups and downs, the downs will defeat them. It happens when couples run up against a stressful situation and don't have an abiding

inner knowledge that this too will pass and that they will return to more pleasant times. They focus on the current moment and let it defeat them or fester under the surface so that it colors their relationship.

Thriving couples understand that pain in relationships can be generative.

That is a critical concept. Couples are willing to go through pain and to face difficulties because they know that they will reap great rewards on the other end. Most people are too afraid to do that. They fear that if they face problems it will break them up or be too painful. Fear keeps them from facing and moving through problems which fester below the surface for years. Unfortunately, that is a common syndrome. Couples who recognize that problems are opportunity for growth, if they are willing to tackle them, learn and grow in ways that would not otherwise be possible. Unless you view obstacles as opportunities for learning, you won't be willing to face problems.

Intimacy causes pain and creates opportunities to heal old wounds. Would you elaborate?

Intimacy can cause pleasure and at the same time bring up pain. When you fall in love or are in love with someone, you also experience the pain of times when you loved someone and your love wasn't returned, or the person you loved hurt you, or when you wanted love and it wasn't there. There is a painful side to intimacy and love because we rarely had pure experiences of unconditional love as we were growing up. We also inadvertently hurt each other. It is hard to go through life without making mistakes and hurting the people we love. Moving through those painful times with the person that you are intimate with gives you the opportunity to go back and heal those wounds. If you are in a relationship

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that is loving enough, that love can compensate for love that you didn't get when you were a child and can heal the wounds. It is not easy, because the wounds are deeply ingrained, but it is important to know that it is possible.

Intimacy is a quality of thriving marriage. How do you define intimacy?

Intimacy is self-disclosure. It is stripping away your outer, public ways of being and sharing your inner life with another person. It is not long romantic walks on the beach. In our society we confuse the trappings of intimacy with genuine intimacy. There can be warm fuzzies and romantic activities

without self-disclosure. Intimate style behavior can be deceptive. Intimacy means being honest with yourself and with the person whom you are close to. Out of that self-disclosure can come enormous healing. Healing is facing what is rock bottom true in your life and stripping away your defenses. We defend against looking at the truth in our life because it is painful. Let's use the example of not getting enough love. When a child does not get the love that she needs, the emptiness and unfilled need that she feels may be too painful to experience, so she pretends, "I don't need love." That is a defense mechanism developing to prevent her from feeling pain. The defense mechanism might be healthy at the time. The problem is that we learn the behavior of the defense mechanism and hang on to it long after it is useful. Let's take the above example of the woman who has defended against not getting enough love by believing, "I am loner; I am self-sufficient and don't need other people." That is a tough defense but if she falls in love and her partner breaks through her wall of defense and gets to the part that needs love, and if she is able to experience love, that wound can heal.

Some people fear that if they become intimate, they will lose freedom. Is that true?

People gain freedom because they no longer question, "Am I going to fall in love?" or "Is my marriage okay?" Questions such as "Is my love life okay?" fall away. They operate their lives with the security of feeling loved, adored, and taken care of. They have an enormous amount of freedom. Couples who love each other don't take away opportunities from each other.

Relationships involve trade-offs. It is true that you can't have the same life style that you had you had as a single person. You can't date a

new person every week, but the question is, "What is your priority?" People in loving relationships do not view the things they "give up" as sacrifices. They view them as trade-offs. They gain something in this "sacrifice" that is more than what they are giving up. The idea that when you get into a relationship you give up freedom is a misnomer. Couples who thrive feel that they gain freedom.

Thriving couples have good sex lives and their passion endures.

It is important to marry someone you are sexually compatible with. Sexual chemistry is an essential ingredient. Most people won't go through life sacrificing that aspect of their being if they don't have a satisfactory sex life with their partner. It is important to start out with a relationship that is sexually compatible. People tell me, "I really like this person and we have a good relationship. We talk about intellectual things but I am not really in love. I don't have that passionate zap." I suggest they move on and look for someone they really feel sexually excited about.

With the right partner, sex and excitement don't fade as is commonly believed?

That's right. People who are married for thirty or fifty years go through periods where sex is less frequent and is routine, but these plateaus never last. Couple after couple reported this to me. They have periods when they make love all of the time, really enjoy it, and are passionate and excited. They still turn each other on. The rest of their lives together is exciting and flourishing, and that passion spills over in to their physical relationship.

What role does infatuation play in developing enduring passion?

Some relationships start with infatuation and others don't. Some of the couples that I spoke with started out as work partners. Their

relationships grew and they became close wonderful friends, then they discovered they were sexually attracted to one other. Other couples started with a big bang. The frenzied excitement of a new relationship is not supposed to last forever. When it fades it is an experience of loss, which is normal and natural. Couples should anticipate that and not worry about it. Once you get through the loss of initial infatuation, passion begins to blossom and expand in ways that you could never have anticipated. You have the security of being with each other and the adventure of growing your life together. You watch your spouse doing something very competent and feel proud. It is wonderful to know this is your spouse and he has chosen to be with you.

Infatuation awakens passion that blossoms and spreads into the rest of our lives.

It causes passion to stir in you. If you aren't excited about your life, passion can fade. You learn to live without it. It is important to have experiences that rouse passion and get the juices flowing in your cells. Once you feel that, you don't want to let go of it.

How do we keep passion alive?

Keep your life exciting and make sure that you are involved with things that stir your passions. Some people don't automatically have passion in their life. They need to be involved in a deliberate, maybe a long term, effort to uncover what is going to make them feel passion and aliveness.

We have to desire passion and believe it is possible in order to cultivate it?

Yes. Couples keep passion alive by deliberately paying attention to it. They like passionate episodes and create them through ongoing self-disclosure and by trusting each other. They build trust by sharing things that are sometimes difficult or painful. That is, after all, the best intimacy and passion builder.

