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Life is about this—just how much we love ourselves. If we love and enjoy ourselves, we are free and are living life to its fullest. If we don't love ourselves, we are being deprived of the most important thing in the history of the universe—our life.

—James McMahon

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From the Publisher

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION is about reclaiming our lives in ways that bring renewed meaning, energy, and happiness to ourselves and others.

One of our tasks along the way is to evolve a conscious personality so that it becomes an instrument of our soul. As young children, we absorbed beneficial, along with detrimental, beliefs, habits, and emotions from family and society that imprinted in our consciousness how and who we were to be.

Many of us still carry unconscious beliefs about ourselves and life that prevent us from being who we truly are. These life-limiting attitudes were embedded in our consciousness at a time when we were less able to discern reality and truth for ourselves. We were less equipped to defend or act upon inner truths. In so many ways, family and society defined who we were. We were told how we were and were not supposed to be. We also saw adults model what life was to be like when we grew up. Our style of dealing with our emotions is created in the same way. For example, if a baby is told to stop crying when he is hurt, over time, he learns to stifle feelings.

To recreate ourselves, we must discover and make conscious our unconscious, as the unconscious can sabotage our efforts to create the life we are meant to live. To transform our lives, we must experientially journey back into our roots to discover our social, mental, and emotional imprints. Breath work, movement, body work, meditation, dream work, journaling, and creative expression tap our body-mind so that we may release energy and free trapped emotions and beliefs. This creates internal space for new possibilities as well as reducing the distance between our experience and our inner essence.

Once we appreciate and release our past, we are prepared to make new decisions about who we are, and how we want to live. Knowing ourselves profoundly connects us to our essence, and we become guided by our higher selves to live with meaning and fulfillment.

May we all become more conscious. May we all be the men and women we are meant to be.

Rick NurrieStearns
Publisher

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From the Editor...

Real compassion and love will come only by practicing spirituality.
—Mata Amritanandamayi

Envision life as a meditation: breathing in and breathing out love, truth, and compassionate action. Imagine family, business, and political life within this way of being.

This issue of *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* directs us towards this possibility. In the broader sense, this issue is about meditation. Meditation rewards us with a personality grounded in truth and love. Meditation empowers us in two spiritual arenas. First, it leads us to inner peace and fulfillment, which we find by discovering our true essence, our divine nature, and our deepest yearnings. Second, meditation allows us to use our talents and skills to make the world a better place to live, by directing us to pursue our innermost dreams.

Rajinder Singh elaborates on these ideas beautifully. He says that by mastering meditation, we not only attain personal fulfillment, we become an instrument for bringing peace and joy to those around us. Through meditation, we merge in the Creator and realize that all beings are brothers and sisters in the creator. It is at this stage that we develop true love for all and become ambassadors of God's love.

It follows that our hearts are the source of prosperity. If prosperity is achieved without an open heart, we still feel poor. Looking deeply, we see that the way of the heart is the way of giving and receiving. Rick Jarow explains that this basic movement of the heart is mirrored by the in and the out breath. The inhale receives from life, and the exhale offers itself back to life. Often, we do not allow ourselves to receive because we have not developed a strong, centered ground. We simply

cannot hold the energy of bounty. We can retrain ourselves to receive, by practicing receiving the fullness of our breaths.

Meditation offers many gifts. Gloria Chadwick tells us how meditation releases our imagination, to discover the real us. The imagination is a place

where we can reconnect with our true spiritual nature, and be free to be simply who we are. Meditation helps us let go of outside distractions, so we can tune into our subconscious, where we can listen to our innermost thoughts and allow our feelings to speak clearly.

In our interview, Judith Orloff discusses how meditation lets us connect and communicate with our spirit. She knows personally that the surest route to the psychic is through meditation. Meditation lets us tone down the static in our minds, amplifying our intuitive voice. Meditation, as a spiritual

path, opens our psychic nature, while also grounding us so that we may use our heightened sensitivity and capacity in the service of humanity.

Meditation is also practical. It is good for our health because it helps us to relax. We cannot breathe deeply and calm our minds and yet remain tense. For those times when we need extra help to relax, J.P. Vaswani shares a simple method for relaxation.

Meditation, even a few minutes a day, is vastly beneficial. So, let's stay our transformational course and take some sacred time daily to commune with breath, the divine, and our deeper selves.

Welcome to *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*.

Mary NurrieStearns

Mary NurrieStearns
Editor





Bringing Spirit To a Material World

T I N A R A S M U S S E N

Expression of our spiritual beliefs often flows naturally in relation to the “softer” aspects of our lives, when we’re meditating, enjoying nature, or relating to loved ones. But how does our spirituality fit with the more material aspects, such as shopping for groceries, buying a car, or making investments? It is tempting to relegate such matters to a separate sphere, believing that they are “necessary evils,” but are in no way connected to our spiritual path.

With each buying decision we make—whether it is a simple food purchase or a major stock investment—we are making a statement about what we want to support with our financial resources. We are contributing to the existence of large institutions, which have a

tremendous impact on the world, by providing jobs, affecting the environment, and influencing the economy.

Being conscious about our consumption and investment choices brings them to a higher level, transforming them into tangible expressions of our intangible spiritual beliefs and values. Conversely, if we are unconscious about our consumption and investment choices, we may be unknowingly supporting institutions which are in direct contradiction to our spiritual beliefs. Either way, we are “voting with our dollars” by contributing to the existence of these institutions.

CONSCIOUS CONSUMPTION

Some consumer choices are fairly obvious in their implications.

If we buy meat, we know that animals have died in the process of that purchase. If we buy toy guns, we know that they encourage children to “play war.” But what about more nebulous choices, like cereal or clothing?

Imagine that you need to buy a new pair of jeans. It’s likely that price, fit, fashion, and availability will be factors in your decision. But what about the conditions under which the jeans were sewn? Some jeans are sewn by people under horrible conditions. According to the United Nations, in extreme cases such as the country of Burma, commonplace conditions include “torture, summary and arbitrary executions, forced labor, abuse of women, politically-motivated arrests” (Source: Business Ethics,

July/August 1996). If you purchased a pair of jeans while unaware of their origins, not only would you be supporting this militaristic regime, but you would be carrying around with you the negative energy woven into the very fabric of the pants. Conversely, if you were aware of such issues, you might be comforted to know that socially responsible companies, such as Levi Strauss & Co., have pulled out of Burma, and you could purchase jeans with some assurance of their origins.

We may wonder how much impact our choice of jeans has on the big picture of our world. However, our purchasing power has more impact than we might imagine. Remember the economic sanctions placed on South Africa, to make a statement

against apartheid? Only a decade later, South Africa is a changed place. While it could be said that a global shift in consciousness effected this change, the Rev. Desmond Tutu has said that the economic sanctions were responsible. Now, the companies that once withdrew from South Africa can return to establish businesses which provide employment that honors human equality and contributes to an economy that is worth supporting.

But how do we know which companies we want to support? It does take some extra time, but with the growing consumer demand, easy-to-use resources are becoming more widely available. For example, the 1994 book, *Shopping for a Better World*, is a quick and easy guide to values-based purchasing. It lists items by type and brand name, and includes just about any category of consumer product one might purchase, from office supplies to cars to personal care items. Each item is rated on a variety of categories which the Council on Economic Priorities has identified as important. It costs \$14. Another resource, the *National Green Pages*, contains over 100 categories of products and services from companies that “care about people

Each of us, alone, is only a single consumer; but together, we are millions strong. What impact do we want to have on the larger system? Do we want to abdicate our right to choose, or do we want to consciously support companies striving for humanistic, sustainable values? By being aware of the impact of our decisions and using our financial resources to contribute to companies that make the world a better place, we can make a difference in bringing spirit to a material world.

and the environment.” It is published by Co-op America, and costs \$6.95. Both are available (or can be special-ordered) in book stores.

Using these books as resources can ensure that our prosperity is flowing to organizations which we want to prosper. We can use the products knowing that we have consciously contributed to a better world. We can also be assured that we are not consuming negative energy inherent in many

products’ creation. Being conscious in our consumer purchasing helps us move from feeling disempowered about “what the big companies are doing to the world” to feeling empowered that, even as one person, we can make a difference by consciously choosing the organizations that we support.

CONSCIOUS OWNERSHIP

A second area in which we can “vote with our dollars” and bring

our spiritual values to the material aspects of our lives concerns our investment decisions. With the way the stock market is set up, individual stockholders do not have much of an intellectual or “heart” connection to the companies in which they invest. We aren’t involved in the way the company does business, and we may not know what products the company produces—even though we are technically the “owners.” We are even more disconnected when we invest in mutual funds, because the fund manager buys and sells our stocks for us; we may not even know which companies our money is supporting. Co-op America recently published a report which found that nine of the largest fifteen U.S. mutual funds invest heavily in tobacco. This is an example of how individual investors may unknowingly support an industry accused of killing 400,000 Americans a year.

Yet, it is common to see magazine articles or hear people discussing how “big business” is responsible for the ills of our era. For example, a February 1996 cover of *Newsweek* was entitled “Corporate Killers.” It seems simple: corporations and their CEOs are the cause of all this

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Conscious Notes

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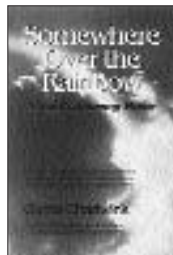
pain. However, when we view this systematically it is much more complex, as David Korten, author of *When Corporations Rule the World*, points out. He notes that the chairman of Eastman Kodak was praised for record profits in 1992, and then fired in 1993 for cutting only 2,000 jobs when investors wanted him to cut 20,000. Conversely, the stock market considers Scott Paper's CEO to be exemplary. In two years he cut 11,000 jobs, slashed research spending in half, eliminated all charitable contributions, and ordered managers not to volunteer for community service. Scott Paper's market share increased 225 percent, and the CEO received \$100 million in compensation.

The irony of this is that the "owners," who clamor for profits relentlessly every quarter, are all the individuals who have investments—one-third of all American adults. It turns out that "them," is us.

So what can we do to ensure that we are conscious investors? First, we can invest in companies or mutual funds that are screened for social responsibility and humanistic business practices. Over 100 investment firms specialize in socially-responsible investing, screening out companies with harmful business practices. Many of these companies boast financial returns equal to or exceeding traditional mutual funds. A few of the more well-known ones include Pax World (800-767-1729), Calvert (800-368-2748) and Parnassus (800-999-3505). The non-profit group Co-op America also provides the handbook *You, Your Money & the World* as a guide to values-based investing. Membership to Co-op

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My Spirit is Free

AMY ALLISON

Once upon a time, before my fourth decade of life, fireworks, explosions, and symphonic crescendos were present, I am sure, and marked various turning points in my life, but not the commencement of my personal evolution.

The evolving of the transformation that is still ever-spiraling came as gently as a Sunday afternoon's rain. I decided to stop relying on what the world offered to my human form, chemicals, food, people, for a "high", and came to feel a hunger and thirst belonging to my numb and starving soul. These new sensations could only be appeased with dedicated contemplation of the unknown, all-powerful Universal Intelligence...my Higher Power. Some refer to this Being as God.

This process of change was not smooth, uninterrupted, or without a lot of mental, emotional, and spiritual pain—it may be likened to the following tale:

"My life had become an island of fire, savage natives, and wild beasts. There was no drinkable water. The drums of the natives were hammered by dark hands with white palms, and the rhythm pounded against the insides of my skull. I found an old rotted rowboat. It



was in terrible condition, yet through some miracle, it appeared to be without leaks. One night in delirious frenzy, I ran to the water, pushed the boat loose from the sand, and jumped in.

"As I drifted, I was thankful to be away from the intense heat, insane screaming, and physical threats on my life. Then I looked towards the dark, unknown waters reaching out before me in all directions. There were no instructions, no maps. Food was raw fish. Sleep was deep, despite the uncomfortable board mattress. There was light and warmth inside me, even in the darkest nights on turbulent waters. I awoke to the sun in my eyes and hopes that my journey would bring me new life."

During the first few weeks in my "lonely little boat," I secluded myself at a bed and breakfast in the hills of southern Indiana. And meditated. And prayed. I talked to my God, asking for "proof" of his existence. At the suggestion of a spiritual advisor, I had purchased the board game "Life." I opened the board, took the plastic pieces out of their wrappers, looked at the tokens, and read the directions. I was without a clue. I couldn't play this game. I thought I was lost. But I prayed, read,

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Mary NurrieStearns LCSW

Psychotherapist, consultant, workshop leader, and editor of *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*. Mary has over twenty-two years experience helping people to transform their personalities and to live with more peace, meaning and joy. She is committed to providing safe and experiential contexts for personal growth and healing that integrate body, mind, and spirit.

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McClintock
V5N5 P14

Transformations

and meditated. I looked at my life with new awareness. I washed the make-up off my face and didn't wear any for a year. I ate fruits and vegetables and drank water. I cut my hair. I felt like I was being born again, but this birth canal was endless.

My self-defining objects were slowly removed from my life. I was banned from my office: others feared me and my behavior, in my earliest days of my journey. I was ostracized by friends who did not like the fact I wanted a new life for myself. I shunned my family for nearly a year, as their ways and actions were toxic, and I was in a raw, flesh-ripped and emotionally-stripped state. I quit smoking. I asked my husband to leave and never come back. Our marriage was conceived by two plastic, addictive-riddled people and no longer had any meaning whatsoever.

Even in this "new" state, I made old mistakes. I entered into a relationship that resembled my father's and mine as I grew up. My naive curiosity took me into some not-so-healthy situations. I still blamed others for situations that befell me and had trouble accepting responsibility for my life. It was too easy to be a victim.

I rushed to make up for lost time. I was doing, doing, always doing. Until one day. After about six years into my transformational journey, someone reminded me that I was a human *being*, not a human *doing*. I tried to slow down. I asked God to slow me down. I helped others who were traveling a similar journey. I turned to a more spiritually-aware mode of living. I worked the Twelve Steps

of recovery to the best of my ability. I gave people the benefit-of-the-doubt. I re-built a relationship with my estranged father. I decided that becoming more like my mother wasn't the kiss of death.

I did not find the vaccine for cancer and could not make a Betty Crocker soufflé. I was never going to be a high school cheerleader or homecoming queen or reach a Golden wedding anniversary. I was never going to look good in a bikini. I wasn't going to be a millionaire, nor live like one. I wasn't on the Dean's List or in a sorority. I was never going to be a mother. But...

I found a cure for my loneliness and learned how to rely on myself to bolster my self-esteem. I learned to cook some very delectable dishes. I maintained my figure, and came to accept that I wasn't twenty-two years-old any longer, or a size 3. I found a relationship with a man that may blossom into a marriage "til death do us part." I have a good paying job and a very comfortable house with a multitude of plants and "natural" memorabilia. I graduated with a 3.5 and earned a Master's in Business Administration. I have a beautiful step-daughter-to-be and a step-grandson-to-be. I have two of the most adorable, lovable kitties that any cat lover could want. I belong to a fellowship of people who are on a similar journey. I am not alone, and I am loved.

I have not had the life that I thought I wanted,—but through this transformation, I found that I am a child of God, and my spirit is finally free. •

Reflections



From Our Readers

FELL IN LOVE

I am writing to thank Nancy Pasternack for sharing her story in the Transformations section of the May-July '96 issue. For all of us who struggle with health challenges (occasional or chronic) and who believe that these challenges can be opportunities for healing our soul, as well as our body, you have made our task a little easier.

