



ANNIVERSARY 1999

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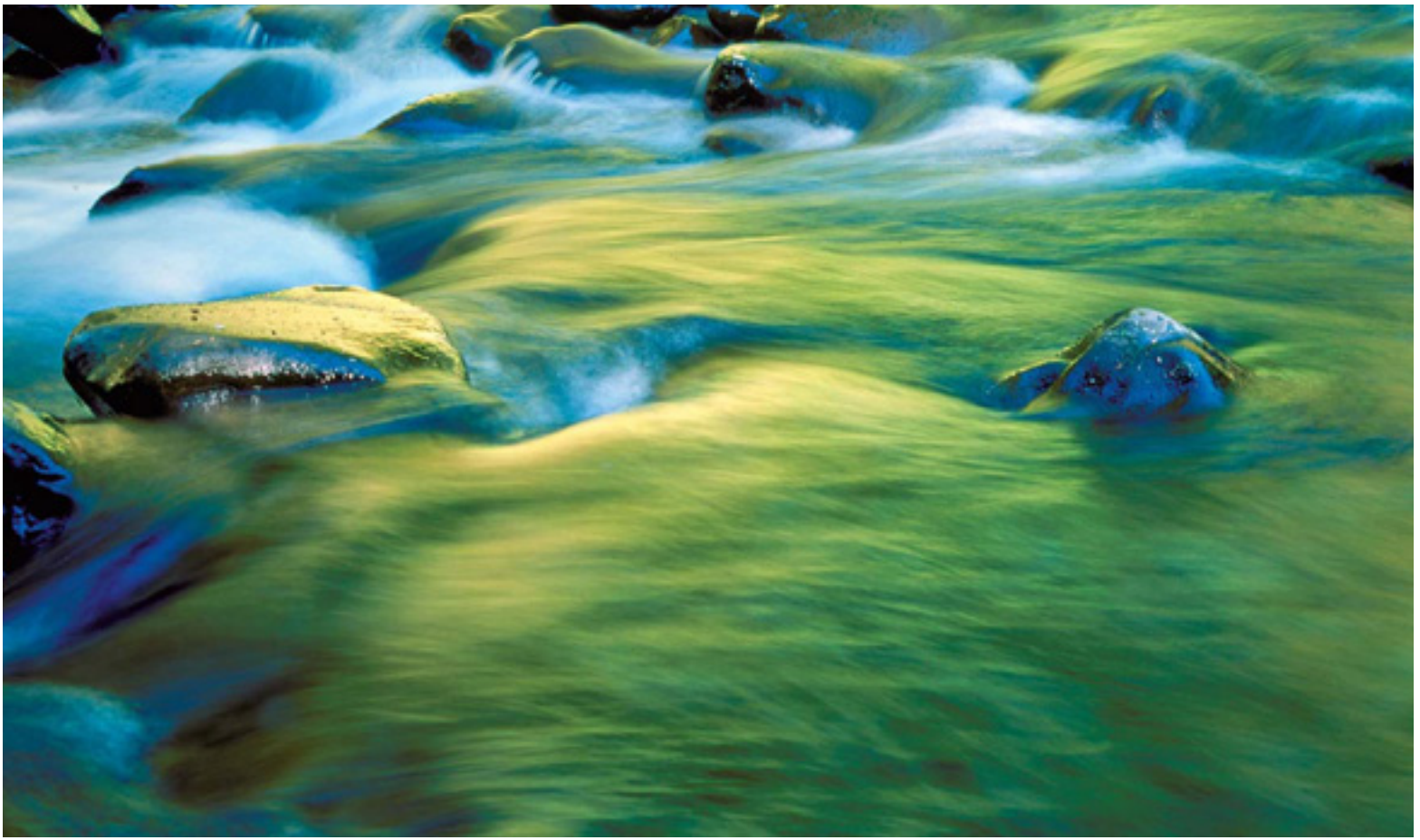
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To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to have played and laughed with enthusiasm and sung with exultation; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived, this is to have succeeded.—Ralph Waldo Emerson

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From the Publisher



By its very nature, life is an on-going transformation. As we grow from infant to adult our body and mind experience profound changes. Up to a certain level of matu-

riety transformation naturally occurs, regardless of our strategies or efforts to resist. Beyond that level of maturation, transformation may continue, but it requires conscious effort.

Personal transformation, in its higher aspects, is more than individual happiness or individual enlightenment. It's about becoming open to the evolutionary impulse within life itself, reaching full maturation, and becoming whole. In its simpler aspects, personal transformation is about learning to live life fully. It's about reclaiming our lives in ways that bring renewed meaning, energy and happiness to ourselves and others.


In a transformational life, we gradually learn how to truly live. We find what we are called to do and how to access our inner fire and joy. In the process of maturing, aspects of ourselves and our life-styles that no longer serve our life are discarded. As we tap into our real selves—living our deepest values and ideals—we become connected with all of life.

To transform ourselves, we must become conscious of who we are. We develop self-awareness, as this awareness helps us to merge with our essential nature. We discover and make conscious our unconscious, so we don't unconsciously sabotage our efforts. In transforming our lives, we reclaim our unowned parts, discovering our social, mental, and emotional imprinting.

Transformation frees us from our own internal resistance, from the confines of our self-imposed constraints, enabling us to make radical shifts in the way we live. Over time, it aligns our body, heart, and mind with our deeper spiritual nature, which gives us freedom from old, habituated living. With this freedom, we move closer to our highest self, essence, soul or "god self."

This is how we become the grand men and women we are meant to be. We on-goingly rebirth ourselves. Who we were yesteryear and who we are today die, so that we may breathe life into the possibilities of who we are becoming. We literally forsake old beliefs, visions, and experiences of who we were, so that we may be molded into ever finer expressions of our life essence.

Welcome to *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*.


Rick NurrieStearns
Publisher

Personal Transformation

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From the Editor

The greater danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it.—Michelangelo

Those of you who are former subscribers to *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* magazine are aware that there was a six-month interruption in publication. During the interim, the magazine went through the fires of transformation. That the magazine arose again is in part due to your support. Your letters and donations gave us the courage to endure the heat. Your support kept alive our belief that the magazine contributes to the transformation of its readers.

During these past months we have reworked the magazine, and it has come through the process with the essential part intact. What remains is the heart of the matter—inspirational and informative material to uphold you as you undergo transformation. The magazine has taken new form, one more fitting its mission. To make insights more accessible we have added two new features—one in which experts answer reader questions and another in which readers share insights on a given aspect of transformation.

The transformative process is not always easy. These months have been a time of soul-searching that took us to our depths. Out of that came a deeper understanding about what transformation is. Rick and I know, even more keenly, that there is help along the way. We know that wisdom emerges from the depths of our being. One realization was that there is no personal transformation without social transformation. At the very least, our loved ones benefit when we mature. However, transformation is not just for our sake. We are here to follow the course that the impulse of life prepares for us, if we just listen. This path involves service for the greater welfare of mankind. To honor this, the magazine now highlights people who dedicate their lives for the betterment of humanity in a feature called Compas-



sion in Action. Individuals profiled in each issue model the potential in us to live according to our highest ideals.

This has been an era of dying and new life. Renewed in us was the faith to follow the impulses that pull at our hearts. We are acting on our sense that

this is what life is calling us to do. This issue of *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* magazine has taken form; the next one is close behind, as is the issue after that.

Gone is the belief that we need to know the direction this work will take down the road. We don't know the future. None of us do, for the future is always uncertain. The future arrives one step following another, a day at a time. All we can do is take those steps that make the most sense, that seem guided by a more knowing intelligence, trusting that the next steps will be revealed when their time is here.

In the quote from Michelangelo, he urges us to aim high, which means to follow our highest aspirations. Had he not done so, the painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel would not be what it is. We can never know if we will reach our aim, but we may. We begin by committing to follow our inspiration and taking initial steps. All we have to do is keep listening and taking action. The rest is not up to us. The yearning that sparks our effort comes from a powerful and knowing source. Putting our faith in that source, success is ours, because no matter what the outcome, we are following the pulse of creation's heartbeat.

Let us follow the yearnings of our hearts.

Mary NurrieStearns

Mary NurrieStearns
Editor

Personal Transformation Contributors

THE DALAI LAMA



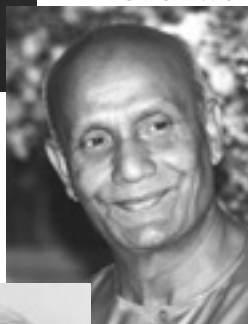
HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA and **HOWARD CUTLER, M.D.** Tenzin Gyatso, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, is the spiritual and temporal leader of the Tibetan people. His efforts on behalf of human rights and world peace have brought him international recognition. He has received the Wallenberg Award, conferred by the U.S. Congressional Human Rights Foundation, the Albert Schweitzer Award and the Nobel Peace Prize. **HOWARD CUTLER** is a diplomat of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. He met the Dalai Lama in 1982 while visiting India on a research grant to study Tibetan medicine. He has a private psychiatric practice in Phoenix, Arizona.

THICH NHAT HANH is a Vietnamese Buddhist monk, poet, peacemaker, and author. He is the founder of Van Hanh Buddhist University in Saigon and has taught at Columbia University and the Sorbonne. He served as chair of the Buddhist Delegation to the Vietnam War and was nominated by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., for the Nobel Peace Prize. His 35 books include *Living Buddha Living Christ*, *Old Path White Clouds*, and *Being Peace*. He lives in France, where he heads the monastic community known as Plum Village. Since the early 1980s, he has come to North America regularly to lecture and give retreats on the art of mindful living.

JIM ROSEMERGY is the Executive Vice President of the Unity School of Christianity, as well as an ordained Unity minister. He is the author of ten books on spiritual liv-

ing, including *Daily Guide to Spiritual Living*, *Closer Walk with God* and his most recent book, *The Transcendent Life*, an exploration of the nature of true power and humility. He lives with his wife in Lee Summit, Missouri.

SRI CHINMOY



SRI CHINMOY is a poet, artist, composer, author, and international emissary for peace. He conducts twice-weekly peace meditations at the United Nations and operates more than one hundred peace meditation centers worldwide. Born in India, he currently lives in Queens, New York.



JIM ROSEMERGY

DAVID ELKINS, PH.D. is a clinical psychologist and professor of psychology in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. A former minister, he is also a published poet. He is the author of *Beyond Religion*, which is reviewed on page 62.



DAVID ELKINS

ROBERT RABBIN



ROBERT RABBIN is an author, consultant and speaker who began to research the world's mystic traditions in 1969. Since 1985, Rabbín has focused on spirituality in the workplace, leading seminars and retreats, and as an executive advisor to a broad range of companies and organizations. He is the author of *The Sacred Hub*, co-author of *The Values Workbook*, and has published many articles on spirituality and leadership.



THICH NHAT HANH

DAVID SPANGLER is the author of *Revelation: The Birth of the New Age*; *Emergence: The Rebirth of the Sacred*; and *Everyday Miracles*; and co-author of *Reimagination of the World*. He has been a codirector and spokesman for the Findhorn Community in northern Scotland and has taught at the University of Wisconsin. He lives near Seattle with his wife and their four children.

ASK THE EXPERTS

IN THIS ISSUE:

Your transformation questions answered by leaders in the movement.



BERNIE SIEGEL M.D.,
how to talk to
dying loved ones.



**KATHLYN HENDRICKS
PH.D., GAY HENDRICKS,
PH.D.,** discovering un-
conscious intentions.



SWAMI CHETANANDA,
is it from ego or
some higher motive?



SHAKTI GAWAIN,
healing emotional
wounds.



**CHARLES WHITFIELD
M.D.,** overcoming
trauma and grief.

Terminal Cancer

“My mother has terminal cancer and doesn’t want to talk about it. How can I make our last months together the best they can be?”

Dr. Bernie Siegel: There are many issues here. Number one, I would say that the fact that the mother doesn’t want to talk about it is the mother’s right and option. It’s not about whether that’s the healthiest approach of all, because it isn’t in the sense of what it may do for the mother to keep it in and try to deny it or not discuss it because she thinks she’s doing the daughter a favor.

What your mother needs is love. She doesn’t need advice. If you just come in and say, “How are you feeling, what’s going on in your mind, what are you thinking about?” what you’re saying to your mother is you are willing to hear whatever her answer is. So, if you come in and say, “Mom, what are you thinking about?” and she says, “Well, isn’t it a lovely day,” she’s saying to you that she doesn’t want to talk about her illness.

You can also walk in and sit down with your mother and say, “Hey, mom, I’ve got a problem.” This may sound crazy, but you’d be amazed at just how much more meaningful it now makes your mother’s life if you walk in and say, “I’m not feeling well, I’m having a problem,” and Mama will sit down and will feel useful by saying, “This is what you ought to do, honey.” It’s also okay to go to your mother and say, “I’m going to miss you,” and cry about it.

Last but not least, tell stories, tell her to make a tape, write notes to leave some history. And again, if she wants to do it, fine. If she doesn’t, or says, “I’m too tired or I need to take a nap now,” okay. But, what you may find is, the next time you come back, she’ll have more stories to tell.

People call me and say, “What should I do? My mother is dying.” What do you feel like doing? Get out of your head and into your heart. My mother’s comment that I grew up on, is, “What would make you happy?” If it’ll make you happy to be with your mother, then get on a plane and go there! If you want to sit at her side 24 hours a day, then do it. But also remember that you have a life, too, so it’s okay to say to your mother, “I’ll be over later, I have to go shopping” or “The plumber is coming, I have to go to work.” Whatever it is. Let it come from your heart and your mother will understand. If your mother knows she’s loved, the love is there whether you are or not.

I’d say talk about your life, your past, what you’re sorry for, happy about, need forgiveness for, and just resolve it all, and when you do that, the death, the parting, is really peaceful. Tears are appropriate when you lose your mother or the mother leaves a child, but if you know you’ve done what you’ve come here for, which is to create love, and if you need to say you’re sorry for something, then say it. Then, the forgiveness is there and there’s peace in all that happens.

If you think your mother is hanging onto life just for you, what you need to do is go in to your mother and say, “Mom, if you’re tired and you need to go, it’s okay. All of your children will be fine, your love will stay with us.” Literally, many mothers choose to die when their children aren’t in the room so that it’s less trouble for the children.

Try to remember that the best part of a person stays, and stays forever. You’ll see them in the houses and the trees, all the things that are here for love and out of love. Love is immortal and makes all things

immortal. There's a land of the living and a land of the dead, and the bridge is love.

So just be there for your mother, hold her hand; it's your presence that means so much. It says I love you and I care for you. You really don't have to say anything, it's just that you're there. If you show love, then that person's life is meaningful. That's what's important.

I'm a nice person, but grumpy.

"Even though I start out the day with good intentions to be kind to others, I find myself being grumpy and grouchy when others approach me. I really am a nice person. What can I do to get out of this destructive rut?"

Gay Hendricks, Ph.D. & Kathlyn Hendricks, Ph.D.: This is a very important question, and we believe its answer reveals one of the most important psychospiritual lessons we human beings need to master.

The key is the phrase "good intentions." When you're in any life situation, you have conscious intentions—ones you know about—and you also have unconscious intentions—ones you don't know about. Unconscious intentions usually speak louder than conscious ones, at least until we make them conscious. If Bill Clinton has a conscious intention to be a good president, he also has unconscious intentions to get caught, look stupid and draw negative attention toward his sexual energy. If he's smart, he'll acknowledge his unconscious intentions as part of his healing process. One of our therapy clients—a powerful woman who's written books, made millions and done great philanthropic work—also had an unconscious intention to punish herself. How did she figure this out? She brought up the fact that she'd had over twenty auto accidents in her life, and none of them had injured anyone but herself! That's a statistical miracle in itself, but we asked her, "What would you say the intentions are of a person with that experience?" Immediately she realized that she tended to have an accident when things were going well, or just after a big success. Success conflicted with her ancient feelings of unworthiness and unloveability, so when she had a break—"through" she immediately needed to create a break—"down." This was her way of punishing herself. A beautiful thing happened after she acknowledged her unconscious intention to punish herself—she stopped having auto accidents. Unconscious intentions evaporate

in the light of awareness. Often, all you have to do is look at them unflinchingly for a moment, and they dissolve into space.

This may sound simple, but it's one of the toughest things in the world. Acknowledging our unconscious intentions is one of the fastest paths to spiritual growth. It's so powerful and quick that we often fear it deeply. Our egos hold onto to the idea that we have "good intentions," and so to protect our egos we refuse to look at the obvious "bad" intentions we have. The best way to study unconscious commitments is through studying the results we complain about. So, if you complain that you don't have enough money, simply say "I'm committed to not having enough money and to complaining about it." This keeps life simple.

So, if "I find myself grouchy and grumpy when others approach me," acknowledge your unconscious commitment to being grouchy, grumpy and to distancing yourself from others. Inquire into where you may have gotten such a commitment established, learn from it, wonder about it. You may find that you un-grump yourself immediately and become that nice person you want to be.

Higher Self or Ego.

"How do we know if the motivation for what we do comes from ego or something higher? For example, if we help someone else, how do we know if we are guided by the desire to be needed or approved of or, as an expression of love and compassion? And does the source of motivation matter?"

Swami Chetanananda: Generally speaking, you don't know on the front side whether you are acting from ego or from some higher motive. As long as you are doing good work, you will learn in the process what is ego and what is true service. You will grow from this experience. The best test of motivation is how freely you give. Ask yourself whether you are giving without strings attached to your good work. Ask yourself what you expect in return. If you serve when you are called upon to do so, and you give freely and without strings attached, you are on the right track.

Is this as good as it gets?

"I have been a spiritual seeker for years. I journal, meditate, maintain a healthy diet, exercise, work a decent job, etc., yet periodically I fall into agonizing depression. Is there a way out of this cycle or is this as good as it gets?"

Shakti Gawain: As human beings we all have four important aspects to our lives—the spiritual, the mental, the emotional, and the physical. In order to experience wholeness and fulfillment in life we need to develop and express all four of these aspects in a fairly balanced way. We need to have some type of spiritual practice that helps us stay connected to our soul. We need to examine our ideas, letting go of old beliefs that no longer serve us and opening to new ones that support our growth and development. We need to heal our old emotional wounds, and learn how to experience and communicate our feelings and needs. We need to care for our physical bodies, and learn how to provide for ourselves on the material plane.

It sounds like you are taking good care of yourself on the spiritual, mental, and physical levels, which is wonderful. Your depression is letting you know that there is deeper healing work for you to do on the emotional level. This is not unusual; most of us have many layers of emotional healing work to do at various times in our lives.

Many people who are highly developed spiritually and mentally think they don't have to do psychological work as well. They assume their spiritual practice will take care of it all. This is simply not true. While spiritual and emotional development are certainly linked, they require different kinds of work. Unfortunately, oftentimes our mental and spiritual ideas may be used as another way of denying our feeling.

Depression can be a complex problem, and there may be contributing genetic or biological factors. However, my experience is that depression is primarily rooted in the emotional level. It usually

Eupsychia Institute Liberating Psyche...



Richard Moss

"What is it that allows me to touch my own experience in faith?"

Richard Moss, author of *The Second Miracle*, *The Black Butterfly* and *The I That is We*, addresses the fundamental necessity for practical spirituality, spirituality that enhances our capacity for conscious relationships, relationships that teach us how to shift from suffering and avoidance to openness and joyousness. His teaching skillfully integrates meditation, energy work, dream work, body consciousness and self-inquiry, awakening each participant to a relationship to truth and to the transformative grace of life's intelligence.

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Compassion in Action

Millard Fuller

FOUNDER OF HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

BY MELISSA WEST

In 1996 President Bill Clinton awarded Millard Fuller, the founder and president of Habitat for Humanity International, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor. President Clinton said Habitat for Humanity is "the most successful continuous community service project in the history of the United States. It has revolutionized the lives of thousands... Millard Fuller has done as much to make the dream of homeownership a reality in our country and throughout the world as any living person."

Millard Fuller didn't start out in a life of service. "I come from the cotton mill town of Lannet, Alabama. My family sure wasn't rich when I was growing up, but I didn't know deprivation, hunger, bad housing. My daddy, though, came from real deprivation, a dirt poor sharecropper family."

Fuller used his entrepreneurial drive to begin a successful marketing firm while in law school. A millionaire by 29, he found himself rich financially but poverty-stricken in soul as his health, integrity and marriage suffered. Fuller did some serious soul-searching, reconciled with his wife, and renewed his commitment to his Christian faith and values. He and his wife, Linda, abandoned their affluent lifestyle, selling all they owned and giving the money to the poor. "We made a decision to fundamentally change our lives and went on a pilgrimage to see what God wanted us to do with our lives," recalls Fuller. "We wanted to do something that



made a difference in the world rather than just piling up money. We didn't know what that meant, but we were willing to ask, and look, and listen."

