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# iveness

Healing  
old  
wounds  
by  
confronting  
the  
past.

DR. SIDNEY  
AND  
SUZANNE SIMON



*Forgiveness is not a new idea. Throughout our lives, parents, teachers, and religious leaders have urged us to:*

*FORGIVE AND FORGET;*

*LET BYGONES BE BYGONES;*

*TURN THE OTHER CHEEK;*

*KISS AND MAKE UP.*

“To err is human, to forgive divine,” we were told time and time again, until we were left with little doubt that forgiveness was a virtue, the good, honorable, and morally correct thing to do. Yet there is something disturbing about the prospect of actually forgiving the real people who caused us real pain. It is liable to make our stomach churn, our pulse quicken, and our palms sweat; to cause indignation and resentment to rumble to the surface. More often than not, instead of feeling loving, benevolent, and willing to forgive, we find ourselves thinking: “Wait a second, I’m the injured party here. Why should I do all the work? Why should I forgive *them*? They should be apologizing to *me*!”

That statement certainly sums up Elise’s feelings about forgiving her sister Megan. Elise was a thirty-three-year-old high school English teacher,

married and the mother of eight-year-old twins, when we met her, and her feud with Megan, two years her junior, had been going on for decades. In fact, according to Elise, Megan had been a thorn in her side since the day she was born. "Megan was one of those babies everyone 'oohed and ahed' over all the time," Elise explains. "She was adorable, she knew it, and she played it for all it was worth." Elise's mother dressed the two girls identically, but blond, blue-eyed Megan drew admiring looks and words of praise while gangly Elise with her mousy coloring and freckled face, heard, "Isn't that sweet, you're wearing the same outfit as your sister."

When the two girls were young, they went everywhere together. "Mom's idea, not mine," Elise sighs. "Megan was my little shadow. I couldn't get rid of her, and if my friends and I didn't do what she wanted, she nagged and whined or threw a tantrum."

Things only got worse as the two girls grew older. Megan, apparently well aware of her older sister's less-than-loving feelings, became a ruthless "tattletale and attention grabber," keeping an eye on Elise and reporting anything she did that might displease their parents. "Then she'd follow up by telling them something wonderful that she did that day," Elise bristles. "It was the perfect one-two punch. I looked like the bad seed, and she was, as always, the little angel." But what really got to Elise was that Megan, who had plenty of her own boyfriends, flirted shamelessly with the few boys Elise dated. "I still see red when I think about one guy whom I really liked, and she knew it," Elise fumes sixteen years after the fact. "Megan did her little number on him, and he spent half the night talking about how gorgeous she was. The next day at school he came up to me and said, 'I hope you don't mind, but I'm going to ask your sister out.' Do you think Megan, knowing how I felt about the guy, told him to take a

hike? Of course not. She went out with him and came into my bedroom afterward to 'compare notes' about what a great kisser he was, knowing full well he'd never even kissed me."

As you can see, the injuries and injustices Elise believed she had suffered because of Megan could fill a list a mile long, and Elise is unwilling to let go of any of them. "Every potentially happy moment in my life, Megan took away from me," Elise concludes, "right down to showing up on the night before my wedding, announcing that her latest boyfriend had gotten her pregnant and getting everyone so upset that they didn't even care that I was getting married. She's been one up on me since the day she was born. So why should I be the one to give up what's left of my pride and dignity by forgiving her?"

Elise equated forgiveness with:  
giving up;  
giving in;  
wimping out;  
admitting defeat.

If such thoughts come to mind when *you* consider the prospect of actually forgiving someone who hurt you, then forgiveness is likely to seem as unappealing to you as it did to Elise. Chances are that you, like she, have been engaging in ongoing psychological warfare with your siblings, parents, children, present or former spouses, and anyone else who ever hurt you. They fired the first shot, and the running battle has continued ever since. Over the years you battled back with words and with silence, with acts that caused pain and acts that induced guilt, face to face and by physically and emotionally removing yourself from the battleground. At times you fought to win, hoping to finally get the upper hand and show them how it feels to be hurt by someone they love. But mostly you fought to keep from losing any more than you had lost already. You hold your ground by holding on to the pain you suffered at the hands of these enemies, by *not* forgiving them for what they have done. The ultimate irony is that

in many cases, they aren't even aware of your misery, and while you are turning yourself inside out, they don't feel a thing.

Like Elise, Warren, a thirty-five-year-old building contractor, has yet to find a convincing reason to forgive his father for treating him like "the invisible kid" throughout his childhood. "My father made it very obvious that he wished I'd never been born," Warren claims, and as melodramatic as it might sound, his perception was not entirely inaccurate. His father was a first-year medical student when Warren's mother became pregnant, and they married because "that was considered the honorable thing to do back then." Warren still shudders when he recalls the arguments he overheard as a young boy, fights between his mother and father that "always got around to my father reminding my mother that she tricked him into marrying her by getting pregnant with me."

"I figured that if I tried hard enough, I could earn his love," Warren continues. "That there had to be something I could do to get him to pay attention to me and act the way fathers were supposed to act." Unfortunately, nothing Warren did brought about the father/son relationship he so desperately wanted. He studied hard and did well in school, but that did not impress his father. He went out for sports, but his father was always "too busy" to attend the athletic events in which Warren participated. "Once I spent a whole semester in wood shop making him these ornately carved bookends, and all he said was, 'What are they supposed to be?'"

Warren's parents divorced when he was fifteen, and his father remarried immediately. Old wounds festered, and new ones were inflicted when his father and stepmother had three children in rapid succession and Warren spent holidays "watching them be the family I always wanted to have. My dad treated his new kids exactly the way I had been dying for him to treat

me.”

At twenty-one Warren gave up all hope of winning his father’s love. He dropped out of college and went into the construction business with the man his mother had married. He married and had children of his own, all the while making sure to avoid his father. This was easy for Warren to do, since, with the exception of a card at Christmastime, his father made no effort to keep in touch with him.

With each passing year, Warren became more resolute about shutting his father out of his life just as he had once been shut out of his father’s life, so much so that when Warren’s father had a heart attack two years ago, Warren did not call or visit his father in the hospital. In fact, he and his wife had “the worst argument of our entire marriage,” because he learned that she had sent his dad flowers and a get-well card.

“We still fight about my dad,” he sighs. “Since the heart attack he’s been calling us, inviting us to his house, saying he wants to get to know his grandchildren. My wife talks to him because I won’t, and then she starts in about how we should patch things up. But I keep telling her there’s nothing to patch up. There’s nothing between us, and there never was. She dragged me to your seminar so I could learn to forgive him. But why should I do that? Because he’s getting old and wants to see his grandchildren? Well, that’s too bad. He should have thought of that before. He made his bed, let him lie in it.”

Warren associates forgiveness with:

- forgetting;
- absolving;
- condoning;

letting the “bad guys” get away with the rotten things that they have done.

You too will be reluctant to forgive if, like Warren, you subscribe to the theory that forgiving lets the “bad guys” off the hook, that it allows them to get away without having to

suffer for what they have done. And most of us do indeed believe that the people who hurt us should pay for the pain they caused, that they *deserve to be punished, not forgiven*. What’s more, because we were the one they hurt, we feel obliged to mete out that punishment, which we do by *not* forgiving them, by continuing to resent them and snipe at them, by not speaking to them and generally refusing to readmit them to the human race.

**FORGIVENESS IS  
RECOGNIZING THAT WE  
NO LONGER NEED OUR  
GRUDGES &  
RESENTMENTS, OUR  
HATRED AND SELF-PITY.**

Hardest of all is continuing to see them on a regular basis and forcing ourselves to act as if nothing is wrong—all because we don’t know how to confront them with our anger. If we were to unlock the prison gates and let them out, we fear that we would be shirking our responsibility to “make them pay.” If we forgave them, we believe we would be betraying ourselves and negating or minimizing the impact of the pain they caused us. Obviously, when seen in this light, forgiveness is unlikely to top the list of priorities in our lives.

Of course, many of the people we meet do not react to forgiveness as vehemently as Elise and Warren did. Indeed, some have what might be described as a nonreaction, insisting that there is nothing for them to forgive. For instance, Marcy, who attended one of our forgiveness seminars with her mother, a recovering alcoholic, came up to us during a break and said, “I really don’t understand any of this. What’s done is done. I can’t go back and change the

fact that my parents were alcoholics. My dad is dead. My mom doesn’t drink anymore. So what’s the point of digging up all this old stuff? It’s only going to complicate my life and make me remember things I’d rather forget.”

Pursuing a similar line of thinking, a colleague of ours who is quite frank about expressing his conviction that teaching forgiveness is “hogwash,” says, “You’ll turn everyone into benign, benevolent zombies. They’ll all be too blissed out to function in the real world, where you need a good, strong suit of armor to make sure you don’t get eaten alive.”

This perspective reflects the idea that attempting to forgive the people who hurt you will:

- open up a Pandora’s box;
- send you plunging into an emotional abyss;
- force you to relive unpleasant experiences and admit how badly you were hurt in the first place;
- leave you vulnerable to being hurt again.

If you feel this way about forgiveness, for one reason or another, we think you might just be afraid to forgive. Perhaps anger, bitterness, and resentment serve as a barrier that protects you from pain, anxiety, and self-doubt. Or you may believe that any move you make to forgive the people who once hurt you will unleash a tidal wave of frightening emotions and mind-boggling questions. For perhaps the first time in decades, you will be forced to seriously consider the magnitude of old injuries and injustices as well as acknowledge the damaged life you have led because of them. You will have to admit you were hurt and examine the details of how, when, and why you were hurt. What’s more, you may have to give up the attitudes and behaviors that have protected you from being hurt again. From this vantage point, forgiveness is a frightening concept indeed, and most of us prefer to avoid rather than openly embrace the things we fear.

Even for those of you who are feeling ready to forgive, feeling willing and even anxious to get rid of your grudges and heal your old wounds, forgiveness is not easy. It is not easy to do, and the thought of doing it is not easy to accept. If it were, you would have done it by now. But the fact is you haven't, and one of the reasons you haven't is that *not* forgiving provides you with certain payoffs or illusions:

**The illusion that if this hadn't happened, you'd have a "perfect" life.**

*Not forgiving* provides a readily available explanation or excuse for anything and everything that is wrong with you and your life. If only things had been different and you had not been hurt when and by whom you were hurt, you would be so much better off than you are now. But since those bad things did happen and you cannot alter the fact that they happened, how can you (or anyone else) expect you to be any way but the way you are? At one time or another, most of us have used this line of thinking to get us off the hook. If we do heal and forgive, we will not be able to use it anymore.

**The illusion of being good.**

*Not forgiving* helps you define who you are. You are the *victim* of some injury or injustice. And although this may make you feel less lovable and capable than nonvictims, you are comforted nonetheless by the fact that you are one of the good guys—since the people who hurt you are obviously the bad guys. Once you forgive, the world can never again be defined in such black-and-white terms. You will have to accept and deal with shades of gray.

**The illusion of power.**

*Not forgiving* helps you compensate for the powerlessness you felt when you were hurt. In fact, while keeping the people who hurt you locked away in the prison of your mind, you feel practically omnipotent, since no one can make you forgive or force you to stop holding a grudge.

**The illusion that you won't be hurt again.**

*Not forgiving* protects you from being hurt again by the people who originally hurt you and by new people in your life. By keeping the pain alive, your eyes peeled for potential danger, and your guard up, you reduce the risk of ever again being rejected, deceived, abused, betrayed, or otherwise injured.

But are the benefits of not forgiving worth the price you pay for holding grudges, harboring resentments, and hanging on to pain from the past? Is having a handy excuse not to try for more worth never having more because you did not try? Is being an innocent victim as fulfilling as being a survivor, or is that sense of power you get from holding a grudge as satisfying as having the power to make your own choices? And is protecting yourself from possible pain worth missing out on life's real pleasures? We do not think so. We believe that the life you have now and can keep by *not* forgiving is not nearly as full and fulfilling as the life you could create by letting go of the pain and making peace with the past.

*Forgiveness is a way of reaching out from a bad past and heading out to a more positive future.*

—Marie Balter

Marie Balter had plenty to forgive. Born to an unwed, alcoholic mother who could not take care of her, Marie was placed in foster care at age five and later adopted by a couple whose severe disciplinary measures included locking her in the cellar. By age seventeen Marie was virtually paralyzed by depression and suffered muscle spasms, choking, hyperventilation, and hallucinations, which doctors misdiagnosed, labeling her a schizophrenic. In 1947 she was committed to a state mental hospital, where she remained for the next seventeen years. They were years of utter hopelessness and despair. There were times when Marie could not eat or move and times when she contemplated suicide.

Finally, in the early sixties, doctors reevaluated Marie's condition and determined that she was not schizophrenic but instead suffering from depression and a panic disorder. With appropriate treatment and the help of friends and mental health workers, Marie was released from the hospital in 1964.

At age thirty-four Marie had to decide what to do with her life, and she had every reason not to do much with it at all. After all, she had been abandoned and abused, locked away from the world, and robbed of seventeen years of "normal" living. She had every right to feel angry and bitter, sad and hopeless; to take it easy and live day to day, expecting little and settling for whatever she got. But that is not what she did.

Marie married, earned a bachelor's degree from Salem State College and a master's degree from Harvard. She worked with psychiatric patients, lectured, and wrote her autobiography, which in 1986 was made into a television movie starring Marlo Thomas. Then in 1988, when Marie was fifty-eight years old, she returned to the institution where she had been confined for so many years—not as a patient this time, but as the hospital's community affairs director. In an Associated Press article announcing her appointment, Marie Balter explained her triumph over enormous adversity in this way: "I would not have grown one bit," she said, "if I had not learned to forgive."

When Marie Balter attributed her triumph over adversity to forgiveness, she did *not* mean that she pushed painful memories out of her mind or pretended that they never happened; decided that painful past experiences were insignificant or justifiable; swallowed her feelings and went on in spite of them; or just woke up one morning and decided all was forgiven. But what *did* she mean? If forgiveness is not any of the attitudes and behaviors we already listed, what *is* it? •

# Forgiveness Is Not...

**Forgiveness is not forgetting.** By forgiving the people who hurt us, we do not erase painful past experiences from our memory. Nothing we have done so far has been able to turn back the clock and remove the unpleasant incidents from our life history, and forgiveness will not do that, either. We cannot forget, nor should we. Those experiences, and even the pain they caused, have a great deal to teach us, both about not being victimized again and about not victimizing others.

**Forgiveness is not condoning.** When we forgive, we lessen the past's impact on our present and future, but this does not alter the fact that the injuries and injustices we experienced were painful and unfair when they occurred originally. By forgiving the people who hurt us, we are not saying that what was done to us was acceptable or unimportant or "not so bad." It was bad. It did hurt. It has made a difference in our life. In fact, true forgiveness cannot occur while we are in any way denying, minimizing, justifying, or condoning the actions that harmed us.

**Forgiveness is not absolution.** Many of us who were raised in the Catholic religion regularly confessed our sins and then received absolution. We performed whatever penance the priest suggested, and the slate was wiped clean until we next sinned, confessed, and were absolved. Many of us still associate forgiveness with this sort of absolution, but that is not what we are expected to do when we forgive the people who hurt us. We do not "let them off the hook." We do not absolve them of all responsibility for their actions. They are still responsible for what they did and must make their own

peace with the past.

What's more, "I absolve you" are words spoken from atop our mountain of self-righteousness and demonstrate that we have not yet healed our wounds or let go of pain from the past. They let us play God, a benevolent God this time rather than a punitive one, but still a God who judges and then condemns or absolves the sinner. Absolution is just another way to be "one up" on the people who hurt us. And that is not forgiveness.

**Forgiveness is not a form of self-sacrifice.**

Forgiveness is not gritting our teeth and tolerating the people who hurt us. Plastering a smile on our face and "making nice" is not forgiving. Forgiveness is not swallowing our true feelings and playing the martyr, saying it's all right when it is not or getting by somehow in spite of the pain. The "grin and bear it" approach to forgiveness makes life less joyful and more difficult. Actual forgiveness has the opposite effect and cannot be undertaken halfheartedly. We either forgive or we don't. Being honest about the fact that we are not ready to forgive yet is better for us in the long run than pretending to forgive.

**Forgiveness is not a clear-cut, one-time decision.**

No matter how sincerely we want to let go of the past and move on with our life, we cannot expect to wake up one morning, think, "Okay, today's the day I'm going to forgive someone who hurt me," and then blithely do it. We cannot make a five-year plan that designates the first Tuesday of every third month as a forgiveness day or making a list of people who have hurt us, and systematically forgive them. Forgiveness just doesn't work that way. It cannot be forced. Forgiveness is what happens naturally as a result of confronting painful past experiences and healing old wounds.

# What Forgiveness Is...

**Forgiveness is a by-product of an ongoing healing process.** Many of us grew up believing that forgiveness was an act to be performed or an attitude to possess, and the reason that we could not forgive was that we were not trying hard enough. But what really keeps us from forgiving the people who hurt us is that we have not yet healed the wounds they inflicted.

Forgiveness is the gift at the end of the healing process. We find it waiting for us when we reach a point where we stop expecting "them" to pay for what they did or make it up to us in some way.

**Forgiveness is an internal process.** It happens within us. It is a feeling of wellness and freedom and acceptance. Those feelings can be ours at any time, as long as we *want* to heal and are willing to try.

**Forgiveness is a sign of positive self-esteem.** It is no longer building our identity around something that happened to us in the past, realizing that there is more to us and more we can do. The past is put into its proper perspective, and we realize that the injuries and injustices are just a part of our life and just a part of who we are rather than all of us.

The religions in which we were raised presented forgiveness as a moral obligation. To be considered "good" and worthy, we were supposed to "turn the other cheek" and forgive our enemies. We believe, however, that *forgiveness is instead our moral right*—a right to *stop* being hurt by events that were unfair in the first place. We claim the right to stop hurting when we can finally say, "I'm tired of the pain, and I want to be healed." At that moment, forgiveness becomes a *possibility*—although it may not become a reality for quite some time.

