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Lotus

Journal for Personal Transformation

We chose the name Lotus because it is one of the most sacred symbols from antiquity. The seeds of the lotus contain, even before they germinate, perfectly formed leaves, the miniature shapes of what one day as mature plants they will become, an illustration that prototypes of all things exist in the nonphysical world before unfolding in the physical world.

The lotus plant grows up through the water, having its root in the mud, and spreading its flower in the air above. The lotus symbolizes our development. The root sunk in the mud represents material life, the stalk rising through the water, and the flower floating above the surface symbolize our development into spiritual beings.

The lotus is a profound and powerful reminder of the vast potential within us to manifest our essence, to be the grand men and women we were meant to be.

From the Editor...

In this issue of *Lotus* we explore the feminine spirit and alternatives for relating to our bodies and inner wisdom.

The articles raise our awareness, as authors discuss the ways patriarchy has inhibited our relationship with ourselves, others, and the divine. Patriarchy is hierarchical in thought and action, with men being regarded as superior and more powerful than women. God is superior to man and is to be sought through male priests, ministers, and holy men. Patriarchy has had powerful impact upon our culture, as people have become separated from nature and the divine within.

Christiane Northrup, in *Women's Healing, Women's Wisdom*, reminds us that for five thousand years, most of western civilization has been a patriarchal society. She states we cannot hope to reclaim our bodily wisdom and ability to create health without understanding the influence of patriarchy on how we care for our bodies. Masculine pursuits, intellectual control, and control of nature and our bodies are top priorities in patriarchy. Accordingly, intuition, feelings, and body sensations are devalued and ignored. Science is worshiped and relied upon for solutions to psychological and physical distress. We respond to symptoms with intervention such as surgery or drugs or we mask symptoms with addictions to substances, relationships, and work.

Christina Baldwin, in *Circles: The First Culture*, reminds us that we have been trained to believe in patriarchy as reality from the moment of birth. We inherit a culture that sees the world through the lens of domination and submission. Enculturation—that which we have been taught to think of as reality—is the way we see the world, but is not necessarily the way the world really is. We believe that a few people are leaders, a few are experts, and the most are followers. Therefore, we turn to outsiders for information and guidance about our own lives. As an alternative to patriarchy, she advocates circles as an organizational structure wherein power is shared equally. In a circle, leadership is rotated as people take turns talking. This reinforces a mutual respect that

When we tune into our internal authority, we discover that our body is not a problem to be solved. Our body wisdom speaks of the divine, the feminine, and of earth wisdom.

allows people to communicate their thoughts openly. This deep communication allows decisions to be made that will be honored by all involved.

In the photo essay *Feminine Spirit*, Linda Schierse Leonard describes feminine spirit as the energy that compels us to quest, to engage in the process of self-discovery. Throughout this issue, there are examples of people undertaking inner journeys. In *Men on Divorce*, Ellie Wymard advises that ex-husbands concentrate on their inner space with the same attention they give to negotiations in their attorney's office to help recover from the pain of divorce. She also recommends keeping a journal of private writings as "it allows a man to tell his psyche that he is serious, that he is willing to listen to his story." In *My Emotional Healing*, Miroslav Borysenko shares how he accessed his place of inner wisdom and flashed upon two scenes from childhood that released his fear of public speaking and brought compassion into his life.

Our inner guidance system not only heals us, it directs our lives and is a wonderful and exciting way of live. Naomi Stephan in *Finding Your Life Mission* says we all have a life mission, a calling that exists only for us and that only we can fulfill. It takes courage and self-love to answer that inner voice, but being faithful to it is the only way to lead a rewarding life. It is the most natural way to be. Our first obligation is to carry out the mission we are meant for. This article defines self-care as releasing the need to please others so that we can take care of ourselves. Life mission represents the very essence of who we are. It is our very deepest intention—the heartbeat, core, and theme that guides our lives.

May this issue nurture your feminine spirit, liberate you from patriarchy, and fuel your life mission.

Welcome to LOTUS.

Mary NurrieStearns

Mary NurrieStearns

Editor

Lotus

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Letters



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

PHYSICAL HEALING JOURNEY

I was happy to see two success stories in the Winter 1995 issue that describe how physical illness or trauma began a healing journey that was transformational. Often that is the case. Distress in our bodies beckons for us to heal our body, mind, and spirit. I think transformation always includes body, mind, and spirit integration. I've read your journal for a while and really appreciate it. I've noticed, though, that while your success stories frequently tell how recovery from illness can be life changing, your articles focus mostly on spiritual and psychological healing and wellness. I would like to see more articles address the relationship between our physical bodies and transformation.—*Mary Frank, Chicago, Illinois.*

NOT SURE ABOUT RENEWAL DATE?

Lately we have received several letters with subscription renewal questions. The transition from four to five issues a year in 1993 created some confusion. If you mailed in your renewal at the four issue rate, you only received four issues. Therefore you may have received a renewal notice before the year ended.

Also you may have received your first magazine two or three months before we received payment for the subscription. If so, your subscription started with the magazine received, not the payment.

If you have any questions concerning your renewal status please feel free to contact us.—*Editor*

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations on your continued success with *Lotus*. A friend who was moving recently gave me all the back issues from the very beginning. Never before have I read a magazine where I wanted to read every single article in every issue, so I'm starting with Volume One. I guess when the student is ready, the teacher does appear. *Lotus* is speaking to me, teaching me new thoughts and insights and reinforcing much of what I already know. It is an awesome publication! You should tell more people about it because I, for one, had never heard of it until my friend gave me her collection.—*Mitch Mitchell, Gold River, California.*•

*Dear Readers: We receive many notes like the one above. We do not publish all comments since they are similar in nature, yet we greatly appreciate them. Your support keeps us inspired and validates our belief in the value of the material published in *Lotus*. Thank you—Editor*

Success Story



Fear of Abundant Living

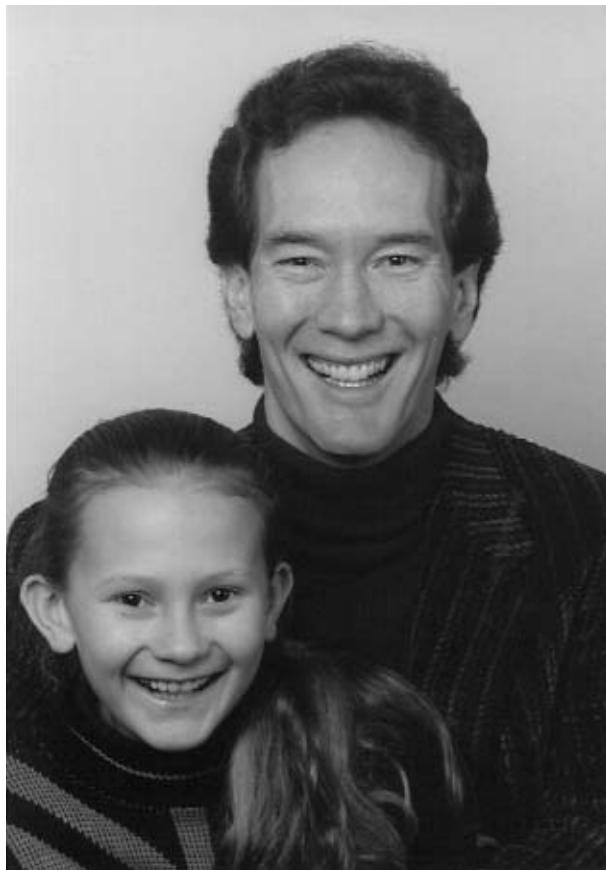
D W I G H T L E E W O L T E R

I once bought a hamster for my daughter. The cage I bought to go with it turned out to be way too small. We had to live with it for a week until I could get back to the store to exchange it for a bigger one. I got claustrophobic just looking at our hamster in his tiny cage. A week later we got a bigger one. We connected the old cage to the new one with a clear, plastic tube that he could run back and forth through between his two homes. His new cage was four times the size of the previous one. It had everything in it but a tanning salon.

The hamster wanted nothing to do with his new cage. He piled wood chips against the entrance so he didn't even have to look at it. I tried everything to lure him into his new home. I put all the food, water, and toys into the larger cage. Nothing worked. Our hamster simply preferred small spaces. Or was it that he couldn't handle abundant living? After just one week in a small space, he was unable to feel comfortable anywhere else. I was furious at our pet. Why would he deny himself access to a greater arena in which to live his life? Clearly our rodent was a loser.

MY LIFE AS A HAMSTER

I used to be a lot like our hamster. I had always lived under the banner of "Small Is Beautiful." I thought my lifestyle was quite humble and politically correct. If I had a lot of money I would buy a mansion. Then I would proba-



Dwight Lee Wolter and Daughter, New York.

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Portunus

New

Success Story

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bly move into one room of it. Maybe two. Perhaps three. I was not a glutton in this world, and I needed very little to keep me happy.

I kept other things in my life small as well. Quite often I engaged in small talk, rather than deep conversation. I was more comfortable with the small amounts of intimacy that small talk affords. I was also frequently the possessor of small thoughts. Big thoughts with large themes gave me a headache. Interesting people bored or intimidated me. I preferred talk about work or the weather so I never felt inferior or insecure.

I was occasionally even accused (correctly) of being the bearer of a small heart. Large amounts of compassion and empathy for others unnecessarily complicated my life. I liked small cars, small portions, small hotels, and small paychecks. It was easier to live in a small world as long as I couldn't afford a larger one. "The more you have the more you have to protect," I told myself as I eyed a nice car. Even my dreams were small, practical and affordable.

Most of my clothes were too small for me. I looked like a little boy trying not to grow up. My shirt-sleeves had never seen my wrists. I couldn't button the top bottom of my shirt without my head turning red. My life was like an all-cotton shirt that I threw in a clothes dryer. I shrunk my world until only I could fit in it. A straight jacket was my idea of pajamas.

I felt that if I made my world small then it would be easier to control. Life would be more manageable. It all began in my mother's womb, which I remember being

Hendricks

New

very small. My mother was three days in labor with me. I didn't want to be born and have to live in such a large space. I reached out to the horizons of my world and pulled them around me like a blanket. I felt swaddled by my small, personal world.

It was not only because of humility and ecology that I led a small life in a small body in a small world. It was also because of selfishness and fear. I was basically afraid of everything. I arrived at the threshold of virtually every relationship in my life with suitcases packed with fear of intimacy, fear of my inability to say no, fear of the consequences of saying yes, fear of the loss of self, fear of trust, fear of being used by others, fear of abusing others, and, yes, I even had fear of fear itself.

I was also afraid of judgments. I knew that I was judged by others and that I judged others as well. My strongest resentment was against people who judged me on the basis of something I secretly believed to be true. But no one judged me as harshly as I judged myself. I lived under the whip of my own judgments. All of my judgments stemmed from fear. I used them to push others away from me. My judgments were like a thumb clamped on the opening of a balloon. I feared that if I let go of them, the world would spin off uncontrollably and I would be left with nothing but hot air.

PUSHING OUT ON THE WALLS OF THE WORLD

Fearing a sense of inadequacy and failure, I remained frozen, waiting for the "perfect" moment to take action. Thanks to the Unitarian minister Forrest Church of All Souls Unitarian Church in New York City, I reduced my fear of

M O U N T M A D O N N A

V O L 4 # 2 P A G E 2 4

Laura Stamps
new

Success Story

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failure in decision making. His idea is "The 60% Solution." Simply stated, when stuck trying to decide what is the best move, try the direction which you are 60% sure will be the best one. Don't wait for 100% conviction which seldom accompanies a belief.

I was at least 60% sure that my world was unnecessarily small so I decided to risk changing my life, despite the fact that change was one of my biggest fears. I was afraid of change for the worse as well as afraid of change for the better. I decided to feel the fear of change and to take an action anyway. I discovered that fear is not a virus that has to be avoided. Accepting fear of failure as well as fear of success, accepting fear of the known as well as fear of the unknown—loosens fear's grip instead of letting it stop us.

While it is sometimes true that by confronting our fears we only succeed in scaring ourselves to death, it is equally true that by avoiding fear we often block the road which leads to doing what we really want to do and being who we really want to be. Fear is here to teach us. Working through fear allows us to eliminate the unnecessary compromises we make with our dreams and aspirations. Not taking the risk of reaching for what we really want, so that we don't have to experience fear, is a set up for bitterness, self-pity, and frustration.

Two weeks ago, for example, at the age of 43, I quit my job as manager of an eight-million-dollar-a-year organization with fifty employees where I had worked for the past eleven years. My young daughter, pregnant wife, and I sold off most of our belongings and

moved out of our large home and into Union Theological Seminary in New York City where I am studying to become a minister. I am very happy. And I am scared to death. I tried to shake the fear of financial insecurity, career change, loss of power in the workplace, and going from a well-known author in the recovery field to an unknown student of theology. I was able to do this because I gave up on waiting for the fear to go away before I could make a move.

Fear is part of my spiritual path. By learning to accept fear I learn to accept myself. By learning to accept myself I discover that I am living in a larger world now, a world made larger by prayer and meditation for the willingness to push out on the walls of the world until the walls move back. I pray for the strength and courage to open doors previously denied me and to open the doors behind those doors. I pray for the strength to turn and walk away from people with whom I don't belong in settings no longer comfortable.

I deserve the comfort of a larger world. I no longer feel right in small clothes, small rooms, or small minds. I do not accept the limited vision of limited people who try to define my reality for me. I no longer limit myself through low self-esteem masquerading as humility. The world is now a large and abundant place. The world is no longer a parent telling me to stay in my room. A small cage is no longer my home.

Leading an abundant and spiritual life means every day being less and less like our hamster. Our hamster prefers small spaces. I don't. •

Charles Sweeney

new

Feldenkrais

from vol 4 # 2 page 19

Success Story



The Simplicity of Living

M A R I A F E R R E I R A

I was born in 5. Miguel, Azores, Portugal, a beautiful island situated in the Atlantic Ocean, 900 miles from the coast of Portugal and 2800 miles from New York, USA. It has been said that 5. Miguel is part of the Lost Continent Atlantis. Due to unforeseen circumstance, my life drastically changed at age 14 when my mother died. At age 16, my brother and I came to the USA to reside with our biological father. I left my island, my extended family and friends. My studies were suddenly stopped due to my departure from 5. Miguel.

Upon arriving in the USA via Boston, Massachusetts, my life at that point ceased to exist. I was experiencing culture shock and much confusion within myself, and to make matters worse, our father was not in Boston to meet us. I began to feel rejected by my mother's death, and I was angry that she had died and left me. We called our father and he told us to take a cab. I recall being frightened, unable to speak English, and having such a fear. I felt that something could happen to us. I prayed in the cab. When I arrived at my father's house, I was so disappointed. This was a major change from my island to a metropolitan city. That night I cried.

Life for me in the USA was terrible. Because I was not able to speak English I was forced to take jobs that did not require any English speaking on my part, such as washing



Maria Ferreira, Swansea, Maryland.

dishes. Every night I would pray to my patron saint, Santo Cristo, and I would use the tools that my mother taught me—relaxation, visualization and meditation. These techniques saved me from having a nervous breakdown. During meditation I would return to the happiest times in my life. My memories kept me from experiencing depression. The techniques saved my life.

I made a commitment to myself that once I mastered the English language, I would go back to school. However my father did not agree with my choices and I had to obey. I felt like I was in prison.

Because I wanted to be free, I thought that if I got married I would be able to go back to school and do something about my life. At age 18 I was married and I had my first child at age 19. My husband is a very nice person but due to his job, I alone took care of the children. We eventually had four children. My studies and goals were halted again but during the time I cared for my children, I studied English along with them. My children helped me with my new language.

My career actually started when I was 38 years of age. I enrolled in the G.E.D. Program and passed the exam. My oldest son graduated from high school and no one was talking about college in my home. Education is the “key” to success. I felt that I needed to help my son acquire an education, so I approached my husband with the idea that perhaps my son and I should attend college together. At first he thought I was kidding but later he approved.

I meditated daily and got in touch with who I was. When we become conscious of who we are, we become in control of our lives.

Expressive Therapy

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Element Books

New

John F Kennedy

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Success Story

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Life is a form of simplicity. When you accept what is, it "is." I became so strong within myself that no one could talk me out of attending college and acquiring a degree. I graduated with my son, earning an Associate's Degree and later a B.A. in Psychology. While working full time as a Social Worker for the Department of Social Services, I enrolled in a Master's Program at Boston University and graduated in 1986 with a Master's Degree in Social Work. At present I'm a licensed independent clinical social worker and enjoy helping people.

At this point, I would like to share my meditation that my mother taught me as a child and helped me achieve my goal.

Today I'm alive. Thank God for giving me another day to learn,

to love and to experience my world that you created for me and others.

Thank you God for the Sun, the Land, and the Air.

I will always love myself and others unconditionally.

I will respect myself and others.

I am able to achieve whatever I want because I am a child of the Universe and I am connected.

I will not be critical of others and I will achieve my potential without hurting anyone.

Because I went back to school at a late age and being a Portuguese, female immigrant, I can appreciate where I am now in my life. I have self-worth. When you have a family and career, it is important to be conscious of your needs and theirs.

My achievement became a reality because I have good friends who helped and supported me with my goals. No one can do it alone.

In conclusion, I want to say that family is extremely important and we as parents have a responsibility to our children. Whatever we give them, they will give it to their chil-

dren. If my mother never taught me how to love and meditate, I could not have encouraged my children to attend school. Because I accomplished my goal in a peaceful way, I was able to balance work

If I did it, anyone can do it. We only need to organize ourselves and learn to experience the Journey of Living in a peaceful, simple way by accepting what is, is.

When people leave birthplace and moves to another part of the world, they simply change their geographic state. We have within ourselves the person that we really are, but due to circumstances and stress, we stop being in touch with ourselves and problems arise. We begin blaming the people we love, the country that we live in, and everything and everyone. We must focus on what we want.

All of us are born with the potential to succeed. We need to give ourselves permission to live each day as if it was the first day of our lives. The beauty of achieving anything is to enjoy the process. •

Esoteric School

North Star

new

Success Story



Special Love

D I A N N E M O O R E

As a child, I felt extremely fortunate to have a warm, responsive father. To me, he was the most wonderful man in the entire world. I knew he had a drinking problem and that he made my mother and older sister unhappy much of the time. But with me, he was kind and gentle. He repeatedly called me "his girl" and these words made me feel everyone in our family would eventually learn to love my father the way I did.

As I grew older, the tension in our household did not lessen. My father became more dependent on his alcoholic crutch. In fact, he seemed to need it more than he needed me. As the years passed, his disposition grew more and more irritable, and he appeared less and less aware of my presence. As he began to come home later each night, I would climb into bed, longing for the morning to arrive so that I might see him before going off to school.

Then one day my mother told me we were moving away—without my father. She explained that if he could stop drinking for one year, there might be a possibility of our family reuniting. I was only 10 years old at the time and had no choice but to go with my mother and sister. I felt extremely sad to leave my father. But I was sure that his love for me and my love for him were strong enough eventually to bring him back to us. All I could do was wait.



Dianne Moore, Cadillac, Michigan.

Success Story

Continued from page 19

After the move, my father visited me regularly at first. He even stopped drinking the first few months after the family separation, and I was waiting with childish impatience for a year to pass. But slowly the disappointments began to repeat themselves. Each Saturday when he came to pick me up, the hour would be later than the previous week. Although I continued to make excuses for his rejection, my love was being eaten away little by little. I was torn between the affection I had once possessed and the pain I was suffering as he alienated himself from me. Each disappointment made the heartache within me greater.

But I was still sure that his love for me and my love for him were strong enough eventually to bring him back to us.

Not long after I began to feel this emotional separation, my father's job demanded that he relocate. The move took him many miles away from me. We corresponded faithfully at first, but then his letters started coming less frequently. In the long periods of time without hearing from him or seeing him, I found my affectionate feelings diminishing even more. As I would occasionally receive a letter from him, telling of the failure and loneliness he was battling as a result of his destructive way of living, I was reminded of the love he needed and condemned myself for not remaining loyal. But once again when his letters stopped, so did mine.

When I was 17-years-old, our family received word of my father's death. Prior to that, he had been imprisoned for writing bad checks and upon being released,

could not find the strength to face the world again. He was found in a dingy room of an old hotel where he brought his life to an end by drinking poisonous methyl alcohol or wood alcohol as they call it on the streets.

The feelings of my father's rejection had been building slowly but steadily as the years passed. And out of anger and hurt I silently felt the need to reject him in return. I felt deeply misunderstood by someone I loved. And I wanted to make him suffer the same disappointment. So when he stopped writing, so did I. By the time he died, I felt totally estranged from him. The days following his death were like watching a silent movie in slow motion. I never cried. I stood at the sidelines as if the entire event were unreal.

Because I was so deeply hurt by the loss of my father's love, all future encounters with closeness eventually ended in frustration. As I fed my sorrow with painful memories, trusting again appeared to be an impossibility. I kept score, concerning my supposed wrongs, and the bitterness grew. There was no accomplishment. I merely succeeded in destroying my own ability to love again. Aside from my work, I lived a fairly isolated life. And I was tremendously lonely all the time.

Then, one day I drove down the "skid row" of our city. My eye caught the sight of a white-haired man draped in an old, brown tattered wool coat, staggering from one edge of the sidewalk to the other, a bottle of liquor tucked under his arm as if his life depended on it. And it probably did.

I couldn't count all the times I had seen my own father in that same condition. I was alone in the car, and I sobbed until I thought my heart would break.

That painful image helped me forget my own suffering long enough to look into my father's world. As I remembered how miserable his life had been, an element of understanding began to grow inside me. I had endured heartache, but he destroyed himself—physically, emotionally, and financially. Because he estranged himself from me and others who loved him, he chose a world of complete isolation and loneliness. He was haunted by his fears, threatened by his defeats, and lastly he buried his misery in death. He did not need my condemnation. He suffered enough from his own.

My father's alcoholism was a terminal disease. But rejected love didn't have to be. At that moment I realized I had expected far too much from someone incapable of fulfilling my needs. Understanding seeped into my heart and the pain slowly melted. As I stopped condemning and began understanding, I began to love instead of begging to be loved.

There is never reason to regret loving, only reason to regret hanging on to heartache—forever.