Millard and Linda Fuller ended up moving to Koinonia Farm in Americus, Georgia, a Christian community where people were looking for practical ways to serve others as an outgrowth of their faith. "It was there with Clarence Jordan, the founder, that we looked around us and saw all the people in the area who didn't have good houses. There was no program that would enable them to get one, either. Well, we thought, here is a way specifically to do God's work.

"You know, you can't just kind of look up to heaven and say, 'I want to love God.' The way you serve God is by serving people—giving water to the thirsty, clothing to the naked, food to the hungry, homes to the homeless. Here we saw all these people right around us living in shacks, and we realized, right here's a real possibility to make a difference. We started by building just one house for one needy family."

The Fullers began a housing ministry, building modest homes on a no-profit, no-interest basis, making homes available to poverty-stricken families who would otherwise have no hope for a home. Each family chosen was expected to give "sweat equity" (their own labor) not only for the building of their own homes, but also with the homes of other families, thus reducing the building costs, increasing pride of ownership and fostering community. House payments—no-interest based on a Biblical passage that enjoined creditors from charging interest to the poor—were placed in a fund which enabled the building of even more homes.

In 1973 Fuller, his wife, and their four children

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 17

“Habitat is about a whole lot more than houses. This work brings people together in community and transforms them spiritually. The health of people improves when they get in a Habitat house; the safety and community of whole neighborhoods flourish. Habitat for Humanity, and everyone who works for Habitat, do a whole lot more than just build houses. They change lives.”

moved to Zaire for three years to test the model overseas. It was a success, and in 1976 Fuller and his associates created Habitat for Humanity International. Since then, the Fullers have devoted their time and attention to Habitat for Humanity International’s expansion throughout the world.

The need for decent, affordable housing worldwide is staggering. Twenty five percent of the world’s population—1.43 billion people—live in either substandard housing or are homeless. “The needs are tremendous, astronomical,” says Fuller. “I deal with all the suffering by remembering that God has assured me that with God all things are possible. I can’t do it by myself; I’m a little human being made up of a bunch of chemicals and a lot of water. By myself I am so insignificant, but if I tie in to that source of spiritual power which is available to me, then I become a potent force in the world.”

Habitat for Humanity has become that potent force. Since 1976 volunteers and families have built more than 70,000 homes around the world in 61 countries, providing more than 300,000 people with safe and affordable shelter. Habitat for Humanity is now building a house somewhere in the world every 45 minutes.

Habitat for Humanity International seeks to eliminate homelessness and poverty housing from the world, and invites people from all walks of life to work together to make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. They work in partnership with individual volunteers, churches, synagogues, community organizations, and the new homeowner families, to build houses and hope worldwide.

Habitat for Humanity International is a grass-

roots movement, depending heavily upon its volunteers. Fuller considers service absolutely essential to a happy and fulfilled life. “To give is to live,” Fuller asserts. “A self-centered life is a self-destroying life. The most miserable people I’ve ever known are self-centered people. The most exciting, dynamic, and alive people I’ve met are givers. They give, not just their money, but themselves. When you give, you live. Think about it: everything in your life is going to be taken away from you except one thing—what you’ve given away. That can never be taken away from you, not by death, not by a bad business deal. Everything you have will eventually be taken from you—health, money, everything—except what you’ve given away.”

Jimmy Carter, perhaps Habitat’s most famous volunteer, has built homes for Habitat since 1994. “Millard Fuller is an inspiration to all of us who have joined him as volunteers,” says the former President. “His faith and perseverance have made continual progress possible.”

“Volunteers see the world totally differently after working for Habitat,” says Fuller. “I met a young man on a speaking trip who had recently come back from Mexico. He’d been in a lot of slums. He told me he was glad he was an American and that he did not have to live like that. Well, he followed me around that weekend as I spoke in several churches and at the end of the weekend he told me, ‘You’ve totally changed my thinking. Before I heard you, I was just glad I didn’t live in Mexico. But now I want to go down there. I see those people differently now. I want to be a part of this work and be part of bringing a solution to the problem.’ He did go to

Southwestern College

work for us, for several years.

“It depends on whether you see a slum in your town as a place you want to stay as far away from as possible, with a fence around your house so ‘those people’ can’t get to you, or whether you see that section of town as your responsibility to change for the better. I’ve seen people who work for Habitat for Humanity get their attitude changed 180 degrees.”

Fuller becomes frustrated when he hears someone say they want to help relieve suffering in the world but don’t know how to start.

“Just help one person,” Fuller replies. “That’s what I did. If you can figure out how to help one person, you can figure out how to help the whole world. What stops a lot of people is they look at a problem and go, ‘Ohhhhh, I don’t know how to solve that whole problem, so I’ll just do nothing.’”

“It all starts with just one act. Americus is a town of 18,000 people; the county has another 12,000. When we started building houses here more than twenty years ago, there were hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people living in shacks. To think, when we started, that we could build everybody in this county a house so there would be no more homelessness or slums, would have seemed like an impossible dream. But by the year 2000 there will be no more substandard housing in this whole county. What seemed impossible is on the brink of happening, but we started by building only one house. You have to have a vision. The Bible says without a vision the people perish. You have a vision, and you just get started.”

When Fuller is asked what the most important thing is that he has learned in twenty years of service,

he replies, “God is love. If you want to be close to God, you’ve got to be a loving, caring person. The more you express love in what you do, the happier you’ll be. Think of Mother Theresa. Have you ever seen a happier looking person? She was so blessed because she had found her mission in life and she was joyfully going about it. Her life was love, love in action.

“To the extent that we can do the same thing, we experience fulfillment and joy in our lives. Work is love made visible; in theological terms, that’s what you call incarnation. It’s what God did through Christ: the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us. God didn’t just preach a sermon. He didn’t just talk about it. He sent his son.

“Expressing love through work is a great source of joy to me. I met a man in Zambia last January who’d just helped build his new Habitat house. A very simple and modest little house, but to him it was like a palace. He was so excited. He said to me, ‘Mr. Fuller, I’m so glad to have my Habitat house. Now I can finally sleep because termites no longer crawl in my ears at night.’ To me that was pure joy, to know that this humble man in a remote African village is now sleeping well at night for the first time in his life because of something I had the great privilege to be a part of.”

“Habitat is about a whole lot more than houses. This work brings people together in community and transforms them spiritually. The health of people improves when they get in a Habitat house; the safety and community of whole neighborhoods flourish. Habitat for Humanity, and everyone who works for Habitat, do a whole lot more than just build houses. They change lives.”•

Atlantic University v7n4p71

From the Heart

Despair, Hope and Faith

Three Companions for the Journey

J I M R O S E M E R G Y

Despair is a part of the human experience. No one escapes the sorrow it brings or its other “companions.” For instance, if we tend to blame other people for our place in life, anger will rise from the shadows of our souls and then call its companions of bitterness and resentment. Hatred may even appear. However, not all of despair’s companions are barriers to our transformation. Wherever there is despair, hope is close at hand, and wherever there is hope, faith stands in readiness prepared to build a bridge to a new way of being and living.

Despair, hope, and faith are three companions we discover when we open ourselves to transformation. Hope and faith appear related to one another as if they were birthed by the same spiritual mother. It seems despair is an unwelcomed guest in this family. This is true, for no one knowingly invites despair into his experience. But like all aspects of life, despair can be a teacher that helps to reveal the way of transformation.

It must have been this way for President Lincoln as he led the nation during its darkest hours—the Civil War that pitted brother against brother. Every casualty was American, people Mr. Lincoln had sworn to serve. He experienced despair, life without hope, and questioned if there was a way to preserve the Union. As the casualties mounted, so did his days of melancholy. However, hope was born in him not because of good news about the war, but because for just an instant he



considered the possibility of peace and harmony in the nation once again. Like us, Abraham Lincoln experienced despair, but he also came to know that hope is born in the darkest times.

As many of us know, despair can be dark and deep. It can seem to be an eternal part of our lives, but hope is always close at hand. Hope is our first look away from the problem. When despair rules the day and the night, there seems to be no way out. We wonder if this feeling of hopelessness will ever pass. It is in moments like these that hope is born. There stirs in us the possibility of an answer. We wonder if life can be different.

It is hope that first challenges despair. Hope whispers that there is an answer, this too shall pass, life can be different from this. Hope has no vision of the new life that can be, or how the problem can be solved, but it knows there is an answer.

THERE IS AN ANSWER

For many years, I met weekly with people greatly challenged by life. Their problems dashed their dreams of the way life could be. I listened to their stories and opened my heart to them. We cannot feel what another person feels, but we can experience the oneness that exists because we all know despair and the pain it brings. Time and time again, I said, “There is an answer. Today, I don’t know what it is, but I know that together we will find it.” Hundreds and hundreds of times, I saw their heads lift and their eyes begin to come alive. A resolve began to form around the four words, there is an answer. Hope was born, and it had an immediate effect upon the person.

Hope is always present because it is the beginning of the journey of transformation. It may seem to live and then to die or not to live at all, but it is eternally present. Over the course of our lives, most of us will witness the life, death, and resurrection of hope many times. It comes into being quickly, but it can just as quickly be replaced by despair. If we believe that our pain has come to stay rather than to pass, hope fades,

Hoffman Institute Hoffman Quadrinity Process

but let us consider for even a moment that life is destined to be more than it appears, and hope is born again.

Hope is needed by the human family. It keeps us going in difficult times. In fact, hope can be the only thing that keeps the hounds of despair at bay. Hope keeps us going, but it never gets us to where we want to go. This is the work of faith.

Hope is close to the human condition. It is one step removed from despair, fear, and anxiety. Faith is the bridge between hope and the answer and the new life that await us.

FAITH IN WHAT?

Faith is a natural part of us, and we have all the faith we need right now. The question is in what do we have faith? Some people have faith only in what they see. Their belief in seen things often puts hope to death as soon as it appears because they judge by appearances. Hope and faith require a different vision, one willing to entertain the possibility of an unseen answer.

We have faith in many things, and many of them are unseen and uncertain. For instance, we have faith that when a traffic light turns green for us, it is red for other motorists at the intersection. However, faith is at its best when it is placed in the spiritual realm. When we have faith in God, a bridge forms over which the answer can come, as well as the resources, strength, and courage to face the challenge before us. These three, the answer, strength, and courage, rise from within us, for this is their dwelling place. This is the wonder of faith. It does not call down a capricious God to occasionally help us in times of need. It calls forth our God-given inner resources, and

Leaderless Groups

A New Approach to Transformation

Leaderless, spiritually centered groups offer an effective community for individual transformation and are essential in society's movement toward consciousness.

Personal Transformation magazine is excited to be sponsoring training programs for therapists, healers or others who have done a lot of inner work, understand the importance of groups in personal growth and want to organize and train leaderless groups.

Steve Wolf will lead the training groups, which will meet for three weekend workshops in a year. Trainees will learn by participating in leaderless groups led by Steve. Three training groups are being organized now: one on the East Coast, one on the West Coast and one in the Midwest.

Take this opportunity to become a group leader and guide others on their transformational journey.

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when they make themselves known, we are transformed.

It is faith in God that builds a bridge to all possibilities. Often we shy away from this step of transformation because it means we have to let go of what we think the answer should be. Faith acquaints us with mystery, an integral part of life that most of us don't want to meet. We want control, to know what we are facing, and what lies ahead. However, many things are beyond our control, and who really knows what lies ahead? Life is mysterious, and it is time we stop trying to strip away the mystery because when we do, we strip away the wonder and awe that are innate to life.

Faith is not knowing what is going to happen; it means knowing that no matter what happens, we are one with God and that all the wisdom, strength and courage we need are close at hand. When we embrace the mystery and invite it into our lives, we open our souls to experience the wonder of being alive. Life that we could not possibly imagine becomes our experience. We become sensitive to spiritual forces that are always present and to answers and insights that free us from bondage.

One evening I received a telephone call from a woman I hardly knew. She was in the hospital and had had a spiritual experience. She was gravely ill, but had experienced herself as spiritually whole. She was excited and free of fear and anxiety. She anticipated a physical healing, but it did not come. She died a day later.

I have wondered about this call. Some might say she did not have enough faith. I would disagree and say that we must let go of what we think is true. Having a sense of one's spiritual wholeness is a great

gift. This is what I mean by embracing the mystery. Life is much more complex and much more simple than we know. Our determination to make it in our image does not allow faith to build the bridge to what can be.

If you have a challenge in your life now or if you are experiencing despair, first entertain the possibility that there is an answer. Allow yourself to think that this answer is so grand and wonderful that it is beyond human comprehension. Only a divine mind could reveal the next step. As you do this, you will feel the birth of hope. Hold to the idea that there is an answer, and hope will keep you going.

The next step is an act of faith. Cast aside any preconceived ideas you have about the way things must be. Remember, the answer is so grand that it is beyond your imagining. Spend some time each day in silent reflection and inner listening because spiritual forces tend to gather when hope is born, and we let go of having it our way. As you move through your daily activities, be sensitive to what you see and hear because answers will come in ways you have not known before. Notice that a peace accompanies you through the day. This is a sign that the bridge is forming. One day soon, the answer will come, but your joy will be more than the fact that you know what to do; rejoice that you have been transformed. •

Jim Rosemergy is the Executive Vice President of the Unity School of Christianity, as well as an ordained Unity minister. He is the author of ten books on spiritual living, including "Daily Guide to Spiritual Living," "Closer Walk with God" and his most recent book, "The Transcendent Life," an exploration of the nature of true power and humility. He lives with his wife in Lee Summit, Missouri.

Common Vision

V7n3p19

Pathways to Wholeness



Healing Relationships

DAVID ELKINS

Despair is deeper than normal suffering. It is the cry of the soul, a message of pain from the core of our being. True despair is not the same as clinical depression; it is not a psychological illness to be quickly cured by the latest psychiatric drug or mechanistic technique. Rather, despair is part of the human condition, a painful yet normal part of the journey. If we live long enough, we will know “dark nights of the soul,” times when despair invades and faith and hope seem far away.

Despair is often associated with the loss of connection. We human beings have this wonderful capacity to love, to connect deeply with others. But when this connection is lost, either by death or by some other severing event, we are often plunged into despair. In my work as a psychologist, I have seen many people in this condition. I remember a mother who sat in my office and cried session after session because her little girl had drowned in a backyard pool. I remember a divorced couple weeping together because their teenage son, whom they both loved more than life itself, had suddenly died. I recall a woman in her late twenties, her young daughter sitting beside her, telling me how much she missed her husband who had been killed in a plane crash—and how much her daughter missed her daddy. Despair is real and it descends upon us when we lose those we love.

I have also seen another kind of despair, one that invades life not because we have lost our connection with someone else but because we have lost contact with our own soul. This despair is very real and often

goes unrecognized. The soul suffers when it is not cared for, when we forget to nourish it with love, goodness, truth, and beauty. When we neglect the soul, it begins to wither and die. And when the soul dies, despair is the inevitable result.

A good, caring psychotherapist can often help when we are in despair—not because therapists have a “magic pill” or can always take away the pain—but because when we are in despair we need another human being to bear witness to our despair, to honor it, to walk with us through the darkness, and to help us find the strength to carry on. Psychotherapy, when characterized by a deep appreciation of the spiritual dimension, can address the pain and suffering of the soul. In the Greek language the word “psyche” means “soul,” and the word “therapist” originally meant a “servant” or “attendant.” Thus the word “psychotherapist” literally means “a servant or attendant of the soul.” At its best, psychotherapy is the process by which we assuage the pain of despair by learning to reconnect with our souls.

But to reconnect with our souls and to learn how to nurture and heal at that level, we must find paths to the soul, ways to access this inner dimension of our being. Fortunately, humans have been accessing and caring for the soul for thousands of years, and this makes our task easier. I would like to suggest some paths to the soul that can be used in therapy.

First: the therapist’s relationship with the client is a primary route to the soul. We have known for many years that the quality of the relationship is a crucial factor in therapeutic healing. Irvin Yalom, a psychiatrist at Stanford Medical Center, said there are literally hundreds of research studies showing that the quality of the therapeutic relationship is significantly related to therapeutic outcome. He said the most important lesson the psychotherapist must learn is that “it is the relationship that heals.”

But what does it mean that the relationship heals? I believe this is another way of saying that the therapist nurtures the client’s soul and through this nurturing the

client is healed. Love is the most powerful healer of the wounded soul, and in the therapeutic relationship love manifests as empathy, caring, warmth, respect, honesty, and acceptance of the client. The presence of these factors turns therapy into a container for soul-making. They make soul-to-soul contact possible, and they heal because they soothe and nurture the client's soul. If loss of connection is at the heart of despair, then it becomes clear as to why psychotherapy can sometimes help. In psychotherapy reconnection often begins to take place. The client and therapist connect as two human beings and the client begins to reconnect with his or her own soul.

This has implications for the therapist. I can only be a healer of the soul when I am in contact with my own soul. We can touch the other only as deeply as the place from which we come within ourselves. If I reach out to my client from a shallow place within myself, I will not be able to make contact with the soul of my client. But if I am familiar with the regions of my soul and can readily access this dimension of my healing, I will be able to make contact with my client at a more profound level and foster a relationship in which healing of the soul becomes possible. As Paul Tillich said, "Depth speaks to depth."

Second: The therapeutic relationship is important, but it is also important that the client sees therapy not simply as a situation where people come to have their souls nurtured by someone else. Psychotherapy is an apprenticeship in which clients learn how to care for their own souls. The client should be shown that there are countless activities and experiences that feed the soul. In fact, almost anything

Wisdom Publications

Innerworks, V7n4p26

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that touches, stirs, or speaks to our depths has this capacity. Literature, poetry, music, paintings, sculptures, movies, plays, dance, religion, nature, and the creative process are all potential sources of soul-nurturing.

Like a shaman carefully choosing roots and herbs for a ritual healing, the therapist must help each client find those things in life that nurture and heal his or her

soul. It is extremely important that the therapist realizes that what nurtures the soul differs dramatically from person to person and avoids falling into the elitist assumption that only classical music, art, literature, and so forth can nurture the soul. While some clients may find Mozart, Beethoven, Van Gogh, or Rilke wonderful sources of soul food, for others a country song by Willie Nelson or Garth Brooks

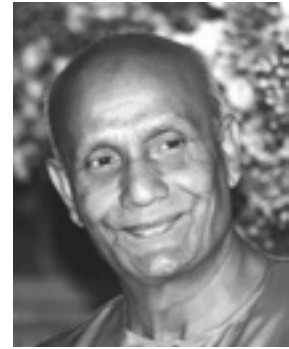
may go straight to the soul. A hike in the mountains or a camping trip to the desert may nurture the soul of another client who would find art galleries and operas a bore. So if we wish to help our clients nurture and heal their souls, we must first help them discover the activities and experiences that truly meet the needs of their own unique soul.

It is also important for the client to begin a regular, consistent program of engaging in these soul-nurturing activities and experiences. For one person this may mean taking regular walks on the beach or along the river; for another it may mean collecting poems or making a tape of all the songs which touch him or her most deeply; for still another it may mean going to the theater more regularly. A few years ago I had a client who went to see *Phantom of the Opera* and then wept in my office as she told me how profoundly the story and the music had touched her soul. A few years ago when I was going through a difficult time in my own life, I happened to see the movie *Dead Poets Society*. The film's existential themes touched my soul and gave me a new perspective. I know a woman who loves Beethoven's music and once got through a painful depression by playing his works over and over. She says the music is what sustained her. I know an older colleague who holds two doctorates, one in psychology and one in literature. For years he has helped clients in mental hospitals nurture and heal their souls by encouraging them to write and share poems with one another in therapy groups. A few years ago I had a client who was in great pain and was feeling somewhat suicidal. When I asked her what she felt would help, she said to get away by

New World V7N3P35

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Transformational Practices



The Gift of Meditation

SRI CHINMOY

Meditation is a divine gift. Meditation simplifies our outer life and energizes our inner life. Meditation gives us a natural and spontaneous life, a life that becomes so natural and spontaneous that we cannot breathe without being conscious of our own divinity.

The difference between prayer and meditation is this: when we pray, we feel that our existence is a one-pointed flame soaring upward. The very nature of prayer is to reach God by going up. When we meditate, we throw ourselves into a vast expanse, into an infinite sea of peace and bliss, or we welcome the infinite Vast into us.

Prayer and meditation are like the obverse and reverse of the same coin. Both are most effective. When I pray, I talk and God listens. When I meditate, God talks and I listen. When we pray, we go up to God; when we meditate, God comes down to us. Ultimately, they are the same. We have to know, however, that when we pray, we feel that we as individuals are separated from God. We feel that He is somewhere and that we are somewhere else. We are looking up at Him and crying to Him, but we do not know when or to what extent God is going to fulfill our prayers. Meditation says, "God is not blind or deaf! He knows what He has to do to fulfill Himself in and through me. Let me remain in soulful silence." The highest prayer was uttered by the Savior Christ: "Let thy will be done."

This prayer is also the beginning of meditation. Where prayer stops its journey, meditation begins.