**Forgiveness is letting go of the intense emotions attached to incidents from our past.** We still remember what happened, but we no

longer feel intensely angry, frightened, bitter, resentful, or damaged because of it. Forgiveness becomes an option once pain from the past stops dictating how we live our life today and we realize that what once happened to us does not have to determine what will happen to us in the future.

**Forgiveness is recognizing that we no longer need our grudges and resentments, our hatred and self-pity.** We do not need them as an excuse for getting less out of life than we want or deserve. We do not need them as a weapon to punish the people who hurt us or keep other people from getting close enough to hurt us again. We do not need them as an identity. We are more than a victim of injury and injustice.

**Forgiveness is no longer wanting to punish the people who hurt us.** It is no longer wanting to get even or to have them suffer as much as we did. It is realizing that we can never truly "even the score," and it is the inner peace we feel when we stop trying to.

**Forgiveness is accepting that nothing we do to punish them will heal us.** It is becoming aware of what we did because we were hurt and how these attitudes and behaviors have also hurt us. It is deciding that we have simply done enough hiding and hurting and hating and that we do not want to do those things anymore.

**Forgiveness is freeing up and putting to better use the energy once consumed by holding grudges, harboring resentments, and nursing unhealed wounds.** It is rediscovering the strengths we always had and relocating our limitless capacity to understand and accept other people and ourselves. It is breaking the cycle of pain and abuse, ceasing to create new victims by hurting others as we ourselves were hurt.

**Forgiveness is moving on.** It is recognizing that we have better things to do with our life and then doing them.

# Healing is a personal process, influenced by:

- the specific ways you were hurt, when, and by whom;
- how you reacted to the injuries and injustices you experienced—including what you came to believe about yourself and what you did because you were hurt;
- your present cir-

you have right now;  
 • your own personal vision of inner peace and what you want your life to become.

These are the jigsaw puzzle pieces of your life. Although many people have accumulated some puzzle pieces that are similar to your own, no one else has all of the same pieces you do, and no one else has fit their pieces together to form a picture that is identical with your own. You have different gaps to fill in order to complete your puzzle, different pieces to discard because they no longer fit you. So your healing process will not be exactly the same as anyone else's. Although the purpose of the jour-

though each of us will move through the healing process in our own way and in our own time frame, we all will pass through six stages of healing:

1. *Denial*. This is the stage in which we attempt to play down the impact or importance of painful past experiences and bury our thoughts and feelings about those experiences.

2. *Self-blame*. While in this stage, we try to explain what happened to us by assuming we were somehow responsible for the injuries and injustices we suffered, decimating our self-esteem as we work overtime to convince ourselves that we would not

received. We are well aware of how we were damaged by painful past experiences, so much so that we wallow in self-pity, expect little of ourselves, indulge ourselves at the expense of those around us, or lash out at everyone and anyone who "crosses" us.

4. *Indignation*. In this stage, we are angry at the people who hurt us and at the world. We want the people who hurt us to pay and to suffer as we have. Our tolerance is virtually nonexistent, and our self-righteousness is at an all-time high.

5. *Survivor*. Finally, at this stage, we recognize that although we were indeed hurt, we did in

fact survive. Our painful past experiences took things away from us but gave us things as well. We become aware of our strengths and welcome the return of our compassion, sense of humor, and interest in matters other than the pain. We bask in the knowledge that, all

they could, too, that if we are more than our wounds, they must be more than the inflictors of those wounds. With this knowledge, we can release them from prison and reclaim the energy we used to keep them there. We can put the past in perspective—without forgetting it—let go of the pain, and get on with our lives unencumbered by excess emotional baggage.

When summarized in this way, the six stages of the healing process seem clear cut, leaving the impression that you move from one to the other in a linear fashion, one step after the other. But that is not how the process actually works. Healing happens in fits and starts, when you are standing still as well as when you are taking giant leaps forward. It also involves moving backward at times, to a former stage for a short while.

In fact, your healing process began the instant you were hurt. Although much of what you have done since you were hurt and much of what you go through in the early stages of the process may not feel good or be considered healing, they eventually bring you to a turning point, the point at which you decide that you are tired of hurting and want to heal. And that is also why the experiences that hurt you and even the worst of what you did because you were hurt are part of the healing process, part of the journey that will ultimately lead you to feel whole, at peace with yourself and others, including the people who hurt you.

things considered, we did the best we could.

6. *Integration*. In this stage, we are able to acknowledge that the people who hurt us may have been doing the best

have been hurt *if only* we had been different or had done things differently.

3. *Victim*. In this stage, we recognize that we did not deserve or ask for the hurt we

circumstances—both the positive and negative aspects of your life today, the problems you may be experiencing and the insight, resources, and emotional support

ney—to attain peace of mind and improve the quality of life—is something we all have in common, for each of us the journey itself will be somewhat different. However, even





# Forgiveness Is Something You Do for You

When Marie Balter overcame the obstacles placed in her path by a “bad past,” when she healed her wounds and let go of the pain, she was not doing anyone any favors. She did not turn her life around to please her mother, reassure her adoptive parents, or give the mental health system a shining example of their ability to rehabilitate mental patients. No, what Marie Balter did, she did *for herself*. She forgave and put the pieces of her life back together so that *she* could feel proud, so *she* had a reason to get up each morning and something to look forward to when she went to bed each night.

And that is what forgiveness is all about—working through the unfinished business, letting go of the pain and moving on *for your sake*. You forgive so that you can finally get rid of the excess emotional baggage that has been weighing you down and holding you back; so you can be free to do and be whatever you decide instead of stumbling along according to the script painful past experiences wrote for you.

To date, the people who hurt you have not made up for what they did to you, and even if they wanted to, they probably could not really do that. Think about it. In all the years that you have been holding grudges and harboring resentments, has anyone who once injured you or treated you unfairly ever offered an apology that *actually relieved your pain*? Have they ever done anything that actually compensated for injuries and injustices you suffered, the good times you missed, the life you led?

Like Elise, you may be waiting for the day when your siblings, parents, children, spouses, or friends will come to you on bended knee apologizing profusely and begging your forgiveness. But if that day came, it would not be enough. It would not relieve your pain or evaporate your resentment. It would not change your life or make you happier, healthier, and more at peace with yourself. *You* are the only one who can do that.

All the years you have waited for them to “make it up to you” and all the energy you expended trying to make them change (or make them pay) kept the old wounds from healing and gave pain from the past free rein to shape and even damage your life. And still they may not have changed. Nothing you have done has made them change. Indeed, they may never change. Inner peace is found by changing yourself, *not* the people who hurt you. And you change yourself *for yourself*, for the joy, serenity, peace of mind, understanding, compassion, laughter, and bright future that you get. These are the rewards *you* can receive. The people you forgive benefit, too—but that is not why you forgive them.

However, make no mistake about it, you will have to work for these things. You will have to work long and hard to heal your wounds and make peace with your past. There are no short cuts, no ways around the fact that *forgiveness is possible if and only if you commit yourself to an ongoing healing process*.

CIIS AD

# FACING OUR SHADOW



ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF HEALING OURSELVES AND THE EARTH IS THE WILLINGNESS TO FACE OUR "SHADOW"—THE FEELINGS AND PARTS OF OURSELVES THAT WE HAVE REJECTED, REPRESSED, OR DISOWNED. OUR SOCIETY HAS TREMENDOUS PROHIBITIONS AGAINST FEELING TOO MUCH. WE ARE AFRAID TO FEEL TOO MUCH FEAR, HURT, SADNESS, OR ANGER, AND OFTENTIMES WE ARE ALSO AFRAID TO FEEL TOO MUCH LOVE, PASSION, OR JOY! AND WE'RE DEFINITELY AFRAID OF OUR NATURAL SENSUALITY AND SEXUALITY.

S H A K T I G A W A I N

**A**s children we learn to reject and repress these unacceptable feelings and parts of ourselves. Most of us are encouraged either to repress our vulnerable feelings and become strong and power-

ful, or to repress our power and aggression and be gentle and vulnerable. Or we may repress both vulnerability and power (as well as sexuality, of course) and become nice, safe, middle-of-the-roaders. In any case we lose not only major parts of our personality and being, but an enormous amount of our life force.

The feelings and parts of ourselves that we have repressed do not go away just because we don't want

them. They are necessary parts of us, parts we actually need for our survival. If they are not allowed their natural expression, they go underground and fester inside of us, building up steam, needing eventual release. If we do not find ways to express them, they begin to "leak out" in distorted ways, or they begin to lead us into life situations which will give them a chance to emerge. For example, if you have repressed

your power, you will have anger building up inside of you. If you don't find a way to express your anger in a direct, constructive way, it will leak out as indirect, covert hostility, or it will eventually burst forth as explosive rage or violence. It might well attract you toward angry people, with the unconscious intention of triggering your own anger.

If attempts to find expression fail or are blocked, the repressed feelings will eventually make your body sick. It is my belief that most illnesses are caused by repressed or disowned energies within us.

Personal healing on all levels—physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual—comes when we get in touch with our disowned energies. As we begin to accept them as vital parts of ourselves, we begin to find safe, constructive modes of expression. Once we get to know these parts of ourselves, we find they are not as scary as we had imagined. In fact, when they are expressed and integrated, they take their place as important facets of our nature. Through integrating all aspects of ourselves, we become whole.

Everything in the universe, including every part of ourselves, wants love and acceptance. Anything in life that we don't accept will simply make trouble for us until we make peace with it. Once we do, the trouble is over.

Here is an image I have found useful to illustrate this point: Suppose you lived in a large mansion, but only occupied a few of the rooms. These rooms are bright, clean, and nicely furnished and decorated. You lead a reasonably good life in them. However, you never enter any of the other rooms in the mansion because you have been told there may be frightening things in them. You keep all the doors in the unoccupied part of the house locked and spend a lot of time worrying about what might escape from the dark part of the house into your safe area. At night

you imagine all kinds of noises. A great deal of your life energy is taken up with worrying and defending yourself.

Finally you become tired of living this way, and decide to take control of the situation and examine some of the rooms. Perhaps you ask a trusted friend or two to come with you, so you will feel safer. You take a big, bright lantern and venture into the first unknown room. You find some unattractive, old-fashioned furniture, cobwebs, and a few beautiful antiques. Once you clean up the room, give away the things you don't need, and decorate it to enhance the treasures you've found, you have another unique and beautiful room in your home. When you are ready, you can proceed to the next room. Eventually, you will find yourself living in a large, beautiful, well-lighted mansion. Since you no longer have to spend your time defending yourself against the unknown darkness, you can turn your energy to more creative things.

In order to become "enlightened," we must shine the light of consciousness into many dark places that we have not yet explored. This is true on a planetary level as well as a personal one. Just as we individuals have repressed aspects of ourselves, the mass consciousness has disowned much of its energy. So we have a large collective shadow to explore.

In modern society, much of what has been repressed involves the energies related to the earth—our primal selves. We have identified too frequently with the masculine rational, active, work-oriented, orderly principles and denied the more feminine emotional, intuitive, sensual aspects. I believe this is why we are having an overwhelming epidemic of drug addiction—drugs release those disowned energies. These energies have to be expressed somehow, or we would not survive. The healing for our drug problems will come as we find more natural and constructive

ways for society to support all of us, and young people in particular, in expressing energies that have been restricted, such as intuition, artistic creativity, sexuality, playfulness, and just "being."

We are also having difficulty right now dealing with our natural aggressive energy. In previous times, societies channeled this energy through great numbers of men engaging in warfare. In modern times, this is increasingly dangerous and unacceptable. Aggression is frowned upon in civilized society, except in a few sanctioned ways—through sports or business. So we have our leaders toying frustratedly with their weapons systems, not daring to use them but not willing to give them up, either, and we have increasing outbreaks of violence in our cities as well. We need to find constructive ways for all of us, men *and* women, to channel our natural aggressive energy creatively.

Many people, especially those in the spiritual and new age movements, believe that we can bring peace and light to the world by focusing on the light, trying to be unconditionally loving, visualizing peace, and so forth. There is a fundamental misunderstanding here. By trying to focus only on the things we deem "positive" and ignoring or repressing the rest, we are simply perpetuating the polarization of light and dark forces. Ironically, this further distorts and empowers the very energies we are trying to avoid.

We must deeply recognize that there is no split between "spiritual" and "unspiritual," good and bad. All aspects of life are elements of the life force and facets of the divine. True healing comes from owning and accepting all of life's energies within ourselves.

Ultimately, the collective healing of our planet can only come through the personal commitment of us all as individuals, in exploring and embracing the shadow in our own lives. •

# Dreams

## FOR PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

*From earliest recorded  
history, people have  
observed their dreams and  
found in them a source of  
meaning, wisdom, and  
guidance.*



Through the centuries, the dream was presumed to be a spiritual event, a gift of God or a gift from some source beyond the ordinary. And, in all major religions and most minor ones, of both East and West, dreamwork was an accepted spiritual practice. In many religious and spiritual traditions—from the most primitive to the most civilized cultures—the dream was viewed as a holistic event, an experience reflecting the wholeness of the individual. Sometimes, as in biblical and shamanic traditions, the dream was viewed as benefitting not only the individual dreamer, but also the entire community to which the

dream belonged.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast, among Christians the practice of dreamwork has been discouraged for the past centuries by the official Church, probably because, in the Church's eyes, dream interpretation has turned from a spiritual activity into a superstitious one. By the fifth century, it seemed many Christians were no longer using dreamwork to develop their moral and spiritual growth, but rather to predict their fortunes and further their material goals. As one person put it, "Many Christians were no longer interested in the God-life, but only in the 'good' life." Even so,

dreamwork continued to be practiced throughout those centuries by holy Christian men and women, many of whom were canonized as saints by the Roman Catholic Church. Now, in the present generation, the practice of dreamwork is again finding a place in Christian spirituality as it had throughout the first five centuries of the nascent Christian Church.<sup>2</sup>

## SPIRITUALITY AND CONSCIOUSNESS

I define spirituality as “a way of being, acting in light of ultimate values.” According to this definition, all persons, by virtue of their nature as spiritual, value-seeking beings, have a potential spirituality. Their ultimate values may be conscious or outside of awareness, healthy or destructive. In turn, the spirituality that is built upon those values may be clear or confused, simple or complex. Part of my work as a “technician” of the spiritual path is helping people bring their spirituality to light.

I have learned through my experience that dreams can help you clarify and live up to your ultimate values. Clarifying and living up to those values is a major part of the process of becoming conscious.

Consciousness is a very important term in spirituality, but not one whose definition is universally agreed upon. For some, consciousness refers to awareness, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings; for others, it implies intention and will. Strephton Kaplan Williams, with whom I wrote *Dreams and Spiritual Growth*,<sup>3</sup> gave a simple and clear definition of the term: “Consciousness is awareness PLUS appropriate action.” According to this definition, an insight never becomes truly conscious until you somehow put it into action in your daily life.

Spiritual practices, such as meditation or dreamwork, serve as ways of tapping into your inner resources, so that insights from these resources may be brought back and integrated into your ordinary life choices. I believe that spiritual practice is primarily a matter of consciousness, as defined above, and that a spiritual practice is complete only when the insights and gifts it releases are being incarnated in your life. Spirituality almost always involves values and choices being made in everyday activity.

For example, a forty-year-old woman named Marie

dreamed that she had given birth to twins. Though one of the infants was well-loved and healthy, the other had been forgotten. Not only was the forgotten child hungry and angry but its head had also, somehow, become completely encased in a seamless golden metal mask.

This dream did not make any decisions or choices for Marie. Rather, based on the data revealed by the dream and her dreamwork, she made choices about nurturing parts of her life that had been forgotten and masked over. On one level, most dreams metaphorically reveal what is going on in your life and portray a current situation in a fresh light,

from which you can grow spiritually. In spiritual practice, the waking ego becomes conscious by raising insight to the level of action. When using dreams and dreamwork as an authentic spiritual practice, there is no substitute for ego-reflection and choice-making.

In almost all traditions, the purpose of bringing the discipline of spiritual practice into your life is to live more in line with your goals and higher life-purposes. The call to a full and whole life is often experienced during the moments of spiritual practice with striking clarity. During dreamwork, Marie realized that the angry cry of the forgotten and hungry child in her dream was a clear call to live her life more fully and wholly, as well as an indication that she had the inner strength to do what was required. From the standpoint of spiritual growth, the purpose of dreamwork, as with other spiritual practices, is to tap into the deepest resources of your self in order to bring up hidden potentials and integrate them into your waking life, that is, bring them into consciousness.

DREAMS ALLOW  
YOUR WAKING  
EGO TO  
ESTABLISH A  
RELATIONSHIP  
WITH YOUR  
DEEPEST SELF.

## SOME PREMISES OF DREAMS AND SPIRITUALITY

Here are a few of the premises, or assumptions, about dreams and spirituality that I hold. Many of you also may study dreams from other perspectives. As a psychologist, a physician, a neurologist, or other practitioner, you may not hold some of these premises; it is not unusual in science even to hold some contradictory positions. For example, two psychotherapists may hold contradictory premises about the function of emotions, yet both may be successful in helping people. Or two physicists may hold contradictory assumptions about the physical universe, yet both may

create valid mathematical equations to describe physical reality. As long as people listen to each other, I believe they can undoubtedly learn from one another. As a technician of the spiritual realm, I focus on the spiritual aspects of dreams and dreamwork.

*The dream is usually presented symbolically and/or in the language of metaphor.* In some ways, your dreams may speak a universal language, and therefore they belong not only to you but to the larger community. Others may find wisdom for themselves in your dream. Many people who have heard Marie tell her dream of the golden mask have been able to acknowledge that they, too, have gone through life wearing masks. Metaphor is the dominant language of spirituality. Dreams provide holistic data in metaphoric form for the choices and decisions that the waking ego—the choice-making part of the personality—will be called upon to make.

*The dream is, among other things a spiritual event.* Many have called the dream “the voice of the soul”. Your dream presents symbolically the options available to you—and others—at the level of the human spirit. During her dream, Marie discovered her resourcefulness by telephoning a goldsmith, who agreed to come and remove the mask. As a result of dreamwork, she decided to work with a therapist to help her remove the emotional masks she wore in daily life.

