



SPRING 1998

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*We are living at a time of tremendous transformation,  
from a species arrogant enough to think it's on its own, to a species  
that remembers where it comes from.—Marianne Williamson*

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# From the Publisher



*Personal transformation is more than a work about individual happiness or individual enlightenment. It is a work about becoming responsive to the evolutionary impulse, a movement from within Life itself that we must understand and obey if we are to continue to exist.—Richard Moss*

**T**ransforming our lives is of utmost importance for our own well-being and for survival of life on this planet. Personal transformation is the most

important work we do because it gives us clarity of mind and steadfastness of heart to work for the betterment of all.

Our intelligence must be directed toward developing ways to live in harmony with the environment, and to constructing governments that respect life and honor their responsibility to provide safety and opportunity for their citizens, so that they might flourish. We must direct the power of technology to protect, rather than to harm life on this planet.

We have the resources in our country to shrink the division between the rich and poor, to educate our youth, and to ensure equal treatment and opportunity for all. Unfortunately, we spend billions of dollars on unneeded military weaponry, rather than funneling a larger portion to programs that protect the rights and dignity of our fellow citizens.

One of the ways I transform my life is to practice living life as if it were my spiritual teacher. We've all heard the saying "When the student is ready, the teacher will appear." For me, the teacher is always present—it is life itself.

Every day I am offered a challenge. Some days it is a new challenge, and other days it is yesterday's challenge, with opportunity for different action. When I live fully present in the moment, I can see what course of action to follow. When I open to life, life provides solutions. As that insight deepens in me, I trust turning to life for answers. I feel less like I have to go it alone.

As we transform our lives, we learn that our voice and actions make a difference. We can impact the larger social, political and environmental issues: we must. One person's effort *can* change the course of history. As we rise to meet our evolutionary impulse, we make a positive difference in our homes, workplaces, community and world.

We want to continue to be a resource for personal transformation and to expand our efforts. The work has grown larger than our small office, and we are seeking help in the form of partners and financial support. If you resonate with our projects and have resources or know of resources, please join forces with us. For details, please see page 8.

Welcome to *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*.

*Rick NurrieStearns*

Rick NurrieStearns  
Publisher

## Personal Transformation

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SUSAN SCOTTER

# From the Editor

A few months ago, during a week-long gathering with a group of spiritual seekers, I composed two epitaphs for myself, one for a present-time death and one for a death forty years in the future. In both, I discussed my life in terms of how much love I gave, and how much love I let in, from myself and others. Since writing those epitaphs, I am more aware of when I respond to and express love. Increasingly, I yearn to be loving, ache when I am not, and know that love is my essence. I realize that the way for me to be truly intimate with myself, others and life is to be directed from the universal love that dwells within.

Love is reshaping my life. I know that I am not alone in this experience; this is your story as well. As we continue along our spiritual journeys, love burns away our falseness so that our beauty shines through. Spiritual literature tells us our true nature is pure love, and that it is our destiny to become loving in our daily lives. This issue of *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* echoes that wise counsel as it explores the themes of love, healing and personal transformation.

Love, healing and personal transformation are interrelated. As we heal our psychological and spiritual wounds, our capacity to love grows, and we find that being loved helps to heal our wounds. Loving support is a powerful healing agent. As we evolve in consciousness, we realize our connectedness with all life forms and understand the underlying unity of life. This understanding deepens our reverence for life and our commitment to utilize our unique gifts to be of service to life.

Love, healing and personal transformation come from the same essential source. In his interview, Bernie Siegel states that when we are healed, we live peaceful, loving lives and serve humankind. He adds that healing may not mean that the physical body is well; however, when we act through love, our physiology is as good as it can be. He describes the ability to love as incredibly therapeutic, affecting the person being loved as well as the



person giving love. Healing begets healing.

In our interview with Jean Shinoda Bolen, she says that the quality of caring between patient and healer is central to the effectiveness of the healing relationship. While healers use their skills to remove contaminants from the

body and psyche, what they really do is make the conditions conducive for the mystery of healing to take place. She stresses that it makes a tremendous difference whether or not a person is supported on a healing journey. Supportive persons carry hope and faith when the patient is unable to do so. Additionally, when people have lived with little love in their lives, to receive caring and compassion is immensely healing. And sadly, many people live with too little love.

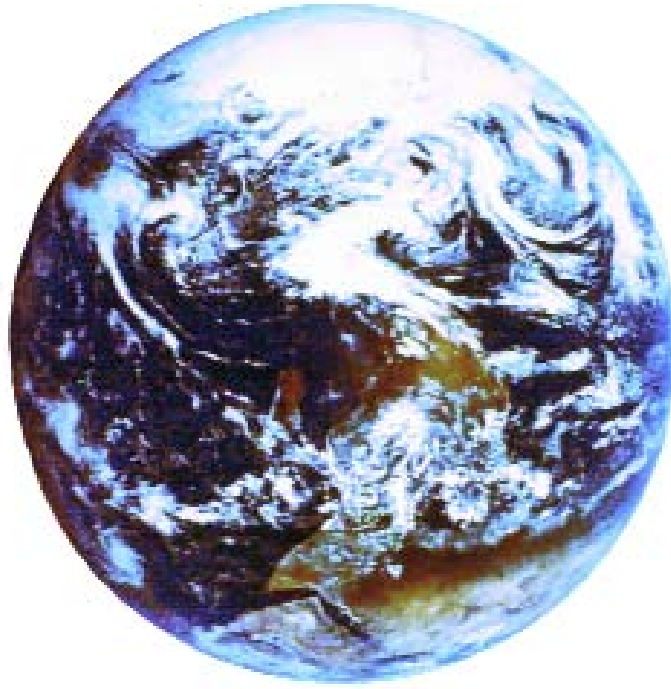
We don't need experts to tell us that we yearn for meaningful contact with others. We know it from our own lives. Yet, being reminded is valuable because we find ways to survive without adequate support and don't know what we are missing. Without deep connection with others, few of us are able to progress beyond surviving, to evolve lives that are rich in meaning and love.

Healing and transformational work is difficult *with* support. To attempt it *without* support is misguided. We need community in which the spiritual journey is valued. Gay Luce, in discussing transformation groups, encourages us to come together in groups because the work of transformation requires the feedback and heightened motivation which comes from honest connection with others. Emotional support helps us to practice making the changes which heal and mature us. She emphasizes that in groups like these, we bare our souls with one another, which makes for deep community and friendship.

May we all grow in love as we give and partake of its power to heal and transform us.

*Mary NurrieStearns*

Mary NurrieStearns  
Editor



# Join Us and Help Transform the World

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

**D**oes this magazine speak to your heart? Is your life also dedicated to the work of personal transformation? If so, please join with us or direct us to organizations and foundations with similar missions, who have financial resources to back our endeavors. The work with *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* magazine and the projects that are evolving out of it are exceeding the capabilities of our small office.

As you longer term readers know, our mission is to disseminate information, resources and support about personal transformation into mainstream society. We seek to embed the value of personal transformation, which is a process of psychological healing and spiritual evolution, into American culture. We believe per-

sonal transformation leads to social transformation. When people become psychologically mature, families and communities become stable and sustainable. When people spiritually evolve, they become loving, honest, and realize their connection to all of life. Violence, injustice and prejudice diminish. When people fulfill their potential, they become tolerant of diversity and motivated to contribute to the greater good of all.

## HOW WE ARE DOING IT

For seven years we have published *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*, a magazine dedicated to being a resource and catalyst for personal and spiritual growth. The magazine inspires and educates about



# What we vividly imagine, ardently desire, enthusiastically act upon, must inevitably come to pass.—Colin Sisson

the many pathways and resources that lead to personal healing and evolution. We are eclectic in nature and draw from writers of various religious backgrounds. We do not advocate any particular religious doctrine or school of psychology and are not affiliated with any organization. We are not a self-help magazine, attempting to fix readers or tell people how to live. Our intention is to guide people in their process of becoming more responsible and mature for their lives and in their circle of influence. We are expanding by implementing other projects that support individual transformation.

## WE SEEK TO SPREAD TRANSFORMATION BY:

- Educating people about the psychological and spiritual pathways of healing and maturation.
- Informing people about the resources available to support transformation, i.e. books, workshops, practical transformational practices.
- Motivating people to engage in their own transformational process by printing inspirational stories of people who have transformed their lives.
- Encouraging individuals to become responsible and socially conscious.

## PROJECTS IN THE WORKS

- Transformation Groups. We are helping coordinate and launch a grassroots project to provide regional support for individuals desiring personal growth. Many studies show the value of group support when people are undergoing a process of psychological and spiritual development.

Our volunteer staff has written a manual to help individuals launch groups, and professional volunteers are coaching individuals as they organize these transformation study groups. We have an advisory board of leading thinkers and authors who are sharing their expertise and experience to help create and sustain these groups.

We are currently in the process of creating an in-depth guidebook utilizing the experience of our advisory board. So far over five-hundred people have responded to the initial promotion to start or attend groups in their area. The groups project pro-

vides needed support at a regional level for growing individuals.

- Transformation Radio. We are working to bring transformational stories to radio. The program would consist of talk segments with people who have gone through profound changes in their lives, with commentary by leading authors, thinkers and therapists.

Through this project, we would also market video and cassette versions of the interviews to bookstores. Currently we are in the development stage researching distribution and marketing.

The initial stories for this radio product will come from the transformational stories that have appeared over the years in *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*. We also plan to use the magazine as a way to recruit new stories from individuals who have had profound transformation.

- Transformational Stories. A book project that is a compilation of deeply moving stories from people who have transformed their lives is nearing the final editing stages and we are negotiating to co-publish.

- Transformation on the Internet. A web site with up-to-date information about our ongoing projects will also provide needed support to help maintain our group project.

## WHAT WE NEED

Our business is currently at a point that the amount of work exceeds the capabilities of our staff to do it. Our limited cash flow prohibits expanding staff or doing needed marketing and advertising.

We need staff and financial resources to sustain and further this work. We are seeking partners, investors or grants to support this work. Our business comes out of a mission to be a resource and catalyst for personal and spiritual growth.

If you have interest in our project and need greater detail, please contact Rick NurrieStearns•

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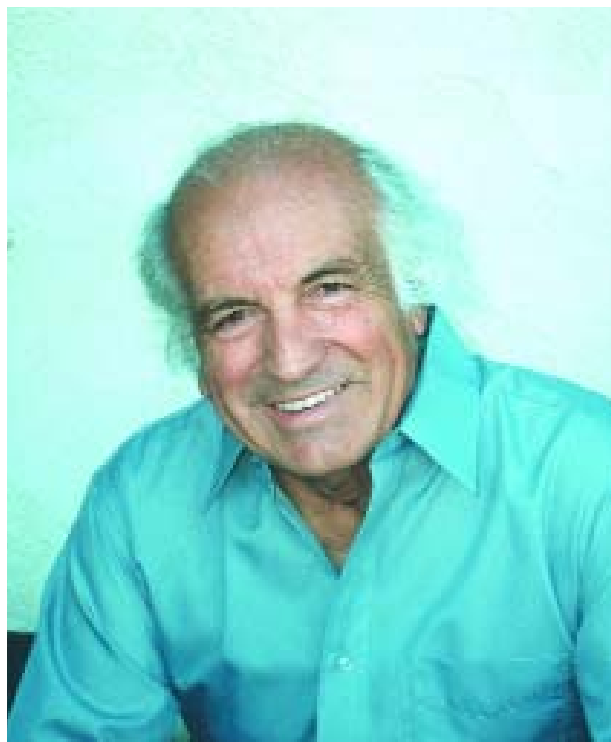
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# Are You A Closet Mystic?

G E O R G E J A I D A R

There are many individuals today who may be mystics, but because of some of the stereotypes widely and wildly circulating, they are not willing to admit it. As you can see, it's very much like the sexual orientation thing. Like it, there has been a great deal of confusion surrounding who is one, what is it, and should one admit it even privately, let alone publicly.

In order to explore what is a mystic, we need to do some much-needed conceptual housecleaning of the stereotypes and misconceptions that abound. One misconception is that the mystic has something to do with magic, which couldn't be further from the truth. A phenomenon is considered magic when we do not understand the principle behind it. For example, much of what we now explain by the principles of modern chemistry was at some time in the past seen as magic and may still be by the ignorant or the gullible. The true mystic has gone far beyond the magical thinking that is the earlier basis of the religious phase of the evolution of our human spirituality. (Those who are familiar with my work know that I consider religion to be an earlier kindergarten or childish stage of our spiritual evolution that was governed by magical and wish-



ful thinking and that we are now in the post-religious era of this evolution.)

Another misconception is that the mystic is passive or has withdrawn from life. This is no more the case than it is for the artist or the scientist. Like them, the mystic is an intrepid explorer of what is beyond the everyday and the conventional. The mystic evolved individually through that crowning achievement of our evolution, the reflective intellect, the height (so far) in the evolution of the consciousness of homo sapiens. This evolution of reflective intellect enabled us to attain to philosophy, high art and science, all of which require that we *actively* approach our world with *wonder* and attempt to discover the underlying *harmony* and *orderliness*. What distinguishes the mystic in this development is that he or she has not only attained that height but has reached and acknowledged the limits of human intellect and is willing to go *beyond*.

The discovery of these limits is seen by most people as a negative, a failure. Actually, the recognition of limits is a great beginning and has been the precursor of every scientific, artistic and spiritual revolution. It is the threshold to mystery, which causes most people to reel in fear while attempting to fit the unknown into

the old, so-familiar framework. This is the realm that requires great courage for the mystic to explore. She or he must leap beyond the comfortably familiar, predictable, controllable known to the unfamiliar, unpredictable, uncontrollable unknown. Contrary to popular misconception, this is not done by leaving behind the reflective intellect whose limits have been acknowledged. Rather it is *subsumed*, along with its hallmarks, reason and doubt, which are regarded as old friends on this journey of exploration of the *transcendent* realm of our consciousness.

It is this transcendent realm of our consciousness that is referred to as the soul, but to avoid the misleading error of thinking of it as an object or an entity, I call this the *Soul-process*, which is the unfolding current stage in the evolution of human consciousness. This is what calls to the individual from within to begin what we call the search for meaning or for the Ultimate. This calling from within has been referred to as the *still, small voice*, or what I call simply the *Yearning*. The Yearning has no objective in this world, because there is no object for it in our ordinary spatio-temporal reality. However, along with this awareness or our Yearning comes a coincident awareness of our *Oneness* with all.

If the mystic has come out of a religious tradition, he or she will not be able to continue therein without the most egregious compromises. Think about the Latin root *religio* which means “to bind together.” Religion sees itself as binding together separate selves to one another and to God. Along with the mystic’s unfolding awareness of the Oneness, the enculturated sense of separateness for which religion functions is seen as illusory, and religion becomes no more necessary than kindergarten is for an adult. Further, religion as a part of the enculturation process has another serious built-in drawback, and that is its emphasis on the group and the corporate way which serves to amplify the conditioning necessary for survival, but which works as an impediment to spiritual growth.

Spiritual growth is not a group activity. The awareness of the Oneness that accompanies your Yearning does not require a group to attain it. That Oneness is a birthright that needs to be discovered and claimed, as you would claim an inheritance. Here, an analogy might be of help. What the mystic must learn is much like a non-swimmer learning to swim. You may start

out in a group, but the first and most important thing to learn is to trust the water to hold you up, then how to move and breathe in it. Actual swimming, however, is a solo activity. The point of it is not to have the instructor or the group do it for you, but as in learning to fly, another excellent analogy, getting to the point where you can do it solo. Similarly, in spiritual growth, you may start out with what I call a Guide, someone who has been there, whose ultimate function is to eliminate that need when you are able to solo. When you are aware of the Oneness, you also know that spiritual growth is for the unique individual and does not require a group, which could serve at most an introductory purpose only. What astonishes me is that the same people who would not dream of going to a physician, an accountant, or a dentist in a group blithely assume that spiritual growth can only or primarily occur in a group. How misguided and sad!

It used to be that most mystics evolved out of a religious tradition, because religions had a near monopoly on learning. That was the only way one could develop the reflective intellect and thus discover the limits thereof, the requisite, as shown earlier, to going beyond it. Next, many mystics were coming out of the arts, especially as the ties to religion were loosened. In our time, more and more mystics are evolving out of science, thanks to its long and successful struggle to be independent of religion. Most are coming from the fields of physics and biology, with a remarkable spillover effect on philosophy, cosmology, and, lagging as usual, psychology. So many of these evolving modern mystics of the post-religious era, although sounding, acting, and feeling like true mystics, seem hesitant about coming out of the closet, a hold-over from the religious era taboos. I’m here to say that you no longer have to be a closet mystic. You can now come out. It’s Ok!•

---

*Philosopher George Jaidar, of Ojai, California, is the author of THE SOUL: AN OWNER’S MANUAL, Discovering the Life of Fullness (Paragon House 1995). A spiritual ecologist, he does a great deal of reclamation of old words. He loves rescuing terms and concepts from the misunderstandings or perversities from religious and conventional usage. This is another in a series of columns by Jaidar which shine new light on words and concepts that need to be redeemed, that can be springboards to personal transformation.*



# Groups Accelerate Your Transformation

G A Y L U C E

**W**e come together in groups because we need contact. Society doesn't provide a lot of meaningful contact. To do transformational work, we need feedback and heightened motivation which comes from honest connection with others. It helps to have outside support in order for us to stay the course of our transformational journey. The emotional support and motivation in a group helps us to practice making the changes which heal and mature us.

We need spiritual community desperately. Our need for connectedness is a big hunger in our culture. Spiritual communities are far more intimate than any other kind of group, because they are deeper. People are aware at some level of their being, even though we may never say it, that when we enter into a group like this, we are talking about soul-baring with each other. That makes a very deep community, and it makes for friendship. People can count on each other. It is easier to have faith when there are people around you who have the same faith.

When people share in a group, they get a sense of increased possibilities. Most people are locked into one or two ideas. When they start hearing others, possibilities open up. They are released from their lock, not



only energetically but in very practical ways.

Group energy is tantric. One and one does not make two: they make a thousand. When you put people together in a group and work with the energy, as well as the issues and intentions, you magnify million-fold what the people would experience if they were alone or in a very small group. Group energy is multiplied, and that is one of the reasons people go to football games. Part of it is the game, but a lot of it is the intensity of the crowd. The crowd focuses at a certain level, which is a terrific boost and very exciting. The same thing is true of really wonderful church services.

For reasons discussed above, groups are invaluable to transformative process. I do encourage you to open to its possibilities. You don't have to be a trained professional or have previous experience with groups to participate. Once you've made a commitment and are meeting for the first time, begin by relaxing and trying to feel at ease with one another. Discuss one another's expectations of the group. These expectations are what lead us on: they are motivation. Become comfortable with each other's expectations and understand that we are in a bigger process than those expectations.

Group coordinators, you can help the group move

## HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE IN A TRANSFORMATIONAL GROUP

Transformational groups are forming all around the country. Groups are an invaluable resource and support for growth. This grass roots movement is being organized by a volunteer group of people committed to supporting personal transformation. The project is backed by the following highly-respected experts in spiritual and psychological transformational processes. Their support will be helpful for all participants.

### OUR BOARD OF ADVISORS INCLUDE

BERNIE SIEGEL	JACQUELYN SMALL
GAY HENDRICKS	GAY LUCE
KATHLYN HENDRICKS	WAYNE MULLER
RICHARD MOSS	MARY MANIN MORRISSEY
JEAN SHINODA BOLEN	

We've heard from some of you that you're interested in participating in a group but do not wish to lead or host one. If this is true for you, please send us your name, address and telephone number. We will forward this information to a group coordinator in your area.

We have incorporated this project as a non-profit organization; this means all your donations are fully tax-deductible. Please see page 17 for more information on ways you can participate.

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from being superficial to being more personal, even the first night. You can move them sequentially beyond the superficial. Intimacy is developed sequentially by building on what is. After they have shared their names and expectations, do a ritual. Have them divide into two circles. Hold a candle and ask them to speak their expectations and their names to each other so that there is a little more contact, a little more depth. After that, have them sit down and write their expectations on paper, deepening it as a ritual. Next, ask if they can say to themselves, "I am willing to let this go for now," and burn the papers. Then share with one another how that felt. Next have them feel the energy of the group after they shared, noticing how it's different from when they started.

Another way to deepen a group, if sharing seems to be superficial, is to bring the group energy to a heart level. Start with a resonance, which is a time when everyone sits in a circle together, with hands joined, in silent meditation. This brings everyone into a more internal focus and opens people energetically. Then the facilitator can model more intimate sharing. For example, if it is a time when more emotional expression is needed, the facilitator can share what she is feeling.

The other tool that I use is what I call right speech. It is a combination of listening and active expression. Right speech consists of expressing your intentions and feelings. For example, I may say that I feel somehow this group is stopped at a level and that I believe we all want to go deeper. If the group energy is low and I feel frustrated, I say so. I continue by saying something to the effect that I would not feel right if I didn't move us on, as I don't want

us to waste time here. I state my intentions, that I want to develop greater intimacy and trust. I have to say exactly what it is that I want between myself and the group and how that affects me.

Also, you have to make it safe. The reason that people are at a superficial level is that they want to be safe. They don't know that it is okay to go deeper. After modeling, by opening up and stating your intentions and what is going on inside you, ask how the others are feeling. State that you wonder what they are feeling, rather than asking a direct questions, as direct questions can intimidate people.

