



AUTUMN 1995

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*True love is possible only with real
understanding. Buddhist meditation—stopping,
calming, and looking deeply—is to help us
understand better. In each of us is a seed of
understanding. That seed is God.*

It is also the Buddha.

—Thich Nhat Hanh, Page 61

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTOPH BURKI/TONY STONE.
PHOTO OF BUDDHA, PAUL GREBLUNAS/TONY STONE

From the Editor...

Practice is a seedbed of miracles—Michael Murphy

In this issue of *LOTUS* we explore how we can transform our lives. As a culture we are attracted to instantaneous cures and easy answers. We take pills to end our pain, discard family in search of instant relationships, wear designer clothes to be somebody, and crash diet as a cure for years of poor dietary choices.

It is no surprise that this mentality has permeated our attitudes about personal transformation. We unwittingly assume that there is a program, author, or method with some simple formula that will transform our life. We think, "If I just do this, I will be okay." Self-help books, cassette tapes, and workshops promise easy-to-follow steps to success, enlightenment, happiness, and health. Are these approaches to transformation effective?

In this issue's interview, Mike Murphy and George Leonard discuss why these approaches are incomplete and what is needed to sustain transformation. They recommend an integral transformative practice—a program of meditation, exercise, affirmations, imaging, diet, reading, and regular group support.

Mike Murphy was cofounder of Esalen, an institute in California that has offered for nearly thirty years weekend to month-long intensive workshops for personal healing and transformation. Repeatedly he found that people experience breakthroughs and re-envision their lives, then often fall back into old patterns and give up their dreams after returning home. He learned that lasting change does not occur over a weekend or as the result of some singular, although profound, experience. He realized that personal growth requires on-going efforts and the support of like-minded people. While we may desire instant transformation, the road to enduring positive change is a path of long term practice.

George Leonard who has practiced Aikido (a form of martial arts) for twenty-four years discovered the joy of practice for its own sake. This is a noteworthy accomplishment in our society that not only yearns for immediate gratification but values the achievement of goals more than the

process of developing. We know that we must practice to master skills. We see this modeled by great artists and athletes who practice daily. George Leonard regards practice as having great value in itself and advocates setting goals to enhance transformational practice. Goals support the practice. He views practice as a way to become centered in yourself as well as a way to make evolutionary changes.

Other articles in this issue will also add depth and insight into your transformational practice. Barry Long (page 65) provides instruction for sitting meditation and mastery of the fundamentals of meditation. Henepola Gunaratana (page 12) gives guidance for taking meditation into your activities of daily living. Dawn Callan (page 54) describes ways to reclaim your personal power. Ruth Ross (page 68) says that growth comes from our choice in the way we use our mind and offers insights into the full use of your creative mind for personal fulfillment.

Transformation requires that we heal the emotional wounds from culture and childhood and learn more effective ways of relating to life. Letting go of the past and making healthy choices in the present are fundamental to evolution. Lynne Finney (page 74) recommends simple breathing techniques as an effective way to free repressed emotions. This breathing brings suppressed emotions them to conscious awareness where they can be experienced, expressed, and released. Margaret Paul (page 48) adds another key to healing by encouraging you to develop a loving relationship with yourself in order to take good care of yourself.

This issue is filled with perspective to support your transformational path. May we all stay the course, learn to love the practice, and have a rich and revealing journey.

Welcome to Lotus.



Mary NurrieStearns

Lotus

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Reflections



From Our Readers

A DEEP FEELING OF ANGER

In the Anniversary 1995 issue I enjoyed the "Grant Me Serenity" by Sandra Toney. I am glad for her that she now has a better life. Nevertheless, I for once would like to hear instead of, "Jake used to remove the spark plugs from the car, so I couldn't go anywhere while he was at work, so I took a plane ride away from there to a better life." But rather this version: Some of my concerned community citizenry decided Jake could have his spark plugs removed from his car and Sandra was able to find a better relationship right there in her own community.

That's what troubles me; were there no "good" men and neighbors to build a relationship with in your own area?

Like I say, I am sure glad Sandra was able to find a better life, but I'm still wondering if Jake might be taking the spark plugs out of someone else's car and will that person be able to get a friend to take them to an airport.

Thank you *LOTUS* for the wonderful Anniversary Issue.

I in no way meant this as a criticism of your magazine or of Sandra Toney, but it just touched a deep feeling of anger. I have lived in miserable relationships myself and in a way continue to do so, but I have decided I will stand my ground and address those of the world that can do unto other but "cannot be done unto." They dish out misery, but are not much (zero) on taking it.—*Jerry O. Madlock, Buckner, Arkansas.*

BARKING UP THE WRONG TREE

On the question of a "money-addicted culture" we are told that we should not blame government for economic behavior of individuals. (Summer, 1995, page 59.) That is barking up the wrong tree. Individual economic behavior is largely a reaction to the monetary, fiscal and spending policies of a government whose legislative body is physically located in one of the social cesspools of the nation. (Pupils in Washington public

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 10

From the Publisher...

With this issue we celebrate our fifth year of publishing *LOTUS*. Those of you who have been our readers over the years will notice that *LOTUS* continues to evolve. We thank the many readers

who have used the reader questionnaires as a way to provide us feed-back. Your response is greatly appreciated.

When I reflect upon our years of publishing I am amazed at how much I personally have been influenced and impacted by the articles, new thoughts and ideas that come across my desk. Each year I explore transformational material more thoroughly through workshops, seminars, and intensives as well as through my own personal practice. This in-depth and ongoing study is giving me a deeper understanding of the nature of personal transformation.

Transformation means both the process of changing personality or character and the actual change, in either external form or inner nature. Transformation is a life-long process of redefining oneself, moving past self-imposed limitations to integrate all parts of ourselves. To transform—to push personal evolution often requires an inward journey of enormous proportions. The journey is the search to understand our relationship with life. It is a response to a call to know ourselves more deeply and to connect fully with our essence. It is our opportunity to develop a deep appreciation for who we really are and to free ourselves from past conditioning. When we become our real selves we live our deepest values and ideals.

It is through unconscious habit of thought and action that we unknowingly and knowingly self-

limit ourselves. These habits of mind are like road blocks that we erect to limit our joy, happiness, and deeper wisdom. The only way we can truly transform our lives is to stop the self-defeating thoughts and behaviors that stifle our joy and happiness. Until we transform ourselves we will not experience the deep joy and happiness that we long for.

There is a natural tendency to resist change, to hold to the security and predictability of our lives no matter how dysfunctional. This is reinforced by others who also resist change and would prefer us to stay as we are. Yet we possess extraordinary power over our own healing and our own lives once we understand and begin the path to conscious evolution.

There is a tendency in Western civilization to be attracted to quick fix solutions and promises. Any significant long-term change requires long-term practice, whether that change has to do with learning to play the piano or learning to be a more

peaceful loving person.

It is our focus with *LOTUS* to provide intelligent support and inspiration to sustain you on your transformative journey. To create each issue we sift through hundreds of the latest books and yet-to-be-published manuscripts on personal and spiritual growth. From this material we extract the most thought-provoking, transformative, and down-to-earth articles available.

Thank you for joining us.



Rick NurrieStearns
Publisher

Most of us realize just a fraction of our human potential. We live only part of the life we are given.

—George Leonard & Michael Murphy

Franklin Spier

Moksha

Reflections

schools, for example, are amongst the lowest academic achievers in the country. The incidence of crime in Washington is fifty times that in Copenhagen.)

As a result of over-saving theories the monetary policies of the government are designed to prevent "over-saving" by punishing those who save and are successful. These policies include a sharply graduated income tax and a deliberate devaluation of the dollar that has been taking place year in and year out. In order to maintain some sort of market for its debts, the government lies and lies about the value of its money. What is the real rate of deterioration of purchasing power? As late as 1958 we could still mail a letter for three cents. Now this government service costs nearly eleven times that much. When we look back to 1958 we can note that the prices of houses and automobiles are increasing in approximate proportion to the way the government values its own services.

The deliberate lowering of the purchasing power of the monetary unit (dollar) and the taxing of interest and putative capital gains which are neither interest nor capital gains in a real sense are bound to encourage irrational and wasteful economic behavior of individuals. A government which spends far more than it takes in sets a bad example for individual citizens.—
Charles E. Weber, Ph.D, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

**DESPERATELY
NEEDED THE HELP**

I wish I had *LOTUS* twenty years

Reflections

ago. My time then was terrible and I desperately needed the help *LOTUS* provides. I found the help with other reading. You may never know how many lives your publication may touch. God Bless you in your work.—*Lavonne Farrice, Dennis, Kansas.*

TRULY INSPIRED

I had put aside the summer issue of *LOTUS* Fortunately, my inner being kept prompting me to pick it up again. After reading several articles and “Conscious Notes” I found my way to your interview with Julia Cameron—“A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity.”

A jolt to my nervous system is a mild way of expressing it. There wasn’t one word I didn’t consume completely. Revelations just kept coming. I was totally conscious of the role I play as victim and deny my own capabilities to create.

I intend to follow Julia’s instructions for writing morning pages and artist’s dates. I’m especially pleased to know there is “no wrong way to do it.”

Thank you and Julia for your contribution to the transformation of the planet, our culture and the world community. I am truly inspired to press on and discover the creative power within me.

I was hesitating, for whatever reason, on renewal of my *LOTUS* subscription. Your journal opens my spiritual channels and reveals my most inner being. I won’t be without it. Enclosed is my renewal.—*Michael A. Stockbower, San Diego, California.* •

Mount Madonna

Parallax Press

Conscious Notes

by HENEPOLA GUNARATANA

MEDITATION IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Every musician plays scales. When you begin to study the piano, that's the first thing you learn, and you never stop playing scales. The finest concert pianists in the world still play scales. It's a basic skill that can't be allowed to get rusty. Every baseball player practices batting. It's the first thing you learn in Little League, and you never stop practicing. Every World Series game begins with batting practice. Basic skills must always remain sharp.

Seated meditation is the arena in which the meditator practices his own fundamental skills. The game the meditator is playing is the experience of his own life, and the instrument upon which he plays is his own sensory apparatus. Even the most seasoned meditator continues to practice seated meditation, because it tunes and sharpens the basic mental skills he needs for his particular game. We must never forget, however, that seated meditation itself is not the game. It's the practice. The game in which those basic skills are to be applied is the rest of one's experiential existence.



TONY STONE/FOUL TENNENT

Meditation that is not applied to daily living is sterile and limited.

You learn new ways to receive and understand sensation. You develop new methods of dealing with conscious thought and new modes of attending to the incessant rush of your own emotions. These new mental behaviors must be made to carry over into the rest of your life. Otherwise, meditation remains dry and fruitless, a theoretical segment of your existence that is unconnected to all the rest. Some effort to connect these two segments is essential. A certain amount of carry-over will take place spontaneously, but that process will be slow and

unreliable. You are very likely to be left with the feeling that you are getting nowhere and to drop the process as unrewarding.

One of the most memorable events in your meditation career is the moment when you first realize that you are meditating in the midst of a perfectly ordinary activity. You are driving down the freeway or carrying out the trash and it just turns on by itself. This unplanned outpouring of the

skills you have been so carefully fostering is a genuine joy. It gives you a tiny window on the future. You catch a spontaneous glimpse of what the practice really means. The possibility strikes



TONY STONE/DUGALD BREANER

you that this transformation of consciousness actually could become a permanent feature of your experience. You realize that you actually could spend the rest of your days standing aside from the debilitating clamoring of your own obsessions, no longer frantically hounded by your own needs and greeds. You get a tiny taste of what it is like just to stand aside and watch it all flow past. It's a magic moment.

That vision is likely to remain unfulfilled, however, unless you actively seek to promote the carry-over process. The most important moment in meditation is the instant you leave the cushion. When your practice session is over, you can jump up and drop the whole thing, or you can bring those skills with you into the rest of your activities.

It is crucial for you to understand what meditation is. It is not some special posture, and it is not just a set of mental exercises. Meditation is the cultivation of mindfulness and the application of that mindfulness once cultivated. You do not have to sit to meditate. You can meditate while washing the dishes. You can meditate in the shower, or roller skating, or typing letters. Medita-

tion is awareness, and it must be applied to each and every activity of one's life. This isn't easy.

We specifically cultivate awareness through the seated posture in a quiet place because that's the easiest situation in

with less stressful activities.

Yet the ultimate goal of practice remains to build one's concentration and awareness to a level of strength that will remain unwavering even in the midst of the pres-

tion session and the beginning of "real life" is a long jump. It's too long for most of us. We find our calm and concentration evaporating within minutes, leaving us apparently no better off than before. In order to bridge this gulf, Buddhists over the centuries have devised an array of exercises aimed at smoothing the transition. They take that jump and break it down into little steps. Each step can be practiced by itself.

BREATH COORDINATION

In seated meditation, our primary focus is the breath. Total concentration on the ever-changing breath brings us squarely into the present moment. The same principle can be used in the midst of movement. You can coordinate the activity in which you are involved with your breathing. This lends a flowing rhythm to your movement, and it smooths out many of the abrupt transitions. Activity becomes easier to focus on, and mindfulness is increased. Your awareness thus stays more easily in the present. Ideally, meditation should be a twenty-four-hour-a-day practice. This is a highly practical suggestion.

A state of mindfulness is a state of mental readiness. The mind is not



which to do so. Meditation in motion is harder. Meditation in the midst of fast-paced, noisy activity is harder still. And meditation in the midst of intensely egoistic activities like romance or arguments is the ultimate challenge. The beginner will have his hands full

of life in contemporary society. Life offers many challenges and the serious meditator is never bored.

Carrying your meditation into the events of your daily life is not a simple process. Try it and you will see. That transition point between the end of your medita-

Conscious Notes

burdened with preoccupations or bound in worries. Whatever comes up can be dealt with instantly. When you are truly mindful, your nervous system has a freshness and resiliency which fosters insight. A problem arises, and you simply deal with it, quickly, efficiently, and with a minimum of fuss. You don't stand there in a dither, and you don't run off to a quiet corner so you can sit down and meditate about it. You simply deal with it. And in those rare circumstances when no solution seems possible, you don't worry about that. You just go on to the next thing that needs your attention. Your intuition becomes a very practical faculty.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is mirror-thought.
It reflects only what is presently

happening and in exactly the way it is happening. There are no biases.

Mindfulness is non-judgmental observation. It is that ability of the mind to observe without criticism. With this ability, one sees things without condemnation or judgment. One is surprised by nothing. One simply takes a balanced interest in things exactly as they are in their natural states. One does not decide and does not judge. One just observes. Please note that when we say, "One does not decide and does not judge," what we mean is that the meditator observes experiences very much as a scientist observes an object under a microscope without any preconceived notions, only to see the object exactly as it is. In the same way the meditator notices impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and selflessness.

It is psychologically impossible

for us to observe objectively what is going on within ourselves if we do not at the same time accept the occurrence of our various states of mind. This is especially true with unpleasant states of mind. In order to observe our own fear, we must accept the fact that we are afraid. We can't examine our own depression without accepting it fully. The same is true for irritation and agitation, frustration and all those other uncomfortable emotional states. You can't examine something fully if you are busy rejecting its existence. Whatever experience we may be having, mindfulness just accepts it. It is simply another of life's occurrences, just another thing to be aware of. No pride, no shame, nothing personal at stake—what is there, is there.

Mindfulness is an impartial watchfulness. It does not take sides.

Stars Edge / color

It does not get hung up in what is perceived. It just perceives. Mindfulness does not get infatuated with the good mental states. It does not try to sidestep the bad mental states. There is no clinging to the pleasant, no fleeing from the unpleasant. Mindfulness treats all experiences equally, all thoughts equally, all feelings equally. Nothing is suppressed. Nothing is repressed. Mindfulness does not play favorites.

Mindfulness reminds you of what you are supposed to be doing. In meditation, you put your attention on one item. When your mind wanders from this focus, it is mindfulness that reminds you that your mind is wandering and what you are supposed to be doing. It is mindfulness that brings your mind back to the object of meditation. All of this occurs instantaneously and without internal dialogue. Mindfulness is not thinking. Repeated practice in meditation establishes this function as a mental habit which then carries over into the rest of your life. A serious meditator pays bare attention to occurrences all the time, day in, day out, whether formally sitting in meditation or not. This is a very lofty ideal towards which those who meditate may be working for a period of years or even decades. Our habit of getting stuck in thought is years old, and that habit will hang on in the most tenacious manner. The only way out is to be equally persistent in the cultivation of constant mindfulness. When mindfulness is present, you will notice when you become stuck in your thought patterns. It is that very noticing which allows you to back out of the thought process and free yourself from it. Mindfulness then returns your attention to

its proper focus. If you are meditating at that moment, then your focus will be the formal object of meditation. If you are not in formal meditation, it will be just a pure application of bare attention itself, just a pure noticing of whatever comes up without getting involved—"Ah, this comes up... and now this, and now this... and now this."

Mindfulness is at one and the same time both bare attention itself and the function of reminding us to pay bare attention if we have ceased to do so. Bare attention is noticing. It re-establishes itself simply by noticing that it has not been present. As soon as you are noticing that you have not been noticing, then by definition you are

Center For Spiritual Awareness

Conscious Notes

noticing and then you are back again to paying bare attention.

MINDFULNESS VS CONCENTRATION

Concentration and mindfulness are distinctly different functions. They each have their role to play in meditation, and the relationship between them is definite and delicate. Concentration is often called one-pointedness of mind. It consists of forcing the mind to remain on one static point. Please note the word “force.” Concentration is pretty much a forced type of activity. It can be developed by force, by sheer unremitting willpower. And once developed, it retains some of that forced flavor. Mindfulness, on the other hand, is a delicate function leading to refined sensibilities. These two are partners in the job of meditation. Mindfulness is the sensitive one.

He notices things. Concentration provides the power. He keeps the attention pinned down to one item. Ideally, mindfulness is in this relationship. Mindfulness picks the objects of attention and notices when the attention has gone astray. Concentration does the actual work of holding the attention steady on that chosen object. If either of these partners is weak, your meditation goes astray.

Concentration could be defined as that faculty of the mind which focuses single-mindedly on one object without interruption. It must be emphasized that true concentration is a wholesome, one-pointedness of mind. That is, the state is free from greed, hatred, and delusion. Unwholesome one-pointedness is also possible, but it will not lead to Liberation. You can be very single-minded in a state of

lust. But that gets you nowhere. Uninterrupted focus on something that you hate does not help you at all. In fact, such unwholesome concentration is fairly short-lived even when it is achieved—especially when it is used to harm others. True concentration itself is free from such contaminants. It is a state in which the mind is gathered together and thus gains power and intensity. We might use the analogy of a lens. Parallel waves of sunlight falling on a piece of paper will do no more than warm the surface. But that same amount of light, when focused through a lens, falls on a single point and the paper bursts into flames. Concentration is the lens. It produces the burning intensity necessary to see into the deeper reaches of the mind. Mindfulness selects the object that the lens will focus on and looks

Dialogue House

through the lens to see what is there.

Concentration should be regarded as a tool. Like any tool, it can be used for good or for ill. A sharp knife can be used to create a beautiful carving or to harm someone. It is all up to the one who uses the knife. Concentration is similar. Properly used, it can assist you toward Liberation. But it can also be used in the service of the ego. It can operate in the framework of achievement and competition. You can use concentration to dominate others. You can use it to be selfish. The real problem is that concentration alone will not give you a perspective on yourself. It won't throw light on the basic problems of selfishness and the nature of suffering. It can be used to dig down into deep psychological states. But even then, the forces of egotism won't be understood. Only mindfulness can do that. If mindfulness is not there to look into the lens and see what has been uncovered, then it is all for nothing. Only mindfulness understands. Only mindfulness brings wisdom.

STOLEN MOMENTS

The concept of wasted time does not exist for a serious meditator. Little dead spaces during your day can be turned to profit. Every spare moment can be used for meditation. Sitting anxiously in the dentist's office, meditate on your anxiety. Feeling irritated while standing in a line at the bank, meditate on irritation. Bored, twiddling your thumbs at the bus stop, meditate on boredom. Try to stay alert and aware throughout the day. Be mindful of exactly what is taking place right now, even if it is tedious drudgery. Take advantage of moments when you are alone. Take advantage of activities that are

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 89

Hendricks

color

Divine Spark

PAULA SULLIVAN

As I shook hands with the president, I wondered if anyone else had heard the words echoing in my brain, “This is not what you’re looking for.” With diploma in hand and a sinking heart, I returned to my seat. Having put off graduate studies and career until our three daughters were in elementary school, I had earned my ticket to success and happiness. Even though the words I heard on graduation night continued to haunt me, I sent out resumes; still, the career position didn’t materialize. In the end I was grateful for a part-time teaching assignment at a community college within walking distance of our home. During the next several years, I came to understand that my hunger was not for a career.

The search for something to fill what felt like a hole in my chest took me to a monastery in a neighboring town. As I stepped onto land once part of the Osage Nation, my heart leaped with joy as I hiked among scrub oaks and pines and inhaled the scent of decaying leaves. This was the beginning of my journey inward, a journey that would take an unexpected turn.

For several years, I spent Wednesdays at this Benedictine Monastery dedicated to dialogue among reli-



gions of the East and West. During extended retreat times, I learned to meditate and participated in the common prayer of the community. In discovering eastern spirituality, studying the writings of contemplatives and mystics, I found the mystic dimension of my own heart.

Noticing the intensity of my spiritual practice, a few close friends worried aloud. Surprised by their comments, I began to wonder about the path I was taking. After some reflection, I realized that my spiritual pursuit was at the expense of my primary relationships with my husband and daughters. In an effort to become more involved in the lives of my husband and daughters, I went to the monastery less often, yet continued spiritual practice at home. No matter how hard I tried to be involved in the activities of my family, contentment came only during periods of meditation. I couldn’t figure out why my spiritual practice seemed to distance me further from my family.

In the midst of my pondering, I won the career lottery as a full-time member of the English faculty at community college. Even though I had much less time for spiritual pursuits, once established in the work place

Anna Rubyan

Avatar

Transformations

I forgot my unhappiness. Now that I was working full-time, I had great concern for the well-being of my family as well as my students. For the next three years I was happier than I had ever been.

When asked to teach creative writing for the first time, I committed to the act of writing on a daily basis. It was then that the internal tremors began. During the summer break, I worked on a novel that seemed to spin out of nowhere; my fingers flew across the keyboard, filling page after page without effort. For weeks I wrote, hours at a time, until I wrote a scene that scared me into silence.

When I returned to the classroom for the fall term, strange sensations filled my body. Often I heard people say they were losing their mind, but I felt I was losing my body. The world as I had known it collapsed within days. A colleague, well into her doctorate in psychology, saw my panic. I had all the symptoms of post-traumatic stress but didn't know why. She handed me the name of a highly-regarded therapist and convinced me to call.