Out of a painful experience, I learned that understanding someone is a special kind of love. If you, like me, have some resentful, bitter feelings about a loving relationship, perhaps reading of my experience might offer a new solution—a way to continue loving someone who is incapable of reciprocating on your level. •



Our Living Body

Let us be at peace with our bodies and our minds.

Let us return to ourselves and become wholly ourselves.

Let us be aware of the source of being that is common to us all and to all living things.

—Thich Nhat Hanh

A strong and healthy body is vital in freeing the mind and the spirit. There are many paths to bring joyful healing and an improved attitude towards life in the living body. The following is a listing of many approaches and resources to help us liberate our physical being.



Acupuncture/Acupressure

Over 5000 years ago, the Chinese discovered certain points on the body which when pressed, punctured, or heated had beneficial effects on certain ailments. In acupuncture, fine needles are inserted at specific points to stimulate, disperse, and regulate the flow of chi, or vital energy, and restore a healthy energy balance. Acupressure involves the use of finger pressure on the same points along the body rather than the insertion of fine needles. Using the power and sensitivity of the human hand is most effective in the relief of tension-related ailments, in self-treatment, and in preventive health care. Shiatsu, Japanese in origin, is a well-known method of acupressure which uses firm rhythmic

pressure on the points for three to ten seconds following a sequence designed to awaken the meridians. Whether used to relieve pain and muscular discomfort or to prevent illness, acupressure techniques are intended to correct imbalances, working toward the regulation and harmony of all systems of the body. Michael Reed Gach. Acupressure Institute. (510)845-1059. Free hands-on health care catalog available. (800)442-2232.

Alexander Technique

The Alexander Technique, developed by teacher and

actor Frederick Matthias Alexander (1869-1955), is an educational process for improving use of the whole self based on his discoveries in mind/body coordination. The Alexander teacher uses hands-on guidance and verbal instruction to teach others how to replace faulty physical movements with improved coordination. Students learn to perceive and release unnecessary muscular tension. This can promote ease in movement, relieve stress and fatigue as well as alleviate pain that has been caused by postural stress. Kathy Miranda. American Center for Alexander Technique. (212)799-0468.

Anthroposophic Medicine. Developed by philosopher and mystic Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), this medical system focuses on understanding illness as an occurrence to the whole person rather than a chance happening or breakdown. The patient is treated as a body, soul, and spirit and healing depends not only on the doctor and medicine but also on the patient himself. A treatment regime integrates conventional practices with alternative remedies. Anthroposophical Society in America. (312)248-5606.

rence to the whole person rather than a chance happening or breakdown. The patient is treated as a body, soul, and spirit and healing depends not only on the doctor and medicine but also on the patient himself. A treatment regime integrates conventional practices with alternative remedies. Anthroposophical Society in America. (312)248-5606.

Aromatherapy. Fragrance compounds and essential oils have been prized since ancient times for their healing properties. That aromas often affect our general emotional state is well known. For instance the refreshing scent of a garden after a rain, the aroma of freshly baked goods, or a floral potpourri can lift the spirit and conjure up memories. Aromatherapy uses "essential oils" (the volatile oils distilled from plants) to treat emotional disorders, such as stress and anxiety, as well as a wide range of other ailments.

Ayurvedic Medicine is an ancient art of healing whose philosophy teaches that health comes when the forces of body and mind are in balance. Lifestyle and diet are considered when making a diagnosis. An analysis of the individual's mind-body type is made, grouping it according to the predominance of one or more basic life forces, or doshas: Vata, being restless and enthusiastic; Pitta, sharp, orderly, and quick to anger; and Kapha, with high stamina but easy going. Deepak Chopra, M.D., is one of the leading authorities of mind/body medicine and has authored numerous books and audio programs on the subject. Nightingale Conant. (800)525-9000.

BioKinetics In the tradition of Thomas Hanna involves an inter-



est in knowing oneself and regaining an internal awareness of one's potential as a human being through a somatic, rehabilitative approach. Our sensory motor systems respond to stress and trauma by creating habitual muscular contractions which eventually means that we cannot voluntarily relax, resulting in a restricted range of movement and often chronic pain. Restoration of voluntary control of the muscular system through neuromuscular retraining principles makes the brain more intelligent in sensing and controlling the muscles, thereby bringing about the attainment of greater freedom, spontaneity, and autonomy. Somatic philosophy empowers, as areas of the consciousness open and allow us to attain growth in self-knowledge, self-mastery and the enjoyment of our own lives. Carol

Welch. BioKinetics. (303) 245-4370.

Body Centered Transformation is a multifaceted approach to therapy with a holistic, body-mind orientation. Early in life human beings develop a split between thinking and feeling functions. Messages from our body become ignored or denied. In the process evolved by Kathlyn and Gay Hendricks, the body is recognized as our most reliable source of wisdom and when we learn to pay it the attention it deserves, we come into alignment with our innermost truth. This alignment, referred to as integrity, opens the deep source of truth and joy beyond the personality as it gently peels back layers of conditioning, reclaiming essence and bringing increased vitality, spontaneity, and creativity. All the techniques concern recognition of the truth. Breathing is a way of

opening to the truth, movement a way of expressing it, presencing a way of being true, and communication a way of telling the truth. Taking responsibility or taking action and loving the heretofore unlovable aspects of oneself will bring one to an experience of essence of one's own essential nature. Hendricks Institute, Colorado Springs. (800)688-0772.

Core Energetics is a therapeutic approach based on the principles that each person has psychosomatic identity, that healing lies within the self, and that all of existence forms a unity moving toward creative evolution. Core Energetics is a form of body-oriented psychotherapy that seeks to reach the "core" level of consciousness or spiritual self. If basic emotions are denied, the energy flow is blocked. Emotions come from a single source, therefore blocking negativ-

ity can also block the positive emotions. First, one must penetrate the protective mask, uncovering and releasing negative emotions and opening the core energy in order to unify the dualities that appear to be conflicts. This healing approach seeks to merge force with force, the inner with the outer. Spiritual growth can follow when the energy flows freely on all human operational planes: physical, emotional, mental, conscious, and unconscious. John Pierrakos, M.D. and Siegmar Gerken, Ph.D. Institute of Core Energetics. (707)937-2673.

Hakomi was created by author and teacher Ron Kurtz as an integration of mindfulness, meditation, and compassion. It includes general systems theory combined with the work of Bioenergetics, Gestalt, Feldenkrais, Ericksonian Hypnosis, and Neurolinguistic programming. Although it has its own unique form and process, Hakomi is a synthesis of philosophies, techniques, and approaches that respect the wisdom of each being as a living organic system. Hakomi Institute. (303)443-6209.

Dance/Movement Therapies. Dance is the most fundamental of the arts, involving a direct expression and communication of one's self through one's body. We have all experienced the healing effects of movement, the integration of mind, body, and spirit through breathing, posture, gesture, tension release. Dance Movement therapy combines the philosophy of the mind/body connection with psy-

chotherapy. It uses expressive movement as a therapeutic tool for both personal expression and psychological or emotional healing. Dance movement is the predominant mode of interaction, communication, and expression. "Basic dance is the externalization of those

as children. Developed by Moshe Feldenkrais, this method integrates movement training, gentle touch, and verbal dialogue to help create freer, more efficient movement so that we sit, stand, lie, and move with greater ease and pleasure. Dr. Feldenkrais demonstrated that when the brain recognizes a correct, more comfortable and efficient movement, it seeks that way in the future. Feldenkrais Guild. (800)775-2118.

The Movement Studies Institute, under the direction of Frank Wildman, Ph.D., is the major organization for Fedenkrais Method training in the United States and Australia. It offers training programs, seminars in clinical application and educational resources, including audio and video tapes and extensive literature in this field of neuromuscular re-education. Revitalize the effectiveness of work and the quality of movement. Professional training program. August, 1995. Boulder, Colorado. Tancha McKnight. Berkeley, California. (800)342-3424.



inner feelings which cannot be expressed in speech, but can only be shared in rhythmic, symbolic action," said Marian Chace, Founder of Dance/Movement Therapy. Tamara B. Wolfe. American Dance Therapy Association. (410)997-4040.

Feldenkrais Method/Awareness through movement. The Feldenkrais Method offers us a second chance to recapture the comfort and ease of living we knew

Flower Essences, a process developed by Edward Bach, M.D., in the 1930's, aims to alleviate negative emotional states that may contribute to illness or hinder personal growth. Drops of a solution infused with the captured "essence" of a flower placed under the tongue revitalize the natural energy and stimulate healing and transformation on all levels of being. (800)314-2224.

Herbalism. Rooted in common sense and natural laws, much of

what you learn comes simply and naturally. Herbalism is primarily an intuitive art which when working directly with plants, gardening, making tea, and using herbal remedies allows the herbs to be the teachers. One of the first steps involves selecting a small group of herbs you wish to learn about, such as Echinacea, herb supreme for strengthening the immune system; Garlic, valued for effectiveness for colds and infections; Comfrey, used for its wound-healing properties; Chamomile, relied upon to relieve stress and tension; Cayenne, used to improve poor circulation; Dandelion, noted for its preventive and remedial qualities; and Peppermint, an energizer, also used as a digestive aid. "Herbalism seems to capture the heart and spirit and guide one along. In every culture you will find folklore concerning

indigenous plants and the wise women who used them," says Rosemary Gladstar, Herbal Healing for Women. Sage Mountain. (802)479-9825.

Hellerwork is a system of somatic education and structural bodywork which is based on the inseparability of body, mind, and spirit. Developed by former aerospace engineer Joseph Heller, this technique combines deep-tissue massage, movement, and verbal expression. Using connective tissue reorganization techniques, the body is realigned, natural ease emerges, and awareness comes to body movement habits as the body's optimal natural balance and posture are restored in a fluid expression of wholeness and ease. Alignment is physical, emotional, and spiritual. Northwest Hellerwork. (206)632-1160.

Homeopathy is a 200-year-old medical system that uses infinitesimal doses of natural substances called "remedy" to stimulate a person's immune and defense system. Based on the principle that "like cures like," these remedies specifically match different symptom patterns of an illness and act to stimulate the body's natural healing response to restore balance and health. Remedies are safe and non-toxic. For a list of licensed Homeopathic practitioners and resources contact the National Center for Homeopathy, Alexandria, VA. (703)548-7790.

Macrobiotics, a lifestyle, including a simple balanced diet, that promotes health and longevity provides a way to make positive changes in our lives by implementing practical healing methods for the body, mind and spirit. Spirit and nutrients from what we eat give us energy to combat illness and become a creative and spiritual force. That a balanced and healthy body and psyche precede the birth of world peace is macrobiotic thought. Michio Kushi Seminars and Dynamics of Macrobiotics. Kushi Institute (413)623-5741.

Meditation Our state of mind is integral to healing. Spiritual traditions throughout the ages have recommended meditation as a core practice. Beginning with the focus upon the breath, meditation helps to clear the mind, release energy, and free creativity. It involves training one's attention or awareness so that body and mind can be brought into greater harmony and we can live with increased clarity, peace, and compassion, reflected in all of our daily activities. Personal retreats and seminars. Mount Madonna Center. (408)847-0406.

Transformative Vacation Rock Creek new



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Chi Kung is a powerful healing science and art which uses breath, movement and meditation to cleanse, strengthen, and circulate the life energy, leading to better health, stamina, vitality, and improved ability to maintain a peaceful state when exposed to stress. **T'ai Chi Chuan** combines continuous relaxed movements, concentration, and breathing in one of the most effective methods of health maintenance. Often referred to as "Meditation in Motion" it depends not on outer strength but inner awareness. Omega Institute for Holistic Studies. (914)266-4444.

Person Centered Expressive Therapy combines art, music, drama, writing, and movement in all its forms to heighten feelings of creativity, aliveness, and productivity. Natalie Rogers uses the term "Creative Connection" to describe the link between the arts and our

essential being, the inner journey to find our own truth, our core. Through hands-on work and play with all the arts, methods are learned which can be applied in a wide range of personal and professional settings. The person-centered format places you at the center of the program. Your art, history, and ability to create are treasured and supported. Person Centered Expressive Therapy Institute. (800)477-2384.

Multimodal represents the multi-disciplinary approach in expressive arts which began with the formation of the Institute for the Arts and Human Development, Lesley College, Cambridge, Massachusetts. It is based on belief that the whole person is best represented when allowed to express fully the self in the art modality most appropriate. The Expressive Arts Therapy program at the Cali-

fornia Institute for Integral Studies, San Francisco, also focuses on the healing aspects of the artistic process and emphasizes the healing power of the creative artist in all of us. Both CIIS and John F. Kennedy University offer creative arts combined with M.A. counseling psychology programs.

Naturopathy. Using medical science and nature's wisdom, naturopathy seeks to help the body heal itself using each person's innate healing ability with a holistic focus or treatment of the whole person. Naturopathic physicians are trained, licensed, and skilled in conventional health care as well as in the use of natural therapeutics including homeopathic medicine. Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine, Scottsdale, AZ. (602)990-7424. Bastyr College Natural Health Sciences, Seattle, WA. (206)523-9585.

Pilates Method. Developed by Joseph Pilates (born in 1880), this method of resistance control exercise designed to strengthen and stretch muscles is a blend of physical training and mental conditioning. Using the theory that imbalances in the body and habitual patterns of movement cause injury, body alignment is combined with re-education of movement. By strengthening the body and using muscles in harmony with the breath, you can retrain these muscles to work for you in everyday activities. Institute for Pilates Method. (505) 988-1990.

Polarity Therapy. Polarity Therapy is a holistic system of self-

healing based on balancing the flow of energy in the body. Developed by Dr. Randolph Stone, who sought to integrate Eastern and Western approaches to healing, polarity includes many healing modalities such as reflexology, acupressure, yoga, and Ayurveda. Internal and external forces create stress that can accumulate and distort energy patterns. This process works to put one's life energy into balance by using a blend of exercise techniques, nutritional guidance, verbal counseling, and systems of touch. Reflexology is based on the theory that specific points on the feet and hands correspond to organs and tissues throughout the

body and can be stimulated to tonify these organs and to release tensions throughout the body. Certification Program. New York Open Center. (212)274-1829.

Reiki. Practitioners of this ancient healing system use light hand placements to release energy blocks and revive the natural flow of life force, thus helping to restore physical and spiritual health. Reiki Plus, developed by Reiki Master David Jarrell, supplements traditional Reiki with psycho-therapeutic, nutrition counseling, and other natural-healing techniques. The ability to channel Reiki is transferred to the student by a Reiki master. Reiki Plus Institute. (615) 243-3712.

Yoga is a living system that teaches one to attune to, adjust to, and balance in the movement of life. It is a union between body, mind, and spirit. This practical science addresses the many systems of the body. Pranayama are breathing exercises from simple and subtle to complex and sophisticated which not only affect the cardiovascular and respiratory systems but the mind as well. These techniques increase vitality and enhance mental equilibrium. Asanas are the postures, artful and graceful, which leave the joints mobile, strengthen bones, and bring balance, relaxation, and flexibility to the body. This practice, called Hatha Yoga, assists us in living more comfortably in our bodies and brings joy to our soul and spirit. Ganga White and Tracey Rich. White Lotus Foundation. Santa Barbara, CA. (805)964-1944.♦

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movement studies Institute
new



My Emotional Healing

JOAN AND MIROSLAV BORYSENKO

I can still remember giving my first lecture to one hundred fifty medical students, not to mention the fearsome back row of faculty members who, I was sure, were keeping track of all my errors. It was terrifying. But after three or four more lectures, I gradually got accustomed to teaching. Miron, however, had a very different experience. As he readily admits, he used to be one of the worst lecturers of all time because he became literally sick with panic every time he had to speak. Unlike me, he didn't adapt to the situation.

Joan Borysenko, Ph.D., is the author of "Minding the Body, Mending the Mind," as well as "Fire in the Soul," and "Guilt Is the Teacher, Love Is the Lesson." Joan is a cancer cell biologist, a licensed psychologist, and a yoga meditation instructor. Miroslav Borysenko, Ph.D., is a former associate professor of anatomy and cellular biology at Tufts University School of Medicine. He and his wife Joan teach and lecture in many different settings—hospitals, retreat centers, and places of worship.



While fear of public speaking is very common, Miron's fear was exaggerated, almost incapacitating. I taught him basic meditation and breathing exercises, which helped to some degree. At least he could sleep the night before, manage his stomach cramps, and give his lectures. But, as Miron says, these lectures were mediocre at best and certainly didn't reflect his mastery of the subject matter. For a long time, he rationalized his poor lecture performance by blaming the students—they were just "spoiled rich kids," eager to judge him. He also blamed the system of medical education since it valued research more than teaching and provided little or nothing in the way of teacher education. Miron's choice to manage his anxieties by blaming others left him playing the role of the victim.

One day during this period, a friend of ours called. He was a Boston police detective and hypnotist whose job it was to hypnotize victims of crimes in the hopes of getting information that would help apprehend the perpetrator. Like us, "Dave" had an avid inter-

est in healing, healers, and the power of the mind. He told Miron about a healing service that was held one Sunday each month at the Mission Hill Church in Boston. Following some prayers and a brief introduction, the priest blessed people with holy water. Some of them actually fell backward into a swoon, and many testified to physical or emotional healings. Although Dave hadn't gone to the church for a physical healing, he was surprised when a chronically ingrown toenail healed a week later.

Miron was intrigued by the description of the healing service, so we decided to "check it out." The Mission Hill Church is located in a once-elegant section of Boston, bordering the dangerous ghetto area called Roxbury, which was once a neighborhood of gorgeous old mansions and townhouses. An island of splendor in a sea of decay, the church had managed to maintain the beauty of that former era. Dedicated to Mary, as are many of the great European cathedrals, it was filled with magnificent stained glass, sculpture, and medieval friezes. Clouds of sweet incense curled toward a ceiling that seemed only slightly less ornate than that of the Sistine Chapel. Rows of angels and beautifully carved confessionals lined the walls.

The opulence of the church prepared me mentally for a charismatic preacher whose energy would fill the impressive cathedral. Instead, we found Father MacDonough to be a quiet, humble man without a big personality. There was no fanfare to begin the service, just some prayers and a few songs by the community choir. Several hundred people, including a number of children, sat patiently in

the pews. The priest then invited anyone who needed healing to come up to the rail of the sanctuary to be blessed. Miron and I watched from our seats. I was amazed when some people fell over backwards as they were blessed. "Mass hypnosis," I thought, feeling the same resistance arising in me that I had felt as a nine-year-old during the birthday party with the hypnotist. Two big men walked behind the row of supplicants catching those who fell, placing them gently on the cool marble floor. No way was I going to fall over!

After a few minutes, Miron and I lined up to take our turns. As a drop of holy water touched my face, an incredible peace spread throughout my body, a peace so deep that my muscles just gave way. Two strong arms caught me as I sank down into an ocean of bliss. I looked up from the floor to see Miron grinning down at me. After a few minutes, my muscles recovered and I walked back to the pew to find that Miron had a different, but equally remarkable, response to the blessing. He was weeping from the depths of his soul. In the decade or more that we'd been married, I had never seen him cry. His tears flowed throughout the remainder of the service.

When we emerged from the dark womb of the church into the bright light of day, I asked Miron why he'd been crying. Oddly enough, he didn't have a clue. Just as I had been simply overwhelmed with peace, he had been overcome by grief. As the weeks passed, he still couldn't figure out what had happened. So when the Sunday of the healing service came on the following month, he suggested that

we return to the church with a few friends. This time he began to cry from the moment he set foot in the church to the moment we left, nearly two hours later. People were sending us tissues from several rows away.

This time we were determined to figure out what the tears were about, so I guided him in the mirror exercise described in detail in my book about emotional healing, *Guilt Is the Teacher; Love Is the Lesson*. He got comfortable and shifted into belly breathing, accessing the place of inner wisdom where the mind begins to quiet. Then he visualized the number three, and let the three melt into a two, the two into a one, and the one into a zero. Then he let the zero elongate into an oval mirror and asked to be shown a scene that related to why he was crying in the church.

Immediately, he flashed on a scene from his childhood. He was about seven and had recently emigrated to America following the end of World War II. His parents had trekked across Europe on foot, fleeing from their Russian oppressors. Captured by the Gestapo, they were fortunate that their stay in a concentration camp only lasted a few months, especially since Miron's mother was pregnant. After Miron's birth, they slowly made their way to safety in the American sector of Germany, their path often perilously close to the front lines where bombs and shells were exploding. His parents were survivors, arriving at Ellis Island with a boatload of seasick refugees, a six-year-old boy, and five dollars to start a new life. Once in New York, Miron used to joke wryly, his life took a major turn for the worse

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when his parents sent him to Catholic school.

The scene he saw in the mirror was of himself, alone in the family's apartment, crying in bitter frustration and anguish, banging his knee against the wall. It was evening. His mother was out learning English, and his father was at work in a factory. Miron wasn't afraid of being alone, so at first he didn't remember what the problem was. So, he asked the mirror again. The next scene that appeared was of his first-grade parochial school classroom. The teaching nun had asked him to come up front and read. He stood there filled with shame, his little hands shaking, because he didn't speak a single word of English. The nun stormed up, pulled out his hand, and beat him with a

ruler. Several months later, she sent him to be evaluated for mental retardation. Somehow, in the midst of a massive period of immigration, it had escaped her that this lonely little boy spoke only Ukrainian.

No wonder Miron had an aversion to speaking in front of groups! And no wonder his grief had been compounded by a healing service in a Catholic church. The time had come to heal a painful memory that not only limited Miron's ability to teach but also limited his ability to connect with God. For most of his life, Miron had believed that God was a sorry excuse for persecution in the name of righteousness. After all, when religion teaches fear instead of love, what else can a child be expected to think?

Once Miron became aware of the childhood trauma he had endured, the next step was to heal his wounds. From the perspective of his adult self, he was able to imagine holding his seven-year-old self and reassuring him that he was not to blame. Patiently explaining the truth of what had happened and giving the child the chance to express his emotions, Miron lovingly healed the memory—which included forgiving the nun. Whenever I heal my own memories, or those of clients, I always finish the process by enclosing the scene in a bubble of light and sending it back to the universe.

The retrieval of the memory clarified some basic, life-guiding decisions that Miron had made as a child. Such decisions are not conscious choices. They are unconscious mechanisms of survival. To protect himself from abuse by authority figures such as the nun, he had developed an authoritarian, judgmental part of his own nature. If that part of him could have

talked to the nun, perhaps it might have said, "I'm tough and you can't get me. Besides, I'm just like you. I bet you respect me now." There was also a part of him that found safety in being a victim because he could get love from his parents, who wanted to soothe his hurts. Can you recognize these two parts of Miron in his interactions with the medical students?