Are these couples monogamous?

Yes, they are. For most of them the possibility of an outside relationship is a non-issue. It doesn't come up; they wouldn't consider it; and they don't crave it. That doesn't mean that they don't have attractions outside of their relationship. They do because they are healthy. They are usually people-oriented, are involved with other people, and have close friendships with the opposite sex. Even though they may be tempted or a little sexually turned on, they never act on it, because they value so much what they have with each other. They don't consider it. It is really a non-issue.

Is there anything you want to add?

I want to emphasize that our culture doesn't believe in or support thriving marriage. It is important for couples who thrive to realize that they are swimming upstream. Our culture believes that to be happy, you buy something. We are materialistic and oriented toward achievement and success. Those things are often bought at the price of intimacy, closeness, and pleasure. If you want to build a life that emphasizes love, passion, aliveness, and excitement, you may be called upon to do some things that are a little unorthodox.

Such as?

Refuse promotions at work or take a work schedule that is a little less demanding. In other words, make professional or business sacrifices. I know a lawyer who is a partner in a big firm. He says he does the minimum required of his partnership in terms of bringing in new business because he wants to spend time with his family. This is a high priority for him. People on their death beds do not say, "I wish I had spent more time at the office." They say, "I wish I had spent more time with the people I love."•

D A V I D K Y L E

ELDER LEADERS

The role of the elder woman and man traditionally has been that of a person with authority and dignity within the community who carries the values, traditions, and experiential wisdom of the people. Elders can help balance, heal, and restore the constant strain of interaction between people, environmental conditions, and the relationship to the spiritual world. Being in a different stage of life, elders are slower to action, more cautious in their decisions, and most importantly, are more willing to take the longer view on issues. They have fewer pressures generally and no deadlines to meet. In the life of the community, elders can act as a balance to the impetuosity, heat, and quickness of youth. But true elders do not squash and control the energy and dynamics of youth. The elder's role is to channel, focus, bless, and encourage youthful energy toward constructive and creative ends in society. There is a direct link between elders and youth. If the elders are doing their job appropriately, youth move into adulthood contributing to the community. From the elders they can learn how to temper their youthful fire. Elders give guidance through adulthood and help to sustain a balanced life of economic fulfillment, artistic and creative expression along with spiritual and political governance within the community.



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With the growth of the machine over the past hundred years, elder leadership has waned and all but been destroyed in Western culture. Rather than given dignity and authority, our elders are often separated from families and put into retirement compounds. Rather than observing youngsters in their communities and helping to guide,

initiate, and mentor them, our elders often sit and watch the problems of youth played out on *Days of Our Lives* or other soap operas and sitcoms. Until seventy five to a hundred years ago there was no retirement for older people. Their role was to focus on the children, share their wisdom and insight, and prepare for their own crossing through the portals of death. Society acknowledged that older people were at a different stage of activity and purpose in their lives, but clearly there was a role for them.

Our current idea of retirement is associated with the release from the daily job as if it were a prison. Retirement is the release from the isolation, alienation, and fragmentation of a life compartmentalized between work and what we call our "real" life of family or hobbies or recreation. Retirement means we

can have our own lives back once again. Retirement means we no longer have a boss telling us what to do. The problem is that by the time we reach retirement age we have been so conditioned by our jobs and hypnotic consumption that we don't know how to reclaim our lives for ourselves. We replace the time we spent at our jobs with more of the consumption and recreation pattern rather than learning to grow and change into a different role as a responsible elder in the community.

Within the fragmentation that occurs between work obligations and personal fulfillment, we have lost a sense of individual and collective purpose and direction. Our formal education hasn't taught us about the stages of life and initiations that humans need to go through. And our parents and grandparents were removed far

enough from this knowledge themselves that they couldn't articulate it to us. Without this elder wisdom, community and society no longer provide us with the wider vision and context in which to develop and grow as human beings. Without this context we are cast into life alone without an operating manual that can show us the connection between the beginning of life and its end.

Out of our loss of a meaningful sacred connection to life, we became frightened of death. We lost the sense of the stage in human development that death plays in each of our lives. As a result we have lost meaningful rituals for those who die. Our only alternative for those who are dying is to try to keep them medically alive, often far beyond the wishes of the ill person and the family members.

We are taught to fear aging and death so we create a cultural facade and pretend that we never get old. Our facade is eternal youthfulness. Beauty is defined as a certain age, a certain physical look, a certain style of living. The propaganda of the machine reinforces the fear of death with new products. To preserve youth we create the need for "things" from hair dye to facelifts to tummy tucks. In the disconnection from both the sacred and the purposefulness of old age, our older leaders learned to copy the media hype—the youthful patterns. Our older leaders are dieting, jogging, often wearing the most youthful fashions; many participate in seniors-level marathons and so on. In the most basic way those who should be our elder-leaders are unwilling to accept their natural stage in life; they use their energy in trying to look and be younger. Our cultural taboo of growing old is robbing us of the human resource that is most needed at this time.

My call is for us to recover elder-leadership in a youth dominated

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culture. Young people often turn toward novelty and challenge the structure and dynamics of current values and traditions. With this natural challenge, society needs to have a big enough container so that the living essence of those values and traditions is not destroyed. Because young people lack groundedness as they work and play and experiment, elder leaders can provide the context, the experimental ground, the depth of perspective, and the boundaries that help not only young people but the culture itself to stay healthy and in balance.

The indigenous people of the

planet still know the principles of elder-leadership, the initiation process into this stage of life, the perspective of how it functions, and the tools that are needed by elders to foster the capacities of leadership within themselves. From indigenous peoples we can observe the practical results of thousands of years of elders being the carriers of the sacred for their communities. This knowledge can give us insights and understandings that can help to reclaim the souls of the millions of older women and men who have not been initiated into the next-to-final stage of their life's journey. This knowledge can help them restore the dignity and honor that their life experience deserves.