And have patience. There are times, I think, that groups hold back because something is going on that is too deep for them to cope with at the moment. That happened in my mystery school last year. We were doing work around the issue of death and a man left the group. The man had some psychological issues to deal with that were beyond the scope of the tools we had given people. The group immediately started responding differently after his departure. Energetically, they had felt that it was appropriate to be more guarded in his presence.

Things like that sometimes happen, but they are more the exception than the rule. Facilitators, you will be successful as long as you open your hearts and be as non-judgmental as is humanly possible. Relax and let go of your expectations, because you are not doing this. The destination of the group, en route to something that you hope will happen, may be very unexpected. You may think the group is off track, and all of a sudden, the energy that is holding the group back from where you think you ought to be, breaks loose.

In the course of the group, keep remembering

*PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 18*

J F K University

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## *Groups*

*Continued from page 15*

that each person is coming from a different place. Be accepting and patient, and let people do their own process. Here is a tip out of my experience. Don't out-perform the group by using the group as a forum to demonstrate your excellence. I have to remember that, as a facilitator, I am going through this for the umpteenth time and that it is the first time for my group participants.

I am humbled by groups repeatedly. When I really listen, the participants are incredible teachers. None of us has the totality—a group comes closer than an individual. There is tremendous wisdom in each person. Most people don't know they have great wisdom until they come to a level of clarity in themselves, where it can come out. I hold back sometimes; I don't want to be too much the teacher. I like them to say what is going on, because much of the time, they will say what I would have said, and in doing so, they hear their own wisdom.

I want to encourage facilitators and participants on this journey. This is wonderful work and can greatly change your lives. Give it your love. You can't do transformational work without love. Open your hearts to one another and to the tools you are exploring and discussing. Grow patience and humility. Being in a group enhances the largeness, the speed and intensity, of the transformational process. And remember, this process includes more than just you and your efforts. This process is a mystery. •

*Gay Luce is the founder and director of the Nine Gates Mystery school. The Nine Gates program is a compressed nine day training that creates an accelerated personal transformation of profound depth. Gay is the author of "Longer Life, More Joy," "Body Time" and "Sleep." For more information on Nine Gates call (415)332-4366.*



# Reflections



## *From Our Readers*

### ***A P P R E C I A T E   T H E K N O W L E D G E***

I wanted to respond to your recent interview with James Hillman in which you talked about *The Soul's Code*. I have read only parts of his book and will continue to read more. I am thrilled to read of so many people who are putting these pieces of our human puzzle together. Hillman is obviously a thinker who has done good work. I agree with him: we have to first have an idea which gives us a new perception of the world. The more I read about "the soul" and our search to understand genetics, disease, depression, etc., the more I appreciate the knowledge I have gained which has changed my entire perception of myself, my life, and the world. With that, I want to encourage you again to take a look at Kathy Oddenino's work (see <http://members.aol.com/joypub>). She has written six books, all of which explain "the soul's code" and show the relationship of our knowledge to ourselves rather than only in pieces. She is the only person I have ever read or heard who defines the soul and spirit.

As I continue to see, more and more people are searching for truth within themselves, which will help them recognize their freedom of choice in how we focus our consciousness. This is what I am learning, and this is what I hear James Hillman talking about and why readers hear his words as "a breath of fresh air." The thousands of people who are reading James Hillman books will one day be reading hers!—*Margaret Martin*

### ***I   M A D E   A M I S T A K E***

I regret to say that with the last subscription renewal notice I received I wrote *cancel* across the top. This is not a choice but a necessity since things like health care continue to go up while wages continue to remain the same. Sometimes I think I made a mistake in sending off that notice. Today I received the Winter/Spring 1998 issue of your magazine. I barely began reading it when all of the reasons I have kept it came back to me. Your magazine is very timely and just when I start to question the things going on in my life, I seem to receive the next,

*PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 76*

# The Power of Spirit

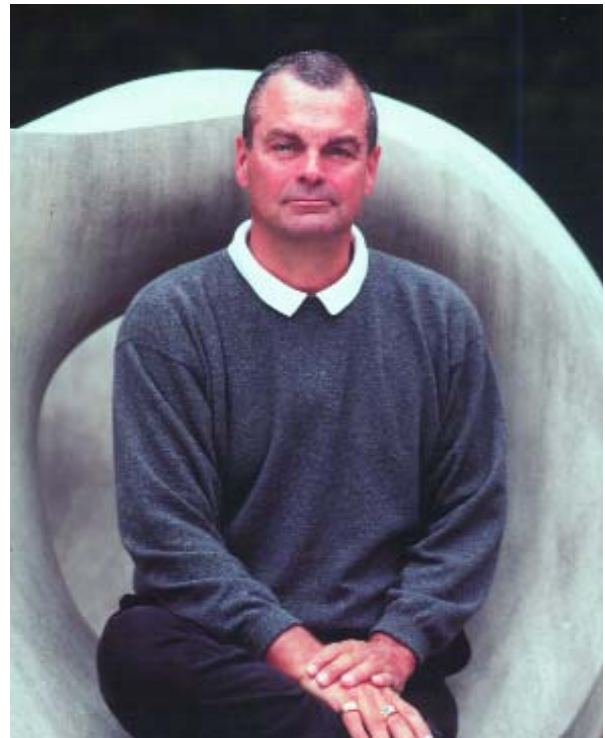
SWAMI CHETANANANDA

I am going to tell you an autobiographical story. This would be an unusual thing for an Indian teacher to do because in India, spiritual people say they have no personal history. This is because Being has no past and no future—in the infinite, there is no such thing as progress—only the infiniteness of Being itself. History, then, is irrelevant.

As long as we are entangled in our past, we cannot be free. To be free—which is to contact the power of spirit and live from it—is first and foremost to be free of the past.

But I think it's important for me to tell this particular story, which begins in the past, because you may come to understand, in a way which is more meaningful to you than through abstractions, about contacting that power of spirit which creates the whole universe and which resides within you.

Before I tell the story, though, there is one thing we need to understand together. This is a story of inner transformation. Although it is one person's story, it is not about anything personal. It is about the power of spirit which is within each of us. It is not about self-improvement because self-improvement has nothing to do with the spiritual. In the quest through the prac-



tice of yoga for the power of spirit, certain things in your life will definitely be better. But the problem with self-improvement is that it is ultimately a self-critique, which keeps us locked in a mind set that deals with what we have identified and judged to be our faults and limitations, and in fact all of that is irrelevant. What most people imagine to be their problems are often nothing more than a set of circumstances appropriate to the particular field in which they have developed. And so, rather than try to spend effort “improving,” what we really need to do is completely transform our field of experience.

In different spiritual traditions, there is often a discussion that we are already perfect, and this is because spiritual growth is not a tool for self-improvement. The ultimate paradox about self-improvement is that we're all going to die, so how improved can we get? Can we improve enough to beat that basic event? And at that point in time, what is the net effect of all the accumulated improvement that we have gotten? The same effect as all the money we have saved.

So this is a story of inner transformation, which is beyond self-improvement, beyond the past, present and future. It is a story of the power of spirit.

Contacting the power of spirit within us, which is inner transformation, is not about winning or losing. It is not about self-improvement or anything personal. It is about Being—the absolutely finest being—not because we’ve “improved” anything, not because we’ve “improved” the orbit into which we were born, but because we live within the power of spirit.

The story starts in Bloomington, Indiana, in 1966, when I left a town of 10,000 people in rural Indiana and went to college. At first, it was confusing, going from a little town to an academic environment of 30,000 people in the university and another 40,000 in the town. Then, there was also the fact that as an undergraduate, I only got teaching assistants as teachers.

None of this daunted me, however, because I knew that I wanted my life to be about benefiting other people. So I thought that politics might be a way in which I could do this. I worked as the editor of a political magazine until I realized that my interest in trying to bring about a better quality of life for human beings had very little to do with what politicians were actually doing. Whether it was campus, state or national politics, too often when politicians talked about quality of life for others, what they meant was quality of life for themselves. I saw through the rhetoric to understand it as a justification for self-interest. It was depressing.

This became clear to me one February in Indiana; it was a very cold and dark February. I was living in a student house, which means too many roommates, so the place was dirty, disorganized. It was at least 20 below out. The windows had a quarter of an inch of ice on them. It was the dead of winter; I was searching for an avenue to help people and wasn’t finding it; I was feeling despair. I realized then that most people are born to a track or orbit in life based upon the tensions of economic position and parents and perspective. We have a certain amount of energy allocated to us as we come into this world, and it sets up a track, an orbit—a circular path. This orbit is something which most people never escape, and on that cold night, at that moment in my life, I was aware of the orbit I was in, and I looked down the groove of it and felt deeply that the life that was laid out for me was

not at all a life worth living. I simply couldn’t accept it.

I turned on the television, and there was the movie of the Charles Dickens’ novel, *David Copperfield*, and David was walking along the beach, asking himself, “Will I be the hero of my own life?” And that question gave me goose bumps. I felt within myself that I absolutely had to be the hero of my own life or life was not worth enduring. And that was a very important moment for me.

It wasn’t the end of my distress. I picked myself up and threw myself back into school. I thought that I had failed in my responsibilities in the context of my track in life and that I needed to return and do better. So I tried—and it didn’t work—because the old way—all of it, no matter how “improved” I tried to make it—was simply that orbit, that track that led nowhere.

In those days, I was driving from Bloomington to Indianapolis a couple of times a week to spend the afternoon at a high school helping kids with their reading. One day while I was doing this, it dawned on me that before I could do anything about the quality of anybody else’s life, I had to do something about the quality of my own. I recognized that the orbit into which I’d been born had nothing to do with the quality of my life whatsoever but in fact existed primarily as a natural mechanism for limiting the range of experience that was available to me. In other words, I realized I couldn’t transform myself in this orbit and leave this orbit at the same time. If I was interested in the quality in life, I had to transcend my life as it existed at that moment because no matter how “good” I sought to make it, I could only get the level of quality that everybody else got by staying in the orbit. And that quality was limitation.

So rather than continue to be upset with myself and feel badly about myself—rather than walk



through life with a heavy heart and accept the meagerness of the qualitative experience available to me within that orbit—I said, “No, I have to be the hero of my own life. I have to change the entire field of my experience.” But how?

As grace would have it, I recognized, through a yoga class, that the most important thing was to find a teacher, a mentor, to help me develop the skills necessary to change the field of my experience. In many heroic epics, in India’s *Mahabharata*, for example, Arjuna and his brothers are princes. Hercules, or Heracles in Greek, was the son of the god, Zeus. In other words, these were beings who were trained to meet the challenges in their lives, and I realized the first thing I needed to do was to get some training. I knew that becoming the hero of my own life would be a serious endeavor.

I also understood, though, that it is a light endeavor—because in becoming the hero of our own life, we rise above old tensions to a level of lightness within ourselves that is a demonstration of the profound light, the power of spirit, that resides at the center of our soul. But the hero’s quest is also the most serious endeavor that a person can undertake, and it is absolutely not risk free. Continuously we deny ourselves the possibility of ever finding any real satisfaction in our lives because we look for the path of least resistance; we look for the most comfortable route to travel. But that’s the old orbit—and because of that, we lose our very life because essentially what we’re doing is allowing our laziness and fear to dominate our potential. It is in the challenges and adversity in life, and in facing that adversity, that we gain from life the discrimination and strength to maintain from within ourselves an authentic contact with the power of spirit, which is the vital power of Life Itself.

So I was literally praying for a being to guide me when a person who was a friend just happened to meet a person who knew a spiritual teacher, Rudi, and this acquaintance just happened to be passing through Bloomington. It was in this serendipitous way that I was shown a picture of my teacher. I looked at the picture and said, “Yes,” went to New York and saw Rudi—just laid eyes on him—and understood that this was a person who would help me change my life.

Authentic teachers are people who have burst the orbit, who through their own heroic endeavor have

established themselves in the power of spirit, and they share that state with others with no self-interest whatsoever. A teacher is available, but they may not be evident. They usually do not promote themselves very much. They are often doing extraordinary work quietly and somewhat unknown. It is only from the deepest part of you that you find a teacher, only from that place within your soul that calls out for a more authentic quality of contact with the living essence from within you. It is the power of spirit within you that reaches out into the field of experience and evokes from that field a contact with a real hero, a person who has sacrificed themselves infinitely to realize a level of satisfaction, a lightness, and a depth of peace within themselves.

As taught by an authentic teacher, the practice of yoga, which brings us to the power of spirit within us, puts us in touch with our own energetic mechanism, the mechanism by which, according to ancient tradition, the power of spirit becomes first our soul and then our heart and then our mind and then our body. In physics, scientists have noted that when a particular atom takes on more energy, the orbit of the electrons moves out, and at a certain point, it takes on enough energy that it starts to shed electrons. A teacher is an energy source that widens our orbit to the point of transcending it. The teacher guides us in finding the place within ourselves where a transformation can take place that has the potential to be truly profound and self-sustaining.

So the interchange between spiritual teacher and student is not about information; we may glean some information, but a spiritual teacher is not there to “teach” us anything. The better word for a spiritual teacher is the Sanskrit word, “guru,” which means “dispeller of darkness”—the light then brings itself—and dispelling the darkness means breaking the orbit and being free of all tension, all crystallization, all sense of separateness, to become deeply and completely aware of the power of spirit within ourselves.

I’d like to backtrack a minute to share what I think are some of the important points of this discussion. Number one, I wasn’t born to any special circumstance, and number two, I didn’t have any special life experience. In other words, anybody can be the hero of their own life. It is a matter of rising up to overcome the inertia and centrifugal force which seeks to

hold us in the orbit of life experience into which we were born. In rising out of that orbit, it becomes possible for us to escape the suffocating patterns of tension and interaction that function as a self-limiting force on both our physiology and our psychology.

In order to become the hero of our own lives, we have to have the courage to accept ourselves as we are and begin to find within that place which is calling forth to our heart and our mind, our soul, an acceptance that allows for that deepest creative power to manifest itself irrespective of wherever it might lead us. Being the hero of our own life does not preclude or exclude any activity, any particular style of life, any particular line of work. In fact, what this endeavor should do is totally extend and refine our capacity for self-expression as it completely extends and refines our capacity for self-awareness because we are awakening and calling forth from within ourselves a power of spirit that is the source of strength to enable us to overcome the structural limitations of the orbit into which we were born.

Becoming the hero of our own life is an endeavor that should continuously turn us to the potential that exists within us to recreate ourselves, and in turning to that potential and in recreating ourselves, we are rediscovering the vitality of Life Itself that is what makes anything alive—what makes life delicious.

The hero's quest and the hero's journey are not about any external events. They are about the transformation of the hero, the inner transformation—not the material or personal transformation. Of course, in our society, becoming the hero of our own life means getting our own software company. How sad. As if somehow we could purchase life. As if somehow an authentic experience of being alive were something available with money.

When Rudi asked me to return to Bloomington to set up an ashram, I said, "Rudi, I'll need some money to do this." And Rudi looked at me, smiled and said, "Anybody can do it with money." Do you understand what he meant? In one sentence, he cut me in half and freed me from a level of mental constriction. Because if we are true to our heroic endeavor, then we depend upon that creative power, the power of spirit, our own creative resource, not on something outside us, not on anything outside us.

The hero's journey is about inner transformation,

and the transformation that takes place in the context of moving here and there in the world and facing different challenges is not about the victories we have or the defeats we experience. It is about the unfoldment of that power of spirit from within us that causes us to understand ourselves in a profoundly different way—to understand ourselves in a way that allows us to be free of self-doubt and self-loathing—of all the things I was feeling so many years ago on that very cold, winter day in Indiana. It allows us to be free to live in the vitality of the power of spirit, which is at the core of our soul, and to accept its voice, its song, to live its symphony as the form of our life, whatever that symphony might be. The power of spirit has from within itself pulled forth the whole universe, and that power that has created the whole universe is within us. We can do anything we want with that power. So the power of spirit through the practice of yoga—which is the hero's journey—is about experiencing that power and learning to trust it. Spirit is one, it is whole, and it is infinite—transcending then and now, before and after, coming and going, higher and lower, less and more—transcending every such idea. Spirit manifests itself when we are in contact with it as the quality of completeness, of joy and satisfaction and clarity, which is its own quality. Spirit manifests that completeness in each and every moment that we are in contact.

Contacting the power of spirit within us, which is inner transformation, is not about winning or losing. It is not about self-improvement or anything personal. It is about Being—the absolutely finest being—not because we've "improved" anything, not because we've "improved" the orbit into which we were born, but because we live within the power of spirit. We find a teacher, we develop a spiritual practice, in order to know that power of spirit within us. In becoming the hero of our own lives, we burst the bounds of any orbit, we journey beyond the limitations of orbit into the power of spirit, which creates the whole universe and which resides within each of us. We see its beauty and wonder, and we choose to live, always and only, from and within that. •

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*Chetanananda is abbot of the Nityananda Institute, a spiritual community based in Portland, Oregon. For more information about Swami Chetanananda or his books, call Rudra Press at (800)876-7798.*

# The Healing Journey

M.J. A B A D I E

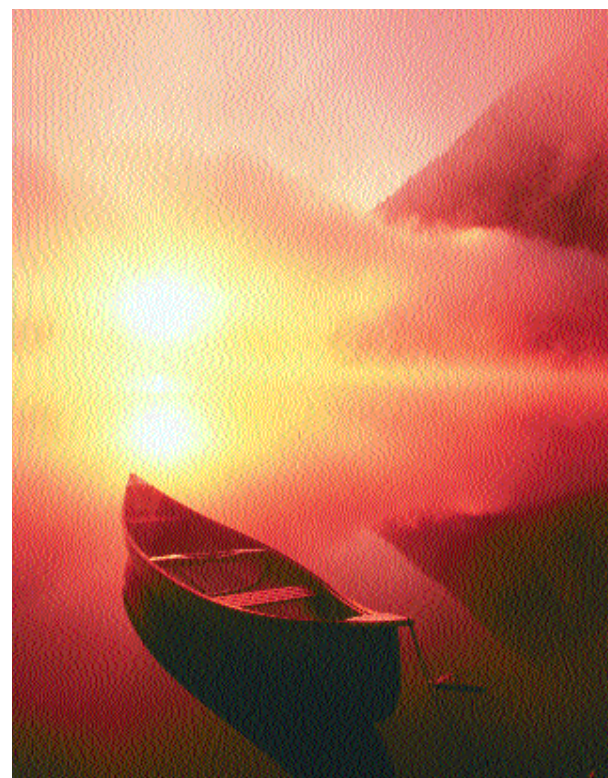
When one goes on a journey into unfamiliar territory, it is best to have a knowledgeable guide who knows the terrain, speaks the language, and is familiar with the customs. Wise and serious travelers also keep journals to record experiences and impressions of the new territory being explored and to compare it to what already has been seen.

## YOUR HEALING GUIDE

A guide is actually a symbol for our own deepest wisdom, which resides in the *self* and connects us to all the other *self*-entities everywhere, to nonhuman life, to nonorganic life, to the cosmos itself.

During my life, I have encountered many guides. You, too, will have more than one guide during your lifetime, but you can call upon cosmic tour guides at any time you feel you need guidance.

A guide may present itself as an “archetype”—an old man or a wise woman; a human figure you may or may not recognize, such as a grandparent or an idealized teacher; an animal that talks or communicates telepathically; a spiritual entity, such as an angel or “intelligence” from another dimension; or even as a rock or



body of water. These symbols are likely to shift and change over time and with the subject for which you are asking guidance. Asking for guidance with healing may produce a figure consonant with your idea of a healer. Accept what comes, for it arises from your deepest *self*.

By making the effort to meet and dialogue with your healing guide, you will be setting a precedent for getting help on a regular, sometimes unasked-for basis. Your healing guide can warn you of incipient problems in advance of real illness; it can provide you with penetrating insight into what ails you; it can reveal subtle nuances of meaning that are embedded in your experience of illness and healing.

For example, one man contacted a guide whom he saw as a long-bearded, gray-haired old man of great age. He called him “Methuselah” after the biblical figure and felt great comfort in the presence of this ancient one who seemed to be all-knowing. He enjoyed making this contact and relished the sense of trust he felt with this guide.

Once, he developed a series of painful migraine headaches for which his doctor made no other than the usual “stress” diagnosis. Unsatisfied and often in crip-

TSU/PETER TIMMERMAN



By making the effort to meet and dialogue with your inner guide, you will be setting a precedent for getting help on a regular, sometimes unasked-for basis. Your healing guide can warn you of incipient problems in advance of real illness; it can provide you with penetrating insight into what ails you; it can reveal subtle nuances of meaning that are embedded in your experience of illness and healing.

pling pain, he contacted Methuselah and asked him what the trouble was. That night in a dream, he saw the old man coming out of an operating room holding in his hand what looked like a Ping-Pong ball. He tossed this object to the man, who caught it, noticing that it seemed filled with fluid.

Intrigued by this image, the man called his doctor and asked for a CAT scan but was told it was not necessary. As his HMO would not pay for any unauthorized tests, he let the matter go. A few days later, he was hit by one of the unexplained migraine headaches, which doubled him over with pain. That night, sedated as he was, he “saw” a vision of the old man in sorrowful mien standing over his unconscious body. At first he thought the vision was the product of the drugs he had been given for the intense pain, but then he got a strong feeling that his guide was showing him a future possibility. Alarmed, he decided to demand the CAT scan, even if he had to foot the bill himself. He got the test, which revealed a small fluid-filled cyst on his brain. It was benign and easily removed; after the healing process the man had no more headaches.

Much relieved, and thankful, he did a meditation to tell Methuselah that all had gone well and to ask him to monitor his brain in the future. To his utter surprise, the old man admonished him severely, saying sternly, “You have missed the point.” What point? The cyst was removed, all was well—what could the remark mean?