In psycho synthesis terms, Miron's Victim sub-personality was in cahoots with his Judge. The Judge protected the Victim, and the Victim received sympathy, a poor substitute for love and respect, but at least a reassurance that he was cared for. When we are children, our world view is shaped by the need for love. How can we act, what can we say, to ensure the continual bestowal of love by our primary caretakers? Abandonment means psychological, if not physical, death to a child. Love is as critical to survival as food and shelter. In the process of adapting to our home, school, and cultural situations, we develop a whole system of sub-personalities similar to Miron's. These sub-personalities can be compared to masks that hide our true nature, even from ourselves. Until we heal the wounds that formed them, we tend compulsively to act out the old stories from childhood with new people. Our true creativity and power cannot shine forth.

The change in Miron after healing these sub-personalities was profound. He began to see his students as people just like himself, with their own fears and insecurities. He noticed how they worried about absorbing the enormous amount of subject matter in their courses. Would they flunk out? Could they make it as physicians? For the first

Since relatively few of us were loved unconditionally as children, we can do only marginally better with our own kids. This is the meaning of the biblical statement that the sins of the father are visited on the children.

time, he saw the students as people rather than as oppressors. On the day that his heart broke open in church, compassion began to flow. Emotional healing had kept his heart open, and he could finally empathize with the students' pain because he had lovingly faced his own.

Miron also opened his heart to his parents. His father Dimitri had been very distant as Miron grew up, and he felt as if they hardly knew one another. So, Miron decided to drive to upper New York State where his parents lived to try to make a heart-to-heart connection with his father. The entire five-hour drive from Boston was spent trying to figure out how to open up a meaningful conversation. He finally decided to make the

simple request, "Tell me about your childhood."

Miron's father had lived through a holocaust that is rarely spoken of, the terrible starvation that Stalin inflicted on the Ukrainian people, in which more than seven million people perished. As an adolescent, Dimitri had watched many of his childhood friends wither away and finally die. A mother in his village, crazed from grief and hunger, actually ate her own daughter. Dimitri and his mother managed to survive only because he had the foresight to hide grain in numerous gourds and hang them in trees all over the countryside. In addition, his mother still had a cow. He spoke of how the neighbor's children would line up, waiting for the daily glass of milk that was all the nourishment some of them had.

Dimitri cried as he remembered one little girl spilling the milk down her dress because she had become too weak even to drink. No wonder he'd been so distant all his life—depressed and stuck in the memories of his own private hell. As Miron listened to the story, the distance he had felt from his father melted away. Anger and hurt were replaced by love and understanding. There was no question of forgiving his father because it was clear that he had done the best he could. Miron's healing deepened while listening to his father's story, and his father was also healed when he saw the respect and love that shone from his son's eyes.

As a result of these months of healing, Miron finally overcame his fear of public speaking. When he put down his Victim and Judge masks, he was at last free to become himself. He ended up winning Tufts Medical School's out-

standing teacher award for four years in a row until he finally left academia. As you might imagine, his healing has changed our home life, too. The tendency to blame, which is one of the greatest toxins in a relationship, is practically nonexistent now. And the authoritarian, distant father of our children's youth has grown into a loving, supportive parent. One of the greatest joys we've both had in our long marriage is the continual deepening of our love for one another and our children as both of us have continued to heal.

Since relatively few of us were loved unconditionally as children, we can do only marginally better with our own kids. This is the meaning of the biblical statement that the sins of the father are visited on the children. Sin, after all, simply means separation. When we are separated from love, we become hypnotized by fear. Then we naturally teach fear rather than love because it is all we know. Every mask we put on, every sub-personality that we mistake for who we really are, is simply an expression of the fear that we are not lovable. Each person who heals him- or herself of this illusion helps break the chain of fear that has extended back in a long progression through our families and throughout our world.

Stop for a minute and think of two or three masks that you learned to wear as a child. What are they? Can you understand how they sometimes get in the way of your ability to love and create? Are you ready to heal them and claim the wisdom in your wounds?

Each of our sub-personalities is a samskara, an imprint on our souls, which is comfortably worn

with use and which we will continue to live from until we consciously become aware of the pattern and choose to heal it. When we do, each sub-personality will become a jewel in our crown of wisdom. For example, behind the mask of the Victim lies the gift of a compassionate heart. Once we have suffered and healed, we have particular empathy for the suffering of others. Behind the mask of the Perfectionist lies a deep appreciation for beauty and balance. The healed Judge becomes a fine discriminator, capable of acknowledging the unique gifts of every person.

Someone at a workshop once asked Miron what the jewel in the healed Martyr was. He had to stop and think. The Martyr is certainly one of my sub-personalities, but it isn't one of his. "The healer Martyr," he replied, "is a person who can suffer with dignity and grace because suffering is inevitable, but misery is optional!" I laughed, recalling my mother, who would sweat for days in a hot kitchen preparing the holiday meal and then refuse to sit down and eat with us. She believed she had to serve and complain. In this role, she found some worthiness. Having been tutored in martyrdom from an early age, I can say that for me worthiness is the jewel of the Martyr. As part of my healing, I've learned to feel good about my being, not about a show of doing in which I give my life force away.

There are as many ways to heal old emotional wounds as there are schools of psychotherapy. As with meditation, different methods are suitable for different people. One caution however lies in making any process of healing your primary identity. This is just putting on one more mask to buy love. While 12-

step programs have served to heal many millions of people, a few get addicted to their program and become professional 12-steppers. They are Sue or Sam, the Recovering Alcoholic. When you introduce yourself to people outside a recovery program as an adult child of an alcoholic or as an incest survivor, you have seriously limited your being. You are much greater than the sum of your wounds, no matter how grievous they might have been.

Similarly, some people get stuck in healing their inner child to the point where they elevate it to the status of brat-in-residence. Miron and our older son Justin once went to a men's group led by the poet and writer Robert Bly. One of the men in the group began to wax eloquent about the warm and wonderful relationship he had with his inner child, how he took him fishing and fathered him. Bly, in his endearingly blunt manner, yelled, "Well, then it's time to kill the little son-of-a-bitch now, isn't it?" What he meant was that ultimately healing is a letting-go, not a hanging-on. We need to heal our wounded inner children and let them grow up into emotionally mature, wise adults rather than coddling them for a lifetime.

Each stage of our life is marked by death and birth. Just as our infant self dies to become a child, our child self must die to achieve adulthood. Emotional healing is a series of deaths and rebirths. Every time we put fear to death, we are reborn to a deeper ability to love. •

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Unfinished Stories

P A U L A F A R R E L L S U L L I V A N

Every person is an unfinished story. By writing down the stories accumulated as we journey through life, we begin to recognize some of the paradoxes, both human and divine, and step into the mystery of “the religious way.” Through the telling of our life stories, whether we write them on paper or make audio/video recordings, we create the possibility of “dancing madly backwards” into the heart of reality. We dare to explore the unfinished story that we continue to create until we draw our last breath. Our stories are not finished, yet writing about the events that have shaped our memories brings us to self-understanding—the first step in recognizing the holy mystery behind the life we have been given.

Paula Farrell Sullivan earned a B.A. in English from the University of St. Thomas in Houston Texas, and an M.A. in Rhetoric and Writing from the University of Tulsa. Former associate editor of the Eastern Oklahoma Catholic newspaper, Paula currently teaches composition and creative writing at Tulsa Junior College.



Through the act of telling our accumulated stories, we honor the events of the past and free ourselves, in the words of Tristine Ranier, "from the limitations of time and place that confine most people." Committing memories to paper helps us to attain insight and discover the person we are at this moment, at the same time acknowledging and honoring the experiences that have brought us to this moment. Writing allows us to grasp fully the significant events of our personal history in an age so inundated with infinite noise it is difficult to experience any moment fully. In the silent activity of writing we come to greater awareness of the self that is our inner guide and begs for integration with the "I" that is caught up in the dailiness of providing for our most basic needs. Many of us spend too many years mentally untangling threads of experience and lose sight of the religious way.

Writing the story of one's life is a way of actualizing the past and letting go of a natural tendency to dwell on or cling to past experiences. We can mull over events of our lives as we drive down highways. We can (and often do) react to family members and coworkers

because they have in some way pushed a button marked "the past." Or, we can choose to rediscover the meaning of our past as we perceived it by making a permanent record of those events. Writing is a means of finding the path that leads back to the only reality. That path is rooted in self-knowledge.

Our purpose is to discover the great mystery of becoming, the great mystery of the sacred in our lives. To discover that mystery, we will explore the many contexts of our lives—our personal history in our family of origin, the influences of early years as well as the present situation; our work experiences; our faith experiences. Woven together these contexts continue to create the person we are always in the process of becoming.

Because our purpose is to discover the mystery in our lives, we need not fear creating an account that simply justifies our actions or glorifies the events of our life stories. If we write with the intent to discover the truth in our lives, we need not fear glossing over our less attractive moments or making too much of the grandeur of our lives. If our purpose is to discover the holy mystery threading through the events of our lives, we need not fear creating anything false. The intent here is to discover our individual truth that which leads us to the divine.

In *The Man Who Wrestled With God*, John Sanford describes how the Kalahari desert Bushmen were convinced their "stories somehow contained their very soul as a people and that if any enemy should come into possession of the stories he would have the means to destroy them spiritually." In the West we hunger for such a point of contact with our souls. By owning

Writing is a means of direct contact with our soul, of contact with the most intimate truth of our human trinity: body, mind, spirit. Something very direct happens as we pick up a pen to write; mind connects to body through fingers grasping both pen and the truth of our experiences.

our stories, having the courage to record and reflect on the happenings, ideas, emotions that make up our lives, we will not lose them to emotional distortion, to the enemy of our public mask: what we, or others, think we should be. Telling the stories of our lives is a way of seeing the source of our being, a way of honoring and thus integrating all the events of our lives.

Writing is a means of direct contact with our soul, of contact with the most intimate truth of our

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In ancestral times, the circle flourished as the primary communal structure in richly diverse pockets of human community that spanned the globe.

The Inuits of the Arctic Circle met in council and built their dwellings round. The Aborigines of Australia painted sacred spirals on cave walls and on their bodies and followed the energy of the earth across the vast expanses of the outback. The native tribes of the American plains constructed teepees and set them in circles. African tribes built circular villages. In all these variations of human adaptation, the circle was the common element. The circle is our First Culture.

First Culture was the flowering of human community based on the campfire, the council, and the circle. It flourished for thousands of years in kinship-based tribal groups across the globe. First Culture was rooted in the development of agriculture, a skill about ten thousand years old, which necessitated small bands of hunter/gatherers to claim territory and stay in place long enough to plant seeds and harvest crops. In hundreds of variations, the human tribe adapted to climate, terrain, and natural resources. They developed social structures which helped sustain them on the land and spiritual myths which helped explain the mysteries of life. These structures and their spiritual base are evident in paintings, carvings, petroglyphs, runes, crafts, and architecture. What seems to have been intact in all these settings were the concentric circles of interconnection—the campfire, the extended family, the tribe, humanity, nature, and the mystery of spirit. “And deep in my cells, I remember the first circle.”

Many, many thousands of years ago, when we captured the spark of fire and began to carry the embers of warmth and cooking and light along with us from site to site, fire brought a

new experience into being. Coming in from the veldt where we had been wandering in small breeding groups, we found shelter in caves and crevasses and brought the safety of the light with us. The fire warded off predators, cooked the meats, and roasted the roots and nuts that were our staple diet. With the flame, we could provide more food, extend the safety, sustain more people.

We made a circle around the flame and began to face each other. We came into circle because the fire led us there. Struggling to keep warm, struggling to keep safe, it made sense to put fire in the center. A circle allowed space for each person to face the flame, to take a place. As a member of a fire circle, we each could claim a place of warmth and a piece of the food. Out of this instinctive taking-of-place, the idea of community began to develop.

Socialization is not always a smooth process. Sometimes I can still hear the snarls of males vying for control, the fierce protective grunts of the females guarding their young, the squeals of little ones cuffed aside, the sighs of the old and vulnerable. The circle provided the basis for community, a format for working things out. As we refined social skills, the circle grew with us. With our faces animated by the flicker of flames, we began to recognize each other as kindred, as “like kind.” Surrounded by familiar kin, with bodies fed and sheltered, the rules and taboos of community social conduct could be established.

When I see someone again and again in firelight, the fire becomes symbolic of our connection; I see a spark in the other. Perhaps as we first faced each other across the shimmering circle

of light, we were able to envision the spark of the sacred in each other’s eyes. We wondered about our place in the larger circle of the earth and sky, in the community of creation. Around the campfire, a mythology arose about our creation and our reasons for being, and we told stories about our place in the scheme of life. The fire was a sacred symbol, the source that provided a cohesive center. And when we fell asleep around the fire’s coals, we dreamed.

We felt small and vulnerable on the great natural skin of the planet. So many things were unexplainable. How could we be so hungry and when we cried out, one among us would find a berry bush or a flock of birds would come within range of our slingshots? How could a woman’s body swell and swell, and then in the midst of crying and blood, push out another human being? Why did death come, and sometimes healing? Full of wonder, we developed rituals of thankfulness. Out of spontaneous gratitude, we believed ourselves to be in relationship with some Spirit Being who helped safeguard our lives.

We experienced a radical dependence upon all of nature. We were her daughters and sons, and so we named her—Mother. We carved images of the Mother Goddess, crawled into womb-like caves, made offerings to the land, threw gifts of incense into the fire, built altars of cairn stones, notched the trunks of trees to mark our passage, danced and drummed and sang, and held council in the sacred shape of the circle. I remember. And so do you. Our cells recall another way to lead our lives. Our cells are leading us in a process of reclamation.

The Power of the Circle



C H R I S T I N A B A L D W I N

It is dusk on a Saturday evening. Carol and John's house is quieted from its usual daily busyness. There is soft music playing as a group of teachers and parents enter. Lights are low. A cloth is spread on the coffee table in the center of the living room and objects depicting school life are laid out—a bowl of apples and cookies, pencils and small pads of paper, the Crestview Eagles emblem, school photos of the children whose parents have come to circle. These familiar objects shimmer in the light of several candles. Arlene has come, so has Mrs. Ebble and several of her close colleagues. The president of the Parent Teacher Association is here, John and three other fathers, five mothers of Jenny and Brandon's friends. This time the circle has been called with intention.

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It had taken Carol one whole evening to draft a paragraph statement asking people to participate. "I am calling another meeting," she wrote, "to hold council about the issues facing us regarding the impending strike between the teachers of District 269 and the Board. The purpose of the meeting is to provide a forum in which teachers and parents together can develop a plan to approach the Board and advocate for resolutions that will be best for everyone. This meeting will be at our home and will be held as an intentional circle. We will use the structure of council to hear each other out, gather information, develop understanding, and plan considered action. Circling may be new to us, but it is an ancient form. We will literally sit in a circle, open and close formally, pass a talking piece around to share the floor (Jenny's day-glow-pink ruler ought to work well). We will design the outcome of the evening as we go. If you are willing to take this risk and explore a form that may really help us here, please let me know by Friday. I know this is short notice, but it's all the time we have."

In the entrance way, people greet and introduce themselves as they arrive. They take off coats and get a cup of tea or coffee before entering the living room. Even

though it has not been articulated, there is a sense that this is consecrated space. People settle in, expectant and a little nervous about how to behave around the centerpiece and candles.

Carol and John live on a block where people hardly know each other except for the visiting that occurs between their children. John works for a company where everyone spends the day in cubicles doing highly isolated tasks. Carol works at a software firm. Year after year, their children are educated by people they hardly know. They go to church, sit in rows and listen politely while someone else tells them what God is. The closest they get to governing council is the voting booth, and most of the time they vote without much sense of what the issues really are or what this or that candidate can really do. We know this routine; we live it too. It's life in the middle.

John says, "Many of us are only bare acquaintances. If the circle works as Carol has explained it to me, we're going to get to know each other much better tonight. I'd like to suggest we start with a minute of silence. Whatever you want to do during that time is fine. Pray or meditate, breathe deeply, or do multiplication tables—it's all about focusing. We need to draw a line between the day and the circle. We need to make a space in which we can hear each other more accurately than we usually do and find a way to speak our own truth."

When people settle into silence for one minute, or three or five or ten, a sense of timelessness may occur. But in ordinary settings, silence in a group has become a signal of discomfort rather than contemplation. We fidget. Our minds race around looking for

something to say. Silence between partners or friends may indicate anger or sullenness. Since silence has become a sign of social disapproval, we may need to retrain ourselves in order to feel comfortable. Breath helps. By concentrating on gentle, rhythmic breathing, we may slip into stillness, rest there, and then gently let the mental energy rise again. When John feels his own mental energy returning and senses that others in the room are also ready, he signals the end of silence by ringing a small brass bell. People open their eyes.

Opening a circle with ritual is essential to help people drop their expectations that the circle is just another name for a committee meeting, task force, or project team. People are often surprised to find themselves in a setting that includes ritual. And yet, they are also intrigued. Lighting a candle, creating even a small focal point in the center, following a time of silence by reciting a quote—whether it's a poem or a mission statement—all help us remember our roots in the circle.

After this evening's silence Carol begins. She is eager for the idea to work, her voice vibrant. "As convener this evening, I welcome you to circle. I appreciate your coming and your willingness to try a new form of meeting in order to resolve this problem. I've called this meeting, but in circle it's not mine to run—the circle belongs to all of us."

In holding a circle, leadership rotates, responsibility is shared, and each participant agrees to trust that there is something present that's larger than all of us. In building trust, group guidelines have proven very helpful in creating an agreed-upon environment inside which we

can carry on the business of the circle. The purpose of Carol's called circle is to generate ideas to break the stalemate and show support for the teachers, the children, and the school system itself. To frame this discussion, Carol suggests the group observes basic guidelines: confidentiality, careful listening without interrupting, making statements that have to do with problem-solving, and calling for time out if people need to regroup and think through an issue. Carol and John are being very careful in how they introduce this circle: they want to invite people into council without scaring them.

Beverly Ebble starts by saying, "My biggest problem is isolation and lack of vision. I'm so busy coping with the twenty-four little beings right in front of me, I don't feel connected to the staff or the larger picture. Certainly I want my kids to pass their grade equivalences, but I also want to help them grow up, ready for the world. You can't imagine the level of need some of these youngsters have. I get the sense nobody is raising kids anymore, that most of us are just passing them on and on in the system, and I get into despair about where they're going. And then, when the School Board says it's all about budget cutting, even my own salary—I get angry and defensive."

When the pink ruler is passed to her, Arlene says, "Well, I'm raising my kids! I'm the only mother here who's home when they get home." There is a flurry of murmured response among others in the circle, but they respect the talking piece and let Arlene finish her thought. "Okay, okay, just listen to me. I don't mean to say you're doing it wrong and I'm doing it right. I'm saying times have changed from

Opening a circle with ritual is essential to help people drop their expectations that the circle is just another name for a committee meeting, task force, or project team. People are often surprised to find themselves in a setting that includes ritual.

how it was when we were kids. My question is, if we ask parents to do something more, will parents find the time to take an interest in what's happening? I'd like to suggest some kind of coalition between parents and teachers so that we can bring the Board a solution, rather than another demand. But I don't know how to design it..."

This is a complex discussion about a complex problem. People need to express their overall concerns and then break the problem down into small enough pieces to see how they can effect change. Of course there's tension, but it's creative tension. The circle is not always a group of like-minded souls who agree with each other about everything. There is room in the circle for many opinions, voices,

views. Listening to Arlene, several parents feel themselves shift into guilt and defensiveness, but because they don't interrupt her, they hear the rest of her statement and relax again into problem solving.

A father named Tom takes his turn. "At work we're using Quality Control Circles to problem solve in several divisions. I'm wondering if we can adapt this concept to what's happening here. Maybe we could design teams that would take responsibility for different extracurricular activities, use volunteers and cut costs in that area so there would be more money to negotiate salaries."

SECOND CULTURE: THE MODERN WORLD

This circle is not so strange that we cannot imagine ourselves within it. Opening with a moment of silence and passing a talking piece may be different than the last meeting you or I attended, but it's conceivable that the format helps. Certainly the tone of this gathering is more constructive than that of the community forum hosted by the PTA officers. What happened in the PTA meeting was a microcosm of what's happened to our culture as a whole. Our understanding of how to hold council has been replaced with the drive to maintain and control access to power. Controlling access to power creates a hierarchy model for society in which the powerful few maintain dominance over those who believe themselves deprived of power.

In this model it is the circle itself that we have lost. Through a re-examination of anthropological evidence, scholars are recovering the First Culture heritage which previously had been hidden in what was considered "prehistory." Until ap-

proximately five thousand years ago, there were thriving First Cultures throughout the world. Most of these cultures did not fortify or build defenses. They did not expect domination, and yet—in agrarian societies scattered throughout the Mediterranean, Europe, and the Americas—domination occurred. Warrior cults began raiding these more pacifistic groups, and eventually the world turned from circle-based communities to the patriarchal and hierarchical societies that I call Second Culture.

When we understand the underlying beliefs functioning in Second Culture and in our minds, it's easy to see why an event, even one as simple as a community meeting, is unable to achieve its stated purpose of communication.

Raised in Second Culture, we have been trained to believe in patriarchy-as-reality from the moment of birth. We inherit a culture that sees the world through the lens of domination and submission. In patriarchy, we have been taught to believe that some people are leaders and most people are followers; to believe that when someone assumes power and moves to the top of the heap, then the rest of us are knocked down a notch; to believe that overpowering is the only way to get our wants, desires, and needs met; and to believe that only the weak, the losers, and the inept allow themselves to be pushed aside, to be marginalized at the rim of society.

When we think about the underlying beliefs driving Second Culture, it's easy to understand why an event as simple as a community meeting is unable to achieve its stated purpose of consultation. As the organizer of the meeting, the president of PTA,

even though he is a well-meaning man, tried to maintain control in the ways he knew—by exerting his leadership and by expecting others to respect his position as leader of the meeting. He assumed people would follow format, would adhere to Roberts' Rules of Order, would let him guide the proceedings. But the situation was emotionally charged and others fought to wrest that control away, to establish their own point of view, to make the crowd follow their line of thinking. Ted Johnson could bang the gavel all he wanted and it wasn't going to stop Joe Smith from getting his two cents in, and it wasn't going to prevent the fourth grade teachers from walking out en masse, nor keep Pam Anderson from bursting into tears of frustration and again embarrassing her husband, who never understands why she can't control herself in public.