In the time it took to set an appointment, I wrestled with God. For ten years I had traveled the transformational journey. It had rough spots, but I was committed to finding the path that would bring my life into balance. Why was everything falling apart? Where was this God I pursued so ardently, this faceless Being I felt drawn to follow. Had I not been a faithful seeker? Lighting a candle, I sat in a darkened room. Just as "This isn't what you're looking for" echoed in my brain a decade before, a new refrain appeared: "Grace builds on Nature." For many months I pondered the

meaning of this statement by Thomas Aquinas, a thirteenth century theologian I had studied in college.

I had stuffed myself with God, but the hole inside was ever widening. Suddenly I realized that all those years of meditation were not wasted. They had strengthened and prepared me to face secrets I had carried a lifetime in the cells of my body. Meditation helped the secrets float to the surface. Now they were ready to come through my voice in the presence of a skilled and compassionate therapist, one able to listen to what family and friends couldn't bear to hear. He empowered me to receive and accept the truth of my childhood as it flowed from my body's memory in a steady stream. Now was the time to heal a childhood covered in denial and fear of losing the mother and father I had nearly sacrificed my Self to love.

Grace had led me to the monastery, yet it was my human choice to continue the practice of meditation. That practice gave me the resolve necessary to heal my wounded mind and body. Even as a preschooler, I was attracted to anything otherworldly; sublimation had allowed me to block the unspeakable pain lying just beneath the surface of my conscious life. The real work of transformation had finally begun: re-discovering and honoring my human history.

After a year of therapy, I realized and accepted what I did to survive years of abuse. My mind created other personalities that protected me through difficult experiences and times. Now I was ready to learn their histories and mine, to help all of us come into the present rather than remain glued to a shame-filled past. Ini-

tially, my greatest resource and steadfast support was my therapist. His unconditional regard for me as a person has helped me choose life and healing when the temptation to do otherwise seemed overwhelming. On many occasions he worked with my husband and children to help them understand and accept the most difficult times on my journey to wholeness.

On confronting my abusers, I had to accept orphan status. Close friends took on new significance as I began to look at them as my chosen siblings and surrogate parents. My spouse of now thirty years endured frequent and painful tests of our relationship as he supported my desire to heal. It took both of us to commit to the grueling work of integration if our marriage were going to survive. When I felt despair, he nudged me with his faith. When he became weary of the pain my therapy uncovered, my courage inspired him. Our daughters grieved for their mother and themselves in the loss of so many relatives who couldn't bear the telling of the secrets.

In these years of healing, the deep regard my husband and I have for one another and each of our daughters, as well as our individual and family faith in God, sustained each of us. Even in the darkest times, humor became salve for my wounds. As my husband and daughters began to recognize my altered states more easily, their gentle humor often provided a bridge to the present. During these years of "grace building on nature," our daughters met and committed to relationships with sensitive men, full of compassion and humor, adding to our storehouse of Grace.

Early on, writing became a powerful tool in my healing. After only

Hay House

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 89

Becoming Myself

MARY-ELLEN BENOIT

So much of life forces us to hide parts of ourselves, to squeeze ourselves into some socially prescribed role. Some of life's experiences attempt to beat us down, to destroy in us the true and valuable parts of ourselves that make us unique. Overcoming and surviving these attempts at personal eradication is a constant, never-ending battle, especially if you are gay or lesbian.

My personal transformation has been a life-long journey, begun in infancy, wending through all the stages of childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and into my middle years. My spirit grows and changes as my body does, wisdom increases along with my age, intellectual understanding comes with experience, compassion grows with knowledge.

It has been a long, fascinating, sometimes surprising journey, whose purpose I believe is to create and reveal the total me.

I didn't "come out" until I was 37 years old. In many ways, this coming out is also a life-long process of blossoming, of unfolding into the fullness of the being you truly are.

People have asked me to tell them when I "knew" that I was a lesbian. There is difficulty in making



anyone understand that "knowing" and "realizing" are different developments. My whole life I felt woman centered—even as a child I sensed that my sustenance, nourishment, and care came mainly from women. As a teenager of the 50's, I began to suspect that not everyone shared this belief in the supremacy of the female. I struggled to fit in, to date boys, to merge my emerging sexual drive with that mysterious attraction to the opposite sex that I did not feel. There was no personal crisis, no great Epiphany in those years, rather a feeling of profound sadness, a loneliness, a great void in my life that I could not begin to identify. I had no words then for lesbian, gay, homosexual. I only knew that to be "queer" was to be despised. My best friends, girlfriends, were like sisters to me. There was an emotional connection I had never felt before. But even from them, I hid my conflict, struggled to be popular, to date, to focus on a male-dominated world.

The next years were full of exploration, of adventure, of trying to find my place in the world. There did not seem to be many choices. Eventually I married a man and gave birth to a beautiful daughter and then a precious son. The marriage did not last, for a variety of reasons. I was aware once again that my women friends

Transformations

and family were my total support system, my day-to-day validation of my worth, my primary source for caring, understanding, and acceptance in those difficult years.

The journey continued. I went back to college. With the help of friends and family I continued to raise my children. I delved into learning and poetry, finding in my writing the outlet for my confusion, fear, and spiritual search for my place and purpose in this life.

Again, I saw that it was women who nurtured me, nourished me, cared for me in the literal sense of the word. I was fortunate to have many friends, and we struggled together to find our paths. We came together after the weekend dates, the jobs, the children's crises, the exams, the weekly budget crunch. Our Sunday evenings together were special, full of love and laughter, tears and advice, sympathy and support.

Eventually, I began to be aware, began to see that I loved women and loved myself for being a woman. I began to see that my thoughts, feelings, and desires were primarily driven by my relationship and link to the universal femaleness.

While I knew many men, dated quite a few, was raising a son, I had to admit that for me, the center of the universe was female. God was a Goddess, and love and sexuality were inextricably linked to women.

I told no one of my insight. I became celibate. I tried to look inward, to be centered and balanced. I wrote poetry and prayed and desperately tried to be silent enough to hear any answer. Finally I met someone who made it impossible for me to hide, to pretend, to deny my passion. We fell in love,

and began a journey together that has lasted for 14 years. We have suffered, rejoiced, raged, grieved, and celebrated, but most of all we have loved and cared for each other.

To "come out" is a term used for a specific social act in our society. But in truth it is a blossoming, a fruition, a seed probing through the soil into sunlight, a breaking free of the butterfly from the cocoon. But it is not all sweetness and liberation. There is much pain, the shedding of illusions about oneself and others, the loss perhaps of values and beliefs one has been taught since childhood. There is danger—the severing of friendships, the estrangement from family, the very real threat to your children, home, and livelihood. This way of being in the world is sometimes exciting and challenging, sometimes frightening and dangerous, but it always feels right.

This is not a lifestyle. It is my life. It is how I am in the world. It is who I love and why I love her. It is the ways in which I choose to spend my free time, the friends I now have, the authors I want to read, the music I listen to. This being lesbian is a life more balanced, because to me it is so natural, so normal to love a being of the same gender. This part of me is the fullest expression of my life, the most awesome affirmation of who and what I am.

I truly believe that this is more destiny than choice, more nature than nurture. I know in the deepest hollows of my heart that I was truly born when I embraced my sexuality. I know now that in a woman-centered, grace-filled, loving place that is a very special gift. •

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TONY STONIZ/DAVID HANOVER

Relationship as Healing

O N D R E A A N D S T E P H E N L E V I N E

When true hearts truly join there is a mystical union an interconnecting of whole human beings which is the foundation for great insight and growth. It is a collaboration in healing. Although we often speak in terms of merging, or becoming one, or dissolving into oneness—this is not a giving up of one person to another. It is not as the great German poet Rilke fears of such commitments, “a hemming-in, a mutual consent that robs one party or both of their fullest freedom and development.”

Stephen Levine is a meditation teacher and writer who has counseled the terminally ill. Ondrea Levine, along with Stephen, codirected the Hanuman Foundation Dying Project. She has served the healing and dying for more than twenty-five years.



Indeed, if two people attempt only to become one, they certainly may get lost. But if the oneness just beyond such concepts is their ultimate concern—if each heart is committed to the universal heart, our birthright, our original nature—neither stops. And the ongoing aerial act is spectacular.

Indeed, when Rilke says that the most that can be expected is that “two solitudes protect and border and greet each other,” he is speaking of the best of the ordinary way. They do not burn for the Beloved. They do not love the truth even more than each other. They refuse to give it all away, to be blessed surveying new frontiers.

The distance from your pain, your grief, your unattended wounds is the distance from your partner. And the distance from your partner is your distance from the living truth, your own great nature. Whatever maintains that distance, that separation from ourselves and our beloveds, must be investigated with mercy and awareness. This distance is not overcome by one “giving up their space” to another, but by both partners entering together the unknown between themselves. The mind creates

Attempting practices that put my mind elsewhere... I went to one of my teachers to ask how I might get rid of the pain. But instead of buying into my escape mechanisms, he said, “Don’t look for relief. Look for the truth!” This statement has done much to propel our investigations.

the abyss but the heart crosses it.

When Ondrea and I met she had already had two operations for cancer. In the first operation, her cervix and uterus were removed. In the second, tumors were excised from the bladder. Clearly if we were to enter together the remarkable potential for emotional and spiritual healing which seemed available in our collaboration, we would first have to focus on the physical body. Having found someone with whom each of us could complete relationship, someone who could go all the way and was committed to do so, our first obligation, while exploring deeper and deeper levels together, was to focus our attention daily on the healing of the physical. There was something too precious here not to direct all our energies into a healing relationship.

During the first years, physical healing was part of our daily regimen. Long-held, half-recognized concepts about illness, the body and even “cure,” dissolving one after another as insight into the depths of what healing might entail, opened us to levels of being that connected the heart with the disheartened. Cure was the known but distant. Healing was the mystery, the

ever-present. Cure seemed limited to the body alone. Healing seemed ongoing, open ended, multidimensional. We sensed that if we followed the path with the heart, the body might follow. But the priorities were clear. In a sense, she—we—were no longer healing just for ourselves but rather for each other and the exploration we had committed to,

Dyad Healing Meditation

This exercise is done with two people who acknowledge momentarily being either a sender or a receiver of the healing energies of the experiment, sitting across from each other, looking into each other's eyes.

Sitting comfortably, look into the eyes of your partner.

Sense the presence, the living suchness, in those eyes.

Let yourself see.

Let yourself be seen.

Feel this person across from you. This being, too, who only wishes to be happy, who only wishes to be free of suffering.

The person you are looking at now is impermanent. Eventually they'll die.

And so is the person they are looking at.

Sense this shared predicament, this impermanence and recurrent pain of being human.

Let this pain be shared in the possibility of a new healing.

Senders, sense in the body of your partner any place that may be calling for healing. Notice any sensations in your body that may be mirroring the experience.

Approach this discomfort in the shared body with mercy. In your body, in theirs, receiving with heart the disheartened in another.

Receivers, allow that which calls for healing to be seen. Open to that healing. Let it in.

In your heart, let your partner know what part of the body, what aspect of the psyche, needs harmonization.

Continued on right page.

and ultimately perhaps the sentient beings it might serve. As we committed together to the healing we took birth for, the isolation—the fear—went out of the illness. And with each level of deepening awareness came a healing, the mystery becoming more distinct, an increasingly experienced undefined union of hearts.

In those first years there was of course the play of bodies and minds introducing themselves to each other (while discovering themselves) as lesser/old ways of relating were auditioned and dismissed. But even in the times when our minds were clouded, beyond such confusion was the ever-present, palpable interconnectedness and commitment that reminded us always to go straight to the heart of healing. At times it was hard to tell if we were pilgrims on the path or clowns in the circus but the next step was always the same: to let go into love, to deepen mercy and awareness, to put down the load as we were able. A moment at a time. Lightening the burden. Healing.

The potential of a healing relationship is in its ability to speculate on the mystery with great “don't know”—an openness of mind which no longer clings to the “known” and insufficient, a mind vulnerable to the truth.

About two years into the process, a much-trusted friend, proficient in Oriental medicine, told Ondrea there was a distinct possibility that she might die within the next six months. He is an expert acupuncturist, someone we certainly would have gone to for treatment had we not lived a thousand miles away. But because of his great concern for Ondrea's well-being, he showed me with a pen on her body the acupuncture points he felt must be regularly stimulated for her body to reorient and heal itself. Although I had never applied acupuncture before, he offered me a set of needles and said, “This isn't how I would have chosen to do it but considering the seriousness of the situation, you really have nothing to lose. Just be sensitive and trust your inner touch.”

For the next year at least three times a week, I inserted needles into extremely sensitive areas of Ondrea's back, knees, and abdomen, in hopes this would bring energy to areas of physical imbalance. Sometimes the sessions went very smoothly and she felt instantly revived. But at other times Ondrea winced in pain due to my ineptitude with the needles, which caused a searing flash to pass through her body. It was one of the most extraordinary situations I have ever found myself in—causing pain to the person I most

wanted to be without pain. It was an incredible lesson in helplessness that deepened our trust and commitment.

We trusted on the physical plane what we had discovered on the mental plane: that healing is entering with mercy and awareness into those areas we have so long withdrawn from in fear and judgment. Thus we followed the path of acknowledging pain, approaching it, exploring its calcified outer ring of thought and resistance, its grief, and entering it with loving kindness. Letting pain float in a moment-to-moment mindfulness and timeless mercy. As this process had consistently aided in the relief and healing of mental pain, so it seemed to aid in the softening and release of physical discomfort. Uncovering layer after layer of wounded holding and antiquated defenses, we experienced the joy of simply being, cured or uncured, healed or unhealed. Quietly listening for what the next skillful step might be.

Sometimes we might both be crying as I turned the needle or placed another one deeper. Sometimes the children would come into the bedroom and find Ondrea lying on her stomach, a dozen needles protruding like quills from her back, and as their shoulders crept up about their ears, attempting to hold back the confusion, they often retreated. But even with their aversion to anything that reminded them of pain, they would at times just sit in the room and chat—something deep within them trusting the love which permeated.

The need for our absolute surrender and “don’t know” trust in the process became a powerful part of the yoga of our healing relationship. It was an extraordinary time.

Now, some years after that period of “heaven/hell,” Ondrea’s body is devoid of cancer and the toxins which so threatened its existence. Looking back on that time, we are unsure whether it was the acupuncture or the enormity of the love we shared that allowed in the healing. Perhaps it was both, combined with an ever-deepening capacity to give to herself that which she had so long offered to others in her many years of service to those in pain in local hospitals and nursing homes.

If you were to ask either of us, now fifteen years after her last cancer diagnosis, how Ondrea dispelled cancer from her body, we would each have to answer, “Don’t know.” But it seemed to be a combination of love and our willingness to focus a merciful awareness on the area to be healed—not ostracizing it or sending anger into the illness but inviting it into the preciousness of the moment.

Dyad Healing Meditation

Nothing to verbalize. Just allow yourself to be received.

Uncover the hurt that wishes healing.

This self-protection, this hard-belliedness is too much to hold onto. Too much suffering.

Let it go. Let it be in your partner’s heart.

Those sending, begin to approach your partner’s pain with mercy.

Acknowledge the physical, mental, and spiritual grief that resides there.

Notice to what degree the sensations in the other’s body and mind resonate in yours.

Meet these feelings, these sensations, with mercy and loving kindness.

Noticing moment to moment the flow of sensation in that area.

Meeting moment-to-moment sensation with moment-to-moment mercy and softness.

Softening around sensations, around thoughts, floating in the mind/body.

Let your partner float in mercy and awareness.

Know that there may be a place within your partner that is all too willing to die, to disappear, world-weary and ready to escape this painful life. We are grieved numb here and there in the body.

Slowly fill those areas that long for your embrace with loving kindness.

Begin to focus into the body of your partner a care for well-being that touches pain with love rather than fear. That meets, not within little pities, but in vast compassion.

Senders, sensing a place of pain in your

Continued on next page.

Dyad Healing Meditation

partner, through your eyes send that mercy and that healing directly into their need.

Receivers, notice any place that limits your willingness for your partner to know your pain. Anything that limits the accessibility of your pain to love.

Let the healing in. Let your partner's love in.

It's so isolating, so lonely, to be alone in pain. Share it with the mercy.

Let their loving kindness be received, be absorbed into your openness to healing.

Open your pain to the possibility of healing. To the possibility of a new mercy and softness.

Notice how doubt can block, how expectation can limit, the accessibility of your pain to healing mercy. Let it in.

Sending, deepen the intensity of this intention to heal. Moment to moment focus your awareness on the sensations subtly imagined, if not felt, in your partner's body.

Waves and waves of healing mercy sent into your partner's pain. Waves and waves of healing mercy received by that pain.

Slowly the hard-held pain softens.

Softly the gentle healing expands, cradling the sensation as if in the arms of the Mother of Mercy or the heart of the Beloved.

Receiving, let your body fill with your partner's concern for your well-being, compassion and loving kindness. Allow your pain into the shared heart of healing.

Receiving, let your partner participate in your healing.

Let yourself receive this mercy that is so

Continued on right page.

There is a school of thought, now gaining credibility, that is exploring the profound potential of the family and relationship to heal the body. As one might focus mercy and a healing awareness into one's own illness or pain, think how much more powerfully magnified that potential becomes when others, too, are directing their loving attention and mercy into that area. Imagine how healing, on so many levels, it might be when several minds and hearts are focused on a discomforted loved one. Each in collaboration with the source. There is in the family, large or small, as well as in one-on-one relationship, a considerable potential for developing deeper capacities for healing.

As our experiments in healing deepened, we began using our bodies as a kind of laboratory to test these techniques. Living in a large adobe house heated by wood stoves, our arms occasionally came in contact with hot metal when adjusting or adding fuel. Entering directly into the discomfort, watching the initial tightening diminish. Softening to the hard reactions around the pain, we noticed that burns healed very rapidly when forgiveness and loving kindness were directed into the multiple tinglings arising there. Often in an hour or two only a red mark remained, rarely a blister. And within a few days, the area was completely unaffected. To test this process of embracing that which we so often rejected, we noticed that if we allowed the mind's insistent reaction of withdrawal and fear to remain without the application of these techniques, the effects of the burn might last for a week or more after blistering and generating considerable sensation in that area. Living in the laboratory, it became something of a game to send love to one area of injury but not to another. To see in ourselves, for ourselves, just what this process of healing entailed.

There were also less subtle opportunities to test the effectiveness of this process. Working with my kidney stone, the second in ten years, we sat together on our meditation pillows and focused intensely on the sensations in my urethra where the sharp edges of the stone produced considerable sensation. Within two hours the stone had disintegrated into a fine powder, easily discharged. Had I suspected the potentials of touching so much pain with that much mercy when I had the first kidney stone, I might have saved myself a very painful lesson in how resistance amplifies pain. But I guess that had to be the teaching before this one.

Continuing to apply the healing power of a merciful awareness, we directed this energy at various times over the

years into a cracked bone, a strep throat, a pinched nerve, and various cuts and contusions with surprising success. At first we felt that these results were just a bit too good to be true, that perhaps somehow we were doing some sort of minor “magic.” But as we continued to apply these techniques, we discovered the magic of a deeply focused awareness and the wonderment of mercy and forgiveness to enter that which has become closed off, numbed, and perhaps inflamed.

Other opportunities, too, arose. When I was nineteen, I learned that I had a “congenital spinal condition.” Disks in the fourth and fifth lumbar regions had ruptured when I was in college, causing me to return home for emergency surgery. For some time after the operation, aspirin and limited function were how I dealt with the occasional discomfort in the lower back. Some years later in my forties, the disks in my neck began to collapse, releasing considerable pain and further decreasing mobility. My initial reaction was to take anti-inflammatory medication and hope the condition would go no further. But this didn’t work. My arm became numb, with pain radiating into my right eye.

During the first months of the spinal sensations, I bargained with my discomfort. My resistance sought techniques that might relieve me but as hard-bellied as I was, it was like throwing meat to a rabid dog to keep it at bay a moment longer. My discomfort was unaltered. Attempting practices that put my mind elsewhere but hardly investigating that which intensified the disagreeableness of the experience, I went to one of my teachers to ask how I might get rid of the pain. But instead of buying into my escape mechanisms, he said, “Don’t look for relief. Look for the truth!” This statement has done much to propel our investigations.

Together we began to explore the sensations and sent forgiveness instead of fear into the pain. Responding with compassion instead of reacting with anger, a new confidence arose in our ability to heal. Instead of doubt and a sense of failure, we noticed a deeper trust in the process as pain began to diminish. We noticed an increase in the ability to turn my neck. X-rays of the area met with a doctor’s frown. His suggestion that surgery would be necessary once again was left behind in a new “don’t know” at the possibility of going beyond what others insisted was unhealable. Now some years later, what was incapacitating is at times only mildly discomforting. The progression of the spinal disintegration seems to have stopped, and I am without symptoms or loss of flexibility for very long periods.

Dyad Healing Meditation

hard to give to ourselves. Let their care in.
Allow yourself to be loved that much.

Let it in. Receive.

Sending, notice any resistance or doubt that limits your capacity to join in the healing.

Let the powerful intentions for your partner’s well-being penetrate whatever residual grief may arise. Have mercy on you, on them.

Receiving, notice whatever blocks the possibilities of healing. Let it go. Not doubt, not fear, not anger. None of them are worth holding onto. This is the moment you took birth for.

Notice how even boredom can block something so important, so precious. Let it go.

Focus again and again on opening to this care, this concern for your well-being.

Feel the great roar of your partner’s heart echoing in yours.

Let the roar of your partner’s enormous care for your well-being displace the pain and weariness.

Let the healing be sent. Let the healing be received.

Notice any fear of being loved that much.
Let it in.

Or any fear of loving that much. Let it come through you.

Let the healing we each took birth for float in each other’s heart.

Let it float in your partner’s great nature.

Let it be received in your great heart. •

Now any increasing sensation in the shared body/shared heart instructs us once again in mercy and awareness, drawing two hearts into a single focus.

We are all wounded healers on the way to completion, entering our wholeness just beneath the surface of our superficial holdings, the shared investigation of discomforts leading to a sense of satisfaction and wholeness. Living in the lab, life becomes an experiment in truth.

This capacity to experience directly your partner's process creates a bond which enables each to experience the other's mind-body-spirit. And on occasion even to recognize conditions not previously diagnosed but later confirmed by physicians. This mirror effect, pleasant or unpleasant, is just another aspect of what poet David Whyte called "living with the consequences of love."

In some ways, this living with the enormous potentials and difficult healings of the deeper levels of a conscious loving is not unlike what we have come to call "wearing the psychic hat." In workshops we ask the participants, if we had a hat which projected your thoughts to everyone within three hundred feet, who would be the first to volunteer to put on that hat? NO one ever raises a hand. But committed relationship is just such an invitation. How long are we going to resist putting on the hat of truth? How long can we stand feeling so unsafe just to maintain the illusion of safety—the smallest of small mind?

And we ask you each, as gently as possible, what keeps you from wearing that hat? Are you afraid someone will overhear your insecurities, your sexual fantasies, your angry commentary, your frightened prayers? How much of our life do we feel we need to submerge in order to stay alive? How little mercy has touched this secret pain and longing?