Your commitment to healing at the soul level, your honesty, and your self-acceptance are inspiring. I especially liked your statements that "there is no right or wrong way to heal and no timetable," and "I feel certain that it's OK to be where I am and who I am: a Transformation in Progress." For me, learning to accept where I am and my own timing is an essential part of the healing itself.

We are all transformations in progress, no matter what our physical condition, age, profession, etc. Your story helped remind me that there is no shame in being "in progress." That, in fact, the healing and "remodeling" of our lives is a worthy and heroic venture. I bow to the healing and "remodeling" process in you, in me, and us all.

Let me also take this opportunity to commend *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* for a wonderful magazine. I fell in love instantly with your first issue and have been an avid supporter ever since. While I have to admit I prefer *LOTUS* over your current name (I like the imagery that *LOTUS* brings to mind, and it seems less like a trendy New Age name), I will continue to look forward to each issue, no matter what its name! A rose by any other name is still a rose!—*Lynn Tanny, Gainesville, Florida.*

CORRECTION

In "Our Bodies Are Spiritual," by Carmen Renee Berry (July/ Sept), a transcription error changed the meaning of the third paragraph. The paragraph should have read: "We all long to be loved and accepted completely. Since we are spiritual beings, for us to feel acceptable, we often sense that this means being acceptable to God. And, since we are physical beings, this acceptance must include our bodies, our entire bodies."

We apologize to Ms. Berry for this error.

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 17

Hurley/Dobson
Enneagram

Dreamtime
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Transforming Inwardly with Meditation

J A S O N S I F F

Meditation is considered a higher spiritual pursuit in Eastern religions. It is widely known that meditation can lead to almost any spiritual experience imaginable, and that religious philosophies and practices have evolved out of the vision of those who have devoted themselves to meditation.

When I first began meditating, knowing all of this, I thought “How could anyone go wrong with meditation?” It was the perfect way. You did not need to believe in any dogma or doctrine, and rituals were not part of the deal. The only thing I did not take into consideration was the power of meditation to create illusions. I did not know that it could also be used as an escape from the things about myself I did not want to face.

It wasn’t until I had meditated for two years, in the early part of my second year as a Theravada Buddhist monk, living at a monastery in Sri Lanka, devoting eight to twelve hours each day to sitting, that I started to see that the bright lights, the sense of well-being, the feelings of bliss and harmony, were fine—but not



what was real to me as a human being. The anger, frustration, craving, and fears that I had known so well before I meditated had become so pacified and distorted that I could not recognize them any longer. It was as though I had distanced myself from myself so much that what I had known of myself had become someone else. I saw that I was living in a world where I did not connect with my personal history, but with something vaster, other than me, placing my sense of what was real in the realm of timeless, faceless experiences. I never thought I was fully enlightened or anything like that, only that I was becoming adept at meditation and accustomed to the range of spiritual experiences and understandings open to us. Nowadays, when I read spiritual material about the infinite, oneness with everything, the emptiness of all phenomena, the bliss of unity, the extinguishing of selfhood, it reminds me of meditation before my fall, when I could dwell in the illusion of having no suffering, when, in truth, I had only found a temporary escape.

This understanding felt like my first moment of

self-honesty since I began meditating. Shortly thereafter, I realized that I did not like a fellow monk at the monastery where I was living. The self-appointed librarian, he would not leave me alone, pressuring me to work for him when I was in the library quietly reading. Each day, I grew more annoyed with his pushiness and felt guilty about my lack of goodwill toward him and the library, but I wasn't there to catalog books eight hours a day. This conflict was unexpected. I was angry with him, due to his demands and rudeness, and ashamed of my selfishness and resistance. One day, walking back to my hut from the library, I repeatedly uttered under my breath, "I do not like that monk, I do not like him." It was like a revelation of the highest order! I knew that was incontrovertibly true at that moment, and that my feelings were greatly affecting me. Unfortunately, I had bypassed those feelings and their consummate truth through the power of my meditation sittings.

This was self-honesty. An intensely felt truth leaked out to spoil the pristine illusion of peace and harmony. I discovered that meditation can provide the peace and clarity from which one can have an intense feeling and know its truth and value.

About a year later, I began teaching meditation to people from Europe, America, and Australia at a meditation center in the central mountains of Sri Lanka. I was hit with questions about how to deal with anger and lust and was asked the most difficult one of all, "How does meditation relate to real life?" No answers about finding a transcendent reality, whether it be a universal oneness

H J Kramer

Richard Moss

Innovative/Wings

Transformations

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or a constant underlying flux of change, satisfied these people who wanted practical answers for their personal and worldly problems.

With these educated people from Western countries, who had an appreciation for psychology, I listened to the experiences of others who did not have as easy and joyful experience with meditation as I had. For I too, as if catching a contagion, felt fear, anger, hurt, and vulnerability, as I become more conscious of my personal problems and the strife in the world around me. I offered insights from the troubled mind to the peaceful, clear mind. They gave me the opportunity to be caught for hours in my personal world of conflict and fear, and I gave them a green light to be honest with themselves, as I experienced the change that such permission gives first-hand. All the dark shadow aspects of myself would rise up to be looked at, first with fear, then with acceptance, and finally, with a love for the truth of my humanity.

As I became more honest, I saw how I had lived almost three years in a country with a brutal and horrible civil war, carving out my sanctuary within seemingly protected monastic walls. That was all an illusion. I was near death at least once, having missed a bombing by a couple of hours. I had heard the shots of firing squads conducting executions in the distance. I had stuffed my fear. With self-honesty, I saw that I had grown progressively weaker, due to a malnourished diet. I had intestinal problems and could no longer live off the food that was given to me as a monk. I needed to control my diet in order to sur-

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Reflections

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When I first sent in for a subscription to your magazine, it was because I really wanted to subscribe and receive it. I am a mother with four children, though I drive professionally in forty-eight states. However, I am in a position at present which forces me to leave my driving position, to be at home full-time. Because of this, (my husband and I were team drivers) our income has been cut in half—from the not so great it already was. It takes a lot of miles to make any sort of a paycheck—splitting thirty cents a mile along with the various added bills of supporting and raising a family. Therefore, because I don't wish to have a bill I cannot pay, (money feeds the children) I must regretfully decline getting your magazine. I do hope you will understand.—
Anita Barlow, Austin, Texas.

Editor's Note: Every month, we receive many letters like the one above. Publishing material that helps heal and transform individual's lives naturally attracts people in need. We have gifted many with our publication, but the need for discounted or free subscriptions outweighs our financial ability. To remedy this, we have started "Friends Fund" for individuals that are financially not able to pay for a subscription. If you would like to sponsor a person in need, please send your donations to Personal Transformation, Friends Fund, 4032 South Lamar Blvd #500-137, Austin Texas 78704-7900.

Mount Madonna
pickup from
V5N5 P19

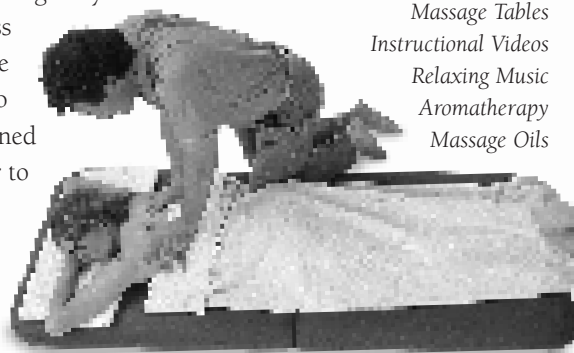
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Life by Design
V5N5 P21

Reflections

Continued from page 21

P R E P A R E H U M A N I T Y

Congratulations on such a well-done publication. Your dream of “promoting the deepest kind of personal and spiritual transformation” is also mine, and it was with great joy that I read your magazine.

We know we are in the flow when these kinds of things come to us and resonate with us at the most important levels of our beings—confirming that one is on the right track and flowing with the divine energies. The interview with Richard Moss was especially rich—and I had never heard of him before, now am looking forward to reading his books.

I received your Spring issue as a gift while attending a conference in Montreal hosted by Doctors Marilyn and John Rossner, and I must say it is being passed around here with gratitude.

Whenever one of us of like mind goes to the States, we stock up on what is on the stands at the bookstore; your magazine was new to all of us, and we all love it. I am especially grateful for your calendar section and look for more extensive listings of events being held by various organizations around the country.

Again, thank you and all involved for presenting these inspiring and motivating articles. It helps people like me help in my small way to change the world.—
Claudia Hilton, Nassau, Bahamas.

C L A S S A C T

I purchased the May-July issue of *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* (my

Reflections

Continued from page 22

first) as much for its form, as for its content. While many magazine designs are confusing, unattractive, and hard to read, your magazine is a shining achievement. The design is clean and fresh—it is a visual delight and eminently readable. From heads and sub-heads to text, from photos to pull-quotes, everything says “class act.” Your magazine is an example of how good typographic design not only enhances readability and communication, but can be a delight to the mind and eye, as well.—*Steve Marston, Glen Oaks, New York.*

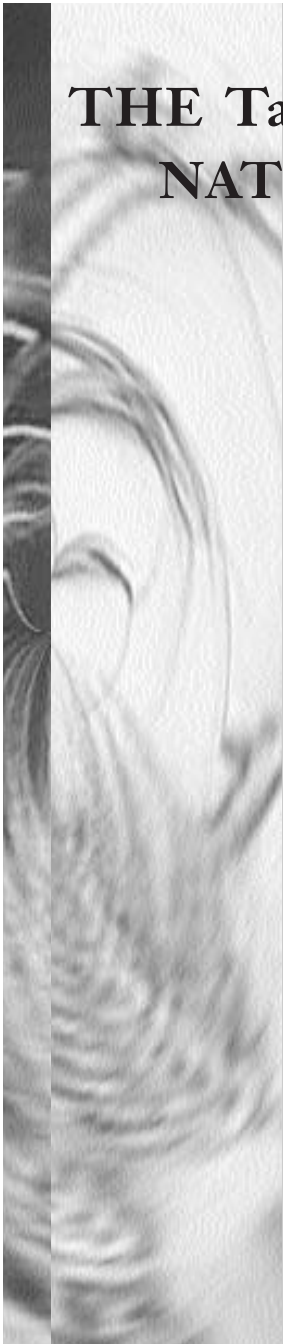
S T R A I G H T W H I T E ?

I have decided not to re-order *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*. A couple of my clients commented on something I had myself noticed. *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* is, in content, very white and straight. While that does not necessarily translate to a negative message, there is certainly an opportunity for one to be perceived, if only by omission of inclusion. *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* is the only publication in my office that anyone ever commented negatively on. That is why I am removing it. A spiritually—focused publication needs to work harder not to exclude the collective majority in the metropolitan areas it strives to serve.—*Name withheld on request.*

C O N G R U E N C E O F V A L U E S

I really enjoyed the last issue of *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*. I often recognize a congruence of my values with the message of

Association for Research
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THE Tao OF NATURAL BREATHING

For Health, Well-Being and Inner Growth

By Dennis Lewis

Foreword by Master Mantak Chia

The Tao of Natural Breathing takes the reader on a fascinating journey into the physiology, psychology, and spirituality of natural breathing. Dennis Lewis draws on his many years of study in the Gurdjieff Work, Advaita Vedanta, and the Healing Tao to show how we can incorporate natural (whole-body) breathing into our lives to improve our health, increase our energy, and support our quest for self-knowledge and inner growth.

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Dennis Lewis is a student, teacher, and practitioner of Taoist and other approaches to healing and self-transformation.

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Reflections

Continued from page 23

your publication, and this last issue really accents our common bond.

My best wishes to you and appreciation for the work you do so well.—*Brad Blanton, Stanley, Virginia.*

I N T E G R I T Y

I just received the July-September issue of *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*. I sell them in my store. As I opened this issue, I turned to "From the Publisher" on page four. I need to tell you how much I needed to hear your message.

I've been a waitress for twenty years. But two years ago, I bought a book store. I have worked night and day since then, running the store and doing my waitress job.

As I began running the store, I also developed an integrity like you have with your magazine. I only carried things I felt were true to soul work and that carried light. And like you, I could have made a lot of money selling less than best. I also have a tendency to give away a lot. So, needless to say, it's been hard. There never seemed to be enough money. So, I kept plugging along with my goal true in my heart, and I also felt that even if the store failed, I would have learned so much, what would it matter?

I turned to your article on page four, and I felt such a sense of sharing and peace knowing that there are other people on missions and who are true to their hearts and have the courage to change their name. I see you are slowly changing from *LOTUS* to *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*, just like I'm changing the name of my book store to Spirit Matters because

Lucidity/Dream Link

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 62

Second Sight



AN INTERVIEW WITH JUDITH ORLOFF
BY MARY NURRIESTEARNS

Judith Orloff, M.D., is the assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at UCLA, and has worked as a psychic with law enforcement agencies and archaeological expeditions. Judith is a lecturer and workshop leader on psychic and spiritual development and sees patients in her private practice in Los Angeles. The following interview is based on her new book "Second Sight" published by Warner Books.

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION: I am pleased to introduce "Second Sight" to our readers as your book prepares us to acknowledge and develop our innate psychic capacities. Legitimizing the psychic has profound implications for health care as science and spirituality join together, allowing practitioners to utilize psychic capacities as a professional tool and to relate with the people they serve in more loving ways.

Let's begin with a discussion of how the psychic is stereotyped in this culture.

JUDITH ORLOFF: There is a terrible negative stereotype that goes along with anything psychic. The word congers up psychic phone lines or gypsy fortune tellers. We don't connect the psychic with being a potent healing tool and a way to connect to spirituality and to our visionary side. Unfortunately, the image of the psychic has become tarnished in our culture. Part of my role is to serve as a bridge between traditional medicine and the psychic, to legitimize the psychic and make it holy again, as it ought to be.

What does being psychic mean?

Psychic phone lines and gypsy fortune tellers are a small and rather insignificant aspect of being psychic. What is really significant is tapping into our inner resources to develop compassion and a vision for our own process. As a result, we develop empathy for other people and use our clarity to better the world, which is the true purpose of being psychic.

Why is being psychic both shamed and feared in this culture?

As a psychic child, I grew up with a tremendous amount of shame, so much so that I never talked about it to anyone. I believed there was something wrong with me, that somehow I was colluding with the negative events I predicted. I grew up with the shame that comes from the cultural lack of acknowledgement of our visionary side and capacity to see clairvoyantly. We are not trained to revere dreams or visions, unlike the aboriginal and the Native American cultures. In this country, we are indoctrinated into logical, rational, linear thinking.

Being psychic is labeled as mentally ill.

The American Psychiatric Association labels anything psychic either as a sign of psychosis, a mental disorder, or as a sham. There is no acknowledgment that psychic ability is a healing tool and a powerful human legacy that we can all tap into.

Are there words synonymous to psychic that are perceived

Too many individuals have exploited the psychic as a means to control or manipulate, or for greed. Is it any wonder, then, that in much of Western culture the term psychic has fallen into disrepute? Sensationalized by the press, scorned by traditional science, discounted by intellectuals, to again be considered holy, the psychic must be redefined in human terms. It allows us to connect with one another more deeply, with empathy and respect, to join together as a collective force.

The purpose of cultivating ourselves psychically is to open. And then to open even more. With prescience, we come to know ourselves well, become more sensitive to friends and family. Better able to respond to their needs, we can be lovingly in harmony with our relationships. The choices we make become truly well-informed, based on our innermost desires, not on some artificial notion of who we are supposed to be.

as being more legitimate?