We've been in this scenario. We were schooled in it. We grew up in it in our families. We have experienced it in nearly every conflict situation we've ever lived through: at home, at work, in our churches and synagogues, in any group where power has become an issue. And in a society based on control and power, power will always, eventually, become the issue.

By hosting a meeting in a circle, Carol and John are challenging five thousand years of enculturation. They are saying power will be shared, opened up, dealt with differently, so that we may find a new way of being together that can lead us to re-imagining what culture might be. Carol and John are just two folks in the middle—our neighbors, ourselves, and yet they are beginning to re-imagine culture.

For the most part, we believe in

the patriarchy because it is the model that has been presented to us as reality. However, patriarchy is not reality. It is a model, a system, a construct that has been built and can be un-built. Enculturation—that which we have been taught to think of as reality—is how we see the world, but it is not necessarily how the world really is.

The human mind learns by comparing a present image with a previous image. This is both our source of genius and of our conditioning. The baby sees a furry four-legged creature and asks, "What dat?"

The parent explains, "That's a doggie, honey. See the nice doggie?"

The next day the baby sees another furry, four-legged creature and says proudly, "Doggie!"

"No," says the parent, "That's a cat."

So the baby looks more closely. The baby begins to discern the subtle differences that make a dog or a cat. The baby gets so good at this discernment that no matter what color or size or hair-length is presented her, she can tell whether this is a dog or a cat. This process of discernment functions voraciously in the youngster's mind, which gobbles up and integrates information about concepts and ideas as well as about dogs and cats.

Once we have checked out that our categorical discernment is "right," we stop holding that part of reality in question. The baby trusts her parents' perceptions and incorporates their information. The student trusts the teacher. The adult trusts the government and religion. We begin to assume that our information about the world around us is intrinsically true.

Over time, we establish a matrix



of understanding which so thoroughly frames how we see the world that we cannot imagine anything else. And this is our dilemma. To function as good members of society, we have learned to see the world through the lens of our collective conditioning. But what we have been taught to think of as reality is actually only our collective imagining of reality. For the most part in patriarchy, what we have been taught to believe is not actually in our best interests socially, psychologically, or spiritually. And so, we must reteach ourselves.

The tool we have for training ourselves to see the world differently is consciousness. In those moments when we are really conscious, our conditioning is able to fall away and we see something anew. These are often ecstatic moments. We experience an internal “ah-ha” that revitalizes us and reframes how we connect with other

people, situations, and the natural world. The lens falls away for a brief glimpse. Insight comes and goes, but these moments are enough. They provide breakthrough, and breakthrough provides a basis for new thinking. We who have had even one moment of consciousness—a moment when we have understood that how things are is not the way things have to be—hold the tool of our liberation.

Carol and John are inviting themselves and the others in the circle to gather with intention and to hold personal consciousness. When Arlene finishes her thoughts, when Mrs. Ebble articulates her frustration, when Tom sees the correlation between what's happening at work and its application at his children's school, liberation begins.

Liberation begins in circle by listening to each other. In a circle,

the use of a talking piece or comfortable reliance on moments of silence, allows us to listen differently. Interaction slows down. There is breathing space. Our minds downshift from the usual pace of thought. In circle, we may practice being bi-focused in our concentration: paying attention to what is being said and letting other people's words and actions get through the usual social barriers. We shift from ego-centrism to circle consciousness.

I was raised in a typical family where “reality” was fought over on a minute-by-minute basis. We all knew that only one person's point of view would be proclaimed as the right one and that this determination of “what really happened” was some kind of prize was power. Carl and I and our two younger siblings engaged in constant squabbles to define reality—to be the one able to say what happened—to be be-

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Living in the Fast Lane

EKNATH EASWARAN

Constant hurry and day-in, day-out pressure take a cumulative toll on the nervous system. When the hurry becomes chronic, the effects of this toll build up in the mind as well. What begins as nervous tension becomes rigid patterns in the way we think and act. The mind itself gets speeded up; and when the mind gets speeded up, it is easily subject to negative emotions like anger and fear. A racing mind is simply moving too fast for love, compassion, tenderness, and similarly quiet states. Judgment is replaced by snap decisions. In a mad rush, in a frantic hurry, where is the time for making choices?

On the hairpin curves in the hills around the Bay Area there are signs warning "25 miles per hour." It reminds me of the Blue Mountain area of South India where I used to live. On those winding, narrow roads there was one dangerous hairpin curve after another. But since many drivers did not know how to read, instead of a sign saying "25 miles per hour" there was a grisly picture of a human skull. Most drivers immediately became cautious when they saw that skull, because a mistake on those roads could be fatal.

Every driver understands that if you go too fast, you can't control your car. But few of us understand that the mind is very much like a car. It drives us through life, and

we go where it takes us. When we are in a hurry, the mind is moving too fast for us to absorb what is going on around us, heed the warning signs, and make the judgment calls we need to avoid a potential accident. And when judgment is blurred by speed, we are in the greatest danger. It is no exaggeration to say that we are then on a mountain road taking blind hairpin bends at sixty miles an hour, barely holding the road.

"Living in the fast lane" has become a notorious phrase with reason. Nobody should travel in that fast lane. When your life and your mind are going faster and faster, there *can* be no decisions. There are only reflexes—and reflexes become compulsive. When

the same thought—that is, the same emotional response, the same urge, the same craving—repeats itself over and over again without a break, it becomes compulsive. It can be a compulsive addiction to smoking or drugs, it can be a compulsive attachment to a particular person. Whatever it is, every compulsive cycle of thinking is dangerous because it means we are not free. The mind is as powerful as a Ferrari. We cannot get control of our behavior until we get a firm grip on the wheel. And that means we have to learn to slow down our pace of living.

Trying to get through life without control over your attention is a little like trying to reach a destination with no control over your car.

Suppose you get into your car at five o'clock as usual, ready to drive straight home after a long day at work. Unbeknown to you, however, your car has taken on a life of its own. To outward appearance it is still your reliable old Ford station wagon, but under the hood it has been possessed by a ghost.

You get in and head for home—north, say, out of San Francisco, across the Golden Gate Bridge. It is a beautiful day, and you are enjoying the view and the unusually light traffic when suddenly, without warning, your car swerves into the right-hand lane. You grab the wheel sharply, but the car ignores the wheel and pulls off onto the exit to Sausalito. In horror, you re-



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alize that you are not driving your Ford any more; it is driving you.

You want to go home, but your car has other ideas. It finds Sausalito tempting. Even a ghost is susceptible to fine seascapes and good restaurants. You are in a panic. What is the matter with this car?

After a desperate struggle, your Ford begins to respond to the steering wheel again, and you manage to get back on the freeway. "Whew," you say to yourself. "That was a strange incident. But everything seems all right now. I just hope I can get home before anything else happens."

Your worries are well founded. As you pass Mill Valley, you again feel an irresistible tug on the wheel. The ghost takes over once more, pulling fiendishly to the right to get off the road. After fighting with you for a few exits, it gets its way and careens off at Paradise Drive. The malls on both sides of the highway are full of shops your ghost finds fascinating, but you hardly notice. All you want is to get back to Highway 101.

It's a fight like this all the way home. When you finally arrive, three or four excursions later, you're out of gas and it's almost morning—time to head back to San Francisco to go to work again.

This story belongs in the realm of science fiction but when it comes to our attention, we often have as little control over our lives as the driver of this ghost-driven car. With temptations and distractions on every side of us, we are used to the mind weaving all over the road, swerving from lane to lane and causing danger to ourselves and everyone around.

Fortunately, you don't have to put up with this. Attention can be trained, and no skill in life is

greater than the capacity to direct your attention at will.

The benefits of this are numerous. If you have trained your mind to give complete attention to one thing at a time, you can achieve your goal in any walk of life. Whether it is science or the arts or sports or a profession, concentration is a basic requirement in every field. And complete concentration is genius.

I have a friend who is an excellent driver with a first rate car. On a long distance trip, she glides smoothly into the through lane and cruises straight to her destination without even changing lanes. She never seems to exert herself, and she always manages to think a little ahead. Streams of traffic just part like the Red Sea before Moses to let her through. And her concentration is like that, too. When she is behind the wheel, her mind is steady and her attention never wavers.

This kind of one-pointed attention is helpful in whatever job you are doing. But perhaps the greatest benefit of a trained mind is the emotional stability it brings. In order to get angry, your concentration must be broken—your mind has to change lanes. In order to get afraid, your mind has to change lanes. In order to get upset, your mind has to change lanes. It is not that you choose to let your attention wander; your mind simply takes over and changes whether you want it to or not. If you can keep your mind in one lane, your concentration is unbroken; you are master of your attention. Whatever the circumstances, whatever the challenges, you will not lose your sovereignty over your thinking process.

A wandering mind is not just a

modern problem. Even in the days of the Compassionate Buddha, more than twenty-five hundred years ago, people used to complain to him, "I have problems at home. I have problems at work. I can't sleep well; I can't eat well; I am always upset."

The Buddha would look at them with his wise eyes and say, "Nobody is upsetting you. Nothing is upsetting you. You get upset because you are upsettable."

Then he would add, "Don't you want to be un-upsettable?"

"Yes, Blessed One."

"Don't you want to be happy?"

"Of course, Blessed One."

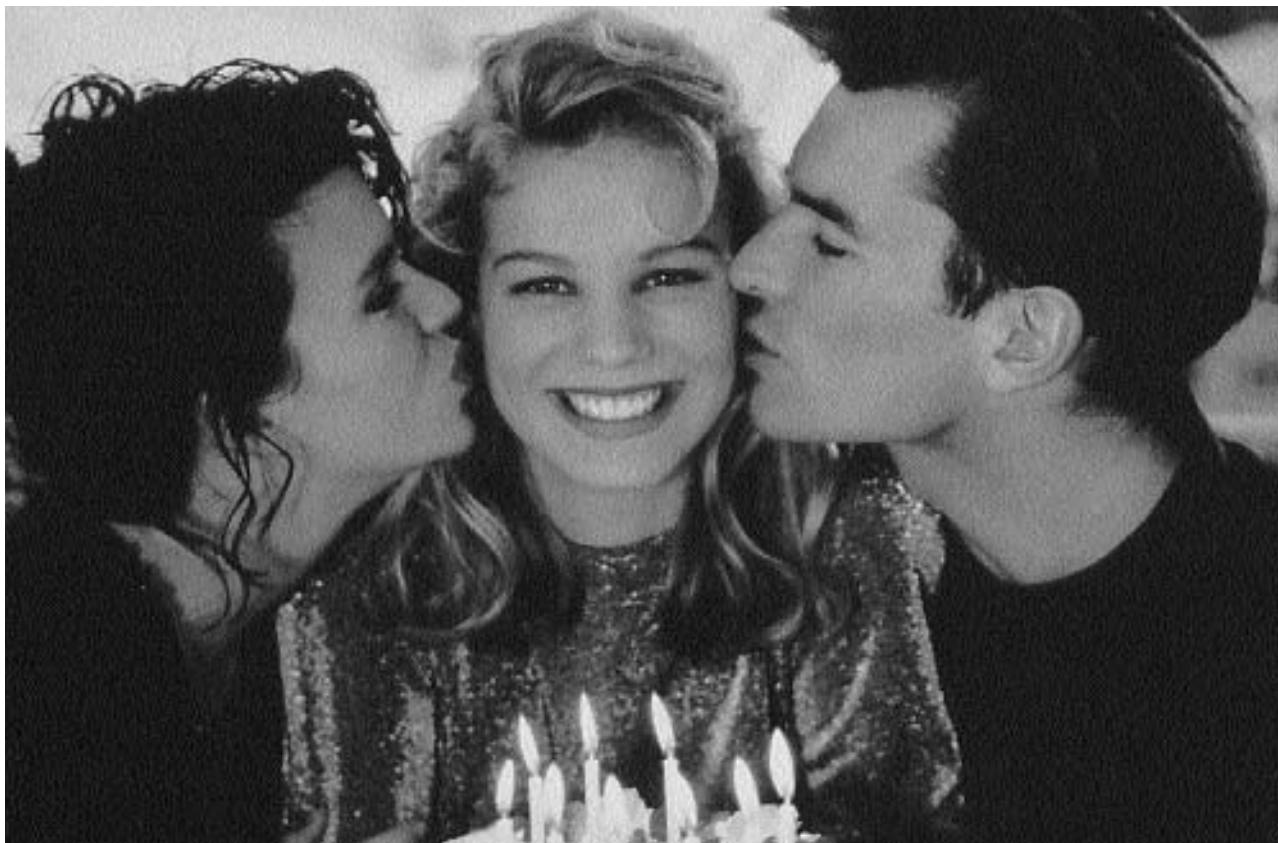
"Then," he would say, "you have to train your mind."

That is what we all yearn for a mind that cannot be upset by anything. And we can achieve it, too: But it calls for a lot of work in the training of attention.

The Buddha was perhaps the most acute psychologist the world has seen, because he understood the workings of the mind from the inside. When we have resentments or hostilities or ill will, he would say, not only our attention but our vital energy is caught in the past. When we learn to recall attention from the past and keep it completely in the present, we reclaim a tremendous reserve of vital energy that has been trapped in the past like a dinosaur. Every time we do this, we restore a little more of our vital wealth to the present moment.

Just as all of us carry the burden of resentments from the past, we all have fears and anxieties related to the future. This is part of our conditioning as human beings. But here, too, we can learn to prevent our energy from wandering into the future and keep it completely in the present.

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Honoring Rituals

S Y D N E Y B A R B A R A M E T R I C K

All passages occur over time. The overwhelming feelings of grief that predominated after the death of my father eventually receded as other experiences that composed my life demanded my attention. After the first three months passed, I knew I would eventually be okay. Then I was unexpectedly thrown back into despair when the anniversary of his birth came around. I would not have flown back to Chicago to spend the day with him had he still been alive, yet I felt an extraordinary sadness at the realization that I would never again have the option to celebrate his birthday with him. Each time an important day approached, birthdays of my sisters, my mother, or my own, my parents' wedding anniversary, and certain holidays, I was reminded that the last celebration had been the last.

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It's important to do something symbolic around birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays. I spent an afternoon at Vesper Hospice in San Leandro learning how they addressed this dilemma. A Hospice is a comprehensive program of care for people in the final stages of life-threatening illnesses. It allows patients to remain as comfortable and active as possible in their homes, surrounded by and cared for by family and friends. The Hospice team visits the patient and family anywhere from once a month to several times a week, depending on patient and family needs. In addition to emotional support and counseling, Hospice offers bereavement counseling and support groups. Nancy Sobanya, bereavement counselor, and Cheryl Richards, coordinator of the Kids, Teens, and Loss program; shared ways that they honor the deceased and the survivors at difficult times.

Twice a year their agency holds an Evening of Remembrance. This ecumenical memorial service is attended by family members who have participated in the program in the past year. The memorial begins with the chaplain doing a reading as an invocation. Then the chaplin relates a story of her own loss and invites people to stand and share

their stories. The officiant reads the names of the people who have died and as each name is read family members go to the altar to light candles in memory. Each person is given a flower after lighting a candle. All the families are asked to bring photographs or mementos of their loved one to place on the richly decorated altar. Everyone joins in singing a series of songs: "The Rose," "Amazing Grace," "You'll Never Walk Alone," "Morning Has Broken," and "Wind Beneath the Wings." Poems are read, too. One in particular, "We Remember Them," allows for response. This ceremony provides family members with a personal and public acknowledgment of their grief and of the life and death of their loved one.

Nancy and Cheryl also recommend writing a letter or sending a card to a deceased friend or family member, visiting the grave, going to dinner in their honor, or finding some way to celebrate the person's life. These acts are positive ways to express the feelings that arise and are opportunities to handle unfinished business.

It's never too late to say goodbye. Whether you have lost someone you care about to death, divorce, a move, a fight, or the ability to be fully conscious, you can still communicate with the person in some fashion. Your loss may require completion with someone who has harmed you in some way. It could even be a part of your own body, your youth, or a memory. Whatever you have lost, a person, place, object, idea, or principle, it may not be over for you. Even if you thought the severance itself or the initial grieving was the end, you may have more words and more feelings about your loss. The an-

niversary of the event can summon these feelings. Other anniversaries associated with the experience or the aftermath can also be evocative.

Sometimes it takes a long time to gain strength to face a loss. Whenever feelings come up, it's good to have resources to deal with them. Creative expression and ritual, family and community support, and a connection with spirit can be there for you. If you initially experienced your loss as a source of confusion or pain, perhaps this was all you could manage at the time. An anniversary often serves to reawaken the loss. Many people respond by turning to spiritual practices and deepening their sense of connection on all levels.

A very old symbolic system further depicts this. The Tarot is a deck of seventy-eight cards, twenty-two of them are known as major arcana. These correspond to fundamental expressions of energy common to all, as well as basic challenges that must be met for growth. The twelfth card, the hanged man, represents surrender. One guidebook uses a discussion by Carl Jung to describe this condition as "...a boundless expanse full of unprecedented uncertainty, with apparently no inside and no outside, no above and no below, no here and no there, no mine and no thine, no good and no bad. It is the world of water where all life floats in suspension." Once you meet the challenge of this card and let go, you move to the next step along the path which is represented by the death card. This card is one of the three paths that lead from ego awareness to awareness of higher self. Its meaning is a fear of annihilation and resistance to giving up. But once surrender of your old way of being has been accepted, you



pass through a gateway and are reborn to a higher level.

No one wants to remain bewildered, angry, helpless, or in pain. There is a saying that goes, "When the student is ready the teacher will come." Many people have reported coincidental or synchronistic events occurring that helped them just when they needed it. The following are just a few examples that show how this can happen.

Renee's mother had painfully succumbed to cancer the year before, and Renee had planned to plant a permanent memorial in her garden for the first anniversary of the death. She chose baby's tears and mother ferns, plants that had been important to her mother. As the day of the anniversary came closer, Renee began to have vivid memories of the days preceding her mother's death. By the eve of the anniversary, Renee's emotional

state was nearly out of control. She began to pray desperately for help. The next morning as she stood on the deck in her yard, she heard a loud flapping sound. A big white blob flew past and landed somewhere down the hill. Renee ran down the path in search of the object. There was nothing to be found in the lower garden. "Oh well," she thought, "since I'm out here I might as well look for a spot for the plants." The search was appearing to be unproductive when again she heard the sound of flapping in a tree above her. It was a huge white duck and it was flying up to her yard. As she climbed back up to find the duck, she passed "the spot." After digging holes for the plants, Renee went back toward the house. The beautiful wild duck was sitting there, waiting for her and quacking. It stayed all day, then

flew off as mysteriously as it had arrived.

Another story involves Buck, a man who was the youngest of eight children. Never having felt a part of the family, he left his family after high school. He changed his name and moved across the country. Years passed and he had very little contact with his siblings or his parents who were by now getting on in years. In a rare phone call home, he learned that his father was not well. Twenty years had passed. Buck was nearing forty and re-evaluating his life. He decided to quit his dead-end job. Filled with dreams of a better future, he looked for a career and then just a job, with no success. As a last resort, he called his parents hoping they'd make him a temporary loan. Instead, they invited him back to live and offered him an apartment, work, and opportunity. He re-

turned to make arrangements and discovered a large, warm, welcoming family, all sincerely wanting him to be home.

Anniversaries can be opportunities in disguise. They provide measures by which you can evaluate the progress of your transition. As an anniversary approaches, you may find yourself feeling out of sorts. Some people get depressed or irritable and don't know where the feelings come from. Use creative expression at these times to make an assessment of your emotional state and to move forward.

A Bay area resident I'll call Zora depicts one type of response. In early October of 1992, Zora began to have nightmares. She would awaken suddenly, bathed in sweat, heart pounding, feeling as if she was trying to escape from a horribly threatening force. The year before Zora had escaped a disaster. Her home was one of several that remained standing in an area where most properties were burned to the ground. Although she stayed the neighborhood and watched the new buildings going up and the land turning green, something within her did not feel the threat was over. Maybe the same fire wouldn't return but another fire could surely be in wait, ready to turn into a massive conflagration.

Fortunately many groups were available to help the victims of that fire, and Zora joined with others of the neighborhood and community who felt the need to give and receive support.

Frank, a stroke victim, had a different type of anniversary experience. Frank found it very difficult to adjust emotionally as well as physically to his paralysis. His physical therapist tried the traditional forms of rehabilitation with

Anniversaries can be opportunities in disguise. They provide measures by which you can evaluate the progress of your transition.

little success. He was just too depressed. One day Frank entered the therapy room just as she was finishing up with a child. "Why not use the same materials with Frank?" she thought. His introduction to this new procedure began with modeling day. At first he just squeezed it listlessly. Soon he realized he enjoyed the feel of the warm, pliable clay and began to shape it. Gradually he regained motor control in his damaged hand and arm. Each finished piece was whisked away by the therapist and stored in a safe place. When three months had passed, the therapist brought all of Frank's pieces out and displayed them. The progress was quite obvious and he felt heartened for the first time. He allowed her to draw up a timetable to check his development in monthly increments and agreed to work on other parts of his body as well.

There is no way to predict how an impending anniversary will affect you. Knowing that you may

experience uncomfortable feelings can be helpful. When people quit drugs or alcohol, they may have sudden cravings years later. Sometimes there are triggers that precipitate the cravings. When you are aware that certain feelings and behaviors are possible, you can prepare or intervene in appropriate ways.

Preparation includes having an available support system that you know you can call on or a practice you can return to. It's important to hold on to your own truth about your feelings. You may have the experience of being invalidated if you share with others what's going on within yourself. Even well-meaning friends can say you don't know what you're feeling or there's no reason to feel that way. *Don't listen to them.* While you may have little desire to hold on to a depression, denying or ignoring your feelings will not work. Acknowledge what you feel even if it makes no sense, is not pleasant or is not timely.

Use the same means of dealing with your feelings as you did before. If something worked before, try it again. If that intervention isn't effective, try another approach. Your loss has created a change within yourself. Perhaps something that you couldn't do before is right for you now.