The man meditated on the image of the Ping-Pong ball, seeing it flying through the air, back and forth, back and forth. Slowly, it dawned on him that this was how he lived his life. He’d been taught at business school to “keep your eye on the ball,” and that’s all he had ever done, becoming a workaholic.

But Ping-Pong was a *game*—it was supposed to be *fun*. The “game of life” was supposed to be fun, too, but it had turned into a fiercely competitive sport in which winning was the only acceptable outcome. Realizing that the cyst represented a deeper imbalance than a mere physical disorder, he vowed to change his ways.

#### MEETING YOUR GUIDE

In this meditation, you are going to meet a healing guide whom you can trust and rely on. To prepare yourself, do the following:

1. Articulate a question you wish to ask your guide. State the question as clearly and succinctly as you can. Vague questions beget vague answers. The more specific the question, the more specific the answer will be.
2. Choose a question that cannot be answered by a simple yes or no. The purpose of the first effort to contact a guide is for you to get to know this realm of your inside being.
3. Stick to your present situation and avoid broad generalities. Don’t ask, “How can I get well?” or “What’s the matter with me?” Instead, phrase a question specifically, as in “My upper right arm is stiff and painful. What can you advise me about this condition?”
4. Choose a question that does not require a prediction. This is usually interpreted as trying to “test” the guide. Simply asking for guidance is always good. State the subject about which you wish guidance.
5. Be willing to trust your guide and to accept whatever form will appear to you.
6. Remind yourself to pay attention to the guide’s appearance. You will ask your guide for a

## School of Energy Mastery

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## Hampton

### Manifest your Destiny

name or a symbol by which you can recognize him or her in the future.

After you have prepared yourself for your encounter with your guide, find the time to be alone and undisturbed for half an hour. Relax yourself completely and let go of the day's tensions and cares.

Mentally take yourself to a place somewhere in nature—a forest, the seaside, a flower-filled meadow, a lake shore, a cove—whatever appeals to you. See in front of you in this pleasant place a veiled object, full of mystery. A puff of wind comes along and blows away the covering, and your guide is revealed to you. Take whatever image comes and begin to dialogue with it. Ask your question and wait for an answer. If one doesn't come immediately, be patient. The answer may come in words, through intuition or telepathy, as an image, or even as a snatch of song or an instruction to read a book or magazine article.

In these guided meditations, the specifics are not as important as making the contact. Whatever springs into your mind is the right answer, because you are using a process to contact your own inner wisdom. Your guides are within the realm of the deepest part of your being, which is connected to all reality everywhere at all times and places.

When you have met your guide, introduced yourself, and asked your question, notice the details of the place so that you can return here whenever you like. Fix it in your memory. When you get the answer to your question, thank your guide and say you will look forward to further dialogue in the future.

If you do not get an answer, or if

the answer seems to make no sense, accept that also and try again later. Remember, you are learning a new skill.

If you are asking about pain or illness, ask your guide what your pain is trying to tell you. Ask what its deeper meaning is.

Before leaving, make an appointment to meet with your guide again at a set time. Follow through on this with another meditation.

### KEEPING A HEALING JOURNAL

All travelers are advised to keep a record of their journey. A healing journal is an adjunct to your regular healing practice and will serve as a channel into your own intuition about yourself and your health.

Record your thoughts and feelings along with physical circumstances. Jot down which meditations you use, and what results are obtained.

In time, you will perceive patterns of meaning. Your life is not an accidental or random event; it has meaning and purpose. Keeping a healing journal will help you to discover this.

If you are already a journal-keeper, this will be no problem. If you are new to journal-keeping, you may need some time to acclimate yourself to writing about your healing experiences on a regular basis. Whatever you do, make it an *enjoyable* experience. Play with the journal. You don't have to restrict yourself to writing in words; you can draw or paste pictures in it, or copy healing affirmations or bits of poetry. One friend makes it a habit to write down a self-created affirmation, a sort of ode to her healing process, each day.

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 35

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## Crown Asian Health Secrets

# My Mid-Life Journey

C A R O L Y N   H O B B S

When I look back on 1996, I see a nightmare. It felt like a nightmare of frightening body symptoms that would not go away as quickly as I expected them to: an abnormal pap smear in March, intestinal inflammation from March through December, months upon months of insomnia, and skipped menstrual cycles followed by two or three periods in one month's time. Finally, in November, my immune system was so depleted that I relapsed three times into bronchitis.

This was a rude awakening from a body that, for the first 46 years of my life, has carried me through numerous running marathons, played an infinite number of basketball games, cross-country skied every winter, and carried 60-pound backpacks for two weeks over 10,000 and 12,000 foot mountain passes every summer for 20 years (my idea of "fun"). I have prided myself for years on running an hour a day five days a week since 1976. But in 1996 the tables turned. All of a sudden, my body demanded a great deal of attention from me.

Of course, irregular menstrual cycles, hot flashes, fatigue and even an abnormal pap smear can be "normal" for a premenopausal, 47-year-old woman like myself. My menstrual cycles even balanced out with



Chinese herbs from my naturopathic doctor, and the biopsy results came back benign. But sleep has always been critical for rejuvenating my energy and helping me cope with everyday stress. When I began waking up at 3 or 4 in the morning, unable to fall back to sleep, my calm, relaxed, cheerful Type B personality transformed into an irritated, tired-all-the-time pessimist whom I had never met. Some mornings I literally woke up crying and exhausted facing another full day of clients with so little rest.

The irritation in the right side of my large intestine, and secondarily in my stomach, continued to baffle me. I could not believe it didn't immediately disappear after changing my diet. Within the first week of intestinal pain, I switched to a bland diet of cooked soft foods, eliminating hot mustard, salsa, broccoli, uncooked vegetables and spicy foods. By the second week I even cut out decaf lattes and mochas, chocolate and the microbrew beer on Friday nights (tough sacrifices for a Leo who loves the hot and spicy aspects of life). Despite these changes and drinking slippery elm tea daily, the pain persisted.

As a body-centered therapist for 14 years, I know that our body and spirit speak to us nonverbally



through the “language of the body.” “What is my body trying to say to me?” became my mantra that I carried with me into those quiet moments before falling asleep at night and into my morning meditations. Even more than my loyalty to psychology, I have been passionately committed to holistic, new age body-mind consciousness and healing since 1974. I was determined to listen to the “language of my body” and regain balance in my body, mind and spirit.

In my own attempts to “get the message” from my body, I asked my dreams at night, just before falling asleep, “What might I need to learn now in order to heal?” One morning I remembered dreaming that my black and white, 14-year old cat was meowing at my feet in the kitchen. In the dream she looked so scrawny and starving

that I felt sorry for her, and still I left the kitchen forgetting to feed her. As I took this image into my morning meditation, I wondered to myself what the image of my cat starving and scrawny had to do with my current health dilemma. Clarity bubbled up from my intuition: I had been starving my “feminine” or feline side by focusing too hard on more masculine aspects of myself: efficiency, productivity, accomplishing. Carrying this one step further, I drew a picture of my starving cat on a sketch pad. The act of drawing brought tears as I felt how much I’d neglected the female, instinctual parts of myself.

During many morning meditations, I would sit quietly and pose the question, “What might my body(spirit) be saying to me through this symptom?” I would simply ask the question, focus on

my breath going in and out of my belly, and listen for a word, a feeling sense or an image to pop into my awareness. At times, merely focusing awareness on the pain directly (rather than avoiding, denying or resisting it) would greatly decrease the pain level.

As I opened more and more to “what is true” in the present and even said, “I love myself for feeling pain in my side now” and “I love myself for hating the pain,” my inner state returned to joy and well being, even amidst the pain or feelings of despair.

In the summer of 1996, I turned to a breathwork therapist to help me move through my own symptoms. My body certainly had good reason to show signs of stress. Within a two-year period, I had left a thriving therapy practice in northern California and moved

## Tell about Your Transformation

In each issue, we present stories from people who have transformed their lives.

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## Journey into Wholeness/new

twice in Colorado, building a new practice from scratch in a new community where I knew no one. At the same time, I emotionally and financially supported my partner through a mid-life depression, so my accumulation of unexpressed anger, resentment and grief needed attention.

Over a series of breathwork sessions, I hit pillows and raged loudly about the huge financial responsibility I had shouldered by myself. I breathed into my chest and grieved deeply over losing my partner to depression for two years, resulting in extreme loneliness. The fear (and terror) sitting in my belly felt like a black mucky lead ball. I breathed into this lead ball during one session and allowed the fear to find its own voice: a deep wailing sound came from my very core. All these feelings triggered old childhood wounds about growing up with a depressed mother in the fifties who abused Valium and other prescription drugs, which left me feeling as a child like my own needs were unimportant.

I had been far too busy “surviving” and setting up a new income base those first few years to take time to feel. I assumed that—once this anger, resentment, grief and loneliness were acknowledged and expressed—my symptoms would disappear. I experienced some relief, but the inflammation in my intestine and stomach was not healed completely. Based on the philosophy of body-centered therapies, this indicated an even deeper level of unconscious beliefs and unexpressed feelings that still needed to be acknowledged.

I searched for answers by rereading spiritual books. In between seeing six clients a day, teaching one to two psychology

## Spirit of Dolphin

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courses each semester at the local college, and co-leading a women's therapy group on Tuesday evenings, I frantically searched books and my soul for answers. The pain in my right side continued to occasionally wake me up at 3 or 4 in the morning, which gave me hours of unstructured time to consider "What is the *big lesson* here for me?" I wanted my health back, I desperately wanted my body back, and I wanted it *now*. But the symptom persisted.

By November, after eight months of insomnia and intestinal pain, my body collapsed into bronchitis. I consulted another body-centered therapist for help. As I described my symptoms of the past year to her, her first comment was that my body was refusing to function. She continued to suggest that possibly some old unconscious belief I'd been operating on since childhood had come to a complete dead end.

She concluded that I was living under an "illusion of immortality"—pushing myself despite symptom after symptom. I suddenly felt shocked into reality. With all the innovative stress management tools I had acquired for "healthy living" the past 23 years, I had simultaneously acquired the belief that I was a superwoman, unaffected by normal human limitations. This belief allowed me to keep overriding my body's basic needs for rest and recovery.

Within 24 hours of speaking with this therapist, I decided to take an entire month off from seeing clients. This action was unprecedented in my 14 years of practicing therapy. As I look back now, I'm appalled and amazed that it took me nine months of symptoms to finally give myself what my

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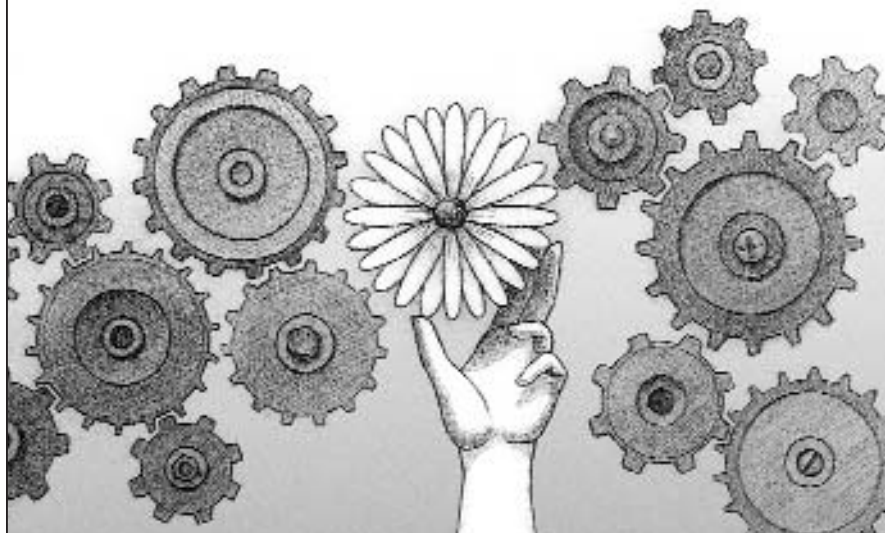
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# A Sense Of Self

PAUL E. BECKER

I grew up in a small town in the midwest which was a great place to grow up. I was very active in high school, being a four-sport athlete and participating in band and chorus. These positive outlets got me out of a tense household where there was much arguing and fighting. When I would go to bed at night, I remember covering my face and ears with a pillow to block out the arguing. Tears ran down my cheeks those nights, and I wished there could be peace and love in my family.

I grew up to become an adult with conflicting beliefs about myself. On the one hand, I knew I was a good person. On the other hand, I had an inferiority complex. I wondered if I was as good as others, and wondered if I was lovable.

In college I found alcohol for the first time. I loved how it made me feel, and I looked forward to that feeling on a regular basis. I managed to graduate from college with a double major, after having my college career interrupted by two years of military duty in the Navy, where I graduated to drinking scotch.

I met a wonderful lady my last few years in college. There was something very special about her and our relationship, and there still is after 20 years of marriage. She saw the goodness in me that I always knew was there but couldn't find on my own. She seemed to



love and accept me unconditionally.

After graduating from college I got married and worked 60-80 hours per week for three years, drinking 20 cups of coffee by noon and then scotch at night. I began to question my lifestyle and what I was all about. My drinking was destroying my relationship with myself, which wasn't so good to start with. I was losing self-respect. I had little to no self-esteem, self-love, self-acceptance or self-worth. All those words start with *self*. I had no sense of self. I knew if I was going to stop drinking and stay stopped I had to develop a sense of *self*. I had to find peace without alcohol and love myself.

Seventeen years ago I started on my spiritual journey of self-discovery and self-recovery, healing my soul and recovering my spirit. Wayne Dyer's book *Your Erroneous Zones* influenced me in the beginning. I saw in that book my erroneous beliefs about myself and about life. I have continued to read Dyer's books over the years. His journey seems to be chronicled in his books. I feel like I have been on a parallel journey with him. I have since read countless other books by leaders in the fields of transformational psychology and spirituality.

These authors have been instrumental in my spiritual journey of transformation, reinforcing what I ultimately knew all along. We are what we think we are.



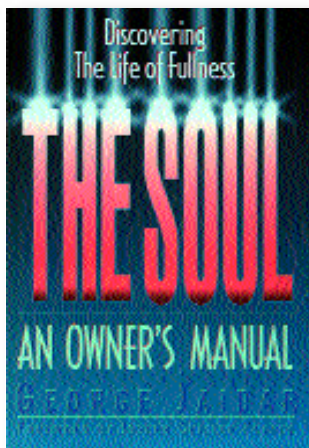
Our thoughts about who we are can be changed. We are lovable. The life force (God) that created us is in every one of us. We are all children of God. We are all one, all connected to each other by God. Every life is sacred and precious. Love is the answer. When we humbly love ourselves, we can love others and send love out into the world. When we love ourselves, we become patient and tolerant of ourselves, and we have patience and tolerance for all. When we love ourselves, we respect ourselves, and we respect others.

Over the years I have made peace with my past and my parents. I have developed a sense of *self*. That sense of self is based on a healthy supply of self-love, self-acceptance, self-esteem and self-worth, resulting in self-respect. I meditate regularly to stay in conscious contact with my God. Meditation helps me stay out of my ego and live through my heart, my spiritual center. My spirit woke up—I was spiritually awakened. To the best of my ability I live each day of my life loving God, loving myself, loving my wife and children, loving people, and loving life. I love the Hindu word ‘Namaste,’ which means “I celebrate that place in you where we are one.” When I know we are one, I can live without judgment.

I have been in the counseling profession for seventeen years. I have had numerous opportunities to meet myself in other people and have had numerous opportunities to help others find a sense of their *self*. My hope is that everyone can make peace with their past, make peace with themselves and love themselves unconditionally, find peace and love in their hearts, and find peace in this lifetime. With peace comes joy, and we can truly know heaven on earth. •

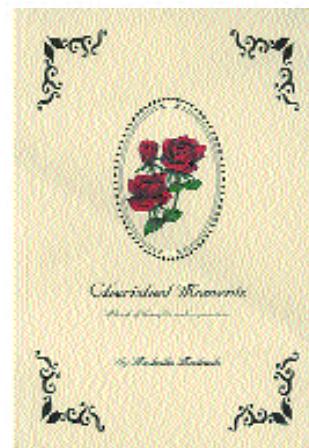
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## *Transformations*

*Continued from page 31*

body relentlessly demanded: turning *all* my energy and attention toward myself. I needed to get quiet enough and unbusy enough to really hear my shy inner self. Until this moment, my entire adult life had been aimed toward career, productivity and “pursuing my potential” master’s degree, state licenses, successful practices, ongoing trainings, conducting workshops, leading groups... As if that wasn’t enough, aerobic activities occupied all my nonwork hours. Since 1974, I had completely devalued such “couch potato” activities as drawing, relaxing, cloud watching, strolling and “being.” Re-embracing these feminine aspects of myself felt very foreign, but I slowly learned to accept their “intrinsic value,” even if they didn’t make money or strengthen my heart aerobically.

I set up one small room in the house as my “sanctuary” for the one-month retreat and filled it with a meditation pillow, a blanket, large stuffed pillows (to hit in case I needed to release anger), a drawing pad and pastels, spiritual books I intuitively felt drawn toward, my journal and a pen. My partner agreed to the terms of my “home retreat,” which are similar to an insight meditation retreat: no verbal talking, no eye contact, no socializing for me evenings or weekends, and all business matters would be handled without me. In general, I would spend my days uninterrupted by worldly matters in order to sink down into my own timing, my own needs and my unexpressed feelings.

I filled every moment of every day with meditating, journaling, long walks (alone), drawing, working with Tarot and Medicine cards, soaking in hot baths, listen-

ing to Jack Kornfield dharma talks on tape, reading, napping and moving to music. I did not make myself exercise aerobically or follow any “plan” for the day. I gave myself the time and space to feel feelings I had been too busy to feel for months (maybe years)—not just the obvious surface anger and resentment, but deep grief over abandoning myself and the whispered longings for quiet, unplanned moments. Slowly, as days passed, I began to wonder, “What if I really trusted all my feelings? What if I trusted my tears enough to really listen to what they have to say? What if I said ‘Yes’ to my heaviness, my sadness, my depression, my despair?” One morning I found myself leaning into a big pillow crying and whispering, “I wish that someone was listening to me.” In that moment, I recognized that I myself had not been listening to me, not nearly enough.

On those mornings when I felt extra brave, I would sit quietly and whisper to myself, “I’m willing to feel whatever feelings I’ve been unwilling to feel.” One memorable morning this invitation brought deep deep grief, and I cried. I cried for all the times I had abandoned myself, for all the times I had dismissed my feelings as unimportant, and for all the times I’d bought into that old codependent belief from childhood that “I don’t need anything and I can handle everything.” Through her ignoring my needs, my mother had unconsciously taught me that my feelings were unimportant next to her huge depression, and I had been reenacting this old belief the past few years. In that moment of awareness, I threw out the old

childhood belief and named aloud my new belief: it’s *never* necessary to abandon myself or leave my needs out.

Right on the heels of changing this old belief to a healthy one, I asked myself a question that I first heard from Jack Kornfield: “What is asking for acceptance now that I previously closed my heart to?” As in the dream of my starving cat, an image of my feminine self popped into my awareness. I immediately recognized a second old childhood belief causing havoc in my current life: my 10-year-old girl’s belief that I could avoid the horrible suicidal depression that Mom suffered if I just denied any ways that I was like her—my femaleness. In my child’s mind, my female side represented depression and despair. At 47, it had become too painful to operate on this old unconscious belief anymore. I cried and made a deeper commitment to embrace my feminine side.

Eventually, as the puzzle pieces of my healing fell into place, I came up with a new question for connecting with my inner self: “What does my soul need?” The answers that began flooding my being felt very different than my ego’s familiar desire to “look good” or “sound important.” This question allowed me to begin to resonate with the deepest part of my core. My ego and strong will, which had been driving me to ever greater achievements, began to surrender to a “higher inner authority,” my soul. Inside, this felt like losing control, as if the floor was falling out from under me. But afterward I saw that it was only those childhood beliefs I’d clung to so tightly that were collapsing. In their place, a more bal-

*PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 72*

## Healing Journey

*Continued from page 27*

Use any form you please. I find a bound notebook is best because I tend to lose separate pieces of paper. A simple spiral notebook is inexpensive and widely available, or you may prefer something grander, such as a cloth-bound book with blank pages.

Rereading what you have written, whether the next day or a year later, can be an illuminating experience. For one thing, you may be little aware of your progress until you see where you were this time last year. *Enjoy* your journal—think of it as a dear friend with whom you spend intimate time.

How much time you spend with your healing journal is up to you. During a six-month period when I was undergoing an intense healing after a plunge into the pit of depression, I wrote many pages every day. In fact, keeping my healing journal became, for that period of time, my life work. Many of those experiences are reflected here. Had I not written it all down, I might have forgotten many of the lessons I learned, lost the details of my healing journey, or even had the whole experience fade away like last summer's flowers.

Write when and for how long or how much it suits you each time. If you are a person who responds well to a scheduled activity, by all means put it in your schedule. If not—and I think this is preferable—let it be spontaneous. Whatever works for you at the time is best.

Of course, if you are going through a specific illness, such as a surgical procedure, you may have a lot of time for reflection and writing during your recuperation period. Don't waste it watching reruns on TV. You will find much more interesting material inside yourself.