THE ELDER STAGE OF LIFE

To those of us in our late forties and early fifties, this "spirit," this imprint of the sacred in our lives has been an unconscious beacon. It has been pulling us toward something. In our twenties we broke free from our families and from unconscious societal conditioning. In our thirties we explored our strengths and capabilities. In our forties we tried to create something new in the world. But now that we are in our fifties, we need to take the responsibility to give shape and direction to our culture.

Carl Jung in his classic essay, "The Stages of Life," submits this question of culture to us. He asks, "Could by any chance culture be the meaning and purpose of the second half of life?" He goes on to observe that old people in tribal cultures were always the guardians of the mysteries and laws of the people. He then says, "How does the matter stand with us? Where is the wisdom of our old people, where are their precious secrets and their visions? For the most part our old people try to compete with the young." Jung then tells us that the

confusion and fear about old age and the “cult of youth” occurs because the only purpose that is taught older people is to keep expanding what they did through the first half of their lives: making money, increasing position in society, and continuing to expand personal prestige. “The afternoon of human life must also have a significance of its own and cannot be merely a pitiful appendage of life’s morning.” The reason for this failure, Jung says, of having few wise elders is that we now “have no schools for 40-year-olds. That is not quite true. Our religions were always such schools in the past, but how many people regard them as such today?”

Many of the older cultures gave men and women a second initiation around the age of 50. Even today there are still indigenous peoples who initiate people at different periods in a person’s life. The Dagara people in West Africa initiate boys and girls between 13 and 17 with rites of adulthood. This initiation gives them direct connection to the sacredness of the other world of the ancestors and a larger spiritual reality. The rites also gives them a deep respect and clear knowledge of the cosmology of their tribe.

INITIATING ELDER-LEADERS

John W. Gardner in his book *No*



Easy Victories says, “Leaders have a significant role in creating the state of mind that is the society. They can serve as symbols of the moral unity of the society. They can express the values that hold the society together. Most important, they can conceive and articulate goals that lift people out of their petty preoccupations, carrying them above the conflicts that tear a society apart, and unite them in pursuit of objectives worthy of their best efforts.” Without a new leadership, without healthy, mature elders to help raise up new images at the center of our world community, we will continue to live in a narrow economic definition of reality that excludes or minimizes the importance of an inner spiritual world. Without new

forms of leadership, there may well be no elders to teach the rituals and the various stages of life, none to teach how truly to be human, none to bring us into contact and balance with the natural world, and none to show us the inner guide that can help us redefine a new world. Without this kind of elder leadership in our families and communities, we will increasingly drift away from life’s deepest knowing, life’s greatest joys, and lose ourselves in the machine.

Yes, it is true that our initiation as elders will not be easy. In a youth culture we have regulated older people to the role of useless parts. Our culture no longer values older

people and most people who have aged have themselves not learned how to tap the sources of wisdom that come through consistent contact with the natural world. Many older people are caught in the pseudo-life of television soaps and sitcoms and therefore they tend only to reinforce the machine’s values in younger people when they interact with them. We who are in our fifties and sixties must learn to reclaim the role of elder in our culture. One of the first steps of initiation is learning to be quiet and in turning off the media and entertainment input. We need to spend as much time as we can in natural settings and listen to what nature will teach us. Slowing down, being quiet, and listening are in my view

the first initiation steps to becoming an elder-leader. In these ways we can begin to rediscover the old and new ways that can return health to our communities.

OLD AND NEW FORMS OF LEADERSHIP

It is with these critical issues in mind and with the awareness that we come together within *the crisis of the crossroads* that we must examine the potentials for a more healthy pattern of elder-leadership in our world and communities. The crisis of the crossroads has been with us as long as we've been on the planet. But the resolution of our machine's cultural crisis may determine our most basic survival as a species. *Leadership from those of us in our fifties and sixties must take both old and new forms if we are to get through our current crisis.* We have some work to do individually and collectively.

- We must return to the past of our distant ancestors and find the images of the ancient power that come from outside and beyond the material world.

- We must understand anew the value and power of myths and how they create boundaries for the choices we make in the world.

- As elder-leaders we must discover the potent use of ritual that creates a conduit through which power for healing can be safely channeled.

- We must also explore the forward flow of today's circumstances to find the elder-leader pattern that best works for us now.

Somehow we can all feel that our political and economic leadership and often our spiritual leadership is bankrupt. The machine sucks up our leaders and warps their capacity to be responsible to members of society or to the natural world. We who would be initiated into an elder-leader role walk this same fine



line as we try to distance ourselves from the machine's values, beliefs, and perceptions. Our saving and protecting power in this crisis of leadership however is in the natural world and its access to the world of the sacred. The world of the sacred is fundamentally more powerful to help us than the machine.

There is an old African ritual designed to meet such crises. The

ritual calls for two groups lined up opposite each other, giving a call-and-response chant back and forth. This particular chant is used when the problems in the village are very great and the people have no answers about what to do. In this chant they call to the gods to come to the crossroads to help them, protect them, and guide them in a safe direction. During the ritual the people sing loud and strong as they move in line toward those opposite them; they also make exaggerated body and hand movements to demonstrate their serious intent and resolve in calling the gods to help them. Through this generating of physical, emotional, and spiritual intensity, a clarity, direction, and new way are revealed to the community.