There's also the chance that you've changed a great deal. You may have the good fortune to discover that as an anniversary approaches, there is no longer any energy in it for you. Whereas memory of the experience is intact, there is no emotional charge. May it be so. •

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Feminine Spirit

LINDA SCHIERSE LEONARD WITH
PHOTOS BY GINA MEYER

The feminine is part of the human dimension and is manifested in both men and women, as is the masculine. It is a mistake to identify feminine with female, or masculine with male. Our feminine side emphasizes caring, responsiveness, receptivity, and relatedness. Feminine concerns and values focus on the process of human interaction. Although rooted in the feminine, these concerns are manifested in both men and women.



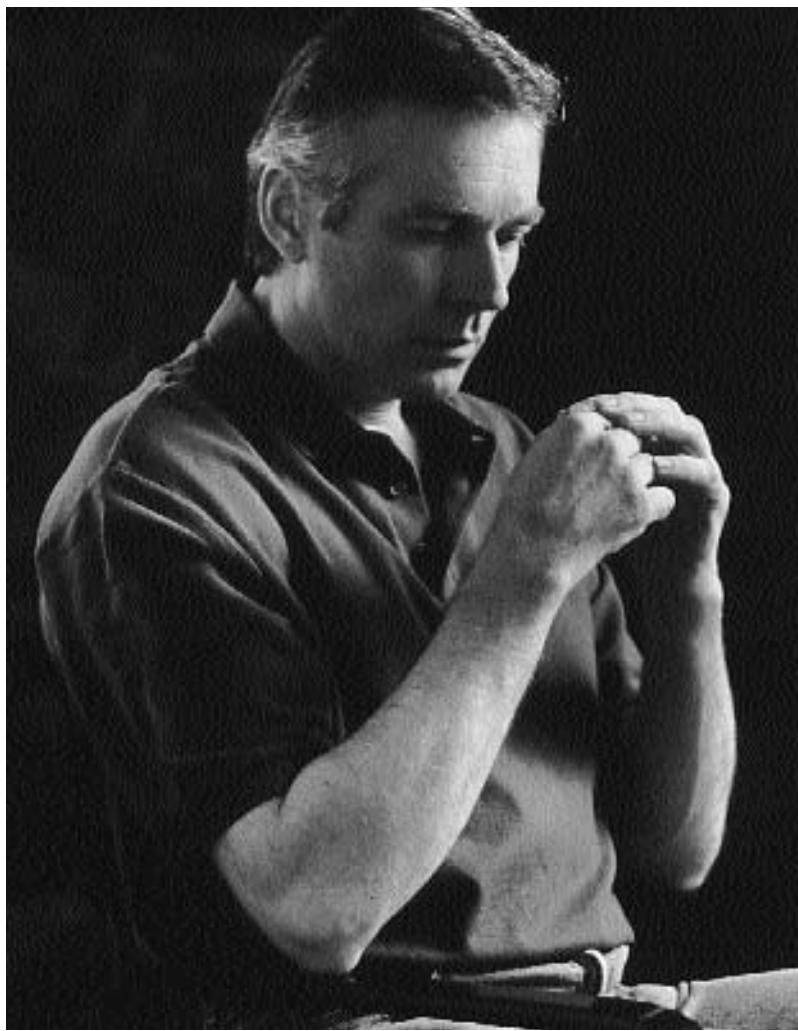
Feminine spirit connects us with each other through caring. I see feminine spirit as a human energy that compels us to quest, to engage in the psychological process of self-discovery; it is an impulse toward freedom. Feminine spirit is beyond definition, to a degree. It is an energy that is felt and intuited in images. We know the feminine spirit through the way we feel about ourselves, each other, and the way we feel together.





Earthiness, spontaneity, flexibility, emotional vitality, compassion, warmth merging in a network of caring—all are aspects of feminine spirit. The power that enables grass to grow and push up through rocks and concrete, the energy that flows through our bodies and rejuvenates us every spring, the reverence for life, for planting seeds, for the cycle of the seasons, and the courage to endure the pain of labor and giving birth, all are expressions of the feminine spirit that enlivens and moves us, inspires and breathes life into us, and links us to the earth. When we do not feel a connection to the growing earth, the feminine in us feels betrayed. Feminine spirit has an innate assertive strength that is non-aggressive, non-martial in quality. It is an energy that we can tap that is a creative alternative to the regimented patriarchal spirit in which our culture and society are fixed.

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Men on Divorce

ELLINE YMARD

TONY LATHAM/TONY STONE

Ex-husbands who recover from the pain of divorce advise men to concentrate on their inner space with the same attention they give to negotiations in their attorney's office. A legal divorce is the definitive outcome of a step-by-step court process. But the emotional recovery from divorce is spiral, not linear. No amount of conceptual knowledge about divorce will relieve an ex-husband's grief, guilt, anger, or loneliness. By concentrating solely on the legal process of his divorce, he detaches himself from understanding divorce as a personal crisis.

Ellie Wymard, Ph.D., the author of "Divorced Women," and "New Lives." She is a professor of English at Carlow College in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She has appeared on national television and radio programs, and her critical essays have appeared in scholarly journals throughout the country. She makes her home in both Pittsburgh and Chatham, Maryland, with her husband Joseph.



A man may not need to turn to professional counseling during separation and divorce, but because divorce means loss, it is in his best interest to spend time gaining a clearer understanding of himself and ways he wants to refocus his life.

Many ways exist for an ex-husband to help himself. Keeping a journal is highly recommended as a practical way for men in the cycle of divorce to release their thoughts and feelings, ponder their needs, and discover patterns to their behavior. By keeping a journal, a man becomes his own friend. Therapist Joseph Jastrab told me that he advises private writing because "it allows a man to tell his psyche that he is serious, that he's willing to listen to his own story. A journal really opens up his schedule, allows time for dealing with his pain, which he could easily ignore by filling his hours with work and diversionary activities."

A man who keeps a journal also has the advantage of controlling the amount of pain he wants to bear at a given time. He need not write in it every day, for example. He can put it aside for a while and return to it when he is ready. A

diary often helps a former husband to write down things that in retrospect he wish he had said to his wife. It provides a way of expressing sorrow, guilt, and anger. Moreover, a journal is a good listener, for it will not register boredom from hearing the same stories repeated. To gain perspective on incidents that occurred between himself and his wife, it is not unusual for an ex-husband to repeat himself. In my interviews, for example, I often heard about a particular episode more than once within the same session.

A journal provides opportunities for a divorced man to explore memories from earlier days, even before his marriage. Revisiting a younger self is often a therapeutic adventure, allowing him to see the complex reasons behind the choices that he made. By writing in a journal and then placing it aside or locking it away, an ex-husband has a tangible symbol of measuring his progress and putting his divorce behind him. One man burned his journal when he was finally able to stop viewing himself as a failure and was ready to move on.

A journal is also a fine place for musing over dreams. It is possible to pay attention to them without necessarily being schooled in dream interpretation. Writing about dreams while they are still vivid allows a man another way that moves beyond logic to listen to himself. For example, one man recalled making a list of people to inform that he and his wife were divorcing. He thought he could easily rejoin the mainstream of life, until he had a dream of being surrounded by people, pointing fingers at him. Writing in his journal about the implications of the dream, he knew he could not count

on his friends alone for moral support, and sought professional counseling.

Personal writing can also take the form of unmailed letters. This strategy proved effective for a husband who raged with anger when his wife filed for divorce. Although their marriage was not compatible, he never thought it would end. In writing letters to her in which he reviewed their life together, he discovered how selective his hearing had been. As he wrote, he heard echoes of their serious disagreements, and acknowledged for the first time his denial of what she had been saying to him about her unhappiness and what they had to change in their relationship. The marriage was not saved, but the process of writing unmailed letters lessened his hostility and helped him to accept his share of blame.

MASCULINE MYSTERIES

In whatever way a man chooses to be introspective about the loss of his marriage, he may during the process unexpectedly meet the boy he left behind in his childhood. A man who was dependent on his wife may feel emotionally immature and lonely without her to take care of him. In such cases, Joseph Jastrab urges men to "comfort the boy and really become father to that part of yourself that wants attention and feels forlorn." As an example, he suggests that a man buy himself whatever he enjoyed as a child, whether it be a plastic whistle, a stick of bubble gum, or a baseball. If a father gives a young son a simple gift, it is a sign of his love. The son is happy, and the father expects nothing in return.

Similarly, Jastrab points out, when an adult man gives himself bubble gum or a baseball, he responds to the needs of the inner

boy and acknowledges the friendship he has for himself. The token makes more visible the respect he has for the crisis he is going through. Eventually, he is able to give himself other gifts that are nurturing and healing, such as taking off a Saturday to walk in the woods. His awareness deepens to nourishing his spiritual life, the center of his worth and being, rather than the world of work and commerce.

Divorce then becomes an opportunity for him to reach a new level of integrated maturity, balancing being and doing.

Taking time for solitude is crucial for a man going through the crisis of divorce. As a positive way of thinking about masculine identity, Douglas Gillette, author of *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover*, suggested that ex-husbands read the autobiographies and biographies of men.

"Certainly a man can go through a divorce without therapy," he contended, "but somehow or other he has to be willing to go into his feelings and the world of masculine mysteries, and reading about men's lives can help him to do that." A first-person narrator's description the ways he shaped choices for himself is a possible model for men searching for ways to redirect their lives. Biographies

that reveal the complex interpersonal relationships in men's lives may also help ex-husbands to interpret their own experiences in terms of past, present, and future.

For example, a man I interviewed benefited greatly from reading biographies of the Trappist monk Thomas Merton, as well as his autobiographical writings and journals. Merton inspired him to focus on his spiritual life, long neglected by his efforts to advance in his career and financially support a large family. By meditating on Merton, he found coherence to his life. He began to affirm his own goodness and find joy in the simple pleasures of the moment. After years of feeling demeaned by his wife, he once more valued himself and his gifts. Through Merton's example, he also grew in his capacity for expressing sympathy and authentic concern for others. He was ready to step into the future.

Ed Honnold, the founder of the Men's Council of Washington, believes that men are just now coming to realize that they do not want to continue in the same patterns of behavior that "make a man a man: keeping the wolf from the door, keeping fires burning and the boundaries safe." On the other hand, the blurred edges between gender roles make many men uncomfortable as they try to decide what it is about men that is not like women. Men want to live out a more sensitive masculinity, but the old rules for manliness were easier to follow. Men's councils, collectives, and resource centers existing across the United States sponsor events for men to share their thoughts and experiences on a broad range of issues that men traditionally do not talk about with each other—such as intimacy, grief, love, tears, homophobia, male myths, spirituality, and a very



popular topic—father-son relationships.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Books that ex-husbands and therapists whom I interviewed particularly recommend include: *Crazy Time: Surviving Divorce* by Abigail Trafford; *Fire in the Belly: On Being A Man* by Sam Keen; *Intimate Strangers* by Lillian B. Rubin; *Iron John: A Book about Men* by Robert Bly; *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover* by Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette; *Men and Divorce* by Michael F. Myer; *Men and Friendship* by Stuart Miller; *Men Talk: How Men Really Feel About Women, Sex, Relationships and Themselves* by Alvin Baraff; and *To Be a Man: In Search of the Deep Masculine* edited by Keith Thompson. Divorced men repeatedly refer to the value of *The Road Less Traveled: A New Psychology of Love, Traditional Values and Spiritual Growth* by M. Scott Peck, M.D.

Whatever practical means a man chooses to help himself recover from divorce—reading, writing, meditating, or attending seminars on men's issues—it is a time for him to learn about himself, to concentrate on what he feels and why. This is difficult at the beginning of the divorce process when contradictory feelings of guilt, anger, hurt, and self-pity are so strong.

Bereavement specialists offer a number of realistic ways for coping positively with these conflicting emotions, for they agree that a man ought to express the emotions he is feeling because repressing them only further dissipates his energy.

For example, if a man is sad and wants to cry about his marriage but cannot, therapist Cathleen Fanslow-Brunjes recommends renting a video such as *Terms of Endearment* and watching it by

himself. Leafing quietly through family photograph albums is also a way to unleash pent-up sorrow. If he is angry, Fanslow-Brunjes suggests turning up the radio or screaming in the shower. If he punches a bag or rips egg cartons and beats them with a wooden spoon, he is releasing hostility, not going crazy. In a gentler way, one man, Fanslow Brunjes recalls, learned to do crewel and inundated all of his friends with gifts of fancy pillowcases, napkins, and tablecloths.

A newly separated or divorced man may feel sad at particular times of the day, such as early evening when he usually arrives home from work. If this is so, he can schedule for that time other activities that require physical exertion, such as tennis, racquetball, handball, or swimming. He can join a community or office softball team. Exercise in the evening also encourages a sense of well-being that may contribute to better sleeping.

Sundays, holidays, and anniversaries are often difficult for estranged husbands. If so, those days might be filled with volunteer work in hospitals, with youth groups, or in soup kitchens. Helping others through their loneliness is a way of shedding light on one's own problems.

This is also a time however when a hurting man needs to appreciate his virtues. He can make a list of his good points and his accomplishments: the fact that he is a team player at work or the office, a loyal brother, a caring father, a talented woodcarver. This list may visually represent to him that he is indeed a good person and that his failings exist among many positive traits. Knowing that he can identify

his flaws, he may stop feeling burdened by personal failure and begin to act on those things that he can do to improve.

Above all, when a man going through divorce feels unloved, guilty, or angry, he needs to treat himself physically and emotionally with patience and care. This includes accepting the help of others willing to listen sympathetically to his story. But when men want sympathy, they frequently turn to women. Consequently, a divorced man often enters into a new, long-term codependent relationship before he truly understands why his marriage did not last.

If he does not give himself time to mourn his disappointment or exorcise the need to blame, unresolved guilt and anger may haunt his future. (Moreover, a surrogate wife who assumes his emotional "dirty work" may only prepare him for marriage with another woman, while she is left with memories.) As a rule of thumb, therapists recommend that a man wait at least a year after his divorce is final to think seriously about remarrying.

Former husbands who are most positive about their present lives advise men to begin the journey toward recovery with themselves. The solitary introspection that they recommend is not a self-serving, self-indulgent, self-pitying exercise. But they believe that divorced men can benefit from their loneliness if they use the time to become more conscious of their inner resources. They urge men not to give up on themselves by denying their pain with a frenetic lifestyle or escaping from it via alcohol or drugs. They advise living through the pain and taking honest steps for understanding why it is there. With his new insight, a divorced man is less apt

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Martin Luther King Jr.

Finding Your Life Mission

NAOMI STEPHAN

Life is a personal mission. You have a calling that exists only for you and that only you can fulfill. It takes courage and self-love to answer that inner voice, but being faithful to it is the only way to lead a rewarding life. It's also the most natural way to be. As the Zen master said to his student, "Zen is eating when you are eating." Life is living your personal mission.

Naomi Stephan, Ph.D., works as a composer, writer, motivational speaker, and educator. Her choral works have been performed throughout the United States. Naomi heads her own Life Mission coaching practice offering consultations by telephone, individual Life Mission coaching intensives, as well as creating books and tapes.



Your first obligation is to carry out the mission you are meant for, not what your father, mother, mate, or friends say you should do. *No one can go through your life, tell you what it is or how to be it, except yourself.* Your mission will begin to take shape within yourself when you listen to your inner wisdom.

We're talking about self-care here: releasing *the need to please others so that you take care of yourself!* Every one of you has an individual mission to fulfill. Each of you has an individual part to play in that process. There are no substitutes for you, no actors standing in the wings to play your role. And there is no need, or time, to meddle in each other's roles!

Your mission is the most important gift you will ever receive and give in your life. It has only one requirement: that you follow the inner voice of your soul. You have no excuses for missing the mark because it's your mark.

The beauty of experiencing your *Life Mission* is that through it, you get in touch with that special spiritual assignment only you are qualified to fulfill.

WHAT IS LIFE MISSION?

Life Mission represents the very

essence of who you are. It is your very deepest intention—the heartbeat, core, and overall theme that guides your life. It expresses what you are all about. Other words for mission include *calling, quest, sending, destiny, or assignment.* Mission is the specific path of your soul in this life.

Once you understand that you have a calling, you learn to connect who you are to what you are doing. Everything makes sense because you do it in the light of your mission. Every task takes on a special meaning, subsumed as it is under this highest heading of your life. A mission then provides the vehicle through which the purpose, shape, and direction of your soul's path is expressed.

The "I have a Dream" speech of Dr. Martin Luther King expressed his mission: namely, that different races of this country could live and play in peace with each other. Everything he did related to that mission which was, as he put it, to be "a drum major for justice."

Likewise your dream, whatever it may be, illuminates and enlightens your soul's path like a beacon.

WHAT IF I DON'T YET KNOW WHAT MY MISSION IS?

Some fortunate people (for example, Albert Schweitzer or Wolfgang Mozart) knew their mission at an early age and carried it out consciously. If you despair because you haven't yet completely embarked on your mission process, take heart. For many, a realized mission might not begin to blossom until mid-life. Anne Morrow Lindbergh made the transformation from poet to world explorer as a grown woman. John Kennedy achieved his goal of influencing the direction of his country in his forties.

Eleanor Roosevelt moved from a subordinate role to a world figure in her later years. And look at Grandma Moses! It is never too late to embark on your mission discovery path.

The important thing here is to seek and then carry out your assignment. Awaken your own discovery process so that you can walk your own journey, just as countless other courageous people have done.

WHY MISSION AND NOT CAREER?

A mission can take various forms: a career, an avocation, a hobby, a pastime, a passion, or anything in between. It can be, but is not necessarily, identical with work. The term *Life Mission* refers to who you are and what you do to live out your soul's purpose in life.

A career is only part of what you do. Instead of thinking about your career as the description of who you are, think of it simply as one facet of yourself which—along with your interests, hobbies, relationships, activities, and avocations—helps make up your mission. Think of *Life Mission* as the melody, the theme of your life; career, on the other hand, is the musical instrument you play it on. Using different instruments (careers, avocations, and the like) you can express your mission in varying and interesting ways but the melody (mission) stays the same. Thus you have infinite possibilities, infinite variations possible within one basic theme.

Put in another way, work is a description of what you do, but your *Life Mission* is the spiritual and holistic perspective of your life, the meaning of your life. *Life Mission* is therefore a fundamental reflection of who you are.

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF LIFE MISSION?

Missions can take various forms, such as the desire to explore the polar ice caps, like Admiral Byrd; to protect consumers, like Ralph Nader or to be part of a creative duo like Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas.

A mission could be the greening of Los Angeles through planting trees (the goal of an urban organization called Tree People); dealing positively with the death process, as does Elizabeth Kubler-Ross; playing beautiful music on the trumpet, as does Wynton Marsalis; or sheltering injured and sick sea turtles, like Ila Loetscher. A *Life Mission* is therefore an individual role that is beneficial to all life.

Missions can be humble as well as grand. Some humble expressions I have noted are the missions to keep the floors of the local hospital sparkling, to give people the most unusual and unforgettable taxi ride they have ever had, or to make for children the most elaborate and biggest soap bubbles possible.

THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT

Every mission requires courage and commitment. People with a mission are dauntless, tenacious souls. They have answered their inner voice, taken risks, and responded when opportunity knocked. Their lives seem to say, "I know who I am and where I want to be, and nothing is going to stand between me and my destiny. I refuse to hold back or to deprive myself of my purpose." To fulfill their calling, mission seekers may have had to battle institutions, government, society, relatives, parents, and even mates. They persevere without asking permission from others and accept responsibility for



the outcome. And you can do that, too.

FROM MISSION IMPOSSIBLE TO POSSIBLE

In the old TV series called *Mission Impossible*, the main character always received an "impossible" assignment to perform. "Your mission, should you choose to accept it..." was the stock statement heard each week. The viewers knew the lead character was going to accept that mission and there was never any doubt he would succeed. That's a good message right there. Let's compare that TV series with the concept of mission.

You Get Your Life Mission from

Inside Yourself. Unlike the show's assignment, your assignment comes from within, from your soul. Your first assignment is to discover what has always been there but needs to come into conscious awareness.

"But," you may protest, "I need to pay for my exotic cockatoo, see the kids through school, keep up my standard of living, join the country club." Anything else but, "This is what I need to do." The creative web that you spin, like that of the spider, must come from within. Manifesting your *Life Mission* is like weaving your own spe-

cial web. There's no other pattern quite like yours.

Your Mission Is Possible. It would be the quintessential cosmic joke for you to want something you couldn't fulfill. If it's your heart's desire, you can *realize* it.

Your Life Mission Is Unique. If you have been conditioned by herd thinking to be a part of the pack, to emphasize sameness and minimize the differences, it's difficult to identify the unique part of yourself.

What is unique about yourself? Statements such as, "I'm a mother of three children," or "I like people," or "I have an aardvark in my back yard" don't count because they refer to something external rather than a special quality within yourself. Focus on a characteristic that has always been inseparable from yourself.

When I asked Jim, a scientist, about his mission, he said he had the unique capacity to know just how things interconnected. At age seven he declared, "The bombing of Hiroshima is bad for people and it will hurt the fish, too!" For him, caring about the planet and making connections between events shaped his unique mission as an environmental caretaker.

SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE A MISSION-LESS CHILD

Many people have neglected their mission. They remain, like the man in Kafka's parable "Before the Law," languishing at the entrance gate to their own space.

What might keep you from embracing the thing that is most yours? You may simply need the concepts and tools to gain entry to your mission. Perhaps you're just afraid. Or you might need encouragement. Maybe you feel the years lost will be too painful, that others will disapprove of your decisions,



or that you'll lose what you've gained if you change course now.

But as the song lyric goes, "So how could you lose what you've never owned?" What do you profit if you've gained the whole world but lost your own mission?

Whatever has kept you off course, you can change now! Denying your destiny is the ultimate self-denial.

Remember that:

- There are clues that your mission has always been within yourself.
- Missed missions can—and must—be found.
- You can break through any barriers to your mission.

- Responding to a calling is the true measure of happiness.

There are no shortcuts to figuring out your life, no instant this and immediate that. Look at all the "how-to" books that offer easy solutions and quick fixes. The national passion for alternative ways to get high through drugs, sex, or fads is an example of trying to get to the top without doing the work. You reach your peak if you are willing to climb for it.