In addition to keeping your

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 72

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# Retreat

JENNIFER LOUDEN

Each of us has a personal periodic, an internal tide, an instinctual cyclical rhythm that alternates between an accomplishing, energetic, doing time in which you engage with the world, dig ditches, get degrees, bake your ideas, and sell them, and a retreating, reflective, being time in which you detach from the world, stare out the window at the rain, plant fat spring bulbs, and breast-feed your imagination. When we do not value or attend to the retreating cycle as much as we do the accomplishing cycle, we betray our basic rhythm and risk becoming walking zombies, with no life to speak of. We have not allowed time to replenish our inner world. As May Sarton wrote in *Journal of a Solitude*, to do without solitude “is even worse:”

I lose my center. I feel dispersed, scattered, in pieces. I must have time alone in which to mull over any encounter, and to extract its juices, its essence, to understand what has really happened to me as a consequence of it.

Right now, too few of us are tending to our cycle of being, of going within. We are suffering from a starving soul. By not recognizing and feeding our longing for retreat, by not declaring “I need to do nothing” or “I need to knit or clean my closet or simply be alone,” we diminish ourselves. By believing that if we take time for ourselves, our kids will starve, the cat will die, or our company will go bankrupt, we starve our lives into efficient skeletons. One question almost always presents the biggest obstacle: “Do I believe I am worthy of a retreat? Is all this fuss necessary? Can’t I just take a pill?”

You, me, each of us must value the retreating, going-within cycle as much as the accomplishing, out-in-the-world cycle. Can you believe that being

alone for a day is as important as going to work? Do you dare believe that making retreat a regular part of your life is as important as making a million dollars?

To come to this new belief, we must learn the value in retreating. We must discover firsthand how solitude can allow us to locate our juice, our authenticity. Marion Woodman noted in her interview in *The Feminine Face of God*,

One of the problems women have today is that they are not willing to find the river in their own life and surrender to its current. They are not willing to spend time discovering themselves, because they feel they are being selfish. They grow up trying to please other people and they rarely ask themselves, “Who am I?” Rarely. And then life starts to feel meaningless because they live in terms of pleasing, rather than in terms of being who they are.

Since I was little, I have imagined canoeing down the underground river, the aquifer that runs under northern Florida. Finding the river of your life is as mysterious and mythical as imagining. To locate our personal rivers, we must be willing, as Kim Chernin writes in her book *Reinventing Eve*, to “peel back layer after layer of pretense, compliance and accommodation so that I could stand naked before myself as a woman.”

Finding your river is a subtle and maddening undertaking, like trying to shape iron with tweezers. It is also terrifying work, for it requires surrender. Not only do you have to dig underground to find the water (which many of us believe does not exist), but you also have to jump into that murky water and swim! My friend Jeanie asked, “Why are you calling it a retreat? What are you running away from?” Finding your own underground never means running away





TSJ/GRIFFIN BERNARD

from the external, “the torrent of daily have-tos,” as my sister-in-law Diana names it. It is a running toward yourself, toward a place (it can be both internal and external) of seclusion, privacy and contemplation.

We can see this in Kim Chernin’s account of her own initiatory retreat in *Reinventing Eve*. She was bored and restless, depressed and despondent, and she had driven up into the mountains above Dublin, stopping at an old estate she had never visited before.

An old man came out of the gatehouse; he was surprised to see me, touched his finger to his cap, showed me the bell on the gate. A scrappy dog growled and came toward me, tugging at his rope. I had several cookies in my pocket. I threw one to him... The gate swung back a few feet; I walked through and turned to wave at the old man, who locked it behind me.... From the moment the old man disappeared into the gatehouse again, I felt a panic of loneliness... I wanted to run back to the car and head out for Dublin...

She went forward with her walk and experienced a transcendent time out of time in which she grasped that nature, “which I’d always imaged as a brute force, had some kind of vivid life to it.” She had to face a question: was it possible that her rational world view, “everything I had been told about the universe was simply an assumption, a style of perception, rather than truth?”

It was too late to flee from the place. I, the rationalist, was in the grip of extreme emotion. I could fight it off, run away or surrender and find out what it meant. I found myself before an immense tree. Near the bottom it had been split almost in two by lightning, and in the charred, concave base, a brilliant green and yellow lichen was growing. I stared at the tree, a natural altar. I tried to distract myself with this thought, and meanwhile my body was doing something peculiar. I noticed it, thought I should fight it, was doing it anyway. Then it was done. There I was, on the ground in front of the tree. Tears streaming down my face. I, raised in a family of Marxist atheists, down on my knees, worshipping?

Chernin’s story is echoed again and again in women’s stories of retreat. Separated from what is normal, we are brought to our knees before all that is holy and meaningful.

We may retreat for many reasons throughout our lives, to reflect on our lives, to celebrate our wisdom, to mourn, to create, to recuperate, but the underlying one is to recontact our purpose in life. Life becomes dull and meaningless not because of what we are doing, but because we don’t know why we are doing it, because it has no resonance with our inner world. “I believe what a woman resents is not so much giving herself in pieces as giving herself purposelessly. What we fear is not so much that our energy may be leaking away through small outlets as that it may be going ‘down the drain,’” wrote Anne Morrow Lindbergh in 1955 in *Gift from the Sea*. “Every person, especially every woman, should be alone sometime during the year, some part of

each week, and each day. How revolutionary that sounds...”

A retreat is the restorative by which you walk away from being a woman who exists only in relationship to others and walk toward a self that relishes and enjoys her relationships because she has a strong center from which to relate. Creating your own retreat allows you to encounter your deepest needs, feelings, and impulses *away from the voices and needs of others*.

But here we get trapped in the feminine crucible. Here is the place where the social messages about what makes a good woman, the economic realities, the inner beliefs of worth, and the family responsibilities meet the call to retreat with a heart-wrenching, forward-momentum-stopping crash. A retreat simply feels impossible to do. For some of us, even an hour alone in the bathtub feels like a hopeless desire. It can take massive amounts of courage to believe that you must have time to muse, to fling open your dusty hope chest crammed with notions, recollections, fancies. To picture your future. To pore over and release the past. To retreat. “Women are, by nature, disposed to relationship and connectedness; yet true relationship cannot be embraced until a woman has a deep sense of her ‘at-one-ment’.” Without this essential independence from all roles and bonds, she is a potential victim for servitude,” Marion Woodman cautions in her book *Dancing in the Flames*, co-written with Elinor Dickson. To be connected with and to nurture others is a precious, delightful, integral part of our lives. We are constantly giving in a personal or emotional way. We want to do so, some of us *must* do so, but we also must take time to be in solitude, to find and tend our selves, or we risk becoming ensnared in a tyranny of relationships, unable to locate our authentic core. When this happens, we risk losing not only the meaning in our lives but our very selves, the deep-rooted, innermost knowledge of who we are and why we are here. •

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# Letting in Love

BRADFORD KEENEY

An awakened heart is a necessary condition for being able to receive the light.

Consider choosing three days where you pay special attention to any appropriate living creature, whether it be your spouse, parent, child, friend, pet or plant. Imagine that these are the last three days you will be with them. Tell them that you are taking three days to conduct a spiritual experiment and that they are not to have any unnecessary concern about your actions. Repeat this every other month until it is a bimonthly holy day for you. Watch how the practice of love's actions helps deepen your preparation to encounter the light and enrich your every day.

The value of practicing the love that opens your heart is illustrated by the story of a solitary dog who spent the last three days of his life being awakened by the generosity of a lonely man.

One day while walking through a park, an old crippled dog came up to an old man who had never experienced love in his entire life. The dog caught his attention by speaking these words, "I am old and crippled. Children don't like to look at me because I look so sick and pitiful. I only have three days left to live, and more than anything else in the world, I long to



have the experience of being loved by my master. I want this so much that I have learned how to speak so someone could hear my request. I have searched the world for a person who would understand my situation, and I think you understand what it is like not to have love in your life. Would you please grant me my wish that you be a good master to me in my last three days? You don't have to really love me. It would be fine for you to pretend that you love me."

The old man was moved by the sincerity of the dog's request. Without deliberation he told that dog that he would give him the best three days of his life. Off they went on a great three-day adventure. The old man took him to a restaurant and fed him a delicious steak, showed him all the beautiful places in the park, and took him to the spots that had unique odors and smells. The old creature was permitted to sleep on his master's bed, and throughout the night the man rubbed his belly and sang him soothing songs.

At the end of the three days, the dog said to the old man, "You have truly cared for me, and I am most grateful. You have enabled me to open my heart. For the first time, I know what it feels like to love someone." The old man began weeping and replied, "I, too, have learned to love and have never felt more

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 79



# Find True Healing

AN INTERVIEW WITH JEAN SHINODA BOLEN  
BY MARY NURRIESTEARN

In order for us to truly live, we have to heal our body mind so that we unfold our whole potential as loving human beings. Jean Shinoda Bolen is a gifted healer of the psyche. The metaphors and love in her books provide a healing context for readers. When we decided to explore healing in this issue, we knew that Dr. Bolen could contribute a depth of understanding about healing, in general and about healing of the psyche, in particular.

**PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION:** *Let's begin by discussing the nature of healing.*

JEAN SHINODA BOLEN: What comes to mind are the similarities between healing a broken bone and healing a broken heart. In healing a broken heart, the

need is to recover and love again, and the need of a broken bone is for it to become strong enough to support you again. Healing is about the capacity to function again. Something had to happen to get in the way of a natural functioning, whether it is the ability to walk or an ability to love. We come into the world with these capacities. When something goes wrong, people go to physicians or healers of all kinds. I don't consider myself as healing anyone, any more than I consider the orthopedic surgeon as healing a broken bone. Nature or God or something beyond the physician is the healer. The healer helps clear the way for what is natural to occur. The things in the way are the problems that people come with. One of the tasks in

TS/JED SHARE



Jean Shinoda Bolen, M.D., is a Jungian analyst and clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco. She is the author of "Goddesses in Everywoman;" she is an internationally renowned lecturer and workshop leader. Her other books include "The Tao of Psychology," "Gods in Everyman," "Close to the Bone," and "Crossing to Avalon." A fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, Dr. Bolen has also served as chairperson of the Council of National Affairs of the APA and as a board member of the Ms. Foundation for Women. Dr. Bolen lives in Mill Valley, California.



psychological healing is to remove the contaminants. You can't heal any part of the body when there is an infected foreign object in it, such as a splinter. Psychologically, the contamination is often an attitude that has been imposed on the psyche of the person, either a condemnation, a belittlement, an action that implied that this person is worthless.

***So healing is a restoration of functioning, and the process includes removing some type of contamination.***

Yes, some contamination or some kind of limitation. Many people who come to see me had a natural growth impeded. Each person has their own seed of what they are supposed to develop into. The strength or the shape of that quality will be distorted, as a plant is affected if it does not receive sunshine, water and good soil. In a healing relationship, the person who provides the environment doesn't fix the person, but provides the equivalent of a green thumb. We attend to the person just as we attend to a plant. We give it energy and love. We notice whether there is enough food and water. It is natural for a healthy person, psyche, plant or bone to grow if the conditions allow it to happen.

***In healing the physical body, many times we do nothing and the natural healing process occurs. While sometimes we need a bone set or something***

***to be surgically removed, often our body heals itself. Is that also true in psychological healing?***

Time has a positive effect on most broken hearts. Time heals loss and pain. Though time and nature may heal the wound in the body and the wound in the psyche, sometimes body and psyche grow a layer over a festering wound that becomes toxic to the person. Childhood abuse or grief that is never expressed, or secrets that made you feel like you didn't deserve to be part of the human race, contain elements that are like a covering over a big infected boil. The body makes an effort to ward it off, yet the infection saps the person until it is opened and drained. A lot of emotional dysfunction needs to have the equivalent of opening the wound and letting it drain so that the person remembers the pain and experiences the feelings of grief and betrayal and shame. The wound is cleansed by the accepting presence of that other person who doesn't recoil.

***How important is desire to heal to the healing process?***

It varies a lot. In physical illness the body's physiology has the capacity to respond in a positive way, to heal itself. The working of a healthy immune system is a natural response of the body to heal itself. If the person's body and psyche have been depleted over time, if the psyche is depressed and the person feels hopeless or wants to die, the body's response is affected. There is a psyche-soma connection.

***Doesn't it take a certain amount of willingness to engage these processes, to seek out support, and to undergo potentially uncomfortable experiences that can be aspects of the healing journey?***

A more old-fashioned term would be the will to live or the desire to survive. When people are lost in the wilderness or are going through a physical or psychological process, a positive commitment to stay the course does matter. Courage and conviction and desire have something to do with the hope that you can affect your personal fate. Sometimes, that is the missing quality that needs to be sparked before the rest can happen.

***That quality can be provided through the presence of someone else. The physician or healer can hold that courage and faith when the person isn't able to.***

That is a major quality determining the effectiveness of a physician or psychotherapist. Of course, at certain places in the journey, the patient is going to get discouraged. The hope that something can be effective has a major effect on the psyche and in turn on the body. Andrew Weil described the power of doctors to encourage people or to hex them. What the person in authority says about the likelihood of your recovery makes an enormous difference to most people. Bernie Siegel speaks about exceptional patients, the ones who say, "I am not going to let authority tell me what my fate is going to be; I have something to do with my own fate." Exceptional patients have a survival quality that people have who make it through difficult situations.

*They have the capacity to stay connected with courage and faith.*

It also makes a tremendous difference whether or not you are supported on that journey. People who run marathons talk about running into the wall, that place where it seems too painful to keep on going, and yet you only have a couple more miles to go. Knowledge about the wall helps, being aware that this is a natural part of the journey. During labor, women know that the most painful part is just before the baby comes out. Fortunately for most women, the process is beyond will power. The baby is going to come out. The marathon racer facing more pain can give up and say "I quit." There isn't an instinct that is going to deliver the runner to the end of the line. That is true of the physical and psychological healing journey most of the time. The body can pull the person through, in spite of the person, sometimes. But most of the time, giving up and feeling hopeless affects what the body will do. People who believe in them and love them who say whatever helps that person keep on keeping on, for as long as it takes to make it to this particular destination, make a large difference.

*Does fear accompany chronic or potentially fatal conditions and does addressing fear turn the tide in healing?*

It varies a great deal. Some people don't feel much fear under circumstances where most others would. There is a psychological type who deals

with what is in the present and doesn't have the intuition, imagination or worrywart element that anticipates the worst. The more you get out of the present moment and into the dire-what-can-happen-next, the more you are not present to deal with what is right now. Feeling overwhelmed by fear of what is coming is a real problem across the board. A person who has stage fright may avoid giving the performance that would allow them to really express some major gift, for example.

*In your book "Close to the Bone," you talked about the impact of potentially terminal illnesses. It seemed that people who came through those illnesses faced the fears of death and loss such that fear no longer had the power it can have over those of us who haven't faced a potentially terminal illness. Does something happen in that process that changes people's relationship with fear, rendering it less powerful?*

There is a considerable range of responses to approaching death. A great number of people who approach death do come to some sense of peace about it being a transition. Sometimes, people live a lot longer than expected because they are not ready to cross over yet. Will keeps them on this side until something shifts. Often, something is going on with people who take a long time, when doctors expect they wouldn't be around long. Great spiritual and psychological work is done in the last phase of the body being alive.

*In that sense, death is a time of healing.*

The period before dying can be an enormous time of healing for people who felt they were not loved as infants and children, *if* they die with people around who love them. If they grew up with a sense people liked them only if they were productive or attractive, to find at the end of life when they aren't productive or attractive and are helpless that they are loved heals something that goes back to the beginning of their lives. Also, people who realize they are going to die soon make amends, forgive others and try to heal relationships that have been estranged.

Jane Wheelwright, a Jungian analyst, wrote a book, *Death of a Woman*, about 20 years ago. She describes an analysis that took place over the last

year or so of a woman's life. The dying woman was relatively young. The question is why anyone would want to do an analysis if they know they are dying. Jane went to her house for sessions after the woman was no longer able to come to Jane's office. It was clear that she was working on deep psychological issues and that her psyche was engaged in resolving things until the end. I believe that we are spiritual beings on a human path and that we come into life as a stage where things can be encountered. There is a relevancy to doing this kind of work up until the very end.

***You mentioned that forgiveness is an aspect of deep psychological or spiritual healing. Talk about forgiveness as an aspect of healing.***

Forgiveness and compassion are essential elements in psychological healing, although the profession of psychiatry and psychology rarely uses these words. When you go into the painful places, in childhood and adulthood, where you were disappointed or betrayed or incested, and express it to someone who receives it compassionately, you begin to be compassionate with yourself. Most people who have been treated badly have an attitude toward themselves which is not compassionate. It is as if a part of the person holds onto the misguided notion that if she were treated badly, she must have deserved it, or something irrational like that. When you tell your story and it is received with compassion and understanding for you the sufferer, you start to shift your own attitude towards yourself as you realize you didn't deserve this, but it happened. In talking, you begin to understand who these people were, what was happening and what their limitations were. That awareness leads to compassion and forgiveness.

You need to let go of the wounds of your childhood in order to grow into your own life. People who dwell on their less than happy childhoods are stuck there. An old energy has a hold on them. They define themselves in terms of what happened in the past, and they haven't grown in some crucial way. A mature person doesn't deny the rough spots and the bad things that happened, and in fact, because of it usually has compassion for other people. But a mature person doesn't feel entitled

because of their suffering. They go on. Things happen, they get slighted, somebody does something intrusive or whatever, but it isn't amplified by the past. It is just what it is. They deal with it and go on.

***Fear causes us to miss the present because of the influence of an imaginary future. Here is influence from another direction, from the past which is contaminating to living in the present. Can we facilitate healing so that we feel whole and live in the present? Can we communicate with or be guided by this healing process?***

Because I am a Jungian analyst I think in terms of the archetypal. Archetypes are a way of saying that there are elements inherent in us that we come with. One of the things I like about the Jungian psychological framework is that there is an assumption that we each have a center of meaning or an archetypal Self and that we are inherently a species for whom meaning matters. Meaning has to do with why we are here. There is a spiritual or divine element in us and in the universe. Archetypes don't just *exist* in us. They are *shared* with all human beings. Healing involves being in relationship with this archetypal Self, which provides us with a sense of interconnectedness and wholeness. It is in us all. It varies, but most people have an inherent sense that I am here for a reason, my life has some purpose, and I need to discover what it is. That is the individuation journey. One way to define psychological impairment is that depression or anxiety is getting in the way of a person's sense of having a purpose and of being on course.

***How do you define a true healer?***

My comments are restricted to what I know, which is about health professionals who are also healers. I think of such people as needing to be skilled and proficient at what they do professionally, and beyond that, have a love for their patients, an attitude of service, and a personal sense of the sacred. Such people are not arrogant. A healer is someone who can help the patient receive the invisible but real energies of healing. There is trust, an infusion of love, an absence of fear.

***How do we find a true healer when we need one?***

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# Spiritual Heroes

T H O M A S   C R U M

**H**eroes. They provide us with pictures and possibilities. In short, they inspire us and keep our sights high. And if our heroes are real enough, and our actions are aligned enough, our dreams can become reality. It's like a cosmic internet powered by intention and consciousness. No batteries required.

Our heroes change as we do. We become less interested in simple physical prowess and bravery and are more drawn to heroes who embody commitment, passion and service. As I grew out of childhood, my heroes were harder to come by. At least the live ones. Were they no longer making heroes like they used to, or did I have higher standards? How wonderful it would have been to have listened to Socrates challenge his countrymen, to have witnessed Michelangelo on the scaffolding, studied under Einstein, served

under Jefferson or Gandhi. They ignite dreams of our highest selves and inspire us to take action on those visions.

Are there heroes today? Must we look only to the past for great teachers? Is greatness only bestowed on a person after his death, when his contribution has passed the test of time and memories of his basic human frailties have faded? Doesn't it take greater awareness to honor the giants of today because their significance is often disguised by the typical eccentricities of human nature, hiding their true value from all but the most perceptive? Could it be that a paint-mixer for Michelangelo went unaware of his proximity to greatness, too busy judging his boss's moodiness? Buddha must have belched on occasion or forgotten a disciple's name or misplaced his begging bowl. How many times have we missed a Buddha in

TS/RICK RAYMOND



our own midst because we perceived basic human flaws as a denial of greatness? The only heroes who are not vulnerable to human nature are made of stone, and stand motionless while pigeons strut on their shoulders.

As we grow from childhood to a more experienced and wrinkled existence, the qualities that we demand from our heroes change. Rather than looking for fast feet and a strong body, we look for a depth of compassion, wisdom and inner peace.

If I had the opportunity to sit at the foot of any contemporary hero to learn the art and practice of compassion, there would be no question as to my choice. It would be the Dalai Lama. I had long hoped to meet the exiled Tibetan leader but had never given the idea too much energy, appreciating the globe-trotting schedule and necessary insulation from the public that any world leader and Nobel laureate requires these days. Just another dream. But once again, I stand in awe of the power of dreams becoming reality.

I had the great fortune to give a presentation to a conference of the World Presidents Organization in Bali. Halfway through the conference I had taken a day off to spend some time in the jungle of the less populated island of Lombok. When I got back, I noticed the blinking message light on the phone in my room. Fred Chaney, one of the main organizers of the event, was informing me that the Dalai Lama had recently confirmed his acceptance of a longstanding invitation and had arrived at the hotel. It had been agreed that His Holiness would co-lead a session on meditation the next morning with Mitsuo Aoki, a Japanese-American philosopher-priest in his eighties and (gulp!) me! Did I have the time to meet privately with the Dalai Lama at 5 p.m.? *What?* Let me hear that message again. A dream come true, a private meeting with the Dalai Lama! But *co-leading* a session? What an honor. What an opportunity. What a *crisis*. I checked my watch. It was 4:45 p.m. This is the kind of timing I love. No time to worry or to over prepare. Just get centered, breathe and respond. No time to consider what to wear, what to say. No time to plan how to impress His Holiness on the one hand, and in so doing, miss the entire moment on the other. I dashed out in my flowered shirt (the bargain warehouse variety

from Hawaii), shorts, flip-flops and wraparound sunglasses.