In small and large groups and with great intensity, we must call forth together for a new direction and leadership. Our challenge is to find the way to reinitiate our elders so that healing and help can come to our

wounded brothers and sisters and to our wounded communities. This call and challenge is to each of us individually who has arrived at this elder-leader stage of life. •

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MYRLEEN FERGUSON/PHOTO EDIT



PROBLEM SOLVING

J A M E S F A D I M A N

One can overcome almost any barrier, provided one maintains the willingness to do so. We are already superb problem solvers. What might be lacking is experience, practice, or well-developed skills. Healthy children are natural problem solvers; they seek out and revel in novel situations. Adults sometimes need help in reconnecting with their basic capacities—overcoming habits that block their original mental agility. Essentially, we obstruct ourselves by believing that we are uncreative. Only when this self-imposed limit is overcome can we start to develop new levels of skill.

MICHAEL NEWMAN/PHOTO EDIT

James Fadiman, Ph.D. has written or edited eight books in the areas of psychology, health, and personal growth. He holds degrees from Harvard and Stanford Universities and was a lecturer at Stanford and a professor of psychology at San Francisco State University and at Brandeis University. Currently, Dr. Fadiman directs his own consulting firm and conducts seminars, lectures, and teaches in the area of personal growth.



First class problem-solvers are well aware of the frustrating walls that so often spring up between them and potential solutions. As self-concept improves however, one becomes more at ease with complex problems, can take on more creative projects, and investigate new avenues of self-expression. Each new arena, while it exposes new obstacles, presents new opportunities. Each of us needs continually to overcome inner habits which restrict the free flow of our creativity.

Even the most skilled and successful artists and inventors, the most proficient problem-solvers need to address their inner barriers—be they emotional, cultural, environmental, intellectual, or perceptual. What follows are examples of each. As you read the descriptions, how many are immediately familiar—or can be found in your family or friends? *The first step on the road to change is recognition*—becoming more sensitive not only to the impediments within yourself but in others as well.

EMOTIONAL BARRIERS

Emotional barriers are those feelings that interfere with your willingness or your ability to solve problems. They take many forms.

LACK OF CHALLENGE

Sometimes a problem seems too simple or obvious to hold your

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attention. It seems beneath your intelligence or the demands of your job; it's a task which should be delegated, put aside, let slide—something "anyone can do."

For example, my files for this book have grown unwieldy and I need to restructure them. It is not a difficult task but it is cumbersome and involves a series of small decisions, none of which interest me; more interesting problems are forever presenting themselves. The result is that the files are not put in order. Similarly I need a small brass fixture for a lamp which is broken. I know that I need to call around for the part, disassemble the lamp, check the new part to be sure that it fits, and reassemble it. The time it will take to do the task when I actually get around to it will be under thirty minutes, including the calls and the drive to the store. The time

it takes to overcome my lack of interest, however, will be (to date) almost three months. Meanwhile the lamp stays broken.

We continually accumulate problems like these. The challenge is to learn why we are not more willing to solve them—why we procrastinate. Perhaps it is because there seems to be no learning involved and thus no obvious challenge. It was said of Brother Lawrence, author of the medieval classic *The Practice of the Presence of God* that although he never hurried and never worked quickly, he did twice as much work as any one else because *he always did exactly what needed to be done*. It is both a gift and a skill.

NEED FOR QUICK ANSWERS

In a problem-solving group, you'll often find that certain members come up with solutions almost immediately. Once they find the key to a problem, they lock onto it and will not let go. Their need is to begin to implement a solution rather than continue to consider alternatives.

I used to admire them. Here were people who were already applying a solution before I could even decide if the solution they were going for was a good one. What I learned however was that the very speed of their achievement was a clue to a significant emotional barrier—fear. *The very existence of a problem disturbed them*. Such people are uncomfortable in a world with unsolved problems—a world of uncertainties. So they seek therefore not *the best* solution but *any* solution that diminishes their anxiety. The need to flee from fear is for them the most pressing problem.

So what on the surface passes for quick-wittedness or impatience is often simply a lack of confidence. When you settle for patch jobs, quick fixes, or temporary solutions,



you may be trying to avoid rather than trying to solve the problem.

FEAR OF MISTAKES

One definition of life is that it is a process of making mistakes, learning, and making new mistakes. In problem-solving, fear of making mistakes is a common stumbling block. It leads to doing nothing, waiting for someone else to take responsibility, allowing your ideas to be superseded—always reducing the possibility of a mistake and thus reducing your fear. Unfortunately this also lowers—to zero—your chances of finding a solution of which you can be proud. That being alive means you will make mistakes is not a cynical idea but a cheerful one; problem-solvers, inventors, creators, and artists make far more mistakes than the average person. They have to; they take far more risks. A willingness to take risks in one's work and in one's personal life is a recurring theme in the lives of creative people.

Here are rules of thumb for risk-takers:

1. If more than half of your ideas

work the first time, your solutions are not very inventive. You are probably trying to avoid challenge.

2. If *everything* you do works, you are taking no risks at all.

3. If what you invent consistently fails, you are not learning from your mistakes.

A final examination I once gave took place on Lake Lagunita on the Stanford campus. The task was to design, construct, and operate a vessel that would hold four students, cost no more than thirty dollars, and be able to go out to the middle of the lake on one surface and come back on a different face—safely. In addition to grades, there were two awards: one for the fastest vehicle to complete the course, the other for the most innovative. The final was well attended: five hundred spectators, including a local television news crew, girlfriends and boyfriends, rooting parties, bystanders, and the class itself. The exam, run as a race, was exciting and close. Any failure would be extremely visible.