CLUES TO YOUR MISSION

Everyone likes clues. They provide the most important evidence of your *Life Mission* throughout your life. Here are some vital tips

to help get you on the right track with your mission process.

Clue #1: Look to Your Passion and Enjoyments. Jean, a real-estate broker, was forever puttering in her garden and helping friends with theirs. She would habitually stop to look at new landscape designs, and she owned a collection of books on interior design. But hard as it is to believe, until Jean observed what she actually liked doing—creating beauty through nature—she didn't recognize the clues! The body always responds to right action and right thought by giving you energy. Look for times when you feel that energy. Most often it will be evident when you are engaged in a passion or enjoyment. When you're on track, you'll catch yourself feeling enthusiastic, moved, and alive. Let's look at Brenda's example.

DRAWING ON YOUR SKILLS

A very discerning Southern woman with an investigative bent, Brenda was heading into her forties with a sense of being totally off-base with her mission. A native of Georgia, Brenda loved those old Southern mansions and the sense of history in her environment. She lamented the decay of those buildings whenever she read about it (clue!).

Brenda knew what she was interested in, but she spent considerable time trying to translate it into practical terms. She constantly found reasons that she should not pursue her mission of esthetic preservation. A French language teacher, she secretly wanted to use her artistic talents to restore and recover art. But she insisted there was no way to express exactly what she wanted because it was so rare.

She told me of an incident on a plane flight in which a fellow pas-



senger described a rather unusual passion. He made underwater drawings of archaeological sites. "Wouldn't you love to do that?" I asked. She literally rose up in her seat, her eyes brightened, and she cried, "Yes!" Then she slumped back down and sighed, "But there isn't a market for such an unusual thing." For a brief moment, Brenda had experienced a clue of passion.

What would that "water archaeologist" be doing now if he had limited himself with such thinking? The market for your talent needs only one person—why not you?

What are you passionate about? What gives you energy? Include any items from the past. Pay atten-

tion to those clues that tell you what *You* want in your mission. Even if the enjoyment is for a fleeting moment, make note of it! Observe what you catch yourself enjoying (it isn't always obvious). Sometimes a passion can stare you in the face and you won't recognize it. By actively being aware of your passions, you can begin to see your mission take shape more clearly.

Get out your mission journal and write down examples. Don't stop to analyze or censor them. Just write down your passions and enjoyments as fast as you can until you can't think of any more. Add any that occur to you over time. After you have a sizable list (say ten

or twenty items), look for the clues common threads and experiences that weave throughout your list.

Do you enjoy physical things? Mental things? Outdoor things? Solitary things? Things involving nature? Animals? Position yourself to encounter more of your passions and enjoyments by seeking out attractive environments where those feelings will be unleashed. If you like animals, for example, go to a zoo. If you like mountains, go hiking. If you like children, go to a playground!

Clue #2: Monitor Your Aches and Pains. When you fail to respond to your inner wisdom, you'll feel specific emotional and physical reactions resulting from that neglect. Your mission will nestle somewhere in your body and reveal its presence through aches and pains. Consult your body and let it tell you what the problem is.

Keep track of those aches and pains. When and where do they flare up? Identify any sad experiences you have had and where the pain was located. What were the circumstances of the experience? How did you react? What caused the pain to stop, if indeed it did?

Clue #3: Look for Rewards. You're never punished for pursuing your soul's path. Some form of reward will always occur. Something positive will happen. It might come in the form of a gift, such as a trip to a foreign country from a relative. Or it might be a sudden loan to continue graduate study. I bought new stereo speakers for the

first time in 17 years to encourage and support my reawakening musical self. The first time I listened to these new speakers, I experienced the rush I had felt with the first set. In the next day's mail, I received a check from an unexpected source for the exact amount I had paid for

all those items down in your notebook.

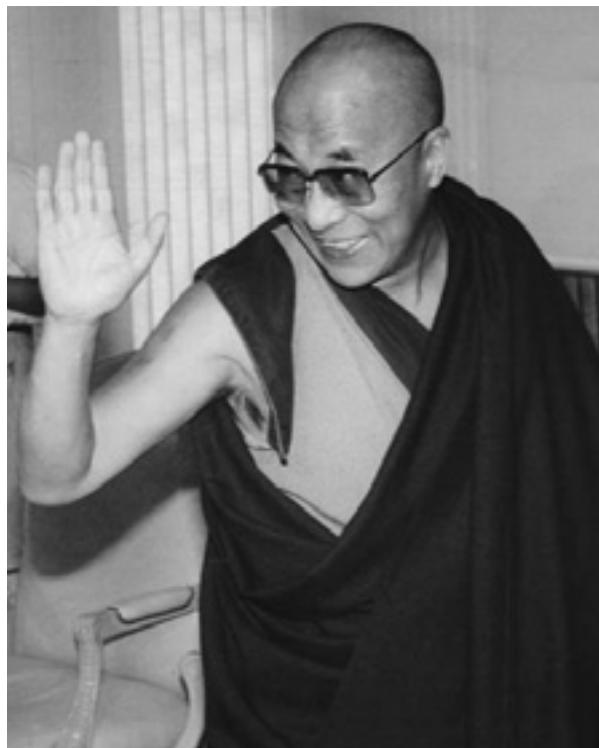
Then look for clues about things you want to know more about. Some items on the list may even surprise you. One client's list included astronomy. She realized that she needed to move to a western state with wide open skies to fulfill her mission of raising people's consciousness about the gentle treatment of animals.

The teacher teaches what the teacher needs to know. Mission and learning mirror each other like reflecting pools. After all, Mozart wanted to learn more about music and Leonardo da Vinci about the human figure (and not vice versa). What you want to learn gives you clues about your mission.

Clue #6: Who Are Your Heroes? Think of the books you used to read as a child or the ones your parents read to you. Who are the people, fictitious or real, living or dead, whom you admired? Maybe you kept a scrapbook

or clippings on your heroes. Maybe you went back to the city library again and again to reread that one story about Amelia Earhart or the first big-league African-American baseball player Jackie Robinson. They will tell you a lot about the person you want to be. The kind of people they were, the situations they found themselves in and the results they got will give you insights into your own directions.♦

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The Dalai Lama

the speakers. Coincidence? Or a reward?

Clue #4 Analyze Your Fears. Fear is a friendly reminder that you may be running from the very thing you love. Fear often arises when you refuse to face your mission.

Clue #5: What Do You Want to Learn? When you want to find out about something, it shows that a desire is awakened within you. What stimulates your curiosity? Get a college catalog and page through it, picking out five courses you'd take if you didn't have to be concerned about time, money, skills, or other restrictions. Write



Women's Wisdom

INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTIANE NORTHRUP
BY MARY NURRIESTEARNS

Christiane Northrup, M.D., is a holistic physician and member of the Natural Healing Health Advisory Board. She is a former president of the American Holistic Medical Association. In 1986, along with three other practitioners, she opened Women to Women in Yarmouth, Maine, to address the specific health concerns of women.

LOTUS: You say in "Women's Wisdom, Women's Bodies," that we cannot hope to reclaim our bodily wisdom and ability to create health without understanding the influence of society on how we care for our bodies. What cultural heritage are we dealing with?

CHRIS: For five thousand years, all of written history, most of Western civilization has been a patriarchal society. Masculine pursuits, intellectual control, and control of nature have been top priorities. We were the parents and nature was the child, to be managed and put into service for us. If you represent society as a triangle, God would be on the tip of the triangle, followed by men, then women. Children are under women and nature is at the base. We internalize these values and collectively recreate the hierarchical society. We are taught that after Washington, Bill Clinton, and the laws change, we can change. It is the other way around. When we change and shift consciousness around this hierarchical structure within each of us, we begin to create health. If making a million dollars and controlling our bodies, rather than living fully and joyfully, are our top priorities we can not create health.

We are born connected to nature and as a part of the universe. As children we are inculcated into a society that says, "Be a good girl or boy. You are good if you do what I say and bad if you follow the dictates of your own heart." We grow up under the auspices of what Caroline Myss, a medical intuitive, calls the prostitute archetype. To feel good about ourselves, we do things that are out of touch with what we know and feel inside so that others will love us. We are

When our innermost desires are cultivated and nurtured we know who we are and remember why we came. We feel connected...

told that to belong and be worthy we have to do those things.

The truth is we are born worthy. We are born precious, and all we need is to have that reflected to us through our parents' eyes. We then have a sense of who we are. When our innermost desires are cultivated and nurtured, we know who we are and remember why we came. We feel connected and do not have to use alcohol, drugs, sex, or work to stay out of touch with our feelings. Our guidance system which give us life direction.

How does patriarchy influence our experience of ourselves?

If you are a woman, patriarchy tells you that your menstrual cycle is a pain. We are introduced to our menstrual cycle, our connection with the moon and creativity, as a fundamental monthly problem. It is associated with bleeding and pain and is awful. We are taught that the pinnacle of being female is to be sexually available and attractive all the time. Menstrual cycles are clinical events not related to how

we feel deep inside or to our creativity cycle. They are events requiring Kotex that enable us to have children. Instead of being taught that menstrual cycles are magic, we are taught they are a problem.

Since women are taught to be sexually available at all times we squelch our monthly cycle with birth control pills. Our energy is in tune with a drug company rather than with the moon. It is more valuable to be sexually available than to be in touch with one's innermost creativity. We should not ask our partner to use condoms or natural family planning which allows us to be in maximum touch with our fertility cycles. In a patriarchal culture women learn that connection with men is so valuable it is acceptable to lose ourselves in the pursuit.

The systematic suppression of our needs and expressions causes enormous emotional pain.

The need to fit in and be connected with a man, if you're heterosexual, is powerful in this culture. We are taught that a woman alone is a pariah and not useful to society. A divorced or a single woman is not welcome at parties and is a threat to married women. A bachelor is seen as an asset to parties. A man alone is invited everywhere. A woman alone is not invited anywhere.

Fundamental beliefs of the addictive system pertaining to health care are that disease is the enemy, medical science is omnipotent, and the female body is abnormal. Please discuss these beliefs.

Disease is seen as the enemy, rather than as a sign that our body needs to rebalance. We believe we need to wipe out symptoms. Medicine is like killing the messenger—if you don't like the message, kill

the messenger. Our surgical drug arsenal is set up like preparation for war. Disease, the body, and its needs are enemies. We like to have people to be willing to work and produce twenty-four hours a day. In medical training, it is a sign of weakness if you need sleep, a bathroom, or food. A woman in a board meeting of a Fortune 500 company on the first day of her period may have to go to the bathroom frequently. She cannot acknowledge that in the boardroom. We pretend we do not have bodies or needs. Our job is to get the work done. In patriarchy, disease and bodies should be controlled. We should be in control at all times. If we are not, then we have done something wrong which a bullet (a pill) can fix. We believe that medical science is omnipotent. We cannot control our bodies all the time, so we have this science of medicine to control what we cannot. Medical metaphors are like military stories. In a successful surgical strike, all of the tumor is sterilized.

The female body is considered abnormal. The vast majority of medical research on cardiovascular disease has been done on men. Dr. Blumenthal at the National Institute for Health said that men's health has been practiced on women for decades. Early nutritional research was done by women because nutrition was one science that patriarchy allowed women to enter at the turn of the century. One line of research women followed was the effect of the menstrual cycle on women's nutritional needs. That research was wiped out when nutrition became a field dominated by men.

The female body is also seen as unreliable. The menstrual cycle is stated as a reason why women are

The next time something bad happens say, "I played a part in cocreating this event. This event is here to teach me something." I do not mean that your ego played a part in this, what I call your "soul" played a part.

not reliable in combat. We should ask why combat is believed to be fit for the male body. We see pregnancy as a problem and avoid labor and labor pain at all costs. Women are socialized to believe that the natural processes of our bodies, menstruation, ovulation, monthly breast changes, menopause, childbirth, and breast-feeding are all medical problems to be solved.

How do women reclaim feminine authority?

We reclaim our authority by noticing. We are noticing when pre-menstrually we are more fragile emotionally. That it is our body's way to let off excess steam and to be more reflective. We are noticing that the libido or sex drive increases at ovulation. We are noticing that, as Jean Shinoda Bolin pointed out in *Crossing to Avalon*, when we feel compassion we also experience a reflex in our

breast, the same as when nursing a baby. This is a sign of opening the fourth chakra or the heart. When we tune into our internal authority, we discover that our body is not a problem to be solved. Our body wisdom speaks of the divine, the feminine, and of earth wisdom.

In reclaiming our authority we learn to trust feelings, intuition, and life experiences not explained by science.

Yes. True science is the study of what is. True science asks why things happen. The essence of science is a wonderfully open mind. If data does not fit what you believe, you change your hypothesis about what is going on. I meet true scientists only occasionally. Mostly I meet people who practice the religion of scientism, a fundamentalist religion that permits only a few variables to be studied. Human experience includes thousands of variables occurring simultaneously. Scientism is like trying to determine what an elephant looks like by having blindfolded people surround the elephant. Some feel the tail, others feel a front leg. Newtonian science, reducing everything to one or two variables, has huge limitations. Studying hormonal effects in mice or rabbits has limited applications to humans.

Science is full of holes. In medical school I asked what causes systemic lupus and rheumatoid arthritis. In both cases the answer was "idiopathic," which means we don't know. I was astounded by the hubris. The focus was on squelching symptoms. Rarely did anyone ask what was going on in the patient's life that created the imbalance that eventually resulted in disease. That question flies in the face of patriarchy. We are supposed to be in control all the time, and if we

are not, we must be bad. That question would be blaming the patient. If you have a disease and believe the disease means nothing and came from nowhere you are one hundred percent a victim of the disease. You have nowhere to go. That equation is so disempowering.

How do we reclaim our internal wisdom?

The next time something bad happens say, "I played a part in cocreating this event. This event is here to teach me something." I do not mean that your ego played a part in this; what I call your "soul" played a part. Let's say you experienced incest as a child and in adult relationships you choose abusive men. You have two choices. You can think all men are abusive and the world is crummy or you can think I attract abusive men. There is a way I participate in this. How do I participate in this that it keeps happening to me and how can I change it? This approach is the exciting way to live, the only fun way to live. The other choice is to wait for the next bomb to drop, which is no fun because you feel hopeless and helpless. Your immune system bottoms out and whatever disease you have worsens.

How do we discover answers to these questions?

I wrote the book to give guidelines for this. Let us say that every Monday you get a sore throat. On Sunday ask, "What am I feeling?" You may find the prospect of going to work Monday depressing or there may be someone at work you cannot speak to, so the symptom becomes a sore throat. Become your own detective in a compassionate, broad-based way. Do not necessarily approach this with your intellect.

The first step is to announce to your spirit guide, the angels, or God as you know that energy, "I am interested in becoming my own authority. I am interested in being in the driver's seat of my life, and I can't do it alone." In the twelve step program of Alcoholics Anonymous, we admit we are powerless over alcohol. I have my patients substitute whatever they are powerless over. Step two is to believe a power greater than ourselves, or greater than our little egos, can restore us to sanity. Step three is to turn our lives over to that power. We do not go anywhere in life as long as we think we are the only one driving the bus. This is a fundamental problem of patriarchy. We put divinity or God outside of ourselves and hire interpreters called "priests" to tell us what is going on with God. We all have divinity within us. Divinity talks with each of us. If we think we are alone and there is no guidance available, we are justified in feeling victimized and to blame. What is necessary now is an initiation into spirit or what Caroline Myss calls the initiation of the fourth chakra. We need to move from cause and effect, from blame and victim mentality to the fourth chakra or the love center of the body and forgive our past and what we cannot change.

To heal we need to tap into our inner guidance. How do we access it?

Inner guidance is the feeling and intuitive knowing we have as we go through our day. Let me describe a morning being lived by inner guidance. You awaken and spend a little time before arising in appreciation. Appreciate your body and how it feels and give thanks for your life. When you are in a state of grati-

tude or receptivity you open the gates for inner guidance. Now that you are open to guidance in whatever form it comes, get out of bed, shower, and go to work. Notice a song on the radio that is meaningful for you and soak it in. Let us say you ask guidance for dealing with a colleague who is driving you crazy. Stay open to things coming toward you that provide answers.

There are many ways to touch inner guidance within your body. It is effective first to relax by listening to music or taking ten deep breaths, then to ask the part of your body that is giving you signals to talk to you. Write down the messages that come in. This information is a natural organic part of being human. We are taught to block it out in childhood. We are taught that only authority figures outside of ourselves know solutions for our problems. For example, I advise women to place castor oil packs on their lower abdomen for menstrual cramps or endometriosis. While lying down with a pack I ask them to journal thoughts, feelings, and images that arise. They have a story from their body about what is going on for the next office visit.

You say that we cannot make a new world for ourselves as long as wounds from the addictive system live in us. How do we leave our wounding behind?

Become strong in the present. Every time you feel good about yourself or accomplish something you are proud of, self esteem improves. As that happens you become ready to deal compassionately with wounds from your past. When we started Women to Women, we thought we left behind everything we did not want to bring into the new structure.

We wanted a health care center that honored women, was a nice place to work, and had plenty of clean air and sunlight. We did all of that. We created a beautiful space. Two years later we were not quite as exhausted as we had been previously, but our structure was dysfunctional in many ways. We created something different and improved from conventional settings we had worked in, yet were still over-worked, tired, and receiving abusive phone calls from patients. We realized we were trying to be all things to all people and were still operating addictively. This stuff lives in us. It is in our cells because we were brought up in patriarchy.

To leave wounding behind is a life-time, spiral, non-linear process. You do not simply decide one day to leave your past behind and move on. You decide to move on and the wounds from the past then come up. You do not go backward; you go forward to find the wounds. The wounds come to you because they are why you have not moved forward before. First, take a step forward and say, "This is what I want in my life. I want a work space or a body that reflects who I am." As you move forward you learn what is within that has stopped you previously. It will hit you between the eyeballs. It is exciting.

The stronger you become, the more willing your body is to give its secrets to you. I am currently working on my eyesight. I became myopic with some astigmatism at the age of 12, which is when many girls begin to wear glasses. I am now asking, "What didn't I want to see?" I still do not know but I am working through it because I have asked the question.

Part of healing is respecting our

We are naturally created to make sounds of joy, ecstasy, and anguish. Sounds are part of the internal guidance healing system. When we cry and go all the way into an emotion, making the sounds associated with it, we heal ourselves while making sound.

emotions, which is difficult because feelings are devalued in our culture.

Our emotional body tells us when we are on the right path. When we feel happy and joyful, we are in maximum state of receptivity for guidance. We are also in a state of attraction for more good things. When you feel terrific, you attract other people who feel terrific and events that feel terrific. When you feel lousy, you do not move towards what makes you feel good; you move through negative emotions that prevent you from feeling good.

You say that crying, our body's innate way of dealing with pain, is

suppressed culturally and medically.

When children fall and hurt themselves, they have a short period of crying, then are up and playing again. They wail and then are okay. A woman in labor may have periods of yelling; it is her body's emotional cleansing system. Ann Wilson Schaeff says that sounds are like a grappling hook; they detox the toxins in our bodies. We are naturally created to make sounds of joy, ecstasy, and anguish. Sounds are part of the internal guidance healing system. When we cry and go all the way into an emotion, making the sounds associated with it, we heal ourselves while making sound. When we squelch and choke back tears, our guidance system has no choice but to come back as disease at a later time to get our attention. If we do not listen the first time we get hit with a bigger hammer the second time.

A child naturally does a quick cry and goes on. When you are taught not to make your sounds in order to be a good girl or boy, you spend years pushing down your natural healing ability. When people become sick and hit this bedrock of pain, they cry tears that have been unshed for years. They are not just tears about the current situation, they are tears unshed from a lifetime.

Memories are stored in the body. Oftentimes, during a body massage, people have flashbacks of events from childhood or some other time. The events of our lives are stored in our bodies.

How are life experiences stored in our bodies?

No one knows. The body is a hologram where every part reflects the whole. Acupressure points on feet reflect the organs of the body.

Acupressure points in ears reflect the whole body. Somehow life events are stored in our body tissues. The whole is encoded in every part but no one knows exactly how. Wilder Penfield found that by stimulating different areas of the brain, all the events of a person's life can be recreated. Memory is stored in the brain and throughout the body.

Another healing step is to sort through our beliefs. You say we have to believe that we can be healthy.

So many families have illness in them. When I see someone with a family history of heart disease or cancer, the person often believes at some deep level it is only a matter of time before she develops heart disease or cancer. The belief runs in her family and becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy.

The culture believes that to age is to get senile, lose memory, and become a burden to society. We believe that to age is to deteriorate. We were not meant to deteriorate; we were meant to mature. We have an amazing collective hypnosis where older and younger people alike believe that to age is to become senile and infirm. It is crucial to believe you can be healthy. Perhaps your mother believed that it is a woman's lot in life to have a hysterectomy. I have seen three generational families where every woman has had a hysterectomy before the age of forty-five. They believe on some level that at age forty-three, their uterus has to go. We call it genetics but I think genes are the way we take our self contracts and manifest them into life experience.

Another healing step is to get our history straight. Explain that please.

When we have a history of abuse, neglect, rape, or whatever, until our tears are shed and we fully integrate that experience, our bodies draw our attention back to the unhealed portions. Alice Miller said the truth of our childhood is stored in our bodies. We can drug and trick our bodies but the truth remains and we are stuck until we acknowledge what happened. In our office we use a questionnaire for family history. Oftentimes in filling out the form, people have a gestalt, an important discovery. They may see that they were sick the entire time their parents were divorcing. Kids often do that. They manifest illness to focus attention away from the family trauma.

We do not remember our history until we are emotionally strong enough to remember. My mother didn't remember parts of her past until she was in her sixties. That is as it should be. Children basically think they are responsible for everything. There are things children do not want to see and know because if they saw and knew fully, it would be difficult to go on. They leave parts of themselves in the past. Soul retrieval brings parts of yourself from the past into the present.

Another aspect of healing is learning to respect our bodies.

Yes. Think about how most women talk to their bodies everyday. "I hate these hips." "These breasts aren't what they should be." "My hair is always so dull and lifeless." "I hate these lines around my eyes." "Look at this pot belly." "I'm disgusted with myself." The abusive language in our heads about our bodies is tremendous. We say that society needs to be safer for women, but we are not safe in our own heads. If we are

trashing our bodies mentally in the mirror every morning, how can we expect society to accept our bodies? If we talked to our friends the way we talked to our bodies, we would not have friends. If the body is a manifestation of thoughts, what kind of thoughts do we send our bodies that create the same old problems? We need to be compassionate with our bodies.