*The dream can provide healing and wholeness.* It is, in part, the dream’s purpose to put you in touch with your ultimate values. It can get you involved in your own development and growth. Marie realized that the golden mask would need to be removed before she could become a whole person. Others, too, have found wisdom and healing insights for themselves from her dream.

*The dream releases energy or insight.* It is possible for you to bring the dream’s insights into waking life and integrate them into the choices you make at the conscious level. Sometimes, the waking ego’s ranking of ultimate values is dysfunctional or conflictual. When this happens, the deepest self, in dreams, is likely to reveal the problem. For example, upon reflection, Marie began to recognize her own anger at being forced by her family to live behind a mask for most of her adult life, and she realized she wanted to begin living in an emotionally honest way.

*The dream allows your waking ego to establish a relationship with your deepest self.* From the spiritual technician’s perspective, dreamwork offers a way for building and using a line of communication between the waking ego and the deepest inner self. For Carl Jung, this self is the center and integrator of all life experiences, conscious and unconscious. Establishing a relationship between the waking ego and the inner self is perhaps your most important spiritual task in bringing yourself to spiritual maturity.

*In light of spiritual growth, the dream is more powerful when viewed as a question rather than as an answer.* A question invites growth in any relationship much more effectively

than a command, especially in the ego-self relationship. Questions evoke consciousness. Marie discovered that her golden mask posed many questions: “How did I forget this other child I had? How did the golden mask get put on the child? Do I sometimes find my mask valuable to me? What professionals would help me take it off?”

*The dream is incomplete without dreamwork.* In spirituality, the dream is the gift; dreamwork is what we do with it. Like a gift, the dream is meant to be opened, used, and cherished. Since a dream often speaks a universal language and triggers insights in others beside the dreamer, I believe the richness of its gifts may sometimes be more fully recognized when dreamwork is done with a partner or in a small dreamwork group. Nevertheless, it remains the dreamer’s task to realize the dream’s healing insight.

*In pursuit of spiritual growth, the purpose of dreams and dreamwork is to bring you to higher levels of consciousness—that is, to awareness plus appropriate action.* Marie found that her mask dream was of such profound depth and meaning that for the next ten years she continued to profit from dreamwork on it. She discovered she had been wearing layers of masks, and as one layer was taken off; another was discovered beneath it.

*Dreamwork provides a way to channel the energy and insights of the dream into daily life.* For Sigmund Freud, dreams were the royal road to the unconscious. The unconscious realm was a boiling cauldron of energy, and dreams led to this energy source. For Freud’s disciple Carl Jung, dreams used symbols to reveal different kinds of energies in the unconscious realm that were available to us in waking life. Jung called these energy sources archetypes. For Jung, archetypes were bundles of energy, like the myriad strands of electrical wire bundled together in a power cable carrying energy from one place to another. Dreams and dreamwork can be used to release these spiritual energies. Whenever Marie worked on her golden-mask dream, she found energy to make everyday choices that helped her put aside the mask.

In the Western tradition, spiritual energies are called virtues. (*Virtus* is the Latin word for energy.) In the Eastern traditions, these energies are associated with spiritual energy centers called *chakras*. Major spiritual energies include creativity, the transmitting of life, self-awareness, courage, forgiveness, empathy, willpower, wisdom, meaning, discernment, unity, vision, and cosmic perspectives.

## D R E A M T A S K S

Many approaches to dreams simply help you find meaning in them; so that once you have discovered what your dream is all about, the problem is considered solved and the process is over. Perhaps in certain approaches to the dream, it is enough to stop there. But in spiritual practice, which involves the way you live and act in light of your ultimate values, the purpose of the dream and dreamwork is consciousness: awareness plus appropriate action.

For this reason, the final step in dreamwork is to turn

the energy and insight of the dream into choices and actions. At this stage, it is up to the waking ego, after reflecting on the energy and insight of the dream, to make choices for living and acting in the world. The easiest and most effective way of doing this is to create a list of possible dream tasks that could be accomplished to keep the energy of the dream alive, then to choose some of these tasks and actually carry them out.

Why actually carry them out? If you don't use the energy released in the dream, it will slip back into the unconscious and no longer be as readily available. How many of us have had insights about our lives that we recognized as important, intended to do something about them, but never turned those insights into concrete tasks? Consequently, our lives were never changed. The great insight soon became merely a vague memory, taking up a forgotten line or two in our personal journal. Marie kept her golden-mask dream alive by returning to it periodically over a period of years.

Furthermore, the accomplishment of such tasks keeps the energy of the dream alive and growing. The more Marie used her gift, the more that energy became available to her. This principle is true in all domains of life: the more you exercise your muscles, the stronger they become and the more energy they make available to you. The more you discipline yourself to keep the dream energy alive, the more access you have to it. If your dream reveals to you that you have the courage to face an important issue in your life, create a set of tasks to keep that energy alive and exercise that courage. In doing so, you will develop courage to face not only that particular issue but future issues as well.

There are three different kinds of dream tasks that you can use to keep the energy of the dream alive.<sup>4</sup> The first are *Dreamwork Tasks*, techniques to clarify and nurture the energy revealed by the dream or by a symbol within it. Dreamwork tasks might include reflecting on dream symbols, having a dialogue with a dream figure, bringing an unfinished dream to resolution, and using artwork to concretize a dream image. For example, Marie conducted dialogues with her dream figures—the mask itself, the good baby, the forgotten baby, and the goldsmith—and all of them had wisdom for her. She also researched the meaning of “mask” and “persona” in the writings of Jung.

The second kind of dream tasks are *Personality Tasks*. These are *inner activities* that you, your dreamwork partner, or someone acting as a spiritual technician (such as a member of the clergy, a spiritual director, or a shaman) might suggest to keep the dream energy alive. Personality tasks might involve you in making a list of the ways you are like or unlike a certain dream figure, jotting down what positive things might happen if you were to incorporate dream energy into your daily life, or practicing some reflection or personal discipline that keeps you connected with the dream energy, such as marking down every time you affirm yourself. Marie made lists of the places in society where she

still wore her golden mask and of the diminishment to her life the mask had caused. She even attended a mask-making workshop.

The third set of dream tasks are *Outer Life Tasks*. These are *outer activities* that you or your dreamwork partner might suggest to keep the dream energy alive. Outer Life Tasks might include taking actions that involve other people or the work you do. If your dream revealed that you had the energy to enhance your courage, you might choose to practice a simple act of assertiveness, or to stand up for yourself among your friends, or to write a letter of complaint to some company. Not only did Marie enter psychotherapy, but she also realized that without the mask she might appear angry and critical, so she chose to tolerate these unfamiliar feelings and consciously express them appropriately in public as validation that she was indeed removing her mask. Notice how each of these three kinds of dream tasks support and enrich each other.

The objective with dream tasks is to choose tasks to keep the energy alive, not to exhaust it. Therefore, you should choose tasks that you are able to accomplish in a finite amount of time and at which you are likely to succeed. Success breeds success, and a successful expression of dream energy is most likely to keep that energy alive. It is best to have a string of successes to keep you motivated and actively involved.

I believe dreamwork has made a revolutionary contribution to spirituality in recent years. Dreamwork is really a spiritual exercise that almost everyone can learn with some degree of proficiency and use effectively without having to depend upon someone else as a dream expert. Versatile and adaptable, it can be used individually, with partners, and in small dreamwork groups.

Since you dream every night, there is never a dearth of material for spiritual growth. On the other hand, there is no need to become compulsively attached to the dreamwork process. You may use it regularly without engaging in it compulsively. You don't need to do it every day. Whenever you choose to explore your dream resources, your deepest inner self will help you realize your true potential.

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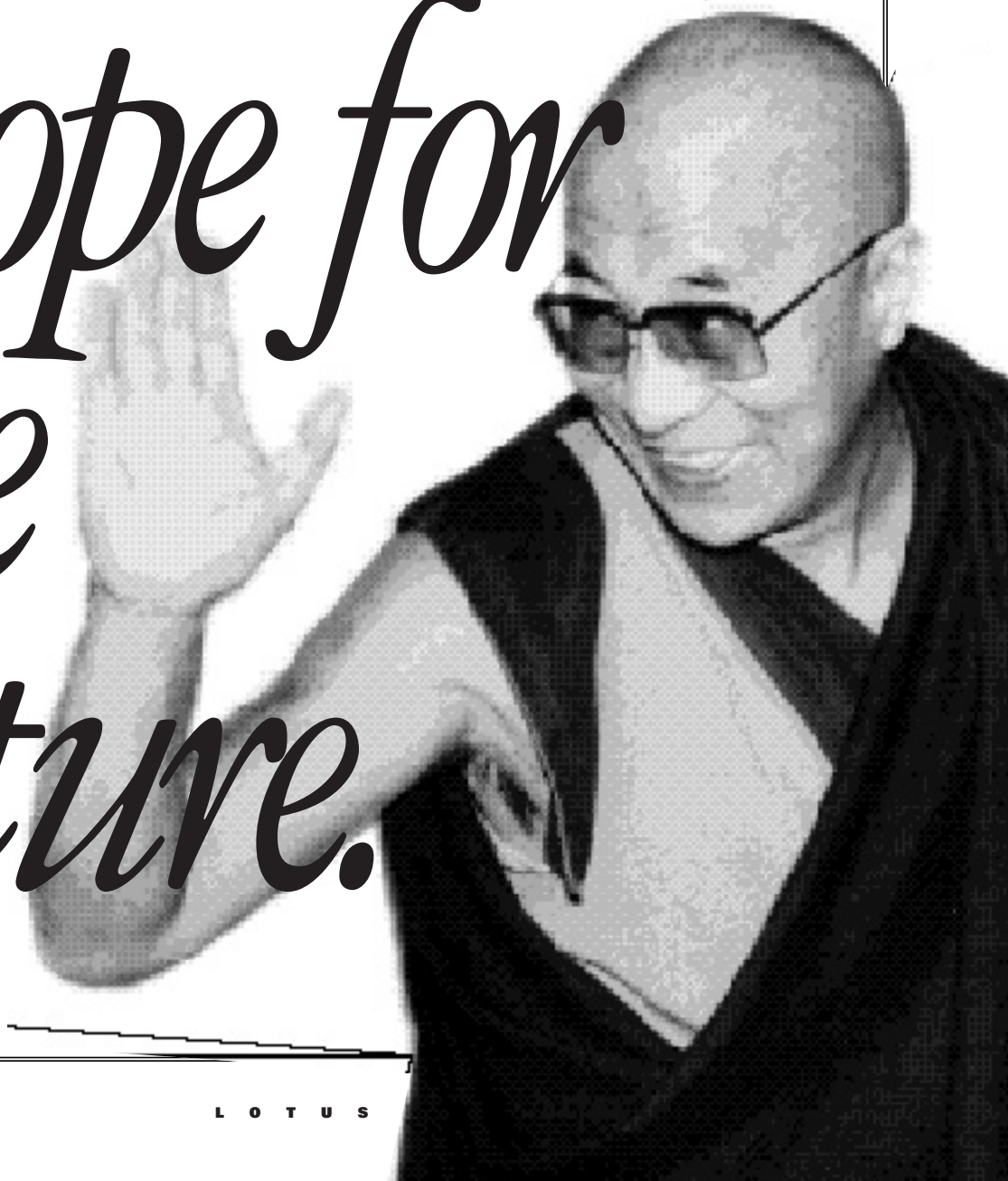
#### Notes:

1. Larsen, S. *The Shaman's Doorway* (Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press, 1986), p. 82-117
2. Kelsey, M. *God, Dreams, and Revelation* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1974).
3. Savary, L.M.; Berne, P.H.; and Williams, S. K. *Dreams and Spiritual Growth* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984).
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*I want to speak with you about the importance of kindness and compassion. When I speak about this, I regard myself not as a Buddhist, not as the Dalai Lama, not even as a Tibetan, but as one human being, and I hope that you will think of yourself as a human being rather than just an American, or a Westerner, or a member of a particular group. These things are secondary. If you and I interact as human beings, we can reach this basic level. If I say, "I am a monk; I am a Buddhist," these are, in comparison to my nature as a human being, temporary. To be human is basic. Once you are born as a human being, that cannot change until your death. Other characteristics—whether you are educated or uneducated, rich or poor—are secondary.*

TENZIN GYATSO, THE XIVTH DALAI LAMA

*Hope for  
the  
future.*







Today we face many problems. Some are essentially created by ourselves, based on divisions due to ideology, religion, race, economic status, and other factors. Because of this, the time has come for us to think on a deeper level, on the human being level, and from that level to respect and appreciate the sameness of ourselves and others as human beings. We must build closer relationships of mutual trust, understanding, respect, and help, regardless of differences in culture, philosophy, religion, or faith.

After all, all human beings are made of flesh, bones, and blood, wanting happiness, and not wanting suffering. We all have an equal right to be happy, and it is important to realize our sameness as human beings. We all belong to one human family. We quarrel with each other, but that is due to secondary reasons, and all of this arguing, cheating and suppressing each other is of no use.

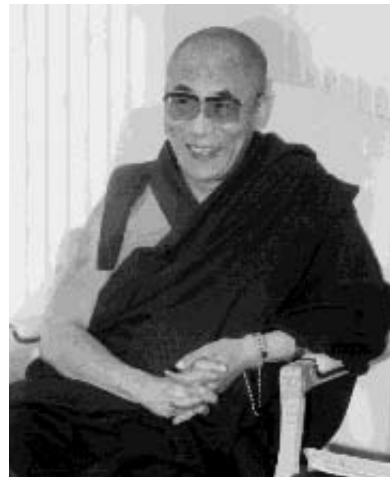
Unfortunately, for many centuries, human beings have used all sorts of methods to suppress and hurt one another. Terrible things have been done. We have caused more problems, more suffering, and more mistrust, and created more hatred and more divisions.

Today the world is becoming smaller and smaller. Economically and from many other viewpoints, the different areas of the world are becoming closer and much more interdependent. Because of this, international summits often take place; problems in one remote place are connected with global crises. The situation itself expresses the fact that it is now necessary to think more on a human level rather than on the basis of the matters which divide us. Therefore, I am speaking to you as just a human being, and I earnestly hope that you

are also reading with the thought, "I am a human being, and I am here reading the words of another human being."

All of us want happiness. In cities, on farms, even in remote villages, everyone is quite busy. What is the purpose? Everyone is trying to create happiness. To do so is right. However, it is very important to follow a correct method in seeking happiness. Too much involvement with superficialities will not solve the larger problems.

There are all about us many crises, many fears. Through highly developed science and technology, we have



*THERE IS NO  
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TEMPLE.*

reached a very advanced level of material progress, both useful and necessary. Yet if you compare the external progress with our internal progress, it is quite clear that our internal progress falls short. In many countries, crises—terrorism, murders, and so on—are chronic. People complain about the decline in morality and the rise in criminal activity. Although in external matters we are highly developed and continue to progress, at the same time we neglect our inner development.

In ancient times, if there was war, the effect was limited. Today, because of external material progress, the potential for destruction is beyond imagination. When I visited Hiroshima, though I knew something about the nuclear explosion there, I found it very difficult to see it with my own eyes and to meet with people who actually suffered at the moment of the bombing. I was deeply moved. A terrible weapon was used. Though we might regard someone as an enemy, on a deeper level an enemy is also a human being, also wants happiness, also has the right to be happy. Looking at Hiroshima and thinking about this, at that moment I became even more convinced that anger and hatred cannot solve problems.

Anger cannot be overcome by anger. If a person shows anger to you and you respond with anger, the result is a disaster. In contrast, if you control anger and show the opposite attitude—compassion, tolerance, patience—then not only do you yourself remain in peace, but the other person's anger will gradually diminish. World problems also cannot be challenged by anger or hatred. They must be faced with compassion, love, and true kindness. Even with all the terrible weapons we have, the weapons themselves cannot start a war. The button to trigger them is under a human finger, which moves by thought, not under its own power. The responsibility rests in thought.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTO

*ANGER  
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PERSON  
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DISASTER.*

If you look deeply into such things, the blueprint is found within—in the mind—out of which actions come. Thus, first controlling the mind is very important. I am not talking about controlling the mind in the sense of deep meditation, but rather in the sense of cultivating less anger, more respect for others' rights, more concern for other people, and more clear realization of the sameness of human beings. Take the Western view of the Eastern bloc—for instance, of the Soviet Union. You must look at the Soviet Union as brothers and sisters; the people of Russia are the same as yourselves. From the Russian side, they should also look on your side as brothers and sisters. This attitude may not solve problems immediately, but we have to try. We have to begin promoting this understanding through magazines and through television. Rather

than just advertising to make money for ourselves, we need to use this media for something more meaningful, more seriously directed towards the welfare of humankind. Not money alone. Money is necessary, but the actual purpose of money is for human beings. Sometimes we forget human beings and become concerned just about money. This is illogical.

After all, we all want happiness, and no one will disagree with the fact that with anger, peace is impossible. With kindness and love, peace of mind can be achieved. No one wants mental unrest, but because of ignorance, depression and so on, these things occur. Bad attitudes arise from the power of ignorance, not of their own accord.

Through anger we lose one of the best human qualities—the power of judgment. We have a good brain, allowing us to judge what is right and what is wrong, not only in terms of today's concerns, but considering ten, twenty, or even a hundred years into the future. Without any precognition, we can use our normal common sense to determine if something is right or wrong. We can decide that if we do such and such, it will lead to such and such an effect. However, once our mind is occupied by anger, we lose this power of judgment. Once lost, it is very sad—physically you are a human being but mentally you are not complete. Given that we have this physical human form, we must safeguard our mental capacity of judgment. For that, we cannot take out insurance. The insurance company is within ourselves: self-discipline, self-awareness, and clear realization of the shortcomings of anger and the positive effects of kindness. Thinking about this again and again, we can become convinced of it; and then with self-awareness, we can control the mind.

For instance, at present you may be a person who, due to small things, gets quickly and easily irritated. With clear understanding and aware-

ness, that can be controlled. If you usually remain angry about ten minutes, try to reduce it to eight minutes. Next week make it five minutes and next month two minutes. Then make it zero. This is the way to develop and train our minds.