When writing *Second Sight*, I struggled to find a stigma-free vocabulary that would be accurate and embody the kind of message I wanted to communicate. I could not find one. I considered the words, psychic, intuitive, impressions, visionary, and sensitive. Intuitive is the word that therapeutic touch practitioners and other healers use to avoid the incredible stigma associated with the word, psychic. I don't think that intuition accurately characterizes the whole phenomena. Intuition is more general, like a gut feeling or hunch. In the psychic realm, we are able to see into ourselves and other people, and know very specific things. As we connect with our heart, we are able to merge with people and gain access to their spirit. There is also psychic empathy, which is the ability to pick up and sense energy around the body, and as a result, sense psychic input and even physical symptoms from people.

In Webster's New World Dictionary, the first definition of psychic is "of the psyche or of the soul." How is the psychic linked to spirituality?

The best way to tap into psychic ability is through meditation. We have to find a silent place inside so that the psychic can come in. It doesn't enter through the linear mind. In order to cultivate ourselves spiritually and to connect with the divine, or the large mind, we have to be in a mode of receptivity. As we open and connect to spirit, clarity occurs, and as a result, we can pick up information that isn't accessible otherwise.

Essentially, does being psychic mean we are able to pick up information?

Yes, it's the ability to sense information and compassion. When we tune in spiritually, compassion and heart come, along with information. There are programs, like the Silva Mind Control, that teach psychic ability as a skill that can be learned without any kind of spiritual context. It is possible to learn certain things in that way and to pick up information; but without a spiritual context, it is not possible to expand, and feel the extent of the spirit. As a result of a spiritual connection, wisdom—something greater than information—comes through.

In your book, you advise that we often need a teacher. What is the role of a teacher?

Teachers who have integrity can be pivotal. They can help us to open in ourselves, when alone we might flounder. I've had two main spiritual teachers in my life. Brugh Joy, my first teacher, helped me to realize that I can be a physician, a healer, a clairvoyant, and a sensitive—as he modeled being

able to bridge those worlds. As a result of his capacity to channel energy, I was given the ability to feel energy and to know that it is real. He guided me into places that I probably couldn't have gotten to on my own, because of my own resistance.

You make it clear in "Second Sight" that being psychic is an aspect of our spirituality. You discuss tools to help develop spirituality, including the use of an altar. How do altars facilitate spiritual development?

The altar is a sacred space in our home that we create for ourselves. My altar is very simple. It is a little table covered with beautiful fabric. I have candles, incense, a statue of Kahn Yin, the Goddess of Compassion, and a picture of my father, to bring him energy and share my love with him. When my mother was dying, I had her photograph there, to enhance our connection. An altar is a place where we can attune to spirit. It shouldn't be in the main thoroughfare of our home, and we shouldn't parade many people by it. It is a place where spiritual power can build, and where we can go for solace and replenishment. When it's not possible to meditate elsewhere, because our mind is talking loudly or we are otherwise distracted, we can go to our altars. I believe strongly in altars.

You said that the energy surrounding an altar helps to induce an interior focus and that the psychic thrives when attention is drawn inward.

Exactly. Altars create a vortex of energy. When we meditate in the same place day after day, energy builds in that spot, which makes it easier to get into the rhythm of meditation.

An altar supports the discipline of meditation.

Yes, when we practice regularly, we train ourselves to tune into spirit. If we meditate once a month, rather than every day for at least a few minutes, it is difficult to shift our attention away from our active minds to the realm of the invisible and to align ourselves with spirit. The more frequently we meditate, the easier it becomes, and the more we can be taught by spirit. We have to devote disciplined time every day to sit and honor spirit and to allow ourselves to be taught.

How do rituals enhance spiritual practice and the development of psychic capacity?

Ritual is a way of focusing, and focus is very pow-

erful. When focus is achieved, energy is heightened. If done with sincerity, attention, and humility, creating rituals can hone our clairvoyant abilities, as well as our connection to spirit. In the book, I talk about a patient who was unable to tune into her intuitive voice. I suggested she make a circle of stones on the beach and sit there for a long time. As a result of sitting and meditating, she was able to tune into her intuitive voice and hear it as a reality, something she knew in the cells of her body. The ritual acted as a focus for her to get in touch with her own truths. Ritual is a structure that facilitates opening and helps us to hear our truths, which can be obscured in other circumstances.

This example of ritual reveals that the psychic realm isn't something that just gives us information about others; it also helps us hear our own inner truths. Our culture does not realize that helping ourselves is one of the great benefits of being psychic.

Yes, we help ourselves, then we can help others. The psychic is to be used for service.

How is prayer a tool for developing the psychic?

I consider prayer to be a psychic phenomenon, although it's never defined as such. Prayer creates a channel for direct communication with spirit. Prayer is important because it is our way of appealing to a greater, higher power, for help in our lives or for good in the world. Through prayer, we can be heard, and we can facilitate change. It softens and opens our hearts, allowing us to merge with spirit and to hear the responses given. Prayer is wonderful in that it may be answered in ways that we don't anticipate. "Thy will be done" is my favorite prayer. I believe it is the most appropriate prayer, although sometimes I do feel it is appropriate to ask for a specific thing, depending on the situation. I prayed specifically for help with my father when he seventy-five years old and about to embark upon an elaborate orthopedic surgery for his back. He would not listen to my reasoning. I prayed for an intervention so my father could hear me or open to the possibility of not having surgery. I forgot about the prayer. Later that day, my cousin, an orthopedic surgeon, called from Ohio to announce that he was coming to Los Angeles. He proposed an alternative to surgery, which my father accepted. Sometimes,

prayer works that way. There are also occasions when our prayers are not answered as we desire at the time. I have prayed for certain things in my life that I am really happy I did not receive.

What other tools help us to connect with the psychic and spirituality?

Dreaming is the most natural conduit for the psychic that we have, simply because our egos don't get in the way. We can travel to different realms and tune into various nonphysical spaces in dreams. We dream every night, and dreams are our main access to spirit. To remember dreams, we can create a dream journal where we record our inner workings. Dreams are illusive and tend to drift away. Documenting dreams is very important. It is also helpful, upon awakening in the morning, rather than bolting out of bed, to stay in what is called a hypnogogic state, the luxurious state between sleep and waking, during which the dream images are alive and can be retrieved and worked with.

What is the difference between psychic and psychological dreams?

Psychological dreams help us to identify psychological processes revolving around anxiety, depression, and anger. They help us to grow psychologically by pointing out our shortcomings so we can work on them. Psychological dreams are wonderful. They make up the bulk of our dreams because we have so much work to do on the psychological level, and it's really important that we do that work. Many spiritual practices don't focus on psychological work, but it is extremely important, because as we work through our own issues, we become more transparent psychically. We gain clarity internally and connect to spirit as we work through our own issues. Psychological dreams help us to identify these areas in which we're blocked. Anxiety dreams, such as running to get away from someone who is pursuing us, reveal that some aspect of ourselves is pursuing us and scaring us, and we need to identify what that is. Psychological dreams help to uncover our fears, angers, and griefs so that we can release them. They also help us to recall childhood traumas so we can work through them. Psychic dreams are a bit different. They don't necessarily help us work out our psychological issues. They give certain information to help us concretely in our lives. Spe-

cific guidance dreams, when listened to, give wonderful advice. Unfortunately, we're not trained to listen to these dreams in our culture.

How can we recognize psychic dreams? You said that they are impersonal, crystal clear, and have a witness quality.

Yes. They come through without the same kind of emotional charge that psychological dreams have, and sometimes they give us very specific information. For instance, I was told in a dream that I was to go to medical school to become a psychiatrist in order to have the credentials necessary to legitimize the psychic realm. The psychic comes through for me in a genderless voice. It is simply information. It is not an uncaring voice, but it is neutral. We can listen to those voices in our dreams that inform us about the direction we need to go in, people in our lives, how we can help others, or how we can heal. The information either comes through words or is transmitted telepathically through metaphor. When the psychic comes through metaphor, we have to intuitively interpret our dreams, and that's where a teacher can be most helpful. There are also dreams which actually heal us.

Yes, please talk about healing dreams.

I believe that energy transmitted through dreams helps with physical healing and emotional healing. A friend of mine, a psychologist and clairvoyant, had a lipoma, a fatty benign tumor, and dreamed that this huge syringe went in and sucked the substance out of the lipoma. She was literally physically healed. That's a rare circumstance; nevertheless it can happen.

Common examples of healing dreams are those that occur following divorce, death of a loved one, or surgery.

Yes. Spirit can work through us and talk to us in dreams much more easily than in the physical world because we're more open. Our defenses aren't operating, so we are not as critical or filled with preconceptions about what can happen. Openness is critical. We have to have a beginner's mind and the wonderment and freshness of a child. As we approach the psychic realm, we want to be more like children, but utilize the wisdom and scrutiny we have as adults.

How can we elicit guidance dreams?

First, we have to allow for the possibility that they are valid. We must believe they are real, in order to allow our life to be guided. We all have guidance and protection. Unfortunately, we don't think about it, are not told about it, and don't know how to listen to the guidance. Guidance comes through very specifically, but it might not be practical, so we may have a difficult time with it. When I had the dream to go to medical school, it was the last thing I wanted to do. I could have ignored it and gone my own way. Fortunately, I knew enough to listen, so I bargained with myself to enroll in one course to see how it went. When guidance dreams seem impractical, give them a chance and see if there is energy to propel you further along the course that the dream is outlining.

In the book, you also suggested writing questions you want guidance about and placing the paper near your bed.

That's a good ritual. Questions need to be specific and from the heart, not intellectual concerns. The spirit with which one asks the question is important, so with purity of spirit, write your question, and put it by the bed. Speak your question out loud, then let it go, and give it to spirit. Allow the dream to come, and document it the next day. If the answer is not clear on the first day, keep doing that for about a week, and the answer will be there.

You teach people to use remote viewing. How can remote viewing help us?

Remote viewing is a teachable technique that has been used at the Stanford Research Institute and at the Mobius group where I worked. It is a formalized psychic reading. A remote viewing occurs when you tune into a remote target, such as a specific geographical locale or a person, and in a meditative state, allow without efforting at all, psychic impressions and information to come about the location or person. This is about allowing, not efforting. Setting aside logical, analytical life, and allowing the emptiness associated with receptivity helps the information to make itself known.

I had a patient, a film producer, who wanted to learn to trust himself. He was in a bad place, doing films he hated. He felt that his creativity was being sapped because he wasn't listening to his intuition about what he should do. The bulk of our work consisted of teaching him how to meditate, to go into that intuitive place, and once there, to do remote viewing on projects and people, in order to use his intuitive abilities along with his other skills to select projects and work associates. I taught him to tune in to people and pick

It may be that we must recover our wisdom gracefully, let it emerge in its own time.

Dreaming can facilitate this. A pristine state of awareness, it is a direct line to a place where alchemical gold abounds and nothing is devoid of meaning. Here, time and space are nonexistent; anything is possible. Specific guidance for living your life well lies in your dreams. Like a blank canvas, they provide a medium where both the psychic and your unconscious can freely express themselves.

up information about them to help him determine if they were compatible to work with him. He uses remote viewing in his work now, as a matter of course. He tunes in intuitively to get information, so decisions are not arbitrary. For instance, if he's hiring a director, he does remote viewings on candidates to get impressions about each person. He checks his impressions for accuracy when he meets the people. It has really helped him pick people he resonates with.

What about remote viewings and ethics? When we have the capacity to gain information about other people, how do we not misuse that kind of power? Do we need permission to do a remote viewing on someone?

One form of permission is to directly ask a person for permission to tune in to them. Another way is to ask for permission on an inner level. Often times, when I'm tuning in to someone, I get a brick wall, or a barrier, that says do not go further, let it be. This person needs privacy. There is integrity based on the openness of people. When people don't want to be seen, it's not possible to tune in to them. There is an operational system on an inner level. Not everyone is psychically open and vulnerable to being seen. Ethics is also the attitude with which we approach any project. There needs to be a sacredness in what we do and a sense of respect woven into remote viewings.

Psychic healing and laying on of hands are psychic abilities. How can we develop these capacities, for the sake of loved ones, patients, and ourselves?

The basis for laying on of hands is that the power of love can be transmitted through touch. We all have the capacity to heal one another and to balance one another's energy. There are specific ways of tuning in to love through meditation and prayer, by asking for spirit to come through us. We are channels. It is not our personal energy that brings healing. If we are open, believe in spirit, and are committed to love, love can be channeled through our human instruments to help each other. Psychic healing is incredible because it gives the person being healed a first hand experience of the energy so that they can access it in themselves. Balancing energies in our body facilitates both physical and

emotional healing, but energy balancing alone will not usually do the healing. The person must take an active part in their own healing process.

The power of expressing love through touch is profound. We are such a touch-starved people. It is so beneficial to touch our child's scraped knees and to hug our spouse when he or she comes home from work stressed. Simple, loving touch is a psychic process. Realizing this can help legitimize being psychic.

Exactly. Look at mothers' instincts to hold children. Why do mothers hold their children? Because they're transmitting loving energy, which is healing. That doctors and counselors are taught not to touch their patients is misguided. Clear, non-sexual touch is a healing tool. When used with respect and sensitivity, touch is powerful. We can all touch with care and awareness. The key is the consciousness that must accompany the touch.

How do we recognize the psychic experience in everyday life?

Look for synchronicities in life, rather than dismiss them as random coincidences. The whole concept of coincidence needs to be re-defined. We miss so much under that umbrella. Begin to look at synchronicity as a way of life. When we identify synchronicities in our lives, no matter how small, we grow in aware of synchronicity as a psychic phenomenon. Synchronicities can act to guide us in our lives.

First, we have to recognize and legitimize synchronicity.

Honor synchronicity as a guidepost, and don't dismiss it. The same is true of déjà vu, an experience of feeling as if you've known someone before, although you haven't met them previously, or going into a building and feeling you've been there before. Explore déjà vu, feeling where that takes you, see what memories are invoked, discover what these people have to say to you even if you don't know them or are not interested in them intellectually.

What is psychic empathy?

This is the ability to pick up energy and to empathize with people, to feel what is going on in them emotionally, physically, or spiritually. We all have the capacity to do this. Sometimes, people feel

inundated by psychic empathy. As a child, I couldn't go into big shopping malls and didn't like going to parties because I would leave exhausted and not know why. When we go into places with many people, we pick up a lot of energy. If we are psychically receptive, we can feel bombarded. Some psychic sensitives aren't aware of what is happening and internalize the energy, resulting in an agoraphobia where they don't want to go out of the house. When we pick up energy, we open ourselves to the whole environment and can expand our capacity for love, but we need to know how to deal with it so that we don't internalize it. You can share love with people through psychic empathy, even at the checkout stand in the market. In your heart space, you can send and pick up love without saying a word. Psychic empathy is a way to generate and to receive love.

How can we recognize when we are experiencing someone else's sensations and deal with them, so that we are not overwhelmed?

If you stand next to someone and want to move closer and feel invited into their space, you have picked up their energy. Alternatively, if you stand next to someone and suddenly feel nauseous, depressed, or anxious, you might be picking up their sensations. One sure way to tell is to move away. If the feelings are someone else's, they will subside. We can train ourselves by asking questions about how it feels to be in the world, and how it feels to be around other human beings. Look at the world as a laboratory and see what you sense around various people—what gives you energy and what depletes you? Know if you pick up physical symptoms. If you are around someone who has a backache, do you suddenly have a backache? If we are unaware, empathy is an unconscious process, and we have no idea what's going on in our lives. Once we see it as reality, we can work with it. Psychic empathy is a way to connect with the collective in a powerful way if we open ourselves to it. Without preparation, we can pick up physical or emotional symptoms and become ill or distraught. Many psychic sensitives feel that picking up symptoms is the only way to heal people. I strongly disagree. I don't think it's

necessary. We must learn through meditation how to let energy come in and go out of our bodies without it remaining or harming us.