This commitment to the deepest levels of relationship, this openness to wear "the psychic hat," is perhaps personified in the story of a friend traveling in India. During a hiatus between meditation retreats our nearly penniless friend was walking the streets of Benares when he was approached by a beggar who said quite insistently, "Give me money!" To which our friend replied, "I would if I could but I have none, dear friend." Bowing

slightly, he continued on his way. But the beggar would not let him take more than a step before he pulled again on his sleeve demanding once more, "Give me money! Give me money!" To which our friend replied, looking softly into the beggar's eyes, "I would give if I could but I have no money," and shook an empty pocket to display his sincerity. As he continued slowly on his way, the beggar reappeared in front of him and insisted once more, "Give me money!" To which our friend, soft of belly and open of heart, gently replied that it would give him great pleasure to share what he had but all he had left after six months of meditating in India was his heart. And that he wished greatly for this man's well-being. The beggar, silent for a moment, looked deeply into his eyes, relaxed his hold on his sleeve, smiled, and whispered softly to him, "When you see God in everyone, everyone will see God in you," and disappeared into the crowd. Nothing that came out of this stranger, neither aggression nor anger nor even his obvious need, closed our friend's heart to the moment they were sharing. He was simply present. So when we see others as the Beloved, that is what they will see in us. When someone reaches out to you, no matter how awkwardly, and you respond with mercy, even when there is nothing you feel you can do—when not even helplessness obstructs your love or your sense of connectedness—you become the beloved of the Beloved. You become love itself, the mystery. It is, indeed, as Rilke wrote.

For one human being to love another human being: that is perhaps the most difficult task that has been entrusted to us, the ultimate task, the final test and proof, the work for which all other work is mere preparation. Loving does not at first mean merging, surrendering, and uniting with another person—it is a high inducement for the individual to ripen, to become something in himself, to become world, to become world in himself for the sake of another; it is a great, demanding claim on him, something that chooses him and calls him to vast distances. •

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TONY STONE/LORI ADAMSKI/PEEK

The Liberation of Age

M A R I A H A R R I S

When we claim our freedom and enter the terrain of age, seeking to learn how to proclaim liberty throughout this land to all its inhabitants, a fresh realization grips us. We are confronting an unknown land, a terra incognita. We're exploring it, even creating it, as we go along. We have only the sketchiest of maps.

At the turn of the twentieth century, women's life expectancy was 46. The nuances and the fullness of life past 50 weren't major concerns. Only in the years of our own elderhood has life expectancy changed for women, now hovering close to 80 in the United States. Gail Sheehy now admits that as late as 1976, when she wrote her influential book "Passages," she rarely touched on life beyond 50. Not only couldn't she imagine herself this old, but most people she interviewed thought of 50 as over the hill.

Maria Harris holds a Ph.D. from Union Theological Seminary in New York and has taught at Andover Newton and Princeton theological seminaries. A preeminent scholar, she is the author of ten books on aspects of religious education and the role of women in the church, as well as the popular guide, "Dance of the Spirit: The Seven Steps of Woman's Spirituality."



But even as attention has turned toward the second half of life, more specifically to the years between fifty and one hundred, certain assumptions about age have precluded our asking the right questions. Until now, inquiry into later life has focused on the five percent of the over-65 population in nursing homes or the five percent of the aging suffering from Alzheimer's, not on ordinary older people. Inquiry has focused not on age in itself, but on age in relation to youth. In fact, the defining characteristic of age has become *no longer being young*. Youth provides our lens, our angle of vision. A (if not *the*) guiding question in age has turned out to be, "What does it mean—physically, sexually, psychologically—to leave youth behind?"

For far too long, we elders have been and done what too many students of aging, developmental theorists, or even gerontologists have told us to be and do. We've been taught that age is equivalent to dealing with sickness, loneliness, impairment, and decline; and we've bought into the presumption that these conditions constitute the meaning of age. Even as I began writing this book, part of me was surprised to read responses to my questionnaire revealing alive, vital, involved older women who failed to focus on decline and impairment. I wondered whether they were unusual, and concluded they weren't.

In realizing that, I've discovered something I now want to proclaim. From the rooftop of my soul I want to shout, "We've been asking the wrong questions about age." The central questions most

fitting for us aren't how to deal with pathologies or inevitable decline and death, although the last two are relevant because the way of all living things is to decline and die. But that's not the meaning of age. Age's central questions are more along the lines of those in the following exercise.

PROBING A NEW SET OF QUESTIONS

Before we explore some more general responses to new questions about age, pause to listen to your own responses. Begin by attending to your breathing, becoming centered and quiet, perhaps using the mantra, "Listen, listen, listen to your heart" for an initial period of three minutes. Then listen to your heart's probing and respond to the following questions:

1. Now that you have entered the land of aging, what freedoms await you?
2. What are some resistances to age once binding you that are now gone?
3. Complete: For me, the best thing about being free to grow old is.

Share your responses with one other person, or write them in your journal, before considering those that follow.

Each person's answers to these questions will differ to some degree. Following are four of my own responses to question 1.

We are free to cherish age. That's a mighty course change in an ageist society, so obsessed with youth it's difficult to find the faces of over-50 (and certainly over-60) women in advertising or playing romantic leads against agemates such as Sean Connery or Robert Redford. For those female leads, Hollywood wants women in their thirties—Michelle Pfeiffer or Demi Moore—saying of still-gorgeous women in their forties, fifties, or beyond, "We can't use her. She's over the hill."

But as we bid youth a gentle farewell and embrace the freedoms of age, we know we're not over some hill, but in a lush, green valley, full of fresh growth. So we ask, "What does Hollywood know about it?" and turn to age as a source of truth—and strength and power—in our lives, one to be embraced, not feared. We discover that cherishing

and befriending age feels right, fits, the way flats do after decades of high heels.

One simple way to cherish our age is to stop creating false images of ourselves by trying to look younger than we are, to abandon “age passing” in favor of proudly exhibiting our actual years. Some of us may add back the years we knocked off our age when we turned 50; others may forego makeup. At 58, I stopped coloring my hair and began greeting the now silver-haired me when I looked in the mirror. When I did, my eyes revealed an older woman at peace with herself and in tune with her inner elder.

Embracing honesty regarding our physical selves allows us to pierce the surface and reach our deeper spiritual selves. Releasing superficial obsessions that may constrict us, we become alert to interior capacities ripe for development, including personal power, honest sexuality, and deep contemplation. The fullness of years that “Jubilee” celebrates becomes the basis for a genuinely new spirituality that liberates us even further into wisdom.

We are free to be wise. Sometimes, when I end a workshop, I go around the room and ask women to answer the question, “Who are you becoming?” Last week, when I did that, Alla, in her late fifties, answered, “I’m becoming a wise woman,” reminding all of us present that that could be true for us, too.

Becoming wise, like becoming free, takes a long time. Wisdom is a kind of knowledge based on intuition, but the intuition, in turn, comes from living and being in touch with the range of experience long life offers. It’s cumulative. But it’s physical, too, centered in the body and in blood, birth, and

Becoming wise, like becoming free, takes a long time. Wisdom is a kind of knowledge based on intuition, but the intuition, in turn, comes from living and being in touch with the range of experience long life offers.

pain. It involves acting on hunches, especially the hunch that sometimes the risky action is the right one, the desperate move the only possibility.

Genuine wisdom involves learning from the wisdoms of other forgotten or overlooked people, out of a humility that knows none of us has all the answers. It means learning from the blind how to trust our own fingertips, from women who use wheelchairs how to travel up the ramp, from women of color how to challenge systems that enchain us.

But wisdom also involves admitting that we can make terrible mistakes, have huge gaps in our understanding, and always retain the capacity for evil. Whenever I read the entire twenty-fifth chapter of “Leviticus,” I’m reminded of this. For despite the extraordinary wisdom of Jubilee, there’s a dreadful fault line crossing it: the passage that allows *some* slaves to remain in bondage, as long as they aren’t “our” people.

As for the male and female slaves whom you may have, it is from the nations around you that you may acquire male and female slaves. You may also acquire them from among the aliens residing with you and from their families that are with you, who have been born in your land and they may be your property. You may keep them as a possession for your children after you, for them to inherit as property. These you may treat as slaves, but as for your fellow Israelites, no one shall rule over the other with harshness. (Lev. 25:44-46)

I used to be terribly shocked by that, wondering how the first Jubilee people could be so unseeing. I thought of these lines as a scar, a fissure of evil,

flawing the wholeness of Jubilee. I still do. But I also suspect that this passage, repudiated in modern times so that the teaching and practice of Jubilee today does extend to enslaved persons, was left there to remind me of terrible omissions in my own life, places of evil I am capable of ignoring.

We are free to let go. A central and recurring theme in Western mystical tradition is detachment, which speaks to the promise of letting go, release, and redemption. Although some interpret it as cool distancing from a situation or self-absorbed withdrawal from working toward justice, it is actually a facet of liberation.

Complementing this tradition, the “Bhagavad Gita” of Hinduism teaches that the detached person is active, but that being active differs here from its usual meaning. A person now acts without looking for the fruits of her actions. Whatever we are called to do or are able to do is now done for its own sake, not for the sake of results or rewards. And although such an attitude doesn’t necessarily depend on age, it characterizes later years more than it does youth.

Expressing her own growing detachment, 50-year-old Anna Mae, who describes herself as “a youngster beginning old age,” writes that as she ages, she experiences the power of “a growing freedom and urgency to say what I care about most deeply,” coupled with “the desire and will to simplify my life of material and emotional things.” The result of that, she adds, is the ability to give “time and space to friends, travel, and political involvement.” For her, letting go of the habit of saying what’s expected and distancing herself from material things enrich her growing into age.

My husband, Gabriel, is a strikingly detached person, a man who is very hard to buy gifts for because “things” don’t possess him. A mere 58, he says detachment means you’re willing to wait on life if you must, determined and patient enough to stay at what you feel called to do. Whether your work is designing a cathedral, mopping floors, governing a nation, or lying flat on your back in pain, “the human vocation is to stay at our post and do the best we can. And when we’ve done that, he surmises, the last element in detachment—as it is in

the last part of life—is to take no credit but instead “return glory to the Source of all gifts.”

We are free to be mature, moral agents. Embracing age, wisdom, and detachment leads to a sense of ourselves as *mature*—grownups at last; as *moral*—spiritual beings who believe goodness and creativity must triumph over evil and decay; and as *agents*—human actors who have given up roles such as pretender, little-girl-lost, or earth-mother-who-can-fix-all-ills simply to be what we are: human.

Aging means living in the interstices of paradoxes: doing and not-doing, laughing and weeping, living and dying. Freeing ourselves from youth, superficial knowledge, and acquisitiveness liberates us to give ourselves to the world. We may have already learned the wonder in a life of continuing thresholds and the quiet grounding achieved when we take time for the hallowing that prepares us for liberation. Now it is time to learn the necessity of the ritual act of proclaiming freedom, one that may begin with our own lives but eventually extends beyond our own personal boundaries.

JUBILEE, A RELATIONAL SPIRITUALITY

It would be a grave error to interpret Jubilee as “proclaiming liberty” simply for ourselves. For those two words are followed by seven more: “throughout the land to all its inhabitants.” Claiming personal liberty goes hand in hand with proclaiming it for others. This Jubilee ritual makes it very clear that we who would live its spirituality must reach out beyond ourselves to anyone or anything existing in a condition of bondage, servitude, or imprisonment.

An early example of this interpretation occurs in a reading from the Hebrew Bible clearly based on “Leviticus.” In chapter 61 of “Isaiah,” in a passage beloved to those of many religions and even those of no religion, the prophet-poet writes:

The spirit of God is upon me because that God has anointed me; has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to prisoners, and to proclaim the year of God’s favor.

That “year of God’s favor” is the Jubilee year,

and here Isaiah affirms that Jubilee prescribes a connected, social, and proactive spirituality. The liberty and freedom I want for myself as a Jubilee woman must be earned by doing things that contribute to the freedom of others, things as simple as praying for their freedom and as complicated as joining the Peace Corps, the way Lillian Carter did at 68. Such activity is a sign the Spirit is upon me also.

The breadth of Jubilee liberty is reiterated in the New Testament in the gospel of “Luke.” When Jesus returns to Nazareth, where he was raised (“Each of you shall return to your place and to your people, where you were brought up”), and goes to the synagogue to speak to his neighbors, he asks for the scroll containing the book of “Isaiah” and reads the passage quoted above. Then he adds, referring to Jubilee’s relevance to the people gathered in the synagogue, “Today, this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” The promise of Jubilee cannot be fulfilled in isolation, but only as part of a community.

This meaning of Jubilee as the proclamation of liberty beyond ourselves is alive in modern times. In 1991, for example, missionaries from Panama asked the United States and the World Bank to declare a year of Jubilee in 1992, the five hundredth anniversary of the voyages of Columbus. But they didn’t ask it for themselves. They requested it instead for Central America’s poor African-American and indigenous peoples, overburdened by crushing and exorbitant debts and referred to globally, as if it were their only identity, as debtor nations. The missionaries saw the relevance of release, forgiveness, and amnesty, both beyond themselves and beyond biblical times.

In the United States, the proclamation of liberation from bondage compels us to consider our prisons. We are remarkably ignorant of women’s prisons, for example, and the toll prison takes on mothers and children. Unlike in the Bible, where prisoners are not criminals or convicts but prisoners of war, captives, hostages, or victims of government



TONY STONE/ROD DARIQUIST

oppression, our prisons are too often places of warehousing for many nonviolent offenders who have broken civil laws and who might be better sentenced to community service. Prisons neither rehabilitate nor offer new beginnings.

“Lila served two years for lying about a \$167 welfare check. She was offered one year if she would plea-bargain, but she refused, went to trial, and got two years,” wrote one aging woman prisoner, reporting on this system. Lila still insists she never cashed that check, the reporter continues. “I think it was my cousin done it, but I didn’t get that money.” Even worse, when her sentence is finished, Lila will still know nothing of budgeting her welfare check, will still not know how to read and write.

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TONY STONE/TIMOTHY SHONNARD

The Art of Listening

LYNDA FIELD

“At the station we were a team of 20 to 30 people and Yaba Walaga was able to identify many of them by the sound of their footsteps, as well as a multitude of other sounds in the cacophony of the rain forest. This highly differentiating acoustic perception is an ability totally lost in western cultures. We have also lost sight of the psychological value of the greeting and the social value of communication generally. Simple human conversation is a disappearing social phenomenon. Most oral information is now fed into electronic devices or written on machines. Most of what we hear and see emanates from the same type of technological media.”—Andreas Fuglesang, “About Understanding”

What is the art of listening? What does it involve? Why is it important for good communication? The Chinese verb “to listen” is composed of five characters, meaning: *ear, you, eyes, undivided attention, heart.*

This translation suggests that listening is more than just hearing, which we often regard as an instinctive function. In fact the art of listening involves *all* our being. When we listen with our whole selves we are doing so much more than just hearing the words. We become aware of what is being communicated at all levels of our being—we are listening with our head and heart. When we listen to someone with *all* our attention we are validating that person. We are saying, “I respect your views—feelings—thoughts; you have a right to them and you have a right to express them.”

If you listen in the Chinese sense you are *listening to understand*; you are listening with every part of your being, with your mind—body—spirit—emotions.

When two people are listening to understand each other they are in effect saying to each other, you deserve my undivided attention. The lines of communication are open and both people are validating each other. They are aware of each other's self worth and so have created a truly supportive interaction. Because their communication is based on trust, it

When two people are listening to understand each other they are in effect saying to each other, you deserve my undivided attention. The lines of communication are open and both people are validating each other. They are aware of each other's self worth and so have created a truly supportive interaction.

babies listen. They are wholly attentive and aware. We lose these skills as we grow up and start to close up emotionally. Victim behavior includes poor

can be open and honest. When we validate each other in this way we are increasing our own and each other's self-esteem.

DO YOU LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND?

How do you listen when you are bored? Do you cut off and start daydreaming? What happens if you disagree with someone? Can you still listen or are you busy working out what your response will be and how you are going to say it? How does it feel when you know that someone is involved in their own thoughts when you are trying to communicate with them? Do you maintain eye contact when you are listening or are you apt to fidget and look away? Do you ever finish sentences for people? How do you feel when someone does that to you? Are you aware of a person's body language when they are talking to you? Can you listen with your eyes? If someone says one thing but contradicts it with his/her body language can you pick up these clues? If, for example, someone says that she's feeling fine but shows anxiety in her physical body—clenched fists, hunched shoulders, lack of eye contact—which would you believe? Can you listen without judgment?

Can you listen with your whole self?

We were born to listen in this way. Watch the way that



TONY STONE/BRAN BAILEY

communication skills. If we are poor listeners we are responding as victims.

Our early communication experiences have a direct effect on our listening skills.

Stuart remembers that when he was a child he always spoke very quickly to his father in order to stop him interrupting and criticizing. Stuart often finds himself interrupting others and repeating his father's behavior—he has learned to listen aggressively.

On the other hand, William, who remembers being listened to in a similar way, has become a submissive listener. He is so worried about his own performance that he doesn't have time to listen to another person and so he shuts off.

Aggressive listening may include interrupting/fidgeting/threatening body language, and critical intervention. The listener's underlying message to the speaker is, "You're not worth listening to," and so the speaker feels low in self-esteem. The lines of communication close as the speaker feels threatened and responds in a more guarded way. Aggressive listening is a victim response. We cannot respect our own sense of self worth whilst we are denying the worth of others.

The underlying message in submissive listening is, "How am I coming over, what sort of impression am I making? I haven't got any spare attention to spend on listening to you."

Check your own childhood communication memories. Can you find a relationship between the ways that you were listened to and the ways that you now listen?

SOME LISTENING SKILLS

- Concentrate on the speaker.
- Maintain eye contact as much as possible.
- Listen to the content of what is being said.
- Listen to body language.
- Try not to interrupt.
- Listen for the things that are not being said.
- Keep an open mind.
- Watch your own body language. Is it open and receptive?

If we listen with understanding we can support someone without necessarily agreeing. In this way we can separate a person's intrinsic self worth from their behavior. We are *not* our behavior; we are more than the sum of our actions. Remember how our self-esteem is linked with our ability to separate ourselves from our mistakes and the things we can't do? Well, when we are listened to with understanding we are being validated and our self-esteem is being supported. Similarly when we can listen in this way we support our own self-esteem. Supporting self-esteem opens up the lines of communication and then all things are possible, even when we disagree about opinions. Closing our ears, eyes, and in fact whole selves to another person is hurtful. It denies their self worth and closes down the likelihood of communication and then very little is possible. Remember how it feels when someone stops listening to you.

Keep practicing your listening skills. Become aware of your own blocks to listening and work at removing them. A wonderful byproduct of listening to understand is that every encounter becomes interesting in some way. All communication becomes fascinating when we listen with every part of our being. We learn so much about the other person and so much about ourselves. •

Lynda Field has a degree in sociology and social psychology. She is a trained counselor and psychotherapist, who lives in Cornwall England. From the book "Creating Self Esteem" by Lynda Field. Copyright 1993 by Lynda Field. Printed with permission from the publisher Element Books.

Eight Traits of Emotional Hunger

D O R E E N V I R T U E

Emotional and physical hunger can feel identical, unless you've learned to identify their distinguishing characteristics. The next time you feel voraciously hungry, look for these signals that your appetite may be based on emotions rather than true physical need. This awareness may head off an emotional overeating episode.

EMOTIONAL HUNGER:

Is sudden. One minute you're not thinking about food, the next minute you're starving. Your hunger goes from 0-60 within a short period of time.

Is for a specific food. Your cravings are for one certain type of food, such as chocolate, pasta, or a cheeseburger. With emotional eating, you feel you *need* to eat that particular food. No substitute will do!

Is "above the neck." An emotionally based craving begins in the mouth and the mind. Your mouth wants to taste that pizza, chocolate, doughnut. Your mind whirls with thoughts about your desired food.

Is urgent. Emotional hunger urges you to eat "Now!" There is a desire instantly to ease emotional pain with food.

Is paired with an upsetting emotion. Your boss yelled at you. Your child is in trouble at school. Your spouse is in a bad mood. Emotional hunger occurs in conjunction with an upsetting situation.

Involves automatic or absent-minded eating. Emotional eating can feel as if someone else's hand is scooping up the ice cream and putting it into your mouth ("automatic eating"). You may not notice that you've just eaten a whole bag of cookies ("absent-minded eating").

Does not cease, even when the body is full. Emotional overeating stems from a desire to cover up painful feelings. You stuff yourself to deaden your troubling emotions and you will eat second and third helpings, even though your stomach may hurt from over-fullness.

Promotes guilt about eating. The paradox of emotional overeating is that you eat to feel better and then end up berating yourself for eating cookies, cakes, or cheeseburgers. You promise to atone ("I'll exercise, diet, skip meals, and so on—tomorrow!")

PHYSICAL HUNGER:

Is gradual. Your stomach rumbles. One hour later, it growls. Physical hunger gives your steadily progressive clues that it's time to eat.

Is open to different foods. With physical hunger, you may have food preferences, but they are flexible. You are open to alternative choices.

Is based in the stomach. Physical hunger is recognizable by stomach sensations. You feel a gnawing, a rumbling, emptiness, and even pain in your stomach with physical hunger.

Is patient. Physical hunger would prefer that you ate soon, but doesn't command you to eat right at that instant.

Occurs out of physical need. Physical hunger occurs because four or five hours have lapsed since your last meal. You may experience light-headedness or low energy if overly hungry.

Involves deliberate choices and awareness of the eating. With physical hunger, you are aware of the food on your fork, in your mouth, and in your stomach. You consciously choose whether to eat half your sandwich or the whole thing.

Stops when satisfied. Physical hunger stems from a desire to fuel and nourish the body. As soon as that intention is fulfilled, you stop eating.

Is based on eating as a necessity. When the intent behind eating is based in physical hunger, there's no guilt or shame. You realize that eating, just like breathing oxygen, is a requisite ingredient of life. •

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Realizing the Potential of Body, Mind, Heart, and Soul with Integral Transformative Practice

AN INTERVIEW WITH
GEORGE LEONARD & MICHAEL MURPHY

BY MARY NURRIESTEARN



George Leonard, above left, is a pioneer in the field of human potential and the author of ten books, including "The Transformation," "Education and Ecstasy," "The Ultimate Athlete," and "Mastery." He holds a fourth degree black belt in Aikido and is co-owner of a martial arts school in Mill Valley, California. He is the founder of Leonard Energy Training (LET), a transformative practice inspired by Aikido. Michael Murphy, above right, co-founded Esalen Institute in 1962 and helped start Esalen's Russian American Exchange Program. Through this work, he helped create a new style of citizens' diplomacy which increased understanding between the two superpowers. He is the author of three novels, "Golf in the Kingdom," "Jacob Atabet," and "An End to Ordinary History," as well as two works of nonfiction, "In the Zone: Transcendent Experience in Sport" (co-authored by Rhea White) and "The Future of the Body."