This is my feeling and also the sort of practice I myself do. It is quite clear that everyone needs peace of mind; the question is how to achieve it. Through anger we cannot. Through kindness, through love, through compassion, we can achieve peace of mind. The result will be a peaceful family—happiness between parents and children; fewer quarrels between husband and wife; no worries about divorce. Extended to the national level, this attitude can bring unity, harmony, and cooperation with genuine motivation. On the international level, mutual trust, mutual respect, and friendly and frank discussions can lead to joint efforts to solve world problems. All these are possible.

But first we must change within ourselves. Our national leaders try their best to solve our problems, but when one problem is solved, another crops up. Trying to solve that, there is another somewhere else. The time has come to try a different approach. Of course, it is very difficult to achieve a worldwide movement of peace of mind, but it is the only alternative. If there were an easier and more practical method, that would be better, but there is none. If through weapons we could achieve real, lasting peace, all right. Let all factories be turned into weapons factories. Spend every dollar for that, if that will achieve definite, lasting peace. But it is impossible.

Weapons do not remain stockpiled. Once a weapon is developed, sooner or later someone will use it. Someone might feel that if we do not use it, millions of dollars will be wasted, so somehow we should use it—drop a bomb to try it out. The result is that innocent people get

killed. A friend told me that in Beirut there is a businessman who deals in weapons solely to make money. Because of him, many poor people in the streets get killed—ten or fifteen, or a hundred every day. This is due to lack of human understanding, lack of mutual respect and trust, not acting on a basis of kindness and love.

Therefore, although attempting to bring about peace through internal transformation is difficult, it is the only way to achieve a lasting world peace. Even if it is not achieved during my own lifetime, that is all right. More human beings will come—the next generation and the one after that—and progress can continue. I feel that despite the practical difficulties and the fact that this is regarded as an unrealistic view, it is worthwhile to make the attempt. So wherever I go, I express this, and I am encouraged that people from many different walks of life receive it well.

Each of us has responsibility for all humankind. It is time for us to think of other people as true brothers and sisters and to be concerned with their welfare, with lessening their suffering. Even if you cannot sacrifice your own benefit entirely, you should not forget the concerns of others. We should think more about the future and the benefit of all humanity.

If you try to subdue your selfish motives—anger and so forth—and develop more kindness, more compassion for others, ultimately you will benefit more than you would otherwise. So sometimes I say that the wise selfish person should practice this way. Foolish selfish persons always think of themselves, and the results are negative. But a wise, selfish person thinks of others, helps others as much as he or she can, and receives good results.

This is my simple religion. There is no need for complicated philosophies, not even for temples. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple. The philosophy is kindness. •

## LOVE, COMPASSION AND TOLERANCE.

*The essence  
of all  
religions  
is love,  
compassion,  
and  
tolerance.*

**K**indness is my true religion. No matter whether you are learned or not, whether you believe in the next life or not, whether you believe in God or Buddha or some other religion or not, in day-to-day life you must be a kind person. When you are motivated by kindness, it doesn't matter whether you are a practitioner, a lawyer, a politician, an administrator, a worker, or an engineer: whatever your profession or field, deep down you are a kind person.

Love, compassion,

and tolerance are necessities, not luxuries.

Without them, humanity cannot survive. If you have a particular faith or religion, that is good. But you can survive without it if you have love, compassion, and tolerance.

The clear proof of a person's love of God is if that person genuinely shows love to fellow human beings.

To have strong consideration for others' happiness and welfare, we must have a special altruistic attitude in which we take upon ourselves the burden of helping others. To generate such an unusual attitude, we must have great compassion, caring about the suffering of others and wanting to do something about it. To have such a strong force of compassion, we must have a strong sense of love

that, upon observing sentient beings, wishes that they have happiness—finding a pleasantness in everyone and wishing happiness for everyone, just as a mother does for her sole sweet child. To have a sense of closeness and dearness for others, use as a model a person in this lifetime who was very kind to you. Then extend this sense of gratitude to all beings.

Deep down we must have real affection for each other, a clear realization or recognition of our shared human status. At the same time, we must openly accept all ideologies and systems as a means of solving humanity's problems. One country, one nation, one ideology, one system is not sufficient. It is helpful to have a

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LEARNING TO  
LOVE OURSELVES



# THE 10 IRRATIONAL BELIEFS OF THE ADDICTED MIND

BY LEE L. JAMPOLSKY

**W**hen we are caught in addiction it is impossible to experience love. Compulsivity and peace of mind are mutually exclusive. It is my belief that much addictive behavior stems from trying to cover up or run away from deep feelings of aloneness. Rather than feel our aloneness we

become focused on controlling, getting, judging, defending, and attacking, as ways of looking away from our loneliness. Our addictions slowly become the walls behind which we hide. Eventually our walls become so high that instead of simply hiding we become prisoners of our own making. The guards in the prison of addiction are our egos, while the bars of our cells are forged with our irrational beliefs. We sit upon cold gray cement in our dark and isolated cells, thinking that there is no escape. In order to become free of our addictions we must first identify the irrational beliefs that keep us stuck where we are.

# 1. My self-esteem is dependent upon my being approved of by everybody on this planet.

Unanimous approval is highly unlikely, and this belief results in another one of the ego's vicious cycles:

a. I try to please other people so I will feel good about myself.

b. I eventually fail because I can't always please everybody. Failure brings on feelings of guilt, which lead to feelings of low self-worth.

c. To compensate for feelings of low self-worth, I become even more of a people pleaser.

In love-based thinking I realize that:

*My self-esteem is not dependent upon pleasing others. Approval seeking takes me away from who I am.*

# 2. If I am to consider myself worthwhile, I must excel, achieve, win, and display glowing competence at all times, in all places, and at all costs.

How brittle self-esteem can become. Is it any surprise that such a belief leads to addiction? This belief is based on a fear that if you let down your guard for even a second you might slip and be found out to be incompetent. The fear of being found out as a fake is prevalent in our society. Some years ago a study revealed

that a large number of individuals in high-level, respected positions felt, deep down that, they were not qualified. These individuals felt that one day they might be discovered as frauds. The result of this belief is that the individual runs on a treadmill, oftentimes with high achievements, yet his or her inner experience is one of feeling deeply inadequate, not enough.

Love-based thinking reflects the truth about who you are:

*My self-worth is not based solely upon what I do or achieve. I am enough right now.*

# 3. All things that go wrong in my life are caused by other people. These people need to be blamed and punished.

To avoid our own underlying feelings of inadequacy we may blame other people. Sometimes we may feel so out of control in our life that we irrationally think that blaming and punishing another person will somehow give us back a little bit of control. Fear is at the core of this belief. While we run from fear we cannot ever look at the source of the real problem: our addictive mind.

Love-based thinking recognizes that:

*Healing must begin in my own mind.*

# 4. If external situations in my life are not exactly how I want them

# to be, I must feel tense, worry endlessly, and expect a disaster to occur within seconds.

The ego has a surefire way to keep us from looking at ourself and our belief system. The ego encourages us to become totally preoccupied with the chaos around us. It may be a new thought for you that the situation is *not* the determiner of your experience. You may have become used to feeling happy when things are going your way, and unhappy when you don't like the situation. We can behave like a robot programmed with responses to all situations. We can become so caught up in trying to make the outside world to our liking that we forget about our inner life. When we compulsively try to control external circumstances, we guarantee ourself a life void of lasting peace.

The one thing about trying to control situations is that the job is never quite done. You will be able to find something else that needs to be controlled. Conversely, as you become more comfortable with who you are, the need to control things will diminish.

In 1982 I spent time with Mother Teresa at her Missions of Charity in India. Through her I saw firsthand that it is possible to experience peace of mind even when surrounded by hunger and death. I believe that she saw these abandoned children and dying people as being in need of love and respect. Her focus was on providing them with this, while asking for nothing in return. Being with her was probably the first time that I truly believed that peace of mind is a choice, that every person is capable of unconditional love, and that happiness is not dependent upon the external situation.

I am not suggesting that we should not care about what is happening in the world. I am stating that where we must begin is where we must also end, and that is with examining our own mind. In order to live a peaceful life you must recognize that we have control over our own feelings and reactions.

Love-based thinking states:

*If I want to change my life, I must first change my mind. What I experience is based upon my thoughts and beliefs.*

**5.** If something negative happened in the past, I should be very concerned about it repeating itself in the future. It will help if I keep dwelling on the possibility of it occurring.

There is nothing written in stone that states that the past will repeat itself, yet many people run their lives on this premise. This belief leads to a lack of trust, a guardedness. The irony is that simply dwelling on a possible negative outcome can cause it to occur. If we put enough energy into thinking something will happen, good or bad, it just might. And when we see our negative prediction come true we increase our commitment to worrying about the next catastrophe. This, in turn, creates another one of the ego's vicious cycles.

I lived in Mexico for a year and saw the effects of this belief demon-

strated in an ironic way. Montezuma's revenge is a problem with travel south of the border. It was my observation that people visiting Mexico approached this fact in one of three ways:

1. They ignore it, eating and drinking everything in sight.

2. They realized that they were not immune to bacteria. They enjoyed their food, ate lightly at first, and avoided obviously unsanitary situations. Beyond that, they did not preoccupy themselves with the situation.

3. They worried constantly about it, questioning everyone about the food until the proprietor wanted to throw it at them. They constantly thought about how awful they felt the last time that they had diarrhea.

What I observed in my casual study was that members of group 1 and group 3 became ill with more or less the same frequency. Those in group 2 were the least likely to be counting the tiles in the bathroom. The point of the story is that excessive worry does more harm than good. Because of the power of thought we attract that upon which we dwell. This power can be used to bring either positive or negative experiences into our life. The choice is ours.

In letting go of worry we begin to experience joy. When we are preoccupied with the future and worrying about the past we are likely miserable. As human beings we have a powerful brain, yet we may have problems with three simple facts about time:

*The past is past.*

*The future is in the future.*

*The present is present.*

**6.** If I avoid painful issues and stuff down my emotions, I will be safe and happy.

Despite popular opinion, repres-

sion and procrastination are *not* the keys to happiness. Through our addictions we have attempted to push down our feelings of anger, unworthiness, and shame. When we stop our addictive behavior by confronting the addictive thought system, repressed pain will surface. It is by allowing this process to unfold (usually with the help of a friend, a therapist, or a sponsor in a twelve-step program) and working through our pain that we once again become feeling human-beings. Procrastination is an indirect way of saying, "I don't trust myself, my intuition, or God." Our pain makes us afraid to move in any direction; we become stuck. We procrastinate about changing the situation. The more afraid we become, the more we procrastinate. As we procrastinate we adopt addictive ways of being in order to further avoid our feelings and create more reasons to not like ourself.

In contrast with repression and procrastination, love-based thinking states:

*I trust in the unfolding of my life. Love has never abandoned me. I need but open my heart to it.*

**7.** I am weak and need to be dependent on somebody or something else.

You may have a feeling of being weak, incomplete, or somehow insufficient. Even being alone for a few hours may make you uncomfortable. You may find that drugs or other addictions give you temporary relief, yet deep down the feeling of incompleteness persists.

When I was a kid, my family enjoyed doing jigsaw puzzles. Sometimes we could not find a piece. After we would search for a certain piece for hours we would joke about the puzzle being sent from the manu-

facturer with a piece missing. Each time this happened I became convinced that someone at the factory had a cruel sense of humor and had withheld one or two pieces. Eventually the missing piece would always eventually turn up.

None of us came into this world with a piece missing. It may take patience and perseverance to remember our wholeness, but it is there.

This is not to say that we don't need intimacy with other people. But being in a dependent position is not intimacy, it is dependence, and is based on a belief that we lack something in ourself. When we become aware of our wholeness we can then begin to truly share ourself with others. We can also allow ourself to be nurtured.

*Share who you are with another.*

*Don't look to another to make up for a lack in yourself.*

8. I should be very involved in, and upset about, other people's problems.

When people learn that I am a psychologist their first response is often, "Don't you get depressed listening to problems all day?" I suggest to them that it is possible to be of service to others without taking on their problems and their pain. Each of us can be compassionate without taking on suffering. You may think that being helpful means being overly identified with another person's pain. Though it is important to acknowledge the person's pain, it is equally important to see that person's health as well. If I see the underlying health and wholeness in a person, I feel whole. If I identify only with the pain, I feel only pain.

Many of us may jump into solving other people's problems as a way of

giving yourself some sort of self-esteem. This is just another form of addiction: we think that doing something or problem-solving will bring us happiness. When we stop being a super problem solver, we will probably feel a shame and a low self esteem that the addiction has covered up. It is through sharing this pain with another human being that we can move toward healing ourself. From this healed, whole place, we can truly be of service. Recognize that:

*Fixing you will not fix me.*

9. There is one right way to view the world.

If you grew up in an alcoholic or dysfunctional family, you may think this way. To compensate for the craziness and inconsistency that you witnessed, you may defend yourself by seeing the world as divided into good and bad, right and wrong. This belief locks out intimacy. The subtext of this belief is, My safety lies in believing that everything is black and white, that there are no gray areas in life. Recognizing that this rigid view of the world lacks truth brings underlying anxiety to the surface. This is because when you give up rigidity you must confront life's ambiguities.

We can become addicted to a certain way of viewing ourself and the world, despite the fact that such a view keeps us from experiencing closeness with another. When you find yourself lacking the closeness to another that you want, remember:

*There is another way to look at this.*

*The world is not always clearly black and white.*

*If I am attached to being right,*

*I am shutting the door on learning the lessons of love.*

10. I am limited in what I can do and the happiness that I can experience.

There is an entire vocabulary devoted to the belief that people are limited. I refer to these words as love blockers, because they inhibit our ability to experience love and creativity by reinforcing the addictive thought system. Love blockers are words that can be seen as the mortar that holds the bricks of the addictive thought system together. If we remove the mortar (love blockers), the bricks (addictive beliefs) are more easily removed. Some examples of love blockers follow.

*I doubt* if I could succeed. I know that I *should* do it, *but* it is too *difficult*. Besides, nobody else seems to be able to succeed; it is *impossible*. And I've *tried* it before; I *can't* do it. *If only* things were different. I ought to do it, but I have this *limitation* that prevents me.

In addition to the italicized love blockers already mentioned, many other words become love blockers when used for categorizing, evaluating, or judging yourself or others.

Most people use at least a few love blockers, and everyone has his or her personal favorites. Yet with conscious effort we can eliminate these words from our vocabulary. In doing so we will make giant strides toward uprooting the addictive belief system.

Richard Bach, in his book *Illusions*, says one sentence that summarizes love blockers:

*"Argue for your limitations and sure enough, they're yours." •*



# altruism

## FRIENDSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSE BY G. D. E. PURUCKER

Human nature is inclined, when hearing about Altruism, to imagine that it is something foreign to us, dragged into human life as a desirable thing to follow, but a thing that is highly impractical. It is perceived that it is not inherent in the characteristics of human beings to be altruistic naturally. In other words, most people are fascinated with the idea of isolated self-interest. Wherever we look, whatever we consider or study, we find that the individual working alone for itself is helpless. It is a union of effort, cooperation in living associations which is not only what Nature herself is working to bring about and therefore which we find everywhere; but that anything that runs counter and contrary to this fundamental law of the Universe, produces disharmony, strife, and what in our own bodies we call disease. Health is that condition of bodily structure where all parts work to a common end in what we may call friendship, in what we may call union.

Consider the stones: are they not unions of atoms composing, making, producing, a thing? No single atom of any of the chemical elements of which any stone is composed is the stone itself. How about the lovely flower? How about the bodies in which we live? How about a single person? Could they produce the great works that men and woman have bent their genius to achieve, alone? Civilization is but the combined efforts of human beings to produce great and noble effects in human life—increasing comfort, dispelling danger, bringing about the productions of genius from the greater men and woman, which is transmitted to our own comfort and use. Show me a single instance where pure self-interest has produced anything. We find naught, if we consult Nature in all her kingdoms. Altruism is the word we give to this fact when we see its ethical significance, and this significance is not any different from what we see in the physical world. Altruism means the one working for the all—Nature's fundamental law in all her grand structures. Think of the very deep moral lesson, to be drawn from this greatest of the universe's verities, so common around us that usually we pass it by unseeing. Show me anything that can endure sole and alone for a single instant of time.

Two or more atoms uniting make a molecule; two or more molecules a larger production; and it is the countless multitudes of unions which produce the universe. Any single entity asserting to follow the path of isolated self-interest sets its tiny will against the force that keeps the stars in

their courses, brings about civilizations, and produces all the wonders that are around us.

You know the ancient Greek story about a certain very curious and inquisitive person who opened a box and all the evils in the world fled out, and there remained therein only Hope? I think this contains a great deal of truth which has a practical bearing on life's problems. As long as a man or woman has hope they will not despair. Weak or strong, it matters not; if they have hope, something to look forward to, if their inner spirit, the spiritual being within them, teaches them something of hope, they not only will never despair, but they will become a builder a worker with the Universe, because they will move forwards. And this is Altruism.

We are all children of the Universe, of its physical side and of its spiritual and divine side. This being so, there is in every human breast an undying fountain not only of inspiration, but also of growth, of hope, of wisdom, and of love. So that the world today, although apparently in a perilous condition, still contains men and women to carry the evolutionary wave of progress over its present turmoil and strife; for the majority of mankind is essentially right in their instincts, especially the higher instincts.

Therefore, I do not see anything horribly hopeless about the world's condition today. I believe not only that there is ground for hope, but that the undying spark of spirituality, of wisdom and love of altruism, always living in the human heart, will carry the human race not only out of its present series of difficulties, but into brighter days, which will be brighter because wiser and gentler.