How else can we recognize psychic in everyday life?

If we have a strong sense about something that comes to us out of the blue, for instance, if we sense that a loved one is in danger, we need to register the information, reality check its accuracy, and act on it. We need to listen to and honor the intuitive as it works its way through our being each day.

Does taking action enhance and develop psychic capacity?

Yes, taking action reinforces psychic. Being psychic is about sensing and taking action.

Is there anything else you want to add?

In this process, it is important to not give away your own power. Many people tend to do this. People come to me wanting to set me up as an authority who will tell them what to do, which is the last thing I want to do. Therapists need to be aware of this because it can be seductive when people put you up on this pedestal, which is not appropriate or helpful. They think you have all this power, and they don't want to develop their own power. The role of the psychic therapist is to always mirror back a person's own power and never attempt to do the work for them.

One of the benefits of developing psychic capacity is our own empowerment, so that we no longer look for an external fix.

Exactly. This is an inside job here, going inward and connecting to our own spirit, realizing that spirit works in our lives and harmonizing with spirit, for developing ourselves and then helping others.

If we all developed our innate psychic capacity, what would be the impact on family and community?

It would be tremendous. The whole world would change. If people would open to their inner instincts, connect with spirit, and have the commitment to work through their own darker issues, so they are not projecting everything on the outside, we would see a huge difference. We would be a kinder, more loving humanity.♦



Imagination and Your Inner Self

G L O R I A C H A D W I C K

You already know that your mind speaks to you in images, rather than words. The thoughts you hear and the pictures you see in your mind originate in your imagination—the magical world of your inner images. Your imagination is where you can rediscover the real you, where you can be totally free to simply be who you really are. It's where you can reconnect with your true spiritual nature.

PHOTO: MUSE BY SUSAN SLOTT. SEE RESOURCE SECTION
PAGE 69 FOR GREETING CARD INFORMATION.

Gloria Chadwick has been a teacher of mind power, meditation and dream work for over 25 years. Gloria is the author of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow: A Soul's Journey Home," "Discovering Your Past Lives," and a forthcoming book "Reflections." She lives in Chicago with her two daughters.



Until now, maybe you've thought that only what you perceive with your conscious mind is what is real. While this is true, that's just half of it. There's another world that's also very real and is waiting to show you what's within yourself. It may seem that reality only revolves around your conscious mind and your physical senses, but it also continually swirls through your subconscious awareness, coming up to the surface and showing itself in your thoughts and ideas, your feelings, and your dreams. Maybe, you've had experiences in which an answer or an insight sparkled into your mind out of the clear blue sky—your inner, spiritual self was whispering to you through your thoughts and intuition. And perhaps, there were times where a dream was unusually clear and vivid—a dream that seemed to be more than just a dream.

Intellectually and intuitively, you're aware of both your conscious and subconscious perceptions. In the everyday work world and just taking care of life in general, we tend to clutter up our thoughts with meaningless mind chatter and mundane things, and we often bury our real feelings under layers of mask and pretense. We're so surrounded by physical chaos and noise, and the *shoulds* that society imposes upon us, that we don't pay attention to our more subtle, inner sense of awareness. We're so busy scattering our thoughts and energies and running around doing things that we can't even hear ourselves think. Underneath the facade of what we call reality is the true real world—the real us.

Once we let go of outside distractions and tune into our subconscious, we can be in touch with ourselves and see that our inner self and our higher self

are one and the same. We can bring that inner, more perceptive awareness of our true spiritual nature into our everyday world and know what's really happening beneath the hustle and bustle. We can be in both worlds simultaneously. When we take the time to relax—to just be natural, to be who we really are, to just *be*—we're able to direct our attention into a quiet, gentle part of ourselves. There, we can listen to our thoughts and allow our feelings to speak clearly. We can look at what we hear and know the true awareness of our spirit.

So come and explore this magical world of your imagination, and watch your mystical mind in motion. You may see that your imagination is more real than you think it is. And you may be in for a few surprises as you reconnect with your inner self and reunite with your higher self—the one who speaks to you through your feelings, the one who whispers spiritual knowledge into your mind.

Just by stretching your imagination and opening up your mind, you can become so much more aware of the worlds within you and around you. Reality is more than it appears to be on the surface, and your imagination will show this to you. Take some time for yourself and relax. Let your magical mind be your guide through the world of your inner images. Somewhere inside yourself, you'll touch your true feelings and rediscover the magic of the real you—the magic of your inner spiritual self. And if you listen, you'll be able to hear a voice that whispers to you—your inner voice that's real and true, the voice that always speaks the truth.

MIND-POWER EXERCISES

1. Create a special place—a quiet, tranquil nature scene—in your mind that's all your own. A place where you feel completely comfortable and natural, where you enjoy being peaceful, calm, and happy within yourself. A magical place where you can truly be who you really are, where you can tune into your inner self and listen to your inner voice. A spiritual sanctuary where you can connect with your true spiritual nature and experience harmony within yourself, where you can open up the complete awareness of your mind.

Your nature scene can be a beach, where you can listen to the sound of the waves and watch them as

they gently ebb and flow. It can be a forest, where you can hear the wind gently moving through the leaves in the trees, whispering to you. It can be a wide open expanse of earth, where you can view the horizon clearly in all directions. It can be a mountain or a valley. It can be a lake, where you can go sailing, or a wonderful waterfall. It can be a garden with very beautiful flowers. It can be a rainbow, it can be the sky, it can be the sun, or it can simply be the air that you breathe. Your nature scene can be wherever and whatever you want it to be.

It can be reminiscent of a place you've been before, or it can be a place that you create entirely with your imagination. Think about the kind of place you'd like to have as your nature scene. Close your eyes and create a picture in your mind of the place that would make you most happy. When you've got a good picture in your mind, be there—create that scene. You may find an exact replica of your conscious thoughts, or you may find that you create a different scene, once you're inside the magical, mystical world of your imagination. Whatever you see and create is the most perfect nature scene for you.

When you've created your nature scene, just be there for a while to enjoy it and to appreciate nature. Tune into your feelings, reconnect with your inner self—your real spiritual self—and listen to your inner voice. Hear what it sounds like, and how it speaks to you.

2. After you've been in your nature scene several times, notice how you feel when you're there, what you do and what you think about. Thorough-

Just by stretching your imagination and opening up your mind, you can become so much more aware of the worlds within you and around you. Reality is more than it appears to be on the surface, and your imagination will show this to you.

ly explore your nature scene. Notice everything that's there. Notice any previous connections to pleasant and positive experiences in your life. See the symbolism in it and what it represents to you by exploring your feelings about it. Become aware of why these connections are surfacing in your nature scene.

3. Aside from the obvious benefits of being able to go into your nature scene at any time to just relax for a few moments, to feel peace and harmony, to refresh and revitalize yourself, or to let go of stress and tension that may build up during your day, your nature scene gives you the opportunity to quietly reflect on the things that are happening in your life. You can look within yourself to see how and why your experiences originated. You can find solutions to problems and answers to any questions you pose. Listen to your inner voice, to your true feelings. Talk to your inner self—your higher self. Ask for guidance. Trust the information that comes from your inner knowledge and act on the information given.

4. Your nature scene is much more than it appears to be. It is truly a real, magical place within you that opens up into many wonderful worlds that offer you

insight and understanding into yourself; worlds that open up into universal knowledge; worlds that show you your mystical mind—your spiritual essence. Explore those worlds. •

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A Father for Every Child

DAVID BLANKENHORN

The most urgent domestic challenge facing the United States at the close of the twentieth century is the re-creation of fatherhood as a vital social role for men. At stake is nothing less than the success of the American experiment. For unless we reverse the trend of fatherlessness, no other set of accomplishments—not economic growth or prison construction or welfare reform or better schools—will succeed in arresting the decline of child well-being and the spread of male violence. To tolerate the trend of fatherlessness is to accept the inevitability of continued societal recession.



David Blankenhorn is founder and president of the Institute for American Values, a private, nonpartisan organization devoted to research, publication, and public education on family issues. He is a frequent lecturer and chief editor of "Rebuilding the Nest: A New Commitment to the American Family."



Many voices today, including many expert voices, urge us to accept the decline of fatherhood with equanimity. Be realistic, they tell us. Divorce and out-of-wedlock childbearing are here to stay. Growing numbers of children will not have fathers. Nothing can be done to reverse the trend itself. The only solution is to remediate some of its consequences. More help for poor children. More sympathy for single mothers. Better divorce. More child-support payments. More

prisons. More programs aimed at substituting for fathers.

Yet what Lincoln called the better angels of our nature have always guided us in the opposite direction. Passivity in the face of crisis is inconsistent with the American tradition. Managing decline has never been the hallmark of American expertise. In the inevitable and valuable tension between conditions and aspirations—between the social “is” and the moral “ought”—our birthright as Americans has always been our confidence that we can change for the better.

Does every child deserve a father? Our current answer hovers between “no” and “not necessarily.” But we need not make permanent the lowering of our standards. We can change our minds. Moreover, we can change our minds without passing new laws, spending more tax dollars, or impaneling more expert commissions. Once we change our philosophy, we may well decide to pass laws, create programs, or commission research. But the first and most important thing to change is not our policies, but our ideas.

Our essential goal must be the rediscovery in modern society of the fatherhood idea. Malinowski called it the “principle of legitimacy.” For every child, a legally and morally responsible adult male. Others have described this idea as the imperative of paternal investment, achieved through a parental alliance with the mother. A more familiar name for such activity is married fatherhood.

The essence of the fatherhood idea is simple. A father for every child. But in our society, few ideas could be more radical. Embracing the fatherhood idea would require a fundamental shift in cultural values and in parental behavior. No other change in U.S. family life could produce such dramatic improvement in child and societal well-being.

To recover the fatherhood idea, we must fashion a new cultural story of fatherhood. The moral of today’s story is that fatherhood is superfluous. The moral of the new story must be that fatherhood is essential. In today’s script, the Unnecessary Father dominates the action. In addition, too many understudies are doing far too much. The star of the new

script must be the Good Family Man. The understudies must leave the spotlight.

The new story will be simultaneously more positive and more negative, more celebratory and more reproachful, than today's anemic account of unimportant men. The good news, largely ignored in today's script, is that married fatherhood is a man's most important pathway to happiness. Being a loving husband and committed father is the best part of being a man. The bad news, similarly missing from today's watered-down narrative, is that high rates of divorce and out-of-wedlock childbearing, the twin generators of pater-nity without fatherhood, are incompatible with male happiness and societal success.

At the intellectual center of the new story, defining and sustaining the fatherhood idea, must be two propositions about men. The first is that marriage constitutes an irreplaceable life-support system for effective fatherhood. The second is that being a real man means being a good father. The first proposition aims to reconnect fathers and mothers. The second aims to reconnect fatherhood and masculinity. Both of these propositions carry profound societal implications. Each will powerfully shape the plot and characters of an invigorated cultural story.

In a large sense, the new story must help us change from a divorce culture to a marriage culture. In a divorce culture, divorce overshadows marriage as a defining metaphor for the male-female relationship. Divorce comes to be seen as modern, cutting-edge, a representative generational experience. The institution of marriage and the norm of marital permanence come to be seen as comparatively old-fashioned, beleaguered, even quaint—a way of life primarily suitable for older or boring people.

In a divorce culture, people are intensely interested in divorce and want to improve divorce. Family scholars study it. Children's books tell stories about it. Policy makers pursue the goal of better divorce. In contrast, marriage commands relatively little attention in a divorce culture. Even the primary custodians of the marital tradition—the clergy and marriage counselors—frequently lose their regard for that tradition and drift toward a preoccupation with divorce.

For a basic contradiction defines our contemporary divorce culture. On the one hand, we are a marrying people. Indeed, American attitudes toward marriage remain distinctly romantic and even sentimental, especially regarding the potential in marriage for personal fulfillment and adult

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companionship. Yet at the same time, we are a society in the midst of a widespread collapse of confidence in marriage as an institution, in the ideal of marital permanence, and in the preeminence and necessity of marriage as a child-rearing environment.

In short, while we believe in marrying, we are losing our belief in the institution of marriage. As a result, we are simultaneously institutionalizing divorce and deinstitutionalizing marriage. For divorce, our goals are to regularize it, destigmatize it, and improve its procedures. For marriage, our goals are the opposite. Deregulate and privatize it. Make it more flexible. Reduce its privileged legal status and cultural influence. Describe it in high school textbooks not as an ideal, but as one of many options. In a divorce culture, marriage is increasingly viewed as a problem, divorce as a viable solution.

This view of marriage destroys fatherhood for millions of men. By normalizing the rupture of the parental alliance and the departure of men from their children's homes, the norms of a divorce culture decimate the foundations of good-enough fatherhood. To recover the fatherhood idea, we must recreate a marriage culture. The alternative is the continuing decline of fatherhood.

A stronger story of fatherhood must also reclaim and revise the connection between fatherhood and masculinity. Across cultures, as David D. Gilmore reminds us, manhood is regarded as a test, a challenge, a prize to be won. In general, societies assume that women possess traits of femininity. But men must typically "prove" their masculinity. Of course, elite opinion today is frequently quite suspicious of this idea. Yet, for most men in our society, to "be a man" remains a matter of considerable importance.

Tragically, the weakening of fatherhood in our generation has produced a large and dangerous chasm between fatherhood and masculinity. Over here is the manhood test. Over there is fatherhood. Consequently, to "be a man" increasingly has very little to do with being a father.

In today's elite fatherhood script, the New Father constitutes an androgynous rejection of all tradi-

tional masculinity. As a cultural model, the New Father urges men simply to ignore or ridicule the manhood test.

The New Father is expected to define his masculinity by either disavowing it or inverting it. As a result, the New Father model explicitly compels men to make a choice: Be a New Father or be a man. The pathway to the former is the rejection of the latter.

A similar split is occurring in popular culture and in the larger society. From Arnold Schwarzenegger-style fantasy movies of male omnipotence to the teen-age gang culture in our central cities, the idea of "being a man" is increasingly identified with violence, materialism, and predatory sexual behavior. I am a man because I will hurt you if you disrespect me. I am a man because I have sex with lots of women, and my girl friends have my babies. I am a man because I have more money and more things than you do. Norms of good-enough fatherhood—I am a man because I cherish my wife and nurture my children—are simply not part of this manhood equation.

If our society forces men to choose between passing the New Father test and passing the manhood test, one result will be less fatherhood. Similarly, if we encourage men to pursue a manhood that is untempered by norms of responsible fatherhood, the primary results will be more violence and less fatherhood. The former urges fatherhood without masculinity. The latter stands for masculinity without fatherhood.