The winning entry was a teardrop-shaped container built by a team with excellent mathematical

skills as well as nautical experience. They left nothing to chance, testing their craft over and over in the week preceding the final. The most innovative craft was a true exercise in risk-taking, an open oval shaped like a ring with a twist in it. It was a Mobius strip, a mathematical construction which seems to have only one side. I had seen

them made from a strip of paper as a curiosity but had never seen one built to hold four excited and optimistic graduate students. They paddled out to the middle of the lake, turned it “inside out” and began to paddle back. Twenty yards from shore the frame broke and the whole contraption began to sink. Furious paddling almost made it to shore but not quite. The design was brilliant but it had not been welded properly; the stress of the race literally tore it apart. “How do you feel about your craft now?” I asked. It evolved that none of them had ever been sure that they make it even to the center of the lake.

It is to the bold that the rewards belong. No risks—no rewards. Real risk-taking assumes a self-concept which takes failures in stride and enjoys successes. Most inventions do not work the first or the tenth time; but to the inventor, each failure is merely a step on the way. Those who stop with an initial setback never taste the sweetness of eventual victory. A major American industrialist was asked how to be successful; his answer, “Increase your failure rate.” It is a hard piece

TURN TO PAGE 86

Theory, 7.00.

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L O T U S

Simplify Your Life

Continued from page 65

When you think about it, the *getting out* of a difficult relationship can be relatively easy. It is the *deciding* to get out that is often the difficult part. No other thing you could possibly do will simplify your life as quickly or as completely as getting out of a bad relationship.

JUST SAY NO

One of the things I promised myself when we decided to simplify our lives was to reduce my social commitments to people beyond the circle of my immediate family and friends. I've finally reached a point where, if someone asks me to do something I don't want to do or spend an evening with people I don't have any interest in being with, I simply say "no." Thank you, but no.

My weekdays are devoted for the most part to my work and unavoidably there are deadlines and obligations I have to meet. But my evenings and weekends are my own. They have become sacred, and learning to say "no" to things I don't want to do—especially those things I have always felt I should do—has kept them inviolate.

If you have a problem saying no, go back and read *When I Say No, I Feel Guilty* by Manuel J. Smith. This classic bestseller from the 1970's will give you the verbal tools you need to reduce your commitments and make your time your own again.

SPEND ONE DAY A MONTH IN SOLITUDE

If you already spend a fair amount of time alone or if you've made sufficient changes in your life so that you are out from under the pressures that once made it so complicated, you may already be getting all the solitude you need.

But if your days are full of family, friends, traffic, noise, demands, requests, pressures, deadlines, schedules, and an endless parade of

people, you may want to think about spending a day or possibly a weekend each month by yourself, completely away from the everyday distractions that complicate your life.

Spending a day in solitude can mean doing anything from taking a hike up a mountain trail or sitting quietly on a park bench. It can mean a day spent wandering through art museums or art galleries or a day browsing in the stacks at your local library. While it doesn't necessarily mean getting away from people, it definitely means getting away from people you know who are likely to make demands on you.

Spending time away from the constant barrage of pressures we face can get us back in touch with what is real and can help to alleviate the tensions of everyday life. After all, freeing ourselves from the pressures of modern living is a major part of what simplifying is all about.

Hint: If you're not in the habit of taking time for yourself, you may need to explain to your mate and/or family members what you plan to do and your desire to spend time alone. It's important that those close to you understand your need for solitude so they won't feel left out or rejected.

STOP TRYING TO CHANGE PEOPLE

I have a good friend who got into an awful mess a few years back from which she is still trying to extricate herself. But, in fact, she hasn't been trying nearly as hard as I have. I've spent a lot of frustrating time and energy over the years attempting to get her to see how she could change her life for the better. The solutions to her problems were so obvious—at least to me! The bottom line is that, though she pays lip service to wanting to change, she is really not all that interested.

One of the things that has become clear to me since I've started to slow down is that people do what they want to do. Understanding that has made it possible for me to see the fine line between being supportive, one of the bywords of the 1980s, and getting in the way. When it comes right down to it, we can't change other people. They change when they're good and ready. Ultimately, we all have to get out of our own predicaments. Most often what people really want is a supportive ear. This includes kids and spouses.

Now I just listen. Boy, has that simplified my life. And it has freed up a lot of energy to spend in more enjoyable and more productive pursuits.

JUST BE YOURSELF

Have you ever stopped to think about how much energy you spend—and how much you complicate your life by pretending to be someone other than who you are? We all do it. It's part of being human and it was also a big part of the fast-paced lifestyle of the 1980's.

Often we assume various layers of pretense not so much out of our own needs but because of someone else's. How often are we untrue to ourselves because of the pressures of our family, the demands of our mate, the entreaties of our children? If your lifestyle reflects someone else's idea of how your life should be, take a few moments to imagine how much simpler it would be if you dropped the pretense and learned just to be yourself. •

Elaine St. James, a former businesswoman, spent the past three years simplifying her life. She and her husband live a simple, peaceful life in Santa Barbara. Copyright 1994 by Elaine St. James. Adapted from the book "Simplify Your Life" by Elaine St. James. Printed with permission from the publisher, Hyperion. Available at your local bookstore or by calling (800)759-0190.

Problem Solving

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of advice to follow at first but one which increases your chances for success.

THE DESIRE FOR ORDER

A close cousin to the fear of risk-taking is a craving for order. Order is a sensible requirement in any large organization and in the lives of individuals; it becomes an obstacle when it interferes with creative responses. *Problems are exactly those issues that don't fit into any previous order.* People who thrive on order try to squash problems with rule books, manuals, and regulations; with tidy spaces, orderly files, and endless lists. Problems remain but they go underground.

Have you ever been told that such and such "is not covered in the regulations." What you're being told is your problem asks for novel thinking—and you should therefore go away. Encountering this barrier, I've found that a direct appeal to the higher mind sometimes helps. "This is your special area; you understand it and I don't. What would you do to solve this problem?" If they become reflective, you can relax—their problem-solving faculties are coming into play and they will search for a solution. If they reply with another version of "It's not in the regulations," ask for their supervisor or anybody else, and try for the higher mind again.