It is not the crises or horrific noise of the thunder which govern the great functions of life, human and cosmic; but those slow, always quiet, unending silent processes which build all the time and carry the human race into the future. There is the ground of our hope! ...primal, simple verities which every human heart can understand. It is time that men and women look on the bright side, to see hope around us, to forget themselves and their petty worries, and to live in the Infinite and in the Eternal. It is easy—ininitely easier than making ourselves continuously sick with frets and worries! Within each one of us there is something divine to which we can cling, and which will carry us through! •

*Adapted from Wind of the Spirit, published by Point Loma Publications*

PHOTO BY RICK NURRIESTEARS



# THE JOURNEY *From Conflict To Love*

JORDAN & MARGARET PAUL, P.H.D.S



FOR THE LAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS WE HAVE BEEN LEARNING AND DEVELOPING IDEAS ABOUT HOW RELATIONSHIPS WORK, CRYSTALLIZING THESE THOUGHTS INTO MODELS TO UNDERSTAND THE PATHS THROUGH CONFLICTS IN RELATIONSHIPS. WHEN WE FIRST DEVELOPED OUR MODEL OF THE PATHS THROUGH CONFLICT, WE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE CLOSED, DEFENSIVE, PROTECTED PATH NECESSARILY LEADS TO NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES. WE ALSO KNEW THAT THE OPEN, VULNERABLE, LEARNING PATH LEADS TO POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES. AND WE KNEW THAT ALL OF US CAN CHOOSE WHICH PATH TO TAKE.

FOR EXAMPLE...

**L**et's say that your mate forgets your birthday and you feel upset. You can protect yourself by blaming your partner, who may then get angry, which hurts you, and then you both retreat, feeling unloved and unloving. Or you can gently remind your mate, openly ask why he/she forgot your birthday, explore your reactions (why you've taken it personally, what your expectations are, and how you react when your expectations aren't met), and experience the entirely different result of acting from an intention to learn. Clearly, the choice of the reaction is yours. And as you make your choice, *the things you do generate the feelings you feel.*

The most important addition to this understanding of the paths through conflict emerged when we discovered, in *The Road Less Traveled*, by M. Scott Peck, the following definition: "[Loving behavior is] the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth." This sparked thoughts that added a much deeper dimension to our thinking—the dimension of love and caring and the recognition of the difference between loving feelings and loving behavior. (We will use the words *loving* and *caring* interchangeably.)

First, for most people, there is a big difference between the love they say they feel and what their behavior indicates. All too often when conflict occurs, people who say they love each other do not act out the love they feel; instead, they act out their protections.

Second, while on one hand the things you do generate your feelings, on the other hand *your feelings generate the things you do.* So, if on a deep level you love someone but your behavior isn't loving, there must be another feeling getting in the way. Almost every time, that intervening feeling is

some form of fear, guilt, or shame. The opposite of love is not hate, it is fear.

The next conclusion became obvious: the intention to learn, which we had labeled the "path of evolution," is the path not only of growth but, more important, of loving behavior. And the opposite—the path of fear and protection—is unloving behavior.

We have therefore expanded our definition as follows: Loving behavior nurtures your own and another's emo-

*For most people,  
there is a big  
difference between  
the love they feel  
and what their  
behavior indicates.*

tional and spiritual growth, promotes personal responsibility, and increases self-esteem.

Our model illustrates the only two intentions possible in a conflict—the intention to learn or the intention to protect—and the paths that follow each intent. Conflict—any situation that produces discomfort, feelings of fear, guilt, anger, disappointment, or hurt—occurs when another person does something you don't like or think is wrong, or when *you* do something that another person doesn't like or thinks is wrong; or *you* do something you think is wrong, which creates internal conflict. The instantaneous, learned reaction to conflict is to protect. You choose it, albeit subconsciously, because the conflict taps in to many fears, and you believe that

reacting openly would leave you too vulnerable. These deeply ingrained beliefs and fears, which were learned in childhood and lie buried in your subconscious, have been causing you to react protectively to internal and external conflicts since you were an infant; these responses, which have become habit, have produced the patterned reactions that run your life.

In addition, we've all learned to respond protectively to *any* discomfort, not just the discomfort produced by conflict. We've learned to protect against feelings of anxiety, disappointment, sadness, grief, guilt, disconnection, aloneness, boredom, hurt, and fear. And just as there are only two intentions in a conflict, there are only two intentions in response to any discomfort—protecting against feeling, trying to make feelings go away by denying them, or feeling our feelings so that we can learn about the fears and beliefs that are creating our discomfort.

There are three categories of protective reactions: (1) control—attempting to get others to change their behavior through instilling fear or guilt; (2) compliance—going along with what others want, out of fear or guilt; (3) noncompliance—either active resistance, which is rebelling; passive resistance, which is temporary compliance followed by deferred resistance (you say you will but then you don't); or indifference, which is either withdrawing or shutting out, or both. None of the things you do to protect yourself—those behaviors that cover up your vulnerable feelings of hurt and fear—meet the definition of loving behavior.

In both our personal and professional lives, we were aware of our protective behaviors. It was relatively simple to see that our attempts to control people or to give ourselves up were not leading to intimacy. But to

realize that these behaviors were unloving hit us like a ton of bricks.

It's easy to be loving when things go your way, but when people do things you don't like, your subconscious fears rise closer to the surface, causing you to react habitually with protective, unloving behavior, which inevitably results in the other person's getting upset and behaving unloving toward you. Then either you give in, hoping to placate the other person and regain his/her love, or you become rebellious or walled off behind your indifference, or you attempt to get the other to change his/her unloving behavior. Of course, the other person then reacts to your defenses with his/her own defenses—and a protective circle is created.

Understanding loving behavior made it disturbingly evident that *unhappiness is always a direct result of unloving behavior*. The most challenging path you can pursue is learning to react in a caring way to yourself and another person *no matter what the other person is doing*.

To see compliant behavior as unloving is a real stretch for most people. After all, you have been taught that giving in, going along with, and/or pleasing others at your own expense is loving. But seeing that none of these behaviors fosters your own or others' emotional and spiritual growth casts an entirely different light on your behavior.

Unloving behavior starts the erosion process that leads to alienation and unhappiness. The unspoken message you give over and over again to the people in your life is, "I'll be caring with you as long as you behave the way I think you should."

Protective, unloving behaviors not only estrange you from the people in your life but cause unhappiness within you. Protective behavior does not nurture your emotional and spiritual growth and is not personally responsi-

ble. Consequently, protective, unloving behavior diminishes your self-esteem.

The corollary insight is just as important and may be more surprising: your self-esteem is raised or lowered by how you react to conflict. Protective responses—attempting to control, giving in, becoming indifferent—lower self-esteem. You feel weak, out of control, like a victim. Conversely, loving behavior, an openness to learning, feels powerful: you are in control of



yourself; you are not a reactor but are taking positive action.

Protections—your attempts to avoid the pain of losing either another person's love or your own integrity—actually bring about the very things you hope to avoid: lowered self-esteem; eroding love; power struggles; sexual, financial, and communication squabbles; feeling unloved and unloving.

Protective, unloving circles continue to bring about the misery in your life. Anytime you see another person's behavior as wrong and try to get him/her to change, or you go along with it out of guilt or fear, or you become indifferent, you perpetuate an unloving circle.

The intention to learn, however,

fits the definition of loving behavior and produces entirely different results—personally responsible behavior, emotional and spiritual growth, and joy, intimacy, satisfaction, and self-esteem. Anything other than an intention to learn is protective.

When you're open to learning from conflict you want to understand yourself and the other person. You want to learn from your feelings rather than protect against them. The intention to learn begins a process of exploration that requires only two conditions:

- (1) a willingness to experience the transitory pain that may accompany the truth; and
- (2) a belief that there are very important, compelling, respectable reasons behind every behavior and feeling.

The areas that can be explored are: how you protect; what happens when you protect; what are the fears and beliefs that produce your protections; how you got these fears and beliefs and the purpose they now serve; and what it means to take personal responsibility and to be loving.

When we wrote the book *Do I Have to Give Up Me to Be Loved by You?* our primary focus was on exploring and learning about the other person. We have learned, however, that the primary focus must be on learning about oneself. Learning about the other is important, but focusing on oneself is the key to being personally responsible. In fact, focusing on the other can be just another way to protect oneself from looking inward and taking responsibility.

One of the questions we are most often asked is, "How can I practice these ideas if the person I'm in conflict with is not open to exploring and learning?" When your intention is to learn about yourself, the other person is merely your helper. You can do your learning with or without

him/her. In a primary love relationship, the involvement of your mate creates a wonderful intimacy; but if you believe you can't learn without the involvement of that person, you become a victim, anxiously awaiting your partner's decision to be open or not. However, you do not need to wait for another's cooperation. You become a victim only by choice. When the other person is not available, you can learn about yourself by looking at your part in creating the conflict, or you can read, think, write, or enlist the help of a friend or therapist.

We all want love, and we wait for others to give it to us, but love and good feelings occur in our lives only as we become more loving. The charge becomes obvious: you need to stop trying to get others to change and concentrate on what you need to do to become more loving.

The intention to learn in conflict occurs rarely. Yet it is the only way you can learn the way out of your unhappiness and into love. Any situation that upsets you—unmet expectations, disappointments, broken commitments, and so on—provides an opportunity for your most profound learning. Such situations can be met with either the intention to protect or the intention to learn. When you react protectively, you do not learn anything. When you are open to learning, you create meaningful changes in your life.

In every conflict, the question never asked is, "What is the loving behavior?" Because you haven't been trained to think in these terms, you need first to learn what is loving and then to learn what prevents you from behaving that way. An openness to learning is always loving. Reacting in protective, unloving ways will guarantee negative results. It's the same set of interactions that guarantees war between nations: we get upset, believe we're right ("God is on our

side!"), and go to war; or we defend ourselves from a real or imagined threat by going to war. Even though at times fighting may be necessary to survive, the belief that we can bring about peace by going to war is a false belief. Real peace will only emerge from a total change in consciousness. Learning what it means to relate to others with love is that consciousness.

The history of our culture shows a distressing picture of an unloving people. Ego consciousness—judgmentalness, selfrighteousness, dominance, one-upmanship, selfishness, accumu-



lation of power—has been predominant. But we are now at a unique crossroads: either we learn to live in peace or we will destroy our planet. Only when we become convinced that our old ways of thinking will never bring about peace and joy will we be ready to behave from the consciousness of love. And the beginning of that consciousness is learning to relate lovingly to each other in our everyday lives.

Relationship, then, is the new frontier and we all are the pioneers. It's both frightening and exciting. There are not many models to help us learn how to play this new game. Most books about relationships reflect old ways of thinking. Everyone is

struggling to discover what it means to have truly loving relationships, but no one has all the answers. However, we can unlock our potential to live more closely with the part of ourselves that has long been dormant—our Higher Selves, the consciousness of love that lies within us all. As we live more in harmony with that consciousness, we will open vast new possibilities.

### SELF-LIMITING BELIEFS

Removing the blocks to being a more loving person has become the focus of our personal learning and teaching. Protection—the exact opposite of loving behavior, which is to be open, giving (without giving up oneself), soft, and concerned for self and others—is always a reaction to fear. *The real basis of fear, guilt, and shame is false beliefs.* In fact, all negative feelings come from false beliefs. So, when you change your beliefs, your feelings will change.

Beliefs run your life, and most of your beliefs are erroneous and self-limiting. For example, when you believe you're inadequate in a particular area (how your body looks, your intelligence, your sensitivity), you take things personally and feel bad and defensive when you're criticized. Your feelings come directly from your belief of inadequacy. When you know you're okay, even though criticism never feels good, you clearly see that the criticism comes from the other person's false beliefs and his/her own unhealed pain, and your feelings and reactions are entirely different.

You may not fully understand how your beliefs create the fears that generate your behavior. In fact, you may

not believe it at all. However, it's true, and when you decide to rid yourself of false beliefs, you'll begin to live more consistently with the truth.

AN EMOTIONAL,  
INTELLECTUAL,  
PHILOSOPHICAL,  
AND SPIRITUAL  
JOURNEY

**Y**ou were not born with beliefs about right or wrong. Rather, from conception on, you were guided by an unseen intelligence that knew exactly how to behave and feel. You didn't think, you just reacted. The beliefs you later used to guide your life were learned. The truth you now seek in the learning process comes from the part of yourself that we refer to as the Higher Self. The Higher Self has been called by many names—the Holy Spirit, Christ consciousness, natural self, human nature, God. Use whatever words feel most comfortable for you.

This Higher Self is an extension of the energy that created and maintains everything. It is the part of you that knows how to live in a loving and joyful way. The intention to learn is a journey to rediscover and to live more harmoniously with that part of yourself.

The Higher Self state of being is not well known. The personality you formed soon after birth is the more familiar. This learned persona is your ego.

We use the word *ego* as it is used in Eastern philosophy—meaning the constructed personality, the false self. The definition of *ego* in Western thinking has come from Freudian psychology. By that definition, the ego is the governor of the personality

structure that includes the ego, the superego, and the id, and therefore a strong ego is considered a healthy thing. But when defined as the false self, a dominant ego is not desirable.

As you grew up, your constructed personality or ego was an important part of your development and became your defense system. You came into the world defenseless, guided mostly by instinct, your natural self. Your behavior, however, was judged by just about everyone, and was reacted to with anything from a disapproving look to yelling, spanking, or enforced isolation. But the message was clear: "You are wrong." You were made



wrong for your thoughts, feelings, and actions, and were judged as bad every time your behavior conflicted with what those around you believed was right. Into your ego went all of the beliefs you learned.

The ego was created, then, to protect you when your natural actions and feelings brought disapproval from those around you. As a child, the fear of rejection was so great that you had to create a way to avoid this disapproval and gain the love you so desperately needed. Your ego was necessary; it saved your sanity, if not your life.

The ego, born out of fear, does not know how to love. It is the needy part of you that only wants to get, to manipulate others to give you love,

affirmation, and approval. All fears of inadequacy and the beliefs that created those fears are in your ego.

For most of us, our personalities become so identified with our egos that we forget we have another part of our being—the Higher Self. It is the part of you that is connected to, and in harmony with, the universe. It functions from universal truths rather than from the beliefs of human beings. It is the best that is within you. In the Higher Self there are no judgments, fears, worries, or protections, for it is the place of unconditional love and knowingness. The Higher Self is love, and it exists in all of us and we all have access to it.

It's important to recognize times when you've been in harmony with that part of you and recognize the feelings that always accompany Higher Self behavior. It is that centered, balanced, wholesome place where you act with integrity and feel your self-esteem enhanced. When your behavior comes from the Higher Self, you feel like you're walking on water, as opposed to being stuck in the quagmire of your ego's emotions.

THE EGO VERSUS  
THE HIGHER SELF

**A**ll negative feelings come from the ego. The Higher Self knows only peace, love, and joy. The ego tries to justify unloving behavior—"He deserved it"; "I had to teach him a lesson"; "It was for her own good." The Higher Self never acts in an unloving way, no matter what another person is doing. In essence, that is the message taught by Buddha, Jesus, Rabbi Hillel, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Higher Self is the spiritual

# CHALLENGING SELF-LIMITING BELIEFS.

*Challenging beliefs is a simple yet difficult process. It is the heart of the transformational process. Use this format to learn about every self-limiting belief you have.*

**H**ere are some of the most common self-limiting beliefs.

## **BELIEFS ABOUT CONTROL:**

*Attempting to control others through guilt and fear, by using my anger, blame, judgments, or cries of "poor me," will eventually get me what I want.*

*Attempting to control another person is justifiable if he/she does something I feel is wrong.*

*In a relationship, if I'm not in control, then*

*I'll be controlled.*

*I can get another person out of his/her protected behavior.*

## **BELIEFS ABOUT COMPLIANCE:**

*If I do things to make myself happy, I'm selfish. To be unselfish, I have to give myself up to make others happy.*

*I have to give myself up to make the other person happy, or that person won't love me.*

*Going along with what others want, even if it's not what I want, is a loving behavior.*

*What I feel and want isn't important.*

*I should never do anything that upsets another person or hurts another person's feelings.*

## **BELIEFS ABOUT RESISTANCE:**

*Rebelling is a good way to establish one's independent identity.*

*It's the controlling person's fault that I resist or rebel.*

*If I don't rebel, I'll be controlled.*

## **BELIEFS ABOUT INDIFFERENCE:**

*I can avoid problems by becoming indifferent.*

*It's better to shut down and withdraw than to reach out and risk rejection.*

## **BELIEFS ABOUT ADEQUACY:**

*I'm not good enough. Therefore, I have to—control to get what I want—give in to avoid rejection—shut down to avoid the pain that I can't handle.*

*I'm inadequate, unlovable, not good enough because ....*

*If I'm wrong about anything, it means I'm stupid or not okay and I'll be rejected.*

*I can't handle pain, especially the pain of rejection.*

## **BELIEFS ABOUT EXPECTATIONS:**

*If I were really important to you (or if you really loved me or cared about me) you would...*

part of you and the only true reality. The ego is fear. The Higher Self is love. You cannot be in fear and in love at the same time—you can only be in one or the other. So in your Higher Self, free from fear, you feel alive, joyful, and relaxed.

The false beliefs of the ego tell you that you are too vulnerable and need to be protected, which forces you to act in unloving, defensive ways, creating deadness, depression, anger, and tension. The Higher Self, however, knows the truth—that you can handle, survive, and find peace in any situation.

Your ego is probably having a field day right now, pointing out all kinds of situations that you can't handle: your mate leaves you, has an affair, won't make love with you, or dies; your boss gets angry with you or you get fired; your business fails; your child fails in school or gets involved with drugs. We cannot stress strongly enough that *any* situation can be learned from and turned into a positive experience. Only when you know that any conflict or discomfort is an opportunity can you accept turmoil, chaos, and unhappiness rather than protecting against them.

All of the ego's beliefs are lies. One of the most common of these is that happiness and self-esteem come from outside yourself. Therefore, most people pursue happiness and self-esteem by trying to become successful (accomplishing things or acquiring wealth, status, or a good reputation) and/or by being loved. But the closed doors of protected thinking keep you from discovering the truth: that even if you satisfy all the ego's desires, there remains a necessary element that if not part of your life will negate everything you do.