The challenge for a new story of fatherhood is to resocialize masculinity by reuniting it with fatherhood, recognizing that these two ideas for men stand best when they stand together. Fatherhood cannot destroy or oppose masculinity. But fatherhood must domesticate masculinity. In a good society, men prove their manhood by being good fathers. The alternative is the continuing decline of fatherhood and a deepening ambivalence and skepticism toward masculinity. •

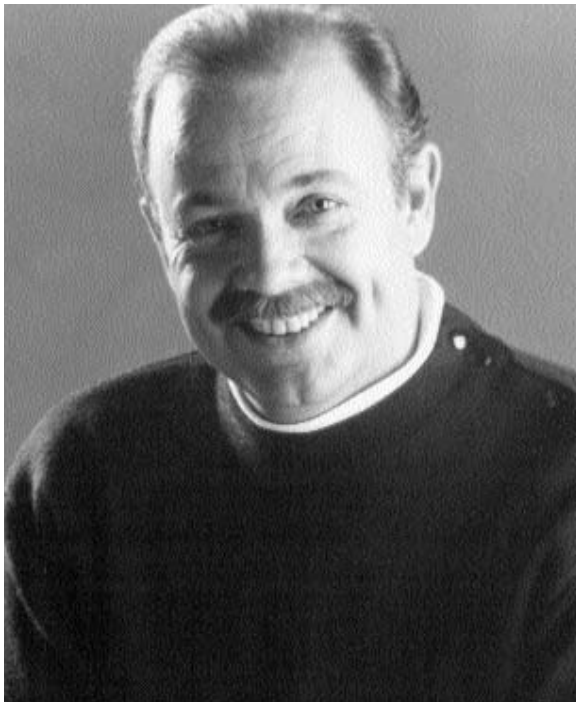
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Ethical Choices

J E F F R E Y P A T N A U D E

An ancient Japanese parable tells of a samurai master constantly challenged by a student who sought a level of equality with his teacher. The master understood the needs of the young learner and remained patient with him as the student provoked a confrontation at every opportunity. Frustrated by his inability to thwart his teacher, the student conceived a foolproof way finally to conquer his master. Holding a baby bird, he presented his cupped hands to his master and asked, “Is the bird in my hands dead, or is it alive?” The master knew if he guessed the bird was dead, the student would open his hands and let the bird fly away. If he said it was alive, a quick squeeze of the student’s hands would break the creature’s neck, and he would present to the master a dead bird. The master simply looked into the eye of his challenger and said, “It is whatever you choose it to be.”



Jeffrey Patnaude began his career as an Episcopalian priest, heading two large suburban parishes. Intrigued by the possibility of applying his spiritual training to the business world, he left parish ministry in the late 1980s to found an organization that works with business leaders to help bring "spirit to work." Jeffrey lives in Northern California with his dog, Bear.



Choice is at the center of our being as it confronts us at every turn of life's labyrinth. We can choose to cut corners or jump over the lines to reach the maze's center. The choice is ours. The wandering tribes of ancient Israel were no strangers to the circuitous path of the labyrinth. Tradition says that they wandered a desert path for many years before receiving a vision of their destiny. Just before his death, Moses, who had led them out of Egypt and away from the pharaoh's tyranny, stood before them and spoke of the responsibilities inherent in their freedom to choose what lay ahead:

This day, I have set before you life and death, blessings and curse; therefore choose life so that you and your descendants may live. (Deut. 30:19)

As in the last hopeful words of a dying parent to his children, Moses wanted what was best for his followers who had traveled so far, yet he knew the choice would be theirs to make.

Choice lies at the heart of inner management. Living a life of balance, for example, requires the ability to make choices and to say no—and yes. Making use of our expansive imagination involves a conscious decision not to be limited by the confines of a narrow perception, but instead to be willing to soar into the uncharted territory of the human mind. Employing intuition means choosing to pay attention to the wisdom within ourselves that speaks without words. Living a life of joy requires a decision to embrace all of life, pain and pleasure, as equal components of wholeness. Authentic power results from making choices that are aligned with compassion—not fear.

THINKING POSITIVELY

We can encourage positive thinking patterns or cling to the banister of negativity, from which we slide downward into the shadow. Negative thinking can create self-fulfilling prophecies. It increases stress, facilitates depression, and chokes creativity. It diminishes our self-esteem, as it does our ability to cope effectively with problems and challenges.

Choosing to harbor negative thinking also has disastrous consequences in the work world. I once worked with a friend who repeatedly told himself, unconsciously, that his important projects were doomed to fail. I tried to talk him out of it, but no matter how I assured him, his fear of failure held him intent in the belief that he would not, could not, succeed. Not surprisingly, many of his projects failed, and eventually his company couldn't afford to keep him. He was like the man who sits on a bench in New York's Grand Central Station, throwing sawdust in the air to keep the elephants away. When someone points out to him that there are no elephants in Grand Central Station, he says, "See? It's working!" The elephants for my friend were his

images of colossal failure, and eventually he became failure's own best exhibit, never convinced that he had another choice.

Each choice cultivates a habit, as well as a direction. My friend who had programmed himself for failure was living in reaction to a cynical interior monologue, a self-punishing habit that destined him for failure. It caused him to focus on the gap between his ambitions and his present conditions, rather than the bridge of possibility that was there for him to cross. By surrendering to negative expectations, he had already fulfilled them.

Negative thinking leads to two especially self-defeating habits. The first is the tendency to base our responses on untested assumptions (such as the possibility of failure), as if they are fact. The other is the habit of having constant second thoughts about our decisions.

With respect to the first habit, as leaders, it is far more effective to refuse to respond to anything other than objective and demonstrable facts. With respect to the latter, there is no point in speculating about what could have been, when you are confronted with what is. Every choice automatically creates a gain and a loss, a selected path, and a road not taken. When we do act, we must have faith that our foundation for leadership is firm enough that we will, in general, choose well.

Mark Twain spoke wisely when he said, "Life does not consist mainly, or even largely, of facts and events. It consists in the main of the storm of thoughts that are forever blowing through one's

Truth is the basic currency of human social relations. It is what stabilizes society, and what allows for its existence. Consider this: if lying were the standard behavior in a society, all knowledge would have to be self-acquired. No one could trust what was learned from another.

head." We can't stop our own thought storm, the creative force of our mind. But we can determine the nature of thoughts on which we choose to dwell—to cultivate a direction of thought that is positive and life-enhancing, rather than destructive and life-draining.

There are two courses that we can navigate through the storm that rages in our own imagination. The one that will bring us into harbor requires that we leave negative thoughts in our wake, choose to think positively, and act within the realm of self-affirming patterns of thought. Clearly, it is easier to make such a choice in a positive context.

A newly hired scientist, whose first project for her corporate employer resulted in a million-dollar loss, was requested to report to the CEO. The scientist arrived at the executive's office shaking in her shoes. The company president asked her if the facts were straight, and the project had indeed lost all that money. The scientist stammered out a "yes." Rising from his chair, the president thrust out his hand and exclaimed, "Congratulations!" leaving the young woman relieved, yet utterly bewildered.

The president continued, "This company has been successful in large part because of our willingness to experiment, take risks, and learn from our failures. If you were to lose another million dollars for the same reason, you'd have to find work elsewhere. We assume you've learned something important from this attempt, and that something great will come of it." That scientist eventually became a valuable con-

tributor to the research organization, producing innovation after innovation.

This example shows how a company can choose to use failures to generate possibilities, rather than as a vehicle for diminishing emerging potential. Corporations which work to discern opportunities, rather than obstacles, have chosen the higher path of positive thought, which leads not only to unexpected profit, but also to new discovery and substantial growth. Such corporate policy begins at the level of individual leadership, at the time and place where the leader makes a choice—not to be a victim of imagined circumstance, but to take responsibility for a well-considered choice and to transform challenging situations to reflect a positive outcome. These are clear and simple acts of will that harness the mind to serve and discover greatness.

ACTING ETHICALLY

The business environment is charged with a host of new issues, involving occupational health, environmental consciousness, affirmative action, international conflicts of interest, and sexual integrity in the workplace, just to name a few. Traditional business ethics are inadequate to answer these moral questions. Furthermore, providing people with a job is no longer adequate justification for a “bottom-line” corporate mentality in which profits come before people in every instance. More sophisticated ethical tools are needed for today’s business climate.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Today, for better or worse, business is accountable at both a societal and personal level. Business decisions affect not only the standard and quality of living for employees, but can help to extend to all people the chance for adequate nutrition, good health, and quality medical care, as well as a life with dignity. These are basic human rights that business leaders can help to ensure, because they, more than any other group, can create solutions to problems within the framework of day-to-day realities.

Peter Drucker, one of the architects of modern management, has said that “efficiency is doing the thing right, while effectiveness is doing the right thing.” When business leaders ask themselves the question, “What is the right way?” they frequently mean what is politically expedient or good for prof-

its in the short run.

Business today has the financial network and technological capabilities to shape the destiny of humanity. Such a responsibility requires leaders who will address needs effectively and a business ethic based on the spiritual value of human dignity. Corporate culture must seek not only the optimum relationship among risk, reward, and profit, it must foster initiative, sharing, and community.

Doing what is right profits all our lives and plows a wider strip of ground than the narrow focus of the traditional corporate bottom-line. I believe that businesses that choose to act ethically are ultimately more profitable than those obsessed with the net. Doing good for its own sake requires a shift in the managerial paradigm. The decision-making authority invested in management results in an ethical conflict between the manager and employee when the employee is not consulted about important company decisions. Management must explore new ways of sharing that authority in order to establish a more comprehensive ethic for in-company culture.

The policy of Missouri’s Springfield Remanufacturing Company—with a work force of 800 and 1995 earnings of over \$100 million—is to treat employees “as if they own the place.” Hence, production workers receive exactly the same information in their weekly meetings about every penny earned and spent as the board of directors, and participate in making corporate decisions right along with management. Springfield’s open-book management has been called a turnaround strategy for American capitalism, and such large corporations as Xerox and Clorox send teams of executives to “The Great Game of Business” seminars to learn from the Springfield model.

The effect of corporate decisions is not isolated within the organization, but touches human society as a whole. Every individual who thinks and acts ethically contributes to a universal moral climate. Our every action makes a difference, just as every thought registers within the energy pool of the cosmos. Ethical thinking contributes toward a positive environment of imagination and hope.

TELLING THE TRUTH

“Character,” Aristotle wrote, “is a matter of habit.” We develop a truthful character simply by

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 74



Suffering Can Be Useful

POLLY YOUNG-EISENDRATH

There is a dearth of methods and theories about how suffering can be useful in the contemporary world. Coming from the elite ranks of medicine, biology, and sometimes even psychology is an almost uniform lack of interest in the value of suffering. Instead, the focus is on avoiding or eliminating it. This strategy tends to increase our worst fears—that pain and suffering are intolerable and useless. I've told a different story here, an alternative way of looking at our hardships as major catalysts for change and development.

IMAGE BANK/WHITE PICKETT



Polly Young-Eisendrath, Ph.D., is a psychologist, Jungian psychoanalyst, and Clinical Associate Professor in Psychiatry at University of Vermont College of Medicine. She writes and lectures widely about human development, and does research on resilience.



I'm writing against the current tide that includes a widespread assortment of recovery and New Age formulas for how to stay healthy, happy, and in control, as well as the hard-core scientific ideologies of genetic engineering that promise us cures for all major diseases and the possibility of conquering death. Trying to find a gene for criminality, a physical cause for hopelessness, and ever better drugs to treat our negative moods, we direct our gaze toward nature to locate the origin or cause of our suffering. This is a grave error.

Much of our suffering originates with our own discontent. When we discover that, we begin to find a path to freedom. Our society is moving in a psychologically and spiritually dangerous direction, as

we attempt to explain more and more of our personal difficulties through biology and genes. We've dropped the mirror of self-recognition.

Without the capacity to see how we create a lot of our own difficulties, we are morally and spiritually adrift. We are often deeply perplexed about the increase in violence and destruction in our cities and the willingness of our young people to take their own and others' lives. But it is obvious that there is no—widespread understanding of the ethic of suffering that one is the creator of oneself and that whatever we do, we become heir to our actions. There is no felt personal connection between actions and consequences, no belief that death is a transition, no hunger for compassion or service as a means to self-knowledge.

A famous story about the Buddha tells of his encounter with a teen-age mother who has lost her infant to death. She is frantic with grief and outrage and has traveled from village to village, carrying her child on her hip, looking for a miracle that could bring the child back to life. Someone tells her that only the Buddha, who is preaching in a nearby town, would be capable of such a miracle. When she arrives at the town and finds the crowds around the Buddha, she pushes her way through and stands before him.

"If you would perform a miracle and bring my child back to life, I would do anything in return," she says with touching sincerity. The Buddha sees the depth of her grief and says, "If you bring me a mustard seed from a home in which there has been no death, then I will perform the miracle." This sounds like a small task, and she readily agrees, setting off with the deepest gratitude in her heart.

She travels from door to door in this and other villages, carrying her dead child and asking at each house if there has ever been a death. She hears about many difficult deaths and much disease, and her heart is opened to other people's pain. Eventually, she realizes that all families have been touched by death, and she returns to the Buddha.

"I know now what you were trying to teach me," she says. "I am not alone in my misery. All people must endure death, not only their own, but others' around them." The Buddha gently offers to perform a funeral for her child, and then to teach her

how suffering can be alleviated. Thus, she becomes one of his most dedicated followers, and eventually a powerful teacher in her own right.

The only real freedom from suffering and death is to accept them, to be interested and begin to see how they connect us to ourselves through meaning, and to others through compassion. Although we may find many cures for illnesses and some relief for pain, only when we can transform our own fears and anxiety into interest and curiosity do we have access to the knowledge and compassion that give life purpose. This sense of purpose brings greater creativity and transcendent coherence, allowing us to move more smoothly through future difficulties and losses, appreciating the riches they provide, in the context of the demands they make on us.

Yet, today, we have little interest in how to make sense of suffering, maintaining instead a sometimes singular focus on how to quell the pain that can teach us so much. There is a tendency now to assume that depression is a “biological disease” because we have antidepressant medication that sometimes works well to relieve symptoms. There may well be a biological component to some depressions that might even have psychological origins, but we have in no way empirically demonstrated that depression is a biological disease. Biochemists don’t even know why antidepressant drugs work to alleviate some depressions. And yet, we make claims that we know what depression is and that we have defeated it.

Depression is still a transitory mood, one that we all have from time to time, and we don’t know much more about its origins than we did a hundred years ago. We know something about some kinds of depression, but we don’t know the big picture. The

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hype surrounding the new antidepressants focuses our gaze on biology, not on our own negativity or discontent.

In his successful book, *Listening to Prozac*, the psychiatrist Peter Kramer not only advocates Prozac—or similar SSRI antidepressants that increase serotonin levels—for most cases of depression, but he claims that it can make people “better than well.” Why would anyone want to be better than well? It’s one thing to improve a debilitating depression so that a person can awaken basic self-awareness, but it’s another to try to escape the ordinary problems of living. Readers of Kramer’s book can easily come away with the impression that Prozac will solve life’s problems, everything from a bad mood to low self-confidence. Even though antidepressants can help us stabilize a difficult mood disorder, if we look to the medication to solve life’s problems, then we’ve broken the connection between suffering and meaning.

In my experience doing therapy with depressed and anxious adults, I have seen them become resilient within the cycles of depression and renewal by seeing how their own psychological complexes—the negativity and discontent—triggered their depressed moods. Looking into the mirror of self-recognition, we can all reduce the despair, resentment, envy, and self-pity that increasingly characterize many of us living in the affluent societies of today’s world.

We need far more opportunities to hear stories of suffering, to explore our own experiences in some meaningful context, to be mentored or guided through the fundamental transitions from suffering to compassion, and to become knowledgeable about the ethic of suffering.

In large measure, we in Western societies have a

social problem with “idealization”—a grandiose fantasy about who we are and what we should control—that can separate us from other peoples and other species, and may have already put us at high risk for extinction. This kind of idealization, a tendency to feel exempt from the natural conditions or limitations of human life, stems from illusions of control and independence. Many aspects of Western culture, from our stories of individual heroes and geniuses (stories that always eliminate the influences of family members and others who might have contributed to “greatness”) to our beliefs in the True Self, promote isolation and overestimation of our personal worth—perhaps even the worth of our species.