Meditation is like going to the bottom of the sea, where everything is calm and tranquil. On the surface of the sea there may be a multitude of waves, but the sea is not affected below. In its deepest depths, the sea is all silence. When we start meditating, first we try to reach our own inner existence, our true existence, that is to say, the bottom of the sea. Then, when the waves come from the outside world, we are not affected. Fear, doubt, worry, and all the earthly turmoils just wash away, because inside us is solid peace. Thoughts cannot touch us, because our mind is all peace, all silence, all oneness. Like fish in the sea, they jump and swim but leave no mark. When we are in our highest meditation, we feel we are the sea, and the animals in the sea cannot affect us. We feel we are the sky, and all the birds flying past cannot affect us. Our mind is the sky and our heart is the infinite sea. This is meditation.

When you meditate at home, set aside a corner of your room which you can make absolutely pure and sanctified, a sacred place you use only for meditation. For your daily meditation, it is best to meditate alone. Before beginning your meditation, it is helpful to take a shower or proper bath. It is also advisable to wear clean and light clothes.

To follow the spiritual life, you should meditate at least once a day. It is best to meditate early in the morning when the atmosphere is calm and peaceful. Evening is another good time. If you give importance to your meditation and are sincere, your power of meditation will automatically increase. If you are regular and punctual in your meditation, you will notice your own progress. Having a set time to meditate will help you fight against the lethargy and waywardness of the mind.

When meditating, it is important to keep the spine straight and erect, and to keep the body relaxed. You will find that your inner being will spontaneously take you to a comfortable position; it is up to you to maintain it. Some seekers like to meditate while lying down,

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Sound Light

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but this is not advisable. You may easily enter into the world of sleep or into a kind of inner doze. The lotus position an advanced yoga posture, is not necessary for proper meditation. Many people meditate very well seated in a chair.

It will help if you burn incense and candles and keep some flowers in front of you. The outer flower will remind you of the flower inside your heart. When you smell the scent of incense, you will gain inspiration and purification to add to your inner treasure. When you see the outer flame, immediately you will feel your inner flame climbing high, higher, highest.

PROPER BREATHING

Proper breathing is very important in meditation. When breathing, try to inhale as slowly and quietly as possible, so that if somebody placed a tiny thread in front of your nose, it would not move at all. And try to exhale more slowly still. If possible, leave a short pause between the end of your exhalation and the beginning of your inhalation. If you can, hold your breath for a few seconds. But if it is difficult, do not do it. Never do anything that will harm your organs or respiratory system.

Each time you breathe in, try to feel that you are bringing into your body infinite peace. When you breathe out, try to feel that you are expelling the restlessness within and all around you. After practicing this a few times, try to feel that you are inhaling power from the universe. When you exhale, feel that all your fear is leaving your body. After doing this a few times, try to feel that what you are breathing in is infinite joy, and what you are breathing out is sorrow, suffering, and depression.

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Transformation Groups

Groups That Work

MARY JANE MORGAN

To do transformational exploration, we need the support of others committed to conscious growth. Living according to our spiritual ideals, where we bring compassion and truth into our daily lives, is most possible when we have feedback, heightened motivation and honest communication from others. This kind of support is most likely to be found in a group designed for that purpose. Over the past several years, transformational groups have been sprouting up around the country in various formats.

Steve Wolf, a clinical psychologist, has been a member of, as well as a leader of, growth groups for over twenty-five years. He believes that leaderless growth groups can become effective communities for transformation and are an essential step in our collective movement toward consciousness. He is teaching group facilitators this model so they may start up leaderless, spiritually centered groups. His hope is that these groups will proliferate in the same way 12-step groups have.

In the past couple of years he has formed transformational groups that he describes as “spiritually centered, psychologically oriented, leaderless groups designed for the purpose of creating conscious community.” As the groups’ trainer, he teaches participants and the group how to become leaderless. Both the groups’ focus and the processes used within the groups have come out of Steve’s group experience and studies.

In essence, Steve teaches groups how to address dif-



STEVE WOLF

ficult psychological phenomena that invariably become present in groups. He also teaches exercises designed to help participants become spiritually centered so that when they work through conflicts they do so with reverence while taking ownership for their own perceptions and feelings.

In this type of group, participants must have had at least one year of therapy, a 12-step program, or some other process where they have done inner work. They must also commit initially to meeting for six months, once a week, for two and a half hours.

Although many experiences happen in the groups that are therapeutic, these groups are not therapy. They do, however, provide a safe place for people who desire a conscious community in which to do self-exploration. Group participants are screened so members don’t have to deal with disturbed personality development within the group.

The group trainer organizes and develops each group, teaching participants how to function in the group and to gradually become independent of him. After meeting with the group for a few sessions, group participants meet without the group trainer, who then returns to the group for two more sessions, then skips a week. Over time, the group meets more and more often without the group trainer.

Over the course of the group’s existence, the trainer remains available to the group to provide assistance and training on an as-needed basis, being paid only when he meets with the group

“Many leaderless groups flounder due to their inability to deal with the five crises of leaderless groups,” says Steve. He labels these phenomena as crises because when they occur, the soul or spirit of the group no longer feels free to be totally present inside the group process. Accordingly, individuals start to split off from the group. They no longer feel safe to totally express themselves, and the group lacks the total presence of each of its members.

The five crises arise surrounding issues of forming consensus, inability to explore deep emotional content, personality conflicts, power, authority and leadership struggles, and loss of spiritual purpose or reason for being in the group.

To deal with these issues, Steve teaches methodologies he has borrowed from various programs. One of these is the Solaris Method, which he learned several years ago as a member of a leaderless group at the Jungian Institute in Los Angeles. The Solaris Method has become a cornerstone for the early development of his groups.

After people "check in" with the group, the trainer asks if anyone has an issue within themselves or within their lives that they want to work with. If there is, they begin the 25-minute Solaris Method.

The person sits in the center of the circle. He or she spins a bottle and the person it points to becomes their facilitator. These two people sit in the center of the circle. Everyone else observes in silence.

The purpose of the facilitator is to be curious, to assist the person who is exploring their issue, and to follow the subtle threads of their own subconscious process. The two people work for about 20 minutes until a natural plateau is reached. At that point, they go back into the circle.

Each person in the group tells the person who was in the center what their experience of the process was; they in turn have the opportunity to respond to comments made, to the group as a whole, or not at all. Afterward each person in the group gives feedback

to the facilitator, who also has a chance to respond.

The Solaris Method is only one example of varied processes that are taught to the group so it can not only become leaderless, but also manage inevitable crises and grow into a conscious community, supporting one another's evolution.

The feedback we have received from people interested in transformation groups tells us that this kind of training is needed to ensure that people can develop groups that will be meaningful and successful.

This training replaces the *Transformational Group* project and its efforts to support group startups. •

Steve Wolf is a licensed clinical psychologist from Los Angeles, California and co-author with Connie Zweig of the book, "Romancing the Shadow."

Transformation Group Training

Learn to Train Leaderless Groups

Personal Transformation magazine is sponsoring training programs for individuals interested in becoming trainers for leaderless, spiritually centered transformation groups.

The training is particularly suited for therapists, healers and other qualified persons who have done a lot of inner work, understand the importance of groups in personal growth, and would like to organize and train leaderless groups.

The format is ongoing, small groups which meet for three weekend workshops over a year. Trainees learn methodologies by participating in a leaderless group led by Steve Wolf. Three training groups are planned: one each on the East Coast, the West Coast, and in the Midwest.

These groups are being organized now. Take advantage of this opportunity to become a group leader and guide others on their transformational journey.

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From our Readers



EDITOR'S NOTE: A special thank you to all who wrote letters of encouragement and/or sent donations to us at *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* during these past six months. Rick and I read every letter, sometimes more than once. We did not have space to print all of your letters. They were all heartfelt and it was impossible to select just a few to publish. We want you to know that without your support, we would not be publishing again. Thank you for contributing to our lives and to the magazine. We hope the magazine will continue to contribute to your lives.

RETREAT

Thank you for Jennifer Louden's article, "Retreat" in the Spring 1998 issue of *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*.

Everything I read in her article, I already knew, and knew from experience. I have participated in the retreats she speaks of, so I know the benefits. But knowing and doing are two different things and after reading her article, it seemed like a long time since I had "retreated" and nourished my soul, my spirit. Like many people, I suspect, daily living often distracts me from "retreating." I need to be reminded, need that little nudge—and sometimes a kick—to remember the things that I know to be true and critical to a healthy self, and a self that can best serve others. Ms. Louden's article was just the

nudge, the reminder, that I needed to prompt me into action—or in this case, inaction. A retreat. While I can't afford week-long escapes to far-off retreat centers, I have found ways to retreat in my own world. And it begins today.—*Connie Moister, St Paul, Minnesota.*

UNDERSTANDING THE DYING

I just wanted to write and tell you that Barbara Harris Whitfield's article, "Understanding the Dying Process" in the summer 1998 issue came at just the right time for me.

I recently had the unfortunate experience of watching a good friend die at too young an age. When I first learned of his illness, I went through several phases of denial and anger. At about that time, I read Ms. Whitfield's article, but my spirit still fought against accepting what she was saying. I guess it was fighting against accepting the reality of my friend's illness, the reality that a once vibrant young man could have the rug pulled out from under him and his whole life turned upside down so quickly.

But as I watched his health deteriorate, I thought back often to the article, shared it with his wife, read it again myself and finally came to realize that she was right. That the best thing we could do for this man was to let him go. As hard as that was, and his wife seemed to accept it more easily than even I did, Ms. Whitfield's article helped me

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READERS ON...

DO YOU WANT TO SHARE your insights and reflections with other *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* readers? We want to know about your transformative experiences—what you learned, how you changed and how these aspects of transformation affected you and the way you relate to life. Send us a 400-500 word essay on one of the following aspects of transformation.

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Transformations

Crisis can be a Gift

JAMES SMALLWOOD

TTrue journey stories for me have always been *The Wizard of Oz*, *Odysseus*, *Star Wars*, and *It's a Wonderful Life*. The hero in each of these stories is usually immersed in feelings of hopelessness that are always initiated by a crisis. Dorothy suffers the loss of friends, family and home, and is ultimately exiled. Odysseus also loses friends, family and home, as do Luke and George Bailey.

My crisis centered around the loss of my career, friends, family and home. The day I had to move away from my home and friends because I couldn't find work in that town, life as I knew it started to crumble. My wife and I left Santa Barbara, and with \$800 to our name, moved to northern California. Exiled. Along with everything else going on, my wife was sick and I had to figure out how I was going to take care of us.

After I lost my job, I read books, went to groups, gurus and therapists. In doing this, I came to realize that somehow only I had the answer to life that I'd been looking for. No one else had it for me. I hoped I would find the answers I had sought for so long in how I chose to live my Journey through this crisis.

As I looked back over the last 20 years of my life, I remembered that even then I was searching for "an answer." The world around me was full of misery and suffering, and it wasn't reserved for only the "bad" people. Good people were murdered, suffered the loss of loved ones, sickness and disease. No one was immune

Three people transform their lives and offer hope and guidance for others.



to the reality of suffering. Even Jesus was tortured on the cross, and rumor is, Buddha died of food poisoning.

I had accumulated years of troubles—divorces, bad relationships, jealousy, addictions, pain and arrogance. You know, the usual stuff. And in my mind everyone else was the cause and source of my suffering. I accepted I had my problems, but if only everyone else out there would change I would be so much happier. Yet deep inside I knew that wasn't entirely true.

As I was thrown into this crisis, it became the beginning of a Journey that, as it unfolded, answered my questions, "Why is there so much suffering, what is the cause, is there a way out, what is the answer, why am I here?" The year before, my wife had introduced me to an ancient meditation technique for calming the mind, changing the mind, and seeing the cause of problems and suffering.

I felt broken and lost. A deep wound inside had been torn open and laid bare, exposed, bleeding and aching. As I look back now, I see that the crisis was a blessing in disguise. In the midst of all of this I had many opportunities to work on the meditation technique my wife had introduced me to.

I attended ten-day courses where I sat for 12 hours a day looking at my own mind, thoughts, sensations and feelings. And I began to make connections. I remember in one course in particular where I wandered in my mind for days lost in feelings of anger, depression and

“I acknowledged that just as surely as the problems lay deep in my mind, so also did the solution. I only needed to embark on the Journey...”

hatred. My mind replayed life-scenes over and over again—the hurts, betrayals, and broken promises. Finally, I was worn out. I looked around and realized none of those people were there. They weren't in the room and never would be. I had taken myself on a week-long personal tour of Hell and Purgatory, a lifelong tour.

And then I began to realize it had always been myself who had caused all my years of suffering. My own ranting, raving, crazy mind had me absorbed in dramatic, anger-filled, hopeless emotions. My biggest “enemies” had never been anyone “out there.” It was at this point that I started to feel like there was a way out, an answer to my misery. The lock on my mind came with a key.

As all this new information began to sink in, I acknowledged that just as surely as the problems lay deep in my mind, so also did the solution. The exit door to my suffering was on the other side of the deep crazy abyss called “my mind.” As I realized this, I began to feel deep feelings of gratitude. There really was a way out. I only needed to embark on the Journey just as all of our heroes had done. I needed to come face to face with all my demons, use all my past memories and habits of my mind as the way out, the way to treat the cause of my own suffering. The ten-day course I took on vipassana meditation, a technique taught by Buddha, showed me how to do this, how to go inside my body for life's answers.

That was seven years ago. The meditation technique I learned during that time has impacted all aspects of my life. As a psychologist, it has helped me relate to my clients on a deep, caring level and shown me that although people are different, no one is better than someone else. I see now that we're all human beings suffering from different conditions... everyone is doing the best they can and we all have something to learn from one another.

My spiritual journey has also taught me there is

no journey, no growth, no change, without morality. Morality is the foundation of a true spiritual life. The turning point for Odysseus happened when he gave up his lust and deception and ego gratification. For Luke, he finally became totally honest both with himself and others and told the truth. Jesus and Buddha lived a life of morality. It was the foundation of their teaching. Absolute morality. I'm not talking about a form of morality that we fashion and that makes us appear moral to others and lets us get away with “a few small white lies here and there,” “a little acting out now and then,” occasional “mistakes.”

We all know what a true moral life is like, and as we advance in our moral life, we advance on the spiritual path. We move into a new realm, the realm of compassion, hope, joy, and service. We become the Grail, the containers of true spirituality. This is our challenge and the gift of our crisis experience. To meet the crisis head-on, to stand our ground with our wounds gaping wide open, to surrender and to call to the “Something Greater.” We must deal with the Hells we have created and come out the other side stronger, more complete, more humble, more human, and, if you will, initiated into the spiritual realm.

As we travel this spiritual journey, we must challenge ourselves to live our life in the best possible way, passing the torch to others, serving others and our community, and being deeply committed to the ongoing and lifelong process of deepening our spiritual life first, above all else.

That's my story. The story of my gift of crisis and the significant change in my life because of that crisis. Maybe it's your story, too. Maybe you've changed a little. Maybe your life story is a Hero story. Maybe you, too, have had the good fortune of having your crisis experience move you on your way to a better life, to being a better person and making this world a better place. If so, and if you are the Hero reading your story, welcome home. •

Cancer Lesson: Treasure Every Day

NANCY COHEN

I can vividly recall the carefree scene in my mind. It was a beautiful day, May 5, 1997. My fiancé and I had applied for our marriage license in Cape May, N.J. My mother accompanied us as our witness. While we were filling out the paperwork for our license, she asked if I was planning to run the Race for the Cure for cancer the next Sunday. I thought it was an odd question, and certainly unrelated to what we were doing at the time. “No, Mom. I haven’t run in several years,” I replied. In retrospect, it seemed my mother’s innocent question was a bad omen. I had no idea then that in 24 hours, my life would be forever altered.

I didn’t give my mother’s question a second thought until that evening. I was sitting on a large denim lounge chair and I started doing a self-breast exam. I think it was subconscious on my part. I don’t know what led my hand to my breast, mainly because I never do self-breast exams, even though, as a nurse, I know better. Nonetheless, I found a lump on my left breast. It was a hard mass, with a diameter of approximately one inch and absolutely no pain associated with it. I examined my right breast. It was soft, no lumps.

Fear played a big part in my aggressive pursuit of an immediate appointment. The next day, I was examined by a breast specialist at my hospital. She is a gifted surgeon, technically excellent with a gentle bedside manner. She confirmed that there was a mass and whatever it was would have to be removed. She took a fluid sample from the lump and sent it to the cytology lab where the specimen would be examined microscopically. Normally, the results are back within 24 hours. However I was called into the office approximately three hours later. It was as she suspected. “Nancy, I am so sorry to deliver the bad news. The mass is malignant.”

I was in total and complete shock. My mind reeled with questions. Are you sure? How could this be? Where did it come from? How could I possibly

have developed this disease? I was a healthy 31-year-old who exercised regularly, ate right and had a very remote family history of breast cancer. I was also working two jobs at the time; clearly not a sedentary individual. I just didn’t fit the description of the “typical cancer patient.”

Questions and theories swirled around in my mind. Was it the stress of two jobs, planning a wedding, environmental toxins, or did I have the dreaded breast cancer gene? I was terrified and I felt so alone in the doctor’s office.

I’m too young to die, I thought. What was going to happen to me? Wasn’t there any other explanation for this abnormal growth, a cyst perhaps? Please, God if you take this away, I will never ... But it was too late to bargain. I was faced with a potentially deadly disease. That was the reality. I had lost all control. I had to put my trust and my life in the hands of the doctors I chose to care for me.

I made my first phone call to my parents. I sobbed hysterically until my supervisor gave me permission to leave. My fiancé was in school that night so it was impossible to contact him. That evening and the next several days I was bombarded with phone calls from family and friends. Even acquaintances and long lost friends were eager to hear my story. An endless flow of cards and flower arrangements were sent my way. I felt privileged to be honored in various prayer groups.

My wedding, which I had been planning for six months, was coming up in three months. I decided not to cancel this precious event. I desperately needed something to look forward to, and planning my wedding gave me hope.

From the moment I told my fiancé, Timothy, he supported me 100 percent. My relationship with him was really put to the ultimate test even before

“My outlook on life has changed dramatically. I am so grateful for every new day, and I now take very little for granted.”

NANCY COHEN



our marriage took place, and through all this we've grown even closer and learned to make our relationship a priority no matter how busy we are. The time we have with those we love is precious and should never be wasted or taken for granted. As I went through my treatment, I learned to quit taking things in life for granted, especially my relationship with loved ones.

During treatment, I took a six month hiatus from my primary nursing job and had to completely resign from my second nursing job. The hustle and bustle of my daily life was replaced with doctors' appointments, surgery, chemotherapy, radiation and recovery. All of my life's plans were put on hold until the treatments were determined. After two surgeries, the first to remove the malignant growth and the second to remove fifteen axillary nodes, the most encouraging news at this point was that the results of the node biopsy were negative.

Although this was an extremely difficult time in my life, it was also a time when I was able to get away from work and experience life without all the pressures of my nursing job(s). As my life slowed down, I was able to truly appreciate the small things in life that I had been taking for granted. Everything becomes more pronounced when you feel you're on a time clock. Nature, a sunset, family, everything became much more meaningful to me. I

will never put myself under the stress of doing two jobs again. It simply is not worth it. Clearly my body couldn't handle it and life is too valuable to go down that road again.

My last chemotherapy treatment was scheduled for two weeks before my wedding so I'd have some time to recover and gain my strength. My wedding day fell on the hottest weekend of the year. Barring a few minor morning disasters, the wedding went off without a hitch (no pun intended). I was able to restore my mother's wig from the '70s. I wore the beautiful make-up I received from the Look Good...Feel Better program. (This program sponsored by the American Cancer Society, involves product donations from cosmetic companies. Make-up artists and hair dressers also volunteer their time to demonstrate make-up application and wig usage.) My wedding dress was simple yet elegant. After almost three hours of fussing and primping, I looked like a vibrant, lively, healthy bride.

My husband has remained a pillar of strength throughout my ordeal. Even with his difficult work and school schedule, he has always, and continues, to be there for me. He even took the summer off from school to take care of me. The nights following each chemo session were sleepless ones. Tim escorted me to the bathroom every 15 minutes so I could hug the porcelain goddess.

My hair is growing back and my eyebrows and eyelashes are coming in at a furious rate. Applying mascara is a small pleasure I will never again take for granted. My prognosis is good, even though I have to see one of my three physicians every three months.

My outlook on life has changed dramatically. I am so grateful for every new day, and I now take very little for granted. The profound changes I have experienced are most evident in my relationships with others, especially my husband and parents, but also with my surgical patients, my oncology patients in particular. I can identify with what they are going through. I understand their fears, the unknown they face, even that their faith is now uncertain. I am there for them, to hold their hand and speak to them in a calming manner.