That element is the ability to remain open and loving—in other words, in your Higher Self—when faced with difficult, upsetting situations. You have been led to believe that you will feel good about yourself when you *get* love, so most of your

behavior is an attempt to get approval (or avoid disapproval) and is therefore manipulative or defensive. In reality, it's only when you *give* love that your self-esteem, your self-worth, is raised. "Giving love" means "that behavior which nurtures emotional and spiritual growth."

What the ego doesn't tell you is that the *only* way to find real happiness, peace, love and self-esteem is to behave in loving ways. Things like money and relationships can enhance your joy but can never create joy.

Protected, you get angry when things don't go your way, on your timetable, by your form. Open, you recognize that there is a higher wisdom guiding your life and that you can tap into that knowing for guidance through seemingly your darkest hours. You can wallow in the misery of self-righteous indignation, or you can learn your lesson and move on into higher self-esteem and joy. You

always have two choices—to protect or to learn.

The intention to learn is a choice that you can make at any time. Our egos would like us to believe that our emotions dictate our lives so that we really don't have choice. But, as with all ego beliefs, that is false. *We always have choice.* At the Intention Training Foundation, we have a symbol that's formed by your index and middle fingers held up in a V in front of your face. The left finger represents the intention to protect, the right finger the intention to learn. The choice is always right in front of you.

You may be feeling very angry, critical, and disapproving of yourself right now. Those thoughts are coming from your ego. Try to think of yourself as a television set with only two channels. When you're critical or hard on yourself, you're tuned to your fear channel and are hearing the voice of your ego. But the other channel—

your love channel—is your Higher Self. Your Higher Self, being non-judgmental, is never critical and knows that all things have a purpose, a time, a reason. You can tune in any-time and listen to the voice of your Higher Self.

A realistic goal is to diminish the ego's control of your life. The more fear dominates you, the more unhappy you are. Conversely, the more you react in concert and in harmony with your Higher Self, the happier you are and the more love, intimacy, and joy you create.

Learning about your ego's fears and beliefs is the way out. The more you resolve your fears by bringing your beliefs into alignment with universal truths, the less time you'll spend in your ego. The task is an ongoing one. It is the challenge of a lifetime—not a week, month, or year.

•

Grandmaster Tae Yun Kim Advertisement

A black and white photograph of a mountain range. The foreground shows a valley with a river or stream winding through it. The middle ground features a large, dark mountain peak on the left and a smaller, more rounded peak on the right. The background shows a hazy, distant mountain range under a light sky. The overall scene is serene and majestic.

*This Earth is*



*The following letter, written in 1855 was sent to President Franklin Pierce by Chief Sealth of the Duwamish Tribe of the State of Washington. It concerns the proposed purchase of the tribe's land. Seattle, a corruption of the chief's name, is built in the heart of Duwamish land.*

The Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy out our land. The Great Chief also sends us words of friendship and good will. This is kind of him, since we know he has little need of our friendship in return. But we will consider your offer, for we know if we do not so, the white man may come with guns and take our land. What Chief Sealth says, the Great Chief in Washington can count on as truly as our white brothers can count on the return of the seasons. My words are like the stars—they do not set.

How can you buy or sell the sky—the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. Yet we do not own the freshness of the air or the sparkle of the water. How can you buy them from us? We will decide in our time. Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people.

We know that the white man does not understand our ways. One portion of the land is the same to him as the next, for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs. The earth is not his brother, but his enemy, and when he has conquered it, he moves on. He leaves his fathers' graves, and his children's birthright is forgotten. The sight of your cities pains the eyes of the redman. But perhaps it is because the redman is a savage and does not understand...

There is no quiet place in the white man's cities. No place to hear the leaves of spring or the rustle of insect's wings. But perhaps because I am a savage and do not understand—the clatter only seems to insult the ears. And what is there to life if a man cannot hear the lovely cry of a whippoorwill or the arguments of the frogs around a pond at night? The Indian prefers the soft sound of the wind darting over the face of the pond, and the smell of the wind itself cleansed by a mid-day rain, or scented with a pinon pine. The air is precious to the redman. For all things share the same breath—the beasts, the trees, the man. The white man does not seem to notice the air he breathes. Like a man dying for many days, he is numb to the stench.

If I decide to accept, I will make one condition. The white man must treat the beasts of this land as his brothers. I am a savage and I do not understand any other way. I have seen a thousand rotting buffaloes on the prairies left by the white man who shot them from a passing train. I am a savage and I do not understand how the smoking iron horse can be more important than the buffalo that we kill only to stay alive. What is man without the beasts? If all the beasts were gone, men would die from great loneliness of spirit, for whatever happens to the beast also happens to man. All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth.

Our children have seen their fathers humbled in defeat. Our warriors have felt shame. And after defeat, they turn their days in idleness and contaminate their bodies with sweet food and strong drink. It matters little where we pass the rest of our days—they are not many. A few more hours, a few more winters, and none of the children of the great tribes that once lived on this earth, or that roamed in small bands in the woods, will be left to mourn the graves of a people once as powerful and hopeful as yours.

One thing we know which the white man may one day discover. Our God is the same God. You may think now that you own him as you wish to own our land. But you cannot. He is the Body of man. And his compassion is equal for the redman and the white. This earth is precious to him. And to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its creator. The whites, too, shall pass—perhaps sooner than other tribes. Continue to contaminate your bed, and you will one night suffocate in your own waste. When the buffalo are all slaughtered, the wild horses all tamed, the secret corners of the forest heavy with the scent of many men, and the view of the ripe hills blotted by talking wires, where is the thicket? Gone. Where is the eagle? Gone. And what is it to say goodbye to the swift and the hunt, the end of living and the beginning of survival.

We might understand if we knew what it was that the white man dreams, what hopes he describes to his children on long winter nights, what visions he burns into their minds, so they will wish for tomorrow. But we are savages. The white man's dreams are hidden from us. And because they are hidden, we will go our own way. If we agree; it will be to secure your reservation you have promised. There perhaps we may live out our brief days as we wish. When the last redman has vanished from the earth, and the memory is only the shadow of a cloud moving across the prairie, these shores and forest will still hold the spirits of my people, for they love this earth as the newborn loves its mother's heartbeat. If we sell you our land, love it as we've loved it. Care for it, as we've cared for it. Hold in your mind the memory of the land, as it is when you take it. And with all your strength, with all your might, and with all your heart—preserve it for your children, and love it as God loves us all. One thing we know—our God is the same. This earth is precious to him. Even the white man cannot be exempt from the common destiny. •

# Sacred

HELL  
THE *Fifth Avenue*  
ENTRANCE

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A NEW YORKER CARTOON CAPTIONED “HELL: THE FIFTH AVENUE ENTRANCE” SHOWS A SIDEWALK SCENE THAT INCLUDES A FEW PEDESTRIANS. IN THE MIDDLE OF A CITY BLOCK, A WIDE-ARCHED DOORWAY OPENS INTO STAIRS LEADING DOWNWARD.

THIS CARTOON SUGGESTS THAT, LIKE A SUBWAY, HELL CAN BE ENTERED FROM ALMOST ANY NEIGHBORHOOD AND STATION IN LIFE. THE GATES TO HELL, THE GATES LEADING TO THE SEDUCTION OF THE SPIRIT, TO BETRAYAL OF THE DIVINITY WITHIN ONE’S SOUL—THESE PATHS TO SELF-DESTRUCTION ABOUND.

A man lies on a steam grate in a cold December morning in the Old City section of Philadelphia. A bag of food lies next to his head. AP/Wide World Photo.



And it's not just a matter of self-destruction. Evil appears in many places, not only on Fifth Avenue. A bit of hell exists in many of our institutions. The list is long and sad.

Hell is not just our ability to betray the divinity within us, but also society's betrayals. Social issues go unattended. Individually and collectively, we are careless toward the spirit of life that resides in each of us.

I use the word "hell" metaphorically. I am not suggesting that hell *exists* somewhere, as in Dante's *Inferno* or Jonathan Edwards's fiery brimstone pool. Such notions are unworthy of the modern mind. The hell that I am pondering exists in the here and now, in our lives. Personal demons, nagging sorrows, pangs of guilt and conscience because of errors of the heart may make us feel as if we are in hell, just as someone else's misdeeds may injure and haunt us. Isn't it hell when we lose self-esteem, or when we are not treated as full human beings?

But the *New Yorker* cartoon has turned my attention to that part of Fifth Avenue known around the world—the home of Tiffany's, Saks, and Rockefeller Center—the home of wealth, privilege, capitalism, gluttony, and greed. Entrances to this particular hell also exist on New York's Wall Street and Madison Avenue. While all who labor or

live in these places are not doomed, the struggle to keep one's soul, I imagine, must be difficult.

Part of the problem is the religion of mammon (that is, wealth). Ambrose Bierce defined mammon in his *Devil's Dictionary* as "the God of the world's leading religion." Some people will recall Jesus's reference in Matthew: "No one can serve two masters; for either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." And Luke adds that the lovers of money heard all this, and scoffed at Jesus.

Let me illustrate this by telling you about Gary Olson, a college professor. Olson taught a course about the effects of global capitalism upon Third World peoples. He was heartened by the apparent understanding of his students. However, as a class exercise Olson read aloud a paper by one of the handful of students who did not accept his view. It was titled "An Ode to Greed" and was worthy of the most ardent capitalist. Then he asked the 85 students in his class to react to the paper anonymously. Much to his surprise, two-thirds of the class agreed with it. Their papers expressing concern and sympathy about the victims of capitalism had simply been meant to please him.

*The overwhelming class sentiment was captured by an "A" stu-*

dent who said, "I know what is going on is really bad. But I want a Mercedes 450 SL someday and all the designer clothes I can afford. I have the uneasy feeling that if there is too much justice and equality in the world, the good life won't be there for me in the future." From the last row another "good" student chimed in: "I really have to agree with Bill. I came to college so I could be rich in the future. If our government didn't do these horrible things, it might not work out for me. I know it sounds awful, but that's the way it is." —Gary Olson, "Execution Class" ZETA magazine.

The next week, out of desperation, Olson set up another classroom exercise. He asked Dan, a student from Zaire, to participate in a role-play and to pretend he was a South African antiapartheid activist who had been arrested, tortured, and sentenced to death. The professor announced that Dan was to be executed in 15 minutes.

With Dan sitting in front of the class, the professor asked the students to tell Dan why he had to die, reminding the class of the discussion the previous week. The students did not enter into the role-playing, but with prodding, several spoke. One said: "You see, if our government didn't cooperate in killing people like you, our corporations would lose their cheap labor, raw materials, and profits. We would suffer. And besides, someone has to be on top." A few students protested, but the professor continued.

After 15 minutes, Olson pulled out a starter's pistol with blanks and asked his students if any of them wanted to proceed with the execution. No one accepted. So in front

of the class he aimed the gun and fired. On cue, Dan toppled over.

This exercise made a profound impression on many students—although no doubt the most hardened dismissed it as a gimmick. We face this problem of the hardening of the heart—betrayal of the divinity within. Or, if it is not an



A homeless woman cries as she huddles from the cold at Rockefeller Center in New York on January 1. The woman said she survived by panhandling, eating at soup kitchens, and sleeping in the subway. She was crying because this is her second homeless New Year. AP/Wide World Photo.

outright betrayal, then it is being at ease in Zion, perhaps thoroughly coopted by whatever comforts we have; or having worked hard to get our share, we forget others. That's the part of our lives, or at least my life, that I must resist if I want to save my soul.

What are the pathologies of capitalism? We could probably agree upon this list: excessive individualism, isolation,

and loneliness; a society of consumption and materialism; pervasive greed; a definition of success in life that focuses on accumulation rather than service; the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. The philosopher Cornel West has written a provocative book, *Prophetic Fragments* (1988), in which he summarizes the problem: "The modern West has bequeathed to the world—besides ingenious technological innovations, personal liberties for some, and comfortable living for a few—mere fragments and ruins of a decaying and dying civilization. This decay and decline owes much to the captivity of its ways of life to class exploitation, patriarchy, racism, homophobia, technocratic rationality, and the quest for military might." The result, in his view, is not surprising: a culture of alcoholism, drug abuse, and escapism.

We cannot minimize the entrenched power and moral indifference of corporate capitalism (which adds up to immorality), the need for more powerful checks upon the economic elite, the need for redistribution of economic power, and the temptation to despair. But Cornel West—and I join him—worries about the captivity of the churches and the loss of prophetic imagination and vigor.

It is tempting to make excuses for the excesses of capitalism—but when we have our hearts alive, our spirits in touch with divinity, our minds alert, how can we make the excuses? There are two issues: economic power and personal response. Both need attention.

In Manhattan's Tompkins Square the homeless have erected a city of shelters that the police keep upsetting and clearing away. These squatters who have nowhere else to go are resisting the system as they can, on the level of territory. As unsightly and as unseemly as it is, this matter of resistance is to be honored.

What can we do? We can recommit ourselves to the long haul; we can work on racism, militarism, patriarchy, and homophobia, and challenge an economic system that denies that people are precious.

Capitalism is a tough issue because it is so pervasive and deep. Money is an excellent servant, but a terrible master. Shouldn't we expect more of ourselves than to worship it? Shouldn't we keep alive a vision of our community as one of resistance and struggle and hope, and keep alive a faith that the habits of money can be changed?

Augustine wrote: "Hope has two beautiful daughters. Their names are anger and courage: anger at the way things are, and courage to see that they do not remain the way they are." Are you angry? Can you muster the courage to keep on working at changing things, at making a difference? With such anger and such courage, hope lives. •

*The Rev. Bruce Southworth is minister of the Community Church of New York, (Unitarian Universalist).*

Minds in Harmony ad





# CALL ME BY MY TRUE NAMES

THICH  
NHAT  
HANH



I have a poem for you. This poem is about three of us. The first is a twelve-year-old girl, one of the boat people crossing the Gulf of Siam. She was raped by a sea pirate, and after that she threw herself into the sea. The second person is the sea pirate, who was born in a remote village in Thailand. And the third person is me. I was not on the boat; I was tens of thousands of miles away, but because I was mindful, I knew what was going on in the Gulf. I was very angry, of course. But I could not take sides against the sea pirate. If I could have, it would have been easier, but I couldn't. I realized that if I had been born in his village and had lived a similar life—economic, educational, and so on—it is likely that I would now be that sea pirate. So it is not easy to take sides. Out of suffering, I wrote this poem. It is called “Please Call Me by My True Names,” because I have many names, and when you call me by any of them, I have to say, “Yes.”

*"Please all me  
by my true  
names."*

*—Thich Nhat  
Hanh*

Do not say that I'll depart tomorrow because even today I still arrive.

Look deeply: I arrive in every second to be a bud on a spring branch, to be a tiny bird, whose wings are still fragile, learning to sing in my new nest, to be a caterpillar in the heart of a flower, to be a jewel hiding itself in a stone.

I still arrive, in order to laugh and to cry, in order to fear and to hope, the rhythm of my heart is the birth and death of all that are alive.

I am the mayfly metamorphosing on the surface of the river and I am the bird which, when spring comes, arrives in time to eat the mayfly.

I am the frog swimming happily in the clear water of a pond, and I am also the grass-snake who, approaching in silence, feeds itself on the frog.

I am the child in Uganda, all skin and bones, my legs as thin as bamboo sticks and I am the arms merchant, selling deadly weapons to Uganda.

I am the 12-year-old girl, refugee on a small boat, who throws herself into the ocean after being raped by a sea pirate, and I am the pirate, my heart not yet capable of seeing and loving.

I am a member of the politburo, with plenty of power in my hands and I am the man who has to pay his "debt of blood" to my people, dying slowly in a forced labor camp.

My joy is like Spring, so warm it makes flowers bloom. My pain is like a river of tears, so full it fills up the four oceans.

Please call me by my true names, so I can hear all my cries and my laughs at once, so I can see that my joy and pain are but one.

Please call me by my true names, so I can wake up and so the door of my heart can be left open, the door of compassion.



still have the theme of this poem in my mind. "Where is our enemy?" I ask myself this all the time. Our earth, our green, beautiful earth, is in danger and all of us know it. We are not facing a pirate, but we are facing the destruction of the earth where our small boat has been. It will sink if we are not careful. We think that the enemy is the other, and that is why we can never see him. Everyone needs an enemy in order to survive. The Soviet Union needs an enemy. The United States needs an enemy. China needs an enemy. Vietnam needs an enemy. Everyone needs an enemy. Without an enemy we cannot survive. In order to rally people, governments need enemies. They want us to be afraid, to hate, so we will rally behind them. And if they do not have a real enemy, they will invent one in order to mobilize us. Yet there are people in the United States who have gone to the Soviet Union and discovered that the Russian people are very nice, and there are Soviet citizens who visit here, and when they return home, report that the American people are fine.

One friend in the peace movement told me, "Every time I see the President on television, I cannot bear it. I have to turn the TV off, or I become livid." I think I understand him. He believes that the situation of the world is in the hands of the government, and if only the President

would change his policies, we would have peace. I told him that is not entirely correct. The President is in each of us. We always deserve our government. In Buddhism, we speak of interdependent origination. "This is, because that is. This is not, because that is not." Do our daily lives have nothing to do with our government? I invite you to meditate on this question. We seem to believe that our daily lives have nothing to do with the situation of the world. But if we do not change our daily lives, we cannot change the world.



**Thich Nhat Hanh during a mindfulness walk at the Viet Nam War Memorial in Washington, D.C. Photo by Simon Chaput.**

In Japan, in the past, people took three hours to drink one cup of tea. You might think this is a waste of time, because time is money. But two people spending three hours drinking tea, being with each other, has to do with peace. The two men or two women did not speak a lot. They exchanged only a word or two, but they were really there, enjoying the time and the tea. They really knew the tea and the presence of each other.

Nowadays, we allow only a few minutes for tea, or coffee. We go into a cafe and order a cup of tea or coffee and listen to music and other loud noises, thinking about the business we will transact afterwards. In that situation, the tea does not exist. We are violent to the tea. We do not recognize it as living reality, and that it is related to why our situation is as it is. When we pick up a Sunday newspaper, we should know that in order to print that edition, which sometimes weighs 10 or 12 pounds, they had to cut down a whole forest. We

are destroying our earth without knowing it.