At one point in college I saw that I would have great difficulty fulfilling a set of requirements before graduation. I went to the

appropriate office and laid out the problem. The woman helping me studied it every which way. She agreed with me that there seemed to be no solution that would not cost me a lot of time and energy; but, she added, "That's just the way things are." In desperation I said, "Can you think of another way?" She shrugged and shook her head. Then, just for an instant, she asked



herself for a solution. Her face suddenly cleared; she laughed and turned to me. "There is something you can do; take the classes you wish, then come back here six weeks before graduation. Someone will look over your transcript, see that it's too late to change anything, make an exception in your case, and O.K. you for graduation. Just one favor—when you come

back, don't tell them where you got the idea." There are always solutions. They may not be comfortable or easy as that one was but every problem has alternative paths.

JUDGMENT

Often we prefer to judge ideas rather than develop them and make them work. This is a subtle barrier; in organizations it is often misperceived as a virtue. People who dominate by judging may be highly placed and highly paid, though seldom enjoyed or looked up to.

Can you recall being a member of a group struggling to solve a problem anything from how to position a new product to where to hold a charity auction? As ideas emerged, one member of the group would continually shoot them down.

"We tried that three years ago; it cost us a bundle."

"You haven't taken into account the parking problems."

"We can't afford to create a new position."

"That vendor's no good; he's having delivery problems of his own."

There are also those who grudgingly acknowledge "Yes, BUT... Yes, BUT..." These people, despite their wisdom and

experience, are deadly "idea-snuffers." They are so determined and able to see defects that they rarely allow an idea to mature. If you observe them carefully, you'll realize that they're afraid—not only of making mistakes themselves but of allowing others to make them. By focusing early, closely, and tightly on the defects in an idea, they prevent the initial proposal

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DENNIS MACDONALD/PHOTO EDIT

Reviews



BY RICHARD HOLMES

Conscious Relationships

John Welwood, Ph.D.

\$18.95 (2 cassettes) 180 minutes.

(800)775-6887

In this seminar, John Welwood notes initially three stages of "couple development"—a "childlike state" (e.g., identity "fused to family," as in India); adolescence, which resulted in a breaking away from home and a "rebellion against old forms" (peaking up through the 1960s); and emergent adulthood, characterized by "bringing consciousness to the nature of the couple itself."

In his soft-spoken way, Welwood elucidates how and why a relationship should be used "as a vehicle for realizing our true nature." What is true nature? Those qualities he says that most persons have lost touch with—openness, sensitivity, compassion, basic goodness, and so on.

"We need a new vision of relationship," he claims, in order to remove veils that hide our vulnerability and to soften the contractions of body and mind that have cut us off from our feelings.

Welwood talks extensively about the separation between the self (that ineffable soulfulness within us) and other (whoever and whatever we attach to on the outside to solidify our ideas about ourselves, that is, those "self-other imprints" that are false). He envisages our inner being as a palace, well-lit and expansive; but, because many persons are enslaved to various identities—thereby diminishing the capacity to perceive into their true nature—they end up "living in a one-room apartment in the middle."

The vast darkness outside this one-room prison espe-

cially becomes overwhelming when, for example, love brings us up against "disused parts of ourselves." It is at this point, this "razor's edge," Welwood observes, that we either unconsciously retreat back to safety or consciously walk into the dark chaos, experiencing its "fertile possibility," and leaving behind the safety of our walled cocoon.

Welwood: "The stronger love's radiance, the darker the shadows we encounter. The more enlivened we feel, the more we also feel our dead spots. The more we start to become conscious, the more we see how unconscious we've been. And the deeper our love, the more it exposes our resistance to love."

This is the challenge that he presents—that probing the darkness allows in the light or as a Sufi poet put it in paradoxical language, "Whoever does not die of his life is unable to live by it."

A conscious relationship, Welwood affirms, is work, requiring a struggling receptivity to (but not an indulgence in) every conflict that arises. "While the heart connection provides warmth and support and nurturing," he teaches, "the soul connection provides the challenge."

Each person in such a relationship needs to be "someone who will make us live and die most intensely."

Otherwise, to use another of his analogies, we're easily impressed, like a hard stamp in soft wax, etched there in childhood and staying for as long as we rely on others to maintain our erroneous identities. The "self-other concept" that Welwood discusses with his audience (through both lecture and Q & A) brings us face to face with another paradox: that we must heal our wounds in relation to each other, but that an unhealthy way of doing this is becoming slavishly dependent on each other for this healing. His advice that we must learn not to project outward and reject inward is obviously sound in light of these bipolar tendencies of people.

Far Journeys

School for Esoteric Studies

Reviews

Through conscious relationship partners can impel each other to recognize the projections and to develop an awareness that dissolves them or at least loosens their control over us. The heat is "consciousness" and the wax is our "soul nature," which is, Welwood instructs, "what we want to melt back into... that open quality of being."

But the process is slow, change is incremental, he counsels. Ego is deceptive. Patterns of resistance require intense and honest observation. It is a "kind of spiral process," "a process of converting lead into gold. The lead is the ego reactions; and the gold is the qualities of our true nature that we've lost or gotten distorted."

In *Conscious Relationships*, Welwood is gently persuasive in pointing out that the weak links in human nature can become strong links if couples sincerely wish to step out of one-room confinement into a palace in which the lights have been turned back on.

The Core of Spirituality

John Bradshaw

\$16.00 (2 cassettes) 120 minutes
(800)775-6887

Without a doubt, John Bradshaw is a dynamic speaker—sincere, intense, funny, and committed deeply to the idea that "natural shame is the source of spirituality."