The human ability to think abstractly, to manipulate symbolic concepts apart from concrete situations, is perhaps one of the greatest resources of our species. When it goes unchecked—driven primarily and unknowingly by *dukkha*—it can also lead to ruin, as the desire for greater and greater competence overtakes our experience of interconnection.

Our economic systems are grounded in competition and individualism, and although we have the potential for the complex responsiveness of true democracy (valuing a range of different points of view and responding to a range of needs), we seem more and more to be moving into a zero sum game that focuses on personal stakes (like my pocketbook or my safety versus yours) and pulls in the direction of self-protection and isolation. Rather than working together to achieve goals that are shaped first and foremost by the interdependence of our needs and those of other life systems, we often end up protecting the most privileged humans. In large part, this is the product of believing in individual rights to happiness, no matter the expense to other people and other beings.

Unless we can begin to see that our inherent discontent and drive for increasing competence run up against our interdependence or connectedness, we humans may not survive the next millennium. Our drive for competence may be the great instinctive weakness that topples our species. We can see how negative thinking might have benefited us in the evolutionary process, compelling us to greater and greater manipulation of the environment for our

own needs. But from the perspective of the delicate balance of the ecosystem of life, our ever more competent adaptation may be ill-suited for the long run.

Our capacity for competence sets us up to feel exempt from the constraints and limitations of life on this planet. But in recognizing our suffering, seeing how we create it, we can free ourselves from the constant press to improve, and begin to experience the vast interconnectedness of our existence.

As we develop personal responsibility for our attitudes, intentions, and actions, we begin to free ourselves from the dictates of self-protectiveness. We ride the mule backwards and see ourselves in the mirror of hellish existence. We gain the capacity to transform hell into heaven.

What is so striking about the resilient is how smoothly and quickly they create a coherent and meaningful story from hardship, misery, trauma, abuse. They shape painful, desperate events into unity and purpose, into compassion and creativity. This might seem like some sleight-of-mind trick if we had no conception of how we create worlds from our own attitudes and responses. From psychoanalysis and Buddhism alike, we glean ideas about why our meaning, our attributions, and intentions are so vitally important in shaping a life.

When you change your perception of an event or a person, at that moment the perceived also changes. Subject and object are joined by perception. This account of a world resting on consciousness seems far-flung only if we hold onto the notion of a separate self. When we conceive of the self as wholly interdependent, functioning to integrate and bring coherent image and meaning to diverse perception, then we appreciate more deeply the freedom that human beings have brought to the world. This freedom is one of making new meanings, especially of opening ourselves in times of pain and suffering to the roots of our compassion. When we cross the bridge from self-protectiveness to compassion and knowledge, we have changed the world. Without the ordinary occasion of human suffering—our own discontent—it is likely that we would never find the bridge. •

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Inner and Outer Peace

R A J I N D E R S I N G H

Throughout the world, we find people have many ways of expressing their desire for peace. We hear phrases such as “peace be with you.” At Christmas, people send greeting cards or sing songs about “peace on earth.” We find that people will hold up two fingers in the form of a “V” which symbolizes “peace.” When someone dies, we pray that he or she “rests in peace.” Nations meet continually to search for ways to make peace with each other. Organizations dedicated to peace have sprung up in many countries. There is even a Nobel peace prize for individual contributions to this noble cause.



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The quest for peace is universal. In every age and in every country, people have been trying to find peace within their environment, within their societies, and within the world. It is strange that this search has been going on for so long and has been sought by so many people, yet its attainment remains elusive. Few find peace for themselves. Nothing on earth seems to provide us with a true and lasting peace. We start to wonder why peace is so hard to achieve.

WHY PEACE IS SO ELUSIVE

First, we should analyze what peace is. A dictionary defines it as freedom from strife, and a state of serenity and calmness. Inherent in this definition is the answer to why peace is so difficult to find. Life and strife seem to go hand in hand. Whether one is rich or poor, a king or a peasant, one's life is always beset with one problem or another.

There is a story from the life of Lord Buddha which aptly illustrates this truth. A woman whose young son had died approached Lord Buddha. She was shedding copious tears over the loss of her child. She asked Buddha to help bring her son back to life and ease the terrible pain in her heart. Buddha, in his wisdom, told her he would help her if she could first bring back the mustard seed from a household in which no one ever died. The lady followed his instructions and moved from one home to the next. Yet, at each door, she received the same reply. She realized that there wasn't any family that could pass through life escaping the loss of one of its members.

Death is the one inevitable fact of life. Sickness and disease are yet others. We need only examine our own life to see how difficult it is to go through one's existence without any mishap, accident, or illness. Medical books are filled with numerous diseases that can afflict human beings. There is no dearth of accidents that could befall us, as we move through life's highways and byways. With death or illness hanging over our heads, it is difficult to live in perpetual, uninterrupted peace.

Even if our physical body is fairly healthy, few can pass through life without any strife. There are many occurrences that produce stress. If we have a family, we know that the illness, unhappiness, or misfortune of any member causes the others to be distressed. Whenever any two people live or work together, there are bound to be tensions due to differences of opinions or differing viewpoints. There are a host of other problems that afflict our lives. If we search for peace in our outer life, at best we can find transitory moments. We certainly do have times in which we enjoy the warmth of being with our loved ones, or we have moments of happiness

from some gain or achievement. But these moments are fleeting. Inevitably, life again comes with its panorama of problems. The great mystic-poet saint, Sant Darshan Singh, expressed this beautifully in one of his verses:

Whenever your devotee's condition alters but a little, Life presents itself to me with another cup of sorrow.

It seems as if lasting peace in this life is virtually impossible. Life is more like a pendulum in which we swing back and forth from moments of joy to moments of sorrow.

ATTAINING INNER PEACE

But true peace can be attained in this lifetime. We only need to undergo a paradigm shift. Our angle of vision needs to be changed. We normally look for peace in the outer world. We hope to find it in our possessions, positions, and relationships. But the loss of any of these causes us to become agitated and distraught. Our peace of mind is disturbed. There is a way to have true peace. Just as Birbal shortened Akbar's line by drawing a longer line next to it, the solution to finding peace can be found in a similar way. We cannot change the nature of the world and its problems. But we can add a new dimension to life that will give us peace.

Peace can be found within us. Many people believe the outer world is the only reality. But the enlightened luminaries throughout history have had mystical experiences which verified for them the existence of inner spiritual regions.

Buddha found enlightenment by inverting within himself. Christ has said, "The kingdom of heaven is within you." The Muslim and the Judeo-Christian scriptures speak of the contact that the prophets had with God. Mystics in every religion have described their inner spiritual experiences. These higher realms co-exist simultaneously with us in the physical world. They are realms of eternal peace and bliss. We cannot change the world, but we can tune into those realms lying within us. By doing so, we will change our perspective in our life.

The way to reach this inner world is through

meditation. Meditation is the process by which we separate our soul from the body to voyage into the regions within. Spiritual teachers or mystics who have mastered this science can teach it to us. First, they explain the theory so we can understand the process. Then, they give us a practical demonstration of it through meditation on the inner Light and Sound.

The more we come in contact with the Light and Sound, the more bliss we experience. The soul experiences pure joy and happiness. This bliss stays with the soul throughout the day and night, and we experience peace and contentment.

CONTRIBUTING TO OUTER PEACE

By mastering meditation under the guidance of a spiritual teacher, we not only attain personal fulfillment, but we become an instrument for bringing peace and joy to those around us. When we merge in the Creator, we recognize that all living things are children of God. We realize that the Light of God that is within us is within everyone else. We realize that all beings are brothers and sisters in the Creator. It is at this stage that we develop true love for all, for our fellow beings, and for all creation. We become ambassadors of God's love. We radiate love to others. If each person had this realization, there would be true peace on this planet.

By experiencing inner peace, we can achieve outer peace. By entering into the sanctuary of peace within us, we gain the inner treasures. Some people may feel that the path of meditation is one of escapism. They feel that it requires one to sit in an outer cave or on a mountain top like a recluse. But meditation does not lead to escapism; rather, it makes us more alive. It is one of the most effective ways to actively work towards outer peace. We should maintain a balanced life in the world. While attending to our spiritual progress, we should also lead a normal life, fulfilling our worldly responsibilities. We need to work in the world to earn a living. We must care for our family. We should contribute to the needs of our neighbors, our community, our society, the nation, and the world. Whatever we undertake, we should do to the best

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The Seat of Prosperity

R I C K J A R O W

The heart is the seat of prosperity. If one's prosperity is achieved without an open heart, one will still feel poor. No matter how much is accumulated on any level, something will be missing. The notion of the heart as the center of prosperity exposes the myth of "hard work" for what it is, as there are quite a few beings on this planet who are able to manifest materially without working. Millions of people have witnessed the Indian holy man, Sai Baba, manifest materials from the universal field into his hand. Swami Jnanananda Giri, upon finding a sack of potatoes dumped in front of his cottage, would say something like, "Somebody must be coming for dinner;" and indeed people would arrive later that evening.

IMAGE BANK/BOHLEBERG

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This does not equate with any form of freeloading. Richard Dominguez, the one-time stockbroker who preaches financial independence through radical voluntary simplicity, notes that people who succeed in being supported without working for money are usually people who have an intense sense of mission. They are inner-directed, and their directness supports those around them. What needs to be fully appreciated for prosperity to manifest is the way of the heart in the world, the way of giving and receiving. This basic movement of the heart is mirrored by the *in breath* and *out breath*; the inhale receives from life, and the exhale offers itself back to life. In truth, no one can say where one movement ends and the other begins, for the words giving and receiving are but human approximations of a much greater universal law. Nevertheless, when we speak we are bound to these terms. Receiving is mentioned first because it is conspicuously absent from our lives. Notice how most people react to compliments, for example. It is not unusual for any of us to shy away from them, saying—often with our body language—that we are unworthy of receiving such recognition. On the other hand, we might be so starved for support that we are continually seeking new ways to market ourselves, thrusting ourselves on people whether they would benefit from our gifts or not.

Both sides of this polarity indicate an inability to receive. Receiving has to do with having a fundamental openness toward experience, a willingness to accept all that life has to offer—the good and the

so-called bad. Often we do not allow ourselves to receive because we have not developed a strong, centered ground. We simply cannot hold the energy of bounty. We are bowled over by heightened spiritual experiences or by perceptions of too much money, authority, responsibility, and so forth. In order to receive, we must begin at the root, establishing ourselves in our fullness and in our right and need to be exactly who and where we are. We align our feelings with this energy and can then choose reasonable priorities to focus on. But if we are not able to receive, our priority will not make contact with the greater community.

Receiving can operate on many levels. We can learn to receive praise or constructive criticism; we can allow ourselves to accept money, beauty, and affection, as well as quality friendships and quality items, not feeling unworthy or awkward at participating in all of life's treasures. Receiving also involves accepting rejection and pain without blocking it out and forming judgments that will not allow us to transform the energy. When it is our time to drink from the cup of poison, we can drink it completely. In this way we receive the impact, and hence the wisdom, of the experience. In the midst of our darkness, we then find a jewel forming, a treasure that is ours to share because we have allowed it to form through our genuine openness. If we are unwilling to open to rejection, criticism, or illness, we waste much energy trying to push these things away and are therefore constantly in a defensive position. In order to receive such gifts, we must be convinced of our innate goodness and value. We must believe that we are inherently worthy. Finally, in order to receive we must give, for giving opens up our field and sets up the flowing circuit of prosperity. But in order to give, we must believe that we have something to give. No matter what kind of talents and abilities or seeming handicaps and shortcomings we might think we have, what we have to offer is essentially our own God-given essence, and no person or thing can minimize this or take it away.

The first thing we can do to retrain ourselves to receive is to practice receiving the fullness of our breaths. By beginning each morning as a conscious receiver of the breath of life, you will feel so energized that you will *want* to give, you will *want* to get

up and do something. Image yourself as an open vessel. Invite the breath of life to flow through all the organs of your body. One by one allow the lungs, heart, liver, stomach, spleen, pancreas, kidneys, bladder, and sex organs to become energized and filled. Every morning invite your limbs, muscles, bones, tendons, and skin to be filled with vital energy. Receive! The next time someone compliments you, do not cringe or belittle yourself, but instead allow yourself fully to take in the compliment. Take the time to feel yourself filled consciously. Giving will then become a natural outcome of your condition.

Giving is not about doing good, nor is it about service to God, guru, or country. Such concepts can further the illusion of separation and are often based on some subtle form of self-hate. Most of us have lived our lives filled to the brim with injurious platitudes about how we should give and help the needy. Consequently, many people harbor “healer’s disease” and so sit in watchful wait for someone in need, swooping down upon them in order to justify the healer’s existence. Thoreau once said, “If I knew for a certainty that a man was coming to my house with the conscious design of doing me good, I should run for my life.” And so would we, because we are being attacked by the grasping need behind the act. Much so-called giving is based on a sense of obligation and therefore prohibits the natural flow of receiving. The same is true of tithing, and any similar type of saving, if it is calculated to bring a profit later on. All such methods have in common the desire to create a specific end, which means that they are coming from one form of attitudinal poverty or another. There is no spontaneity, no magic, and no meeting. This is why so many wealthy people need to continue accumulating money; they do not know how to do anything else. Even with all manner of comforts, they are still not receiving, and thus they remain haunted by what they do not have.

In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, this mentality is known to belong to the realm of the “hungry ghost.” Hungry ghosts are visualized as disembodied spirits with enormous bodies and tiny mouths who are always trying to suck up more experience because they can never get enough. The Vietnamese Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh observes that

America seems to have a hungry ghost syndrome. The feverish energy of consumption—intellectual and emotional, as well as material—is never satisfied because there is little earth-centered groundedness or a regenerative cycle of giving and receiving.

Giving, whether it is of an emotional or a material nature, is not a calculated act. Giving flows from fullness, and it is spontaneous. When we feel full, we are free to give and to receive. Every time you find yourself hoarding, ask yourself what you are actually trying to fill. (This includes the hoarding of knowledge.) Each time you find yourself giving out of compulsion, look to the root of the compulsion, for true giving is an expression of our value, and every time we give, in every way we give, we are making a statement. With every dollar we spend, we are supporting something or someone. Do our expenditures reflect our values? Do we see spending as giving, or are we still trying to extract bread from the world? If we only spent money on what we believed in, every expenditure would be aligning us with our priorities and moving us toward our goals. Every time we paid a bill, we would be actively supporting a new vision of the world. For example, many people now buy organic food whenever possible, not only for health reasons, but also because it supports the natural foods industry, the small farmers, and self-sustaining agriculture, rather than community-crippling agribusiness. These people are not simply buying food, they are giving. In a similar vein, new companies such as Working Assets and Seventh Generation have built the idea of giving into their corporate mission. Every time you pay your telephone bill under Working Assets, for example, a percentage of that money is put toward environmental causes.

Another word for giving is support, and support is something that occurs on all levels. Joyce Critendon remarks that if the customers at her inn feel the heart energy coming from the staff—that is, if they feel true support—then even when there are defects in the service, the guests are likely to return. For they are receiving something that cannot be measured, and yet it is palpable.

The opposite of support is envy—the same envy that Emerson declared to be ignorance—and it is the crowning emblem of our scarcity. Wherever

there is envy in our lives, there is a place where we believe that we do not have enough, or worse, are not ourselves enough. To work through the heart center is to come to terms with our envy.