There were two monks in orange robes standing outside the Dalai Lama's door when I arrived. The gentleness and joy in their faces said what translations could not. They were happy to see me. Maybe they just liked my shirt.

We bowed, shook hands, and one of them said, "His Holiness will be with you in a moment."

A little time to spare and the first pang of anxiety hit me. What was the protocol? Shoes or no shoes? Take those stupid sunglasses off! Should I have brought a gift? How should I address him? Just as I was about to inquire, the door opened. The monk in the doorway bowed and stood to the side as a beaming face behind him engulfed me with love and compassion.

"Welcome," His Holiness said, holding out his hands for mine, as if he were my long lost grandfather. Of course, he kind of was.

He took my hand in both of his and bowed, looking at me with kindness that melted every residue of nervousness inside me. He led me by the hand into the room and into a chair. Placing his chair within a foot of mine, he sat down, leaned forward with his forearms informally collapsed on his knees, his smiling face alert and excited, as if he were visiting with a beloved relative, keen to hear every word of his adventures. I felt affirmed and acknowledged, not through words, but because he was fully present with me—not with his thoughts, his plans or his opinions—but with me, the guy from Colorado with the loud shirt. And to be honest, from that moment on I can't remember a thing we talked about. Only that it was a profound time of peace and connection.

After a time, Fred Chaney and Mitsuo Aoki appeared in the room to discuss the next morning's session. We all looked to the Dalai Lama, but his happy expression said it all. Whatever we decided was fine with him.

Being quicker of thought than I, Mitsuo took the reins and suggested that he could make some opening remarks and then introduce the Dalai Lama. After the Dalai Lama had spoken, His Holiness would turn it over to me to do whatever Colorado ski bums like me would do in such a situa-

tion. Everyone seemed to approve of the concept except me. I took a deep breath and spoke.

"Excuse me, Your Holiness, but as much as I am honored by this opportunity, I have considerations. You see, I've been involved in the practice of meditation for only twenty years. I am a novice (sniff). You've been involved in the practice your entire lifetime, and thousands of life times prior to this one. I am deeply honored to be in your presence and that is enough. Anything I say may be unworthy. I do not need to do anything. And besides (insert whining music here), I think..."

It took only one penetrating look, a fatherly smile, and the wave of an arm for His Holiness to quiet my ramblings, dispel my fears, and confirm the original plan. I was in awe of the faith he had in the outcome without even knowing what Mitsuo or I was going to say or do. I had images of puncturing the spiritual balloon of Tibetan Buddhism for years to come. I saw myself gabbing on about how little white guys meditate, while long deceased Tibetan monks turned over in their graves out of fear that somebody might think that they approved of this insanity. But my fears dissolved instantaneously as the Dalai Lama continued to beam at me with confidence and trust.

It was only that evening as I was going to bed that the worries began anew. But with each fret, I would recall the Dalai Lama's face—relaxed, compassionate and full of joy. And I had to relax and let go. What else could I do?

In the morning I met Mitsuo a half hour early to go over the setup of the room. On the stage was a large circular dais for the Dalai Lama, with a simple chair on either side for Mitsuo and myself. Mitsuo had felt that this would be the best arrangement, and I concurred, as it allowed the center of attention to be on the Dalai Lama. When the audience was filled to capacity, a spokesperson informed the audience of the proper protocol. The arrival of His Holiness would be announced just prior to his entering the room. Everyone was to stand quietly until he had entered and sat. I noticed two men quickly climbing on the stage to replace the dais with a chair.

"What's the problem?" I overheard one of the organizers nervously ask one of the men.

"Oh, His Holiness has asked that he not be put above the two others, as he never wants to be treated in a superior manner if at all possible."

"Of course," I thought, seeing that grandfatherly image of him again in my mind.

"His Holiness, the Dalai Lama," came the announcement.

Everyone stood up quickly with hushed excitement. Mitsuo and I stood by the door, ready to follow him up on stage after he was seated. But, as soon as he entered, he went right to us with that relaxed, almost sheepish grin, and those ever-kind eyes. Taking each of us by the hand, he led us onto the stage with him. There we were—the revered Tibetan monk, an elderly Japanese priest, and a little guy from Colorado—traipsing across the stage, hand in hand. The Dalai Lama had made sure that, despite our differences, we were on the same boat.

Mitsuo, a warm and energetic man who works extensively with the terminally ill, gave some eloquent comments about the auspicious nature of the occasion. He then began to introduce His Holiness. All eyes shifted to the Dalai Lama, who was leaning forward and looking at the audience as if he had just found a precious flower and didn't want to miss any of its beauty.

As Mitsuo began to describe the grace and dignity of His Holiness, the Dalai Lama reached into his robe and took out a handkerchief. He turned to the side discreetly to blow his nose, unaware that his microphone was directly beneath his nose. The magnified snorting that followed resounded through the room like a cow in labor. The crowd, not having been informed of any nose-blowing protocol, sat in polite but embarrassed silence. The introduction continued, and amazingly so did the Dalai Lama's nose-clearing. And then suddenly, after one more foghorn blast, His Holiness realized that the thunder he was hearing was his own. He slowly, with his head still tilted, turned to the audience very sheepishly and broke into a face-consuming grin. He looked like a little kid caught in a peekaboo game.

The audience laughed uproariously, releasing all of its pent-up anxiety. Without a word spoken, His Holiness had created instant rapport. The day before, he had demonstrated trust and compassion

for me. Now he was demonstrating the love he had for himself.

His Holiness spoke of the importance of meditation, and the daily practices of kindness and gratefulness, a lesson he had already taught me several times over. As I watched him speak so simply and profoundly, I recognized a living example of a truly centered man who walks his talk. A man who has not had it easy—whose people have been slaughtered by the hundreds of thousands, whose six thousand monasteries have been brutally destroyed, and who has been in exile for four decades. Literally, here was a man without a country. And yet he possessed no apparent hatred, no animosity toward the Chinese. He knew intuitively that no value can be added by such a reaction, and it would be himself who suffered most if he were to justify anger and resentment in the place of kindness.

Eventually, it was my time to speak. I had been so immersed in the quality of His Holiness's being that the ego-demons of fear were cleansed. It was easy to be centered in his presence. I stood up and shared two stories that I felt were embodied by the Dalai Lama.

The first concerned an arrogant sixteenth-century samurai. In the strict class system of ancient Japan, any show of disrespect to a samurai was met, at the minimum, with a scolding or, at worst, immediate beheading. This particular samurai had been wandering through the village, growing increasingly irritated as he heard endless glowing acknowledgments of a revered monk named Takuan.

Finally, the jealous samurai shouted, "Where is the monk? We'll just see what he has to teach me!"

The villagers said that he lived in the forest high on a mountain above the village. The samurai proceeded to climb to the mountain. When he reached the top, he searched the forest until he finally came upon a monk who was sitting quietly under a tree.

"So, you're the monk they talk about. Well, monk, tell me the difference between heaven and hell."

The little monk looked up at him and said with a smile, "Get out of here. You disgust me. You're despicable. You have no right to even call yourself a samurai."

Enraged at the monk's evident display of disrespect, the samurai drew his sword and was about to cut the monk's head off when the monk calmly raised his hand and said, "That is hell."

Now at this the samurai dropped his sword. In such awe that this little monk had the courage and the willingness to end his life in order to teach, he dropped to his knees.

As the samurai bowed in gratitude, the monk smiled once more, raised his hand, and said softly, "And that is heaven."

I looked at the Dalai Lama, who had been chuckling and nodding his head with appreciation for the story.

"I'd like to share one more story that was said to have taken place in your homeland of Tibet."

The story took place during Alexander the Great's reign over the Asian Empire. The lieutenants of Alexander's army had scoured the countryside, requiring all the religious factions to pledge their allegiance to the empire. Upon their return the lieutenants reported to their general that everyone had pledged allegiance except for one little monk who lived high in a mountain village. Enraged, the general donned his armor and rode his horse at top speed to the village, where he found the little monk meditating under a tree.

He jumped off his horse, clambered over to the monk, and looked down on him, "Do you realize *who I am*? Do you know that I could draw my sword and cut off your head without blinking my eye!"

The little monk looked up at the ferocious, pompous general with compassion. "And do you know who I am? Do you know that I could have you draw your sword and cut off my head without blinking *my* eye?"

When I finally hit my little bell to signal the time for silent meditation, the image of the centered man sitting next to me appeared in my mind. Here also was such a man, unblinking in the face of death, not staring down his enemy with defiance but gently disarming him with the strength of his compassion. Even in my most outrageous dreams I can't come up with heroes like this. •

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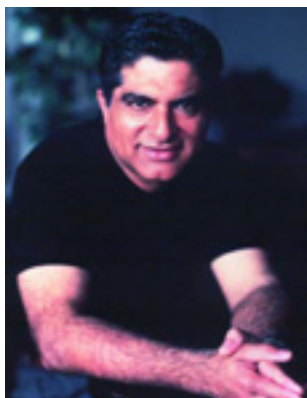
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# What is Personal Transformation

AN INTERVIEW WITH  
DEEPAK CHOPRA AND RICHARD MOSS

*Deepak Chopra, M.D., is a writer, lecturer and physician. He is the author of sixteen books and thirty tape series, including "Ageless Body, Timeless Mind," "Quantum Healing," and "Return of the Rishi." He has made five television specials for PBS, including "Body, Mind, and Soul," and most recently "Alchemy." Since 1996 he has*

*headed the Chopra Center for Well Being in La Jolla, California. He lives in La Jolla with his wife, Rita.*



*Richard Moss, M.D. After a short general practice, he experienced life-changing realizations that led him to his true calling: the exploration of spiritual awakening and its integration into daily life. His books include "The I That Is We," "The Black Butterfly," and "The Second Miracle." For over twenty years, Richard has worked*

*with groups, helping people throughout the world to transform their lives. He lives in Oakhurst, California with his wife and children.*

RICHARD MOSS: The words, "personal transformation" are increasingly used in the community of people seeking psychological and spiritual healing and exploration, but there isn't general agreement on what the words mean. To some people it has to do with personal improvement. To others, like myself, it has to do with a fundamental transformation in the very structure of consciousness. What does personal transformation mean to you?

DEEPAK CHOPRA: I am glad you asked the question like you did, referring to the structure of consciousness. Like many people of my generation, I was exposed to *Vedanta* in India during my growing up years. We were brought up with a vocabulary that laid out a map for the transformation of consciousness. In that sense, what I say in this interview is not original at all.

When you study physics, you've got to learn the

vocabulary that physicists use. The same is true if you want to understand the structure of consciousness. People before us have traveled this road; they laid out a map and established a vocabulary. If you understand that vocabulary, you can understand what transformation of consciousness means. This is not the only vocabulary. Many vocabularies can be used to explore maps, and many maps can be used to get to the same place. If I am driving from Boston to New York, I use a road map; if I go by ship, I use another map; if I fly, I use yet another map. The maps explore certain types of territory, but they can all lead to the same destination.

I was brought up to think of transformation of consciousness in a certain sequential manner. I was told that consciousness has different states of awareness. Each state of awareness results in a certain kind of behavior for the human nervous system, and each state of consciousness creates its own physiology. It is



I am not the same physical body that I was ten years ago so I can't be my body. I am not the same mind that I was ten years ago, hopefully it is more mature, so I can't be my mind. I am not my emotional states because those come and go all the time. I am the witness of all that and the witness of all that is not a person, it is a universal being and I am that universal being.—Deepak Chopra

not physiology that creates consciousness; rather consciousness uses the nervous system to create its own physiology. As a result of that physiology, your perception of your experience of the physical world is altered. What you behold with your physical eyes is a function of the state of awareness you are in, and as that state of awareness changes what you behold changes. Ken Wilber said, "We can see with the eyes of the flesh or we can see with the eyes of the mind or we can see with the eyes of the soul." Most of us, who have not explored the realms of experience of our consciousness, see with the eyes of the flesh and sometimes with the eyes of the mind, but never with the eyes of the soul. William Blake said so beautifully, "We are led to believe a lie when we see *with* and not *through* the eyes."

In my spiritual indoctrination, from the earliest time of my life, I heard my parents and grandparents use the word *maya* for the artifacts of our perceptual experience. Every time they looked at the world they said, "This is maya." There was a deeper reality, which they referred to as *Brahma*. I became familiar with those words early in life, but it wasn't until many years later that I began to understand they weren't speaking metaphorically: they were speaking literally. As we shift from sleep to dreams to waking states of consciousness, reality shifts. Reality is infinitely flexible and subject to revision. I heard a phrase over and over early in childhood from the great sage Vasishtha, the incarnation of God himself. The great sage Vasishtha told his disciple Rama, "Infinite worlds come and go in the vast expanse of my consciousness; they are like moats of dust, dancing in a beam of light that's shining through a hole in my roof." Those words are beautiful, and I didn't realize until later that they were real; they were not a metaphor for

reality. As our consciousness undergoes a structural change, reality shifts because reality is not some external thing. We are specks of awareness that project our own universe and then experience it.

RICHARD MOSS: I am glad that you are talking about the origins of your work and early life. You are articulating a new way of understanding the Vedic and Vedantic tradition. If I take my life in comparison, I don't remember the richness of spirituality in my early life. In my life, and I think this is typical of many westerners, I didn't understand the lineage of my religion as a phenomenon for expression of consciousness. We don't understand the metaphors in Christianity or Judaism as maps or metaphors for deep states of consciousness. For myself, there was a deep sensitivity bordering on suffering which caused me to seek various disciplines and practices. At the age of 30, I had a spontaneous experience that you could call a fundamental change of consciousness. For the first time, I begin to understand what the teachings from the Judeo-Christian lineage were about. I became hungrily interested in *Vedanta*. I read Shankara's *Crest Jewel of Discrimination*, and it made sense to me. I read Walt Whitman, and suddenly I was in the state of consciousness of the poet. I was transformed in a way. It seems self involved to discuss this, but it doesn't make sense to readers unless they understand that this isn't theory.

My perception of reality changed. I didn't know that at one level of consciousness you have one body, and when that level of consciousness is changed, you have another body. Yet my body changed, my capacity to perceive changed, my intuition and my energy changed. When a westerner comes to this lineage of teachings, most of the time

we aren't coming because we want to change consciousness, but because we want to be happier, more successful, and want to escape suffering. It is the ego who wants these things, and it is the ego who generates the suffering. There is a fundamental paradox in how people come to spiritual work.

DEEPAK CHOPRA: You are right. You are one of those people who came from the need to alleviate suffering and found that the only way to do that was to go to a level which is beyond the ego, which gives birth to all suffering. Suffering brought you to a spiritual path. In many ways that is more credible than for someone like myself, who was brought up with the spiritual map being talked about all the time.

I, like you, went to medical school. I came to the west and got caught up in the rat race and stresses of a physician's life. It wasn't until I started the practice of meditation that those muffled learnings inside my consciousness from childhood returned and said, "This is what my parents and my grandparents were talking about." I went back to the same books I had seen in my house all the time, such as the *Crest Jewel of Discrimination* and the *Upanishads*. As consciousness began to slowly but definitely unfold these new experiences to me, I looked in books to find confirmation of what I was going through.

RICHARD MOSS: In my late twenties, each morning I read one of the *Yoga Sutras of Pantanjali* and then meditated, watching my breathing. Then I again read from the *Yoga Sutras of Pantanjali*. I didn't understand the terminologies, but into my subconscious came powerful images. One month before the major change of my life, a priest friend gave me the gospels. I had not read the gospels for many years. I re-read them and I found myself crying tears of recognition. Yet if I had tried to explain to my rational mind what was being affected, I would not have been able to convey it. When this change in my consciousness came, I found it difficult to pass through. I think this passage may be more difficult when there is no lineage to help you. Suddenly the gospels came to me, and I asked myself, "Who has lived this consciousness?"

Strange as it would seem, having been raised as a Jew, it was clear to me that this was the Christ consciousness. Christ lived this. Immediately, inside myself, something eased. I won't say that I relaxed because the stress of the event was awesome for me, but I did know that others had been there before.

The point I want to make is that we can follow a lineage and a teaching, but at a certain place, we enter into mysterious territory that is beyond any teaching, beyond any teacher. These teachings become powerful forces in our subconscious, but we enter something that no longer is attainable by our *effort*. I say this is because most people confuse personal transformation with making a personal *effort* through spiritual practices and psychotherapy. These have profound value and can be helpful, depending on how we define personal transformation. Is it improvement? Is it elimination of certain kinds of negative or destructive patterns of behavior? Or is there something in evolution itself, something given by nature, that the sages talk about, that isn't necessarily the creation of a man's *effort*, but something we can come toward if we meditate or pray sincerely. What I call deep transformation isn't a *willed* process. In fact, it was after I gave up and surrendered inside myself, that the real change came, after I realized that my seeking was between me and whatever was real.

DEEPAK CHOPRA: Yes, I agree. Even meditation is never *willed*; it is a process of *surrender*. Most people confuse meditation with concentration, when it is the ability to let go of everything, including concentration. It is the ability to go beyond the thinking process, to transcend it. Exploring those realms of consciousness is a process of total and ultimate surrender. The techniques and the disciplines are tools that help you go to a certain level where you can come to that place of surrender.

Every three months, I take four or five days and go into a silent retreat in some wilderness area, usually a rain forest or desert. About three years ago, I went to the rain forest of Costa Rica to be alone for three days. I didn't take books or writing material because that is not silence; that is having a conversation with the author. After one or two days, I got extremely restless. There was nothing I could do.

The restlessness passed, and I experienced a profound silence. The day I was leaving, I went to the airport and stayed at the hotel. There was only one book in the room, the Bible. I read the *Gospel of John* and it was like reading *Vedanta* for me. I was familiar with every word—the world was made into the flesh, I and my father are one, I am in you and you are in me, and greater works than these shall you do. I realized that Christ consciousness is what we are aspiring to and that Christ consciousness is a state of awareness that we go into. Christ wasn't about the crucifixion; he was about the resurrection and redemption. God-realized people are those who have achieved that state of Christ consciousness.

RICHARD MOSS: I find that what limits a person's capacity for love or recognition is what they are afraid to feel. Wherever I go, whomever I talk with, their ability to stay in a marriage, to work consciously, to be without fear and to experience joy depends upon what they have the capacity to feel. I've found in my work you have to address suffering, and the Vedantic tradition suggests that if you use these tools, primarily meditation, you can avoid the necessity of engaging a certain kind of suffering.

DEEPAK CHOPRA: The authors of *Vedanta*, and the great teachers of the *Upanishads* did not have the karmic load that we have. Those problems that are so pertinent to us probably were not important to the great Rishis. Buddha said, "You know the *Vedantas* very well, but I have to talk to these people who are suffering and how should I do it?" One of the greatest teachings is that if you want to go beyond suffering, you have to experience it. A sutra that I remember well is that nothing should be clung to as *me* or *mine*. A long time ago, I started practicing that in my daily activity, attempting to keep that in my awareness, because reality is the universal being, and the rest is just a kind of a game. Yet, to get to that stage, you have to go through your suffering. If you don't experience it, if you run away from it or avoid it, suffering ultimately manifests the states of hostility, fear, guilt and depression, which are nothing other than not having addressed the suffering when it was taking place. Remembered pain is hostility and anger, anticipated pain is fear and anxiety, pain directed at yourself is guilt. The depletion of energy with all of the above is depression. We have to be intimate with our suffering—express it to ourselves, share it with other people, release our pain and surrender.

## The Vedantic Map of Consciousness

AS EXPLAINED BY DEEPAK CHOPRA

I would like to articulate the map I was taught as a child. I was brought up to understand that physiology is a function of our state of consciousness, and reality is an expression of that, as well. The first state of consciousness is deep sleep, which is a dull state of consciousness. Brain waves at that state have a certain pattern. Blood pressure and pulse rate and all the biochemistry of the body are specific to the deep sleep state of awareness. Even though it is a dull state, it is a state of awareness because you are able to respond to stimulus such as loud noise. The second state of consciousness, as described in *Vedanta*, is the state of dreams in which you have a new kind of functioning in the nervous system. Brain wave patterns, blood pressure and biological functions operate differently in dreams as compared to deep sleep. The third state of consciousness, as described in *Vedanta*, is the ordinary waking state in which we experience the world through our sensory apparatus.

When we dream, the experience of the dream is real. It is after we wake from the dream to the waking state that we realize that what we were experiencing was actually our own state of awareness. The nervous system was translating that state of awareness into the dream. We don't realize in the waking state of awareness that what we experience as the physical world is similarly self-created. The consciousness is expressing itself in a certain way that allows our senses to selectively summon forth the data, out of what is essentially and erratically ambiguous quantum flow, and create the experience of material reality.

What exists out there is an immensity of consciousness and energy and

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information, or expressions of that consciousness. We selectively summon forth a little bit that our senses respond to, and suddenly we have the experience of objects separated in space and time to form a phenomena. This is not something external out there; it is the projection of our consciousness in the waking state. In the waking state of consciousness we experience the world as real, but it is *maya*. This is an artifact of our sensory experience.