As I think of my patients, it brings to mind the simple self-breast exam that saved my life. I cannot stress enough the importance of this self-assessment. It's critical because mammograms aren't recommended until a woman turns 45. All women, regardless of age, should make it their business to do this every month. It saved my life. It could save yours. •

I Forgive My Father

A L I C I A D O Y L E

My father and I are talking more these days. We didn't used to. But at least now we're both willing to have a relationship. Willing to heal the past. Willing to move on. Our tentative beginning would not exist if I hadn't changed. I had to forgive my father before I could open my heart again. At first, even calling him "dad" was strange, and it is still hard to say "I love you."

Nearly all my life I've struggled to forgive my father. He left when I was in the first grade, leaving my mother alone to raise my two older brothers and me. It was my most painful memory from childhood. He and my mother had had a terrible fight and he'd pushed her against the wall. Angry and

hurt and scared, she'd told him to get out.

I clutched my daddy's leg and begged, "Please don't leave, daddy. Please don't go."

Sobbing, my father walked out the door. I watched as he banged his fists against the hood of his car. Through his tears I heard him say, "I'm no good. I'm no good."

My life changed forever that day. I have few good memories from childhood. What I remember most are the nights my dad didn't come home, the days he locked himself for hours in his den, the times he and my mom viciously tore one another apart with ugly words in front of their three children.

The years that followed my father's leaving were tangled with frustration, sadness and resentment as my brothers and I were forced into early adulthood and my mother was forced to juggle a full-time job and single parenthood while battling a nervous breakdown.

After the divorce, I saw my father occasionally, but our brief visits eventually stopped. As time passed, my father and I grew apart. I began to despise him, teaching myself to forget the few happy times we shared and learning how to deny my pain. Sometimes, I even told my friends that my father was dead.

I cursed him when, at age 13 in a halfhearted suicide attempt, I swallowed a vial of sleeping pills. And when my mother remarried an abusive man, I swore I would never forgive my dad.

Little did I know that my father's actions would not only riddle my mother's life but my own young adult life as well. Untrusting and terrified of abandonment, I was heartbroken each time a casual rela-

“I now know that I was only hurting myself by holding on to my rage. By failing to release past memories and go on with my life, I was the one who suffered.”



ALICIA DOYLE

relationship didn't work out. Emotionally scarred, I withdrew from close friends and family who tried to help. Unwilling to accept the past and move on, I went through life with a crippled heart.

It wasn't until last spring, at the age of 26, that my life took a sharp turn for the better.

My father's mother had just died, and a half-brother I'd never met tried to contact me. I knew only his name, Tony Doyle. He was a son from my father's first failed marriage.

Tony, too, was abandoned by our father as a child. When Tony and I met, there was an instant bond. In connecting with the half-brother who had felt the same emotional abandonment as I had, I slowly began to heal. Tony's life, like mine, was half empty with no father to provide love, support and guidance.

As our relationship grew, Tony told me over and over to let go of my anger toward our father.

"Dad could die tomorrow," he said. "You have to accept the past and move on with your life."

Without telling my father, I forced myself to retrace his past with the hope that I would discover why he left us, why he left me. I started by reuniting with my his two sisters. Together, Tony and I visited my dad's childhood home where I sat for hours one Saturday listening to Aunt Helen

and Aunt Irene tell stories about what happened to them as children.

I learned my father was severely abused as a child. His parents were heavy drinkers. I found out that his childhood, like mine, was riddled with loneliness and fear.

Still, my discovery did not excuse my father's actions. His selfish path had destroyed any possible connection with his only daughter. He had missed spending time with me on holidays, caring for me when I was sick, watching me grow into a young woman. He was a no-show, a man without clear conscience, a dead-beat, a failed father.

But learning about his past helped me in some ways begin to understand him and, in so doing, to forgive him. Perhaps he feared he would abuse me just as he'd been abused. Or maybe he felt he had to battle his demons alone.

His reasons for leaving don't matter anymore. There's nothing I can do to change yesterday. All I can do is learn from my father's mistakes and break the cycle on my own.

My father must live with his own demons, his guilt. I have no demons or guilt. Therefore, I can accept the past and move on.

Even knowing this, forgiving my father is still a daily struggle, an internal war between wanting a father to love and hating the father who left me. At times, I still resent him. And I often wonder what life would have been like with a daddy to tuck me in at night, mend my first broken heart and hold me safely in his arms through life's tough challenges.

Forgiveness doesn't necessarily mean forgetting. I will never forget the day my father left, but I now know I was only hurting myself by holding on to my rage. By failing to release past memories and go on with my life, I was the one who suffered.

Last Father's Day I called my dad. He asked about my job. I asked him about the weather in Colorado.

Then he asked, "Do you forgive me?"

"Yes," I said, and truly meant it.

My dad and I are talking more these days. We didn't used to. It is still hard to say I love you, but saying it is getting easier. •

Tell about your transformation, please see release form on page 74.

Freewill or Destiny?

ROBERT JOHNSON AND JERRY RUHL

How do we know when to exert our will and when to let go and surrender to the will of God? There are times when we need to exert our wills.... I don't advise everyone to sit and wait for a miracle to save them or for someone to rescue them. Following the will of God isn't about resignation or sipping a can of beer and watching television or passively "going with the flow."

It is an audacious notion to put forth in this age of science and willful determination that one's existence is somehow inspired, guided, and even managed by unseen forces outside our control. Whether called fate, destiny, or the hand of God, slender threads are at work bringing coherence and continuity to our lives. Over time they weave a remarkable tapestry.

What are these slender threads? Being in a particular place at just the right time, meeting someone who steers you in an unforeseen direction, the unexpected appearance of work or money or inspiration just when they are most needed. These are the mysterious forces that guide us and shape who we are. They are the patterns that give meaning to our experiences.

Some people seem to exert more free will over their lives. They make plans, set goals, and proceed with full confidence of being in control. That has never worked for me, despite my best attempts.

Looking back from the vantage point of seventy-six years, it is now clear that my existence has always been managed by some benevolent fate. It has taken the better part of a lifetime to accept this idea, and much of the time I still don't understand it. But I have learned to stop fighting it. In youth, I floundered around and followed the slender threads only when I

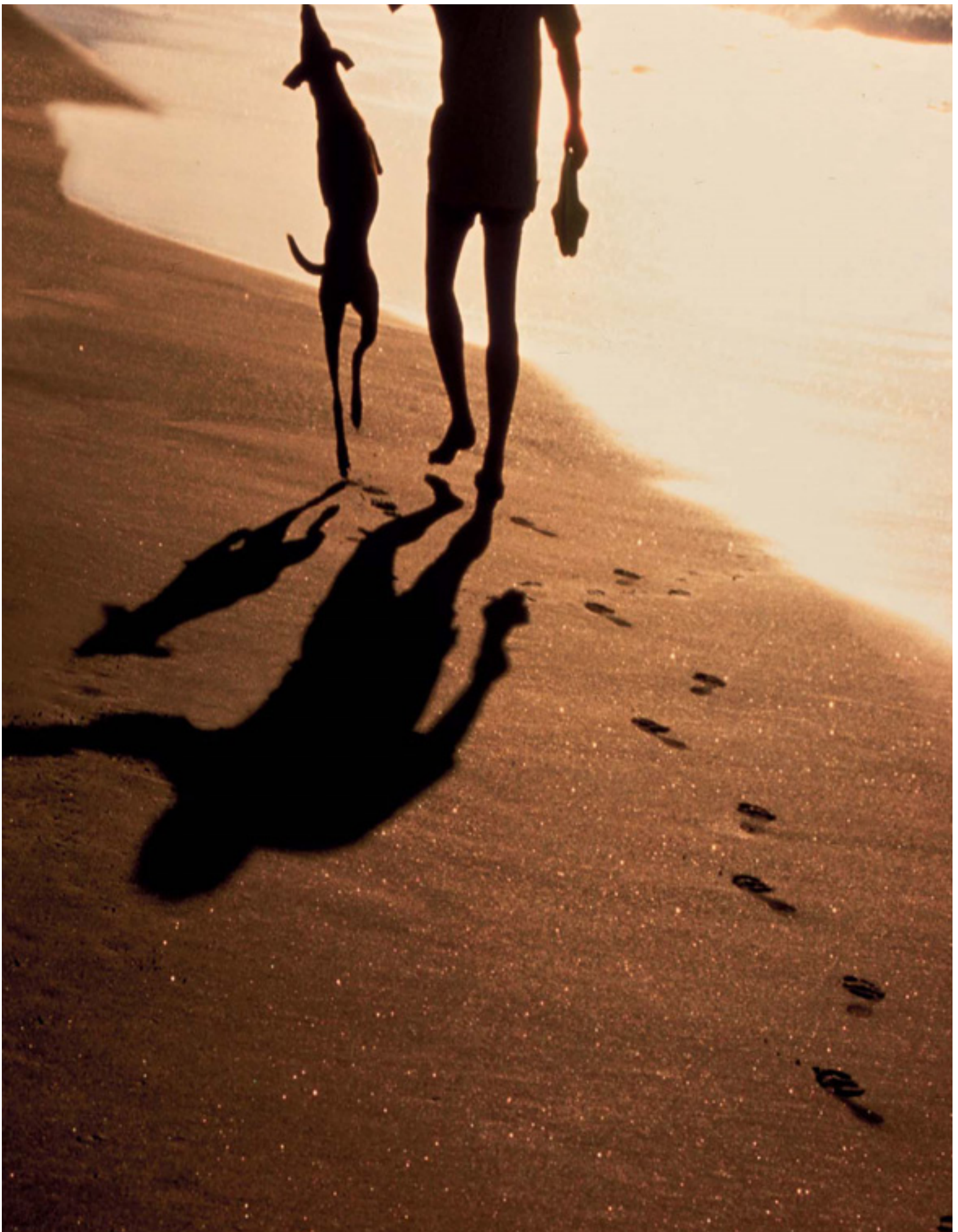
felt like it or when they seemed to be taking me where I already wanted to go. I often struggled to oppose them. As the fruit of my old age, however, I have finally come to trust the mystery. The mystery is this: there is one right thing and only one right thing to do at every moment. We can either follow or resist the slender threads.

We all have free will, and therefore we can try to force situations in life. Perhaps that struggle is what keeps us bound to this earth. But I have gradually learned to accept that the slender threads possess greater intelligence and wisdom than our scrambling egos can ever attain. In good times and bad, one slender thread after another has seen me through and, together, they have shaped what I know and who I am.

This notion of slender threads is essentially a religious idea. I am not much at home with the old-time religion, at least not as practiced in my own culture. And so I often find myself searching for new terms to say old things. I do know, however, that my life is managed by a coherent and intelligent entity of some sort, a guiding hand or patron saint, if you will.

I continue to grapple to find new terminology for talking about the religious life. Each age needs its own language for understanding enduring truths, and while many people feel uncomfortable talking about

TS/JAMES HARRINGTON



religion, our ego-centered, so-called real life is disintegrating at this point in history. The ancient world didn't have much of what we call reality; they lived, instead, by the slender threads. We have gained ego reality but have lost the mystical and religious functions that should guide our lives.

The concept of listening to the will of God is difficult for many modern people to follow, as it collides with our love of freedom and our insistence on free will. However, I must declare that, with respect to the most important aspects of my life, I am not free. I am safest when I let go of trying to control my life and instead follow the slender threads. This is a religious perspective in the sense that the human ego must surrender to something more powerful than itself.

Freedom insists that the ego can do anything it wishes. I do not mean to toss the concept of freedom out entirely. Of course we have free will, but I am insisting that in every moment there is one right thing to do: we can choose to follow the will of God or not follow the will of God, and only in this way can we live meaningful lives.

Humankind has struggled with the dilemma of how to balance fate versus free will since time began. There have been many rules of thumb for how to achieve such a balance. My personal approach is that the big events of my life follow a slender thread while the details are my business. Nobody but me will balance my checkbook or shave me or keep my house tidy. Those are the appropriate tasks for the ego. The little decisions belong to us, while the great things are like the weather sweeping us along. Yet most modern people spend a majority of their waking hours worrying about larger issues that the ego cannot really control. The small and limited ego is not the proper human faculty for such issues. The ego does not belong in the driver's seat. In fact, the ego often gets in the way of being attentive to the slender threads. We must learn to humble and quiet our egos so that we may follow the slender threads.

After many years of struggling with this, I feel that the ego is properly used as the organ of awareness, not the organ of decision. Almost everyone in our society tries to use the ego as an organ of decision. For example, we may say to ourselves, "I am

going to Europe. I will buy the air tickets for this date, and I will stay at this hotel when I arrive." The ego is useful for collecting information about ticket fares and accommodations and things to see and do when you arrive. But the ego does not determine the experience you will have on your trip. People get so preoccupied with trying to control things that are not in the ego's province that they neglect what is the ego's business—heightened awareness. The ego should be collecting data and watching. The ego serves as the eyes and ears of God. It gathers the facts, but it does not make the ultimate decisions. The decisions come from the Self, Dr. Carl Jung's term for a center of intelligence that is not limited to the ego but contains all of the faculties—conscious and unconscious—of the personality. Obviously, this is but a new attempt to describe the old concept of a personal relationship with God.

How do we know if we are truly following the will of God? One knows instinctively; there is a sense of peace, balance, and fullness, an unhurriedness. One of my favorite authors, the French philosopher Hubert Benoit, writes that there is one, and only one, appropriate action in any given moment of time. If you are in that action, then you are happy and peaceful. I am still trying to grow up to this notion of Benoit's. He suggests that if you think you have a choice, you are not seeing the reality of things correctly. The will of God is always singular. I believe this, but I can't always stand the truth of this statement. Certainly, it runs counter to our sense of free will and self-determination. We want the maximum number of choices and the freedom to choose among them. Madison Avenue is the purveyor of discontent; virtually all advertising is designed to create discontent so as to create a market for a product.

When you are following the will of God, there is no choice whatsoever. Here I am not talking about following scripture to the letter. That is one way of being happy, but for most modern people this is not a viable solution. Looking for a manual to tell you what to do, whether that manual is the Bible or the latest psychological theory, is not useful. Listening to the will of God as it manifests within your own psyche, hearing what has been called the still, small voice within—this is the reli-

When you are following the will of God, there is no choice whatsoever... Looking for a manual to tell you what to do, whether that manual is the Bible or the latest psychological theory, is not useful. Listening to the will of God as it manifests within your own psyche, hearing what has been called the still, small voice within—this is the religious life.

religious life. This cannot be reduced to a tidy formula, but one general guideline is to ask yourself what is needed for wholeness in any situation. Instead of asking what is good or what coincides with our personal interest, ask what is whole-making. Sainthood is the result of wholeness, not goodness. What is required for more wholeness will be different for each person, and it changes moment by moment. This requires realigning yourself each day, each hour, and each moment. When one can live in this fashion, aligning the ego with the inner Self, it has a profound effect on the quality of our lives. Abiding by the will of God gives life—including its misfortunes—meaning, purpose, and dignity. It also removes a great deal of the anxiety of modern life.

I must also caution the reader that following the slender threads does not mean manipulating things so that the ego can get its way. Ego-centric spirituality just gets one into more intense suffering. Going after the splendor of heaven as an ego project is very different from having heaven open itself up to you. Many so-called spiritual people set about the task of increasing the amount of goodness in their life or the amount of lightness or brightness or happiness. I disagree with that approach entirely. It is an ego-centric journey with no nobility in it. More often than not, seeking more goodness or happiness just leads to their exact opposite. I sometimes think that exhaustion is the best tool for enlightenment, as it gets the ego out of the way. It finally just wears down so that the divine can pour through.

If I don't know how to make a certain decision, I should use the ego to get all the information I can and then wait. Eventually the will of God will be revealed to me. It is deceiving to say, "I will know," and more correct to say, "It will be revealed to me."

A friend of mine jokes about this. I asked him, "What are you going to do with your car while you're off in India?" and he replied, "Robert, it has not been revealed to me yet."

The way to approach this manner of living is to start with extremely small things. Don't think about it too much or you will end up in contradiction. Just start by attending to how you make decisions in small things. Instead of weighing all the pros and cons and forcing a decision with your ego, simply try to keep your ego alert, and slap its hand gently when it tries to do too much. For example: I have to get groceries this afternoon. Should I go to the small market near my house or the larger one with a greater selection several miles away? Instead of trying to decide, I will just wait until I know where to go. This is in some ways a ridiculous example, but if you practice you will find that there is a difference when the ego says something and when the Self says something; I know from experience that the impetus comes from different places in me. That other center is capable of decisions, and you can almost feel in your body the difference between a Self decision and an ego decision. The ego decision seems to come from your head, while the Self decision seems to come from your heart or your stomach (we sometimes call it a "gut feeling").

How do we know when to exert our will and when to let go and surrender to the will of God? There are times when we need to exert our wills. For most young people, the focus must be on strengthening the ego, passing the necessary exams, graduating from school, staying with the marriage, and so on. The focus must be on learning to direct the will to accomplish the cultural tasks of life. I

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 71

Becoming a Practical Mystic



AN INTERVIEW WITH JACQUELYN SMALL
BY MARY NURRIESTEARN

Jacquelyn Small is well known for her inspirational work in the areas of spiritual psychology and personal-planetary transformation. She is the founder and director of Eupsychia, an institute for healing and training, based in her hometown of Austin, Texas. Through Eupsychia workshops and intensives, Jacquelyn guides people undergoing transformational processes into their deeper selves, so that they heal old wounds and gain understanding of who they really are, bringing sacredness and a sense of purpose back into their lives. She is the author of many books on the transformational process, including her most recent book, *Becoming a Practical Mystic*.

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION: *In your latest book, you say that transformation, in its essence, is the process of discovering our true spiritual intention. What is a spiritual intention?*

JACQUELYN SMALL: First of all, our perception of reality governs our lives, and human perception

comes through lenses in many sizes and shapes. Some people have a broad view of life while others have a narrow view and are more focused on the concrete activities of getting through each day. With a broader view of life, people begin to recognize that we have the power to govern how our lives unfold by our willing intention.

We remember that we are part of a bigger story, a divine Plan for humanity—and that we have “our part” to do to manifest this Plan while on earth. As Dr. Carl Jung said, “We are players in a divine world drama.” This awareness enables us to make it through our troublesome conditions in life with more ease, with less attachment or reaction to the small stuff. We maintain a stronger sense of sacred purpose to life, which keeps us in a continual process of transformation. Without a sense of purpose in life you won’t be able to work with the concept of spiritual intention.

PT: *What do we really transform?*

JACQUELYN: We transform our ability to bring forth our highest ideals and manifest them in the world, and that begins with how we think. For instance, we can begin each day with a positive thought for ourselves and for life, and an intention to carry forward the remembrance of what we want to manifest for that day. We need to carry forth into each day self-remembrance, to remember who we really are. Most of us get caught up in thinking that we are much less than we really are.



PT: What do you mean by self-remembrance?

JACQUELYN: Self-remembrance is remembering that we are both human and divine and already connected to the higher order that rules this universe. It is remembering that we are co-creators, a fragment of divine purpose that governs reality. To move into self-remembrance, most people need to go into a state of meditation or prayer. If we begin each day with remembering who we are, we enter a state of consciousness where we are prepared to take responsibility for how creative we actually are, realizing that everything that goes through our minds creates something. Obviously, if I think negatively, I see all the negative things in life and draw those things to myself. If I can enter a state of consciousness where I remember that I am a daughter of a Higher Power, and not my conditions, I can use that awareness to start out every day with a sense of purpose. Everybody has to decide what he or she wants his or her spiritual purpose to be. It can be as small as wanting to have the characteristics and qualities of a very good person, or as big as wanting to be a change agent for the world, a world server.

PT: As we engage in transformational work, we develop a relationship with something greater, a divine energy or guidance. Are you saying that we have the choice to fill our heads with thoughts of this?

JACQUELYN: Yes. However, we will not know this unless we practice self-remembrance every day, because we won't have the concept as a living experience. We don't remember that we are creative, even though we create all the time with the powers of our minds.

PT: A practice of self-remembrance activates this knowing?

JACQUELYN: A practice of self-remembrance activates spiritual intention because once we remember who we are, we discover that we have the solutions to life's great problems within us.

PT: In addition to realizing that the answers are within us, do we find that we are not alone, that there is help?

JACQUELYN: That is right. An enormous awakening is happening and many people are waking up to the consciousness of the mystic. Mystics are born, they are not created. People recognize themselves as mystics when they remember that all of their lives, they have known there is something more grand going on here than is obvious. Once we move into self-remembrance, or self-creative observation, we start to change our course. We focus on what we spiritually intend rather than letting life's conditions overrule us. When you start



your day with prayer, meditation or invocation, your day unfolds with intention. Otherwise the outer circumstances will create your reality: You go to the grocery store, have an argument with somebody, lose your checkbook, return home, become frustrated because you are late for an appointment, and at day's end, you are worn out from how the day's conditions took you over. When, upon arising, you spend ten or fifteen minutes focusing on who you are, what you are here to do and be, remembering with compassion the state of the world and how you might have a part in making it a more loving

place to be, you start your day in a state of compassion and high self regard.

PT: You mentioned invocation. What is the power of invocation?