LOTUS: Let's begin by defining "integral transformative practice."

GEORGE LEONARD: We call it "integral transformative practice" because it truly integrates mind, body, heart and soul. It's not that each is in a compartment and we put all the compartments together, but that each is integrated with the others. "Practice" is a wonderful word. For us it implies the idea of Tao in Chinese and Do in Japanese, that is a path upon which you walk primarily for its own sake, although all sorts of good things might happen. "Transformative" means changing form. We're simply talking about positive change. In addition to integrating the whole person and serving as a path upon which you walk, it is dedicated to positive change and growth.

The more integral you make the practice the more wonderful all the particular parts become. For example, if you work out physically, your meditation gets better. If you meditate, it's easier to have an open heart towards others. If you have an open heart towards others, you feel better when you're training physically, and so forth. It's synergistic.

GEORGE LEONARD: Writing this book really affected me. Teaching Aikido is not just teaching moves; it's teaching life. In my Aikido teaching over the last two months, I've had one basic theme, to meditate between techniques and then to have the techniques become meditation, even when someone is rushing in and attacking you. It has been very exciting for the students. Sometimes when you're being attacked, you get even more deeply into a meditative state. Everything seems wonderful and you're not trying and yet wonderful things are happening, like in the Tao, the path you walk for its own sake.

MICHAEL MURPHY: George, do you have your students meditate between each move?

GEORGE LEONARD: We start off with meditation and move into witness meditation. Next, we do a few techniques and I encourage students to stay in and deepen whatever state they were in during meditation. Then, we try more techniques. Two or three meditations later, we talk about non-attachment to the results of Aikido techniques. In

other words, lose all attachment for throwing somebody, stay in the state of being with the person, enter the flow of incoming energy, and create a dance out of it. Think about the flow and about remaining in a meditative state. It's been very ecstatic.

MICHAEL MURPHY: I'm going to teach a golf workshop in Colorado. My co-facilitator and I have been discussing this very idea, encouraging golfers to meditate, not just before the round but actually between the holes.

GEORGE LEONARD: It is so deeply centering. When you empty out, you are so marvelously present and centered and alive. Everything takes on a new element of surprise, a kind of wonderful sense of Christmas-time.

MICHAEL MURPHY: This is the kind of thing that we should have been doing all along. Writing the book and developing our program made me think of it and do it.

LOTUS: Mike, you said Esalen taught you that people can't make healthy lasting change without attention to the whole person, without long-term practice, and without solid support. Comment on that, please.

MICHAEL MURPHY: Esalen is a retreat center out in the country. Somewhere between six and nine thousand people come there every year. They come for a weekend or five days or a month and then leave. It is a great place for awakenings, beginnings, transitions, and marvelous conferences to catalyze projects that have outreach. But it's not set up for support of long term practice. From the beginning we've seen that people come, open up, have a tremendous high, go home, make a few little changes, and sometimes experience real disruptions with their jobs and family. They've changed and their environment has not changed. Then they go from there. They can get a practice, forget everything, or come back to Esalen again and again. People need sustained support. That's why George and I did the experiment described in the book and why we want to create a center. People need daily support for the rest of their lives for transformative

Fundamental Principles Underlying Integral Practice

- Most of us realize just a fraction of our human potential. We live only part of the life we are given.
- The culture we inhabit reinforces only some of our latent capacities while neglecting or suppressing others. In the contemporary West, for example, there is great support for high-level athletic development but relatively little for advanced meditation and the meta-normal capacities it evokes.
- Most, if not all, human attributes can give rise to extraordinary versions of themselves, either spontaneously or through transformative practice. This is the case for perception of external events, somatic awareness, communication skills, vitality, movement abilities, capacities to manipulate the environment directly, feelings of pain and pleasure, cognition, volition, sense of self, love, and bodily structures.
- Extraordinary attributes, when seen as a whole, point toward a more powerful and luminous human nature, even a new type of physical embodiment in which the flesh will be suffused with new joy, beauty, and power.
- Extraordinary attributes frequently seem to be given rather than earned and often arise fully formed from a dimension beyond ordinary functioning. Furthermore, their appearance sometimes appears to be mediated by supernormal agencies or processes (which in Christian terms are called the “graces of God,” in Buddhism the “workings of Buddha-nature,” in Taoism the “way of the Tao”).
- A widespread realization of extraordinary attributes might lead to an epochal evolutionary turn analogous to the rise of life from inorganic matter and of humankind from its hominid ancestors.

change. When asked “What is the secret of enlightenment?”, the Buddha said, “Seek out the Sanga, the fellowship.” Same advice in Alcoholics Anonymous. If you want to kick drinking, get in a group that challenges and supports you. You have to receive daily support, cultural support. Particular high level capacities emerge most frequently in cultures that prize and support them, whether it’s athletic skill in America or contemplative bliss in India.

GEORGE LEONARD: We’re looking to combine the two. When you combine things, there is an energetic effect that empowers itself and spirals upward. Things are pulled together that previously seemed separate. The genius of Mike’s book, “Golf in the Kingdom,” was that it put golf together with highest spiritual aspirations. It’s an idea that seemed shocking and yet why should it? Every aspect of life has spirit in it. We can pretend that it doesn’t, we can try to keep spirit out and unbalanced, but spirit is everywhere, body is everywhere. Heart, feeling, emotion, and mind are wonderful entities and finally they are all one.

MICHAEL MURPHY: That’s a great thought George. Spirit is everywhere and body is everywhere. It’s absolutely true.

LOTUS: George, you attribute your practice of Aikido with learning the joy of practice for its own sake. Will you discuss this please?

GEORGE LEONARD: In my book, “Mastery,” I wrote a chapter called “Learning to Love the Plateau.” Any long-term learning entails extremely long periods on the plateau where you don’t seem to make progress, yet practice diligently. At first I thought that plateaus were a big bother. “Oh my God, another plateau. I haven’t made progress for the last two months.” Then boom, here comes a little spurt and I’m virtually on a higher level. Now I say, “Oh boy, another plateau!” I just stay with my practice knowing advancement will come. My main joy is having stability, a continuity in my life that I go to practice. I feel wonderful when I walk into the Dojo, the practice studio, go to the dressing room and change clothes. I have a nice warm feeling inside. I’m home, doing what I should be doing and what’s really me, what I really care about. Then I speak to the students, step on the mat, bow to our founder, and practice begins.

Our massive cultural goal orientation—go to school, make good grades so you can get into a good college, so you

can get a good job, so you can get a big car and a big house—teaches you to do what you're doing because of something else. That is not living. We discard about ninety six percent of our lives with that type of reinforcement. We're in the present moment about two to four percent of our lives. We basically throw the rest away. We have to use the life we're given. I learned to enjoy the practice, for my own sake, not for the fact that I was going to get some kind of belt. Aikido is a very difficult martial art; it's the hardest of all the martial arts to learn. I never dreamed I would ever get a black belt. I never even thought about that; it was beyond possibility. I practiced for the sake of the practice and it really changed my life. It changed my life because it was long term practice. Long term change requires long term practice in almost every case.

MICHAEL MURPHY: I would like to add a footnote. This reinforcement to the next thing principle, never being right here and the resultant wasted life, is so apparent in golf. The average golf round is about four hours, that's fifteen thousand seconds. Of that time, one thousand seconds actually is spent standing at the ball swinging and hitting it. So for fourteen thousand of the fifteen thousand seconds, you're walking around. A good walk spoiled. People walking around, completely mismanaging their minds and their consciousness.

GEORGE LEONARD: All they've thought about is the next shot or the last shot.

MICHAEL MURPHY: We want to teach the richness of these incredible gardens people walk around in. It's a paradigm for the way most people actually live their lives. They are not in the wonder and the enchantment of the present moment.

LOTUS: *What transformative modalities did you use in your program?*

GEORGE LEONARD: We required everybody to attend class, which met once a week, punctually and on a regular basis. We asked everybody to perform the Kata [kah-tah; meaning form, a series of predetermined moves similar to that performed in martial arts], a forty minute practice of physical exercise, stretching, relaxation, imaging with

affirmations, and meditation. Everybody had to follow eight commitments which pertained to eating, relating with one another, physical exercise, affirmations, and the Kata. Those eight commitments became the overall container of the program.

One of the most effective modalities was what we call "focused surrender." We used it with transformational imaging, which is creating a very vivid image of the way you want yourself to be. You state the affirmation in the present tense, make it positive, focus on what you want, and make it real in the organization of your consciousness. Make it absolutely real. When you can no longer hold it, give up. In other words, surrender totally. Surrender to the universe, to God, to whatever deities you wish. Let go and accept things as they are. The combination of imaging and surrendering is a very nice modality. This was one of the most important findings of the project. We also found a high correlation between awareness and how well participants did with affirmations. For example, being aware of what you eat at all times is a bit more important than what you eat. Being totally focused and aware in your Kata is a little more important than how many times you do the Kata.

MICHAEL MURPHY: Awareness is where we link up with the contemplative traditions, particularly Buddhism. The discipline of mindfulness is being immediately present at all times. Bringing awareness into everything you do has enormous physical ramifications.

So often sports provide a marvelous window. The importance of awareness is spontaneously coming out in many sports. Arnold Schwarzenegger says a pump of weights with your mind in it is worth ten with your mind out of it, not just because you improve the form but because of some x-factor.

GEORGE LEONARD: The direct action of the mental realm on the flesh is mysterious. It can't be proven; it has to be speculation.

LOTUS: *You describe this practice as the householder's path. What does that mean?*

GEORGE LEONARD: One of our aims, from the very beginning was to create a long term satisfying

Fundamental Principles Underlying Integral Practice

- Evolution meanders more than it progresses. This is an adventurous universe, in which each advance can be viewed in retrospect as a perilous journey, a close call with failure. Humankind's further advance is not guaranteed nor is the progress of any individual.
- To last, extraordinary attributes must be cultivated. For a many-sided realization of extraordinary attributes, for integral transformation, we need a practice that embraces body, mind, heart, and soul.
- Enduring transformative practices are comprised of several identifiable activities or transformative modalities, such as disciplined self-observation, visualization of desired capacities, focused surrender to emergent capacities, and elicitation of the "relaxation response." Integral practices incorporate these modalities to produce a balanced development of our entire nature.
- These modalities operate in everyday life to some extent, whether or not we are engaged in a formal practice. All of us for example are consciously guided—or unconsciously driven—by images of things we desire, and in most transformative practices such imagery is used to facilitate specific physical or psychological changes. We all occasionally experience the emotional catharsis that is fundamental to many psychotherapeutic and religious disciplines, and we all sometimes practice self-observation. In other words, all of us practice on a daily basis, albeit in a fragmented, largely unconscious manner. Integral practice of the kind we propose aims to make our fragmented practices conscious, creative, and coherent and harness them for health and growth.

practice for people with jobs and family, for people who don't have the time to go to a monastery. This is a practice of this world. We want to make a transformational practice available to people, no matter what kind of life they have. We would really like to make it available to people who are less advantaged socially or economically, because we think it could have a transformative effect on the whole culture. This is not for a few esoteric souls, an elite group. We want to make it available to everybody.

MICHAEL MURPHY: That is why we want our center in an urban area. Ninety percent of the people in the developed nations live in cities. We want people to be able to practice where they live.

LOTUS: What was a typical class like?

GEORGE LEONARD: We had approximately thirty people in class. The first thing we did was called "staying current." We sat in a circular clump and participants discussed things that really bothered them about the practice of their lives. We had traumatic moments. There were tears and understanding. The group was very powerful. Much research substantiates that group support is very helpful. We were limited in time because we had our class in an Aikido school and the Aikido class was scheduled right behind us, so we were very focused. Early on, we learned and then practiced the Kata in every class. Then, we would do a Leonard Energy Transformation exercise. For example, during one exercise, sensation that we perceived as pain was transformed into other forms of energy—into warmth, love, or radiance. These exercises are therapeutic tools for transformation. Then, we broke into small groups of four and five to discuss the exercise and how well we were doing with our Katas. People compared notes and difficulties. Next, we meditated and had some kind of ritual ending. The class content varied.

MICHAEL MURPHY: We scheduled evenings in homes to discuss various subjects and books.

GEORGE LEONARD: Those were important. This is an integral practice so we included mental work as well—reading, writing, and discussions. Frequently we went to Mike's house, which has a nice big living room. Everybody gathered around, like a good old college seminar at the professor's house. It was all very warm. We had refreshments and wonderful feelings. We had intellectual discussions of the rationales for and relationships among the things we were

doing. People did book reports as well as other written work. Often when people undertake some spiritual or emotional path they tend to neglect the mind. For so long in our history, people of education neglected the body and emotions. We didn't want to go to the opposite extreme. We stayed right there with the whole person.

MICHAEL MURPHY: Philosophy is important in all this. It provides the larger mind set, the set of all sets that conceptually guides a person. Every person walking on the planet has a philosophy, however primitive it may be. To make philosophy conscious, to make it rich is what the Buddhists call "right-view." If you are going on an airplane trip, you better have good radar sightings. You have to use the right maps or you might end up on the North Pole. We wanted to help participants develop a conscious philosophy. On the other hand, we didn't want to have dogma because there are always course corrections. We are in a course-correcting mode, so our philosophy has to be capable of development. In that sense we are aligned with science. Theory is beholden to empirical results. You change your theory if it doesn't work. Our philosophy is still developing in many respects. George and I exemplified that by having discussions where we allowed criticisms and free exchange of ideas.

GEORGE LEONARD: Our general orientation is evolutionary.

MICHAEL MURPHY: That's fundamental. We are not going to have fruitless discussions about creationism. There are certain things not worth discussing.

GEORGE LEONARD: Evolution not just of our bodies, but evolution also of the spirit. Within the evolution of all aspects of existence we want a lot of freedom. You do not have to follow any dogma to be a part of this.

LOTUS: *Would you discuss your ideas about evolution and involution? Your presentation in the book was so insightful.*

MICHAEL MURPHY: Most great philosophers since around the year 1800 have been concerned with reconciling the fact that the world is going

somewhere, with world-transcending, or timeless, realities. The general idea comes up with Hegel, Schelling, Henri Bergson, Teilhard deChardin, the famous modern Catholic theologian and other thinkers. Sri Aurobindo, the great twentieth century Indian philosopher, was my primary inspiration in this. All of these philosophers express some version of the involution-evolution idea, namely that this universe is implicit divinity unfolding its latent glories. This is the ultimate setup for the stupendous adventure of rediscovery, through which the universe is emerging and giving rise to new forms of explicit divinity. This occurs over the course of time. The great historian Lovejoy said the hierarchy of being—God to angels to humans to animals to matter—this great chain of being became not just the inventory of nature but the program of nature. It describes the way the world is and also the way the world is going. The divine is enclosed or implicit in matter and is being made explicit over the course of time. On this planet, life manifests greater complexity to ever higher levels of order and in a very profound way closer to God. Out of life emerged humankind with its shamans, saints, and seers, in whom implicit divinity becomes conscious of itself. These God intoxicated people have given us transformative practices through which we can make the goods that are latent in us explicit, and to make all that implicit divinity in our feelings, thoughts, and body more apparent. That is the meeting, the intersection of the transcendent divine and the imminent divine in us.

During focused surrender you image a higher order, whether it is an improvement in your body, thoughts, habits, or the way you approach or love people. You hold that image and then let go, and the outcome is even better than you thought. Why? Because what is implicit meets what is explicit. What is latent meets what is fully realized. What is hidden meets what is fully disclosed. Sri Aurobindo, my teacher, chose the Star of David as his symbol. The star is one triangle pointing up and one triangle pointing down, symbolizing the implicit divine ascending, aspiring to the explicit, to the transcendent; and the transcendent descending, or emerg-

Fundamental Principles Underlying Integral Practice

- There is a powerful resonance between body, heart, mind, and soul. All levels and dimensions of human nature respond to one another, and a change in one typically facilitates a corresponding change in another, as when mental images and affirmations affect the body. This resonance exists because all manifest things arise from a common source, which is “involved” in the stuff of the universe.
- To last and to be successful, integral practice must be engaged primarily for its own sake, without obsession with ends and results. Its practitioners do best when they learn to enjoy the long plateaus of the learning curve. Preoccupation with goals can cause a compulsive striving that blinds us to the emergence of unexpected goods and that inhibits the workings of grace.
- Both the theory and practice of integral transformation are still developing and require a mutual give and take. They are works in progress, requiring course corrections. Like science, they involve continual discovery.
- One reason that transformative practices require course corrections is that they can produce unbalanced development, inhibiting certain capacities while promoting others in a way that subverts lasting growth. They also can give rise to powers that serve destructive motives and therefore need to be monitored by peers and mentors.
- All human attributes depend upon one another, either directly or indirectly. For example, disciplined self-observation requires a certain measure of courage; sustained meditation requires physical stamina; the control of autonomic processes requires kinesthetic sensitivity. Integral practice addresses this aspect of human nature by embracing all aspects of body, mind, heart, and soul.

ing. In the center, there was a lotus symbolizing the aspiration in the heart, what he called the “psychic being,” at the very kernel of our existence, which aspires to ever fuller manifestation of the divine.

LOTUS: The participants in your program found affirmations very valuable. How did you use affirmations?

GEORGE LEONARD: Making affirmations is a familiar process, but we wanted to use them in a specific way. People had freedom as far as what they affirmed. But we tried to make it systematic, as we were conducting research. People affirmed anything they wanted to in a positive statement in the present tense. We wanted them to create one affirmation that would be what we call “normal,” something that is predicable if you follow certain procedures. An example would be to affirm a thirty-two inch waist that is now thirty-four inches. That seems less than a highly spiritual thing to do but we were trying to do things that could be measured. Therefore, we took some common-place desires, not that we care whether people have a thirty-two or thirty-four inch waist. Everybody is fine the way they are. For those who wanted to do that, however, it was interesting for our study. The number one affirmation was measurable, objective, physical, and something that wouldn’t be hard to explain. If you watch your food intake and take good aerobic exercise, you can reduce your waistline. It is explained easily by medical science.

Number two affirmation was “exceptional.” It could still be explained by medical science, but is an exception. Affirmation number three was “meta-normal” or “extraordinary,” as described in “The Future of the Body.” Number three affirmation was something that few people manifest and something that would be surprising to medical science and difficult to explain. The number four affirmation was our cover-all—mind to body is balanced, vital and healthy. We didn’t want people to make changes at the cost of their health.

Those were the four affirmations in our first cycle of classes which lasted eleven months. Our second cycle lasted ten months. We wanted even more objective criteria, so we changed the number two affirmation from exceptional to percent of body fat which we could measure with calipers. Some people might question the spiritual value of that. We wanted something objective, and there is nothing wrong with flesh. Body, heart, soul, and mind are all equal.

MICHAEL MURPHY: The fact that we look down on body-fat-percentage shows the prejudice we carry.

GEORGE LEONARD: Yes, that it is questioned and that we are apologetic in explaining. We had fairly accurate measurement and very good results. The average reduction in body-fat-percentage was 12.60. We had a little bet between the four teachers and the thirty class members as to who would reduce the most. By some wonderful chance, it was a 12.60 average for the teachers as well as for the class. That affirmation showed that results really were happening. The affirmations were made in this form. "I, George Leonard intend to see that the following circumstances have occurred by November 23, 1992: Number one-My waist measures thirty-two inches. State it positively. Rather than saying my skin is free of blemishes, say my skin is totally clear. Create crystal clear positive affirmations.

We used affirmations in a number of ways. We used them every time we did the Kata. We asked them to work on affirmations at other times. Students put transformational check points in their homes in places they passed frequently during the day. So they had little reminders. They found a buddy to remind them of their affirmations to keep the affirmations in their minds and consciousness during the day. Everybody kept a record of affirmations on the day they were made and then on the day they came due, which was November 21st and 20th of the two years. People measured their success of achieving affirmations on a scale of 0 to 10. By keeping records, we were able to get statistical evidence.

LOTUS: I'd like for you to talk about your chapter, "Catching on the Winds of Grace," because it speaks about your philosophy.

MICHAEL MURPHY: The line comes from the great nineteenth-century mystic Sri Rama Krishna who said, "The winds of grace are always blowing, but you have to raise the sail." This relates directly to involution-evolution. Divinity is always everywhere present latently in all our parts and also in it

full glory in other dimensions. We're not usually aware of it but divinity draws us along, pressing to be manifest, wanting to take us up into it. This is the idea of a benevolent deity or nirvana always present. All of us are always enlightened but to realize that, you need to practice. When you practice, however, you can be impeded if you are compulsively attached to particular results. One reason is that you might not be ready for a long time to receive such results and secondly your desired image may be limiting. Maybe what's in store for you is much more than what you're aspiring for. Using focused surrender, you focus, you practice, and you surrender for these very practical reasons. You have to surrender to this higher order, these winds of grace that are always blowing.

Ben Hogan was a great golfer, a great shot maker. He was asked after a tournament, "Ben how come you hit more miraculous shots, that surprise even yourself, than any other golfer?" He said with true humility, "I'm just luckier." They said, "But you practice more than any golfer in the world today, maybe any golfer who ever lived." And he said thoughtfully, "The more I practice, the luckier I get." In other words, there is an equation between practice and grace but there is a sense that when it happens, you don't deserve it. It's beyond you and at that moment the nature of this stupendous game of evolution is revealed, namely the very adventure of it. At that moment we make ourselves great players in the evolutionary game. We surrender to the marvel of it, and are totally surprised by it. But we have to practice to get there. One of the problems with practice is that you can stamp in a limited version of yourself and practice bad habits. In fact, most of us do. We practice limited notions, limited gestalts of who we are. The practice has to be open always to grace, to this implicit and transcendent divinity that is trying to take us up into itself.

LOTUS: Thank you for sharing your wisdom with us and for your commitment to integral transformative practice.



TONY STONE/DALE DUBRE

Inner Bonding

MARGARET PAUL

You've achieved everything you've ever thought would make you happy, but the gnawing, empty feeling that something is missing is still there. To paraphrase Rabbi Harold Kushner, you've discovered that "all you've ever wanted isn't enough." You may feel lost, out of touch with yourself and others, in an emotional fog much of the time. You often feel as if you're doing nothing more than going through the motions. You may agonize over feeling insecure, inadequate, unlovable, and alone.

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These are deeply painful feelings, pervasive and persistent—so painful, in fact, you may have discovered any number of dysfunctional ways to ignore, deny, cover up, or numb the ache of your emptiness: alcohol, food, work, TV, sex, drugs, all of the above. Then one day something happens, a traumatic experience or an internal shift. You reach a turning point and ask yourself, as Jeremiah Abrams states in *Reclaiming the Inner Child*, "Where is the life we lost in living?"

Certainly you're not alone with these kinds of feelings. Most of us struggle for significant portions of our lives with continuous or periodically recurring emotional pain. This happens either because we don't know another, better way or because we're unwilling to try, afraid we'll only make matters worse. Unfortunately the pain often has to become intolerable, or a crisis must force the issue, before we take action on our own behalf. Take the case of Tom, for example.