When we wake up from this waking state, we will look at it as if it were another dream. Buddha, on his deathbed said, "This lifetime of ours is as transient as autumn clouds; to watch the birth and death of beings is like looking at the movements of a dance. A lifetime is like a flash of lightning in the sky rushing by, like a current rushing down a steep mountain." You can only see that when you wake up from the waking state of consciousness into the fourth stage, which is the awakened state, also referred to as transcendental consciousness or as a glimpse of the soul. You step out of the internal dialogue, and you witness for the first time.

The awakened state is a non-judgmental awareness that witnesses everything without being involved in it. There is present, for the first time, a deeper reality of the soul. Walt Whitman, when he first experienced the awakened state, said, "I must not be awake, for everything looks to me as it never did before or else I am awake for the first time and all that was before was just a deep sleep." The fourth stage of consciousness, which we can sometimes glimpse in deep meditation, creates its own physiology, brain-wave patterns, and deep state of restful alertness.

Cosmic consciousness, the fifth

RICHARD MOSS: This is the contribution of psychotherapies, even though they don't have a spiritual base. You have laid out this incredible map, but nobody can get to a state of cosmic consciousness if there is more truth in happiness and freedom and less truth in suffering. In other words, you used images of the flower and the sunset, but when you walk through a forest, there is glory in the dead trees lying on the ground as well. The cycle of life and death is part of the truth of life. You were talking about anxiety. Anxiety starts in the mind the moment there is a sense that I exist as a separate self and that I might not get something the separate self thinks it needs.

DEEPAK CHOPRA: In the end, it's all an artifact. That sense of a separate self is really an illusion because there is no separate self. It is easy to understand intellectually that what I call myself is a dynamic bundle of energy that is constantly transforming. I am not the same physical body that I was ten years ago, so I can't be my body. I am not the same mind that I was ten years ago; hopefully it is more mature, so I can't be my mind. I am not my emotional states because those come and go all the time. I am the witness of all that, and the witness of all that is not a person; it is a universal being and I am that universal being. Intellectually I can explain it, but experientially, if somebody meets me on the street and says, "You are a bloody fool," I suddenly start nursing my grievances. That is not me; that's my ego. This whole thing that I call myself is a bundle of memories and dreams and wishes I have created. By referring to myself through objects, I separate myself from my real inheritance, which is that I am a citizen of the cosmos.

RICHARD MOSS: That someone on the street can insult you and you contract is part of the beauty of this world. The creature in us structures our activities to seek pleasure and avoid pain. What structures the average human mind is the pursuit of happiness and fulfillment through jobs, appearance, money, whom we marry and so on. A higher level of consciousness structures the mind through the desire for truth, for true understanding. You can meditate, and you can have glimpses of cosmic consciousness, but you have to turn into this world. You can't say to the world, "Oh, the world is *maya*, it's a lie." You turn to your wife or husband and discover how much pain you can cause in them, and you have to take responsibility for it. Or you feel yourself contract because you lose a job, and you realize that you are identified once again with this separate self. If

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the first part of the process is ascending to this wonderful state of unitive consciousness, the process is not complete until we bring that into every corner of our human experience—how we raise our children, how we live, how we care for each other. We will be provoked to contract. To the extent that we are insecure we will be provoked into seeking until, we begin to realize, I can't speak for myself because I still contract, but a deep place inside of me realizes that I am not that one who contracts.

DEEPAK CHOPRA: We have to go through it in order to transcend it. And there is no hurry; we have all of eternity to recognize who we really are. What's the big hurry? Whatever we are doing at this moment is from the level of awareness we are in, and in that sense, we all do the best we can. It's okay to desire; it is okay to get insulted. I am reminded of the prayer of St. Augustine in which he says, "Lord give me chastity, give me continence, but not just now."

RICHARD MOSS: I am going to ask you a personal question. When a voice of doubt arises within you, what does it say to you so that you get to chance to reexamine yourself?

DEEPAK CHOPRA: Doubt talks to me in the following way, "Deepak, are you so sure of yourself that you know you have created this map in your head? In fact, this may be a meaningless universe, maybe it's a speck of dust in the mindless void and you are a capricious anomaly in a sea of space; there is really nothing there. This is all your creation and your own imagination; we are freak accidents of nature..." When that doubt comes, I look at the beauty and the grandeur and the magnificence of everything around me, including my own physical body. The human body is the most marvelous, grand and mysterious thing. A psalm in the Bible says, "Behold, I am made so fearfully and so mysteriously." A human body can thank God, play a piano, kill germs, make a baby, and track the movement of stars. When I see this absolute beauty, my doubt goes away.

RICHARD MOSS: You said there is no hurry, but you write so many books. Are you in a hurry?

DEEPAK CHOPRA: No. I have four or five books written now, waiting to be printed. My publisher said, "You've got a rage; you are cannibalizing yourself." Sometimes I feel this compulsive need to regurgitate every insight that I get. That is part of my addictive personality.

state, is the refined state of awareness in which we have the simultaneity of local and non-local awareness—local awareness being the experience of the objects of our perception and non-local awareness being simultaneously the experience of our own spirit. Local and non-local awareness or cosmic consciousness can occur in waking, dreaming and sleeping states. Judeo-Christian traditions refer to this as being *in* this world and not *of* it: you are in *both* places at the *same* time.

Cosmic consciousness is a wonderful experience. I have had it once in a while in long periods of retreat; even though your body is asleep, a part of you witnesses the body's deep sleep. Or your body mind is experiencing the dream state, and a part of you witnesses your body mind having the dream. When you are in the waking state, playing tennis, having a conversation or giving a lecture, a part of you witnesses your body mind going through that process. It is the complete simultaneity of this ever wakeful, eternal, immortal, infinite, unbounded ineffable spirit watching your body mind in the state of dreams, in the state of deep sleep, in the state of wakefulness.

In the experience of cosmic consciousness, there is a sudden appearance of synchronicities or meaningful coincidences because you are connected with the conscious energy field where everything is inseparably connected with everything else.

The sixth state is a further refinement of that. When you behold the object of your perception, you start to pierce the veil of *maya*. For example, you look at a flower, you see the flower as a beautiful red rose, but even as you look, you experience the rainbows and sunshine and earth and water and wind and dust and the void and history of

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the whole universe. The flower is a microcosm, and as you continue to gaze at it, you see the presence of spirit in the flower. Even the object of your perception begins to contain that witness. The witness here, and the witness there are watching each other. This is referred to in *Vedanta* as Divine consciousness. God says if you can't find God in that flower or rainbow or in the eyes of another being, where are you going to find God, in a book of religion? God is not there. God is life-centered, present moment awareness where you pierce the veil of *maya*, going beyond this artifact of sensory experience and find a vision of God. No matter where you go, you can't get away from it.

In the divine state of awareness, or unity consciousness, the spirit within me, the observer, and the spirit within the object of my observation, which is that flower, cloud, rainbow or other being, merges, so there is only one spirit. At that moment, I lose complete identity with my personality and with my body, and realize that what I thought of as a person was actually the universal being pretending to be a person. In the state of unity consciousness, I experience the universe as my extended body. I realize that I have a personal body and that I have a universal body, and they are equally mine. I look at that tree, and it is my lungs. I experientially know that the earth is my mother, and the universe is my father, and they are me. Rumi says, "Let the water settle, you will see stars and moons mirrored in your being." *Vedanta* says when you get to that state, you have become immortal because the universe is immortal, and you are experiencing your own immortality. You are no longer this little skin encapsulated ego: you are a universal being expressing itself locally in space and time. •

RICHARD MOSS: That's interesting because years ago, early on, when I watched fantastic thoughts come in my mind, as I deepened in meditation, I said to myself, "I will not be a teacher when I meditate; I will not process information to give it to people when I meditate, because the identity of teacher or helper is too small, I know there is something more." For me, when that arises in meditation, I let that pass through, because that isn't who I am. I am more than a teacher.

DEEPAK CHOPRA: That requires a certain degree of maturity to do that. I am hoping to get that...

RICHARD MOSS: It is an astronomical amount of work, to be composing so much. Do you dictate it?

DEEPAK CHOPRA: Yes I do. I was flying the other day from Perth, Australia, to Singapore, and there were delays. It took me twelve hours to get there, and I began thinking of synchronicity and started taking notes. In Singapore, there was another delay before I could leave for India. I was there for five hours, and finally, I had a hundred pages of notes. I got into a telephone booth and dictated on my voice mail a whole book on synchronicity. The manuscript was sitting on my desk when I returned from Asia.

RICHARD MOSS: One of my voices of doubt says, "Richard, when you are teaching, you are accessing energy by the focus of attention on you by the people." This lifts me to a different clarity, and it helps me stand above the tendency to identify with separate self or isolated self. So it says, "Do not judge yourself by the depth of what you can teach, but only by what you *live* in the ordinary, in the most benign parts of your life."

DEEPAK CHOPRA: Absolutely true. If you really want to know what somebody is like, speak to his wife.

RICHARD MOSS: What would your wife say about you?

DEEPAK CHOPRA: She thinks I am a great intellect, but that I need to mature, that I am still trying to prove something to the world, and that I need to let go of that, and she is right. ...In the end, what helps me most is to constantly experience gratitude for everything I have, for the relationships I have. Gratitude always brings me to a place of peace. As long as I keep my awareness in the experience of gratitude, the grace of God is there. •

# Epilogue to Interview with Deepak Chopra

BY RICHARD MOSS

It is my feeling that the resurgence of ancient spiritual traditions like Vedanta, Buddhism and Kabbalah have real value for understanding and mastering our human nature. But we need to be discriminating about their limitations for the modern mind and modern situation. For one thing, Vedanta, as well as most meditative or contemplative traditions, were not just divinely inspired activities; they were also doubtless born out of suffering and helplessness. Most of human history was marked by human beings having relatively little empirical knowledge of the outside world and therefore little power to influence it. What was available to be explored that could leverage great power over suffering and toward accepting the general helplessness of early human life in the face of the vicissitudes of nature was the mind.

For the past five hundred years, scientific inquiry has given us unimagined power over nature and our physical circumstances. If the philosophies of India and the East profoundly examined levels of mind, they also encouraged a kind of passivity toward outer life. The contemporary challenge born of our scientific and technological successes is definitely not passivity. On the contrary, it is our helter skelter rush to exert control over everything which is now leading us to destroy the ecosystem upon which our lives depend.

Against this modern situation, personal transformation becomes the most important work we can do. We must each learn what calls us to such potential for greatness and good, and to such potential for self-destructiveness. Personal transformation is more than a work about individual happiness or individual enlightenment. It is a work

about becoming responsive to the evolutionary impulse, a movement from within Life itself that we must understand and obey if we are to continue to exist.

To imagine that Vedanta, even in a modern form, can hold the answers to these challenges is simplistic, naive and maybe dangerous. I think it seduces our egos into imagining that the answers already exist, that they have been attained in the past and all we have to do is follow the map. Of course, even to repeat the inner work that would enable the experiential confirmation of the map Deepak offered is an extremely arduous work. I doubt it can be done, for I believe that true transformation is, after all, a pathless path. In any case, I strongly feel that deep personal transformation must be a work immersed in a wide-ranging, broadly inclusive, contemporary and lived spiritual context and teaching. Crucial to this, I feel, is the birth of a new kind of community of exploration, a new quality of association of sincere individuals. Both Eastern mysticism and Western (or modern) science have the power to lead us to a vision of Oneness, of the interconnected wholeness of ourselves and all things, and we need this. This is the basic root of wisdom, the necessary underpinning for a sane and healthy society. But bringing this vision into the world of social and cultural forms is a lived process that can never be predetermined. To me there is no one tradition, no special practices, no revelations of science that accomplish this. All are important, but every true teacher and every sincere student must reinvent the means anew. The dialogue must never cease, and it must go deeper. The call to transformation must burn forth from more and more nakedly exposed hearts and dedicated lives. •

# Wisdom's House

B O N N I E M E N E S K A H N , R A B B I S T E P H E N  
P E A R C E , F A T H E R J O H N S C H L E G E L ,  
B I S H O P W I L L I A M S W I N G

**T**he religious community supports environmental protection because when people nurture and care for the environment, they nurture and care for each other. Scientists can explain the threats to Americans' physical health. Environmental lobbyists can explain the threats to particular species or ecosystems. But the religious community can explain American values. We value our nature tradition and our tradition of intervening to care for our earth. When we care for our earth, we are more human. We remember who we are, our brevity, our smallness, our creative urge, our sensual pleasure. Without these, our spirit is crushed.

So our shared tradition brings to the environmental table two indispensable tools, moral outrage and common decency. These capacities are to be found within and not without. They belong to no one political party. They belong to every individual and can be used individually. They are our very own Judeo-Christian birthright, and they give voice to the best within us.

Moral outrage is the feeling that makes you yell, "This is not right!" More than a sense of right and wrong, it is the willingness to publicly proclaim one's sense of right and wrong, as well as to publicly act on it. Dissatisfaction can be found anywhere. What culture or society has been devoid of malcontents, grumps, or those disappointed by life? Moral outrage is not just dissatisfaction. Greek soothsayers and Roman augurs foretold ill fortune and even cursed a world gone awry. But moral outrage is not just a reading of the stars. Moral outrage says, "This is not right. *Do otherwise.*" Underlying the feeling of outrage is the belief that the world can be changed, and we can change it. Greek soothsayers did not believe they could change the course of history. But we do believe it. Moral outrage says, "The world is not good

enough, *and we can do better.*"

When Moses said to Pharaoh, "Let my people go," he was saying, "This is wrong, and we will do otherwise." When Jesus argued against the defilers of the temple, he was saying, "This is wrong, and we will do otherwise. We will change history armed only with our own sense of right and wrong. Ours is the tradition of the prophets, who foresaw not only destruction, but a new, peaceable kingdom." Moral outrage has driven us toward a better, more just world because in our tradition one person can say, "This is not right."

The great thing about moral outrage is that it knows no time clock, no moment, and no statute of limitations. It owes nothing to the past and looks only to the future. For thousands of years human beings enslaved one another—for hundreds of years on this continent. But then we said, "This will not stand," and the moral outrage over slavery became a historical force. It does not matter if we have dirtied our land, razed forests, cut gashes into the earth, and strip-mined in the most violent way. What matters is that we can, at any time, say, "This will not stand. This is not right, and we will do otherwise." There is no deadline on morality. We can say it now and start a better world tomorrow.

Chief Seattle can give us sadness. He can give us responsibility or awareness. Only our own tradition can give us the righteous anger that fuels change. Pollution is not right. As long as you believe that, you must be angry about it. You must be angry about each soda can discarded on the sidewalk. You must be outraged at the destruction of the rainforest, incensed at industrial greed, and furious over individual waste. It is not right, and now we are saying, "We will do otherwise."

Although the story of Noah and the Flood seems to speak to our concerns about the earth, Noah is not



a hero, precisely for his lack of outrage. In fact, Noah's indifference so enraged rabbis of later generations that rabbinic authors created a dialogue that they believed should have been included in the biblical text. After the flood was over and Noah had released all the animals, he and his family stood on dry ground. Surveying the devastation, Noah asked, "God, how could you have done this? How could you have allowed all of humanity to be swept away by this flood?"

God thundered back, "Fool! I described at length what I planned to do before the flood so that you might ask mercy for the world. But as soon as you heard that you would be safe in the ark, the evil of the world did not touch your heart. You built the ark and saved yourself. Now that the world has been destroyed, you ask questions and offer pleas? Where was your compassion and pity when it could have made a difference? ...Noah, you are too late!"

As powerful as moral outrage is, our most powerful tool is really common decency. Common decency is common in the sense that it is simple, and common in the sense that it is universal. It is as simple as "do unto others what you would have others do unto you." Treat others—animals, the earth, trees, property—with respect. It is a sad and amazing time in America that we need to define common decency. We must make a case for it, argue our case and advertise it. Who would have guessed thirty years ago that the simplest ideas of caring for our people, caring for our environment, and caring for our own humanity would be attacked by a right wing so rabid it would slash the very land on which it stands? But there it is. And here we are, defending the core of our very culture, common decency.

In our shared tradition, common decency means gentleness. Christians who strive to walk in the steps of Jesus strive to be gentle and forgiving, to turn the other cheek. The life of Jesus as it is recounted in the Gospels is full of images of mildness—the Madonna and Child, Jesus the healer, Jesus the teacher. It is impossible to imagine Jesus screaming, hurling epithets, or even expressing thoughts of bitterness or hostility. That is not what He is about. While the histories of all the countries of the world have certainly consisted, at one time or another, of atrocity and rage, our ideal of common decency is an ideal of gentleness toward others.

Common decency also means respect for privacy, not only physical privacy, but the privacy of thought, feeling and emotion. The Jewish text known as *Sayings of the Fathers* cautions the reader a decent person does not approach a grieving person in the instant of his grief, but waits for an opportune moment. A decent person does not trample the joy of another. So, tradition has it that all brides are beautiful—to say otherwise would crush someone's private joy. And, as the saying goes, in the house of a hanged man one doesn't talk about rope. A decent person does not remind someone of his or her private sorrow.

Gentleness and respect for privacy are two aspects of restraint. Common decency, in our tradition, means restraint. We rein in our emotions and our desires, putting them second to what is truly human in us, thought and belief. The Biblical tradition shows one figure after another sacrificing his or her love or fear or desire in the name of a common good. The great Jewish heroine Esther jeopardizes her comfort as queen in order to save her people.

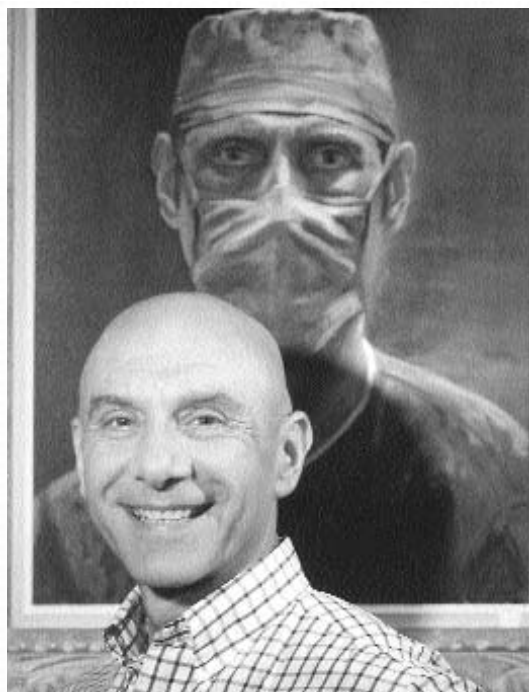
Our ideal, in other words, is a thoughtful, gentle person who leaves wide spaces between himself or herself and other people's feelings. We consider untrammelled emotion childlike. Or mad. Common decency, in our world, is not mad, but rational linking cause and effect, doer and deed. It is not decent for a man to go home and beat his wife and child because he did not win the lottery; it is violent, unthinking and irrational. It is not decent for a person to vote to close down halfway houses and drug treatment centers because he suspects that the money he pays in taxes is what's preventing him from becoming rich; that is violent, unthinking and irrational. Any person who, out of anger and frustration, votes to end programs to feed the poor has lost his or her sense of common decency.

Likewise, a person who burns or destroys the earth has lost his or her sense of common decency. It is common decency, that ideal of gentleness, privacy and rationality, that tells us not to litter, not to destroy property, and to treat the Earth with care and sensitivity. •

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# How Love Heals



INTERVIEW WITH BERNIE SIEGEL  
BY MARY NURRIESTEARN

*Bernie Siegel is the author of several books, including "Peace, Love and Healing," and "Love, Medicine and Miracles." He also is the author of videos and audio cassettes on healing. He started the Exceptional Cancer Patients, a specific form of individual and group therapy that facilitates personal change and healing. He lives with his wife and five children in New Haven, Connecticut.*

Pain in our psyches and pain in our bodies take us into the offices of physicians and other healers. All of us, sometime during in our lives, experience physical illness or heart ache which thrusts us into the realms of healing. So we are well advised to understand how healing occurs and how we can participate in our own healing. Bernie Siegel is well known for his work in healing, particularly self-healing and the power of love to heal. When we selected healing as a central theme in this issue, we knew that Dr. Siegel could share wise words about how we heal our lives.

**PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION:** *How do you define*

*healing?*

BERNIE SIEGEL: My definition of healing has nothing to do with the body. People who are healed live peaceful, joyful, loving lives, serving mankind, and providing others with peace, strength and energy. They are not victims, no matter what is going on in their bodies or their lives. Helen Keller is an example of a healthy person.

*If healing is a way of being, what is the importance of spiritual practice in healing?*

What is vital, I believe, is to have faith. I don't think one can love if one does not have faith or hope. They are the foundations upon which you can build.

The key is what you have faith in. If faith is in power, money or ego, you are going to have a difficult and unhappy life. If you have faith in the proper Lord, you will live a meaningful life and can perform the functions that your Lord requires of you with peace of mind.

***How do you help people move into faith?***

I act as their coach and director. I tell them to behave as if they have faith. That's the only way anybody ever changes. If they are unhappy enough or are in enough pain, and they make a choice to move in an area that would be productive and constructive, rather than sedating, tranquilizing and addicting, I can say, "Let me guide and help you." I also want to point out that they can get in touch with the writings of the great prophets of the last few thousand years. You don't have anything new to say and neither do I. We ought to put up a poster that says, "Please pay attention: you are preceded by Buddha, Mohammed, Christ, Mother Theresa and Gandhi. Read the Hindu, Muslim, Jewish and Christian prophets. They will teach you how to deal with suffering, how to survive, and how to serve."