The Core of Spirituality is vibrant. For two hours Bradshaw cites several powerful Western thinkers and draws unabashedly from personal experience in putting together a lecture that instructs people to accept their limitations, to cultivate "healthy shame," and to work through their grief to realize the paradoxical nature of human existence.

He points repeatedly to the

many paradoxes in his own life to illustrate how living in a "shame-based world"—one in which a child (and, later, an adult child) always has to "measure up"—can give birth to many "false selves" that wheel in and out of consciousness to conceal one's deepest wounds.

Unhealthy shame, he says, causes a person to "numb out" and go the conditioned route of the reptilian brain, which leads to an "habituated way of behaving" and grandiose schemes and dreams that often border on the shameless. People exercise what Buber called "fantastic imagination," hence evading reality and often exceeding norms of decency. And vulnerability in this age of "unrealistic expectations" is buried most of the time and persecuted when expressed openly (albeit infrequently).

What causes unhealthy shame or the suppression of healthy shame? Bradshaw cites many reasons, but he is most critical of patriarchy, a "system of power" that isn't shared and, as a consequence, negates possibilities of what he calls a "deep democracy," a system of shared power in which people assume a collective responsibility for their wounds. Moreover, through open expressions of their grief and acceptance of their limitations, they learn to see that a "spirituality of imperfection" is more attuned to their paradoxical and, as the Buddha taught, suffering nature.

He is blunt about patriarchy: "Patriarchy trains addicts," he asserts. Or, "Patriarchy has persecuted vulnerability."

But he is not in the blaming game in any obsessive sense, as is not uncommon in this age in which ma and pa get scapegoated to no end. Rather, Bradshaw talks about "mystification" in referring to cultural norms that

have legitimized and perpetuated the worst and, yes, most inhumane habits of humanity. In other words, he sees clearly that traditional ignorance can camouflage shame, even "toxic shame" that cannot be overcome except through addictive and imbalanced behaviors.

It is these seemingly unregenerate behaviors that motivate Bradshaw to conduct workshops, each of which he thinks of as a "collective grief ritual." To be able to reenter the "spiritual arena," he maintains, one must bring out the inner child and move as consciously as possible through four stages—the "shame bind," trances (unconscious beliefs, thoughts, and actions), "governing scenes" (e.g., particularly traumatic moments from childhood, like a severe beating), and confusion.

We must, he advises, complete our "source relationships" or the mystification continues, as exemplified in Bradshaw's poignant remembrance of his mother, an incest victim married to an alcoholic: "I can't make the woman I'm with be the mother I never had."

Those of us who are adults should deal with these wounds, but Bradshaw is understandably intent on stemming the tide of inauthentic living in childhood... now. He says, "The greatest social problem of our day is the oppression of children." So his crusade to honor and validate the feelings of children is more than merely a mental health goal; it is an effort to restore community through a compassionate sharing of our deepest personal struggles and to realize that a spirituality rooted in knowing our powerlessness and imperfections can truly be liberating.

The Core of Spirituality is an exuberant reminder that the journey

toward our "paradoxical being" is worth the effort.

The Inner Art of Meditation

Jack Kornfield

\$48.00 (6 cassettes in binder)

8 1/2 hours (800)775-6887

Jack Kornfield, co-founder of the Insight Meditation Society, has for the last twenty years endeavored to find a Western context for his teachings of *vipassana* (or insight meditation).

The Inner Art of Meditation is distilled from his five-week course, drawing most extensively from the southern Buddhist school, which gets one in touch with the "whole catastrophe" that is human life. Practicing meditation is practical spirituality at its best, for it involves not only sitting and being in touch with breath, bodily sensations, feelings, and mental processes, but also mindful engagement in what is often a messy and unpredictable world of people and actions.

Listening to Kornfield's insightful comments is important, to be sure, but as important is bringing full attention to your inner being during the long silences that often characterize the meditation sessions. Each time he guides you through what he calls an "in-the-body experience." Somewhat humorously, he emphasizes that "there's no Mac Meditation." Indeed, there are no shortcuts.

Practice is just that: practice each day, a certain amount of time, in a comfortable place, with minimal distractions, and receptive to the good and bad, whether manifested in the body, the mind, or your surroundings.

Forget idealism during meditation, he advises. Forget trying to resolve problems. Forget waiting for miracles.

In keeping with Buddhist

Atlantic University

WALLACE RESOURCES

Reviews

teachings, Kornfield asks his participants to learn about the “near enemies” that work unconsciously against the “four divine qualities.” Don’t allow attachment to replace “greater loving-kindness,” pity to replace “greater compassion,” the “comparing mind” or “if-only mind” to replace “the divine quality of joy,” and indifference to replace “profound equanimity or balance.”

Vipassana can be practiced in the midst of life. One can retreat in one’s private meditation hall for deeper understanding or splash headlong into the wavy ocean called life and love what is best and worst of the world within and without. The Islamic saying—“Praise Allah, but tie your camel to the post”—epitomizes in words its most practical aspects.

Meditation is not practiced with what he calls a “project mentality”; it is not practiced to attain. Meditation is practiced—as legend has it the Buddha told inquirers upon becoming enlightened—to “wake up.” As usual, paradoxical language surrounds any spiritual talk about meditation. So quite often Kornfield regales his audience with parables and teaching stories, often quite funny, drawn from the Hasidic, Sufi (e.g., he tells several Mulla Nasrudin tales), Buddhist, and other traditions. He also recalls many anecdotes from his readings and personal experiences.

There is a splendid quality to Kornfield’s storytelling that should result in useless encrustations in the mind being softened and possibly loosened.

The meditation that he teaches, if practiced well, can eventually lead to our dying to what we most resist, whether it be violent thoughts, uncomfortable sensations, physical discomfort or pain, or unbidden feelings and emotions. Motives of self-improvement play no part in *vipassana*, Kornfield

emphasizes. Ongoing self-observation with a compassion towards ourselves, in all our imperfections, does play a part. If we suppress nothing, we can gain many insights into our innermost being.