Envy is the serpent's tongue. It bites us and holds on, poisoning every part it touches. For many, the whole career game is based on envy, and all the traditional metaphors for getting ahead are tied in with it. Artists and career spiritualists are not immune. How often do we hear the tinge of envy in our critique of another's work or another's teaching? As long as envy holds sway in our hearts, we cannot function in a free capacity, for envy is based on a sense of poverty and non-acceptance of ourselves. This does not mean that we arm ourselves with goodness and go out to vanquish the enemy of negative emotion. That only leaves us with a humble and frustrated ego. Like any other so-called negative emotion, envy begs for care and investigation. And as we trace it down to its roots, we

see our hidden hopes as delicate flowers that have been stepped on and damaged. We find things that we always wanted to do but never did, and ways in which we always wanted to be but never allowed ourselves to be. Once we see what underlies our envy, we can stop projecting the emotion outward onto others. There is new material to guide us and help us open to the desires of the heart.

If you believe the nature of the world to be dog-eat-dog competition, it will be that for you, and every encounter will reinforce this dreadful pattern. The way of the heart is the win/win alternative, and it entails coming to terms with envy, mistrust, and our basic contraction from the life process, not as

Our calling may often be revealed through our symptoms, illnesses, and discomforts. The very energy that may be crippling us may eventually lead us to our vocations. To listen to this calling, in whatever form, is the stuff of courage.

saints but as courageous investigators of our personal reality. When you mistrust or contract in face of a situation, you can explore it. What is the emotional quality of the situation? Can you fully articulate it? Mistrust and envy are not the enemies, but are instead powerful keys to exploring our scarcity-ridden mentalities, of deeply looking into the parts of ourselves that are not fulfilled, and thus giving us opportunities to reclaim them.

Many people recommend exercises in self-forgiveness for overcoming contraction, but one needs to be very careful in their application. Anger, envy, and so forth are genuine feelings aching to be explored. If forgiveness becomes a "should," then we will constantly torture ourselves trying to be better people. Perhaps a better word for working with heart-based emotions is *acceptance*, living inside a heartfelt acceptance that allows us to open to a situation *as it is*. The openness is achieved not by denying, but by admitting whatever emotion is present and exploring it from the heart center, that is,

exploring it without motive, vengeance, or judgment. The places where we cringe are our personal edges. They are the doors we have never been quite able to walk through, although we have always known they are there waiting for us. The edge is the place where we get tied up in knots in the presence of another person, where we panic at the prospect of turning on the light, even when the darkness feels overwhelming. In order to establish life work that will support our fullness, we need to challenge this place, to walk through this door and other doors like it, even if we start by just sticking our big toes in the water.

One edge that appears time and again in career

counseling is, “How am I going to get paid for it?” Many people in the public service and helping professions feel guilty about receiving payment. Uncomfortable with taking money from an individual, they instead milk the insurance companies for all they can. This scenario points to a misunderstanding of giving and receiving. When we are willing to receive from another (notice I did not use the word *take*), others will want to give to us because their true need is to give, rather than to “be taken.” When you ask a doctor what his fee is these days, he more often than not feigns ignorance and passes you on to his receptionist. The receptionist can quote you the doctor’s exorbitant fee without wincing, since she knows that the insurance company will pay for it. Bureaucracies, such as the insurance industry, remove all sense of giving and receiving. We have given away this power because most of us are ashamed of the way we give and receive.

In order to get right with money, we must get right with ourselves; we must establish our sense of self-worth and enter fully into the wheel of giving and receiving. We need not be afraid to receive because we have given, and we are certainly more inspired to give when we feel we are not being taken. A Himalayan-dwelling holy man, Swami Jnanananda Giri, used to tell me that money is round to keep it rolling. To “keep it rolling” means to enter into the practice of giving and receiving. When we start doing this consciously, we actually begin getting paid for our work because we value it, and others receive that which is of value. Our work itself becomes our way of giving back to life. It is an expression of our fullness, rather than a need to extract bread from the earth. This is the dance that we negotiate as we work through the heart center.

One woman’s life dream was to go to Israel and become an active peacemaker. She had very strong organizational and interpersonal communication skills, but no other plan of action. Yet her ideal was more than a fly-by-night fantasy. She had been holding it in her heart for many years, and it had been incubating. Her children were now in college, and she felt more ready than ever to set out and see what life would bring. Just as she began to conceive of this as a concrete possibility and actually plan a trip to test the waters, the company she worked for

offered her a hefty raise. Her brain went into immediate action. She began thinking, “I could work for five more years, save enough money to secure my future, and then I’ll pursue my dream.”

This is the position most of us find ourselves in. Our heads and hearts are entangled, and we are forever trying to come up with some mutually satisfying compromise. There is no formula here, no way to say if, when, or how one should forego the security of salary, an established position, or credentials.

Following one’s heart does not necessarily mean leaving the established world behind. Some do so in a flourish of heroism and are even lauded by the world. But a teacher of mine who worked with Albert Schweitzer in the jungles of Africa told me that the good doctor’s organ music often sounded a bit out of place there. Many who leave the established world in a flourish return with a dejected thud. It is not emotion, then, that will carry us. The heart’s energy should not be confused with emotion. What carries us is the incubation, the simmering, the constant reappearance of the dream, the inner call that strengthens with time and demands to be heard.

The distinguished Islamic theologian al-Ghazali (1058-1111), a teacher at the University of Baghdad, was held in the highest respect by his peers, though he secretly felt that his work was not fulfilling some greater part of himself. Something else was calling him. He would listen, consider making a change, and then lose courage, until one day his throat dried up, and he could no longer speak. The doctors told al-Ghazali that there was nothing physically wrong with him, but that he was suffering a malady of the soul! Al-Ghazali left Baghdad and studied in seclusion with Sufi mystics for many years. He ultimately returned to teaching with a deepened sense of his calling, and did much to heal the rift between mystical and juridical Islam.

Our calling may often be revealed through our symptoms, illnesses, and discomforts. The heart need not judge. The very energy that may be crippling us may eventually lead us to our vocations. To listen to this calling, in whatever form, is the stuff of courage. It will lead to appropriate action, and you will know that it is appropriate because your being will feel clear, enlivened, and at peace.

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Radical Self-Acceptance

JAMES M. MCMAHON

Life is about this—just how much we love ourselves. If we love and enjoy ourselves, we are free and are living life to its fullest. If we don't love ourselves, we are being deprived of the most important thing in the history of the universe—our life. Being out of touch with just how wonderful we are is double-trouble. It keeps us from truth, and it keeps us from joy. Yet, there is an agency in us that works full-time to do just that. We don't need to join that demon! We may not be able to stop its operation just yet, but we can make a decision this very moment to have mercy on ourselves. We can make the decision to know that this self-criticism is delusion, not our fault, and we can form the intention this very moment to begin to let it go.



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One of the reasons that radical self-acceptance is so crucial is that *no change can occur without it!* We begin to grow out into ourselves to the extent that we begin to love ourselves better. Change never occurs when we lack respect for ourselves. In human growth or return to spirit, radical self-acceptance is the primary agent. In fact, radical self-acceptance is the primary autonomous act, the most profound psychological separation step of all. It implies two irreducible psychic events, “I am enough in myself,” and “I take the power of evaluation of myself to myself.”

No change can occur without acceptance, at least the way I use the word *acceptance*. Psychological and spiritual literature is filled with references to acceptance, self-regard, good self-concept, healthy narcissism, healthy self-love. I use the term *radical* when I refer to self-acceptance because I mean an attitude that surpasses or transcends the ordinary uses of the term. It is beyond evaluation.

First, acceptance means “to receive willingly,” to accept completely any particular characteristic or behavior. It is a receiving of ourselves, a witnessing, completely without judgment. We may be curious or charmed or shocked, but never critical. We let our *opinion* of ourselves alone. We may modify our behavior because of the demands of reality. But our basic nature, we accept as a given. We are neutral. Second, we love ourselves *as a decision*, much as we might love another. Loving is really more a function of our capacity to love than of the attractiveness of the beloved. This is true of ourselves as well. We love ourselves because we choose to. Loving ourselves radically and unconditionally has nothing to do with our worth—as if there were such a thing as worth. We are worthy as a rose is worthy because it is life, and as such it is beautiful. Radical self-acceptance is the total love of self that transcends even unconditional positive regard or a “wonderful” evaluation of ourselves. It is totally without evaluation. It accepts what is, and knows that it is good. It is an aspect of worship; it is a hurrah, a salute to life. In loving ourselves with no strings attached, fully and without reservations, we need not be anything in particular except *capable* of full, complete, unencumbered love. And as we love, we deepen our relationship with ourselves. When we beat ourselves up, we are in relationship to a negative parental image, not to ourselves. We are fused. To *radically* love ourselves, then, is to separate, to be free. This is why it scares us so.

Radical self-acceptance and *change* may seem to be mutually exclusive. If I accept myself completely and without reservation, why would I want to change anything? This may be true about the fierce admonitions to change that we generally direct at ourselves. Radical self-acceptance and fierceness do not coexist. But there is a gentle urge to change that does not come from a sense of something being

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IMAGE BANK/MARC ROMANELLI

Relax!

J . P . V A S W A N I

Meditation begins with relaxation. Most of the time we are tense without realizing it. Even when we go to sleep, our body and mind are not relaxed: We carry the tensions of the day with us and so do not have restful sleep. We wake up the next morning with a feeling of languor or fatigue. We do not feel fresh and strong to meet the challenges of the new day. This goes on day after day, and the tension keeps on accumulating, until it manifests itself in one physical illness or another.

So many diseases of the present day—heart attack, high blood pressure, nervous breakdown, migraine headache, asthma—are due to the buildup of tension. It has been rightly said that “people do not die of disease: they die of internal combustion.” The demand for tranquilizers increases day by day. What is needed is to relax—if possible, twice every day.

There are many methods of relaxation; each person must follow the one that best suits him or her. Here is a simple, easy eleven-step method:

1. Lie on your back on the floor (or a carpet). Or sit on the floor in a comfortable posture. Or in a chair with your feet gently touching the floor. Take a few deep breaths, exhaling each slowly, completely emptying the lungs.

2. Imagine yourself in the loving, immediate, and personal presence of the Lord (your Beloved). You are sitting at His Lotus feet with your arms girdling His ankles, your head resting on His feet. Say to yourself: “Here is true rest. Here is true relaxation. In Thy presence, fears and frustrations, worries and anxieties, depressions and disappointments, tensions and tribulations, vanish as mist before the rising sun. I am relaxed. Relax... relax... relax.”

3. To relax a muscle, you must first tighten it,

then let it go. As you let it go, it may perhaps help you to utter the words: “Let go, let go, let God!”

4. Turn your attention to the muscles around the eyes. Relax-relax-relax. Open the eyes and imagine that the eyelids have become heavy. Let them drop on the eyes. Lift them and let them shut three times.

5. Move on to the muscles around the mouth. Tighten them and let go. Relax-relax-relax.

6. Relax your facial muscles. Clench your teeth, then relax, letting your face go limp. Relax-relax-relax.

7. Repeat the process throughout the body: neck, right shoulder, elbow, forearm, wrist, hand, fingers, left shoulder, elbow, forearm, wrist, hand, fingers, back, chest, abdomen, buttocks, calves, ankles, feet, toes. Push your toes down toward the carpet, stretch and relax. Pull your feet up toward the legs, stretch and relax. Relax-relax-relax.

8. Breathe in and stretch your whole body, relax, and exhale. Repeat this three times. Relax-relax-relax. You are calm, relaxed, peaceful, serene. You are resting at the Lotus feet of the Lord—calm, relaxed, peaceful, serene.

9. You are now lighter than air, moving upward, upward, floating as a cloud—calm, relaxed, peaceful, serene.

10. You are in the presence of the Lord. Offer this simple prayer: “Thou art by me, a living and radiant Presence, and I am relaxed, calm, peaceful, serene.” Repeat the prayer a few times. You are now completely relaxed.

11. When you wish to close this exercise in relaxation, rub the palms of your hands together, place them gently on the eyelids, and gently open the eyes. •

J.P. Vaswani is the author of over 30 books. He is acclaimed as a humanitarian, philosopher, educator, and spiritual guide. The following is from “The Way of Abhyasa” by J.P. Vaswani. Copyright 1995 by J.P. Vaswani. Printed with permission from Triumph Books, an imprint of Liguori.

Atlantic
V5N5 P21

Reflections

Continued from page 24

spirit matters to me. So, thank you for your words that eased my fears and gave me strength to go on. Somehow, I know I'll just have enough to get into that new store—after all, what's \$2000 to the Universe? A mere drop, as far as money goes. So, thank you. And always keep your integrity with the magazine. The changes in the last few issues are wonderful, and you are on the right path. So am I, for that matter! A toast to following our dreams—May we all live and love in the Light! The energy and love is here—so is the quickening.—
Judy Reish, Utica, New York.

A W A K E , A L I V E , A N D G R O W I N G

In the fall of 1993, *LOTUS* Journal for *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* published my Transformation story. Little did I know how this would change my life!

On July 6, 1994, I received a letter forwarded to me from the editor of *LOTUS*. It was written by a woman named Tova. She shared how my story inspired her and asked if I would correspond. I laughed within, “hmmm, could be interesting,” and called her at home. We talked for about an hour sharing from the heart about our “paths” and learning. How long it had been and how refreshing it was to share so openly and honestly with a woman.

About two weeks later, I called Tova again. We talked for hours. It had never been as easy to communicate with a woman as it was with Tova. Six hours later at dawn's light, we called it a night. I went to sleep that morning sensing something subtle and new in me.

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Reflections

Continued from page 62

We continued to talk, write, and share gifts for about a month. The distance between Boston and Austin could not hinder our growing connection. I called her in August and said, "I'll be flying in tomorrow night—can you pick me up?" She said she would see me at the airport.

I wrote in my journal on the plane to Boston: "The closer I get to Boston, the more butterflies I have in my stomach. When I think about meeting this lady, my eyes become moist, and my heart becomes heavy. I wonder what it will be like to see her. Tova, this woman who for some unknown reason I opened myself to. Tova, this lady who has cracked my walls, looked inside of me, and helped me look at myself openly and honestly. I think of meeting her and get very emotional."

The two of us shared three days of peace and magic. I was brought to tears more than once while staring into her eyes. A week later, on the phone, I asked her to marry me. She replied yes. Our fairy tale was coming true.

In Spring of 1994, after many flights between Austin and Boston, we started our lives together in Austin. We have been together two years now, and our relationship continues to blossom because of the commitment to grow as individuals, as well as with each other. It has been a lot of work, but our commitment and trust in each other allows us to enjoy a relationship that is awake, alive, and growing with peace and happiness shining around us.—

Timothy John, Austin, Texas. •

Self Realization

V5N5 P20

Zen Mountain
from V5N5 P75

Book Reviews



B A R B A R A N E I G H B O R S D E A L

Dancing in The Flames:

By Marion Woodman and Elinor Dickson
Shambhala Publications, 1996

240 pages hardbound.

Woodman, a Jungian analyst, and Dickson, a Jungian psychologist, explore the attributes of the Goddess as Mother, Virgin, and Crone, images that the authors find surfacing increasingly in the dreams of those with whom they work. "This unknown figure whom so many people encounter in their sleep speaks to the psyche and to the very cells of the body. She seems to push through from the very depths of the collective unconscious like a universal force that speaks individually and culturally."