JACQUELYN: Invocation is active rather than passive prayer. Instead of saying, “Dear God, I’m a helpless creature, please give me what I lack,” it’s a prayer that says “I am a co-creator and I am willing to take responsibility for what you send me as my job today.”

PT: What do we invoke?

JACQUELYN: You invoke what you intend to be your spiritual purpose for the day. You have to invoke daily, because every day, divine ideals arrive in us that make some things seem more important than others. We have to remember that life is unfolding according to patterns that have been created by a higher order. The conditioning of our childhood years impacts how we react to those patterns. Divine ideals are always trying to pour into the human process, but we are wounded, and don’t pick up these divine ideals and do them with clarity. For instance, a higher ideal might be for us to be compassionate. Yet the human condition has made it so that we are mostly from dysfunctional families. Our parents did not realize that we were divine little beings born in a human body. Most of us were treated as though we were just little human egos. We were supposed to live up to the family codes and carry forth what the family believed was the truth. The truth is, we are here to clean out the conditioning that is blocking us from being pure reflections of divine ideals that are trying to pour into the human process. Our wounds distort us and we often act out of selfishness, fear or ignorance instead.

PT: As we activate our mystical nature, we bring the sacred into our ordinary lives.

JACQUELYN: We bring the sacred into the ordinary by remembering, first of all, that we are sacred beings. Most people have forgotten. Mystics are born knowing that life is purposeful and that humans are both human and divine. In times past, mystics were considered to be impractical because they were dreamers, visionaries who could see the future and understood what humanity was trying to accomplish. However, they usually were

quiet and not activists. The archetype currently coming through human consciousness is the practical mystic, which is not just a seer of Spirit’s work, but a doer of Spirit’s work. I am a practical mystic. So are you. When something is revealed to us, we want to create a workshop around it or a magazine article so that others can learn. Practical mystics are the architects and the builders of the new consciousness that is pouring through our inner life now. We are receiving messages from these subjective realities because new energy has to come from within. It’s exciting because we have to learn decode symbol and metaphor and understand our dreams. If it came from outside, it would be created already. It has to come from the uncreated to be something new.

PT: Whether we identify ourselves as a practical mystic, we can invoke this consciousness...

JACQUELYN: Yes, We all begin with a self-purification process, no matter how wide our consciousness is and how much we see.

PT: You define self-purification as leaving behind earlier formed identities and stories that emerged out of our sense of who we were upon entering adulthood. What do we move into? What guides us as we begin shedding our smaller story?

JACQUELYN: Self-purification usually begins with some internal crisis. People become unhappy with themselves because they see that they are not living according to their higher ideals. My son works for one of the largest corporate consulting firms in the world. They recently surveyed their employees, asking how they saw themselves being in the world five years from now. 85% of the employees saw themselves leaving corporate America and going into creative pursuits—becoming an architect, farmer or artist. There is an enormous yearning to put our lives in alignment with what we consider to be our highest human ideals, and every single human being knows that. But we have excuses and don’t do it. We say, “I don’t have enough money or time” or “I’m too busy” or “I need more education.”

Therefore, we have to engage in some kind of spiritual practice daily. Every morning, we can decide, through the power of intention, to live life for that one day according to our highest ideals. Every night, for nearly twenty years, before going

to bed, I've asked a question to my Higher Power. For instance, recently, I have been asking how I can become more creative again. This morning, upon awakening, I realized that my Highest Self had sent me a symbol, a wave of force, pearl gray in color, and shaped like a giant teardrop, that washed through my psyche. We are meaning-makers, and I interpreted this symbol to mean that my Higher Power was washing through my psyche, clearing out the conditioning that is holding me back. I go into self-doubt sometimes when I am alone. I work better in groups, and when alone, I sometimes forget how creative I am. Everyone has his or her own conditioning that gets in the way of our highest good. We must make these distortions conscious so they won't run (or ruin) us. In this self-purification, first we observe, because we have to be able to see what we are caught up in, and second, we change our course to refocus on what we spiritually intend.

PT: You state that archetypal energies help with self-purification. What is archetypal energy and how can we engage these energies?

JACQUELYN: Archetypes are the divine patterns of how to be perfectly human, the blueprints we grow into. They are divine ideals living in a higher dimension that seek expression through us.

PT: What are some examples of archetypes?

JACQUELYN: You and Rick, because you publish a magazine, are operating under the archetype of the Communicator in your current life work. There is a divine Communicator; a perfect way to communicate that exists in the world of the ideal. I, for instance, operate under the archetypes of the Healer and the Teacher. When I'm "on," all of my conditioning is out of the way, and I manifest as a pure expression for just a few moments, here and there, as a teacher or as a healer. Then my conditioning gets in the way and I go off course. It's unfortunate, but that's how we are. We struggle to live out these divine patterns on earth and not let the superficial aspects of life destruct us.

PT: Is the Observer an archetypal energy that helps with self-purification?

JACQUELYN: Yes, the inner Observer is an archetype. Without an Observer self, you can't do any kind of transformation because this inner Fair witness is a neutral observer. It sits and watches what you do, moment by moment. It makes the light bulb come on in your head when you see that you are off-key. For instance, let's say you have been invited to dine at a restaurant down the street from your office. Rather than driving by your office, you turn in the

Divine intervention awaits us at every turn of the cosmic wheel of destiny. A great principle or power lies behind every desired quality or possibility. All we have to do is petition it and then await the response.

Invocation is active prayer, cocreative prayer. It is self-assertive, will-to-action prayer that goes beyond traditional passive religious faith. Many think of it as the prayer for the coming age. In the past, we have prayed, but this has been an emotional appeal, more of a plea of helplessness, that a Higher Power come into our lives and do both its and our parts.

Invocation is how practical mystics pray, recognizing that we are co-creative, stating that we are ready and anxious to do our part. Knowing we don't have the power to create these high qualities and desired changes apart from our Creator, we invoke them and then make a commitment to enact them. This is a powerful commitment, and it requires the courage and conviction of a true adventurer, a seeker of wisdom, love, and dynamic spiritual will.

parking lot by habit, and start to open the car door, when the light bulb comes on, “Oh! I’m going to the restaurant.” The Observer doesn’t judge, it just nudges you and says, “Notice, you just made a wrong turn.”

PT: It brings reality into awareness.

JACQUELYN: Yes, it brings something into consciousness. That’s all. People confuse it with the Critical Parent, which is a voice in your head saying, “Shame on you, you stupid thing, look what you did.” That is not the Observer. This is the ego state.

PT: Some archetypes become part of our greater story that informs our decisions. However, the Observer serves by bringing our past conditioning into awareness, helping with the psychological work of transformation.

JACQUELYN: Yes. The Observer lives between Spirit and the human self, as the middle one. It is a divine adjuster, if we will invoke it and listen. Unless invoked, however, it remains inactive in us.

PT: Give an example of how we invoke and utilize the Observer.

JACQUELYN: First, we have to realize that we have the power, moment by moment, to be in charge of our lives according to what we focus on and how we decide to be. Once you know you have the Observer and make it conscious, you move through the day with an attitude of self-creative observation. I imagine that mine sits on my right shoulder noticing what I do as I do it. That means, moment by moment, I notice how I am living up to what I have intended myself to be, or how I’ve gotten off-base, and if I’ve gotten off-base, I have to notice what caused me to deflect. For instance, I may feel compassionate while in a conversation with a friend, when she says something that threatens me, and suddenly, instead of being my Higher Self, who is a loving soul, I become this



vicious little person for a moment, and I say something ugly. At that time, I need to pull back and



reflect. What happened? What caused me to drop down and behave that way? I have to take responsibility for getting in touch with how my conditioning keeps me from being true to what I intend.

PT: Does the Observer help make conscious the shadow

side and those aspects of us still connected to our old, small story?

JACQUELYN: It’s a way of befriending our shadow side, and if you are in human form, you do have a shadow. No one is exempt.

PT: Which is not wrong or bad...

JACQUELYN: The shadow is the parts of us that never matured, never had a chance to develop properly, and there are many reasons why. It may be that we were wounded as a child or that we are still innocent about something, not having had any experience with that particular aspect of life, and so we behave foolishly. People have the mistaken notion that the shadow is evil and bad, something they are supposed to cover up. We create more shadow by pretending that we don’t have one.

PT: You talk about redemption and the role it plays in preparing us to embody our bigger story. Let’s talk about redemption.

JACQUELYN: Redemption is tied to the process of salvation. We were taught that redemption is a moral issue, but it’s not; it’s a psychological process. To redeem something means to go back and salvage it. We were born as precious daughters and sons of God. We come into dysfunctional families because we humans have not been educated to remember who we are. We are raised with flawed parenting and as a consequence, create what psychology calls neuroses and dysfunctional ways of relating to the world, and we wind up distorted. To redeem means you go back and do a self-corrective process in

order to remember that you are a spiritual being in human form, rather than a little person who belonged to your mother and father. Often, people have to go to therapy or growth groups, or have a practice of self-reflection and meditation to work through the psychological wounds they have taken on. The process of becoming a practical mystic is a self-corrective course to get back in touch with who we really are and what we are here to do and be, which is to reshape and change this world into the ideal that it was intended to be. We are here to bring heaven to earth.

PT: This is not for the faint-hearted. How do we deal with the tensions, the emotional and physical strain of dying to the old while the new comes into formation?

JACQUELYN: Birthing new consciousness has to be done while staying focused on our spiritual purpose. Otherwise, we get trapped in low self-esteem and self-doubt and lose touch with our spiritual connection. We have been trained for two-hundred years through a belief system of pathology. We've been told that we are damaged, and given pathological labels, which makes us feel as though we are sick or crazy. This has to change. The discomfort that causes us to behave in improper ways is sometimes not symptoms of pathology, it is the birthing pangs of a new consciousness, which is very painful. Humans grow through processes of death and rebirth. Some deaths are small ones that don't bother us too much, but some are huge and we feel like we lose a lot at once. Staying focused on our spiritual purpose gives us the strength and substance to come through the pain and crisis, preventing us from getting lost. We have to utilize the Observer and we have to be in touch with the archetype we want to manifest, because archetypes sculpt our future. If I am trying to be a good teacher, I want to invoke the archetype of the Teacher. I want it to become my inner guide and to communicate with me. I have to know that it will speak through symbol, metaphor, dreams images and be willing to look at symbolic meanings. I gave an example earlier of the pearl gray wave image that came through my consciousness this morning as I was awakening. Our little ego struggles with this at first, because we have not been taught to look at our inner life with respect. We've been taught to seek money, success and fame. That's why my son's consulting firm managers were surprised when they saw, in the research, that young men and women in the company were aspiring to be artists and musicians, not vice presidents of the company! Again, to birth a new consciousness, we first have to sense what it is we are trying to become, which is different for everybody.

In your Higher Mind, your personal story is spread out over a much longer time line than your ordinary biography. Remember, you have archetypal significance, too! Let's go higher now and view you from a wider lens, from the World of Meaning. The memories of humanity's One Soul are stored in this higher world.—If you're willing, take a few deep breaths, and let your consciousness move into a timeless, sacred space. And then, listen: You came into a preselected family for the sacred purpose of incarnation to heal this particular part of humanity. You inherit traits and weaknesses of your predecessors, then make them conscious to heal or learn from them whatever your soul intends. Your genes are encoded with certain strengths, talents, and distortions that are to be released, expressed, erased, integrated, or transformed. You do this by taking on all that you inherited and then becoming conscious of it. You make spiritually based choices that resolve or correct the problems you carry and represent. Humanity can only be healed by each person's assimilation and transmutation of the human condition itself. We each have "our part" to do to cleanse the human DNA.

Some might feel drawn to be a server or a warrior and others a magician or lover. All are sacred ways to express spirit.

PT: *You are saying that we have to align with the archetypal energy that we are seeking. How do we know when the Divine calls us and how do we know which archetypal pattern is our greater purpose?*

JACQUELYN: It will come from what you are naturally interested in. Some people have a passion to be a gardener and to help planet Earth be a more beautiful and healthy place to live. Others are interested in the psychological aspect of life; they want to know how to change human consciousness. Others are architects and want to design the buildings for the new age. We have to look at our passions and honor our desire nature—whatever it is that we desire with all of our heart, what we yearn for when no one else is influencing us, who it is we are in our natural state. Then we have to identify the divine ideal of what we want to become. It might be the warrior or the healer. When you get in touch with the archetype you are seeking to bring into the world, you are going to hit a lot of trouble, unfortunately. You are going to work within the tension of the opposites, because you will have a part inside of you that is resistant to becoming that. We always do. That's the shadow, the part of you who will say, "Oh, you could never be that. My goodness, how arrogant of you to think that you could be a teacher." It will put you down, or distract you into "you better just make money," and send you on a fame trip, which can be an enormous distraction from what you are here to do and be. We have to be adamant about a spiritual practice that keeps us focused on what we intend. We have to stay true to it and not let society's norms pull us away. Once we invoke the archetype that we want to become, we have to learn how to live within the tension of the opposite, because everyone has a dark side that is a problem to be worked out.

PT: *Do you see the approaching millennium as having significance to this kind of transformational process?*

JACQUELYN: In every age of human history, there are people who feel a strong sense of destiny and realize that there's something bigger going on than meets the eye. At the end of centuries and at the end of millenniums, this intensity tends to coagulate into a powerful draw toward change. It's similar to the way we feel at the end of the year, when we make New Year's resolutions. Multiply that a million-fold, and that's what happens at the end of a millennium. However, we're not just at the end of a millennium, we're at the end of a 25,000-year cycle, and at the end of a 250,000-year cycle. There is an impulse within the human process that feels like we are passing through a doorway, entering a new dimension or birthing a new consciousness. Some think that something dramatic is going to happen. I personally don't believe that. I think there is going to be more desire in humans to preserve and improve life. It is interesting that negative archetypes are being exposed. Clinton, Monica and OJ Simpson have captivated our consciousness. Not only do we see that change is needed in our political, economic and education institutions, human beings are looking at archetypal patterns and saying, "Whoa, we really do need change." Unfortunately, human beings don't tend to change until there is a crisis. People with high visibility often reflect the archetypes, both their positive and negative sides. This helps us all see more clearly what we value and need to correct.

PT: *In conclusion is there anything else that you would like to add?*

JACQUELYN: If you are awakening right now, you know it, because the truth is, you are already a practical mystic. We are all mystics, and will awaken at some point to our true powers as living souls.

And finally, my prayer is that we all invoke the quality of right relationship, remembering that we are all brother and sister souls in one big human family. We need to let go of jealousy, possessiveness and competition, and see the beauty and unique creative potential in everyone and help bring that out in one another. This is what creates a better world. •



Telling the Truth

ROBERT RABBIN

Even though the truth of our being is present and revealed within us at all times, we do not usually experience this truth, know this truth, or speak this truth. We have to first work to get at it, and we have to work to live in it. After a while, living in the essential truth becomes natural, and we couldn't leave that truth even if we wanted to. It does take work and practice to find and experience and speak this truth of universal mystical essence. Until we do, we have to say that we are liars about life. This is not an accusation. However, if we do not tell the truth, then we tell lies. To tell the truth of who we are is difficult, though we must—all of us—now begin to do so. Certainly leaders will have to do so or they cannot be leaders.

Just as it is difficult to speak the inner truth, so is it difficult to speak the outer truth, to represent explicitly and precisely how we act and what we do—without anything else added. Just the bare presentation of facts, no extraneous adjectives or adverbs, only nouns and verbs: actions and items. I threw this

rock through that window.

There is a strong correlation between being able to speak the truth of our inner being and being able to speak the truth of our outer actions. Both are essential. Both are hallmarks of leaders.

Telling the truth of our actions is difficult because, though we are told as children to tell the truth, most of us get into trouble when we tell the truth. “Did you take those cookies from the cookie jar?”

“Yes.” SMACK. We won't again admit that we took any cookies, not if it means getting hit on the head. We'll say, “No, I didn't. I swear I didn't. I think Rick did it.”

We often make others uncomfortable when we speak the truth. We often elicit disapproval, or worse: “Do you have to say that?” “Why can't you be nice?” “Don't rock the boat.” “You're being disloyal.” “Let's just put that behind us.” “It's not nice to hurt someone's feelings.” “Don't rat on your friends.” “You should be ashamed of what you did.”

We quickly learn that telling the truth is risky busi-

Telling the truth takes practice. We must learn to get in touch with our inner and outer truths, and then we have to become fearless enough to speak those truths. This is the only way we will find out that truth has the power to liberate, to enliven, to empower—to free us from fear, shame, guilt. This is the only way we can discover that we need not fear truth, that we can live and prosper in truth.

ness, so we learn how to obscure and spin the truth for approval, security, acceptance, to get what we want, to avoid punishment. We condition ourselves to instantly distort the true facts of our lives, so much so that we aren't able to know, within ourselves, what is true about our own motives, desires, and actions. The truth is terrifying to us.

In the late 1980s, I led a series of seminars in San Francisco, New York, and Boston. On the morning of the second day of a two-day seminar in Boston, we sat together in a truth circle. I asked everyone to consider saying something that they had never told anyone before, something they had kept secret and hidden from view.

The rationale for this exercise is simple: if we want to transform ourselves, to free ourselves from falsehood, to liberate ourselves from anxiety and fear and conditioning, to experience truth—then we will have to tell the truth. We will have to put our actual lives on the line. All transformation begins from where we are, by admitting what is true, what is actual, about our lives. This might be painful at first, but telling the truth will ultimately bring exquisite health, joy, and radiance to our lives: the truth will set us free.

The ground rule was that participation was voluntary. I was only offering the opportunity to explore the power of truth-telling.

In the first go around, people said things like, “I stole a bag of candy when I was seven;” “I cheated on a math test;” “I blamed the broken vase on my brother;” “I lied on a job application.”

It was a beginning, albeit a modest one. I asked people how they felt when they spoke these previ-

ously unuttered truths. They felt relieved and somehow strengthened. I asked people how they felt about the others who had spoken these truths. They said they felt empathy. No one felt criticized, threatened, or judged.

I asked people to have another turn. I asked them to rummage through their forbidden experiences and bring one out. I reminded them to just say what happened and not add explanations or excuses; just say what happened. People reported truths that were a bit more revealing. The practice of the first round resulted in more significant tales. After this second round, we could feel a definite shift in awareness; we had come to a more acute state of attention. A new force, like a weather front, was gathering within each of us. A small truth had led to a larger truth; truth was catching hold. I asked people if they wanted to have a third try, and they said yes, they almost demanded it. They were ready, eager, anxious, to purge themselves of congestion and inhibitions and long-held fear and shame.

This time, people said things like, “My father made me suck his penis every day for ten years, from the time I was five;” “One night last week I ate a jar of peanut butter, two bags of Oreo cookies, and a one-pound bag of M&Ms and then made myself vomit—I’ve been doing things like that all my life;” “My father got so mad at me once that he killed my cat in front of me and nailed it to my bedroom wall;” “I masturbated with a crucifix;” “I stole about \$25,000 worth of equipment from my employer and sold it in flea markets;” “I watched an elderly woman being beaten and robbed in a subway and did nothing to help her—I walked off the platform.”

Telling the truth takes practice. We must learn to get in touch with our inner and outer truths, and then we have to become fearless enough to speak those truths. This is the only way we will find out that truth has the power to liberate, to enliven, to empower—to free us from fear, shame, guilt. This is the only way we can discover that we need not fear truth, that we can live and prosper in truth. Truth is a cleansing and purifying drink whose potency restores vitality, health, and radiance to our lives.

Telling the truth is hard and often terrifying. Sometimes we don't want to face what we actually do—we'd rather deny what we did, or find a way to pin the tail on someone else's donkey, because we feel that the truth is too shameful. Alcohol and drug co-dependency, familial dysfunctions, sexual abuse, corporate and governmental fraud and corruption, police and military brutality—all of these exist as a function of secrecy, fear, intimidation, and shame. We often repress the truth of our actions and the actions of others through a personal code of denial, thinking this denial absolves us of responsibility and protects us from consequences.

Most of us also subscribe to another kind of self-protective code, a club code like the Mafia's code of omerta, silence. These codes are meant to protect people within a particular group from the inquiries of outsiders. Codes of self-protective silence prohibit truth and accountability, ensuring the group's survival. Almost every corporation, organization, institution, and bureaucracy—secular and religious—has a code of omerta every bit as perilous as the Mafia's.

People who break codes of silence and speak out on behalf of truth and accountability are often demonized, vilified, persecuted, imprisoned, even killed. These truth-tellers and boat-rockers are branded by others as heretics, pagans, traitors, whistle-blowers and are routinely condemned. Jeffrey Wigand is one example. The vice president for research and development with Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp. between 1989-93, he began to tell the truth about the tobacco industry. They, in turn, embarked on a campaign to discredit him personally and professionally, and to sue him for violating terms of his confidentiality agreement. It was made to seem that the larger crime was to

reveal the truth, rather than what the truth revealed.