The Inner Art of Meditation teaches one to listen deeply with humility, a “sense of stillness,” and a “tenderness of one’s heart.” As a meditation course that teaches us to develop insight, it cannot be valued too highly. •

Success Story

Continued from page 17

just days before having my implants removed.

AM I MY BREASTS?

Is a woman a woman who has no breasts?

Can I still be a goddess? Or have I lost all hopes of playing that part?

The pain, the sorrow an infinite ocean of tears. Am I expected to face all these fears? I’m told rather bluntly, there seem no choices by medical men with indifferent voices.

Inner medicine woman, powerful and whole, give me your magic so that I may accept my new role.

She tells me quietly, “To live life whole and complete two breasts are not needed, this is no sign of defeat.

Stand tall and proud, remember you are not your breasts.

Love and accept yourself, Spirit will take care of the rest.”

With a humbled heart and a tear in each eye

I hug myself and still wonder why

Life does not give answers so clearly. It says, “This is Now.” Treat it dearly. •

Lotus

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Video

THINKING ALLOWED 1" DISPLAY
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Miscellaneous

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Problem Solving

Continued from page 86

from evolving through a normal pattern of testing, modification, and improvement. Their premature criticism not only adds to the potential for failure but reduces the capacity to create more satisfactory alternatives. It is easier to be a judge or a critic than an inventor, an innovative artist, a writer, or a flexible and creative manager. Almost every idea is born with rough edges, wrapped in false starts, and studded with mistaken assumptions. In its first stages,

almost any idea can be belittled but it can also almost always be improved.

What happens to a group if one member is an idea-snuffer? New thoughts flow at first but their production gradually slows until it ceases entirely. The idea-snuffer bullies the part of us that is embarrassed when it makes mistakes. If every idea we come up with is held up and displayed as useless, we soon learn that it is less painful and less threatening to have no ideas than to present poorly received ones.

There is nothing wrong of course with critical judgment—if it can be modulated and not allowed to become destructive. It is said that a writer has two conflicting forces within himself: a creator and a critic. If the creator is too strong, what is written is of poor quality; if the critic is too strong, nothing gets written at all. Successful writers achieve the right balance in widely varying ways. Anthony Trollope worked quickly, carefully, methodically, and rewrote very little. Leo Tolstoy rewrote each of his novels as many as seven times before letting it out of his hands. Even then, he edited his final proof sheets as heavily as he had revised the manuscripts. James Thurber's wife once looked at a story he was writing. "Thurber," she said, "this is high school stuff." "Wait till the sixth draft" was his reply.

Each of us knows the feeling of having an idea primed and ready to share when an inner voice says, "Wait. This idea will sound crazy. Reconsider." An inner battle begins. Sometimes the creator wins; but all too often the critic pushes the idea away and you say or do nothing.

Highly creative people burst with ideas. Often my engineering students worry about something they have invented as part of a class assignment. Will they lose the potential patent rights to the industrial sponsor or to the university? I ask them to evaluate their thinking process.

Is this going to be your last good idea?

If so, protect it by all means.

If not, enjoy the pleasure of creating.

Creative people are like fishermen; they all have stories of the big one that got away. The most creative are skilled fishermen; they catch a big one now and then. A friend of mine invented a product for a new company only to see the prototype fail at a crucial demonstration. The idea had been a good one but the company never recovered. What did he do? He went literally next door to another small start-up company in the same building, created a new product for them, became their chief scientist, and helped them enter the marketplace with a product that was a stunning success. For him, a past setback was ancient history, just another learning experience he could use to improve his abilities for future projects.

For many of us, this is not the case. Failure frightens us so much that we hesitate to begin. *At the core of all emotional barriers lies fear.* Wrapped around that core are memories—some recalled, some repressed—of being judged and found lacking, as well as doubts about one's originality. When one is able to let go of past trauma through insight, self-examination, affirmations, or other techniques, these doubts lessen in intensity; the emotional barriers lift; more ideas become conscious and creativity again flourishes. •

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Coming Into Our Own

Continued from page 84

stuck in confusion and mourning. The ghost of the first half of our life will haunt us.

By no means does everyone who begins the quest continue on it. We may be so terrified by the confusion that we try to turn back. We abort our journey. We may revert

to the stage of denial, postponing the quest as long as we can. Or we may attempt to make superficial, cosmetic changes on our old persona while avoiding any profound change. We do not want to face the truth that something is rotten in our own home. So we call in the building contractor and interior decorator to do some remodeling. Ignoring the deep structural flaws, we add on a bedroom or a lovely deck or some modern skylights in the hope that, once the remodeling is over, life will feel better. Perhaps for a while it does but not for long. We cannot half-bury a corpse. We cannot partially emerge from our cocoon. Similarly, we cannot *sort of* begin a quest. Either we do or we don't—and the time to decide has arrived.

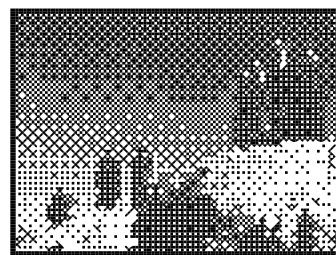
There is only one way out, and that is *through*. •

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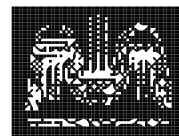
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Fear creates Prejudice and War. For *fear* is the creator of illusions, and illusions mask Truth; it is Truth that sets us free.

Fear begets confusion. Confusion calls for silence.

Candles cannot glow without silence.

If we follow a life-path that is chosen *for* us, it is *fear* that directs; if we follow our *own* wisdom, the True Self leads the way. •

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