Tom had never been in a therapist's office and he wasn't happy about being there now. He sat stiffly in his dark blue suit, unaware that his fist was clenched and his expression stern. He would never have come at all, but the CEO of his company took him aside last week and told him that his outbursts of temper were undermining employee morale and driving potential customers away. "Get some help," the CEO told him. Frustrated and angry, but seeing no other choice, Tom made an appointment.

After we talked for a while about Tom's stress level and work load, I said, "It sounds like you're not taking very good care of yourself."

"Take care of myself? That's not realistic. I have too much to do!"

"But you fly into unpredictable rages, and you could lose your job because of that. And being so stressed out, you're likely to lose your health as well. Can you really afford not to take care of yourself?"

"I don't think I can," he said softly. "I don't know how."

Tom was telling the truth. He didn't know how; he'd never learned. He had been "at work" since early childhood. His father was an abusive alcoholic, so Tom's earliest memories were of trying to protect his mother and sister from harm. When he realized his father treated them better when he wasn't around, Tom left home and lived on his own. He was fifteen.

Most of us don't grow up in these extreme circumstances but even in the best possible beginnings, very few of us know what it looks like to take care of ourselves. We haven't seen that kind of behavior anywhere, not in our families, not even on TV. So we follow the patterns we've learned and we let ourselves down because we don't know what it looks like to be loving to ourselves as well as to those around us. We abuse ourselves, ignore or deny our pain—all because we don't know what else to do. We desperately need to begin to think about these questions: "How do we take care of ourselves? How do we make ourselves happy? How do we bring joy into our lives?"

Take Sandy, for example. Sandy, a divorced mother with two young daughters, is a third-grade teacher. Long hours of preparation have paid off—her students love her, their parents praise her, and the principal has commended her in glowing written evaluations. Practically the only one who isn't convinced that she is a competent, worthy, lovable person is Sandy herself. Constantly exhausted, nagged by indecisiveness and depression, she's discounted everything she's accomplished, including others' affirmations. The only reason Sandy entered therapy was for her daughters. She was determined that they wouldn't suffer the way she had.

In therapy sessions, Sandy said bluntly that she rejected others' loving support "Because I don't de-

serve it.” When asked, “Why do you drive yourself so hard? Why don’t you take better care of yourself?” she answered, “Because selves aren’t for taking care of.”

Where do beliefs like this come from? Why does Sandy believe that she doesn’t deserve love? After all if she did, she’d take care of herself. She loves her daughters and takes great care of them, making sure they eat right, rest enough, and so on. Sandy values her car. If it’s not running well, she gets it fixed. Sandy is no different from many of us: *We all take care of whatever we value.*

Inner Bonding means giving ourselves, each and every moment, what we never had—or never learned—as children. It means developing a loving relationship between our Adult and our Inner Child, a relationship that takes care of our Selves when we are around others and when we are alone.

WHAT IS INNER BONDING?

Inner Bonding is a process of connecting our Adult thoughts with our instinctual gut feelings, the feelings of our “Inner Child,” so that we can live free of conflict within ourselves. Inner conflict is any kind of upsetting difference between our *thoughts*—what we think we should do or feel—and our *feelings*—our gut-level emotions and attitudes. When the conflict isn’t resolved—that is, when we go ahead and take action without regard for our feelings, or take action that is opposed to what we feel, or take no action in response to our feelings—then we’ve abandoned our feelings or disconnected from them. This disconnection creates the inner turmoil, the unrest we experience as discontentment and unhappiness.

The incredibly good news is that what has been disconnected can be reconnected, and with reconnection comes healing and wholeness. The power of Inner Bonding is the power of love as the force that heals, love from Inner Adult to Inner Child. Others’ love can support this process—love from mate to mate, from friend to friend, from therapist to client; but, it is only when the Inner Adult loves the Inner Child that true healing and joy occur.

It would be ideal if our thoughts and feelings could be connected at all times. Although we cannot expect this state of perfection, we can learn

the Inner Bonding process by practicing it until it becomes internalized, an automatic part of our thinking and feeling processes. To learn the process most effectively, we need to understand more about how we function, both internally and externally.

To begin with, the Adult aspect of our personality is our external aspect, the part of us that is able to take action in the world. Inner Bonding requires our Adult to be in conscious contact or connected with our inner, natural self, the vulnerable, feelings-driven self, referred to as the Inner Child. When our Inner Adult is connected to our Inner Child, that is Inner Bonding. When our rational and emotional aspects are connected in this way, we don’t feel internal conflict, because there isn’t any. Free of inner conflict, we feel peaceful, open to joy, and open to giving and receiving love.

WHO IS YOUR INNER CHILD?

The Inner Child is the aspect of our personality that is soft, vulnerable, and feelings-oriented—our “gut” instinct. It is who we are when we were born, our core self, our natural personality, with all its talent, instinct, intuition, and emotion. The Child is our right-brain or creative aspect of being, feeling, and experiencing. It’s the part of us that existed before we had experience. It is useful to refer to this aspect of our person ability as a Child because it allows us to get a handle on those feelings and senses that existed before our maturing experiences merged or confused our impression of the two aspects of our personality, our Adult and our Inner Child.

To speak of an Inner Child is not to over-romanticize childhood. When we were very young we did many *childish* things—we talked baby talk, we played in the mud, we slapped our sisters and brothers when we were angry, we pouted or stomped our feet when we didn’t get our way.

Our Inner Child however is *childlike*—our vulnerability, intuitiveness, sense of wonder, imagination, innate wisdom, and ability to feel our feelings have not changed or aged with our growing, adult experience. Thus while many of us had very unhappy childhoods, that doesn’t mean our inner nature is essentially unhappy.



DOES EVERYONE HAVE AN INNER CHILD?

We all have a vulnerable, intuitive, instinctual inner self. As psychiatrist Carl G. Jung said so well, “child” is only the means to express this psychic fact, the symbol of our preconscious nature:

The child motif represents not only something that existed in the distant past, but also something that exists now; that is to say, ...a system functioning in the present whose purpose is to compensate or correct, in a meaningful manner, the inevitable one-sidedness and extravagances of the conscious mind.

It is clear that we all do have an Inner Child. When people ask whether this can really be true, it usually reveals that they are not in touch with that soft and vulnerable part of their nature. When life is fairly easy and there are no major problems at hand, this lack of awareness is not a particular problem. But when there is conflict or a personal crisis and we feel unhappy or distressed, being out of touch or disconnected from our Inner Child can prevent us from restoring our emotional equilibrium.

WHO IS YOUR INNER ADULT?

The Adult is the logical thinking part of us that has collected knowledge through our years of experience in the world. It is our intellect, our left-brain, logical, analytical, conscious mind. It is the part of us that is thought and action, as opposed to feeling and being, which are the realms of the Inner Child. The Adult is concerned with doing rather than being, with acting rather than experiencing.

The Adult is the choicemaker regarding intent and actions. It is always the Adult that chooses our actions, just as it is in a family. A young child cannot take actions on its own behalf—it cannot shop for food and cook the meals; it cannot earn the money to provide food and shelter; it cannot call a friend or therapist when in need of help. The Child within us cannot take these actions. Taking action on behalf of our Inner Child is the job of the Adult—taking care that our gut feelings and our thoughts are connected, synchronized, not in conflict.

When we are born, we have no worldly, adult experience. But from the moment of birth, our Adult begins to develop. When we are two years old, our Adult is two, with two years of experience

in the world. By the time we are three or four, we are doing many adult activities—choosing our own clothes, dressing ourselves, asking for help when we need it. The adult aspect is learning how to be an Adult all along from the adults in our environment. The Adult then is the aspect of our personality that is learned. One of the things we can learn is to be loving or unloving to our Inner Child.

WHAT IS LOVING BEHAVIOR?

Loving behavior is behavior that nurtures and supports our own and others' emotional and spiritual growth. An inseparable part of this is taking responsibility for our own pain and joy. Therefore loving yourself means taking responsibility for healing pain—pain from the past and the present, for exploring and resolving self-limiting beliefs, and for discovering and taking action to bring about your joy.

Loving others means that you want for them what they want for themselves and that you support them in whatever they feel would bring them joy.

When we are being loving to our Inner Child, we are open to learning about our Child and from our Child. Loving our Child means choosing to learn about ourselves—our past and present pain, fears, and beliefs.

THE INNER BONDING PROCESS

Learning to connect and to bond with your Inner Child means learning to be a loving Adult to your Inner Child in whatever life situation or conflict, external and internal, you are faced with. Inner Bonding is the natural, predictable outcome result-

Loving yourself means taking responsibility for healing pain—pain from the past and the present, for exploring and resolving self-limiting beliefs, and for discovering and taking action to bring about your joy.

ing from the intent to learn—a choice that only you, as the Adult, can make.

When there is conflict between the belief or thought of the Inner Adult and the feeling or need of the Inner Child, the Inner Bonding process seeks to discover what action is needed to bring these two together. What can be done to help to heal the feelings and to meet the wants and needs in loving ways? Since the Adult is the one who takes action in the world and the Child is the one whose feelings are internal, the Adult must take action on the Child's behalf.

This doesn't mean that the Adult indulges the Child's every whim. Truly loving behavior nurtures and supports the emotional and spiritual growth of both parties involved, or in this case, both aspects of yourself. So for example if your Inner Child wants to sleep in, making you late for work, it is not loving behavior on the part of your Inner Adult to agree to that. It is loving however for your Adult to listen to the reasons your Inner Child wants to sleep in and to take action to get rest, if

that is what is really needed.

HOW MANY PEOPLE AM I?

You are, now and always, just one person. You are absolutely not split or fragmented into separate entities; you are a single self. Yet your personality has many facets, unique attributes, different likes and dislikes.

As this singular person, you have both rational thoughts and emotions or feelings. Although feelings, like thoughts, originate in the brain, we experience emotions physically—usually in the stomach, neck, shoulders, or chest. That is why feelings,

instincts, and impulses are most commonly referred to as being at “gut level.”

WHY USE THE TERMS “INNER ADULT” AND “INNER CHILD”?

Very often your rational mind says one thing—“I have a huge, unpleasant task that’s already overdue”—but your gut feeling says another—“I hate being forced to work fast. I feel nauseated.” Or your thought may be, “I know I’d feel better in the long run if I lost the twenty pounds my doctor advised” but your gut feeling says, “I am miserable right now and I need a piece of candy to cheer me up.”

These are common conflicts that go on within each of us all the time. Because we don’t know anything about the concepts of Inner Adult and Inner Child, we forge ahead. We may or may not deliberate the choices and consequences, but either we eat the candy or we don’t.

No one makes loving choices all the time, but some people are more often able to resolve their inner conflicts in ways that lead to good feelings for themselves and positive consequences. Unfortunately a vast majority of people consistently make choices that lead to exactly the opposite.

Probably everyone has a running internal dialogue. Sometimes it’s positive (“C’mon, you can do it!”) but often it’s negative (“How could you be so stupid?”). However, not many of us are aware how greatly this self-talk affects how we feel about ourselves. To bring about a fundamental consciousness shift in your life, one of the most helpful, constructive steps you can take is to attach labels to your thoughts and feelings. This helps you clarify what’s going on internally, as well as give voice to your different, inner aspects. “Adult” and “Inner Child” provide the added dimension of focusing on the relationship between your rational and emotional selves.

It can be tremendously useful to think of your rational thoughts as your Inner Adult, and your feelings and emotions as your Inner Child. This labeling will help you become aware of your conflicts and identify your options. Then you can begin to make choices for yourself that heal your pain and allow you to enjoy fulfilling relationships with others.

HOW TO BEGIN INNER BONDING

The Inner Bonding process is very similar to trying to understand and help an external child. If a child were upset and you wanted to help, you would ask the child what was wrong. You would listen to the answer. If there were something you could do, you would act to help in some way.

Consider an incident that might occur between any adult and anyone else’s child. Let’s say a very young boy is crying on a street corner when a woman walks by. Asking the child what he needs shows that the woman recognizes the child and his feelings. Speaking to him creates a connection, and a bond of caring begins to form. After all, only a loving adult is willing to stop and ask what a child needs. The adult cares and the child begins to feel cared for.

As the woman listens and dialogues, that is continues her questions and hears his answers, the reasons for the child’s feelings are revealed. Loving adults don’t ask one question, “Are you lost?” and then walk away. They listen and then ask the next logical question; for example, “Do you know where you live?” The concluding question is critical and in this case it might be, “How can I help you?” The answer will disclose the loving behavior in this situation. But the child can’t find his way home alone. The adult must take the action. “I’ll call the police and wait here with you until an officer comes.” Taking action on behalf of the child completes the bonding process between the adult and the child. The act is the evidence that the adult truly cares. A loving adult wouldn’t leave the child alone and helpless on the street corner. This also proves to the child that he is worthy of this caring; otherwise the adult wouldn’t have taken action to help.

The principles and process involved when an adult helps an external child are basically the same as those that apply to the relationship between your Inner Adult and your Inner Child—the Inner Adult needs to *ask, listen, and act*. Before any one of us would choose to begin this process however we would first have to choose to be loving. Another way to say this is that we must activate our loving Adult by recognizing our Inner Child’s feelings. •



TONY STONE/TERRY O'NE

Owning Your Victim Self

D A W N C A L L A N

Part of the process of claiming our “warrior” is identifying the areas where we act like victims. Victims are people who give their power away. More accurately, they are people who trade their power for something they want. Having lost their sense of power, they may end up feeling helpless, feeling hopeless, feeling they have limited choices or no choice at all.

Dawn Callan has lectured and taught throughout the United States for over a decade. She has received a fifth degree black belt in Kenpo Karate. Ms. Callan conducts the popular Awakening the Warrior Within workshops, where people learn to face their fears to unlock their greatest inner strengths and gifts.



Most of us act like victims, at least some of the time. Your warrior's job is not to rescue your victim but to transform it; that is, to support yourself as you take your power back in those areas where you are feeling like a victim. To own our victim-self we need to understand that there can be big payoffs for acting like a victim. You may get taken care of, you can blame others, nothing is ever your fault, and you don't have to take responsibility. You identify an adversary, polarize away from it, and never have to recognize that perhaps it embodies qualities that you would rather deny in yourself.

Our world is a mirror; whatever we refuse to own in ourselves we project onto the external world—which projects it right back at us. Victims refuse to see themselves in that mirror. Instead they see something or someone else. However, the price we pay for these projections is huge. Only in the areas in which we take responsibility for these projections, can we change and reclaim our power. Only in the areas we own, do we have any power. By refusing to own them, we give our power away and become victims. A warrior knows there is no way to get through life without making mistakes but only by owning them can we change them. I may create a mess in my life but if I recognize it as my mess and accept that I created it, I can choose to change it or not.

In a larger context, I can look at my childhood and realize that terrible things were done to me when I was too little to do anything about them. But what I have come to know is that every experience was a teacher or a teaching that contributed to

who I am. I believe that before we are born we write in our Book of Life everything we need to learn in this lifetime. I can look back and see what the lessons of my early life were about, what situations taught me courage, which ones taught me patience or honesty, and in the process find the blessing, the gold in the dross.

For example, not having parents I could trust forced me at a very young age to seek the guidance and support of a higher authority. I looked to Divine Mother/Father for comfort and answers, which perhaps accelerated my spiritual journey in ways I might otherwise have never known. When I was in the midst of it, I was unable to see the teachings and felt like a victim, but now I can see how my Higher Self had a plan for me that was bigger than I understood at the time. Until I was able to recognize the process and trust it, I felt like a victim. Until I was able to give up the "joys" of resentment, blame, self-pity, and retribution, I was stuck in my victim role.

So how do we begin to identify where the victim lives in ourselves? One way is to notice when we feel resentment. Resentment is anger that has been stuffed or disowned and allowed to fester. When it finally does get expressed, it is often aimed at an inappropriate person or situation, grinding up an innocent bystander, a loved one, or even ourselves. A warrior expresses her anger in the present, in the moment that it is experienced. She expresses it in an appropriate way, takes responsibility for its expression, and releases it. A warrior is then willing to accept the consequences for her actions. This is clean, honest, direct behavior. A victim hides, holds, and cooks that anger and unloads it in ways that may not even be related to the original incident. It also eats away, internally, at the victim. I believe my mother's cancer was her anger turned to resentment and metastasized in her physical self. It literally devoured her. I had a terrible temper as a kid. I think I intuitively knew from watching her that if I didn't explode, I'd implode.

The other ways that we can identify where our victim is operating are when we blame others, feel helpless, make excuses, equivocate. Notice where you give it up. Where do you quit on yourself?

The Ten Universal Laws of the Warrior Code

1. *Pay Attention.* Stay in the present. It's the only place anything is really happening.
2. *Take Responsibility.* This is your life, take it back. Either you get to own it or you blame someone or something else for it. Choose.
3. *No Kvetching.* No whining, no sniveling—it takes you out of the present and lets you abdicate responsibility.
4. *Don't Take Any Sht.* It's very bad for one's self-esteem to take any abuse. Stand up to your tyrants, both internal and external. The cost is too great not to.
5. *Do It Anyway.* Hard choices temper our strength and our integrity; they make the difference between a life of mediocrity and a life of excellence.
6. *Don't Quit.* Look at what stops you, at where you give the effort up. That is the edge between becoming a victim or a warrior.
7. *Keep Your Agreements.* A warrior is only as good as his or her word. The way we build self-trust and trust in others is by making and keeping our agreements.
8. *Keep Your Sense of Humor.* Otherwise what's the point? Humor helps us to stretch beyond ourselves and our own limits.
9. *Love One Another.* Otherwise where's the meaning? It's the way we remember we're not alone in this universe.
10. *Honor Your Connection to Source.* There is a force in the universe, greater than ourselves, that creates us, sustains us, provides for us, cares for us, guides us, and loves us. It speaks to us from within. Trust it.

Where do you feel you have no choice? Where do you feel that the problem is so big there's no way you can make a difference? The warrior is the part of us that *finds a way*, doing whatever it takes to get the job done.

While the warrior is governed by the second law of the Universe, *Take Responsibility*, the victim needs to *Pay Attention* (which is the first law of the Universe) to the third law of the Universe, *No Kvetching*. By applying this law we can begin to see where our victim operates. Begin now to listen to the voice of your victim:

"Can you believe what they did to me!"

"It's not my fault."

"Sorry I'm late, the traffic was awful."

"It's your fault."

"I can't afford it."

"It's my parents' fault."

"I don't have the time."

"It was the bank's fault."

"I hate my job."

"It's the government's fault."

"My wife (husband) doesn't understand me."

"It's God's fault."

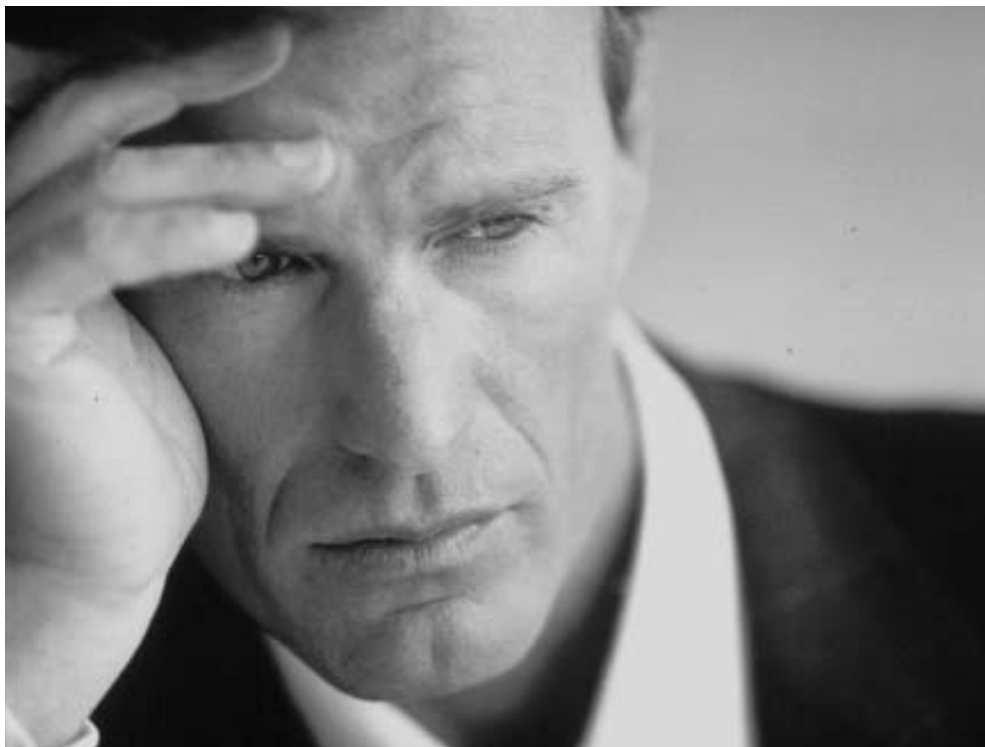
When we are suffering from an illness or we have a crime committed against ourselves, our inner warrior will certainly let others know what's going on. However, the warrior's intent is to express what's going on so that he or she can find answers, make certain that perpetrators are caught, or recover what has been lost. And that's not kvetching. By contrast, victims see the crime or the health problem as just further evidence that the world is out to get them and therefore there's no point in attempting to be responsible for their own lives.

Acting like a victim is a habit like any other. To begin releasing ourselves from the victim habit, we need to understand the steps for doing so. In the beginning the habit is unconscious behavior (the habit is *doing* you). Then you begin to notice the habit and perhaps you watch it for a while. Maybe you become uncomfortable with it or it actually begins to cause you pain or you decide it no longer serves you. It's important to realize that in some way this habit has served you. It is a mechanism you set in motion in the past to keep you safe. For example, one of my habits has been *doing it all myself*. Because my emotional survival as a child was dependent on my not asking for anything and our physical survival depended on my doing everything, this behavior became entrenched. As an adult it was difficult for

me to ask for help or accept it when it was offered. I often couldn't even hear the offer. I would find myself feeling exhausted, isolated, alienated, angry, and martyred. The *pay off* was independence; the *trade off* was in intimate relationships. Part of my warrior work has been learning to ask and learning to accept, remembering that I'm not alone.

It's important to identify and honor the way in which your victim behavior once served you or it will resist change (which it will anyway; it's a matter of degree). You will bump up against your own resistance and denial again and again. Remember that the system is always perfect, you can trust your own process, and that you are always provided with whatever you need at any point to grow and change. And you are always made aware of when that point comes. You'll know when something that once may have saved you, no longer serves you. At the point when we make the decision to change we also need to choose what we want to do instead. Nature abhors a vacuum. If you empty out the psychic space, something else will quickly flow in to fill it. You can choose what that will be or leave it to chance.