It is also important for women to reclaim our minds. How do we reclaim our intellect?

Each individual has a different thinking and thought style. Traditional Marshall Island children, when very young, can navigate by the moon, stars, and tides in boats in the archipelago of Micronesia which consists of thousands of little islands. This intelligence is a kinesthetic knowing of location by the wave pattern on the boat's bottom. This is kinesthetic learning. Patriarchal school systems honor and test the area of intelligence that has to do with reading, math, and very specific skills.

Schools are designed around the model for intelligence that is the white male way of thinking. The corpus callosum, the space in the brain connecting the left and right hemispheres, is larger in most women than it is in most men. When most women speak and think, we draw on more parts of our brains than men do. We remember how something feels, smells, and tastes while describing it. More parts of our brain literally light up. We are criticized for that in school and are called tangential thinkers. Can't you say it in fewer words? Can't you get to the point? To reclaim our intellect, we must understand that in a patriarchal culture the way a woman thinks is seen as inferior to the male mind.

Multiple choice tests were used in medical school. I would know the material and not do well. On multiple choice tests, people whose brains have a large right/left hemisphere connection are often told they read too much into the choices. I could reason how every answer of a multiple choice would be correct in a certain situation because I have a relational brain. More women than men have relational brains and we are penalized for them. The relational brain sees how an answer can be right in any number of situations and a non-relational left brained approach sees one correct answer. Jean Houston says the relational brain evolved by women nursing a baby in one hand, stirring the soup in another, and kicking the wooly mammoth out of the cave with her foot. We have always done more than one task at a time. We became skilled at realizing how one action relates to everybody in the tribal group. We need that kind of brain on earth now.

How does our personal healing heal the world?

There is no other way to heal the world. When people say their mission is to heal the world I suspect their motives. If you are out to heal the world, I suspect there are big areas within that you are not willing to look at because it is too painful. You take on the world because healing yourself seems to be too hard. The way to heal the world is to work on yourself. When you nurture the feminine energy in men, embrace your own intellect. Or when you change your relationship to the cellulite on your hips, you transform that individual energy within yourself and make it less likely that there can be a war outside of yourself. You change the

The wounds come to you because they are why you have not moved forward before. First, take a step forward and say, “This is what I want in my life. I want a work space or a body that reflects who I am.” As you move forward, you learn what is within that has stopped you...

law of attraction. By doing personal disarmament the whole energy field around you disarms. You know how healing it is when you talk to people who do not take themselves too seriously, have a great sense of humor, and use their mistakes as examples. They have done their disarmament. They do not set themselves up as a model of perfection and everything around them feels safe and comfortable.

You say that to make the world safe for women, we must create a safe place for ourselves. How do we create a safe space?

Start by noticing the voices inside your head that put you down. Make a decision to dialogue with those voices and to have compassion for yourself despite the voices. Make a decision not to do this alone. We are herd creatures, we need other people. I could not do my work if I did not have a circle of close associates with whom I work. At Women to Women, we five health care practitioners have created what feels most of the time like a safe haven for ourselves. When we feel safe, we can tell each other when we are angry or disappointed.

Start by creating a space in which it is safe to be and feel honest. When it is safe to own emotions that are not attractive, the opportunity for joy and communion really increases. We need places like that. Imagine if someone decided to make the area around her desk at a major corporation the space of personal disarmament. When doing disarmament with another person, both have to be equally willing to look at the way they create their own reality. I choose to be with people who take responsibility for their lives, which is different from being to blame for your life. Taking responsibility means having power to move forward. When you operate in a like-minded group, the opportunity to change things at a fundamental level is inspiring and humbling.

Writing this book was very personal work. I did a lot of disarmament, working through my training and patriarchy, and trying not to blame men (because they are also mixed up by this culture) while not excusing them for perpetuating it.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 88



Inter-Being

T H I C H N H A T H A N H

If you are a poet, you will see clearly that there is a cloud floating in this sheet of paper. Without a cloud, there will be no rain; without rain, the trees cannot grow; and without trees, we cannot make paper. The cloud is essential for the paper to exist. If the cloud is not here, the sheet of paper cannot be here either. So we can say that the cloud and the paper inter-are. "Interbeing" is a word that is not in the dictionary yet, but if we combine the prefix "inter-" with the verb "to be," we have a new verb, inter-be. Without a cloud, we cannot have paper; so we can say that the cloud and the sheet of paper inter-are.



ROBERT ROWAN/TONY STONE

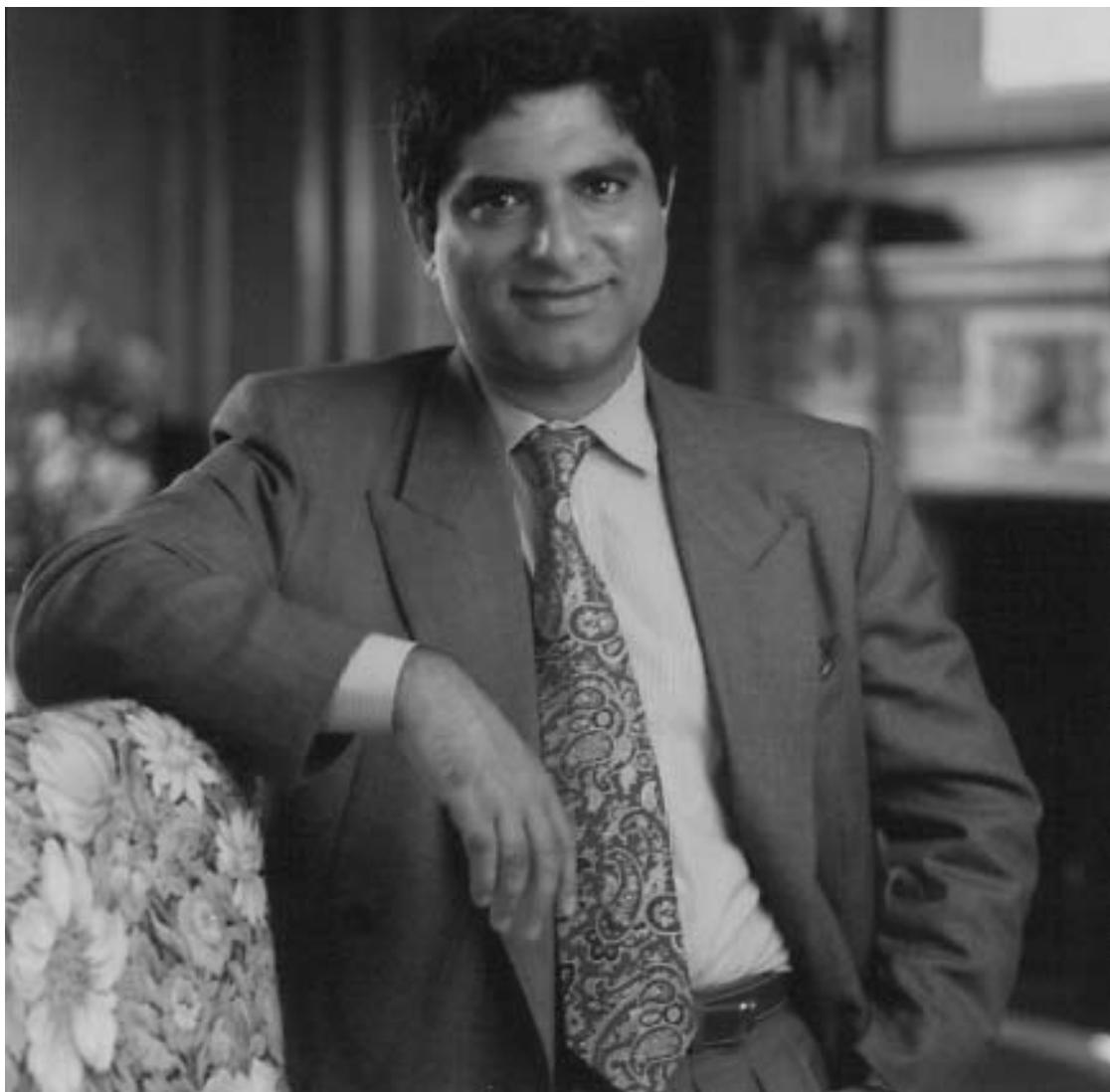
If we look into this sheet of paper even more deeply, we can see the sunshine in it. If the sunshine is not there, the forest cannot grow. In fact, nothing can grow. Even we cannot grow without sunshine. And so, we know that the sunshine is also in this sheet of paper. The paper and the sunshine inter-are. And if we continue to look, we can see the logger who cut the tree and brought it to the mill to be transformed into paper. And we see the wheat. We know that the logger cannot exist without his daily bread, and therefore the wheat that became his bread is also in this sheet of paper. And the logger's father and mother are in it too. When we look in this way, we see

that without all of these things, this sheet of paper cannot exist.

Looking even more deeply, we can see we are in it too. This is not difficult to see because when we look at a sheet of paper, the sheet of paper is part of our perception. Your mind is in here and mine is also. So we can say that everything is in here with this sheet of paper. You cannot point out one thing that is not here—time, space, the earth, the rain, the minerals in the soil, the sunshine, the cloud, the river, the heat. Everything co-exists with this sheet of paper. That is why I think the word "interbe" should be in the dictionary. "To be" is to interbe. You cannot just be by yourself alone. You have to inter-be with every other thing. This sheet of paper is, because everything else is.

Suppose we try to return one of the elements to its source. Suppose we return the sunshine to the sun. Do you think that this sheet of paper will be possible? No, without sunshine nothing can be. And if we return the logger to his mother, then we have no sheet of paper either. The fact is that this sheet of paper is made up only of "non-paper elements." And if we return these non-paper elements to their sources, then there can be no paper at all. Without "non-paper elements," like mind, logger, sunshine, and so on, there will be no paper. As thin as this sheet of paper is, it contains everything in the universe in it.

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A Guide to the Fulfillment of Your Dreams

D E E P A K C H O P R A

The universe operates through dynamic exchange ... giving and receiving are different aspects of the flow of energy in the universe. And in our willingness to give that which we seek, we keep the abundance of the universe circulating in our lives.

The most powerful forms of giving are non-material. The gifts of caring, attention, affection, appreciation, and love are some of the most precious gifts you can give, and they don't cost you anything. When you meet people, you can silently send them a blessing, wishing them happiness, joy, and laughter.

NOTHING IS STATIC. Your body is in dynamic and constant exchange with the body of the universe; your mind is dynamically interacting with the mind of the cosmos; your energy is an expression of cosmic energy.

The flow of life is nothing other than the harmonious interaction of all the elements and forces that structure the field of existence. This harmonious interaction of elements and forces in your life operates as the *Law of Giving*. Because your body and your mind and the universe are in constant and dynamic exchange, stopping the circulation of energy is like stopping the flow of blood. Whenever blood stops flowing, it begins to clot, to coagulate, to stagnate. That is why you must give and receive in order to keep wealth and affluence—or anything you want in life—circulating in your life.

The word affluence comes from the root word “affluere” which means “to flow to.” The word af-

fluence means “to flow in abundance.” Money is really a symbol of the life energy we exchange and the life energy we use as a result of the service we provide to the universe. Another word for money is “currency” which also reflects the flowing nature of energy. The word currency comes from the Latin word “currere” which means “to run” or to flow.

Therefore, if we stop the circulation of money—if our only intention is to hold on to our money and hoard it—since it is life energy, we will stop its circulation back into our lives as well. In order to keep that energy coming to us, we have to keep the energy circulating. Like a river, money must keep flowing; otherwise it begins to stagnate, to clog, to suffocate and strangle its very own life force. Circulation keeps it alive and vital.

Every relationship is one of give and take. Giving engenders receiving, and receiving engenders giving. What goes up must come

down; what goes out must come back. In reality, receiving is the same thing as giving because giving and receiving are different aspects of the flow of energy in the universe. And if you stop the flow of either, you interfere with nature's intelligence.

In every seed is the promise of thousands of forests. But the seed must not be hoarded; it must give its intelligence to the fertile ground. Through its giving, its unseen energy flows into material manifestation.

The more you give, the more you will receive because you will keep the abundance of the universe circulating in your life. In fact, anything that is of value in life only multiplies when it is given. That which doesn't multiply through giving is neither worth giving nor worth receiving. If through the act of giving, you feel you have lost something, then the gift is not truly given and will not cause increase. If

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True Success

you give grudgingly, there is no energy behind that giving.

It is the intention behind your giving and receiving that is the most important thing. The intention should always be to create happiness for the giver and receiver because happiness is life-supporting and life-sustaining and therefore generates increase. The return is directly proportional to the giving when it is unconditional and from the heart. That is why the act of giving has to be joyful—the frame of mind has to be one in which you feel joy in the very act of giving. Then the energy behind the giving increases many times over.

Practicing the *Law of Giving* is actually very simple. If you want joy, give joy to others; if you want love, learn to give love; if you want attention and appreciation, learn to give attention and appreciation; if you want material affluence, help others to become materially affluent. In fact the easiest way to get what you want is to help others get what they want. This principle works equally well for individuals, corporations, societies, and nations. If you want to be blessed with all the good things in life, learn to bless silently everyone with all the good things in life.

Even the thought of giving, the thought of blessing, or a *simple prayer* has the power to affect others. This is because our body, reduced to its es-

Success in life could be defined as the continued expansion of happiness and the progressive realization of worthy goals. Success is the ability to fulfill your desires with effortless ease. And yet success, including the creation of wealth, has always been considered to be a process that requires hard work, and it is often considered to be at the expense of others. We need a more spiritual approach to success and to affluence, which is the abundant flow of all good things to you. With the knowledge and practice of spiritual law, we put ourselves in harmony with nature and create with carefreeness, joy, and love.

There are many aspects to success; material wealth is only one component. Moreover, success is a journey, not a destination. Material abundance, in all its expressions, happens to be one of those things that makes the journey more enjoyable. But success also includes good health, energy and enthusiasm for life, fulfilling relationships, creative freedom, emotional and psychological stability, a sense of well-being, and peace of mind.

Even with the experience of all these things, we will remain unfulfilled unless we nurture the seeds of divinity inside us. In reality, we are divinity in disguise, and the gods and goddesses in embryo that are contained within us seek to be fully materialized. True success is therefore the experience of the miraculous. It is the unfolding of the divinity within us. It is the perception of divinity wherever we go, in whatever we perceive—in the eyes of a child, in the beauty of a flower, in the flight of a bird. When we begin to experience our life as the miraculous expression of divinity—not occasionally, but all the time—then we will know the true meaning of success.

sential state, is a localized bundle of energy and information in a universe of energy and information. We are localized bundles of consciousness in a conscious universe. The word “consciousness” implies more than just energy and information—it implies energy and information which is alive as thought. Therefore we are bundles of thought in a thinking universe. And thought has the power to transform.

Life is the eternal dance of consciousness that expresses itself as the dynamic exchange of impulses of intelligence between microcosm and macrocosm, between the human body and the universal body, between the human mind and the cosmic mind.

When you learn to give that which you seek, you activate and choreograph the dance with an exquisite, energetic, and vital movement that constitutes the eternal throb of life.

The best way to put the *Law of Giving* into operation—to start the whole process of circulation—is to make a decision that any time you come into contact with anyone, you will give them something. It doesn't have to be in the form of material things; it could be a flower, a compliment, or a prayer. In fact, the most powerful forms of giving are non-material. The gifts of caring, attention, affection, appreciation, and

love are some of the most precious gifts you can give, and they don't cost you anything.

When you meet people, you can silently send them a blessing, wishing them happiness, joy, and laughter. This kind of silent giving is very powerful.

One of the things I was taught as a child, and which I taught my children also, is never to go to anyone's house without bringing something—never visit anyone without bringing a gift. You may say, "How can I give to others when at the moment I don't have enough myself?" You can bring a flower. One flower. You can bring a note or a card which says something about your feelings for the person you're visiting. You can bring a compliment. You can bring a prayer.

Make a decision to give wherever you go, to whomever you see. As long as you're giving, you will be receiving. The more you give, the more confidence you will gain in the miraculous effects of this law. And as you receive more, your ability to give more will also increase.

Our true nature is one of affluence and abundance; we are naturally affluent because nature sup-



ports every need and desire. We lack nothing, because our essential nature is one of pure potentiality and infinite possibilities. Therefore you must know that you are already inherently affluent, no matter how much or how little money you have, because the source of all wealth is the field of pure potentiality—it is the consciousness that knows how to fulfill every need, including joy, love, laughter, peace, harmony, and knowledge. If you seek these things first—not only for yourself, but for others—all else will come to you spontaneously.

APPLYING THE LAW OF GIVING

I will put the *Law of Giving* into effect by making a commitment to take the following steps:

(1) Wherever I go, and whoever I encounter, I will bring a gift. The gift may be a compliment, a flower, or a prayer. Today I will give something to everyone I come into contact with, and so I will begin the process of circulating joy, wealth, and affluence in my life and in the lives of others.

(2) Today I will gratefully receive all the gifts that life has to offer me. I will receive the gifts of nature: sunlight and the sound of birds singing, or spring showers, or the first snow of winter. I will also be open to receiving from others, whether it be in the form of a material gift, money, a compliment, or a prayer.

(3) I will make a commitment to keep wealth circulating in my life by giving and receiving life's most precious gifts: the gifts of caring, affection, appreciation, and love. Each time I meet someone, I will silently wish the person happiness, joy, and laughter.♦

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Book Reviews on Reclaiming the Feminine



RICHARD HOLMES

Crossing to Avalon: A Woman's Midlife Pilgrimage

Jean Shinoda Bolen, M.D.
New York: HarperCollins, 1994

Stories of personal spiritual quests are sometimes the most soul-satisfying ones to hear or read.

Crossing to Avalon is a model of this literary genre, exemplifying how an inner expansive view of the personal can be extended to a broader understanding of the world we live in.

Jean Shinoda Bolen will take you, as sister and brother pilgrims, on her midlife journey to the heart and soul of the Grail legend and to the spiritual dynamics of her own life. But she will enrich your understanding of the Grail by adding interpretations that reveal feminine symbology.

"The need for return of the Grail and the Goddess," she writes, "is, as I have experienced its meaning, a personal and planetary story about wounds and healing, about hope and wholeness."

In one sense this book is a midlife spiritual autobiography, in that Bolen, a Jungian analyst of considerable note, is often frank and open about the crises she faced and the "forest phase" that she suffered through and learned from.

Her observation about "Goddess consciousness" re-emerging into the world is as important for men to heed as women; for the *disembodied* nature of spirituality

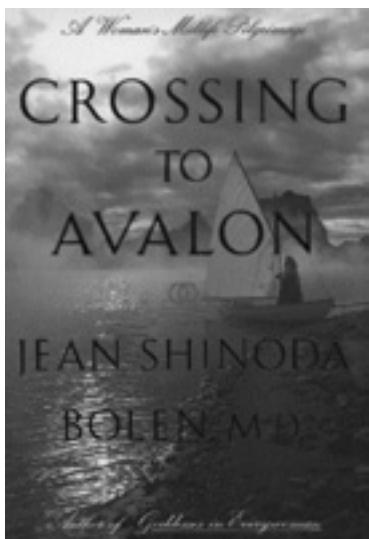
that has been characteristic of most patriarchal cultures the last five thousand years is in urgent need of a feminine infusion.

Bolen wishes to bring the Grail back into our lives. "By sharing the stories of our personal journeys and telling of our encounters and what we learn of the Grail, we each might contribute to the possibility of returning that missing Grail to the world. This is my premise."

How this "midlife pilgrimage" started for Bolen is intriguing. She received an invitation from a "total stranger" (Mrs. Elinore Detiger) to "experience my spiritual sources." At forty-nine, she had recently been divorced from her husband of nineteen years and had felt the need to get her life oriented in some way. But she intuited something deeper beneath the pain. "It was a very difficult period of transition and disillusion, and yet it had an unexpected richness."

The invitation, with a check for travel expenses, was definitely a synchronous event of "unexpected richness," which she decided to take advantage of. The pilgrimage she started has never really ended, for the sacred sites she visited have brought about in her life a dynamic balance between the two mystery religious expressions, each featuring a Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; Maiden, Mother, and Crone).

"Who does the telling, shapes the story," Bolen writes.



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Bolen tells the Grail legend, but reshapes it in the sense of adding a spiritual component, missing from male versions. "In the Grail legends, spirit, heart, and mind are the three paths represented by the three knights who find the Grail. Left out is the possibility of experiencing the Grail through the body... For the body to be considered holy once again, the Goddess

(the feminine aspect of the Deity) must return, for it is only through a Goddess consciousness that matter can be perceived as having a sacred dimension."

And what about Avalon? Where does it fit in? "Psychologically," Bolen explains, "Avalon is an archetypal other world and a mother realm," which, she adds, is "visible only under special conditions and

to particular people." What is its deeper significance? Her answer: "To cross to Avalon is to remember the archetypal Mother, the Goddess in her several forms and many names, to rediscover the feminine mysteries and the sacred in embodied experiences." With patriarchal religion in dominance, Avalon, and all it symbolizes, "disappeared into the mists of forgotten time."

But Bolen, through this wonderful personal narrative, is remembering for herself and for you, the reader. After meeting the Dalai Lama (an experience that brought out the intuitive child in her), she visited Chartres Cathedral, which was built to commemorate the Virgin Mary. At this place she tells of "perceiving the energies in the cathedral with my body." The belief that sacred sites are often set where energies are most concentrated has been confirmed consistently in literature written by pilgrims experiencing a similar kinesthetic knowing. Bolen responded bodily (though, of course, not negating her intellect) in other places—Glastonbury Tor, the Chalice Well (also called the Sacred Well of Avalon, in Glastonbury), Clava Cairns, Pluscarden Abbey, Cluny Hill, and Lindisfarne (or Holy Island).

The names of these places will take on a special spiritual meaning when reading about their impact on her personally, their mythological symbology, rich history, and possible significance to people today. She interweaves her personal stories with learned discussions about the Grail legend, goddesses, and mystery religions, all of which signify the deeper meanings of the Jungian pilgrimage.

"Pilgrimage, in Jungian terms,"

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she informs us, "is an expression of and an effort to circumambulate the Self, to 'quicken the divinity' by bringing the self within us to life."