That's the way it usually works, although there appears to be a real outbreak of truth-telling and whistle-blowing going on in the world today. Whistle-blowers are very close to being saints. I would love to see a thousand saints of conscience wake up tomorrow and call a thousand press conferences.

We have to start telling the truth, whether or not we want to be leaders. You and I must step forward and show the hand that threw the rock. The poet Robert Frost said that "anything more than the truth would be too much." We are in the habit of saying much too much, spinning spun truths, hardly ever speaking the actual truth.

On November 5, 1996, *USA Today* reported the results of a study conducted at RAND and the Harvard School of Public Health that revealed the full extent of medical negligence in the U.S. The annual toll of medical harm includes: 1.3 million injuries, 180,000 deaths, and total costs of \$50 billion.

There is a very practical reason for telling the truth. Telling the truth makes what is real, real. A lie distorts the simple fact of our actions and is composed, in varying measures, of fantasy, denial, belief, rhetoric, dogma, fear, guilt, shame, greed, anger, rationalization and justification. Relative to actual events, a lie is unreal and the truth is real, and nothing is more practical than reality.

When we speak lies, we create an unreal world, an abstract world. If our lies have force and conviction, which they usually do, we end up believing them ourselves. We then live in this unreal, abstract world. We grow up in this world. We go to school in this world. We work in this world. We try to solve problems in this world. We marry and have children in this world. We pray and worship in this world. We grow old and die in this world. The celluloid world of movies is more real than this unreal world of our lies.

It is hard to tell the truth; still, we must enter the actual world of how we are and of what we do. If we don't, how will we be able to change what needs to be changed, to fix what is broken, to soothe what hurts, to find love in a joyous world? We must start telling the truth, the whole truth—not the distorted truth, the partial truth, the half truth, the truth that makes us look good by deflecting culpability, or sells

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Love, Compassion and Joy

THICH NHAT HANH

If you learn to practice love, compassion, joy, and equanimity, you will know how to heal the illnesses of anger, sorrow, insecurity, sadness, hatred, loneliness, and unhealthy attachments.

Love, compassion, joy, and equanimity are the very nature of an enlightened person. They are the four aspects of true love within ourselves and within everyone and everything.

The first aspect of true love is maitri, the intention and capacity to offer joy and happiness. To develop that capacity, we have to practice looking and listening deeply so that we know what to do and what not to do to make others happy. If you offer your beloved something she does not need, that is not maitri. You have to see her real situation or what you offer might bring her unhappiness.

In Southeast Asia, many people are extremely fond of a large, thorny fruit called durian. You could even say they are addicted to it. Its smell is extremely strong, and when some people finish eating the fruit, they put the skin under their bed so they can contin-

ue to smell it. To me, the smell of durian is horrible. One day when I was practicing chanting in my temple in Vietnam, there was a durian on the altar that had been offered to the Buddha. I was trying to recite the Lotus Sutra, using a wooden drum and a large bowl-shaped bell for accompaniment, but I could not concentrate at all. I finally carried the bell to the altar and turned it upside down to imprison the durian, so I could chant the sutra. After I finished, I bowed to the Buddha and liberated the durian. If you were to say to me, “Thay, I love you so much I would like you to eat some of this durian,” I would suffer. You love me, you want me to be happy, but you force me to eat durian. That is an example of love without understanding. Your intention is good, but you don’t have the correct understanding.

Without understanding, your love is not true love. You must look deeply in order to see and understand the needs, aspirations, and suffering of the one you love. We all need love. Love brings us joy and well-being. It is as natural as the air. We are loved by

TSU/DAN BOSLER

the air; we need fresh air to be happy and well. We are loved by trees. We need trees to be healthy. In order to be loved, we have to love, which means we have to understand. For our love to continue, we have to take the appropriate action or non-action to protect the air, the trees, and our beloved.

Maitri can be translated as “love” or “loving kindness.” Some Buddhist teachers prefer “loving kindness,” as they find the word “love” too dangerous. But I prefer “love.” Words sometimes get sick and we have to heal them. We have been using the word “love” to mean appetite or desire, as in “I love hamburgers.” We have to use language more carefully. “Love” is a beautiful word; we have to restore its meaning. The word “maitri” has roots in the word mitra, which means friend. In Buddhism, the primary meaning of love is friendship.

We all have the seeds of love in us. We can develop this wonderful source of energy, nurturing the unconditional love that does not expect anything in return. When we understand someone deeply, even someone who has done us harm, we cannot resist loving him or her.

The second aspect of true love is karuna, the intention and capacity to relieve and transform suffering and lighten sorrows. Karuna is usually translated as “compassion,” but that is not exactly correct. “Compassion” is composed of com (“together with”) and passion (“to suffer”). But we do not need to suffer to remove suffering from another. Doctors, for instance, can relieve their patients’ suffering without experiencing the same disease in themselves. If we suffer too much, we may be crushed and unable to help. Still, until we find a better word, let us use “compassion” to translate karuna.

To develop compassion in ourselves, we must practice mindful breathing, deep listening, and deep looking. Compassion contains deep concern. You know the other person is suffering, so you sit close to her. You look and listen deeply so you can touch her pain. You are in deep communication, deep communion with her, and that brings some relief.

One compassionate word, action, or thought can reduce another person’s suffering and bring him joy. One word can give comfort and confidence, destroy doubt, help someone avoid a mistake, reconcile a conflict, or open the door to liberation. One action

can save a person’s life or help him take advantage of a rare opportunity. One thought can do the same, because thoughts always lead to words and actions. With compassion in our heart, every thought, word, and deed can bring about a miracle.

The third element of true love is mudita, joy. True love always brings joy to ourselves and to the one we love. If our love does not bring joy to both of us, it is not true love.

Commentators explain that happiness relates to both body and mind, whereas joy relates primarily to mind. This example is often given: Someone traveling in the desert sees a stream of cool water and experiences joy. On drinking the water, he experiences happiness. We don’t rush to the future; we know that everything is here in the present moment. Many small things can bring us tremendous joy, such as the awareness that we have eyes in good condition. We just have to open our eyes and we can see the blue sky, the violet flowers, the children, the trees, and so many other kinds of forms and colors. Dwelling in mindfulness, we can touch these wondrous and refreshing things, and our mind of joy arises naturally. Joy contains happiness and happiness contains joy.

Some commentators have said that mudita means “sympathetic joy” or “altruistic joy,” the happiness we feel when others are happy. But that is too limited. It discriminates between self and others. A deeper definition of mudita is a joy that is filled with peace and contentment. We rejoice when we see others happy, but we rejoice in our own well-being as well. How can we feel joy for another person when we do not feel joy for ourselves? Joy is for everyone.

The fourth element of true love is upeksha, which means equanimity, nonattachment, nondiscrimination, even-mindedness, or letting go. Upa means “over,” and iksh means “to look.” You climb the mountain to be able to look over the whole situation, not bound by one side or the other. If your love has attachment, discrimination, prejudice, or clinging in it, it is not true love. If you have more than one child, they are all your children. Upeksha does not mean that you don’t love. You love in a way that all your children receive your love, without discrimination.

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When We Approach Change as a Gift

AN INTERVIEW WITH
MIKELA AND PHILIP TARLOW
BY MELISSA WEST

Philip and Mikela Tarlow offer seminars around the world in “psychological futurism,” empowering individuals and corporations to creatively respond to the unknown shape of our personal and collective futures. Mikela has a social science and organizational analysis background while Philip is an internationally recognized artist. Both bring personal passion and decades of serious spiritual work to their workshops.

Currently on a national tour promoting Mikela’s book, *Navigating the Future: A Personal Guide to Achieving Success in the New Millennium*, I talked with them in Houston where Philip was also attending a gallery opening of his work.

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION: “*Navigating the Future*” offers a groundbreaking program for finding new ways of coping in a world of accelerated change. How did you move into this work?

MIKELA: In the last six years we’ve noticed a distinct difference in the concerns that people have: more uncertainty about the future, difficulty in planning ahead given the velocity of cultural change. The work also came out of a time of despair in our own lives when we had left the city where we had been living for eight years, and the organization we were working with so closely.

PHILIP: For a while we didn’t have any up, down, or sideways. We didn’t have an identity anymore, and went through a period of deep questioning. You could call it despair in that we knew we could never go back to what we had been doing. It had to be something different, and we had no clue what it was going to be. Out of that despair a new and tremendously creative life was born.

PT: *What is the place of despair in the process of change?*

MIKELA: Despair is the deeply creative moment when you know it’s impossible to continue the old way. When you hit that wall, breakthrough is always just on the other side. More and more people are being pushed to that despair point because of the accelerating change and resulting chaos in our culture.

PT: *Given that most of us don’t welcome despair, what encouragement can you offer for working with despair as an ally?*

MIKELA: Accept that your despair is valid and important. In this culture we try so hard to fix everything that’s uncomfortable. Find people who can give you comfort and support without trying to fix you. When we are surrounded by community, it is a lot easier to go through those dark spaces.

PHILIP: If you don’t feel your despair you can get stuck in it. Despair is a normal part of a cycle of feelings, but if we get too scared to feel it fully, then it can go on and on. Suppressed despair isn’t different from any other suppressed feeling, suppressed sadness or even suppressed joy. Suppression of despair blocks chi, if you want to use that terminology, and you’re stuck because you’re sitting on something that wants to move just like any other feeling.

PT: *What is the greatest gift of despair?*

MIKELA: Through despair you reach out to something new. You find new depths and creativity in yourself. Hope and new life are the natural results of feeling your despair and moving through it.

PT: *What do you see people hope for?*

MIKELA: Hope is a feeling that there’s something beyond what you see in front of you: that there’s always something greater and more miraculous in the unknown.

PT: *So it isn’t hope for a particular outcome?*

PHILIP: This kind of hope is based on growing

We're reaching the end of a lot of paradigms: capitalism is no longer working, the economic system is reaching the edge of what is explainable. From the personal to the political, we're hitting the edges of an old system.... The future lives at the edge. The center of society is always locked into maintaining the status quo.

experiences of the essential goodness of human beings and the essential creativity of life. Elders used to be role models who allowed you to hope because you saw they embodied the extraordinary resilience of the human being and the creative nature of life itself. That hope was passed down in a very organic and natural way from the elders to everyone else.

PT: *Then hope happens in two ways. First, hope naturally flowers once you move through the threshold of despair. The other way is that hope can be "caught" from elders.*

PHILIP: I have actually experienced that second way just watching my father. He's 87, working on his second book, and more full of enthusiasm than when he was a younger person. If I were living in a community where elders were an inspiration to others, I would have an entirely different understanding of hope and faith.

PT: *It sounds like despair is the other side of the coin from faith and hope. We want to jump to faith and hope, but what you are saying is that hope is an organic outcome of either listening to someone who has been through the cycles enough or just trusting that cycle in our own life.*

MIKELA: I don't think they're even two sides of the same coin. Despair and hope are just integral parts of the same process. You can't have deep hope without having experienced deep despair. In writing *Navigating the Future*, I did a massive amount of research about what's happening in our culture. There's a chapter that didn't make it into the book that was just terrifying. One very unexpected thing that happened to me out of writing about how bad things are is that I began to feel hope. I can't explain it, but in some ways I feel more hopeful than I have felt in a long time, and in the midst of having more depressing knowledge than I've ever had. Despair and hope are intertwined, both results of being

deeply involved in life.

PT: *So, allowing ourselves to fully enter into despair stretches our hearts and souls and increases our carrying capacity for life itself.*

MIKELA: Yes!

PT: *In "Navigating the Future" you write about carrying the future within us. What do you mean by that?*

MIKELA: We hold a knowledge of the future in our body. When we get people more connected to their feelings and a sort of kinesthetic sensing of the world, they seem to go to a knowledge of their own personal future. The future does not exist in time; you never reach the future. The future is only touched when you go more deeply into your own experience.

PHILIP: Our notion of time is just a model. The Aborigines in Australia have a different model so for them it's normal to access the past or the future part of their dreamworld. Just as there are different languages, there are also different concepts of time. Thinking of the future as "out there" in our linear way can lead to hopelessness, like you're eternally chasing a carrot.

MIKELA: This whole linear model of the future that you have to run toward pulls you away from yourself. It is a constant looking outward.

PT: *In that looking outward, so many of us become afraid of the future.*

MIKELA: I think our fear of the future is our fear of losing control. Much of the journey of Western history has been a journey of control: controlling nature, controlling insects, controlling everything. I think a lot of people are realizing that life is essentially uncontrollable.

Alvin Toffler coined the term "future shock" to name the feeling that the future is arriving too quickly. You feel overwhelmed and in response you withdraw or try to numb out, losing choice about

where your life is heading. But we see evidence of a new kind of sensation that we have termed “future flow.” You see it most clearly in young people who are not shocked at the magnitude of change that surrounds us; in fact, they have accepted this accelerated turbulence as a fact of life that allows for new kinds of creativity. Future flow results in an attraction to, rather than denial of or withdrawal from, what lies ahead.

PT: *What is left when we let go of that illusion of control over the future?*

MIKELA: Tremendous creativity!

PT: *But if people are searching for safety through control, how can they find it once they let go?*

MIKELA: Well, even the desire for safety comes out of the model of control. When you start to discover your own essential creativity, you’re not looking at things in terms of safety. You’re more focused on the process itself.

PHILIP: Most people share at the end of our seminars that they felt safer than they ever had before. It’s not a physical safety. It’s a wide open space. There’s a safety in letting go that’s way beyond the safety of having a security gate around your house.

I think there’s also a radically different kind of safety once you give up the illusion that you’re totally in control of your own life and the process of change. When you go to the transcendent—whatever you call it—the feeling of safety is inherent; it’s not something you need to strive after. The very nature of the transcendent is safety.

When a little child is out playing and he knows that his mother is at home, he feels safe. If he’s not sure that mother’s there he constricts and doesn’t feel that wonderful wild energy that kids have when they know that mother is home. “Mother is at home” is that experience of the transcendent, whatever way you get it. Once you have that absolute safety, your creativity flourishes and you can let go into the process.

PT: *How do you see those processes of individual transformation and cultural transformation informing each other?*

MIKELA: As information presses in on us, the boundaries between our personal experience and cultural experience are becoming more transparent. We are accustomed to attributing personal feelings

to personal events in our life. We need to learn to see that these feelings may be information about what’s happening on a larger level than our own personal story. Your feeling of depression may be about your life, but it also may be about what’s happening around you. When you start to understand your experience that way, it actually becomes a source of motivation for greater involvement in cultural change.

PT: *How is that?*

MIKELA: When you understand that your feelings are connected to the larger environment, it leads to a feeling of connection and that connection leads you to involvement. When you totally personalize your feelings, it perpetuates a bubble of isolation. Feeling connected pokes a big hole in that bubble.

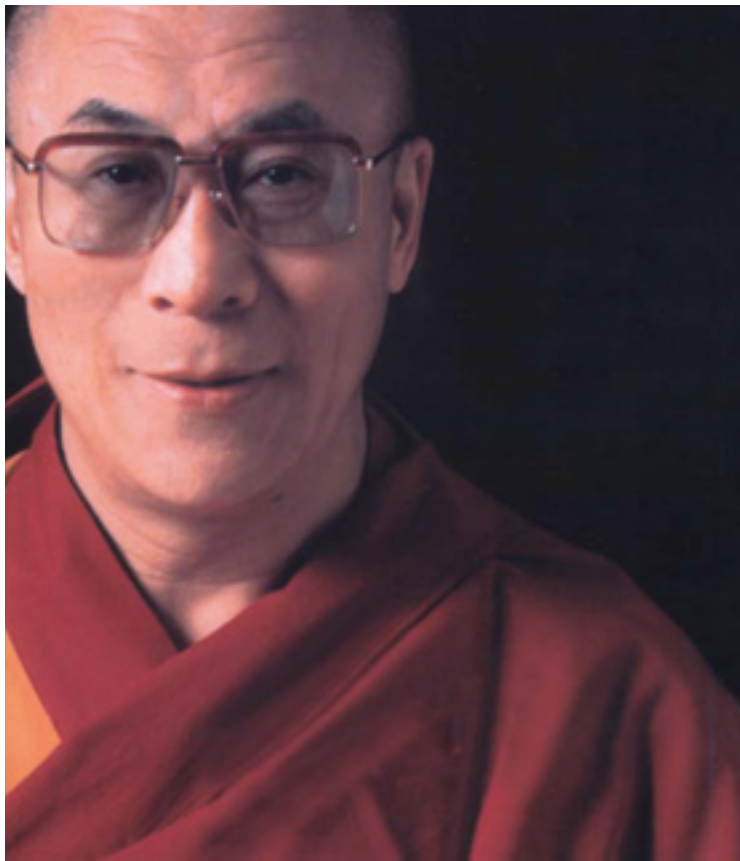
We’re reaching the end of a lot of paradigms: capitalism is no longer working, the economic system is reaching the edge of what is explainable. From the personal to the political, we’re hitting the edges of an old system. Philip and I love working with edges. The future lives at the edge. The center of society is always locked into maintaining the status quo. New cultural ideas always come from the edge, from people who have the least to lose. In the same way, our own personal future is found at the edge, in those stray thoughts or vague sensations we ignore because we are more concerned with the “center” of our life.

Learning to discover and ride the edge of our lives is much like a surfer who catches the most productive point on a wave. We are at a moment in history where we must rewrite our fundamental assumptions about economics, career, community, healing. The only way to discover a future capable of delivering the magnitude of transformation our society needs is by learning to ride the edge.

PT: *We are beginning the last year of this millennium, a huge edge. How would you suggest preparing through 1999 for the new millennium?*

MIKELA: 1999 is a threshold between millennia. People will be dealing with death and rebirth energy more than in any other year to date. We are surrounded both by disaster prophecies and some very real challenges. It is no accident that our millennium celebration is seriously dampened by the unknown effect of the Y2K computer problem.

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The Value and Benefits of Compassion

THE DALAI LAMA AND HOWARD CUTLER

As our conversations progressed, I discovered that the development of compassion plays a far greater role in the Dalai Lama's life than simply a means to cultivating a feeling of warmth and affection, a means of improving our relationship with others. It became clear, in fact, that as a practicing Buddhist, the development of compassion was an integral part of his spiritual path.

"Given the importance that Buddhism places on compassion as an essential part of one's spiritual development," I asked, "can you more clearly define what you mean by 'compassion'?"

The Dalai Lama replied, "Compassion can be roughly defined in terms of a state of mind that is nonviolent, nonharming, and nonaggressive. It is a mental attitude based on the wish for others to be free of suffering and is associated with a sense of commitment, responsibility, and respect towards the other.

"In discussing the definition of compassion, the Tibetan word Tse-wa, there is also a sense to the word of its being a state of mind that can include a wish for good things for oneself. In developing compassion perhaps one could begin with the wish that oneself be free of suffering, and then take that natural feeling towards oneself and cultivate it, enhance it, and extend it out to include and embrace others.

"Now when people speak of compassion, I think that there is often a danger of confusing compassion with attachment. So when we discuss compassion, we must first make a distinction between two types of love or compassion. One kind of compassion is tinged with attachment—the feeling of controlling someone, or loving someone so that person will love you back. This ordinary type of love or compassion is quite partial and biased. And a relationship based on that alone is unstable. That kind of partial relationship, based on

Genuine compassion is based on the rationale that all human beings have an innate desire to be happy and overcome suffering, just like myself. And, just like myself, they have the natural right to fulfill this fundamental aspiration. On the basis of the recognition of this equality and commonality, you develop a sense of affinity and closeness with others.

perceiving and identifying the person as a friend, may lead to a certain emotional attachment and feeling of closeness. But if there is a slight change in the situation, a disagreement perhaps, or if your friend does something to make you angry, then all of a sudden your mental projection changes; the concept of my friend's no longer there. Then you'll find the emotional attachment evaporating, and instead of that feeling of love and concern, you may have a feeling of hatred. So that kind of love, based on attachment, can be closely linked with hatred.

“But there is a second type of compassion that is free from such attachment. That is genuine compassion. That kind of compassion isn't so much based on the fact that this person or that person is dear to me. Rather, genuine compassion is based on the rationale that all human beings have an innate desire to be happy and overcome suffering, just like myself. And, just like myself, they have the natural right to fulfill this fundamental aspiration. On the basis of the recognition of this equality and commonality, you develop a sense of affinity and closeness with others. With this as a foundation, you can feel compassion regardless of whether you view the other person as a friend or an enemy. It is based on the other's fundamental rights rather than your own mental projection. Upon this basis, then, you will generate love and compassion. That's genuine compassion.

“So, one can see how making the distinction between these two kinds of compassion and cultivating genuine compassion can be quite important in our day-to-day life. For instance, in marriage there is generally a component of emotional attachment. But I think that if there is a component of genuine compassion as well, based on mutual

respect as two human beings, the marriage tends to last a long time. In the case of emotional attachment without compassion, the marriage is more unstable and tends to end more quickly.”