Soon after we've made a decision to change we become acutely aware of our old habit, both in ourselves and others. We'll notice the habit after we've done it. At first this can be embarrassing or painful. Don't give yourself a hard time, just notice. Then you'll notice the habit when you're in the midst of it, and maybe you finish it anyway. Don't allow the voice of your judge or inner critic to overwhelm you; simply witness. You can say, "I'm doing it again," and just pay attention not "I'm doing it again, what a jerk I am." Stewart Wilde says, "Observation is power, judgment is weakness." Soon you'll notice the impulse to repeat the habit before



TONY STONE/LAURENCE MONNERET

it happens. This is a pivotal point because now you are doing the habit; it's no longer doing you. You can say yes or no to the habit at this point, rather than automatically falling into the old track. Soon you'll catch it before you do it, and choose not to. You'll repeat this for a while until one day you realize the habit is gone.

Take notice of each time you kvetch, blame, complain, make excuses, accuse, or resent and you'll soon see your life experience shift. You'll have more freedom in your life, more choices, more space, more time, and more fun as you shift from victim behavior to being someone who is in charge of your life. You'll also notice when other people in your life are acting their victim and you'll be less willing to buy into it. It is not our job to change others; we can only change ourselves, which is how we change our world. But in refusing to collude with others when they assume victim roles, we can quietly be a mirror for them, if they are willing to see. The victim says we have no choice. The victim claims we have no power, which is simply not true. Warrior work is about choice and taking responsibility for our choices. It is by healing our inner victims that we reclaim our warrior self. •

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TONY STONE/DAVID HAY

Everyday Spirituality

BARBARA DE ANGELIS

In our search for self-knowledge and spiritual truth, many of us are, I believe, looking in the wrong direction. We have separated the spiritual from everyday living, thus separated ourselves from experiencing everyday spirituality. The spiritual has become associated with Sunday church services, or the Sabbath, or yoga and meditation, or a trip to India, or a tour of a famous European cathedral. We think praying is more spiritual than riding a bicycle, reading religious literature more holy than making love. We are living secularized lives and yet wondering why life often feels so meaningless and devoid of purpose.

Barbara De Angelis is an author and lecturer on relationships and personal growth. Her books include "How To Make Love All The Time," "Secrets about Men Every Woman Should Know," and "Real Moments."



The search for real moments and everyday spirituality must begin with a return to and embracing of the human. Everyday spirituality is not an escape from your usual life in search of some special, exalted experience, but a surrender into the fullness of every experience.

It is not a path that leads you away from the human to the spiritual, from the Earth to Heaven, but rather one that leads you back into the ordinary and everyday, and invites you to find the spiritual within it. It begins and ends where you already are, right here, right now. There's nothing else to look for, nothing else to acquire. You already have everything you need.

"We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience."—Ram Dass

EMBRACING YOUR HUMANNESS

When I became a seeker, I began what I called a "spiritual path." In my longing to know God, I turned away from worldly things. I practiced meditation for hours, sometimes days at a time. I spent whole years in retreat and silence, living in the mountains, seeing only other meditators. I viewed my physical body as an obstacle to enlightenment, my human desires as impediments to achieving a pure, spiritual state. And I looked at my life on Earth as some sort of prison sentence I was serving that kept me from going back "home" to my Divine origins.

I had many beautiful and uplifting experiences during those years, but I could only be happy when

I was doing my "spiritual practice." After searching and searching for answers to my dilemma, I finally had the important realization that all of human life was a spiritual practice—I was supposed to be practicing being human! And thus far, I hadn't been doing a very good job. In fact, I'd attempted to avoid being human entirely. No wonder I was so miserable: I was in the water, but trying not to get wet!

Since that time, I have worked on embracing my humanness, not running from it, and looking within it for the very same spiritual experiences I used to seek elsewhere. I know now that my presence here on Earth is not a sentence—it is a gift: that being human is not a loss of spirit, but an opportunity for spirit to enjoy itself on the physical plane. I am here because I am loved.

LEARNING TO RECOGNIZE EVERYDAY HOLINESS

In order to experience everyday spirituality, we need to remember that we are spiritual beings spending some time in a human body. We are not separate from spirit. This would be impossible. We are simply spirit disguised in human form. In this way, we are connected to all life. The flower is spirit disguised as a rock. We all share the same source. We are all made of the same invisible particles of matter. We are all One.

Your very existence is a product of an eternal cosmic courtship between heaven and earth. Can you not see how loved you are by your Father, the Sky, and your Mother, the Earth, who come together in every moment to bring you food, shelter, and life? There is a meditation I teach my students in one of my seminars:

*"The Earth is my Mother,
The Sky is my Father.
I am a child of Universal Love..."*

The next time you feel disconnected from the world around yourself silently, or aloud, with your eyes open or closed. Between each repetition, take a deep breath, filling up with the gift of air. Soon,

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 80



TONY STONE/PAL GRELLUNAS

Understanding Transforms

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

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.” To work for peace, you must have a peaceful heart. When you do, you are the child of God. But many who work for peace are not at peace. They still have anger and frustration, and their work is not really peaceful. We cannot say that they are touching the Kingdom of God. To preserve peace, our hearts must be at peace with the world, with our brothers and our sisters. When we try to overcome evil with evil, we are not working for peace. If you say, “Saddam Hussein is evil, we have to prevent him from continuing to be evil,” and if you then use the same means he has been using, you are exactly like him. Trying to overcome evil with evil is not the way to make peace.

Jesus also said, “Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment... whosoever shall say, ‘Thou fool’ shall be in danger of hell fire.” Jesus did not say that if you are angry with your brother, you will be put in a place called hell. He said that if you are angry with your brother, you are already in hell. Anger is hell. He also said that you don’t need to kill with your body to be put in jail. You only need to kill in your mind and you are already there.

The death penalty is a sign of weakness, an expression of our fear and inability to know what to do to help the situation. Killing a person does not help him or us. We have to look collectively to find

ways we can really help. Our enemy is not the other person, no matter what he or she has done. If we look deeply into ourselves, we can see that their act was a manifestation of our collective consciousness. We are all filled with violence, hatred, and fear, so why blame someone whose upbringing was without love or understanding? Educators, legislators, parents, journalists, film makers, economists, artists, poor people, rich people, all of us have to discuss the situation and see what we can do. Meditation can help. Meditation is not a drug to make us oblivious to our real problems. It should produce awareness in ourselves and also in our society. For us to achieve results, our enlightenment has to be collective. How else can we end the cycle of violence? We ourselves have to contribute, in small and large ways, toward ending our own violence. Looking deeply at our own mind and our own life, we will begin to see what to do and what not to do to bring about a real change.

LOOKING DEEPLY

We often think of peace as the absence of war, that if the powerful countries would reduce their weapons arsenals, we could have peace. But if we look deeply into the weapons, we see our own minds—our prejudices, fears, and ignorance. Even if we transport all the bombs to the moon, the roots of war and the roots of the bombs are still here, in our hearts and minds, and sooner or later we will make new bombs. To work for peace is to uproot war from ourselves and from the hearts of men and women. To prepare for war, to give millions of men and women the opportunity to practice killing day

and night in their hearts is to plant millions of seeds of violence, anger, frustration, and fear that will be passed on for generations to come.

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.” This is Jesus’ teaching about revenge. When someone asks you for something, give it to him. When he wants to borrow something from you, lend it to him. How many of us actually practice this? There must be ways to solve our conflicts without killing. We must look at this. We have to find ways to help people get out of difficult situations, situations of conflict, without having to kill. Our collective wisdom and experience can be the torch lighting our path, showing us what to do. *Looking deeply together is the main task of a community or a church.*

THE HIGHEST FORM OF PRAYER

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which de-spitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” Many people pray to God because they want God to fulfill some of their needs. If they want to have a picnic, they ask God for a clear, sunny day. At the same time, farmers might pray for rain. If the weather is clear, the picnickers will say, “God is on our side; he answered our prayers.” But if it rains, the farmers will say that God heard their prayers. This is the way we usually pray.

When you pray only for your own picnic and not for the farmers who need the rain, you are doing the opposite of what Jesus taught. Jesus said, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you...” When you look deeply into your anger, you will see that the person you call your enemy is also suffering. As soon as you see that, the capacity of accepting and having compassion for him is there.

Jesus called this “loving your enemy.” When you are able to love your enemy, he or she is no longer your enemy. The idea of “enemy” vanishes and is replaced by the notion of someone who is suffering and needs your compassion. Doing this is sometimes easier than you might have imagined, but you need to practice. If you read the Bible but don’t practice, it will not help much. In Buddhism, practicing the teaching of the Buddha is the highest form of prayer. The Buddha said, “If someone is standing on one shore and wants to go to the other shore, he has to either use a boat or swim across. He cannot just pray, ‘Oh, other shore, please come over here for me to step across!’” To a Buddhist, praying without practicing is not real prayer.

UNDERSTANDING BRINGS LIBERATION

In Latin America, liberation theologians speak of God’s preference, or “option,” for the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized. But I do not think God wants us to take sides, even with the poor. The rich also suffer, in many cases more than the poor! They may be rich materially, but many are poor spiritually, and they suffer a lot. I have known rich and famous people who have ended up committing suicide. I am certain that those with the highest understanding will be able to see the suffering in both the poor and the rich.

God embraces both rich and poor, and He wants them to understand each other, to share with each other their suffering and their happiness, and to work together for peace and social justice. We do not need to take sides. When we take sides, we misunderstand the will of God. I know it will be possible for some people to use these words to prolong social injustice, but that is an abuse of what I am saying. We have to find the *real causes* for social injustice, and when we do, we will not condemn a certain type of people. We will ask, Why has the situation of these people remained like that? All of us have the power of love and understanding. They are our best weapons. Any dualistic response, any response motivated by anger will only make the situation worse.

When we practice looking deeply, we have the insight into what to do and what not to do for the situation to change. Everything depends on our way

of looking. The existence of suffering is the First Noble Truth taught by the Buddha, and the causes of suffering are the second. When we look deeply at the First Truth, we discover the second. After seeing the Second Truth, we see the next truth, which is the way of liberation. Everything depends on our understanding of the whole situation. Once we understand, our life style will change accordingly and our actions will never help the oppressors strengthen their stand. Looking deeply does not mean being inactive. We become very active with our understanding. *Nonviolence does not mean non-action. Nonviolence means we act with love and compassion.*

UNDERSTANDING BRINGS COMPASSION

Before the Vietnamese monk Thich Quang Duc burned himself alive in 1963, he meditated for several weeks and then wrote very loving letters to his government, his church, and his fellow monks and nuns explaining why he had reached that decision. When you are motivated by love and the willingness to help others attain understanding, even self-immolation can be a compassionate act. When Jesus allowed himself to be crucified, He was acting in the same way, motivated by the desire to wake people up, to restore understanding and compassion, and to save people. When you are motivated by anger or discrimination, even if you act in exactly the same way, you are doing the opposite.

When you read Thich Quang Duc's letters, you know very clearly that he was not motivated by the

Even if we transport all the bombs to the moon, the roots of war and the roots of the bombs are still here, in our hearts and minds, and sooner or later we will make new bombs. To work for peace is to uproot war from ourselves and from the hearts of men and women.

wish to oppose or destroy but by the desire to communicate. When you are caught in a war in which the great powers have huge weapons and complete control of the mass media, you have to do something extraordinary to make yourself heard. Without access to radio, television, or the press, you have to create new ways to help the world understand the situation you are in. Self-immolation can be such a means. If you do it out of love, you act very much as Jesus did on the cross and as Gandhi did in India. Gandhi fasted, not with anger, but with compassion, not only toward his countrymen but also toward the British. These great men all knew that it is the truth that sets us free, and they did everything they could to make the truth known.

Buddhist and Christian practice both strive to make the truth available—the truth about ourselves, the truth about our brothers and sisters, the truth about our situation. This is the work of writers, preachers, the media, and also practitioners. Each day, we practice looking deeply into ourselves and into the situation of our brothers and sisters. It is the most serious work we can do.

UNDERSTANDING TRANSFORMS

If while we practice we are not aware that the world is suffering, that children are dying of hunger, that social injustice is going on everywhere, we are not practicing mindfulness. We are just trying to escape. But anger is not enough. Jesus told us to love our enemy. "Father, forgive them, for

they know not what they do.” This teaching helps us know how to look at the person we consider to be the cause of our suffering. If we practice looking deeply into his situation and the causes of how he came to be the way he is now, and if we visualize ourselves as being born in his condition, we may see that we could have become exactly like him. When we do that, compassion arises in us naturally, and we see that the other person is to be helped and not punished. In that moment, our anger transforms itself into the energy of compassion. Suddenly, the one we have been calling our enemy becomes our brother or sister. This is the true teaching of Jesus. Looking deeply is one of the most effective ways to transform our anger, prejudices, and discrimination. We practice as an individual, and we also practice as a group.

UNDERSTANDING OURSELVES HELPS US UNDERSTAND OTHERS

In Buddhism, we speak of salvation by understanding. We see that it is the lack of understanding that creates suffering. Understanding is the power that can liberate us. It is the key that can unlock the door to the prison of suffering. If we do not practice understanding, we do not avail ourselves of the most powerful instrument that can free us and other living beings from suffering. True love is possible only with real understanding. Buddhist meditation—stopping, calming, and looking deeply—is to help us understand better. In each of us is a seed of understanding. That seed is God. It is also the Buddha. If you doubt the existence of that seed of understanding, you doubt God and you doubt the Buddha.

When Gandhi said that love is the force that can liberate, he meant we have to love our enemy. Even if our enemy is cruel, even if he is crushing us, sowing terror and injustice, we have to love him. This is the message of Jesus. But how can we love our enemy? There is only one way—to understand him. We have to understand why he is that way, how he has come to be like that, why he does not see things the way we do. Understanding a person brings us the power to love and accept him. And the moment we love and accept him, he ceases to be

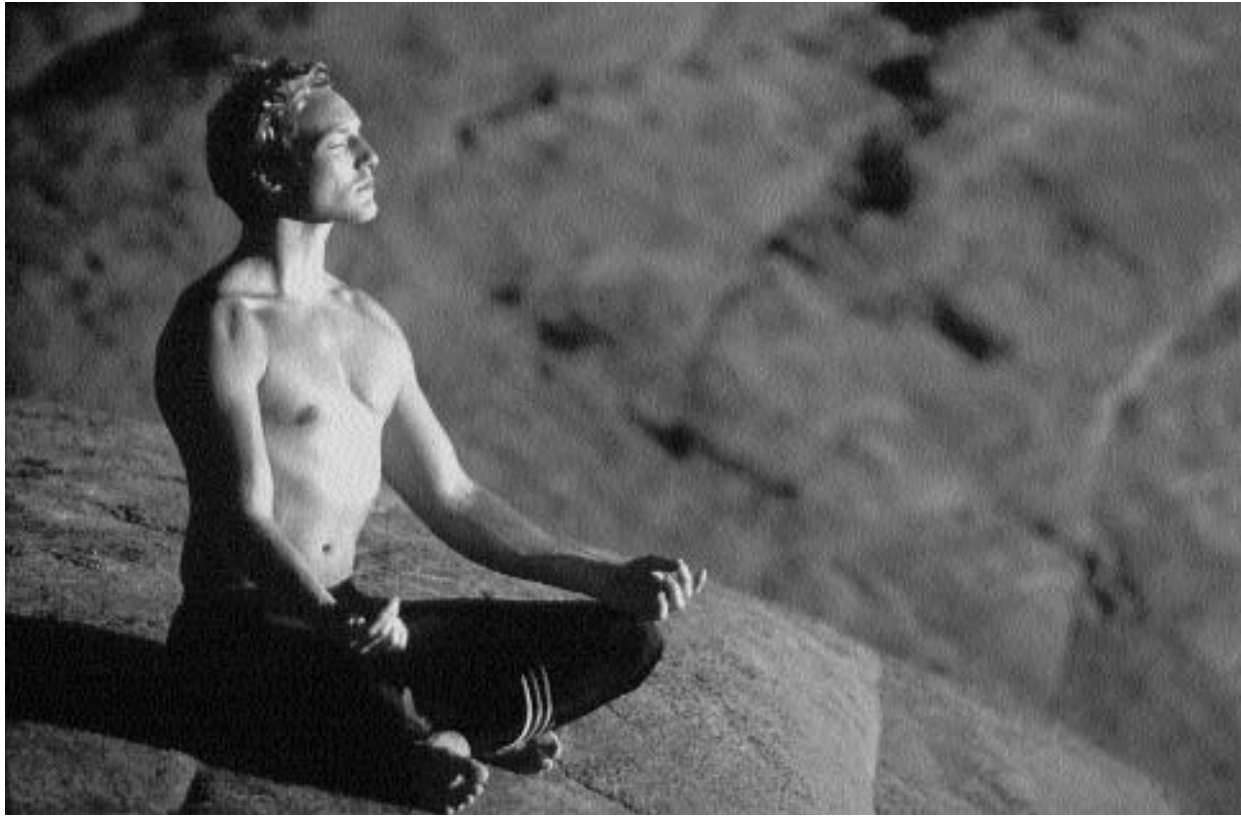
our enemy. To “love our enemy” is impossible, because the moment we love him, he is no longer our enemy.

To love him, we must practice deep looking in order to understand him. If we do, we accept him, we love him, and we also accept and love ourselves. As Buddhists or Christians, we cannot question that understanding is the most important component for transformation. If we talk to each other, if we organize a dialogue, it is because we believe there is a possibility that we can understand the other person better. When we understand another person, we understand ourselves better. And when we understand ourselves better, we understand the other person better, too.

UNDERSTANDING BRINGS FORGIVENESS

“Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” Everyone makes mistakes. If we are mindful, we see that some of our actions in the past have caused others to suffer, and some actions of others have made us suffer. We want to be forgiving. We want to begin anew. “You, my brother or sister, have wronged me in the past. I now understand that it was because you were suffering and did not see clearly. I no longer feel anger toward you.” You cannot force yourself to forgive. Only when you understand what has happened can you have compassion for the other person and forgive him or her. That kind of forgiveness is the fruit of awareness. When you are mindful, you can see the many causes that led the other person to make you suffer, and when you see this, forgiveness and release arise naturally. Putting the teachings of Jesus and the Buddha into practice is always helpful. •

Thich Nhat Hanh is a Zen master, poet, and peace advocate. He is the author of “Being Peace,” “Peace in Every Step,” and “The Miracle of Mindfulness.” He lives in a small community in France, where he writes, gardens, and works to help refugees worldwide. Reprinted by arrangement with Riverhead Books, a member of the Putnam Berkley Publishing Group, Inc. From “Living Buddha, Living Christ” by Thich Nhat Hanh. Copyright 1995 by Thich Nhat Hanh.



TONY STONIS/JOHN KUNNING

Meditation

B A R R Y L O N G

The more often you meditate on yourself and observe yourself in action, the stiller and more intelligently alert your mind will become. After a time you will find that many of the disturbing and destructive elements in your thinking have begun to disappear. You will find that you are experiencing more beauty and richness in your life. The kindly act, a deeper smile, the will to help someone without looking for acknowledgment, the lack of fear of tomorrow, and similar positive responses will be filling the vacuum left by the departing negative forces. You will begin to “know” certain things that cannot be put into words. This is the dawning of the intuition of life—wisdom—brought about by increasing union with the subject being studied: yourself.

Barry Long is a teacher of meditation and the author of "Start Meditating Now," "Stillness is the Way," and "Knowing Yourself." He is the founder of the Barry Long Foundation, a non-profit educational foundation. He resides in London.



How long does it take to master the mind? About as long as it takes to master a foreign language. Success depends on the time and stillness you give to it. If you are half-hearted in the practice of the meditation exercises, you will fail like the half-hearted student linguist.

POSTURE, BREATHING AND THE STILL MIND

The best times for meditation are first thing in the morning and last thing at night—say for ten or fifteen minutes a sitting. If there are likely to be interruptions or noise, find more convenient times.

Do not attempt to overdo things at first. Successful meditation depends on being relaxed and understanding what you are doing. Increase the duration and number of sittings as you feel it is right.

The only discipline you face is to be regular and not to consider whether you feel like it. At times the mind will not want to meditate—especially when you are making progress in stilling it. You may have to vary the times when you meditate but any excuse you make for missing a sitting is false.

You can sit anywhere as long as you are alone. If one of your friends or family is learning with you, you may sit together, but this should be an extra period of meditation. You progress more quickly by sitting alone. The presence of another person will distract you; and you will find there are enough distractions in an empty, silent room without adding to them. Also, you may become dependent on company and be unable to meditate without it. Eventually you will find you can meditate anywhere, in the midst of bedlam if you are not physi-

cally involved, and still be able to keep your self-awareness.

Sit upright on a chair, with your back straight, feet together or a few inches apart and knees spread naturally. Hands can rest on the knees or thighs or be held loosely together on the lap.

Keep the skeleton upright.

Let the flesh fall, so that you are easy and not tense.

Hold the head erect.

Gaze straight ahead and close your eyes.

It is important to be comfortable and yet a little more aware of your posture than usual. If you are not comfortable, the mind will keep darting away to the cause of the irritation instead of remaining where you want to put it. If your body is less upright than usual you may go to sleep.

For some people, dropping off into a half sleep is a problem. It is another example of our mechanicalness. But don't be discouraged. It usually disappears with practice. The mind is not used to being slowed down except when going to sleep and so it interprets meditation as the need for sleep. Again, it is the mind subconsciously controlling us. Avoid sitting down to meditate soon after a meal; a heavy stomach is an inducement to sleep.

Indian meditators sit cross-legged on the floor because that is the normal way of sitting in India. As we do, they also face the possibility of falling asleep so they sit a little more erect in meditation. Some westerners, not understanding this, adopt the Indian posture as though it were essential to meditation. They struggle for months to overcome the discomfort of the unaccustomed position and having mastered it, often regard this feat of self-control as an example of successful meditation. It is not. It is control of the body, not of the self.

The enemy of meditation is the mind. At this stage, you cannot afford the time to stay and battle with the body. Battling involves training and training is mechanical. There is no dispute, nothing to prove. For the mind will win every time.

You close your eyes because it helps to stop the mind from racing. Things you see and hear remind you, by association, of other things. As these other things are in your memory, you start thinking—

and the mind has then taken over. You cannot close your ears nor shut off your senses of smell, taste, and touch-feeling. But as the most distracting sense is sight, you can temporarily eliminate it by closing your eyes.

You are sitting up straight in the chair. Now close your eyes and take three or four slow, deep breaths.

These slow, deep breaths are to put the body at ease and stop the mind from trying to find the source of a new irritation, lack of oxygen. Whenever you attempt something new you tend to breathe shallowly. The body then does not get enough oxygen and becomes mildly inefficient. The mind, because of its lack of self-knowledge, will be unable to locate the trouble and its confusion will be felt as an inability to focus or apply yourself. For a person about to perform for the first time in front of an audience, the effect can be disastrous. The fear of failure adds to tension, the breathing becomes a flutter, an ineffectual pant, the body increasingly inefficient. The mind is unaware that its own anxiety is the cause. It races faster and faster down a panic spiral until it comes to a dead stop, fixed, not in freedom, but in terror, on its own self-consciousness. If the person starts performing mechanically, he will have to take a breath that restores the respiratory cycle, thus getting through unconsciously.