***How do you encourage people to act as if they have faith?***

There is an old Asiatic story. A man says, "I don't know how to pray and I can't pray." The Rabbi says "Well, why don't you pray for the ability to pray." I say "Behave as if, act as if." In studies of actors and actresses, their blood tests are altered by the roles they play, whether it's comedy, drama or tragedy. And they are only performing. We are performing, too. If I say, "How would I behave if I were a lover?" and live that way, I may have a poor performance at times, but I can stop, have constructive criticism from those around me, forgive myself and go on. If you're an actor or an athlete, you understand that. Practice is how you get better at what you're doing. So say, "I will act as if I'm a lover." I encourage people to select a role model.

Write down whom you would like to be like, and then act as if you are that person. Keep rehearsing. I follow Don Quixote. I view the world with love. I tell people to experiment with this. Judge no one you meet for the next 24 hours. Love everyone you

meet and see. It's incredible how that changes your relationship with people. You learn about people, and they share with you. When you judge everybody—he's lazy, he's no good, he only wants money, he doesn't care about me—you project that, and you affect those people. When I walk around being loving, it's incredible how people respond.

I also bare my soul to them. When people say, "How are you?" I tell the truth. I bare my wounds. I may say, "I'm depressed, out of medication, my therapist is away, and I can't get my prescription renewed." You would be amazed at the responses I get. Most of them tell me they know how I feel because they are depressed too. They share intimate details of their lives with me even if I have never met them before.

***You model transparency and authenticity.***

Yes. You know you are authentic when your family, co-workers and clients criticize you. That's a sign that they see hope for you and believe in your ability to change and grow. If nobody ever criticizes you, I think you ought to worry because others may consider you hopeless. If no one ever criticizes your work, lifestyle or personality, then it is likely that they see you as hopeless and unwilling to change. If you were married to a total idiot, someone unwilling to ever alter his behavior, you would question the point of criticizing. He wouldn't listen. But if you know that your husband loves you and cares about your happiness, you can tell him what he is doing wrong. I don't see that as criticism. My thinking is that I want to know how to be better. She knows I care, but sees that I'm not doing it right.

***You are talking about how we relate to criticism.***

That's right. Rumi said, "Your criticism polishes my mirror." When you reach that point in life, you are here to work at helping others. When criticism is something you whine about or explain it is not your fault, you haven't reached the right place yet. When you are, you can say, "Thank you for your criticism." There are people who criticize because of their projections. I get unhealthy criticism too. Due to their problem, they've got to put me down. I can accept that; I don't get angry and yell back. For example, I may go somewhere, give a lecture, and come back to my hotel room to find somebody

slipped a note under my door with no signature, criticizing me. That's not productive. If they sign their name and leave their number, I can ask them what they mean. We communicate and both of us end up better people. Those are people I respect.

***Let's discuss love and healing. How important is being loved and how important is being loving?***

Being loved is vital to one's health. Statistics verify that. In a study at Harvard, 95% of the students who described their parents as unloving suffered a major illness by the time they were in midlife. Only 29% of those who said they were loved by their parents had a major illness. We began to see that how we care for ourselves—what we eat, whether we exercise—relates to self-esteem and self-worth. If you don't have it and are never given it, how are you going to care for yourself? The ability to love is incredibly therapeutic. It affects two people, the person loved as well as the person giving it. Rather than go into great detail, I recommend a book by Ashley Montague called *The Practice of Love*. Read it and you will know the benefits of love.

When we grow in love, we realize that we are here to serve and to give love to the world. Our choice is how we do it. That is how you have a meaningful, significant life and live your longest, healthiest life. When you are acting out of love, your physiology is as good as it can ever be. In that sense, you are never working: you are just loving what you are doing. With life-threatening illness, people give themselves permission to do what they love because they are going to be dead in six months. I can't tell you how many people say, "Thank God, I have cancer." There are side effects to cancer, and a lot of them are wonderful. They have a chance to spend time loving and learning because they didn't die suddenly. They are happy they got cancer rather than some other potentially fatal illness that would have killed them quickly and not allowed them to appreciate life. The giving of love, as I said, is the thing that we are here for. Life is meaningful and complete when you have given love, which eliminates the need to be here for ninety-four years. You can be here for four years and accomplish what you're sent for. Many

authors have said it beautifully. "Love is immortal and makes all things immortal, but hate dies every minute," William Saroyan said. This is true. If you've loved, you live on. In Christ's words, "The Son of Man comes not to be served but to serve, to ransom his life for the good of the many."

Serving isn't being a doormat. You choose how to serve. You can't be a victim if you are here to serve. You are serving, you are doing, you are loving, you are giving. You benefit by how you feel each day. So happiness is choice. It's not something that is provided by others; it is something that comes from within you.

***How do we relate to our feelings?***

What you must do, if you are going to remain healthy and follow your path, is pay attention to feelings. It is not an intellectual choice. I will quote an attorney who said it well, "While learning to think, I almost forgot how to feel." I test people by saying, "I want to take you to dinner—what do you want for dinner?" If they don't answer within five seconds, I know they haven't had a major loss or life-threatening illness. They aren't in touch with their feelings. They are thinking about what they should tell me they want. They are worrying about cost, fat content, my sincerity, or what would I like. When someone asks what you want for dinner, tell them. The answer will come. Ask yourself what will make you happy. You can't think of that answer; you have to feel the answer. It isn't about selfishness, but choices. Go back to Christ's word. He said, "If you do not bring forth what is within you, it will destroy you. If you bring forth what is within you, it will save you." That's the answer to how we relate to feelings. If you don't pay attention to them, you will get sick. I mean that literally. If you don't pay attention to your feelings, your body is going to wake you up. It will make you feel things more and more, until you pay attention.

***But that doesn't mean being led around by your feelings?***

I let my feelings lead me around. Don't pay attention to your feelings, and you'll get in trouble.

***What do you say to someone who wakes up in an angry mood, day after day, and who defines themselves by that anger?***



If you said, "I'm angry," I'd say "Well, you are not going to live forever, so why do you want to spend all these days being angry?" If I wake up angry or upset over something, I ask, "What I can learn from this, how I can resolve it, how I can finish this"? Feelings aren't right or wrong; they just are. So learn from them. Anger can be appropriate. I can have righteous indignation because I am not treated with respect. I don't resent or hate anybody, because I let them know how I feel. I don't let you affect me endlessly. You are not in charge of my life, so I resolve the uncomfortable feelings. I resolve them because I am here for a limited time. Do I want to spend all these hours being unhappy? My answer is "No."

If people feel frightened or full of fear, I ask them to be specific... "I'm afraid of dying, I'm afraid of cancer, I'm afraid of..." What does that mean? If you really take these fears apart, you find answers to them. One may be that I choose to be dead, to leave here, because I don't want to go through that.

***Sometimes death is healing.***

Yes, death is a therapeutic modality when you are tired of your body. It doesn't mean you won't be sad and grieve over separation from others, but you will say, and this I see in symbols, dreams and drawings, that you are leaving. I love my father-in-law's words, "You just fall up." You are whole again. Dying is not a problem for those who are living their life and following their path, do not have family members telling them not to die, or do not have doctors interfering. When you get tired and want to leave, you just go. It's not hard. In today's society it is difficult, because of the people who interfere with the process.

***When we're in a relationship with someone who is dying, how do we help?***

We communicate and listen. If they say, "I'm tired," we hear them. My father-in-law said, "I don't want my vitamins, and I'm not interested in dinner tonight, thank you." He died that night. When my father said to my mother, "I need to get out of here," I explained to her that his body was bothering him, not the side rails on the bed. She said "okay" and he left. In hospitals, most people

die alone in the middle of the night because nobody is listening. They wait until everybody leaves, and then they die.

***Why is it so difficult for us to relate to dying as natural and healing?***

If you don't have faith or spiritual understanding, if you haven't accomplished what we come here for, to give and receive love, death is harder. The medical profession is not taught how to deal with death. In medicine, death is a failure. How many people say that somebody died? They say he went to heaven, passed away, failed, or left us. We have such trouble dealing with and understanding that death isn't a failure, that it's a part of life. When people get a life-threatening illness, they learn so much. Who writes books and articles? People who develop afflictions and become enlightened. Enlightenment comes through accepting one's mortality. That what's God intended when Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of Knowledge. Our creator intended for us to know we are mortal. People do the opposite of what they are told. God said, "Don't eat that fruit." They said, "Gee, I wonder what it tastes like." They ate and learned they were mortal. That's what we need to accept. We cover death with all kinds of craziness. Many magazines about health and longevity have nothing to do with health and longevity. There may be three pages on what is good for you, and the rest is about cosmetics and appearance.

***Aren't we mortal and immortal?***

Yes, a part of us lives on. From personal experience, as well as from the experience of others, I am convinced that we live more than once. This is an educational process, and we are moving up the scale. If you are in the third grade, you are not a very enlightened person and may not spend any time loving. Hopefully, next time you'll get into the fourth or fifth grade, and work your way to eventually be a post-graduate student and contribute something to the world. A Mother Theresa or a Gandhi is a post-graduate student. Those who haven't learned about faith, hope and love are in real trouble. I tell those people to develop amnesia. If you are incapable of loving, don't remember what happened yesterday. Start the day anew.

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 78

# Psychic Energy, Libido & Spirit: Three Energies or One?

M I C H A E L   W A S H B U R N

*This is an in-depth essay focusing on the foundations of finer energies as viewed by transpersonal psychology.*

*In Washburn's transpersonal perspective, human development follows a spiral course as the ego emerges from, loses touch with, and then reintegrates itself on a higher level with the depth-psychological and interpersonal bases of its being. This interpretation of development gives psychological formulation to the spiritual archetype of life as a path, way, pilgrimage or journey of departure from and return "home"—the home to which we return both is the same as the home from which we departed (because it has the same deep foundations) and is not the same (because it is a multi-leveled mansion built upon those foundations rather than only the foundations themselves).*

*Washburn's transpersonal perspective has close affinities with the spiritual depth-psychology of Carl Jung. Compared with contemporary transpersonal perspectives, his perspective is similar in significant respects to the psychoanalytic-holotropic perspective of Stanislav Grof and the phenomenological perspective of David Levin and contrasts sharply with the structural-hierarchical perspective of Ken Wilber.*



Spiritual awakening is multidimensional; it has cognitive, emotional, energetic, psychodynamic, interpersonal and physical dimensions, among others. In this essay, I shall focus on the energetic dimension. I shall briefly describe three ways in which we experience energy—namely, as psychic energy, libido and spiritual power—and then I shall employ a simile which, I hope, will clarify how these expressions of energy might be related.

Psychic energy has four principal features. First, it is an *active* energy because it is the energy utilized in our ongoing conscious experience. Second, it is a *neutral* energy because it is an energy that empowers conscious experience in all modes and systems without being tied in essence to any particular mode or system. Psychic energy, for instance, empowers thinking, feeling and willing without being essentially a mental, emotional or volitional energy. Third, psychic energy is a *functional* energy because it is the energy that empowers the ego in the performance of its psychomental functions. The ego, as agent or executor of conscious experience, uti-

lizes psychic energy without, usually, being significantly affected by psychic energy in turn. And fourth, psychic energy is an *invisible* energy because it is usually at the background rather than in the foreground of attention. We usually focus on a thought, feeling or decision empowered by psychic energy rather than on the energy itself. Although we are sometimes aware of psychic energy when it is exceptionally intense or unchanneled—for example, in states of excitation and anxiety—we are usually unaware of psychic energy *as energy*.

Libido or instinctual energy differs from psychic energy in being a *potential* rather than active energy, a *system-specific* rather than neutral energy, an *impassioning* rather than functional energy, and a *visible* rather than invisible energy (i.e., when awakened from its potential state). Libido is a potential energy because it is usually latent and becomes active only when awakened by instinctual stimuli. Whereas psychic energy is always active by definition, libido is inactive as a default state and becomes active only for brief periods in response to instinctual stimuli. Libido is a system-specific energy because it is an energy expressed through, and only through, instinctual systems, especially the sexual system. When libido is not being expressed through instinctual systems, it lies dormant as the energy of the deep unconscious (the id). Libido is an impassioning energy because it is an energy that affects the ego rather than an energy that is functionally utilized by the ego. Libido affects the ego by importuning it with desire, by arousing it, and, when released in strong bursts, by

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causing it to experience ecstasy. Finally, libido is a visible energy because, when triggered into activity, it is conspicuously evident to awareness. The ego experiences libido *as energy*, and specifically as the energy of instinctual desire, arousal, and ecstasy (e.g., sexual orgasm).

Spiritual power (Spirit) shares some features with psychic energy and others with libido while differing from both in other respects. Spiritual power is like libido in being a potential energy in its default state (i.e., prior to spiritual awakening). Spiritual power is also like libido in being a visible energy (i.e., once awakened), an energy that the ego experiences *as energy*. On the other hand, spiritual power is like psychic energy in being a neutral energy. Like psychic energy, spiritual power energizes experience in all modes and systems without being tied in essence to any particular mode or system—although this *mode-neutral* or *system-neutral* character of spiritual power does *not* mean that spiritual power is neutral in its intrinsic nature or lasting effects, as I shall explain.

In being similar to either psychic energy or libido in these respects, spiritual power is dissimilar from both psychic energy and libido in being a *transformative* energy, that is, an energy that not only, like psychic energy, functionally empowers the ego and, like libido, impassions the ego by way of desire, arousal, and ecstasy but that also permanently changes the ego as it empowers and impassions it. As a transformative energy, spiritual power mutates the ego by transforming it from a subject resistant to spiritual life (an ego

suffering in “sin” or “ignorance”) to a subject at one with and expressive of spiritual life (an ego that has been “saved” or “enlightened”). As a power of both light and love, spiritual power transforms the ego in the direction of light and love.

Given that, in our experience, psychic energy, libido and spiritual power differ in the ways described, the question arises: Are these three expressions of energy different manifestations of a single energy, or are they three different energies? This question usually has been asked in reference only to libido and spiritual power, because these two, when active, are dramatically visible, whereas psychic energy is usually invisible. The question as it usually has been posed, then, is this: “Are we caught between two opposing powers, a lower instinctual power (libido) and a higher spiritual power (Spirit), or are these two powers, appearances to the contrary, ultimately one? In this latter formulation, the question poses as alternatives *dynamic dualism* (Manichaeism, Gnosticism: the view that we must struggle between two conflicting powers, one an instinctual power of darkness and the other a spiritual power of love and light) and *dynamic monism* (Nietzschean spirituality, Tantrism: the view that instinctuality and spirituality are, ultimately, harmonious dimensions of a single life). My own belief is that, of these alternatives, the Nietzschean or Tantric alternative, despite its shocking character, is the superior view. Mature spirituality, I suggest, is in complete harmony with the instincts; it is a fully embodied spirituality fully at home on this earth. To see how this might be so, let us consider a simile that compares the

three expressions of energy we have discussed to different ways in which fire can burn.

Let us imagine a bowl-like container covered with a lid with a small hole in it. Embers smolder in the container. The hole in the lid allows enough oxygen to enter the container to keep the embers ignited. As the embers smolder, smoke is produced and collects in the container, except for what escapes in a steady, attenuated stream through the hole. The inside of the container is almost completely dark, for not only is it filled with smoke, but it also, owing to the smallness of the hole in the lid, is closed almost entirely to light. Now let us imagine that every now and then the container is rubbed in such a way that the embers are stoked and, consequently, jets of hot, smoky air are ventilated through the hole in the lid. This heightened energy discharge lasts only a short time, and then the embers return to their previous state, and the smoke released from the container is reduced again to a steady, attenuated stream. But now let us suppose that at some point the hole in the lid begins to dilate and continues to do so until, eventually, the container is no longer covered at all. As the hole expands in this way, we can imagine that the fire awakens from its near-dormancy and burns more and more intensely until, eventually, it is a brilliant blaze. Finally, let us suppose that the fire, as it grows from smoldering embers to brilliant blaze, burns in a manner that is increasingly “clean,” that is, in a manner that steadily increases in warmth and light while at the same time decreasing in the amount of smoke-producing soot. When the hole first begins to



dilate, the fire is still very sooty; as the hole continues to widen, however, the fire becomes not only increasingly intense but also increasingly transparent.

Now let us interpret the simile. The bowl-like container is the deep psyche, and the fire burning in the container is energy as it arises or “combusts” within the deep psyche—whatever the ultimate origin of this energy might be, intrapsychic or extrapsychic, natural or supernatural. The lid covering the container is a repressive barrier that separates us from our psychic depths, a barrier which I (1994, 1995), following Freud, have called *primal repression*. Primal repression, in covering the deep psyche, submerges and quiets (i.e., “smothers”) the potentials of the deep psyche. Thus submerged and quieted, the deep psyche is the id as described by classical psychoanalytic theory.

The hole in the lid of the container indicates that primal repression does not completely smother the energy of the deep psyche but, rather, allows it to “smolder” and, thereby, to emit a steady stream of attenuated energy into the upper psychic region of the conscious ego. This attenuated energy is psychic energy, which, as explained earlier, is an active, neutral energy that empowers conscious experience in all modes and systems without being tied in essence to any particular mode or system. Psychic energy, again, is usually invisible; it is the ever-present but unseen stream of smoke that arises from the smoldering embers of the id.

The rubbing of the container and consequent release of jets of hot smoke represent instinctual stimulation and instinctual arousal leading to ecstasy, respectively.

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Instinctual stimulation stokes the embers smoldering within the id and triggers a surge of instinctually channeled energy, energy which we experience in the form of instinctual desire and instinctual arousal culminating in ecstasy. Such desire, arousal, and ecstasy are most conspicuous when the stimulation is of a sexual sort. Sexual stimulation kindles the fire within of the container of the unconscious and triggers the release of sexually charged (“smoky”) energy, energy which we experience in the form of sexual excitation and, when the energy is released in especially powerful bursts, in the form of the ecstasy of sexual orgasm.

The widening of the hole in the lid represents the gradual lifting of primal repression, and the ensuing growth of the fire from smoky embers to brilliant, transparent blaze represents the process of awakening and growth in Spirit. The fact that the fire is still sooty in the initial stages of this process indicates that the energy of the deep psyche is only gradually released from the instinctual channels of expression to which it had been almost exclusively restricted by primal repression. Primal repression not only reduces the energy of the deep psyche to near dormancy (embers) but also confines it, as libido, almost exclusively to an instinctual organization. The lifting of primal repression, accordingly, not only awakens this energy but also liberates it from instinctual limits. This awakening and liberation of the energy of the deep psyche, however, is typically a gradual process. The awakened fire, which is sooty at first, only gradually burns not only more

intensely but also more cleanly. It is for this reason that many people, sometimes with considerable distress, have experienced spiritual awakening as being at the same time an instinctual recrudescence. And so it is. But the point is that, as spiritual growth unfolds, the instincts cease being inflamed with awakening-derepressing energy, and this energy is able to manifest itself in a way that is not only increasingly powerful but also increasingly free of instinctual or other mode- or system-specific coloration. That is, it is able to manifest itself as freely upwelling transformative Spirit.

According to the interpretation just given, psychic energy, libido and spiritual power are not fundamentally different energies; they are, rather, the same energy differently expressed. All three are expressions of the energy of the deep psyche, expressions which differ from each other owing to the effects of primal repression. Under conditions of primal repression, the energy of the deep psyche slumbers in the depths and is able to express itself in only two primary ways, in the attenuated form of psychic energy and in the instinctually channeled form of libido. Once primal repression begins to give way, however, the energy of the deep psyche awakens from its slumber and, in doing so, gradually liberates itself from its prior exclusive association with the instincts. As this happens, the energy of the deep psyche gradually reveals itself to be the vital source of all life, not only of instinctual life but of creative and spiritual life as well. Concomitantly, the deep psyche itself, which under conditions of primal repres-

sion had been organized as the unconscious id, gradually reveals itself to be—or to be our access way to—the Sacred Ground, the Fertile Void, the Formless Godhead.

What happens to psychic energy and libido after spiritual awakening? If the primary differences distinguishing these expressions of energy are due to primal repression, it follows that, once primal repression is lifted, the differences in question will disappear. Once the lid is removed from the container and spiritual power is able to burn freely and fully, there is no longer a stream of attenuated energy (psychic energy); nor are there hot, jets of “sooty” energy vented exclusively through instinctual channels (libido); nor are there smoldering embers deep within the soul (slumbering Spirit). Under fully awakened conditions, the soul burns brightly with Spirit, which expresses itself not only as the power of spiritual transformation but also as the power that energizes experience generally (the former role of psychic energy) and as the power that, in energizing experience generally, energizes instinctual experience in particular (the former role of libido). Under fully awakened conditions, Spirit itself performs the role of psychic energy (albeit in a plenipotent rather than attenuated way), and Spirit itself performs the role of libido (albeit in a “clean” rather than “sooty” way).

Among the implications of the view I have presented, two are especially noteworthy: (a) that spiritual awakening greatly increases the energy level of consciousness, and (b) that spirituality and instinctuality are ultimately in

complete harmony with each other. I shall conclude by briefly elaborating on these two points.

If awakened spiritual power gradually takes over the function formerly performed by psychic energy, it follows that the energy level of consciousness rises as this happens. For the spiritual power that takes over the function of psychic energy is not an attenuated stream issuing from "smoldering embers" but is, rather, the awakened fire itself. This analogy is to be taken seriously, because the raising of experience to intense energy levels by awakened spiritual power can be more overpowering than empowering if a person is not properly prepared. Just as surges or strong currents of electricity can damage electrical circuits, so the awakened energy of the deep psyche can wreak havoc upon established circuits of thought and feeling. For this reason it is usually best if spiritual awakening is a gradual process to which one can adjust as the process unfolds.