The authors describe the scope of their work: "In this book we look at some of the history of the Goddess in order to orient ourselves in relation to the past. We look at contemporary dreams in an attempt to discern the quality of her energy, as it manifests today. We look at some of the recent scientific discoveries concerning the 'light in matter.' Because the Goddess in her virgin aspect carries the transformative energy, some of the recent findings of psychoneuroimmunology related to the transformation of energy bring new meaning to metaphors. Hopefully, the new thoughts and new connections will open new eyes and new ears to what it means to worship the Goddess. Perhaps too, by recognizing the dawning of feminine energy that is moving in the collective psyche, we may catch more of our own personal dreams and ask ourselves again, "What is conscious femininity? What does the balance of masculine and feminine as a self-reg-

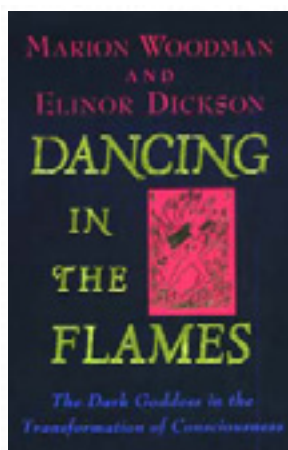
ulating system operating in both men and women look like?"

Tracing the history of humankind's awareness of deity as Goddess, in both Eastern and Western tradition, the limiting and harmful effects of patriarchy's suppression of Goddess imagery on both men and women are examined. "Both genders need a well-differentiated masculine and a well-differentiated feminine. The power structures of patriarchy have profoundly wounded both, making mature relationships almost impossible without hard psychic work... The archetype of the Black Madonna, or Lilith, or Mary Magdalene may be a way to freedom for both [men and women]."

Kali, the Great Mother, first appears in the Eastern tradition as the "fierce embodiment of the devouring mother, who gobbles up everything, even her own children." However, as humanity evolved, later images of the deity

show a halo around Kali as Goddess, pointing to holiness and transformation. "She is black, dark as the matrix, dark as the vortex, from which all creation comes and to which it returns. To her devotees, she is like a black sapphire, radiance shines through her blackness. She dances and laughs with abandon, intoxicated with the mystery she is." Depicted in her highest form as wife of Shiva, Kali assimilates the old Great Mother myth into a Great Goddess mythology.

The authors credit the onset of the Iron Age and its worship of the Sun God with the emergence of an individual sense of self; this led to the ending of



humanity's attendance to the Great Goddess and the beginning of patriarchy in both religious imagery and in society. While this phase of human evolution was essential, it brought with it "our collective neurosis, [in which] we have raped the earth, disrupted the delicate balance of nature, and created phallic missiles of mass destruction. Ironically, in our desperate attempt to keep death at bay (or prevent dissolution, from the point of view of the ego) we have brought ourselves to the brink of extinction. So long as we deny the Great Mother and refuse to integrate her as Goddess in our psychic development, we will continue to act out neurotic fantasies and endanger our very survival as a species."

Humanity as a whole moved from matriarchy and Goddess awareness to patriarchy and God awareness. The authors contend that individuals must make the same journey in their own lives. Fascinating case studies appear throughout the book. Analysis of clients' dreams shows how "individuals follow a similar pattern through matriarchy and patriarchy in their attempts to find their own lives."

Woodman and Dickson draw a helpful distinction between matriarchy and the devouring mother, and the emerging awareness of Goddess as transformer. "In terms of our mythology, a new image of God/Goddess yearns to be found within ourselves. The kingdom is first within. It is manifested through body and mind. We are moving beyond an ego consciousness not only to an integration of body and mind, but to a transcendence of the body/mind split, to a new level of consciousness based on the dance between soul and spirit."

The last chapter will be of special interest to those who are interested in the convergence of research and thought in the disciplines of psychology, spirituality, and the new physics. Patriarchy doesn't work any more, the authors believe, because it rests on a world view that describes stability, predictability, and entity. But the new physics proposes a paradigm of process rather than entity, of synchronicity beyond predictability, where paradox abounds. The authors' treatment of these concepts in light of Jung's "if we possess a grain of wisdom, we will completely surrender to this unknowable who

embraces in love all the opposites" will open the possibility of a new world view for many readers.

The Heart Aroused

By David Whyte

Currency Doubleday 1994

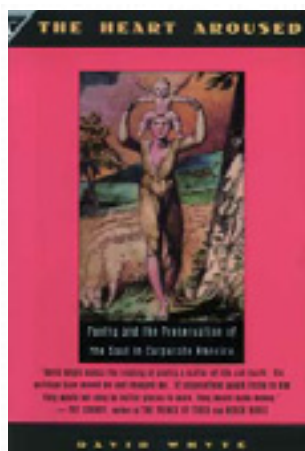
337 pages with Bibliography and Index.

Poet David Whyte was startled when he was asked to write a book about "the life of the soul in corporate America." This reviewer is equally startled, and delighted, that Whyte not only wrote the book, but writes with a poet's grace about the changes confronting corporate America and its employees as we move into the 21st Century.

Whyte contends that corporations need to encourage the kind of individual creativity that will result in corporate flexibility and adaptability. He identifies the realms from which creativity and personal artistry spring as the dark, hidden, underground, often unexplored part of the personality, as contrasted with what is currently acceptable in corporate life: the light, controlled, ordered, hierarchical, and predictable. He sees a need to unleash the creativity of individuals in corporations, a need that is also slowly being recognized by corporation executives themselves. "...Organizations have more often seen these underground and seemingly eccentric desires as a source of continual interruption into their production and purpose. This is now changing. Continually calling on its managers and line workers for more creativity, dedication, and adaptability, the American corporate world is tiptoeing for the first time, in its very short history, into

the very place from whence that dedication, creativity, and adaptability must come: the turbulent place where the soul of an individual is formed and finds expression." And to shake the foundations further, the corporation must realize that to allow the creativity requires making room in the workplace for the source of that creativity: the heart, soul, conscience, and individuality of the employee.

The poet and the corporation need each other, Whyte contends. "The poet needs the practicalities of making a living to test and temper the lyricism of insight and observation. The corporation needs the poet's insight and powers of attention in order to



PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 67

weave the inner world of soul and creativity with the outer world of form and matter. The meeting of those two worlds form the very heart of this book.”

Whyte uses poem excerpts throughout the book as a sort of magnifying glass, looking at the experience of creativity and soul growth through the lens of such poets as Rilke, Goethe, Synder, Machado, Eliot, Williams, Frost, and others, including himself. *Beowulf*, entering the lake of the unknown, where one might very well be devoured, but from which one may emerge into the greater life, has a chapter of its own and weaves its way throughout the book. If high school and college English Literature courses would incorporate these insights into the study of *Beowulf*, young people who become poets or corporate employees would be much the richer.

Two chapters use fire as an image of the alchemical refining needed to live from the creative, and to speak from creative courage in the workplace. The book as a whole is enriched with Whyte’s personal experiences from which he draws principles about living from the center, from the creative and renewing depths. In the chapter on speaking up, “Fire in the Voice,” he relates his experience working with missionary sisters on furlough, women who had returned completely exhausted from their work serving the poor in such places as Peru, Indonesia, and India. Their particular order did not have a tradition of inwardness, of contemplation or meditation. A woman from the Poor Clare order, with its rich heritage of silence and contemplation, was working in the kitchen, serving the missionaries. With immense compassion, the Poor

Clare sister did her work and carried her inwardness. Whyte writes, “Witnessing her profound spiritual presence, I couldn’t help but think that here was a woman who would never burn out, no matter how much she applied herself to the outer world. She had an inexhaustible inner light that would endure through the direst of circumstances. She had come to that light through the ability to say no to everything except the thing most precious to her, an inner focus based on her personal spirituality and the religious life to which she had given herself. Out of those years of saying no, blossomed a magnificent yes, magnificent because she would be nourishing much more than the physical health of those she would care for—a yes that could be followed fully because after all those years gathering her psyche into one single body of faith, every part of her would be uttering it. “Yes!”

Later chapters deal with the importance of innocence and experience, the soul at midlife, and complexity: “Facing What is Sweet and What is Terrible” The final chapter, “The Soul of the World: Toward an Ecological Imagination” points beyond the individual to the greater soul of the world, and the need for an awareness of the cycles of life. Whyte calls workers to quit hiding their depths. “Preserving the soul means that we come out of hiding at last and bring more of ourselves into the workplace. Especially the parts that do not ‘belong’ to the company.” He concludes, “With a little more care, a little more courage, and, above all, a little more soul, our lives can be so easily discovered and celebrated in work, and not, as now, squandered and lost in its shadow.”

For the paperback edition,

Whyte has added a helpful user’s guide to discussion and contemplation, offering thought-provoking questions that relate to each chapter.

Whyte says he wanted to write a “page turner,” and surprisingly, given the depth of the subject, succeeded admirably. In fact, I have a hunch many will turn these pages more than once. •

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from V5N5 P73

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- LEGACY—Ali Akbar Khan—*Triloka Records*
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- SPIRITLANDS—John Huling—*Novox Music*
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EVOCATIVE

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- ANGELS EMBRACE—Jon Anderson—*Higher Octave*
- ASCENSION—Dean Evenson—*Soundings of the Planet*
- CANYONS OF LIGHT—Zazen—*Miramar*
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—Hazrat Inayat Khan

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- IN THE HEART OF THE WORLD—Pamela Polland—*Ivory Moon Recordings*
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- TRANSCENDENCE—Tulku—*Triloka Records*
- WINDS OF WARNING—Adam Plack & Johnny Soames—*Australian Music International*

Inner Peace

Continued from page 51

of our capabilities.

The spiritual path is twofold. We achieve inner enlightenment and peace for ourselves. Then, we use our talents and skills and the gift of our human life to make the world a better place, a more peaceful place. If we are a doctor, we should be the best possible doctor. If we are a carpenter, we should be the best carpenter. If we are a musician, we should be the best musician we can. In this way, we make improvements in our society and make life better for all around us. By developing our inner and our outer life, we will become complete human beings. We will find fulfillment and peace for ourselves and help others achieve it as well.

We may not be able to change our life or eliminate its problems, but through meditation we can look at it differently. Through meditation, we can face life because we understand it better. We have the knowledge to help us face up to what happens to us with strength. We will have gained the inner peace that comes from spiritual consciousness. And we will be a source of peace to all around us.

It is my hope and prayer that each one of you experiences this inner peace and in this way contributes to the peace of the world. •

From "Inner and Outer Peace through Meditation," by Rajinder Singh.

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Woman Gathering

Ethical Choices

Continued from page 44

choosing to tell the truth. The opposite is also true. As M. Scott Peck writes in *People of the Lie*, the more lies we tell, the closer we move toward embodying our lies. Each lie becomes the delight of the dragon of fear who feasts on each morsel in anticipation of the entree of our whole being.

Sometimes, in the midst of often frantic and complex professional decisions, it is difficult to distinguish between solid facts and the apparent realities created by a high-pressure environment. Here, the body itself is one of our greatest aids. The body is a sensor of what is true, and what is not. Because we can easily deceive ourselves in our minds, the body becomes the filter for discerning the truth. If, for example, I begin saying something that I know is

not grounded in fact, my throat clogs up, and I find it necessary to clear my throat repeatedly. Questioned by an audience, speakers offering answers that are half-lies awkwardly give themselves away. Eyes roll, hands fidget, voices quiver, and feet pace. The body rebels when the brain tries to drag it into doing something without the body's permission. This is a basic lesson that a wise and seasoned poker player learns early.

Truth is the basic currency of human social relations. It is what stabilizes society, and what allows for its existence. Consider this: if lying were the standard behavior in a society, all knowledge would have to be self-acquired. No one could trust what was learned from another. Economics, as we know it, could not function. Imagine if you couldn't trust your supplier's delivery promise, or your floor manager's assurance that your product would be ready for shipment within the week. Truthfulness is the lifeblood of the corporation; it forms the final cornerstone—alongside thinking positively and acting ethically—in choosing the right path. •

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Breitenbush
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from V5N2 P84

Sancta Sophia
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Transformation

Continued from page 20

vive. The hardest truths I had to swallow were that I felt alone and abandoned in this foreign country, that I had given up on life for many years, that I adopted a philosophy of life with no worldly aspirations, no loves, no causes to fight for, nothing, just a vapid, dreary waiting game for death to appear and for me to see where my next birth, if any, would be.

Self-honesty helped me to know my fears, physical ailments, loneliness, and alienation, and forced me to make the necessary changes. Meditation gave me the peace and clarity of mind to transform inwardly, rather than temporarily transcending the limits of the ordinary mind. Meditation helped me to accept and love all that my inner world reveals.

We may begin by seeking forms of meditation that offer realizations and enlightenments, passionately devote ourselves to the pursuits our teachers find worthy, all the while forgetting that beginning human is also ending human. All through our spiritual path in life, being honest with ourselves is our greatest ally and strongest weapon against the illusions and escapes that so often arise. •

Jason Siff is a former Theravada Buddhist monk who teaches Vipassana Meditation in Southern California. He is a founder of the Skillful Meditation Project in Los Angeles, which publishes a free newsletter on meditation. He can be reached at (213)223-2470.

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Inner trek/Chicken Soup

Conscious Notes

Continued from page 11

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Once we are confident that we are investing in companies congruent with our spiritual beliefs, the other action we can take is to adopt a long-term view toward these companies' profitability. Rather than looking for increased earnings every quarter, and selling our stock if it doesn't happen, we can give these companies time for their far-sighted approaches to reap rewards. Or better yet, we can support them because we believe in what they are doing, not just for the financial returns.

Each of us, alone, is only a sin-

gle consumer; but together, we are millions strong. What impact do we want to have on the larger system? Do we want to abdicate our right to choose, or do we want to consciously support companies striving for humanistic, sustainable values? By being aware of the impact of our decisions and using our financial resources to contribute to companies that make the world a better place, we can make a difference in bringing spirit to a material world. •

Prosperity

Continued from page 56

To summarize: The basic principle of working with the heart chakra is to create a palpable circuit of giving and receiving. The heart center, the fourth chakra, is itself the fulcrum and can trans-

mute our energies on its own. We need not manipulate, scheme, or even plan. It is enough to open the heart to the edge of risk, to allow the pain, the envy, or whatever other emotions might be present to surface. Letting go of a preconceived outcome, our destiny appears. In this way, seemingly negative situations become meetings with destiny; illness and bankruptcy become doors that we walk through to move into a greater reality. As the spasms of non-alignment subside and the intellect settles in its rightful place, we can move more easily with our heart's desire. Rebirth means living the life of the heart. •

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New World Library



Commitment

S W A M I C H E T A N A N A N D A

If we truly want to have a more extraordinary life, then we must find a more extraordinary place within ourselves to live from. The choice is ours, and it is up to us to make it happen. Although some people may try to sell the easy spiritual trip, there are no angels that are going to come down and wave a magic wand over us, and presto, we're somebody else. All that sort of thing is delusion.

It takes real commitment to walk through the experience of total transformation. The basic practice may be simple, but it is not easy. It takes work, work, and more work; it takes practice, practice, and more practice.

We start exactly where we are and work from there. The more we practice and find it works, the deeper our commitment will become. This process sets up a powerful self-reinforcing mechanism that allows us to have real intensity and passion for our practice.

Ultimately, such a deep commitment is like a center of gravity within us: it keeps us firmly grounded in the work we need to do to be transformed; it allows us to use that work as a lever to lift ourselves above the tensions in our lives over and over again; it is the base from which we can become truly expansive. •

From "The Open Moment," by Swami Chetanananda. Copyright 1995 by Swami Chetanananda. Printed with permission from Rudra Press. Swami Chetanananda's philosophical reflections grow out of years of study, teaching, practice, and experience. Chetanananda is abbot of the Nityananda Institute, a spiritual community based in Portland, Oregon. He is the author of "The Breath of God," "The Logic of Love," "Songs from the Center of the Well," and "Dynamic Stillness."

IMAGE: BANE/FRANK WHITNEY