You take these first deep breaths consciously, and then breathe deeply again every three or four minutes while you are sitting or whenever you observe that your body needs another few deep breaths.

All you need now is something to direct the mind to. This is usually the failure point of meditation methods. You need an object because without one it is impossible for the unmastered mind to be still and remain conscious. The mechanical mind can never rest—even in sleep it chatters on beneath the immediate awareness. It is thinking or engaged all the time.

If you close your eyes now and try not to think, you will fail. Try it.

Within a couple of seconds the mind has begun associative thinking. That is, it hears, smells, or

feels something which reminds it of something in the memory and it races off along a line of related ideas or images. When you catch up with it again you will find it is a mile away from the first idea. If you put your attention on a definite subject, the thinking will follow a more logical course; but the mind will not stay still, no matter what subject you fix it on.

Most people confuse a still mind with a blank, idiotic mind. Far from it. A still tiger is not a blank or idiotic tiger. A still mind and a still tiger are alert, aware, poised, and ready.

Some religious teachers urge meditation on passages from the scriptures. This is effective if you truly love God and perceive the truth of the passages. But it is not a meditation method; it is an end in itself. Meditation is a means not an end.

Meditation is a road to somewhere—to an unshakable state of being. The first tuition is to get onto the road—how to still your mind. Then eventually the stillness becomes the whole natural state.

It is not uncommon for people to have moments of stillness, brilliant insights and revelations through means other than right meditation. But the moments are tantalizingly elusive, even for the most ardent seekers. This is because they have set out to find the road with a seeking mind instead of a still mind. When you seek anything before stillness you seek in vain. Stillness is the road.

The still mind does not have to seek or ask. It is already there, simultaneously at the beginning and the end. It just looks and sees what is.

MAKE YOUR COMMITMENT

I'm sitting here to meditate.

There's nothing else I have to do or think about for the next ten minutes.

If there is, go and do it or think about it. And then come back afresh.

I know that any thought or restlessness that may occur is utterly false and comes from my mind.

I'm sitting here to meditate.

Take your seat on a firm chair. Sit upright.

Keep the skeleton erect. Let the flesh fall.

Close the eyes and breathe out until all the air is gone.

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TONY STONE/LARRY ULRICH

Prosperity

R U T H R O S S

Have you ever stopped to notice the overflowing abundance of nature and wondered if you, too, were born to prosper naturally? We have all we need at birth to develop into the miraculous mental and physical beings that we become as adults. Doesn't it make sense that, like the rest of nature, we would be equipped at birth with all the seeds necessary for our prosperous growth?

Ruth Ross, Ph.D., daughter of a tenant farmer, was born in 1929 and lived a childhood life of poverty. Ruth was a spiritual person, an ardent supporter of women's interests, and a creator of self-awareness seminars that built an atmosphere of trust, joy, and excitement. Her seminars on prosperity emphasized that "attaining what we desire for our financial, physical, and mental well-being is not only possible, it is a necessary part of the balance in being human. Abundance is a natural state of being."



If prosperity is a natural condition, why does it seem so hard? Because, unlike the rest of nature, we humans must exercise choice in the development of our prosperity. To be human is to be self-aware with the ability to choose to develop a higher consciousness. Choice is the means and the end. Our growth—our prosperity—comes from our choice in the way we use our mind.

We are part of nature, but we are not blown by the wind and planted in the earth. We can decide where and when to plant our seeds. That is under our control. We can live a life being a victim, being dependent, responding automatically, or playing it safe in every way, and we may well survive. But if we want to plant those seeds of prosperity that we were all born with, we must deliberately choose to do so.

The source, or seed, of all prosperity is in the full use of our creative mind. By mind I mean more than brain. Our brain is only one small part of our mind. The mind refers to the information received from the *total self*—the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual self. The extent to which we choose to listen to and act upon the information from this mind is the extent to which we will prosper.

Your thought, in the form of intuitive hunches, dreams, and gut reactions, is your connection with your total creative self. To help yourself act on the information given by your creative urges, you can begin by understanding the power of thought.

Here are four major points to consider when starting to use the power of creative thinking:

1. To develop your consciousness of prosperity, observe every day what you are creating with your thought.

We first create in mental form everything we desire to produce in physical form. Look around you. Everything you see at this moment that is human-made—whatever you wear, sit on, eat with, live in—was once only an idea in someone's mind. Think back over the last thing you created—a cake, a manuscript, a clean house, a painting, peace between two people—everything you do has the same beginning. It starts with a thought. It may happen so fast you don't notice it, but every move you make is preceded by a thought. We can literally say that we are our thoughts.

The power of thought is so incredible that it is awesome to try to describe. All physical reality that has been invented, discovered, or achieved by humans started as an idea. Every war or civic program had its origin in thought. We are totally surrounded and affected daily by the results of concentrated consciousness from hundreds of thousands of people whose minds came into agreement to produce our cultural accomplishments—bridges, buildings, systems of all sorts. Each project is physical proof of the power of collective thought.

Just having an idea, of course, is not enough to manifest it into material reality. Ninety percent of our ideas die upon conception, or soon afterward. At best, five percent survive long enough to become somewhat developed, and perhaps five percent see the light of day.

CONVINCE YOURSELF AND YOU CONVINCE THE WORLD

Developed thought alone is not enough to manifest an idea into physical reality. It must be combined with belief. Unless you believe in your idea, it will die. Thought is the striking of the match, and belief is the keg of dynamite—the power behind the creative thought. Intention is the hand that strikes the match. You must know what you truly want—what your intention is—or you end up setting off kegs of dynamite in all directions as if they were firecrackers on the Fourth of July. Everybody

enjoys firecrackers—but their effect is short-lived. Getting what you want out of life requires aligning thoughts, beliefs, and intentions.

What does this mean to us?

It means that no matter what has happened in our past, we are never helpless victims. We have the power to change, to be what we want to be, to have what we want to have. That power is our thought. When our thoughts are repeated often enough, they form a pattern. These thought patterns actually program our minds. Whatever we are programming our minds to create, they create.

2. For a thought to be generative, it must be sharply outlined or defined in the mind with a feeling of expectation.

We tend to think about our wants in vague, undifferentiated, dreamlike states, without putting much mind energy behind them. That is because we find it difficult to believe that we can have what we want in life.

It's true, wishful thinking has little power to manifest but that isn't its purpose. A wish is like a spark—similar to the starter on an engine. You couldn't drive your car around the block using your starter; that's not what it's meant for. If you really wanted to read a book, would you try to do so with a match when you could light a candle? What we wish for, and what we expect, must be deliberately combined in order to create in reality a positive, prospering condition.

The real power behind manifestation lies in the state of expectation. Belief systems—our concepts about what makes life work—are the source of our expectations. Changing our expectations to align them more with what we want may require challenging our beliefs—something we don't do easily. The painful part about growing is that we must constantly challenge our beliefs. The pain comes from not wanting to let go of a position that has helped us get to wherever we are. Beliefs are a two-edged sword. They motivate us, keep us highly charged, keep us moving, and, at the same time, limit our access to other horizons.

Examples of limiting concepts I heard as a child

include, “Life isn't a bed of roses, you know!” and “What you want and what you get are two different things.” And they indicated to me that I should expect pain and misery in life and not much of what I wanted.

Actually our whole concept of reality is limited until we experience the fact that the only reality there is is what we tell ourselves. What we believe, we become.

Because we act as if our beliefs are true, they have both positive and negative effects. When we perceive the world as a finished product with the rules and decisions already made, we walk around on egg shells, trying to fit into this world, fearful of disturbing the preexisting order. Wouldn't it be more fun to sense this world as a giant pile of raw lumber, just there for us to help create something better? This attitude would bring out the creative power we were born with. We want to allow our dreams to become clearer and learn to expect to win, to really make a difference.

YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS POWER

3. In order to understand your creative, manifesting power, you need to differentiate between the roles of the conscious and the subconscious aspects of the mind.

The conscious mind has the task of deciding what we want to create in our lives. It does this by sorting out our thoughts—judging and discriminating among them. Using past and present knowledge, plus all the input of the senses, it weighs evidence, makes priorities, and plans for the future. Best of all, it is under our control.

Not so the subconscious. Our knowledge of this aspect of mind is limited: we both fear and stand in awe of it. The subconscious was long ago acknowledged by psychologist Carl Jung and others as the power base of our being, the real source behind our creativity.

We are wary of being controlled by this power, especially when we feel pulled into actions that we do not consciously accept as beneficial. At those times it seems as if our deep-gut desires have taken over completely, ignoring our rational decisions.

When that happens we feel controlled by the subconscious, yet almost helpless to stop it.

Harnessing the incredible power of the automatic machine, the subconscious, is what manifestation is all about. This task is one of the most exciting and rewarding challenges of our lives. Even at this moment our actions are being determined by this nucleus of energy—how wonderful if we could be in the driver's seat handling the reins!

The subconscious mind is subjective in nature. This means that, unlike the conscious mind, it does not discriminate between thoughts. All are equally treated. All conscious thoughts that have penetrated the subconscious are accepted subjectively, without concern for their being right, wrong, good, or bad to the subconscious. If the conscious mind has said so, it is so.

Our subconscious mind is basically composed of “pictures” of all our conscious thought patterns developed over a lifetime. Any pattern of thought that is allowed to remain in our conscious mind long enough will eventually “sink into” our subconscious as a symbol representing those thoughts. All worries, fears, strongly felt desires, convictions, or beliefs that feel like they are a “part of us” are the thoughts we have kept around long enough to slip into our subconscious. When they do, they form a belief system stored in symbolic imagery. These images, which we have programmed in over the years, run our lives by unconsciously determining our actions and bring to us the positive or negative conditions they represent.

Change only comes when a newer thought with a stronger emotional impact “seeps through” from the conscious mind to counteract the first directive. In the meantime, the subconscious is moving the organism, robot-like, toward the programmed goal.

In this way, the subconscious is similar to an automatic pilot device that has been given coded messages about how to run a ship over the years, and is responding accordingly. All is well until the need of the ship's captain changes, and she finds the automatic device has rusted in place and no one knows how to reprogram it.

Whatever the conscious mind dwells upon be-

comes the orders for the subconscious to produce. The importance of realizing the subjective nature of the subconscious is to understand that the subconscious cannot say no. It is our impersonal genie who can only reply yes, totally accepting conscious thought as an absolute dictator.

That is both good news and bad news. The bad news is that because our culture, as most others, is so negative-prone, most of our programming has been influenced by negative thought—not only our own thoughts but all of those around us. From birth we have experienced daily a bombardment of negativity from parents, teachers, peers, fellow workers, and mates. Their intention is not negative; especially toward us, they are the result of their own negative programming too.

Nevertheless, the results are the same. It is all too easy for us to discuss in great detail what is wrong with ourselves and others—what we can't do, what they did wrong, what we should have done, ways we ought to change, and why we can't. By clinging to our negative thoughts we have unwittingly allowed these attitudes to slip into the subconscious and dominate our creative energy.

Proof that our thought affects us, in both positive and negative ways, is easy to find. Faces, bodies, and actions of people around us reflect if they are happy, self-achieving, fulfilled people. When you are thinking joy, you are emanating joy all around you. Conversely, if your mind is absorbed with worry, doubt, and fear, that shows, too. We attract or repel people according to our thoughts. When you think negatively, you turn away joy and love.

The good news is that we now have a chance to modify all this negativity in our lives. We can do it through deliberate, continuous, conscious canceling of negative thought and substituting positive patterns.

4. The thought most deeply impressed upon the subconscious creates what we manifest in our lives.

It is our choice, and within our power, deliberately to select the thoughts we consciously hold.

By consciously repeating strongly desired thought goals for a sufficient amount of time, we

are actually programming our subconscious to produce those goals. Once programmed, this great impersonal computer has no choice but to produce, without question, what we ask for, indefinitely.

This is where the role of the will plays its crucial part in manifesting. Many have mistakenly tried to use their will to push, shove, and force behavior to conform to their decisions of the ideal. The true role of the will is to be a guardian over our thoughts. Its task is to make sure that all our thoughts positively support our goals. By keeping negative thoughts out of the conscious mind, the will is being used on the highest level possible.

Sound like positive thinking? Yes, it is, but it is more. The head, heart, and gut work together. It is not enough to mouth the words about good in our lives, nor just to think the thought. We must seek it actively, feel it, and live it.

This is far from a Pollyanna approach to life. The negative cannot and should not be ignored. It is to be learned from. We need not only to acknowledge the negatives in our lives, but take responsibility for them, and see what we're getting out of them.

Resisting or hiding from pain may provide momentary pleasure, but it assures a lifetime of pain. Facing our problems may bring momentary pain, but brings a lifetime of pleasure. Working through negatives and living a negative life are two very separate things.

THE POWER OF CONSCIOUS THOUGHT

Because prosperity depends upon the full use of our creative imagination, we need to find ways to use the conscious mind fully. Our task, as of this moment, is to become aware of our own negative thoughts and deliberately cancel them with our willpower. Cleaning up our act from the inside means just that—staying with our own process and watching what we are telling ourselves.

To do this, we need to be constantly alert to the power of our thoughts, to know that there is no such thing as a casual statement. Every time we make a statement we are reinforcing our future.

Words are energy and energy is creative. As poet Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Words are alive; cut them and they bleed." We will use this aliveness of our own words to create life and spirit for achieving our life goals. In order to use the conscious mind creatively to reprogram the subconscious, we will need to keep the conscious mind clear. We need to be able to:

1. concentrate with clarity,
2. develop peace of mind, and
3. be present—*now*.

Let's look at how we block the full use of our conscious mind through filtered consciousness, drifting consciousness, and the chattering mind.

FILTERED CONSCIOUSNESS

We often misunderstand the nature of the conscious mind and try to succeed by being a totally rational person. We strive to know "enough" to win in life. The conscious mind, however, is a gatherer.

The general public values information. Facts, figures, and hard data seem far more real to many people than intuitive guesses, prophetic dreams, or gut reactions. Yet, top leaders in every field easily recognize that many final decisions must often be based on information that goes beyond the facts. After the figures are gathered and digested, big decisions are usually made with intuitive leaps of the imagination. Many times we must ultimately decide with incomplete facts and instead rely on what feels right.

To stay more in touch with your intuitive feelings—the true source of prospering decisions—you need to go beyond interpreting your experiences through the filter of the conscious mind. Use it to classify, computerize, and decode information from the environment. Then *feel* the truth—be with nature and trust your gut reactions to people and problems.

DRIFTING CONSCIOUSNESS

Drifting consciousness is a way we have of disappearing mentally. When we are not present mentally, we are not available to all that is going on and we are not fully prepared to change if it becomes immediately necessary. Being here—now—is hard

work, and absolutely necessary for prosperity consciousness. We must be present to act spontaneously, ready to take our next step when it shows itself.

So much of our time is spent in drifting consciousness, and in distraction, without our even being aware of it. Each time we are driving down the road and suddenly “come to,” not really certain where we are or where we’ve been, we can be sure we have been functioning on automatic pilot. We usually did not choose to reminisce, but instead were chasing an elusive thought that took us farther and farther away from being alive to the moment. Each time this happens we will want gently to refocus the mind on the present.

CHATTERING MIND

The third consciousness trap that prevents clarity of consciousness is the chattering mind. In its usual undisciplined state, the mind has been likened to a “drunken monkey,” jumping about at random, going from one subject to another endlessly, producing little more than fatigue or at best escape. This is the opposite of the kind of directed attention necessary for prosperity consciousness. Prosperity demands concentrated thought. This idea is summed up in the following prosperity key.

PROSPERITY KEY NO. 7

Quieting the mind promotes directed action.

The incessant repetitive thoughts that obsess our minds are a drain on our creative energy. Are you aware of constantly talking to yourself? Take the next two minutes and write down all the thoughts that are going through your head. Note how unimportant most of them are and how you repeat yourself. You probably won’t be able to write fast enough.

Next, sit in front of a clock and try not to think for sixty seconds. Don’t be discouraged by the results; you would have the powers of a very sophisticated yogi if you could stop your mind for just three minutes. Fortunately, you don’t need to be a yogi to reap the benefits of quieting your mind.

A simple and effective way to stop the chatter in

your head is to say “Stop!” to yourself when you hear your “reverberating circuits” going around endlessly. An even more effective, longer-lasting technique is to meditate. If you are a beginner, take fifteen minutes each morning, close your eyes, breathe deeply, relax your body, and when thoughts come, just announce to yourself, lovingly, “Peace. Be still.” Meditation is a form of acknowledging your connection with the spirit of universal love, and it allows for a sense of peace and love to flood your being. The tranquillity that follows stays with you, reducing stress and promoting a state of creative awareness throughout the day.

Many artists have spoken of the creative state of being they achieve by quieting the mind and focusing attention through meditation. Just sitting quietly gives you a chance to go inside to ask your most important questions to your inner self. German composer and pianist Johannes Brahms, for example, wrote about his feeling of being a channel of creative energy during meditation:

I always contemplate my oneness with the creator before commencing to compose. This is the first step. I immediately feel vibrations that thrill my whole being. These are the spirit illuminating the soul power within and in the exalted state I see clearly what is obscure in my ordinary moods; then I feel capable of drawing inspiration from above... straight-away the ideas flow in upon me and not only do I see distinct themes in my mind’s eye, but they are clothed in the right forms, harmony, and orchestration. Measure by measure the finished product is revealed to me when I am in those rare inspired moods.

Creative energy is waiting to move through us once we get out of our own way. Cleansing the mind of negative thought, quieting the chatter, and becoming one with the moment provides the environment for this energy to flow freely through us. •

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Breath Work for Releasing Emotions

L Y N N E F I N N E Y

One of the most effective ways to release repressed emotions is a simple breathing technique called by various names: “conscious connected breathing,” “rebirthing,” and “holotropic breath work.” Whatever the name, this method generally produces dramatic, immediate, and permanent healing effects.

I prefer the term “conscious connected breathing” because it describes the process. When we breathe normally, we tend to breathe automatically, pausing between breaths, and often we do not breathe deeply. In conscious connected breathing, breathing is conscious and one breath immediately follows another without a pause. The person breathes deeply through an open mouth, emphasizing the inhalation and relaxing during exhalation. This way of breathing allows more oxygen into the body which releases the suppressed emotions at a cellular level and brings them to conscious awareness. Continuing to breathe through the emotions that come to awareness allows them to be experienced, expressed, and released.

Lynne Finney, J.D., M.S.W., is an author, lecturer, lawyer, and psychotherapist specializing in the treatment of childhood trauma and helping people live more fulfilling lives.



Psychiatrists in World War II found that soldiers who suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, including hysterical reactions such as paralysis and mutism, were cured through the release of intense emotions. Conscious connected breathing releases the deepest, most intense layers of emotion from past experiences, often those most hidden from our conscious minds, and allows them to be expressed in a safe way. The wonderful news is that once released, those old, painful feelings really *disappear*, leaving you feeling noticeably lighter and happier because the stored emotional energy is gone.

Using conscious connected breathing, I was able to reach the deepest layers of repressed rage, hatred, hopelessness, and grief about my abuse—feelings I did not suspect were even there after years of therapy. I knew I felt sad about what my parents had done to me as a child, but conscious connected breathing brought out a depth of grief that made me sob for hours—and left me feeling dramatically lighter and happier. Experiencing the murderous rage and hatred I felt as a child was terrifying, but the lightness and peace I felt afterwards were more than worth it. Now, even when anger is triggered in the present, the old intense rage is gone.

Although many people deny that they have such intense feelings of hatred and rage, I and other therapists have found that such feelings are present in almost everyone, because almost everyone has experienced some form of physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse as a child without having an outlet for the feelings it engendered.

The amount of emotion you expel at each breath work session is up to you because you control how much emotion you feel. If you want to stop evoking emotion, you simply stop the deep connected

breathing, relax and breathe naturally. The more breath work sessions you do, the more you will be able to access deeper layers of intense suppressed emotion. Although you may sometimes feel that every last drop of emotion has been wrung out of you, there are usually deeper levels to uncover because we have all suffered a variety of profound psychological wounds.

The number of sessions you need depends on how ready and willing you are to experience intense feelings and to stay with them, no matter how strong and unpleasant they are.

Although there is as yet no data on the optimal number of breathing sessions, most people seem to feel as though they are finished after ten to twenty sessions. You will know when you no longer need breath work by the lighter, freer feeling you will experience most of the time in your daily life. Another indication of your progress comes when you stop reacting with exaggerated fear, anxiety, and anger to certain stimuli. When you have cleared yourself of most of your repressed emotions, events that once triggered extreme reactions will no longer bother you. I now catch myself occasionally cursing inconsiderate drivers out of habit, but without the old feelings of rage and helplessness—and I laugh at myself.

Of course you have to continue to release new emotions as they come up in order to remain clear and not build up new stress in your body. The advantage of connected breathing is that once you have learned the technique, you can schedule a session whenever you need one, or work with a partner or by yourself.

The breath process is simple but most people will require the support of a facilitator, at least at first. The depth and intensity of feelings can be frightening and almost overwhelming without the support of someone who is familiar and comfortable with the process. I found I could go deeper and release more with the help of my support person, a massage therapist. After you are comfortable with the process and are able to keep yourself breathing deeply through intense emotions, you may very well be able to continue on your own. A sensitive facilitator will be able to help you reach

that point and show you effective ways to move through the emotions that will come up both during and after breathing sessions.

I do not believe your support person needs to be a licensed psychotherapist, although a psychotherapist can help you understand your feelings and reframe hurtful decisions you made as a child. Most people recover enough of the memories or impressions of what happened to them during their emotional release to resolve the trauma and they do not need any further details. It is the emotional release that provides the healing. In fact, a deep emotional release can produce a dramatic alteration in posture, physical appearance, and health.

One of the extraordinary advantages of conscious connected breathing is its ability to reach emotions that were repressed in infancy and even in the womb. Deep breathing techniques were first used by therapists who recognized that trauma caused by the birth process affected people throughout their lives. They called their breathing therapy “rebirthing” and used it to release the repressed intense emotions and pain of being forced from the womb. Now we know the same techniques can be used for later childhood and adult trauma.

Children understand even at a preverbal stage much more than we used to believe. People using this breathing technique have been astonished to find themselves not wanting to be born because during delivery they heard the doctor say they were too big so they were afraid of hurting their mothers. Or they may have heard or felt that their parents did not want them.

The wonderful news is that once released, those old, painful feelings really disappear, leaving you feeling noticeably lighter and happier because the stored emotional energy is gone.

The phenomenon of repressing emotions has been explained by the revolutionary research of quantum physicists who discovered that our bodies are not solid as they appear to be, but are composed of atoms and molecules spinning around, some traveling far beyond the visible limits of our anatomy. We are actually ninety percent space.

Quantum physicists also tell us that our emotions are made up of energy particles and that if our emotions are not released through expression, these particles can become trapped as energy in the spaces between the atoms and molecules. When we are under a great deal of stress, we stop breathing and breathe more shallowly, which traps the energy of our emotions in our bodies. Conscious connected breathing helps us release the imprisoned emotions by over-oxygenating our cells and forcing the trapped energy out.