The idea of developing a different kind of compassion, a more universal compassion, a kind of generic compassion divorced from personal feeling, seemed like a tall order. Turning it over in my mind, as if thinking aloud, I asked, “But love or compassion is a subjective feeling. It seems that the emotional tone or feeling of love or compassion would be the same whether it was ‘tinged with attachment’ or ‘genuine.’ So if the person would experience the same emotion or feeling in both types, why is it important to distinguish between the two?”

In a decisive tone, the Dalai Lama answered, “First, I think there is a different quality between the feeling of genuine love, or compassion, and love based on attachment. It's not the same feeling. The feeling of genuine compassion is much stronger, much wider; it has a very profound quality. Also, genuine love and compassion are much more stable, more reliable. For example, if you see an animal intensely suffering, like a fish writhing with a hook in its mouth, you might spontaneously experience a feeling of not being able to bear its pain. That feeling isn't based on a special connection with that particular animal, a feeling of ‘Oh, that animal is my friend!’ In that case you're basing your compassion simply on the fact that that being also has feeling, can experience pain, and has a right not to experience such pain. So that type of compassion, not mixed with desire or attachment, is much more sound, and more durable in the long run.”

Moving deeper into the subject of compassion, I continued, “Now in your example of seeing a fish

While undergoing rigorous training, an athlete may suffer a lot—working out, sweating, straining.... But the athlete doesn't see it as a painful experience. The athlete would take it as a great accomplishment, an experience associated with a sense of joy. But if the same person were subject to some other physical work that was not part of his athletic training, the athlete would think, "Oh, why have I been subjected to this terrible ordeal?"

intensely suffering with a hook in its mouth, you bring up a vital point—that it is associated with a feeling of not being able to bear its pain."

"Yes," said the Dalai Lama. "In fact, in one sense one could define compassion as the feeling of unbearableness at the sight of other people's suffering, other sentient being's suffering. And in order to generate that feeling one must first have an appreciation of the seriousness or intensity of another's suffering. So I think that the more fully one understands suffering, and the various kinds of suffering that we are subject to, the deeper will be one's level of compassion."

I raised the question, "Well, I appreciate the fact that greater awareness of other's suffering can enhance our capacity for compassion. In fact, by definition, compassion involves opening oneself to another's suffering. Sharing another's suffering. But there's a more basic question: Why would we want to take on another's suffering when we don't even want our own? I mean, most of us go to great lengths to avoid our own pain and suffering, even to the point of taking drugs and so on. Why would we deliberately take on someone else's suffering?"

Without hesitation the Dalai Lama responded, "I feel that there is a significant difference between your own suffering and the suffering you might experience in a compassionate state in which you take upon yourself and share other people's suffering—a qualitative difference." He paused, and then as if effortlessly targeting my own feelings at the moment, he continued, "When you think about your own suffering, there is a feeling of being totally overwhelmed. There is a sense of being burdened, of being pressed under something—a feel-

ing of helplessness. There's a dullness, almost as if your faculties have become numb.

"Now, in generating compassion, when you are taking on another's suffering, you may also initially experience a certain degree of discomfort, a sense of uncomfortableness or unbearableness. But in the case of compassion, the feeling is much different; underlying the uncomfortable feeling is a very high level of alertness and determination because you are voluntarily and deliberately accepting another's suffering for a higher purpose. There is a feeling of connectedness and commitment, a willingness to reach out to others, a feeling of freshness rather than dullness. This is similar to the case of an athlete. While undergoing rigorous training, an athlete may suffer a lot—working out, sweating, straining. I think it can be quite a painful and exhausting experience. But the athlete doesn't see it as a painful experience. The athlete would take it as a great accomplishment, an experience associated with a sense of joy. But if the same person were subject to some other physical work that was not part of his athletic training, the athlete would think, 'Oh, why have I been subjected to this terrible ordeal?' So the mental attitude makes a tremendous difference."

These few words, spoken with such conviction, lifted me from an oppressed feeling to one of a feeling of the possibility the resolution of suffering, of transcending suffering. •

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Delphi University

Change as Gift

Continued from page 54

In mythology there is always a guardian who watches the threshold or edge. The function of the guardian is to tell you to turn back. You don't have what it takes to go forward, it's too dangerous out there. Y2K and all the bad news scenarios function as guardians when they engender despair. The good news is that whenever you feel despair, it is always a sign that you are close to a threshold or edge. The future dwells just on the other side of that despair.

So this year, go straight for your despair. It is through feeling your way through these issues that you will discover where the edge lies. Only when you reach the edges of your despair will you be able to see a new world of possibility.

PHILIP: My recommendation goes back to a traditional Jewish image of the period between Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year: the archer taking aim. During that time the archer carefully takes aim, marking exactly where his arrow is to go. He looses it on the New Year and, since he has spent so much time aiming, it goes straight to the target.

We can treat this entire year as that same long moment. What a gift. Instead of having ten days to sight our targets and aim, we have a whole year. Each morning we can wake up and ask, what does this momentous time mean to me? If I'm being given a whole year to evaluate where I am, and where I want to go in this new millennium, how can I most wisely make use of that gift? Where do I want the arrow of my life to fly? When we approach change, both personal and cultural, as that archer, it all becomes a gift. •

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Being Loving

DAVID SPANGLER

At times that seems like such a huge task. What does it mean to be loving? How can I be loving? But it so often comes down to such simple things as: “Can I value you? Can I be courteous to you? Can I honor you? Can I treat you with integrity?” We think of love as an attitude and at times struggle to have it, but in many ways it is a behavior. It is what we do.

What is the behavior of being loving?

In one of the loveliest Arthurian stories, Sir Gawain, a knight of the Round Table, agrees to marry Ragnall, a hideously ugly hag, in exchange for her telling the king a secret that will save him from death. The wedding is held, and all the kingdom has pity for this handsome and gallant knight who is marrying someone so horrible in both appearance and manners.

After Gawain and his bride retire to their wedding chambers, she excuses herself to slip into something more comfortable while he climbs into bed, prepared to do his conjugal duty with this hag. Then, out from the curtains steps a stunningly beautiful young woman, the “fairest woman in the land.”

Gawain is dumbfounded. “Where is my wife? What have you done to her?”

“I am your wife,” the woman replies. Then she tells how an evil sorcerer had put an enchantment upon her so that she shifted from being rapturously beautiful to being repulsively ugly.

“Now,” Ragnall says to Gawain, “you have a choice. As my husband, you must decide if you want me beautiful by night for your pleasure, and ugly by day, knowing that people will pity you; or beautiful by day, so people will honor you, and ugly by night, which will bring you no pleasure. Which do you want? You decide.”

All husbands should take note of this, for Gawain proves his wisdom as a man and his smarts as a husband. He says, “This is not for me to choose. I want you to be the way you want to be. It is your choice.”

He gives her back her power. Gawain does not try to decide Ragnall’s life for her. He says, “You are the powerful one. It is your choice, not mine.”

With that, the spell on her is broken and she is beautiful all the time. He honors her sovereignty and that frees her to be her true self.

That to me is loving behavior: giving back power and honoring the integrity of another. It is valuing who the other is. That is a behavior that says, “God loved the world, so He (or She) sent you here, too.”

You are important. I want to honor you because of this importance. I want to honor your sovereignty. I want to treasure who you are. •

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Briefly Noted

Living in Process, Basic Truths for Living the Path of the Soul, by Anne Wilson Schaefer. Ballantine Wellspring, 1998, 361 pages.

In a product-driven society, Anne Wilson Schaefer offers a welcome alternative: participate fully and mindfully in the process of living. Focusing on the journey, not the destination, and living life from the inside instead of trying to control it from the outside, can help maintain balance and calm in the midst of chaotic living. Schaefer's action philosophy and her focus on Deep Process will help readers reconnect with their spirituality and rediscover their personal power, enriching their souls and freeing their spirits.



The Ten-Second Miracle, Creating Relationship Breakthroughs, by Gay Hendricks. HarperSan Francisco, 1998, 266 pages.

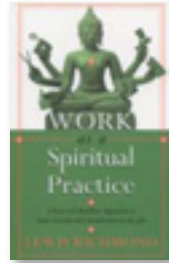
We've all done it: said the wrong thing at the wrong time, or failed to speak up when we should, creating trouble in relationships. It takes just 10 seconds to make or break a close relationship, says Gay Hendricks, and he has the tools to make the most of those 10 seconds. He shows readers how to master the critical moments that can turn a relationship around, avoid the seven biggest mistakes that couples make, rediscover blocked feelings, and enhance intimacy and renewal. He also offers communi-



cation strategies that can help diffuse conflict, break through stalemates, and tell difficult truths. All are aimed at restoring harmony to the family, marriage and work.

Work as a Spiritual Practice: A Practical Buddhist Approach to Inner Growth and Satisfaction on the Job, by Lewis Richmond. Bantam Doubleday Dell, 1999, 288 pages.

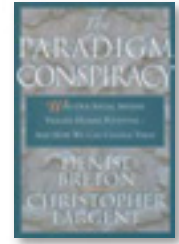
If keeping your work life separate from your spiritual life is a constant struggle, maybe it's time to combine the two and nurture the inner self throughout the workday. Using Buddhist tenets, Lewis Richmond has developed a program that teaches readers to be more relaxed and spiritually fulfilled at work by practicing breathing exercises, developing a sensible pace and healthy equilibrium, and creating a comfortable work environment. He offers practical advice mixed with humor and real-life examples—from doctors to factory workers—in presenting the keys to becoming “chief executive” of your inner life.



The Paradigm Conspiracy, Why Our Social Systems Violate Human Potential—And How We Can Change Them, by Denise Breton and Christopher Largent. Hazelden, 1996, 388 pages.

It's easy to attack a system as a failure; the challenge comes in offering a better way. Enter Denise Breton and Christopher Largent. The authors attack the major institutions of our country—the government, church, school and culture—as diseased entities drastical-

ly in need of change. And they offer, from a spiritual, psychological and political perspective, soul-sensitive directions that change should take. Their solutions offer transformation and recovery on both a personal and societal level. The starting point is within each of us and the goal is societal structures that honor our souls rather than power.



Creating Your Future, 5 Steps to the Life of Your Dreams, by Dave Ellis. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998, 228 pages.

You may not be able to predict the future, but you can create it. In his latest book, Dave Ellis outlines the five steps you need to create the life you've always wanted. Getting the most out of life is a matter of choice and vision: Choosing what you want to have happen for the rest of your life and then creating the vision to make it happen. Ellis' five steps—Commit, Create, Construct, Carry Out and Celebrate—are inspirational yet practical and offer possibilities, not prescriptions, to creating the life of your dreams.



Spiritual Literacy, Reading the Literacy in Everyday Life, by Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat. Touchstone/Simon & Schuster, 1996, 608 pages.

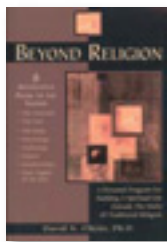
Countless books, seminars, tapes, and retreats focus on deepening spirituality by understanding theological concepts and religious

dogmas. The reality, say Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat, is that spirituality exists and must be nurtured in the myriad simple, familiar, and yet sacred, activities of daily life: cooking dinner, playing with the dog, watching television with the children, visiting the zoo. Through 650 “readings”—stories, poetry, humor and reflections—of everyday experiences, the Brussats bring spirituality home, close to the heart, and remind us that spirituality must touch every single aspect of daily life. Their *Alphabet of Spiritual Literacy* is a collage of wisdom from many spiritual paths that act as markers of the spiritual life and are reflected throughout the book.



Beyond Religion, A Personal Program for Building a Spiritual Life Outside the Walls of Traditional Religion, by David Elkins. Quest Books, 1998, 304 pages.

A spiritual revolution is quietly taking place in our society. Millions of Americans have left traditional religion to pursue alternative paths to spiritual development. They are realizing that they can be spiritual without being religious and that they can nurture their souls without going to church or temple. David Elkins, psychologist and former minister, shows readers how to find authentic, soul-nurturing spirituality outside church or temple walls—in a therapist’s office, a mountain park, and art studio—even in a bedroom. David explores



eight alternative paths to the sacred, including the feminine, the arts, the body, mythology, nature, psychology, relationships and dark nights of the soul. He offers a four step personal program for spiritual growth to help the readers discover what nurtures their souls and how to design a program for spiritual nurturance. •

Healing Relationships

Continued from page 24

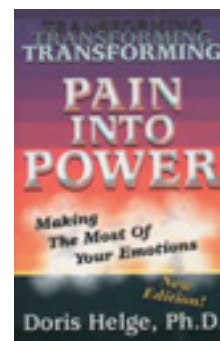
herself to the seashore. Somewhat cautiously I agreed, on the condition that she promised me she would not harm herself and that she would stay in contact. She agreed, and her time at the beach was deeply healing.

Thus, psychotherapy from the perspective of soul means that the soul is placed at the very center of the therapeutic endeavor. Psychotherapy then becomes an arena in which the therapist nurtures the client’s soul, and a training ground for the client to learn how to nurture his or her own soul. This does not mean that other techniques based on other theories are not used; but it does mean that everything is placed in the service of soul and is evaluated from that perspective.

I believe there is hope even in the midst of the deepest despair. Viktor Frankl, who wrote *Man’s Search for Meaning*, was my graduate professor. In World War II Frankl was imprisoned in the concentration camps of Hitler. All the members of his family, including his twenty-four year old wife, were killed in the death camps. Yet Frankl emerged from this “dark night of the soul” and spent his life in compassionate service to others.

Ultimately, faith is the only answer to despair. Carl Jung said,

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 75



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Transforming Despair

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOANNA MACY
BY MARY NURRIESTEARN



Joanna Macy is an activist and teacher. For the past twenty years, she has guided people through a process first called “despair and empowerment work” and now called the “Work that Reconnects.” This work is generally conducted in workshops where group energy supports participants; it invites people into despair about the plight of the planet and the destructive course we are on. The work does not end there. Joanna uses exercises that strengthen the minds and hearts of participants for the struggles ahead. Through this work, participants transform their despair into compassionate action.

Joanna is a guide for spiritual activists who want to end the present course of destruction of Mother Earth. She, among others, sense that we live in an extraordinary time. In this age of information and technology, we have life—yielding information and power. The power is ours to destroy or preserve life—all life—on planet Earth.

It is not news that we are exhausting Mother Earth’s resources and damaging her ability to sustain life on land, air and sea. Nor is it news that there is what Joanna calls a Great Turning. People are alarmed and taking action to slow the course of destruction. People are campaigning for laws to mitigate the effects of pollution, poverty and the loss of habitat. Others are blowing the whistle on illegal and unethical corporate practices. Municipal composting and recycling programs are increasing. A shift is occurring in perceptions of reality. The Gaia theory shows our planet to be a living system and our larger body. A resurgence of shamanic traditions shows us our identity with Earth and other species. Eastern philosophy and religion is teaching the “interbeing” of all life forms as grounds for both spiritual practice and social action.

Joanna is a leader in this movement to preserve life on Earth. Her newest book, *Coming Back to Life:*

Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World, published by New Society Publishers, maps ways into the vitality and determination we each possess to take part in healing our world. It describes a body of work that has grown up over the last twenty years and helped hundreds of thousands of men and women around the globe find solidarity and courage to act, despite rapidly deteriorating social and ecological conditions.

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION: *In our society, we talk about despair as if it is primarily a psychological matter, coming out of personal life. Your understanding is that despair also comes from a different source.*

JOANNA MACY: Yes. I learned, when I began to work with groups 20 years ago, that despair arose in relation to something larger than individuals, personal circumstances. There is a complex of strong feelings that I call ingredients of despair. One is fear about the future based on what we're doing to each other and to our planet. Another is anger that we are knowingly wasting the world for those who come after us, destroying the legacy of our ancestors. Guilt and sorrow are in the complex. People in every walk of life, from every culture, feel grief over the condition of the world. Despair is this constellation of different feelings. One person may feel more fear or anger, another sorrow, and another guilt, but the common thread is a suffering on behalf of the world or, as I put it, feeling "pain for the world."

In American culture, we are conditioned to try to keep a smiling face and remain chipper at all costs. A lack of optimism somehow indicates a lack of competence. Feelings of despair are treated reductionistically as a function of personal maladjustment. This doubles the burden individuals carry. Not only do they feel bad about their world, but they feel bad about feeling bad.

Feeling the pain of the world is not a weakness. This is God-given or, put another way, an aspect of our Buddha nature. This openness of heart that characterizes the caring individual is a function of maturity. Don't ever apologize for the tears you shed on behalf of other beings. This is, in its essence, not craziness, but compassion. This capacity to speak out on behalf of others, because you have the right to, because you can suffer with them, is part of our spiritual nature.

PT: *Realizing that despair comes out of compassion legitimizes what people feel and provides a context for addressing what they feel.*

JOANNA: It also provides a context for action. It transforms the pain that isolated them.

PT: *How are we to relate to despair?*

We have received an inestimable gift. To be alive in this beautiful, self-organizing universe—to participate in the dance of life with senses to perceive it, lungs that breathe it, organs that draw nourishment from it—is a wonder beyond words. And it is, moreover, an extraordinary privilege to be accorded a human life, with this self-reflexive consciousness which brings awareness of our own actions and the ability to make choices. It lets us choose to take part in the healing of our world.

That our world is in crisis—to the point where survival of conscious life on Earth is in question—in no way diminishes the value of this gift. On the contrary. To us is granted the extraordinary privilege of being on hand: to take part, if we choose, in the Great Turning to a sustainable society. We can let life work through us, enlisting all our strength, wisdom, and courage, so that life itself can continue.

There is so much to be done, and the time is so short. We can proceed, of course, out of grim and angry desperation. But the tasks proceed more easily and productively from an attitude of thankfulness for life; it links us to our deeper powers and lets us rest in them.—From *Coming Back to Life: Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World*. By Joanna Macy. Published by New Society Publishers.

JOANNA: We have to honor and own this pain for the world, recognizing it as a natural response to an unprecedented moment in history. We are part of a huge civilization, intricate in its technology and powerful in its institutions, that is destroying the very basis of life. When have people had this experience before in our history? We ask people to relate to what they experience with respect and compassion for themselves. They're not just griping and grumping. It is absolutely shattering when we open our eyes and see that we are actually, in an accelerating fashion, destroying the future.

PT: *As people take in the staggering enormity of what we're faced with, how do you address their sense of being insignificant and feeling overwhelmed, as if what they do will make no difference?*

JOANNA: People fear that if they let despair in, they'll be paralyzed because they are just one person. Paradoxically, by allowing ourselves to feel our pain for the world, we open ourselves up to the web of life, and we realize that we're not alone. I think it's a cardinal mistake to try to act alone. The myth of the rugged individual, riding as the Lone Ranger to save our society, is a sure recipe for going crazy. The response that is appropriate and that this work elicits is to grow a sense of solidarity with others and to elaborate a whole new sense of what our resources are and what our power is.

PT: *Do you recommend that this work be done primarily in a group context?*

JOANNA: Yes, group work is most effective because we are conditioned to think that despair is a personal problem that we must handle alone. A group experience restores a deep faith in life. There is a strong sense of coming home at last to one another, so that we face this together. The institutional and political systems in power have much momentum, which means there will be reversals and disappointment. There's no guarantee that we're going to pull through. At the same time, we are challenged to be courageous, to stand on our understanding of the truth even though others don't.

PT: *I image this group as warriors who pow-wow together and then, strengthened, begin taking action in their own lives and communities.*

JOANNA: That's right, they are empowered by their linked arms. One of the practices, described in the chapter on meditations, is learning to see each other as potential allies. This practice helps us to not succumb to fear and social hysteria when things get rough, as we navigate the transition to a sustainable civilization.

PT: *What is the value of allowing the feelings of despair?*

JOANNA: It takes tremendous energy to repress something so strong, which stems from our instinct to preserve life. Repressing our feelings of pain for the world isolates us, and can also drain us. When we allow ourselves to experience these feelings, we cease to fear them. We learn to turn them into strong solidarity with all beings.

PT: *By opening to despair, do we allow these feelings to move through us?*

JOANNA: It's opening to pain. We use meditations in the workshops to learn how to open. One comes from an ancient Buddhist practice where we use breath to circulate images of suffering, to take them in, instead of defending ourselves. We are dynamic, ever-changing, flowing, open systems, and we're only stuck with what we refuse to experience, because that means we have to hold it at arms-length, and that's exhausting. But if you let all feelings flow through you, channels within you open to beauty, love, wonder, excitement, courage and to a sense of connectedness with all of life.

PT: *Let's talk about hope. What is hope, and does hope arise in this process?*

JOANNA: Hope is an openness to the future that arises out of our evolutionary history. Hope is an impulse in the evolution of humanity. We continually die and live and die into forms that are ever more complex, with greater capacities for sensitivity, intelligence and responsiveness. The story of biological organic life on Earth is this movement toward ever-greater responsiveness on the part of living systems. This is the thrust of living systems. Hope is not hope for any particular thing, or an attachment to an outcome you desire. It's an openness toward what you don't even have the capacity to think yet because you're still in the present. Hope is a radical openness to what can be. It is a posture that leaves us flexible and adaptable and alive.