As for the second implication, if awakened spiritual power gradually takes over the function formerly performed by libido, it follows that spirituality and instinctuality, despite earlier appearances to the contrary, are wholly at one with each other. Prior to spiritual awakening, libido seems to be at odds with Spirit because the energy expressed as libido seems to be exclusively a lower, primitive, even "dirty" (sooty, smoky) energy. When libido is experienced in this way, it seems to be contrary to what we mean by Spirit, which is a power of light and love. Accordingly, it seems, from the vantage point of the ego undergirded by

primal repression, as if there are two potential powers of the soul in inherent conflict with each other: libido and Spirit. But our simile calls this Manichean or Gnostic view into question and points in a Nietzschean, Transcendental direction. It suggests that the awakening of the energy of the deep psyche is at the same time the liberation of this energy from exclusive expression through instinctual channels: The lotus of Spirit rises out of the swamp of the unconscious. Once awakened, the energy of the deep psyche continues to empower instinctuality, albeit no longer in a merely primitive or "dirty" way: Once the lotus rises out of the swamp, the swamp itself is gradually transformed into a pellucid wellspring—or, returning to our simile, the container of the fire, now uncovered, is open to the clear air. But the energy of the deep psyche also, now, increasingly expresses itself independently of instinctuality, as freely upwelling Spirit. Spirit, then, is not opposed to libido; it is, rather, the same energy as libido in a higher (derepressed, awakened, liberated) expression. Mature spirituality, I suggest, is a spirituality completely at home with the instincts—and so it must be if we are to be whole human beings. •

*Michael Washburn is professor of philosophy at Indiana University South Bend. He teaches courses in the history of philosophy, Asian philosophy, existentialism, and the psychology of religious experience. Washburn and his wife Pamela have been married since 1962. He has three daughters and four grandchildren. Washburn is the author of "Transpersonal Psychology In Psychoanalytic Perspective" and "The Ego And The Dynamic Ground."*

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# Book Reviews



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

The two works selected for review in this issue are written by women well-known for their previous books, lecture tours and workshops. Shakti Gawain has published a thoughtful book on prosperity, while Caroline Myss takes a new look at healing.

*CREATING TRUE PROSPERITY by Shakti Gawain. New World Library, 1997. 179 pages. Hard-bound.*

Shakti Gawain, known for books such as *Creative Visualization*, *Four Levels Of Healing*, and *Living In The Light*, in this book explores the nature and pursuit of prosperity.

Beginning with the question, "What is prosperity?" Ms. Gawain offers many of the traditional concepts of that blessed state. For some, prosperity might take the form of a specific amount of money; for others, a sense of security about the future; for others, the awareness that one need not be limited by concerns about money.

Ms. Gawain suggests a more helpful definition, one that is seldom attained in the usual "new age" takes on prosperity: "Prosperity is the experience of having plenty of what we truly need and want in life, material and otherwise. The key point to understand is that prosperity is an internal experience, not an external state,

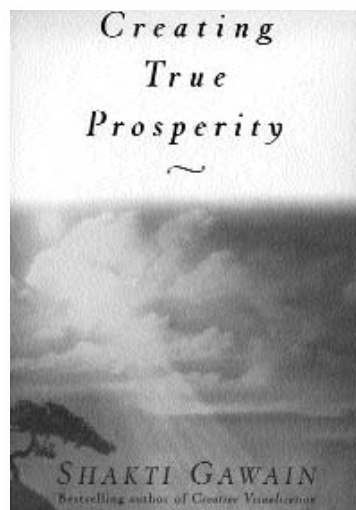
and it is an experience that is not tied to having a certain amount of money... While no amount of financial wealth can guarantee an experience of prosperity, it is possible to experience prosperity at about any level of income, except when we are unable to meet our basic physical needs."

A threefold key to attaining an awareness of prosperity is offered: "1. Discover what we truly need and want. 2. Develop the ability to bring those things into our lives. 3. Recognize, appreciate and enjoy what we have." Again with a unique view, Gawain cautions, "Remember that creating true prosperity does not necessarily mean having more. Many of us are in the predicament of having too much..." yet do not experience the feeling of prosperity.

She defines financial prosperity as "having a relationship with money that supports and enhances our overall experience of prosperity."

Gawain examines three prevalent viewpoints about prosperity: materialistic, transcendent spiritual, and new age, exploring the truth and limitation in each viewpoint.

Explaining that money is a symbol for energy, she suggests that money is a mirror of what is happening in our consciousness, and as such, can be a great teacher. Gawain encourages the





## Reviews

reader to examine his or her relationship to money and what it represents, in such concepts as power, security, greed, etc. Exercises lead the reader to examine such questions as, "If I get too powerful, I might..." and "The advantage of not being powerful is..."

Gawain observes, "When we are committed to our personal growth and we feel we need to do something for our learning or healing process, if it is truly right for us, the money will be there to do it." She relates many experiences from her own life and from the lives of others that illustrate this principle.

Gawain's concept of "tuition" made me laugh aloud in recognition. She describes the universal human experience of making poor choices about investing in someone or something, trusting the wrong person, acquiring too much debt, etc. She suggests thinking of such an experience as "paying tuition in the school of life"—that even if it was costly materially, it wasn't wasted if we learn from the experience. "Remember that money is a great teacher, and if you are a dedicated student, the tuition you spend will be returned to you many times over."

Three middle chapters of the book deal with understanding and balancing the polarities in our nature, and their relationship to the perception of prosperity. Such seeming "opposites" as power and vulnerability, active and receptive, giving and receiving, doing and being, are dealt with to encourage the reader to explore his or her own polarities and how they relate to one's experience of prosperity.

Recognizing that prosperity is not a place or a fixed goal, but rather an "ongoing process of finding fulfillment that continues to

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unfold and deepen throughout our lives,” Gawain outlines seven steps to increase one’s sense of prosperity. They include gratitude, awareness, healing, following your truth, creating a vision, setting goals, and sharing your gifts.

The book’s informal, conversational tone gives the reader a sense of coming to know Shakti Gawain, as well as her vision of prosperity. An unusual chapter is an actual conversation between Gawain and her editor, Katherine Dieter. Dieter asks many of the questions that any thoughtful reader might, giving Gawain a chance to respond more specifically to individual concerns and experience.

The final chapter is a collection of stories about prosperity by such varied contributors as a woman who finds prosperity living a very simple life, a man who left a high paying, high pressure job who found a richer life in business for himself, Gawain’s own experience of how a seeming disaster turned out to be a prosperity blessing, a woman who won the lottery and found that her true prosperity lay in her relationships.

This book could serve as a helpful springboard to examination of one’s attitudes toward money, prosperity, and what gives life meaning.

### QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION OR GROUP EXPLORATION:

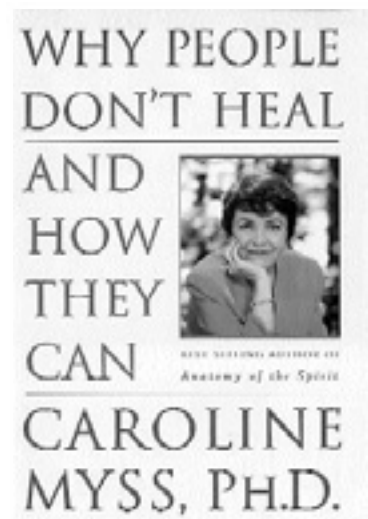
1. What does money represent to me?
2. What has money taught me in the past? What can it teach me in this moment?
3. What is true prosperity to me?
4. Am I prosperous now? If not, what need I do?

**WHY PEOPLE DON’T HEAL AND HOW THEY CAN, Caroline Myss, Ph.D. Harmony Books, 1997. 263 pages, hardbound.**

Caroline Myss, known for her workshops on healing and her books *Anatomy of the Spirit* and *Creation of Health*, offers here a new perspective on why people don’t find healing (fully half the book), and how they can.

Challenging the “new age” dictum that we create our own reality and therefore our illnesses, she surprisingly suggests that illness can also come as an answer to prayer, in that illness can become a teacher to us, bringing us the challenge we need to learn and grow. “As terrifying as disease is, it is also an invitation to enter into the nature of mystery.”

In examining why some people don’t heal, Myss introduces the concept of “woundology” and its seductiveness—that is, how some people tend to define themselves in terms of their wounds (incest, neglect, addiction, betrayal, etc.) “...when we define ourselves by our wounds, we burden and lose our physical and spiritual energy and open ourselves to the risk of



## Reviews

illness.” Not only can woundology cripple the individual, it has consequences for others: “People around the world are confusing the therapeutic value of self-expression with permission to manipulate others with their wounds. Instead of viewing the uncovering of their wounds as an early stage of the healing process, they are using their wounds as a flag and their [support] groups as families and nations.” Why do we cling to our wounds? “...If we let go of certain things, our lives are going to change. And the reality is that we are actually more afraid of change than we are of death.”

Myss explores five myths about healing and offers questions for self-examination regarding each. A chapter on “The Chakras,” “The Astrological Ages,” and “The Forms of Power” breaks new ground. “...Think of the chakras as computer disks that are imprinted with information of all sorts. Much like the hard disk in your computer, the chakras spin and take in data, and also can be tapped to disgorge the same information.” She offers an examination of the ages of Aries (tribal power), Pices (individual power), and Aquarius (symbolic power).

“To ignite the healing fire, you need to believe something with your heart. The heart holds the catalyst that causes the rest of the body to heal in a chain reaction.” Never one to mince words, Myss says, “You don’t need a wishbone; you need a backbone.” She urges the reader to examine beliefs about healing, and to transform tribal and individual beliefs into symbolic perceptions. As fuel for the healing fire, she offers such disciplines as learning to say no, making decisions to change course, adopting

cyclic thinking, having realistic goals, developing will power, and cultivating grace.

In an intriguing juxtaposition of the Eastern concept of chakras, the Christian sacraments, and the Jewish tree of life, Myss leads the reader through numerous exercises, meditations, and explorations designed to help readers “make contact with the healing energy inherent in their own spirit.”

The book is full of stories—about people in her workshops and private practice, and stories from her own life as well. These illustrations bring to life her concepts about healing, and are fascinating.

After reading the introduction, I was prepared to dislike this book, with its dependence on such old symbols as chakras, sacraments, astrological ages, etc. However, Myss uses these symbols in new ways, and from them carefully constructs a foundation for transcending “woundology” and opening to healing. I would give this book to anyone facing a health challenge, and anyone who desires to explore a new way of looking at healing.

### QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION OR GROUP EXPLORATION:

1. Do I “speak woundology?”  
Do I define myself in terms of my wounds? Do I use my woundedness to manipulate others?
2. Has illness ever been a teacher to me? What did I learn?
3. If I found myself facing serious illness, what alternatives would I explore? •

*Barbara Neighbors Deal, Ph.D., is a literary agent and writer in Ojai, California.*

## Southwestern

v7n2p75

## Spirit Journey

## The Healing Journey

Continued from page 35

journal on a regular basis, you can benefit by writing out your feelings about any particularly traumatic experience. This technique was developed by James W. Pennebaker, Ph.D., a professor in the psychology department of Southern Methodist University. To do this technique, spend twenty minutes writing about the most traumatic experience relating to your health condition. Write nonstop and don't be concerned about spelling or grammar.

Often, emotions will pour forth, even tears—but these are healing tears of release. This is an excellent method to gain insight into the meaning of your illness or pain; such insights help you cope with the stress involved in any illness or discomfort. Patients report that the writing exercise served to improve their emotional and physical well-being on a long-term basis.

When doing this technique, it is important to continue it for at least four days in a row, or longer. The reason is that writing out feelings about deeply wounding experiences just once will only reopen the wound but not suffice to begin healing it. According to Pennebaker, the patients who wrote about their deepest feelings related to trauma experienced remarkable benefits in both physical and emotional health, compared to control groups who wrote only about trivial events. The immune systems of the first group were strengthened, leading Pennebaker to conclude that expressing emotions can enhance physical health. He says, "Just putting upsetting experiences into words has profound psychological and physical benefits for our participants."

His reasoning is that repressing feelings is a physiological strain—blood pressure, heart rate, muscle

tension all increase when emotions are "stuffed," or blocked from being expressed. Pennebaker theorizes that when we express our long-buried emotions in words, we relieve the body as well as the mind of crippling stress. His studies have proved that the expression of thoughts and feelings can affect our overall health positively. He suggests the journal method be used to heal past traumas, as well as to relieve ongoing present-day stresses.

Your healing journal can also be a way to help yourself lessen stress and handle anxiety or depression. Whatever your goal, making a commitment to writing on a regular basis is the key to success. •

*From "Healing Mind, Body, Spirit" by M.J. Abadie. Copyright 1997 by M.J. Abadie. Printed with permission from the publisher Adams Media Corporation.*

## Transformations

Continued from page 34

anced version of myself emerged, one that included both my feminine and masculine sides. My wise crone was born.

This fall, while riding my bike through Colorado mountainsides, the whole healing journey I'd been on became clear.

I saw myself at my inner blackboard, erasing every belief I'd built up to protect myself—willing to start over with who I am now. I can't imagine, six months later, living without that gift to myself. The quality how I listen to my inner self and how I listen to my body signals is changed, forever. I see now this was no small matter, what my inner spirit needed to communicate to me. My essence is much bigger than any childhood fears or beliefs my body had contracted around. My true nature is joy. •

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## Letters

*Continued from page 19*

issue which always offers inspiration in some form. Your magazine is the only one I have ever subscribed to that I have read every single article, whether I agreed or not, from start to finish. Your magazine is the only one that offers hope and comfort in a realistic but also somewhat mystical way. I would like to continue receiving *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*, because now I realize how essential your magazine is to me. After a stressful day at work or just trying to get through the hustle and bustle of a day off, I look forward to curling up with the wisdom, insight and inspiration I find between the pages of your publication. Thank you and keep up the good work.—*K. Giaquinto, Daytona Beach.*

### HYPERBOLE

I love your art—pictures, photographs, even your ads are well done. I love the paper your magazine is printed on. Its dull gloss enhances the art, and I suspect it's recycled. I love the ideas you share in your magazine. I hate the way you do not edit anything though. All the articles I tried to read lost me, either from hyperbole or simple boredom. Please make your message more accessible to readers!—*Name Withheld, Cleveland, Ohio.*

### WONDERFUL

Thank you for birthing the vision of your wonderful magazine! I just picked it up this morning for the first time and have already called to subscribe to it. I am especially interested in apply-

ing the creative arts to healing, so I was drawn to the article by Candace Hartzler *Creativity and Healing*. As I am feeling called from within to step into healing work that utilizes the powerful gifts of the creative arts, I would be most grateful to receive whatever information and insights you can send my way. Congratulations on both your personal and professional transformation!—*Robert Schnitzius, Monara, California.*

### DELIGHTED

Have just read my first issue of *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* and am delighted to have found it. Recently I feel certain that my spirit mother is directing me to you. Peace/Shalom.—*Reinhold, via e-mail*

### THIRSTING FOR SUBSTANCE

Today's culture is thirsting for information with substance and depth to enrich their lives. *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* is a valuable resource of personal and spiritual information to assist people in their search for meaningful lives. I believe in the mission of your magazine.—*M. Moultrup, Brighton, Michigan.*•

#### LETTERS —

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## Find True Healing

Continued from page 43

Begin with seeking referrals to someone who is very competent as a physician or therapist, and then ask what he or she is like personally. Go to someone who will treat you as a person who matters. Remember that you are a choice-maker. Trust your intuition. Do the equivalent of shopping around until you feel that you are with someone who is excellent, both as a person and as a professional. If you intend some combination of regular (or allopathic) medicine and complementary (or alternative) regimes, you need a physician who will treat your intentions or experience with respect. Since I believe that healing has to do with love, a healing physician or professional is someone who loves the work and the patients, who cares what happens to them, and who also knows that there is a healer in the patient and a healing energy in the universe.

*If someone enters the healing process in an acute condition, they might not be conscious and, at least for a while, they are unable to be an advocate for themselves.*

If I or a member of my family were unconscious, seriously injured, had a raging temperature, or massive burns—anything of this nature that is acute and needs immediate attention, the best place to be is at the nearest and best general hospital or medical center around. This is what allopathic medicine does best. And mobilize a prayer group as soon as you can.

*What are you currently exploring about healing at this point?*

I'm working on *Goddesses in Older Women: The Third Phase of Our Lives*. In a way, it's "Goddesses

in Everywoman: The Sequel" or "Goddesses in Everywoman—Growing Older and Wiser." I'm describing the archetypes in older women based on goddesses of wisdom, of transitions, of wrath and of laughter and sexuality.

*Because of where the culture is in relationship to women and aging, I am happy to see that you are writing a book on growing older. There are not many positive role models or cultural perspectives to prepare baby-boomers to go through that phase.*

About forty million baby-boomer generation women will turn fifty or become menopausal, coinciding with a new millennium. There has never been such a potential force for change as this number of women whose lives were influenced by the women's movement. This is the most empowered and educated significant-sized group of women in history. What the planet and humanity needs is an infusion of the wisdom women have. Maybe it is now or never for us as a species in an ecological system that is Earth. Maybe if individual women in sufficient numbers draw upon personal and collective wisdom and strength, and act to make things better, healing on a community and planetary scale will come about. Because I know that individuals can grow and be transformed, I believe that transformation is possible on this larger scale. In writing *Goddesses in Older Women*, I will be encouraging older women to become activists, to take stands where they are, to draw upon what they know in their bones, believing that the world changes one person at a time. •

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## Hoffman Institute Hoffman Quadrinity Process

### *How Love Heals*

*Continued from page 61*

Their relationships are better if they don't remember what happened the day before.

We are killing each other because of race, religion, creed and nationality. It's absurd that killing each other makes life interesting and exciting. We need to learn from animals. Each family should have a beloved pet. Children would not kill each other if they were brought up with pets and learned care and love and reverence for that life. I say to people, "Do me a favor; take as good care of yourself as you do your pet." It's laughable, but I know people who smoke outdoors because their pet got sick. They are still killing themselves. And I say, "Excuse me, is it okay to kill yourself, but not kill your pets?" They don't think

of that. They don't realize what they are doing.

#### *How do we become loving?*

Through experience. When someone loves you, you are changed. The child who is difficult may be testing your love. The patient who follows absolutely no instruction may be testing your love. I've had people call and ask for Jack Kevorkian's phone number, who are now alive and well. They had surgery for their cancer because somebody said, "You are a child of God." They never heard that from their family, so they want to be dead until somebody says, "I love you." Then they say, "I guess I'm worth loving," and they find that love. So keep on loving. Anyone has the potential to save a life by continuing to love those who are unlovable.

#### *As did Mother Theresa.*

Christ told us to love one another. I often say to people "Kill them with kindness." Love is the most powerful weapon we have. People stop what they're doing when you say, "I love you." They don't stop when you say, "I hate you, and I'll kill you if you come across that line." When you say "I love you," they are confused, stop what they're doing and wonder how to deal with you. That's true, unconditional love.

#### *What is your path to becoming loving?*

To be loving is my goal. I say it this way, "I have one person I have a lot of trouble with—myself." I am my only problem on earth. I have decided to be as kind and loving as I can be. I'm making a mess out of it, but I'm probably better than most people. I don't say that egotistically. I work at it, but I am far from the person I want to be. •

## *Letting in Love*

*Continued from page 39*

alive." At that moment a shaft of bright white light entered the old man's apartment window and transformed itself into a staircase to the sky. A voice from above was heard by all the neighbors, "Come, both of you, unto my house. You have prepared the ground for your hearts to enter the kingdom of light." The old man with the dog by his side walked all the way up that staircase of light and disappeared into the clouds.

It is said that all dogs know this story and to this day they look to the sky when they howl their song. They haven't forgotten that it requires a heart filled with longing and love to enter the light of the heavens.

Sultan Walad, son of Rumi, speaks to us about this new life in soul:

"A human being must be born twice. Once from his mother, and again from his own body and his own existence. The body is like an egg, and the essence of man must become a bird in that egg through the warmth of love, and then he can escape from his body and fly in the eternal world of the soul beyond time and space."

You enter the soulful flight to bring spirited life into your daily action. You earn your wings through the heartfelt practice of love. This is how your life is illumined by spirit and how you become a midwife to the birth of everyday soul. •

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# For the World to be Transformed

W A Y N E D Y E R

**T**he only way the world will be transformed is for the world's inhabitants to make changes in individual levels of consciousness. As we do this, we experience God. God becomes that harmony. Robert Frost said it beautifully: "We all sit around in a circle and suppose, but the secret sits in the center and knows." That center is where I now go when I meditate. I go into that light and I also bring it to me. Like an axle that turns but whose center doesn't move, God is the unmoved secret in the center.

All the Eastern traditions talk about having an inner observer, being able to "die" while you're alive. To be spiritual, to awaken, to be detached means to experience your own death. What does it mean to die while you're alive? It means coming into contact with the part of you that doesn't constitute your humanity. The invisible part of you—the part of you that leaves

when you die—is where God resides. And this isn't "mystical;" it's real. You don't have to go to India to discover it; you don't have to wear a loincloth and meditate in a cave.

I find God by giving myself time every day—through prayer, or meditation, or whatever you want to call it—to go into another level of consciousness. I close my eyes and breathe. I center myself and empty my mind and begin to feel the love that is there when I quiet down enough to feel. As I do this, I transcend time and space, and I am in the very presence of God. This, to me, is a direct daily experience of God, and it puts me into a state of harmony and bliss that transcends anything I've ever known.

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