Drinking a cup of tea, picking up a newspaper, using toilet paper, all of these things have to do with peace. Nonviolence can be called "awareness." We must be aware of what we are, of who we are, and of what we are doing. When I became a novice in a Buddhist monastery, I was taught to be aware of every act during the day. Since then, I have been practicing

mindfulness and awareness. I used to think that practicing like that was only important for beginners, that advanced people did other important things, but now I know that practicing awareness is for everyone, including the Abbot. The purpose of Buddhist meditation is to see into your own nature and to become a Buddha. That can be done only through awareness. If you are not aware of what is going on in yourself and in the world, how can you see into your own nature and become a Buddha?

The word "Buddha" comes from the root, *buddh* which means "awake." A Buddha is one who is awake. Are we really awake in our daily lives? That is a question I invite you to think about. Are we awake when we drink tea? Are we awake when we pick up the newspaper? Are we awake when we eat ice cream?

Society makes it difficult to be awake. We know that 40,000 children in the Third World die every day of hunger, but we keep forgetting. The kind of society we live in makes us forgetful. That is why we need exercises for mindfulness. For example, a number of Buddhists I know refrain from eating a few times a week in order to remember the situation in the Third World.

One day I asked a Vietnamese refugee boy who was eating a bowl of rice, whether children in his country eat such high quality rice. He said, "No," because he knows the situation. He experienced hunger in Vietnam—he only ate dry potatoes and he longed for a bowl of rice. In France, he has been eating rice for a year, and sometimes he begins to forget. But when I ask him, he remembers. I cannot ask the same question of a French or American child, because they have not had that kind of experience. They

cannot understand. I realize how difficult it is for the people who live in Western countries to know what the situation in the Third World really is. It seems to have nothing to do with the situation here. I told the

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OF HUNGER

Vietnamese boy that his rice comes from Thailand, and that most Thai children do not have this rice to eat. They eat rice of a poor quality, because the best rice is for export. Their government needs foreign currency, and they reserve the best rice for Westerners and not them.

In Vietnam we have a delicious banana called *châu già*, but now children and adults in Vietnam do not have the right to eat these bananas because they are all for export to the Soviet Union. Do you know what we get in return? Guns, in order to kill ourselves and to kill our Cambodian brothers. Some of us practice this exercise of mindfulness. We sponsor a child in the Third World in order to get news from him or her, thus keeping in touch with the reality outside. We try many ways to be awake, but society keeps us forgetful. It is so difficult to practice awareness in this society.

A French economist named Francois Peroux, who is the head of the Institute of Applied Mathematics and Economics in Paris, said that if Western countries would reduce the

consumption of meat and alcohol by 50%, that would be enough to change the fate of the Third World. How can we do it when we do not remember, to be aware? We are intelligent people, but we keep forgetting. Meditation is to remember.

There are means for us to nourish awareness, to enjoy silence, to enjoy the world. There was a 13-year-old boy from Holland who came to our Center and ate lunch with us in silence. It was the first time he had eaten a silent meal, and he was embarrassed. The silence was quite heavy. After the meal, I asked whether he felt uneasy, and he said, "Yes." So I explained that the reason

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we eat in silence is in order to enjoy the food and the presence of each other. If we talk a lot we cannot enjoy these things. I asked him if there was some time when he turned off the TV in order to better enjoy his dinner or the conversation with friends, and he said, "Yes." I invited him to join us for another meal, and he ate with us in silence, and enjoyed it very much.

We have lost our taste for silence.

Every time we have a few minutes, we pick up a book to read, or make a telephone call, or turn on the TV. We do not know how to be ourselves without something else to accompany us. We have lost our taste for being alone. Society takes many things from us and destroys us with noises, smells, and so many distractions. The first thing for us to do is to return to ourselves in order to recover ourselves, to be our best. This is very important. We need to reorganize our daily lives so that we do not allow society to colonize us. We have to be independent. We have to be real persons and not just the victim of society and other people.

**T**he boat people said that every time their small boats were caught in storms, they knew their lives were in danger. But if one person on the boat could keep calm and not panic, that was a great help for everyone. People would listen to him or her and keep serene, and there was a chance for the boat to survive the danger. Our Earth is like a small boat. Compared with the rest of the cosmos, it is a very small boat, and it is in danger of sinking. We need such a person to inspire us with calm confidence, to tell us what to do. Who is that person? The Mahayana Buddhist sutras tell us that you are that person. If you are yourself, if you are your best, then you are that person. Only with such a person—calm, lucid, aware—will our situation improve. I wish you good luck. Please be yourself. Please be that person.

There are so many peace organizations which do not have the spirit of peace themselves, and they even find it difficult working with other peace organizations. I think that if peace workers are really peaceful and happy, they will radiate peace themselves. To educate people for peace we have two alternatives: to use words, or to be

peaceful ourselves and to speak with our lives and our bodies. I think the second way is more effective. One person is very important. I have seen such persons, and because of their way of living, they really influence others.

**T**o take care of our children is also very important. Every time I look at a child, I think of the world we are going to leave for that child to live in. You know very well that if we are not peaceful, if we are not feeling well in our skin, we cannot raise our children well. To take good care of our children means to take good care of ourselves and to be aware of the situation we are in.

If we look deeply, we see that things are interrelated. If your daily life has not much to do with your government, then what does have to do with the government? That is a hard question. Has your daily life anything to do with the people who are dying in the Third World? This is the same question. During the Vietnam War, my countrymen fought not with weapons we had made ourselves—all the weapons came from somewhere else. In the U.S. the weapons industry still supplies the means for millions of people to kill each other. Do you

think the existence of such an industry has to do with the situation of the world?

In our tradition, we are taught to look at things very deeply. For instance, if we look at a table, we can see a cloud, or a forest, or the sun in it, because without the cloud there would be no water for the tree which became the table. We also see the logger and the wheat which made the bread for the logger to eat. In the same way, if we look more deeply, we can see that our daily life has very much to do with the situation of the world. The President of the United States is in your daily life, not just in

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 55

**Thich Nhat Hanh leads a meditation walk during a mindfulness retreat. Photo by Rick Nurrie-Stearns.**





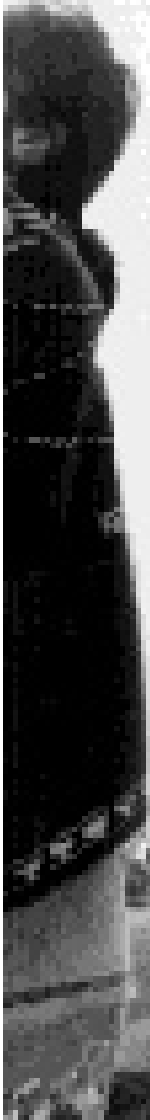
DR. LESLIE GRAY

# *Bridge Between Two Realities*



CAROLYN R. SHAFFER

*“I’m results-oriented,” the striking, articulate woman seated across from me declares. “I have no investment in my clients believing anything about what I do. All I’m concerned about is whether it works.”*



A compact, energetic woman with a stylishly cut mane of black hair and penetrating, coal-black eyes, Dr. Leslie Gray is both a Native American shaman-of Oneida, Powattan and Seminole lineage—and a university instructor. When she's not teaching anthropology and research methodology at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco or lecturing in the Native American Studies Department at the University of California in Berkeley, Gray is often seeing private clients for individual shamanic work. She also conducts occasional workshops on shamanism and trains apprentices.

As we talk today in the pleasant, high-ceilinged room where she meets with clients, Gray looks like anything but a traditional native shaman. She's sitting crosslegged on a red futon—a Japanese folding bed that doubles as a sofa—wearing what appears to be a black cotton jumpsuit. It's really a matching set of shirt and pants, but the casually sophisticated look is the same. As she speaks, her feather earrings flash red against her rich, coppery skin and black hair. The effect is as surprising—and stunning—as the patch of red on a blackbird's wings revealed suddenly when it takes flight. The earrings nod and swing as Gray speaks, agreeing with her every statement and punctuating her most important points.

#### THE NEW NATIVE SHAMANS

She is telling me that a dual career such as hers is not that unusual for native shamans today. More and more are combining an education, and a

successful trade or profession in the dominant Western mode, with their shamanic practices. Gray speaks of a Native American man in the Sacramento area who functions as both medicine man and medical doctor, and of one of her own apprentices, a Mexican woman with Yaqui Indian roots, who has just completed her training as a registered nurse. Eventually, the nurse hopes to serve as an advocate for patients who want to

tribal villages in jungle, desert or forest. Instead, these native spirit-healers reside in communities—whether rural or urban—that are organized along Western lines. They are literate and educated in two or more cultures, and they apply their shamanic practices to the needs of people living in the dominant culture. Rather than rejecting or ignoring this industrialized manner of life, these shamans have learned its ways along with the old ones.

#### BRIDGING CULTURES

Gray is not the only one who perceives this growing movement. I learn later through a telephone interview that anthropologist/shaman Michael Harner has noticed it also. "Leslie Gray, with her high level of education and her dual work as university instructor and shamanic counselor, may be unique today," remarks the director of the Center for Shamanic Studies in Connecticut and author of *The Way of the Shaman*, "but I think it will become more and more common for contemporary, indigenous shamans to practice in this way.



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work with folk-healers of their native cultures as well as with their Euro-American-trained medical doctors. Another colleague of Gray's, an Ojibway healer who recently moved to California from Michigan, holds a fulltime job as a computer technician in addition to practicing his shamanic work.

"These healers," Gray explains in a deep, resonant voice that fills the small apartment, "represent a new generation of indigenous shamans." Unlike their ancestors, they do not live and practice in single-culture

Shamans are highly intelligent and curious about the world and are, by definition, masters of two realities. The more visible and successful they are in ordinary reality, the more useful they are as shamans."

Gray calls herself a "bridge person"—one who links cultures, ancient and new. After speaking with Leslie and her colleagues, I would add the words "trailblazer" or "pioneer" to this description. Gray is at the forefront of a movement among native shamans to not only combine ancient and modern professions but also to

make the spiritual technologies of their ancestors accessible to ordinary people living in late Twentieth century industrialized culture. To this end, Gray practices what she calls “shamanic counseling”. It enables her to use a conventional counseling setting to introduce clients from a wide range of backgrounds to the core or universal technologies of shamanism.

Those who come to Gray do not have to travel hundreds of miles to a tribal community in jungle or forest, worry about making the right kinds of tobacco offerings, and camp under a tree for days waiting to learn whether the shaman will see them. Instead, they can call her on the telephone and make an appointment just as they would with any professional counselor.

This is important, Gray believes, if the powerful spirit-healing technologies of shamanism are to become available to more than a handful of true believers. Gray’s approach works for a wide variety of clients, some familiar with shamanism and others not. Most live and work in the city, but a few travel a hundred miles or more from rural areas to work with her. Some are Anglo, others are Hispanic or Chinese, or of mixed ethnic background.

They seek out Gray because they are feeling ineffectual, confused and powerless. They may be unable to find work that satisfies them or to develop lasting relationships. Some are in spiritual crisis—they have undergone a powerful ecstatic experience or attended a week-long consciousness intensive and don’t know how to integrate this into their daily lives. Gray works with her clients shamanically to help them find their power—or whatever else she determines they need.

#### SELF-HELP SHAMANISM

“When I journey for clients,” she tells me, “it is usually to demonstrate to them how to do it for themselves. My goal is always to teach *them* to

journey, never to hook them into coming back to me for a fix. I don’t encourage dependency.”

While not everyone can become a master shaman, Gray believes that anyone can learn to journey for him—or herself and a small circle of friends or family. This is called personal or family shamanism. The shamanic journey involves entering an altered or non-ordinary state of consciousness, usually with the help of *sonic driving*; repetitive, monotonous drumming, rattling or chanting are common methods of creating what Gray calls “trance-portation”.

“You can almost define the work of shamans,” says Gray, “as the business of ‘traveling’, [either] to the upper world to bring back down power, information or healing, or to the lower world to bring back up personal empowerment for living in the middle world.”

Most shamans, she explains, view the universe as composed of these three realms. The upper world tends to be the land of the ancestors, the middle world that of ordinary consciousness, and the lower world the place of power animals, although this varies in certain cultures. “The aborigines,” she says, “have in a sense collapsed the upper and lower worlds into one alternate realm called The Dreamtime. It’s a realm they consider to be ‘reality’. They tend to give the perspective of non-ordinary reality priority over the perspective of ordinary reality.”

#### THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

The journey begins with the “traveler” finding an opening to another realm of consciousness. While in some cultures people literally dig a hole in the floor to provide this entrance, in others they regard the opening as a phenomenon within the shaman’s consciousness.

“The nature of this opening is highly individual [for each shaman or traveler],” explains Gray. “I invite people to think of an opening into the

earth from ordinary reality, to enter that opening, go down a tunnel and come out the other side; and from there, to explore the lower world. As people become more proficient at doing this, they begin to encounter allies in that lower world and to use information gained from communing with these allies to help themselves or others in this middle world.”

Traveling to the upper world is similar. “The only difference,” comments Gray, “is that you choose an opening that will take you up rather than down, such as a whirlwind, a hollow tree trunk, or a fireplace and chimney. Whatever comes to you as your personal opening is what you use.”

One thing Gray refuses to do is to tell people what they can expect to find in their travels. “Part of what is empowering to them,” she says, “is developing their own maps. For me to develop a map for them would be the very opposite of personal empowerment and would make them dependent on my worldview—not just of this world, but of all the worlds.” At the core of the process of acquiring power in shamanism, states Gray, “is the ability to find things out for yourself, to know what they [the upper and lower worlds] are like.”

#### A JOURNEY WITH PURPOSE

She also makes the point that shamans always journey with a mission. “The art of shamanism is mastering the ability to bring back important information to heal yourself or others.” It is not, as she puts it, “just journeying to see pretty pictures.” A person might do this in the beginning as a way of mastering the technique, but after that, he or she should visit the other worlds with a mission or purpose.

There is nothing to fear on a shamanic journey if it is done properly, Gray assures us. A shamanic journey has two advantageous features—the beings in the other worlds won’t tell the traveler more than she or he

*“You can almost define the work of shamans,” says Gray, “as the business of ‘traveling’, (either) to the upper world to bring back down power, information or healing, or to the lower world to bring back up personal empowerment for living in the middle world.”*





can handle at a given time, and a guardian spirit generally accompanies the journeyer as a protector. "I think you have more to fear crossing the street in a major city," comments Gray, "than you do going on a shamanic journey with a power animal."

At the end of a journey, the traveler returns by the same route she or he used to enter the other world. As a signal to return, the drumming, chanting or other form of sonic driving changes rhythm.

Often her clients make significant progress after only a few sessions. Gray recounts how one young woman snapped out of an overwhelming sense of powerlessness after her second visit. The woman had felt intimidated by the challenges of a new job and her co-workers' response to her. After a dramatic encounter with her power animal in both ordinary and non-ordinary reality following her second visit with Gray, both the woman's attitude and her behavior changed noticeably for the better. (See sidebar article, "Susan Meets Her Power Animal".)

"I haven't conducted an official survey," comments Gray, "but I estimate that my shamanic work is about 90 percent effective." Having participated in two of her shamanic workshops, I have no trouble believing her. At the end of the most recent workshop, one participant confided to me that the breakthrough she made on her shamanic journey that day was "more dramatic than anything I have experienced in 20 years of psychotherapy." The woman later confirmed that it led to positive, observable behavioral changes within a matter of days.

#### *S H A M A N I S M V S . P S Y C H O T H E R A P Y*

Gray is not bragging when she speaks of her effectiveness. To her, it's merely evidence of the power of the shamanic technologies she uses and which she trains her clients to use. It's also a result, she thinks, of the readiness of the people who come to her to make changes in their lives. For some,

she's a last resort. They've tried dozens of other approaches without success. They may know nothing of shamanism, but they're willing to give it a try and are desperate for something that works. Others come already convinced of the efficacy of shamanism and expect quick results. A surprising number confide in Gray that they have been drawn to her through a dream. Not many counselors can claim such highly motivated clients.

One point Gray makes repeatedly as we converse about her work is that she's a shamanic counselor, not a psychotherapist. Because she holds a doctorate in clinical psychology and works with clients in a professional setting resembling that of psychotherapy, people often assume she's a therapist. She's not, Gray makes clear with a shake of her red feather earrings, although that doesn't mean she rejects either psychotherapy or Western psychology.

Gray simply feels called to practice shamanism, and she does not consider shamanism a form of psychotherapy or a replacement for it. The same goes for Western medicine. "In shamanism," she explains, "you make a direct link with spirit, and that spirit helps you heal yourself. The shaman's purpose is to empower others through this spirit-contact. He or she operates from a model of wholeness in which body, mind and emotions working together comprise spirit."

Although psychotherapy and medicine differ qualitatively from shamanism, she says, all three can complement one another. Certain physicians and psychotherapists refer clients to Gray when they perceive that the blocks their clients are experiencing are spiritual in nature. One medical doctor sent to Gray a young man who had successfully undergone chemotherapy treatment for cancer but remained demoralized and lethargic. A psychotherapist did likewise with a client who was making no progress because she believed she had been cursed.

In her characteristically concise, clear fashion, Gray explains the difference between orthodox psychotherapy and shamanism. Psychotherapy, she says, defines itself as lying outside the realm of spirit and operates from a model of illness. It seeks to understand and treat mental and emotional disorders. It is a mental discipline in which understanding—interpretation and analysis—is important, empowerment is secondary, and spirit is unacknowledged. For shamanism, it's the other way around. Spirit and empowerment are crucial, while understanding is peripheral. Gray's way of describing her clients reveals the difference. She refers to them as *dispirited* rather than *depressed*, for example.

Even transpersonal psychology, which acknowledges the spiritual as part of human experience, does not, in Gray's view, compare with shamanism. "Transpersonal psychologists may use shamanistic techniques in their practice just as they may also use the techniques of Vipassana Buddhist meditation," she explains. "But this does not mean that transpersonal psychology, shamanism and Vipassana meditation are the same thing. None of them depends on the others for its identity. They operate in different realms."