PT: Is hope a posture that comes out of working with despair?

JOANNA: I believe so. That is my experience. No one can take hope away from you. You can sit in jail and feel a mystical communion with all beings. We're part of a magnificent story that's been going on for 15 billion years, and at any moment, we can look up and let the sun shine into our hearts. It's such a tremendous privilege to be alive.

PT: How do you define faith and its relationship to the group work?

JOANNA: I could never imagine a way to create myself with this body and mind, as a member of my family of humanity. I couldn't have invented that. Nobody could. Something has given life to me. Something grander than my mind can comprehend is living through me. How can I not rest into that? My surest path to feeling a faith in life is to feel my gratitude for it. This which has brought me into being is a whole lot more intelligent than I am. That which called us into being in this exquisite, vast web of life is beyond our comprehension, but we can taste it, at any moment, when we put our intention in doing so, and put our attention on that truth.

PT: Does faith grow out of action?

JOANNA: Yes, especially as you step out with no guarantee about outcome or any certainty that you'll succeed. Becoming involved in a social cause is stepping into the unknown. Yet it is just then when we step into the unknown that we can feel a greater life supporting us, informing us, and deepening our faith. Taking action also deepens our faith in each other, because we have to work together, even if it's a little study group on how to incinerate toxic waste so that you can protect your kids. When you sit down with even two or three other people, you start teaching each other. Each action, each step along the way, provides opportunity to deepen connection with those people. That shared solidarity can bring you to greater gratitude for the life that runs through you.

PT: As individuals, what do we do? How do we know where to put our energy?

JOANNA: Often, the answer comes from what is sticking in our consciousness like a burr, that which annoys or hurts us as we contemplate it. In a way, it really doesn't matter what the social or environmental issue is. They all rise from the same delusion in our civilization that we are separate from each other, that we are immune to what we do to other beings. I've become convinced that, in part, people remain uninvolved because there are so *many* issues.

When we make common cause on behalf of the earth community, we open not only to the needs of others, but also to their abilities and gifts. It is a good thing that power is not a personal property, because, frankly, none of us possesses all the courage and intelligence, strength and endurance required for the Great Turning. All the resources we will need arise out of our interactions, as we commit ourselves to a common intent for our common fate.

This is the nature of synergy, the first property of living systems. As parts self-organize into a larger whole, capacities emerge which could never have been predicted, and which the individual parts did not possess. The weaving of new connections brings new responses and new possibilities into play. In the process, one can feel sustained—and is sustained—by currents of power larger than one's own.

Whether restoring a garden or cooking in a soup kitchen, there is a sense sometimes of being supported by something beyond one's individual strength, a sense of being "acted through." This empowerment often seems to come through those for whose sake one acts. In the last unprotected groves of redwoods, young activists weather the cold rainy winter and police violence as they perch in the trees to save them from illegal logging. Their valor and endurance is not their own, they say, but bestowed upon them by the great beings they seek to save. "They know we're here; they give us strength."—From *Coming Back to Life: Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World*. By Joanna Macy. Published by New Society Publishers.

The Formula V7N3P65

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They don't know whether they should try to protect sea mammals or battered children or work for the climate. So just take the issue that you have the most passion for and work on that. If you work on the rain forest, you're also working to protect the sea mammals. If you think you have to deal with them all, you'll be immobilized.

Link arms with others and don't act alone. I pulled a group of people together from various walks of life to join me in a study group on dealing with nuclear waste. Our group included a nuclear engineer, kindergarten teacher, dancer and a lawyer, and we taught each other. I asked them to commit to six months, meeting every three to four weeks.

PT: Your example of a six-month commitment makes the work of being a spiritual warrior seem more manageable.

JOANNA: I think setting a terminus is important. We're all rushed out of our minds in this industrial growth society. We have to be realistic and not expect more of ourselves and others than is humanly possible.

PT: What's the significance of this work with the millennium approaching?

JOANNA: To prevent us from going into the future blindly and abdicating our chance to be fully alive. To prevent us from dying before we're dead. To truly see the magnificence of life by being ready to experience our pain for it and also be willing to experience our capacity to meet the challenge. •

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From Readers

Continued from page 29

understand that it was time to let go and to accept that.

Thank you for Ms. Whitfield's message and for all of the inspirational articles you share with your readers every issue.—*Patty Stewart, New York, New York.*

WHAT ABOUT THE BODY

As a new reader of your magazine, I am enjoying the variety of articles and philosophies your publication offers on helping each of us become a better person.

I'm wondering if you or a contributor could address the role of the physical body in personal transformation. It is not irrelevant. What kind of affect does it have on our lives? Who we are physically is with us every minute of every hour of every day of our life, and I know it has some bearing on who we are emotionally and spiritually. I would be interested in reading more about this topic. Thank you for your wonderful magazine.—*Brenda Daniel, Austin Texas.*•

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Practice

Continued from page 26

There is also something else you can try. Feel that you are breathing in not air, but cosmic energy. Feel that there is not a single place in your body that is not being filled by cosmic energy. It is flowing like a river inside you, washing and purifying your whole being. Then, when you start to breathe out, feel that you are breathing out all the rubbish inside you—all your undivine thoughts, obscure ideas, and impure actions.

If you prefer a particular aspect of God—love, for instance—inwardly repeat the word “love” most soulfully several times. While uttering the word “love,” try to feel that it is reverberating in the inmost recesses of your heart: “love, love, love.” If you care more for divine peace, inwardly chant or

repeat the word “peace.” While doing this, try to hear the cosmic sound that the word embodies. Feel that “peace” is a seed-sound reverberating in the very depths of your heart. If you want light, then repeat “light, light, light” most soulfully and feel that you have actually become light. From the soles of your feet to the crown of your head, try to feel that you have become the word that you are repeating. Feel that your entire body is flooded with love, peace, and light.

One more exercise: feel that you are standing at your heart’s door and that you have invited love, peace, light, delight, and all your other divine friends to enter. If complexity, insincerity, impurity, insecurity, doubt, and other negative forces appear, do not let them enter. Try to feel that both the divine qualities and the undivine qualities have taken the form of human beings, and that you can see them with your human eyes. If every day you can think of even one friend and invite that friend to enter through your heart’s door, it will be the beginning of a divine friendship. One day you will allow only your friend love to come in; the next day you will allow your friend joy to come in. After some time, you will have the capacity to invite in more than one friend at a time. In the beginning, you may not have enough means to feed more than one friend at a time, but eventually you will be able to invite in all your divine friends.

MEDITATING ON THE HEART


It is better to meditate on the heart than to meditate in the mind. The mind is like Times Square on New Year’s Eve; the heart is like a remote cave in the Himalayas. If

you meditate in the mind, you will be able to meditate for perhaps five minutes, and out of that five minutes, for one minute you may meditate powerfully. First you may get joy and satisfaction, but then you may feel a barren desert, or your mind will be crowded with thoughts once more. But if you meditate on the heart, you acquire the capacity to identify yourself with the joy and satisfaction that you get, and then it becomes permanently yours.

There is a vast difference between what you can get from the mind and what you can get from the heart. The mind by nature is limited; the heart is unlimited. Deep within you are infinite peace, light, and bliss. To get a limited quantity is an easy task. Meditation in the mind can give it to you. But you can get infinitely more if you meditate on the heart. Suppose you have the opportunity to work at two places. At one place you will earn two hundred dollars and at the other place five hundred dollars. If you are wise, you will not waste your time at the first place.

When you meditate, feel that you are a child standing in a flower garden. This flower garden is your heart. A child can play in a garden for hours. He will go from this flower to that flower, but he will not leave the garden because he will get joy from the beauty and fragrance of each flower. Feel that inside you is a garden and you can stay in it for as long as you want. In this way you can meditate on the heart. •

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Destiny or Freewill

Continued from page 39

don't advise everyone to sit and wait for a miracle to save them or for someone to rescue them. Following the will of God isn't about resignation or sipping a can of beer and watching television or passively "going with the flow." Rather, it means applying the ego to gather as much information as possible to serve as the eyes and ears of God. But for the major decisions of life, it must learn to listen to the heart to hear what is the right thing to do.

The possibility of the slender threads operating at all times is so staggering that most of us can't bear it. Dr. Jung used his word synchronicity to designate a meaningful coincidence. A synchronistic phenomenon occurs when an inwardly perceived-event such as a dream or vision seems to correspond in a meaningful way to an external reality. Neither the inner nor the outer event can be explained by causality, yet they seem to be connected. Most people have examples of this, such as when you are thinking of some person you haven't talked to in years and suddenly a letter shows up in the mail from that very person or you bump into the person on the street. Causality is inadequate to explain such phenomena, so we may dismiss them as just coincidence or chance. Dr. Jung speculated that the two events are acausal but are linked by meaning, and this may relate to some archetypal processes at work in the unconscious.

I think the slender threads are continually present, it is just our ability to accept them that varies. It may be impossible for us to realize this because it would result in our seeing meaning everywhere in all things. This is

the perspective of a saint, but for most of us it is unbearable. It is probably true that we live in a universe with more meaning in it than we can comprehend or even tolerate. Life is not meaningless; it is overflowing with meaning,

pattern, and connections. •

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Love, Compassion

Continued from page 51

Upeksha has “the wisdom of equality,” the ability to see everyone as equal, not discriminating between ourselves and others. In a conflict, even though we are deeply concerned, we remain impartial, able to love and to understand both sides. We shed all discrimination and prejudice, and remove all boundaries between ourselves and others. As long as we see ourselves as the one who loves and the other as the one who is loved, as long as we value ourselves more than others or see ourselves as different from others, we do not have true equanimity. We have to put ourselves “into the other person’s skin” and become one with him if we want to understand and truly love him. When that happens, there is no “self” and no “other.”

Without upeksha, your love may become possessive. A summer breeze can be very refreshing, but if we try to put it in a tin can so we can have it entirely for ourselves, the breeze will die. Our beloved is the same. He is like a cloud, a breeze, a flower. If you imprison him in a tin can, he will die. Yet many people do just that. They rob their loved one of his liberty until he can no longer be himself. They live to satisfy themselves and use their loved one to help them fulfill that. That is not loving; it is destroying. You say you love him, but if you do not understand his aspirations, his needs, his difficulties, he is in a prison called love. True love allows you to preserve your freedom and the freedom of your beloved. That is upeksha.

For love to be true love, it must contain compassion, joy, and equanimity. For compassion to be true compassion, it has to have love, joy, and equanimity in it. True joy has

to contain love, compassion, and equanimity. And true equanimity has to have love, compassion, and joy in it. This is the interbeing nature of the Four Immeasurable Minds. But we must look deeply and practice them for ourselves to bring these four aspects of love into our own lives and into the lives of those we love. •

From “The Heart of the Buddha’s Teaching, Transforming Suffering Into Peace, Joy & Liberation,” by Thich Nhat Hanh, Copyright 1998 by Thich Nhat Hanh. Printed with permission from Parallax Press.

Healing Relationships

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“Man is never helped in his suffering by what he thinks for himself, but only by revelations of a wisdom greater than his own. It is this which lifts him out of his distress.” When Frankl was freed from Auschwitz at the end of the war, he had no place to go. His family had been killed, the city that had formerly been his home lay in ruins, Europe itself was decimated. The despair of the war still hung in the air and filled Frankl’s heart. His long, dark night of despair had done irreparable damage that would stay with him all his life. Nevertheless, there came a time when dawn lit the eastern sky and new life put forth its first green branches in his heart. A few days after the liberation Frankl was walking along a country road near flowering meadows. Larks rose to the sky and sang their jubilant song. Frankl tells what happened next:

I stopped, looked around, and up to the sky—and then I went down on my knees. At that moment there was very

little I knew of myself or of the world—and I had but one sentence in mind—always the same: “I called to the Lord from my narrow prison and He answered me in the freedom of space.” How long I knelt there and repeated this sentence memory can no longer recall. But I know on that day, in that hour, my new life started. Step for step I progressed, until again I became a human being.

Frankl’s long dark night of the soul had finally come to an end. He had been lifted out of his distress by a wisdom greater than his own. •

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Knowing others is intelligence;
knowing yourself is true wisdom.
Mastering others is strength;
mastering yourself is true
power.—Lao Tzu

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Ask the Experts

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indicates we have some deep needs that are not being acknowledged or met—perhaps a need for greater emotional expression or for greater closeness or intimacy with others. Often depression is caused or compounded by an over-active inner perfectionist and critic. This shows up in a tendency to set impossibly high standards for yourself and then criticize yourself when you inevitably fall short. Underneath deep depression I usually find an inner child who is feeling hopeless about getting his or her needs met.

I recommend finding a good psychotherapist and doing some regular weekly work for a while. Ask around for recommendations and then interview therapists until you find one who can support you in honestly exploring your deep feelings and needs. Many therapists function primarily on the mental level and are overly analytical. Find one who is comfortable with her own feelings and so can help you get more comfortable with yours. The good news is, effective emotional healing is very real and possible. It just takes the right kind of support and some work. Here are some books that may be helpful: *Embracing Your Inner Critic* by Drs. Hal and Sidra Stone, *Recovery of your Inner Child* by Lucia Cappacione and *The Four Levels of Healing* by Shakti Gawain.

Overcome by Grief

“My fifteen-year-old son was killed in a car accident. A year later my husband left me. It has been over two years since my son died and I’m still reeling. My job no longer makes sense and I don’t have family around for support. What can I do to get my life in order?”

Charles Whitfield: You’ve had

two major losses in the past two years and may not have been able to do the healing from their hurt—a healing process that we call grieving, grief work, or mourning. “Still reeling” suggests to me that you may not have grieved fully, or that you may have what I call “stuck” or ungrieved grief stored up inside you, like an abscess under the skin that is waiting to drain. The abscess under the skin is perhaps manifested by your experience of “reeling,” and having a senseless job and a disordered life.

In such a situation, how can we grieve, and thereby heal? It’s usually best to avoid taking psychoactive drugs such as alcohol or prescription drugs, since they can slow the grieving process. It’s also good to avoid being around people who may invalidate your pain, e.g. those who may say things like “Get over it,” or “You should be over that by now.”

Honor your feelings as they come up. Feel them and express them to safe people, and/or write them down in your diary or journal. You may want to consider joining a self-help group like Compassionate Friends, which helps parents grieve a lost child. Take as long as you need to grieve. There is no time limit on grieving.

Regarding the loss of your husband: it’s often harder to grieve the loss of a person with whom you’ve had a lot of conflict, and by contrast, a conflict-free relationship tends to be easier to grieve.

Our society is oriented to avoiding grief work. For example, “mental health” systems and other helping professionals routinely mislabel grieving people as being “depressed” or otherwise “mentally ill,” when actually they are only trying to grieve.

The losses of a child and husband are, of course, real losses. Other losses include any traumas of childhood—such as experiencing child abuse and neglect. These have the same impact and dynamics as any big losses, and also need to be grieved.

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Telling the Truth

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our product, or wins that contract, or gets us elected. The whole truth. Anything less is a lie.

When we tell the truth, the picture and the possibilities change. When we tell the truth, the real world appears. When the real world appears, it is not as terrifying as we imagined it would be. We can begin to work with what is in the real world. As painful as the truth circles were, everyone felt a tremendous relief after telling truths, after admitting to themselves and to others that something was so. It really is no big deal. What is a big deal, what is a terrible deal, is the false, unreal, abstract world of lies. It is hell. It is the weirdest failure of all. •

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Solitude

Continued from page 80

was new to me. No one had ever said that whatever I did was okay. That was a gift of solitude. I found myself discovering things I liked to do—having time to focus on my inclinations or just daydream. I loved it and looked forward to it every year as a profoundly celebratory time.

When Myron and I retired there was no more tax time. He and I were together a lot and I had to think about how this precious time would unfold. Myron has a different sleep rhythm than I do—and I discovered early mornings. The gift of silence and solitude is bestowed every day from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. Time to contemplate sunrise, ocean tides, and for the expressions of writers to make themselves known to me.

Last year I began taking piano lessons. When I was a child, my piano lessons were public events. Now my playing and practicing is a solitary act. It is never a performance, only an exploration of hands, rhythm, memory and sound. It is an hour of sacred sounds made just by me, for me.

Finally, there is the presence of my own mind. I have spent hours inside my head, observing thoughts, structures, shapes and fantasies. This practice is a gift only when there is solitude, quiet and the absence of external distractions. I sink into it often, and it nourishes me in countless ways.—*Wilma Heckler, Long Beach, New York.*

Solitude is not isolation, nor loneliness, but quiet inward time spent doing nothing but being with myself and the world around me. I've spent solitude time in the midst of a hundred people sitting in silence and meditation for a week.

I've spent solitude in the mountains walking alone, and in my own home enjoying the surroundings.

Each moment of solitude has been a gift—a gentle release of time, urgency, stress, and “being busy.” I come away refreshed, relaxed, more aware of my own process and existence, and more able to handle the demands of modern living.

So, if this time of solitude is so rewarding and enjoyable, why don't I do it more? Why is it so infrequent? Is it my mind/ego/intellect that resists resting quietly in the mystery of life? As a former trial lawyer I know how to focus and concentrate. As a counselor in the field of death and dying, I know how to sit with others in their pain and unknowing. “So, Dr. Counselor, why don't you spend more time in solitude?” I don't mean sitting in meditation for 20 minutes each morning (and there is value to that, and resistance there also) but rather time spent unfocused, unplanned, alone with the questions that are unanswerable by my mind—perhaps unknowable. A voice in my head says I have to be working, “doing” all the time if I am to accomplish anything. Even “enlightenment” takes work, says the voice. That same voice says that solitude is a waste of time: unproductive, even frivolous.

I think I'll give the voice a day off, and just go sit by my pond—without thinking how little I know about solitude.—*Tio Rodgers, Los Angeles, California.* •

In our next issue: Giving of yourself, your time and talents.

To contribute, please see Letters to the Editor on page 29 for information.

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Readers on Solitude



Solitude has been my lifelong companion. It seems I was born into it. A child of older parents who seemed to either not want, or have time, to simply play; and living on a hundred-acre farm surrounded by other hundred-acre farms with few if any playmates, solitude was always there.

But solitude has been a friend rather than an unwelcomed guest. As a child walking alone in the woods surrounding our house, in solitude's presence I could perceive the underlying stillness amid the forests rustle and bustle. From high atop my perch in one of the two tall pines in back of our house, solitude and I would survey our entire domain.

Today in the seclusion of my home on a wooded mountain side in the beautiful mountains of Western North Carolina in the cathedral of solitude I stand in awe at the beauty of God's creation. And rather than go to a noisy smoke filled club or bar I would much rather enjoy the solitude and read a good book written by someone who has something worthwhile to say, or work in my woodworking shop changing something God created into something else He/She created through me. Or simply meditate in the silence of my own being.—*Will Durant, Skyland, North Carolina.*

As I sit here in Mobile, Alabama, surrounded by busy business associates, most of whom are not particularly aware or concerned with consciousness, I find myself yearning for the quiet and wildlife-filled solitude of the Good Way Ranch. This is my home and oasis from the hustle and bustle of the materialistic rat-race that dominates our society. This quiet regenerates my soul, fills me with peace and gratitude, and helps me to feel and live life more completely.

I have found that this same solitude in the depths of a ship, in the inner bottoms, sitting quietly on rusty steel and listening to my heart beating, feeling the breathing, and simply being quiet in a very hectic existence. A few moments of being quiet and remembering the beauty of the outdoors, many many miles dis-

tant, can be refreshing and a great assist until I can be there in reality. Solitude, a scary yet beautiful place for at oneness with myself, is a necessity for me in my personal growth and consciousness.—*Don Merritt, Chewelab, Washington.*

Thinking about solitude brings to mind the first time I decided to take some time by myself. I had become a mother very early in life, a single parent with four children. After eight years into a new marriage I found that I couldn't take it any more. I was fed up and wanted to run away from home.

My husband was an understanding man and the kids were pretty sympathetic too. We all met together and decided that the summer (1978) would be mine alone. Six weeks to get up when I wanted, eat when I felt like it, and read, walk, or rest as I wanted. Although I continued to work at my job, I lived alone.

I was in heaven; I was also scared. I discovered that I needed my family around me as much as they needed me. I explored how I interacted in the world, by feeling the tightness in my chest when I was asked to do something I didn't want to do. I also discovered that I looked to others to make decisions for me. I became determined to make my own decisions.

The last twenty years have brought personal responsibility for me and the ability to allow others to be responsible for their choices. Thanks to solitude—time to communicate with me, to feel into those tight spaces and listen, to explore and to become congruent—I can't imagine running away from home now.—*Phyllis Bales, Gig Harbor, Washington.*

My husband, Myron, was a tax accountant. Tax season began in December as he prepared the work and lasted until April 15th. During that time, he worked seven days a week from early in the morning to midnight—beyond my bedtime and before I awoke. For four-and-a-half months I was required to manage alone and not present any distractions. That

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