And what is the "Self?" Another word for God, Goddess, Tao—any "archetype of meaning" beyond the ego's apprehension. "When life has meaning, it is because we 'circle around' this divine, ineffable source and are warmed and illuminate by it. Divinity is more than we can know with our intellect; it is the soul that responds to and recognizes the sacredness of moments when we are in the presence of divinity, love, beauty, wisdom, and truth."

The beauty of Bolen's writing is not only in its poetic use of mythological language, but in also re-embodying spirituality through feminine descriptions of flesh and blood. Like a contemporary Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), she sees the soul as "wet and moist and green and juicy," which means, from her perspective, "to be emotionally alive" and "to be real." As this applies to the Grail legend, it means that the three paths of spirit, heart, and mind are joined by a fourth, the body. Moreover, the chalice (a central symbol of the legend) is re-envisioned as an "image-metaphor for a woman's womb." Hence, she reasons, "the Grail then takes on the possibility of another meaning—that of a numinous or mysterious feminine symbol, something transformative and healing, with a sacred or divine dimension of the feminine."

Also beautiful about *Crossing to Avalon* is that whether resonating to the energies of a sacred site, experiencing personal travail, or connecting with people through spiritual networking, Jean Shinoda Bolen is likely to come through as

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one who ignites within readers "the Woman in the heart of women."

After reading her heartfelt memoir, one will surely agree that she takes her own advice, "To respond authentically to what we encounter."

"To do so," she writes, "we *only* have to be inwardly attentive, we *only* have to know what we feel, we *only* have to be able to respond with an innocent, spontaneous, instinctive receptivity that is a finely attuned discriminating consciousness, a body and soul reaction to the world around us."

She has responded authentically to the world, and we are the benefactors of her insights.

Love and the Soul: Creating a Future for Earth

Robert Sardello

New York: HarperCollins, 1995

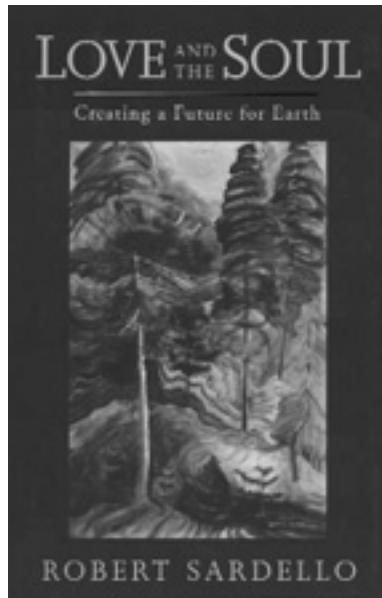
Using a left brain/right brain analogy, it could be said that *Love and the Soul* is characterized by left-brain prose and right-brain insights. Make no mistake; Robert Sardello writes quite well, and, carrying the analogy further, the prose and the insights combine for a whole-brained book. The point being made is that readers will need more patience and effort than usual to penetrate to the meanings of writing that is frequently demanding and occasionally abstruse. But this is not an argument against reading the book; in fact, such a book deserves (and not just difficult passages) rereading and renewed consideration.

Sardello writes, "The basis premise of this writing is that soul refers to the imaginative possibilities of our nature."

There are three qualities of soul—"interest in the future, soul

consciousness, and locating soul in the world as well as within individual life." The essence of soul is love. Love, Sardello reasons, works in tandem with these qualities, always concerned with what humans can be, encountering the world directly and consciously, and extending its bodily sense to all that is in the outer world ("soul as world soul").

Engaging in soul work requires living fully and sensually *in* the world, perceiving every moment as a question to explore imaginatively and creatively, and allowing the unknown of the future to meet you (the true, individual I), where the



soul of your body and the world soul interpenetrate.

Sound complex? Yes and no. Yes, perhaps the language of the book is at times a bit erudite, but, no, the insights can be singled out easily and reflected upon. It is important always to keep in mind that soul is *not* an entity, even an immaterial one; rather, soul is active perception of and receptivity to the inner senses of one's body and all of the created and natural realities

of the world at large. Nothing is exempt from soul, because all that *is* embodies soul. The task at hand for humanity is to learn how to develop its “soul logic” in order constantly to raise questions that serve as “the inspiration to go yet further.”

A life lived with soul is like research, not in the sense of laboratories and experiments, but more as a “way of life” in which embracing the unknown is an every-moment occurrence. Most importantly, Sardello reiterates again and again, a soul life is a turning *towards* the world. “When inner development is separated from the world,” he admonishes, “it is always in danger of turning into spiritual or soul greed.”

Historically, he points to the Knights Templar as models of a group of individuals (as distinct from egotistic individualists) who “foresaw the possibilities of work in the world that was for the sake of the world.” They were models of how inner development and outer work could function in the real world, so to speak. Sardello writes, “They took the idea of monasticism, individuals living in solitude and withdrawn from society, but nonetheless dedicated to the Earth, and brought this into the wide world.”

Also of pivotal importance to an understanding of individual soul and World Soul has to do with “Sophia, Wisdom, the Soul of the World.” “In all ages and in all places, an unending partnership of the human, the divine, and the world has been declared, proclaimed, and protected through the presence of the Sophia. Her creating and mediating activity... has always looked toward the future

birth of creation into the cosmos of love.”

Sophia represents three qualities—the potential (Mother of all), the ideal (the Daughter), and the actual (Holy Soul). And the kind of Sophianic activities that are necessary to engage in soul work are reason (an inner sensing of inner qualities), imagination (a sensing of unity), and memory (“that the human being is itself a recollection of the whole of creation”). Mirroring these qualities and remaining conscious necessitates “love of the unknown and a constant vigilance of inner activity.” To live with conscious soulfulness is not so much a balancing act as learning to expect, to face, and to embrace tensions, dualistic especially as brought about in a world of what he calls “counter-creations” (e.g., virtual reality, which can cause one to abandon soul).

Perception, seen as a “cognitive act of the body,” is also integrally linked to Sophia. “Sophia,” he elaborates, “is the content, process, and object of perception—she is in the body and in the world.” Thought of in this sense, he goes on, perception (or Sophia) is acquired. Here an especially important insight can be singled out: “...to acquire Sophia means to acquire an active capacity, like developing a new organ of perception, the capacity to perceive through the heart, with the world at center.”

No matter in what context Sardello discusses soul, he always makes clear that its activity must be world-oriented and body-sensitive. Perhaps it is valid to say that he thinks of soul as *in* the world, *of* the world (i.e., the natural world in an ecological sense), and *for* the world.

Like other books of such rich

complexity, this one cannot be reviewed easily in a sequential or linear fashion. The book itself is both an intuitive and intellectual experience in the very reading of it. Sardello, thankfully, challenges complacency and urges one to recognize that “Individuality does not come naturally.” In other words, to experience one’s “I,” feeling, and purpose in the world will only come about on a “path of development, the path of love.” Or what he calls the “middle way,” which is living in dynamic tension “between the inner act of meditation and the outer act of action.”

Love and the Soul can aptly be said to be a work of “love and the soul,” for Robert Sardello is most intent on the future of the planet being one of conscious soul-making, informed by love. He asks us to doff our “ego-colored glasses” (but not throw them away, since it isn’t eradication of the ego that a soulful life requires) and to greet the unknown of the future with the return of an all-important third priority, “Sophia as Soul of the World and woman.” The triad of woman, world, and man are all necessary, he says, for humanity “to take up the course of destiny.”

What that destiny will be depends on the transformations humankind makes possible through the spreading of love to all of the world.

“My Name is Chellis & I’m in Recovery from Western Civilization”

Chellis Glendinning
Boston: Shambhala, 1994

Chellis Glendinning, author of the Pulitzer-nominated *When Technology Wounds* (reviewed in *Lotus*, Vol. 1, No. 4) quotes the great psychoanalyst, Erich Fromm “That

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millions of people share the same form of mental pathology does not make those people sane."

An engaging writer, Glendinning will most certainly get beyond your initial amusement at the title of her book—*My Name is Chellis & I'm in Recovery from Western Civilization*—and demonstrate that the “domesticated psyche” of this high-tech, post-modern age is no longer in communion with the earth or is struggling to return to what she aptly names the “primal matrix.”

Primal matrix: “the state of a healthy, wholly functioning psyche in full-bodied participation with a healthy, wholly functioning Earth.”

But, she contends, most humans are lost and homeless. “Mad rationality” is literally de-stabilizing peoples the world over. To Glendinning the crucial social issues of our time are psychological/spiritual and ecological, which are interconnected in complex ways.

She asks readers to imagine the following startling picture: “Visualize a distance of one hundred feet, the length of a basketball court plus six feet more. Imagine that this distance represents the last one million years of existence of the creatures who have become *Homo Sapiens*. Fasten your seat belts. The last *one-fifth of an inch* of this hundred feet represents the length of time that we have lived in mass technological civilization, with the assumptions about life and reality that you and I are taught to assume are ‘normal.’ Not very long and conceivably not very normal.”

One could say that the pathological condition of humanity has worsened, having gone from future

shock to psychic numbing. To her credit, though, Glendinning goes from noting the symptoms of our global malady to a hopeful message that humans can consciously make the transition to a celebratory culture (with all its endless variety).

But first things first. She wishes to re-educate readers about why humanity strayed away from and eventually abandoned “nature-

*“My Name Is Chellis &
I'm in Recovery from
Western Civilization”*



Chellis Glendinning

based” ways of living; why thought, feeling, and spirit became misaligned; and why the three qualities of consciousness, integral to the primal matrix, also became misaligned (i.e., the sense of “I in We,” “I,” and “We Are All One”).

“When I use the word *nature-based*,” she writes, “I mean people who live, or have lived, in direct, un-mediated participation with the forces and cycles of the natural world.”

Not too many of these people are left in the world. For example, Glendinning cites the alarming statistic that rainforest destruction and economic policies in Brazil have re-

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sulted in one-third of its 270 native tribes disappearing from the face or, more importantly, from the heart of the earth. An MIT linguist, Ken Hale, has estimated that only three hundred native languages in the world, out of six thousand, are likely to survive much further into the future.

Why? Because people do not "live in intimacy with the Earth." If they did such societies would be "participatory, democratic, egalitarian, leisurely, ecological, and sustainable." Glendinning has obviously studied the literature of ethnography in order to provide many examples of nature-based peoples (past and present) whose societies indeed exemplify such multidimensional intimacy. These people are embedded in the primal matrix through both thought and action. They can be a mirror for modern humans to peer into—a mirror that reflects back to us the possibilities of a mindful communion with the earthly mother that embraces us.

As it is now, though, humans are being mindlessly distracted by technologies (e.g., virtual reality) that make up an "artificial universe" far removed from the natural pulses of the planet. The consequence of this psychological stance is "detachment." Besides detachment, she notes a psycho-spiritual sickness, "*dissociation*"—of mind from body, intellect from feeling, human from natural world."

And she asks, "Why did some humans create—and then rationalize with elaborate devices, ideologies, and defenses—an unprecedented way of seeing the world

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that is based on distancing and detachment?"

This complex question, though not easy to answer, seems to somehow trace back to pre-agricultural mythologies that describe peoples in balance with the Earth before submitting to a "fall." Looking at these mythic legends, as she does, it becomes apparent that humanity had broken its connection with the natural rhythms of its surroundings. Glendinning makes this observation, "Because we are creatures who were born to live in vital participation with the natural world, the violation of this participation forms the basis of our *original trauma*... This is the systematic removal of our lives from our previously assumed elliptical participation in nature's world..."

And so, uprooted, "we became homeless." The "cycle of pathology" began.

When? She cites agriculture and husbandry (possibly going back ten thousand years) as culprits because the sedentary ways of life that followed in their wake resulted in a relationship of "elliptical wholeness" giving way to "one of detachment, management, control, and finally domination." And lifelong recovery, generation after generation, has been the tragic consequence. Or perhaps, as she alludes, lifelong struggle. "Protective devices" have maintained the detachment and dissociation: hyper-reactivity, flashbacks of trauma, "constriction of feelings," "a sense of future-lessness," "psycho-social development" at a standstill, narcissism, and "thinking disorders" being among them.

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REIKI PLUS
from vol 4 #2
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Lotus is a powerful reminder of the vast potential within us to manifest our essence, to be the grand men and women we were meant to be.

Women's Wisdom

Continued from page 69

Is there anything else you want to say?

What keeps women from moving forward is identification with being the victim. Before releasing victim-hood our wounds have to be witnessed. The feminist movement of the 1970's and 1980's was about witnessing women's wounds. That process can continue as long as needed on an individual basis, but in order to move on we have to become comfortable with what Naomi Wolfe calls "power feminism" and disengage from victim feminism. Women are a diverse group. There are pro-life and pro-choice, Catholic and Islamic feminists. We have to get used to disagreeing. Women are terrified

to disagree. We have to look at, honor, and speak our differences and still work together. Women need to borrow this skill from men. Men know, when they go on the bear hunt or whatever, that all are needed even if they disagree. When women disagree, we stop the game, take our ball, and go home. Women need to come together and create bases of power—power within ourselves, not power outside of ourselves. To do so we have to leave behind the victim role. As long as we identify solely with survival mentality, we do not have the energy to move forward. We are at a crossroads and women need to move beyond the womb of victim-hood. •

Life in the Fast Lane

Continued from page 44

In the long run—I am anticipating many years of training attention—you won't think about the past at all. It is not that you cannot remember the past; you just don't think about it. You won't think about the future, either; not that you don't plan for the future but you are not entangled in what it will bring. You live one hundred percent in the present—which means you are one hundred percent alive. •

Copyright 1994 by The Blue Mountain Center. From the book "Take Your Time" by Eknath Easwaran. Printed with permission from the publisher Nilgiri Press. Eknath Easwaran is the founder of the Blue Mountain Center Center of Meditation in Berkeley California. He is the author of "Words to Live By," "Meditation," and Gandhi the Man."

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Circles

Continued from page 41

lied. Coming in from play, Carl would say, "Mom, mom, I saw a tiger in the woods!"

And I would contradict him, "No you didn't, it was only a dog."

"He was a tiger... or maybe a lion!"

"No, stupid, there aren't any lions or tigers in Minnesota."

It never occurred to us to question whether or not this contest mattered, that maybe Carl's sense of magic could be validated along with my sense of realism, that maybe two views of what we saw in the woods were even preferable to one. In Second Culture context, enculturation had taught us that reality is a contest of power. If Carl won, he would proclaim that his perception was right and mine was wrong. This was often the same struggle our mother was having with our father and the same struggle our father was having with the world.

The circle reintroduces the idea that different perceptions are both valid and helpful and that they do not have to compete with each other for dominance.

The circle is revolutionary because it removes this struggle for dominance and allows us to look at other issues. As long as we are vying for power, we have little energy genuinely available to solve problems, address concerns, or sustain common purpose. When we call the circle—with its potential for liberation—into the midst of Second Culture, we pave the way for a new amalgam of the past and present to emerge—a Third Culture.

THIRD CULTURE: THE CIRCLE AND THE TRIANGLE

Hierarchy is a triangular structure that locates leadership at the top and provides efficient means

for organizing and carrying out tasks. Hierarchy is a useful structure for teaching, passing on information, organizing data, and mass producing goods.

The circle is an organizational structure that locates leadership along the rim and provides an inclusive means for consultation. Circling is a useful structure for learning, governance, creating community, providing services, and observing ritual.

Both the circle and the triangle have influenced each other. They work best when allowed to occur in combination. A council may be called in which every person has a voice and then a group of elders takes all these voices into consideration when they make a decision. A board of directors may be consulted to set the directions for a business. A school board may be approached by a coalition of parents and teachers with a plan for resolving budget deficits or other conflicts of interest.

What happened in the Second Culture that now makes the Third Culture necessary is that the circle and the triangle were separated. Their unique abilities to balance inclusivity and momentum were destroyed. Hierarchy, misapplied, became what we call "patriarchy" or "machine world," a system without soul or conscience that has even been willing to destroy the planet on which it stands. The circle, misapplied, has been treated as an archaic or ceremonial structure that doesn't have enough power to influence the real workings of the world. This imbalance is killing us, and any way we try to resolve it through the blinders of our conditioning leads only to another dead-end.

So when Carol and John call a circle, they cannot expect the circle

to work if they simply read the circle guidelines, pass around a talking piece, and stay in the same frame of mind in which they usually function. They are challenged to leave their conditioning behind and listen to each other in a different way. To listen for the soul of the dilemma we are all in. To listen for the core of the problem to reveal itself. To experience power in community with each other and to celebrate this power by sharing responsibility with each other and for their task. To invite the sacred to rejoin the circle and provide a context of wisdom and guidance larger than the wisdom and guidance of any single person—no matter how wise. •

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McClintock
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Reviews

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Addictions also abound, the most pernicious one perhaps given voice by Vice President Al Gore, "I believe that our civilization is, in effect, addicted to the consumption of the Earth itself."

"Techno-addiction," Glendinning reasons, diverts attention to whatever is non-living and dictated by technique. We are witnessing, she says (though not consciously), "a human-constructed, technology-determined social system whose existence, on every level, is contrary to the natural way of the primal matrix."

Enough, one might say. Does she offer any positive comments on the current age? Is the "traumatized personality" a fixed pattern? Is the confusing solipsism of the post-modern mentality going to further erode our capacities to perceive the natural world? Will the world be dysfunctional forever?

Well, no. "The goal of our collective recovery," she writes, "is the tearing down of fences and the dismantling of the mechanistic ways that characterize the dissociated state. The objective is the reunion of our 'tame' conscious selves with our 'wild' unconscious knowing."

Though she is less specific about how this objective can be reached, she is no doubt right in saying the recovery process must be both personal

and, she adds, "cultural, historical, and environmental." Western civilization has led to amnesia and denial, but she is also right in her observation that people all over the world are experiencing an "urge to wholeness." "By all accounts," she writes, "we want to recover from western civilization."

Telling our stories is a start, she notes in her pivotal chapter, "The Whole Story and Nothing but the Story." Stories of trauma, grief, but also ritual stories of hope and possibility. She recommends that we address our dysfunctions as consciously as possible, whether the result of personal addictions or past traumas, or seeing into the "insidious, institutionalized dysfunctions perpetrated in the everyday practices of our society."

Ultimately, the message of *My Name is Chellis & I'm in Recovery from Western Civilization* is to take action.

As she puts it, "Action is a merging of our convictions about what must be done in the world with our sense of spiritual connectedness."

And, lastly, as all nature-based cultures did before, we can "praise Creation," which she thinks of as a radical act that can "initiate our recovery from western civilization."

Of course, the time to start is NOW. •

Unfinished Stories

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human trinity: body, mind, spirit. Something very direct happens as we pick up a pen to write; mind connects to body through fingers grasping both pen and the truth of our experiences. Writing stimulates memory and thought; memories and thoughts stimulate writing.

Other concerns arise when we try to remember the exact details of events in our lives. How accurate is our memory? If siblings or other relatives read our account, would they protest, "It wasn't that way at all!"? We are relying on memory but we also have to honor where we are as we write our life stories. If we are writing from some distance, we bring something to that event with our later perspective. Herwig Arts describes the difficulties of conveying personal experiences.

In the ears of the average person, the concept "subjectively-colored experience" sounds like a synonym for experience which is arbitrary, emotional, and hence, untrustworthy. But the average person is the obedient child of an era in which knowledge is considered worthy of the name only so long as it leads to technical control and can be calculated.

Because emotional experiences are easily discounted as only that, and surely inferior to analysis, we may question the truth of our experience. Whatever comes through our fingers, trust that it is truth as each reader of this book has experienced it. Our birth order, genetic history, family environment greatly affect our individual ways of perceiving the details of significant moments. We may indeed begin to question and doubt, especially as we reread our record of early-life

experiences. Yet, we can't calculate or control the power of experience as it is re-created from memory. We must write out of our own reality, our perception of the life we have lived, the life we are living. To do this we must believe in our own life, trust our own perceptions. If we look at our life as a process, an unfolding, then from scraps of memory we can piece together the story of our life. When we quilt these scraps together, we see the unique pattern of our life. This requires the opening up of ourselves, being vulnerable, being honest.

For some of us the word "story" may have a slightly negative connotation. It may bring to mind the "stories" we told as children and were punished for our fabrications. The word may conjure up the fairy tales and myths read to us as youngsters, tales that happened in mystical, far-off lands, seemingly unrelated to the reality of our experience. As we experience the events of our life, we do not think of them as story; but when we relate these events to another, that's when "story" happens. We have a powerful need to listen to each other's personal histories as well as a powerful need to tell the stories of our lives. It is in this telling that we come to understand the meaning of our life.

John Sanford retells the stories of several Old Testament figures, without being troubled by the obviously mythological elements in each tale.

...In retelling these tales, I have taken them as they stand—neither questioning their historicity nor credibility, but focusing upon them purely as stories. For from the psychological point of view, it

makes no more difference whether Jacob existed than it does whether or not Shakespeare's Hamlet existed... it is the story of what happened to them that counts, which carries its own message. So we will not "fight" the story, but will try to listen so fully to it that its deeper meaning and implications may be revealed to us.

So it is with our life stories. We need not wrestle over the facts; the intent is to discover the meaning of these events in our lives. It matters not whether we have the facts of our lives down pat, whether Aunt Martha's hair was strawberry blonde or deep auburn. Whether our imagination takes over or not, recollecting experiences is what, in the end, leads us to the mystery behind our story.♦

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Men on Divorce

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to enter into a relationship where the pain is likely to return.

For example, a man who described himself as stumbling through a "black tunnel" after his divorce told me his story in order "to reach another man to say you can make it. You can make it and be happy." Our customary, easy assumption is that men do not suffer from the effects of divorce, when in fact getting through an ordinary day is often an act of faith.♦

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Time for Choices

EKNATH EASWARAN

Constant hurry and day-in, day-out pressure take a cumulative toll on the nervous system. When the hurry becomes chronic, the effects of this toll build up in the mind as well. What begins as nervous tension becomes rigid patterns in the way we think and act. The mind itself gets speeded up; and when the mind gets speeded up, it is easily subject to negative emotions like anger and fear. A racing mind is simply moving too fast for love, compassion, tenderness, and similarly quiet states. Judgment is replaced by snap decisions. In a mad rush, in a frantic hurry, where is the time for making choices? (See related article on page 42.)

DAVID MAISEL/TONY STONE