Repressed emotions, these particles of trapped energy, are not simply mental but a physical reality, and healing requires that they be released. That is why it is necessary to deal with the pain of your past and why therapeutic techniques that do not address past traumas are largely ineffective.

Only hypnotherapy and conscious connected breathing seem to be able to reach back to our earliest emotional experiences. Breath work also avoids our western tendency to intellectualize and rationalize our feelings. With breath work, you cannot plan what will come out; whatever emotion is ready to be released will appear. Since the technique works regardless of intellectual capacity or language proficiency, it may be the most effective way to provide psychotherapy for the mentally disabled and

disadvantaged. In our society, most people who have a disability have been subjected to enough cruel and humiliating experiences so that breath work could be valuable in releasing the anguish and anger they have repressed. More study is needed on the effectiveness of breath work for this group as well as for children.

In order to heal from any type of abuse or traumatic experience, you must get in touch with all of your repressed painful feelings, accept them, and express them in safety. Right now there are not enough traditional psychotherapists in the world to help everyone who needs healing. Conscious connected breathing deserves exploration as a possible means of providing a rapid effective method of healing people at a deep and permanent level on a mass basis without a great deal of expense.

The use of breathing techniques in therapy is a fairly new phenomenon so it may take a bit of searching to find someone qualified to act as a facilitator.

Since psychiatrist Stanislav Grof wrote his book, "The Holotropic Mind," about the amazing effects of connected breathing which he calls Holotropic Breathwork, some psychotherapists are starting to learn the technique, although you do not need a psychotherapist for this work. However, the practitioner you choose should be thoroughly trained in breath work and have experience in using it personally and with clients.

Most important, you should make sure the facilitator has worked on her own problems and is clear of serious emotional problems and blocks that would interfere with your release of emotions. If

Repressed emotions, these particles of trapped energy, are not simply mental but a physical reality, and healing requires that they be released. That is why it is necessary to deal with the pain of your past.

your practitioner has not dealt with her own anger and hatred, she may not be able to support you through yours and may cut you off prematurely, thereby negating the purpose of the treatment. You should find someone who will encourage you to finish the process no matter how violent your emotions are or how long it takes. Although the usual individual session is one and a half and two hours, I have had a couple of sessions that lasted three or four hours.

Being a breath work facilitator takes a special sensitivity, compassion, and freedom from personal problems that would interfere with the process. There is no litmus paper test for these qualities; you have to rely on your instincts during your initial interview to determine if you feel that you and the facilitator are comfortable working together with intense emotions. I suggest that you try one or two sessions with a couple of candidates before making your final choice so you can experience the process and have a chance to

assess firsthand with whom and under what conditions you feel safest and are able to release the most emotion. Unlike traditional psychotherapy, a long-term relationship with the same facilitator is not essential. References from friends are extremely helpful in choosing a breath work facilitator.

Psychotherapists have begun to recognize the value of breath work and are starting to refer clients to facilitators. Most large cities now have wellness centers as do some hospitals which can give you the names of facilitators. Breath work therapists frequently advertise in local new age and health magazines and in newspapers or brochures published by

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Breathing

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health food stores or healing centers. Women's and self-help bookstores can often be helpful in locating breath work practitioners and may also have heard reports from people who engaged them.

Breath work can be done individually or in groups where you work with a partner under the guidance of a facilitator. Whether you choose to work alone and pay a higher fee or learn the process in a group is purely a matter of personal preference. One advantage of groups is that they are often held on weekends for several hours or even a day, so you have time to finish releasing whatever emotions you access that day. A disadvantage is that the facilitator may not be available immediately for another session if you need follow-up help. Sometimes the breath process can release emotions that continue to emerge for a few days following the session and you may want to have someone available for consultation. Before you participate in a group, you may want to ask the facilitator if he will be available for emergencies and further work.

Some facilitators and therapists use evocative music and other sounds during breath work. I went to a facilitator whose husband had recorded segments of classical, African, and other music which not only intensified my feelings, but affected all seven chakras. I found the combination of breath work and music extraordinary and had a powerful spiritual experience. According to Dr. Grof and other therapists, some people experience non-ordinary states of consciousness, including those similar to cosmic consciousness, during breath work. Many people

are now using the technique for mind expansion, in addition to clearing repressed memories.

Connected breathing is one of the newest healing techniques and may prove to be the most effective discovered so far. It is certainly worth trying by itself or in conjunction with traditional psychotherapy. •

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Everyday

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you will feel your connection to wholeness, and you will know peace.

When we separate the spiritual from the everyday, we limit our opportunities for real moments. We miss ordinary miracles and wonders because we are looking for something flashy, something that screams "I am special, I am holy." We are so distracted by our search for the extraordinary that we don't even recognize the sacred when we encounter it.

Real moments of holiness happen when we experience moments of wholeness with ourselves, our environment or another person. As you go through your day, look for holy moments and everyday miracles—the hug your child gives you for no reason at all: a flock of birds flying past a cloud: the beautiful array of fruits and vegetables the earth has produced that are waiting for you at the supermarket: the song playing on the radio that gives you just the message you've been needing to hear: the lone yellow dandelion bursting

through the crack in the concrete sidewalk.

When you stop and pay attention to holy moments and everyday miracles you will start living with awe and wonder and participating in a Divine love affair with God.

Yesterday, approximately 200,000 people throughout the world died. Their time on earth is over. They did not wake up this morning. They did not feel the sun on their face, or feel the wind on their skin. They did not hear laughter, or singing, or birds calling to each other. They could not eat an apple or drink a glass of water. They were not held or kissed or smiled at. They cannot see the stars twinkling in the sky tonight. They cannot gaze at the moon.

You are alive.

You are here now.

You have another day.

That is a blessing.

Enjoy the ordinary everyday miracles that make up your life... They will be your most sacred real moments. •

For information about books, tapes or other products by Barbara De Angelis or for a schedule of seminars and personal appearances, please call (800)682-LOVE

Hunger

Continued from page 41

Doreen Virtue, Ph.D., is a psychotherapist specializing in goal setting and goal achievement, with emphasis in the areas of weight, relationships, and careers. She maintains a private practice, counseling people across the county via telephone and through seminars. From the book "Constant Craving" by Doreen Virtue. Copyright 1995 by Doreen Virtue. Printed with permission from the publisher Hay House, Carson, CA.

Calendar of Up-Coming Workshops, Seminars, and Events.

OCTOBER

- 19–22 AMERICAN DANCE THERAPY CONFERENCE

For professionals to learn more about dance/movement therapy as a powerful and effective treatment tool. At the Rye Town Hilton, Rye Brook, New York. Presented by American Dance Therapy Association. (410)997-4040.

- 21–22 WORKSHOP FOR COUPLES

This workshop for gay and lesbian couples will teach and explore healthy communication, relationship styles, building and maintaining a loving relationship through daily and weekly practices that will be taught, demonstrated

and practiced in a safe, supportive environment. The latest knowledge and research about couples will be discussed and utilized. Sponsored by The Couples School of New Mexico. Led by David M. Ross and Fran Levin, Licensed Clinical Social Workers in private practice. Albuquerque, New Mexico. (505) 293-9087.

- 22–26 KANUGA FALL CONFERENCE

Exploring Jungian psychology for the spiritual journey with Robert Johnson, Alice Howell, Michael Meade, and Peri Aston. Hendersonville, North Carolina. Presented by Journey into Wholeness. (704)877-4809.

- 22–29 MIRRORS RETREAT

Shamanic healing and acting, a dramatization of the ego-soul struggle that exists in each psyche. Dance, theater, and ritual with Gabrielle Roth, teacher/explorer and shamanic healer. St. Helena, California. For more information contact Right Hand Productions. (415)388-0431.

- 25–29 HUMANISTIC MEDICINE

An international conference exploring modern medicine, science, shamanism, and psychology with Brant Secunda, Dr. Wolf Buntig, Jeanne Acterberg, Jean Shinoda Bolen, and others. Garmisch-Partenkirchen in the German Alps. Sponsored by Dance of the Deer Foundation, Soquel, California. (408)475-9560.

- 27–28 ANGELS: CONTEMPLATION AND SPIRITUAL PATHS

DANCE OF THE DEER FOUNDATION PROVIDES EXPERIENTIAL WORKSHOPS IN HUICHOL INDIAN SHAMANISM, WITH BRANT SECUNDA NOVEMBER 17.

Mastery isn't reserved for the supertalented. It's available to anyone who is willing to get on the path and stay on it—regardless of age, sex, or previous experience.

—George Leonard

A lecture that will explore the medieval use of angels as objects of contemplation and the angelic hierarchy as a comprehensive spiritual path. Steven Chase, Ph.D. For more information contact CIIS, San Francisco, California. (415)753-6100.

- 27–29 TWO-DAY POSTURE AND MOVEMENT TRAINING SEMINAR

Movement and posture can always be improved upon. BioKinetics is an empowering somatic approach utilizing a composite of techniques and based on Hanna Somatic Education. It restores voluntary control of the muscular system through neuromuscular retraining principles. It is a somatic learning process of non-strenuous movements

THE ART OF BEING PRESENTS BODY, HEART AND SOUL WORKSHOPS THAT ENABLE YOU TO RECLAIM YOUR LOST INNOCENCE, AND RESTORE YOUR SENSUAL AND SEXUAL ALIVENESS. JANUARY 5, MAUI, HAWAII.

and hands-on practitioner tools to stimulate the brain's release of chronic muscular contractions. Seattle, Washington. For more information call (970) 245-8903.

• 27-29 SOCIAL ARTISTRY

Jean Houston will present a three day seminar on transformation and manifestation of a deeper meaning and truth in your life. Presented by the World Future Research Society, Alexandria, Virginia. (800)227-5210 or (301)654-6499.

• 27-30 PAST-LIFE THERAPY: QUANTUM CONSCIOUSNESS

The Association for Past-Life Research and Therapies conference with pioneers and innovators of Past-Life Therapy. A tool for transformation in the fields of integrative medicine and psychology. Join the foremost leaders in the field, including Valerie Hunt, Hazel Denying, Ph.D., Joseph Costa, Ph.D., Jess Stearn and many others. Contact APRT, Riverside, California (909)784-1570.

• 28-29 AMERICAN POLARITY THERAPY CONFERENCE

South Central Regional Conference. An experiential weekend of Polarity Therapy energy balancing at Mt. Sequoyah Center, Fayetteville, Arkansas, with Chandana Becker. Contact APTA,

Boulder, Colorado (303)545-2080 or Center for Wellbeing, Fayetteville, Arkansas. (501)442-2026.

N O V E M B E R

• 1-5 HEALTH CLASSIC

A rainbow of health, fun, sun, and study in San Diego, California. Keynote speakers include Michio Kushi, Joan Borysenko, and over 30 health and environmental teachers. Gourmet vegetarian meals included. Fifth Annual Fall Health Classic. (805)969-0444.

• 2-7 PAINTING FROM THE SOURCE

Painting from the Source is for people who have considered painting but never thought they could. It is also for people who are trained in the arts and would like to explore and expand their creativity. Many who have experienced the workshop have found it to be uniquely transformative. For information on this and future workshops contact Aviva Gold. (518) 392-2631.

• 3-5 A TIME FOR SPIRIT

The third Annual Conference on Conscious Aging. Join an exceptional group of writers and spiritual teachers such as Christiane Northrup, Matthew Fox, Joan Halifax, Joycelyn Elders, and John Bradshaw. Contact The Omega Institute. (800)944-1001.

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- 3-5 POWER OF SOUND SCHOOL

Explore the fields of sound therapy, healing with tone and voice, drumming and auditory stimulation with Don Campbell. The school meets four weeks during the year. Available in three locations: Baltimore, Los Angeles, San Francisco. Institute for Music, Health and Education. (800)490-4968.

- 3-5 ENNEAGRAM

Learn a tool for understanding self and others developed by Sufi mystics from their observation of human behavior. For more information contact Wisdom House, Litchfield, Connecticut. (203)567-3163.

- 3-6 CHERISHING

A time for sisters. A gathering of women. Nothing comes to birth or flowers without cherishing. Arden, North Carolina (near Asheville). Presented by Journey Into Wholeness. (704)877-4809.

- 3-9 CHANGING OURSELVES—
CHANGING THE WORLD

Deepen your spirituality in a week-long retreat with Marianne Williamson as she joins forces with the inspira-

tional Mary Manin Morrissey to co-create a truly miraculous experience. Based on Williamson's best-selling book, "A Return To Love." Week-long or weekend introduction options available. Namaste Retreat Center. (800)893-1000.

- 5-21 ACROSS THE
BOUNDARIES: BALI AND
BORNEO

Explore bridges between people of different cultures and between humans and other creatures. Begins with the ritual of daily life in Bali and travels to the deep forest of southern Borneo. Children and young people welcome. Joan Halifax, Upaya, Santa Fe, New Mexico. (505)986-8518.

- 10-12 AT THE SPEED OF
LIFE

The Spiritual Path of Conscious Relationships

with Gay and Kathlyn Hendricks. Integrates authenticity, equality, and appreciation to deepen relationships. Contact Namaste Retreat Center, Wilsonville, Oregon. (800)893-1000.

- 11-12 ADDICTION AND RECOVERY

A Journey of the dissatisfied Soul. Learn the meaning of the spiritual nature of addiction and recovery in individuals and contemporary culture. Speakers include Marion Woodman, Mindy Fullilove, Fionnula Flannigan, Fred Holmquist, Sam Naifeh, Garrett O'Conner, and Julian White. Pacifica Graduate Institute. (805)969-3626 ext. 103.

- 17-18 JOURNEY TO THE WELLSPRING

A weekend of prayer, silence, and sharing. Brothers of Taize. For more information contact Wisdom House, Litchfield, Connecticut. (203)567-3163.

- 17-26 EARTH AND SKY

A pilgrimage and seminar at the Pacific Ocean in Mexico. Experience Hui-chol Indian Shamanism, healing, and ceremonial celebration with shamans Dona Josefa Medrano and Brant Sencunda at a villa, footsteps from the ocean—near Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Dance of the Deer Foundation. (408) 475-9560.

- 18—STRESS, COPING AND YOGA

This workshop is intended to enhance health and psychological well-being. Participants will be introduced to practical techniques that can reduce the negative impact of excessive stress and promote healthy lifestyles choices. Areas covered include the dynamics of stress and the use of yoga, meditation. Conducted by Cary Jensen, licensed clinical social worker and advanced student of yoga. For more information contact the Integral Yoga Institute of Richmond, Virginia. (804)355-1008.

- 18-19 A WORKSHOP FOR
HETEROSEXUAL COUPLES

This workshop will teach and explore healthy communication, relationship styles, and ways of building and maintaining a loving relationship through daily and weekly practices that will be

Green Island

Calendar

taught, demonstrated, and practiced in a safe, supportive environment. Sponsored by The Couples School of New Mexico. Led by David M. Ross and Fran Levin, Licensed Clinical Social Workers in private practice. Albuquerque, New Mexico. (505)293-9087.

- 28–DEC 7 SOLAR INITIATION JOURNEY
In this journey across the Yucatan Peninsula, Mayan Traditional Elder and Daykeeper, Hunbatz Men, will teach on the meanings at nine of the Sacred Ceremonial Centers of the Maya. Travel in Mexico and accommodations included. Offered by Caban Alliance. (503)485-8421.

D E C E M B E R

- 1–3 WEEKEND AT AVIVA'S—PAINTING FROM THE SOURCE
Spend a weekend at Aviva's Retreat nestled in the foothills of the Berkshires. Aviva has been teaching inspired art for over 25 years. Spencertown, New York. Contact Aviva Gold. (518)392-2631.

- 4–10 PSYCHOLOGY OF HEALTH, IMMUNITY & DISEASE
Specific applications and sources of inspiration to foster the further use of mind/body medicine. Presenters are Stanley Krippner, Christiane Northrup, Bernie Siegel, Frances Vaughan, and many others. Sponsored by The National Institute for the Clinical Application of Behavioral Medicine, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. (800)743-2226.

- 6–11 MIND/BODY MEDICINE & AYURVEDA
Natural and holistic approaches to health. An in-depth knowledge and understanding of the principles and therapeutic applications of mind-body medicine and ayurveda with Deepak Chopra, MD, and David Simon, MD. San Diego, California. Quantum Publications. (800)757-8897.

- 9—TOOLS FOR MEDITATION
In this workshop, the emphasis is in learning a variety of techniques to introduce the student to meditation and practice. No experience is required. Clover Hill Library, 6701 Deer Run Drive, Chesterfield, Virginia. For more

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For information, call: (212)886-4888 or Write: The Institute For Advanced Metaphysical Studies, 511 Avenue of the Americas, B365, New York, NY 10011.

information contact the Integral Yoga Institute of Richmond, Virginia. (804)355-1008.

- 10-11 A TIME OF BROTHERS

Come join us for a gathering of men in support of one another as we recover the Soul's Journey. Arden, North Carolina. (near Asheville). Presented by Journey Into Wholeness (704)877-4809.

- 24-30 GEMINIDS METEOR SHOWER

A warm weather winter adventure of fun and personal discovery at Baja, California Hot Springs. Camping, hiking, boating, exceptional snorkeling, and fishing. One of the many wilderness destinations for InnerQuest. For other locations and dates and more information call (800)990-HERO.

- 28-JAN 7 AVATAR COURSE

The Avatar course is based on the simple but profound concept that your beliefs will create or attract situations that you experience as your life. Call: Roseann Gould (800)381-2465. Maui, Hawaii.

JANUARY

- 5-13 & 16-24 BODY, HEART & SOUL

Two week-long workshops to enable you to reclaim your lost innocence, heal your shame and to restore your sensual and sexual aliveness. A experiential education in sexuality and intimate loving. Presented by Alan Lowen, Niyaso Carter, and Paul Carter. For more information call (808)572-2234. Maui, Hawaii.

- 8-20 JUNGIAN WINTER SEMINAR IN SWITZERLAND

"Myth, Symbol & Soul" seminar for people with professional or personal interest in analytical psychology at the Jung Institute, Zurich. Contact Michael Galazka, Jungian Seminars, Essex, Connecticut. (800)258-3533 or (203)767-3533.

- 20-26 THE THERAPIST: A JUNGIAN PERSPECTIVE

Sponsored by Journey Into Wholeness, Hendersonville, North Carolina. (704)877-4809. •

Transformation

Continued from page 23

a few months of therapy, I began writing a mythological novel which became the vehicle for integrating the personalities. The writing brought me moments of profound joy and sadness as I processed the experience of childhood. In addition to writing, massage therapy and body work helped me recover a sense of my body as good and worthy of honor rather than shame.

Today I no longer have to navigate an invisible minefield of other sets of consciousness. Creative energy flows easily into various writing projects and in my teaching. I find great joy in simple things: breathing fresh air, eating good food, singing in the shower. I no longer escape into meditation to find peace; yet periods of meditation continue to be part of my daily life, making me aware of how sacred life is, of the great joy that living in the present moment brings.

While my transformation began with a solely spiritual focus, my wounded mind and body made the spiritual path very difficult. Whole psyches, I have discovered, lead to realms of the Spirit I only dreamed of tapping. Those realms are available, here and now as I work with students, play with my granddaughter, lunch with friends. When I began to look inward fifteen years ago, the Divine seemed very far away. Today the Divine Spark is as close as the nearest person, blade of grass, or sun-filled sky. God is in the recesses of my own heart. I have tasted and digested the meaning of "Grace builds on Nature."•

Conscious Notes

Continued from page 19

largely mechanical. Use every spare second to be mindful. Use all the moments you can.

CONCENTRATION ON ALL ACTIVITIES

You should try to maintain mindfulness of every activity and perception through the day, starting with the first perception when you awake and ending with the last thought before you fall asleep. This is an incredibly high goal to shoot for. Don't expect to be able to achieve this work soon. Just take it slowly and let your abilities grow over time. The most feasible way to go about the task is to divide your day up into chunks. Dedicate a certain interval to mindfulness of posture, then extend this mindfulness to other simple activities: eating, washing, dressing, and so forth. Some time during the day, you can set aside fifteen minutes or so to practice the observation of specific types of mental states: pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral feelings, for instance; or the hindrances or thoughts. The specific routine is up to you. The idea is to get practice at spotting the various items and to preserve your state of mindfulness as fully as you can throughout the day. •

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Age

Continued from page 37

The Jubilee woman who tells Lila's story was also an inmate. Jean Harris was finally released in 1993 after serving thirteen years and is now in her seventies. A graduate of both Smith College and New York's Bedford Hills Correc-

tional Facility for Women, she wryly shares Lila's plight with the rest of us, pointing out that we all know people who take \$167 tax deductions at lunch and asking whether as taxpayers we have more reason to pay for those lunches than for Lila's check, or Lila's future. In her own Jubilee Time, Jean Harris is devoting herself to women's prison reform and to mothers in prison and their children, modeling the kind of complete Jubilee spirituality to which all of us are called. •

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Meditation

Continued from page 69

Breathe in slowly and gently and fill yourself with air.

Breathe out until you are empty.

Take three more of these deep breaths.

Deeply. Slowly. Evenly.

Now let the body breathe naturally.

Be still.

A thought comes in. You're starting to think about something. Observe yourself.

Thinking is mechanical.

Catch the thought.

And breathe out... as if to breathe the thought away. *Breathe thoughts out!* •

From "Lesson One" of "Meditation, A Foundation Course," a book of ten lessons by Barry Long. Lesson two explains what to direct the mind to in order to start stilling it. Copyright 1995 by Barry Long. The book is available from bookstores or from The Barry Long Foundation, POB 251 Cerrillos, NM 87010. (800)497-1081.



TONY STONE/ROD CLARKE

Life as a Practical Mystic

BARBARA HARRIS WHITFIELD

Practical Mystics:

- Celebrate our connectedness to Divine Energy.
- Find peace and joy in our daily life.
- Love and honor ourselves and the Earth equally.
- Celebrate our connectedness to our inner life.
- Care and protect our True Self/Child Within.
- Treat our physical body as sacred.
- Enjoy being in our bodies.
- Thrive on direct experience.
- Experience reverence in infinite variety.
- Are passionate and faithful in all our relationships.
- Are at our most powerful in compassionate service.
- Have healthy boundaries and limits, yet...
- Enjoy and thrive on boundlessness and unity.

A Mystic is someone who relates to the universe in direct experiential communion, through the soul or the "Child Within." There is direct knowledge of reality,

and most of our journey leads to this reality. If we can apply this relationship every day in our personal life, we will likely feel the presence of "Grace."

Our journey of psycho-spiritual growth may peak in the experience of this communion. The challenge is to keep our feet planted firmly, to live in both worlds and bring the attributes of spirit here while at the same time functioning here, taking care of ourselves and paying our bills. To achieve this balance, we can live by our own inner laws rather than outer pressures, to operate in this world but not be of it. The above characteristics reflect my own experience and that of people I have known and assisted on their journey.

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