#### THE REALITY OF POWER ANIMALS

For a shaman, the guardian spirit or power animal a person meets on a shamanic journey is just as real in non-ordinary reality as a rock or a bear or a human being is in ordinary reality. These entities are not mere figments of the imagination, projections of the unconscious, or useful symbols for personality integration, as psychotherapy might describe them.

The way Gray treated a client who came to her with a nightmare illustrates the difference between shamanism and psychotherapy. The client, who had been working with Gray for a couple of months, was under considerable stress. She had recently divorced and moved to the area, had

not yet found work and was living with a new lover. The night after a session in which Gray had restored her guardian spirit, the woman dreamed that a red spider attached itself to her vagina. At her next session with Gray, she asked what this meant. Rather than launch into dream interpretation as a psychotherapist might have done, Gray explained to her that analysis is only one way of working with dreams. The shamanic way would be to remove the spider rather than interpret its meaning. The client agreed to let Gray conduct a classic shamanic ceremony for removing harmful power intrusions.

As Gray prepared to enter non-ordinary reality, a spider crawled across the pillow on which she was sitting. She picked it up, held it in her open palm and showed it to the client. The client turned pale and shrieked. The spider in Gray's palm was the same red color and had the same markings as the one in her nightmare. Gray took the ordinary spider outside, released it, and returned to the task of removing the non-ordinary spider.

After the session, the woman improved dramatically. She began to interview for jobs and actively pursue new friendships. She also reported feeling more energy. She no longer described herself as depressed. Gray does not claim to know what the nightmare meant or why removing both the ordinary and the non-ordinary spider appeared to have such a beneficial effect. Analyzing the problem and its resolution is not of great importance to her. What she does know is that the techniques worked, and that's enough for her.

In the red spider case, Gray directly intervened to empower a person she considered dispirited. Such intervention is not always necessary. Often people can heal themselves using shamanic techniques even if they have no previous experience with shamanism.

Such was the case with Barbara, the woman who underwent the dramatic breakthrough at the most recent Leslie Gray workshop I attended. Barbara had never before journeyed in shamanic fashion and was not seriously interested in pursuing shamanism. She attended the event, titled "Speaking with Spirit Tongue", to work on her fear of being seen in public. She was scheduled to give a presentation in a class the following week and found herself panicked by the prospect. Since childhood, she had been inordinately afraid of speaking in groups or otherwise being noticed.

In her journey, Barbara traveled back to adolescence and relived a scene with her father that she explained later had been repeated many times in her childhood. Whenever she dressed up for a party or a dance, her mother insisted that she go show her father how she looked. Inevitably, her father would find something to criticize. His response left her feeling exposed and unattractive. In this journey, Barbara called on an ally to help her: the dog that had been her pet and confidante during those childhood years. Both the dog ally and Barbara the adult comforted and reassured Barbara the young girl.

When she described her journey to others in the workshop, Barbara found herself filled with rage. Until that moment, she had not realized that her anxiety about being seen and the narrowness this brought to her life could be traced to those humiliating sessions with her father. Gray suggested she try saying "No". The word burst from Barbara's mouth as if it had been waiting 30 years for release. She shouted "No! No! No!" for at least a minute.

What impressed Barbara most about the shamanic journey was the immediacy of the experience: "It was not just a memory but a real going

## A CASE STUDY: SUSAN MEETS HER POWER ANIMAL

By Leslie Gray

**S**usan was a young woman who had recently become an aide in the psychiatric unit of a large hospital. She was feeling overwhelmed at the time I saw her, less by her work with patients, she said, than by her relationships with other staff members. In several months, she had made no friends among the staff. She felt her lack of training was glaring in the eyes of other staff members, and she was afraid that certain staff wanted to show her that she was incompetent. She described the problem, nonetheless, as primarily due to her own lack of self-confidence. She complained that her exaggerated deference to superiors, her stammering, excuse-making manner, as well as her interpersonal withdrawal from others were the main contributors to her problem. Yet, she felt helpless to stop these behaviors.

I informed her that the shamanic diagnosis of her situation would be one of power loss, and that the remedy was the restoration of a guardian

spirit in the form of a power animal that I would retrieve from the other world and blow into her.<sup>1</sup>

The next time I saw Susan, she had performed a simple purification procedure of smudging herself with sage smoke and fasting lightly for 24 hours. I lay down on the ground next to her and put us both into an altered state of consciousness via a tape of drumming. I came back from my "journey" and blew the spirit of a mountain lion into Susan. She, in turn, reported that on her journey, she had simultaneously felt like a cat, and she was surprised at the coincidence. I then instructed Susan to go out into nature and dance her animal.<sup>2</sup>

Two weeks later, I saw her and she reported a remarkable change at work. People seemed to be acting friendly toward her, and she had joined a staff support group. Most importantly, she no longer felt afraid of people at work and felt confident enough to express her thoughts and feelings to them.

After our last meeting, she had gone to a local nature preserve to

dance her newly acquired mountain lion spirit. She shook her rattle and leapt upon a rock. The moment she landed, she found herself staring into the eyes of a yellow mountain lion that inhabited the preserve. She was flabbergasted, but she froze on the spot and the lion locked eyes with her for two or three minutes. Susan said that she knew at once that this was a profound affirmation from her guardian, and, following that experience, she felt a surge of well-being which affected positively every area of her life, especially her work at the hospital. •

### Notes

1. For a description of restoring power through the technique of blowing power animals into an individual, see Michael Harner, *The Way of The Shaman* (Harper and Row, 1980), pp. 76-85.

2. See Harner, *Ibid.*, pp. 60-62, 65-68, on "dancing to metamorphose into animal forms" in order to restore power.

back.”

“It seems that at the workshop,” Barbara reported later, “my extreme fear of being visible and having people look at me just fell away. It was a transformational experience. As a direct result, I not only got through the challenge of the class presentation, but I became aware that I have lots of capacities that I haven’t tapped.”

When she later gave her class presentation, she felt utterly calm. She even enjoyed the process and threw in some humor. Some of her classmates told Barbara afterwards that she’d make a good teacher.

#### CREDENTIALS IN BOTH WORLDS

Leslie Gray never intended to become a shaman. She had her cap set for a career in clinical psychology, the field in which she received her doctorate. If it weren’t for a book on psychiatry and an automobile accident, she would most likely be conducting research in that field today.

The first crack through which the ancient ways slipped into her life was Henri F. Ellenberger’s *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The Origins of Dynamic Psychiatry*.

“The book purported to trace contemporary psychiatry from shamanism to mesmerism to hypnotism to Freud,” says Gray, “but, as I read it, the thought hit me like a bolt of lightning that perhaps this wasn’t evolution but *devolution*.” The volume opened with a description of the work of a Kwakiutl shaman. “What this person was doing was so powerful,” she remarks, “that as I read on in the book, I sensed that we (in Western culture) were getting further away from what might, in fact, be the most

effective techniques.”

Gray read everything she could get her hands on about shamanism. She even began to write and teach about the subject, but her quest remained an intellectual exercise until she injured her neck in a serious automobile accident. By this time Gray had been awarded a fellowship in clinical



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psychology by Harvard University and was engaged in research there.

“Here I was living in Boston, the mecca of Western medicine in the United States, and after going to 11 different orthopedic specialists, I couldn’t find one who could help me.” On the recommendation of a Native American friend, Gray visited a Cherokee medicine man living in the Smoky Mountains. Not only did she obtain considerable relief from pain, but she also found herself face to face with an extremely powerful practitioner of shamanism. Impressed by the results of his healing work, she began to spend time with him and other shamans to learn firsthand

about their ancient art. Her interest in academic work began to wane as her fascination with shamanism grew.

When Gray asked the Cherokee shaman to take her on as a fulltime apprentice, he turned her down. She was crushed by this at the time. “He told me to finish my doctorate. He said that I was not meant to be a shaman like him, that I was supposed to be a bridge between the two cultures. It took me years to appreciate his decision. I realize now that I would have been trying to be someone I wasn’t.”

Gray is literate; the Cherokee medicine man is not. She realized that she couldn’t undo her literate mind to see and respond to reality the way he does. She also knew that his lack of literacy would prevent many Euro-American educated people from learning from him. Most non-Native Americans would only notice his inability to read and write. They would not see his brilliance or sense his powerful presence as Gray did. For shamanism to reach urban, industrialized

America, Gray finally realized, it had to come through people like her, shamans with credentials in both worlds.

This insight and the implications it held for her life did not strike Gray at once. For a number of years she studied shamanism and worked with native practitioners without any thought of practicing as a shaman herself. Not until she received a powerful vision in 1982 did Gray realize she herself was called to be a spirit healer.

#### A CALL TO PRACTICE

Her vision, a classic shamanic ini-

tiation journey, came during a visit to a shaman after months of feeling dispirited over how she was meant to work in the world. In the course of a journey to the lower world, Gray found herself devoured by a dragon-like snake, spit out onto a rock altar and reassembled as a radiant being. When she returned from the journey, she came down with a fever that lasted two weeks. After that, her life changed for the better on every level. She moved into a sunnier apartment, made new friends, and knew without a doubt that she was supposed to practice shamanism.

How she was to do this was another question. Gray could not simply follow in the footsteps of her teachers. She had to find her own way in a rapidly changing world.

#### M E R G I N G O L D A N D N E W W A Y S

Leslie Gray is not so much interested in duplicating precisely the practices of tribal shamanism as she is concerned with making the universal technologies of this ancient art available to ordinary people living in an industrial culture. To accomplish this she has adapted certain external forms of traditional shamanic practice to fit contemporary urban life. Her second-floor apartment reflects this blend of cultures. On one wall, her Siberian-style shaman's drum hangs beside a full-length portrait of a Native American woman. Against the opposite wall, a portable stereo, a cassette recorder and a couple of headsets rest atop a small black steamer trunk.

When Gray conducts a shamanic journey outdoors, or in a hall in a non-residential neighborhood, she beats her drum to take participants into non-ordinary reality. When she works with clients in her apartment, she asks them to don a headset connected to her stereo and lets a shamanic drumming cassette take them to the spirit realms. This keeps the landlord happy and avoids sending the neighbors into trance—or to the telephone to complain to the

police.

Gray tells of one or two clients who work in the corporate world and use this technology to journey on the job. When they have difficult business decisions to make, they close the door to the office, pull out a personal stereo and headset, insert a shamanic drumming tape, lie down and travel to the lower or the upper world to consult their guardian spirits.

"Where we live, who our ancestors were, whether we wear feathers or whether we smudge with sage or cedar—these are just the trappings," Gray states emphatically. "They have no bearing on whether shamanic methods work or not."

"In many ways," she adds, "shamanism is uniquely suited to contemporary life. It's a powerful way of dealing with learned helplessness—the experiences of feeling dispirited, alienated and fragmented—and in modern life, such learned helplessness is epidemic."

Historically, shamanism developed as a response to emergency or life-threatening situations. Ancient tribal peoples could not fall back on machines or pills to meet their crises. They had to rely on their innate psychic powers. By learning how to contact spirit directly, they were able to regain their power or to heal themselves.

#### A N T I D O T E T O A H E C T I C L I F E S T Y L E

"City life," Gray points out, "is an ongoing emergency situation. It is emergency as a lifestyle. Everything is supposed to be done yesterday and everyone is in a hurry. We live under incredible pressure."

"If nothing else, shamanic practices help us to slow down—to pay attention. They enable us to screen out the bombardment of stimuli so we can hear our inner voices. Shamanism helps us guide our lives based on what spirit says to us rather than on what external sources such as radio, television, magazines, and books tell us." As such, it functions as

an effective antidote to a society that is addicted to external solutions.

For shamanism or any powerful medicine to work, it must be made available to people in forms they can ingest. Finding such forms is the challenge Gray and other shamans face as they practice their ancient art in cultures far removed from the tribal. Just as their predecessors had to use all the tools and ingenuity at their command to meet the life-threatening situations of an earlier decade or age, so also do today's native shamans confronting modern emergencies. Gray's motto seems to be "Do what works." Spirit does not discriminate between high-rise office buildings and underground kivas, or between prayers offered with tobacco and those simply spoken from the heart. It's the connecting with spirit that counts.

Leslie Gray practices universal or core shamanism in a conventional urban counseling setting, and it works. Other native shamans may find different approaches effective for their communities. The forms or trappings of either may vary as spirit leads the way. •

#### Notes:

*For a detailed discussion of "ordinary" and "non-ordinary" realities, see Michael Harner, The Way of The Shaman (Harper and Row, 1980) on what he calls the Ordinary State of Consciousness (OSC) and the Shamanic State of Consciousness (SSC).*

*Carolyn R. Shaffer is a writer and editor living in Berkeley, Calif. Her articles on spirituality and consciousness have appeared in New Age Journal, California Living, Plexus, and other periodicals. She also contributed to Charlene Spretnak's The Politics of Women's Spirituality and co-authored City Safaris: A Sierra Club Explorer's Guide to Urban Adventures for Grownups and Kids. Shaffer wishes to thank Dio Urmilla Neff for her assistance with this article.*

*Dr. Leslie Gray practices shamanic counseling in San Francisco, is a professor at California Institute of Integral Studies, and a professor in the Native American Studies Dept. at U.C. Berkeley.*

The names of Dr. Gray's clients have been changed by the author to insure their privacy—Editor

*Continued from page 19*

## Love, Compassion and Tolerance

variety of different approaches on the basis of a deep feeling of the basic sameness of humanity. We can then make a joint effort to solve the problems of the whole of humankind.

Every major religion has similar ideas of love, the same goal of benefiting humanity through spiritual practice, and the same effect of making its followers into better human beings. All religions teach moral precepts for perfecting the functions of mind, body, and speech. All teach us not to lie or steal or take others' lives, and so on. The common goal of all moral precepts laid down by the great teachers of humanity is unselfishness. Those teachers wanted to lead their followers away from the paths of negative deeds caused by ignorance and to introduce them to paths of goodness. All religions can learn from one another; their ultimate goal is to produce better human beings who will be more tolerant, more compassionate, and less selfish.

Human beings need spiritual as well as material sustenance. Without spiritual sustenance, it is difficult to get and maintain peace of mind. The purpose of religion is not to argue which one is best. Over the past centuries, each great teaching has served humanity, so it's much better to make friends, understand each other, and make an effort to serve humanity than to criticize or argue. Buddha, Jesus Christ, and all other great teachers created their ideas and teachings with sincere motivation, love, and kindness toward humanity, and they shared it for the benefit of humanity. I do not think those great teachers created differences to make trouble. Our human mind always likes different approaches. There is a richness in the fact that there are so many different presentations of the way.

There are two ways to enter into

Buddhism: one through faith and one through reasoning. Faith alone may not be sufficient. Buddha always emphasized a balance of wisdom and compassion: a good brain and a good heart should work together. Placing importance on just the intellect and ignoring the heart can create more problems and more suffering in the world. On the other hand, if we emphasize only the heart and ignore the brain, then there is not much difference between humans and animals. These two must be developed in balance, and when they are, the result is material progress accompanied by good spiritual development. Heart and mind working in harmony will yield a truly peaceful and friendly human family.

I feel that my mission is, wherever I am, to express my feeling about the importance of kindness, compassion, and the true sense of brotherhood. I practice these things. It gives me more happiness, more success. If I practiced anger or jealousy or bitterness, no doubt my smile would disappear.

The real troublemakers are anger, jealousy, impatience, and hatred. With them, problems cannot be solved. Though we may have temporary success, ultimately our hatred or anger will create further difficulties. Anger makes for swift solutions. Yet, when we face problems with compassion, sincerity, and good motivation, our solutions may take longer, but ultimately they are better.

When I meet new people, in my mind there is no barrier, no curtain. As human beings you are my brothers and sisters; there is no difference in substance. I can talk with you as I would to old friends. With this feeling we can communicate without any difficulty and can make heart-to-heart contact. Based on such genuine human relations—real feeling for each other, understanding each other—we can develop mutual trust and respect. From that, we can share other people's suffering and build harmony in human society. •

Thich Naht Hanh Ad

My Tibet Ad

*Continued from page 43*

## Call Me By My True Names

the White House. Non-violence is not a question of belief. It is a way of life. It is awareness in order to have an accurate vision of reality, and having an accurate vision of reality in order to be in the most lucid state possible. From that basis, you can act.

It is very difficult to say that someone is nonviolent or violent. We can only say that a person is more or less nonviolent at a particular time. When I drink tea, I know that it is not entirely nonviolent because in the cup there are many tiny living beings. It is a question of direction. If you think that violence is sometimes needed, then I think you need more awareness and more love. Then I am sure you will go in the other direction. Even a General conducting a war can be more nonviolent or less violent. In planning strategies, he can avoid killing more people, so there is a little bit of nonviolence in his violent act. You cannot just separate people and say some are violent and some are not. That is why people with love, compassion, and nonviolence should be everywhere, even in the Pentagon, in order to encourage nonviolent attitudes within those we think are our enemies. That is why we have to love the President of the United States. Otherwise we cannot influence him, we cannot encourage him to move in the direction of nonviolence.

I would like to suggest that in each home we have a

small room for breathing. We have rooms for sleeping, eating, and cooking, why not have one room for breathing? Breathing is very important. I suggest that room be decorated simply, and not be too bright. You may want to have a small bell, with a beautiful sound, a few cushions or chairs, and perhaps a vase of flowers to remind us of our true nature. Children can arrange flowers in mindfulness, smiling. If your household has five members, you can have five cushions or chairs, plus a few for guests. From time to time, you might like to invite a guest to come and sit and breathe with you for a few minutes.

I know of families where children go into a room like that after breakfast, sit down and breathe ten times, in-out-one, in-out-two, in-out-three, and so on, before they go to school. This is a beautiful practice. Beginning the day with being a Buddha is a very nice way to start the day. If we are a Buddha in the morning and we try to nourish the Buddha throughout the day, we may be able to come home at the end of a day with a smile—the Buddha is still there. It is really beautiful to begin the day by being a Buddha. Each time we feel ourselves about to leave our Buddha, we can sit and breathe until we return to our true self. Doing these kinds of things can change our civilization.

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