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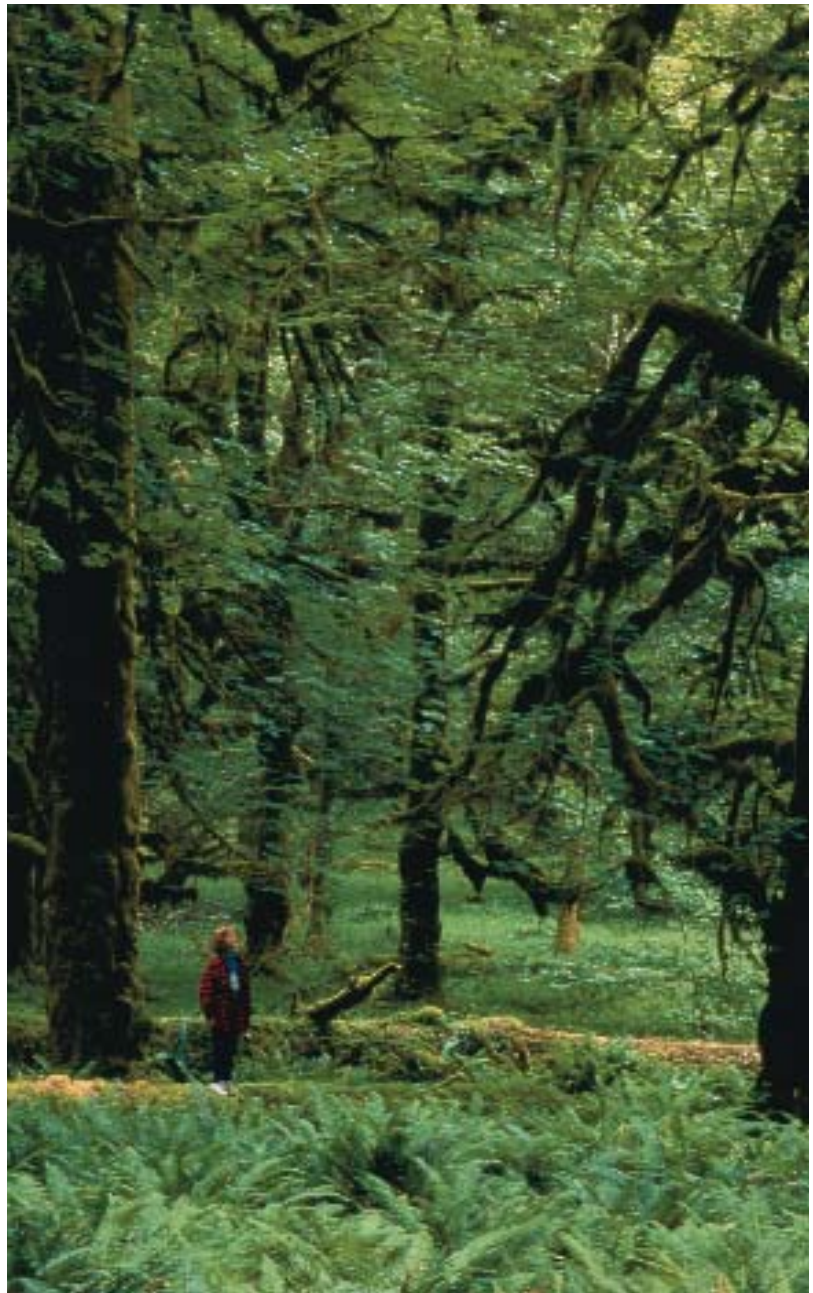
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*“People are always blaming their circumstances for
what they are. I don’t believe in circumstances. The
people who get on in this world are people who get up
and look for the circumstances they want, and
if they can’t find them, make them.”*

—George Bernard Shaw

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From the Publisher

For Mary and me, *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* is a dream worth dreaming. Our dream was conceived in the fall of 1990, a few months after our

marriage. As a psychotherapist, Mary had a keen interest in emotional healing. As a spiritual seeker, I had immersed myself in the study of Eastern religions and meditation. Our conversations and experiences together led us to realize that both psychology and spirituality are integral to personal transformation.

At that time, I was in a family business and published a spiritual newspaper on the side. I felt unfulfilled in the business and had a strong yearning to do something more meaningful. I responded to my mounting dissatisfaction in business, and with Mary's support, sold out, to follow my growing desire to publish a magazine on personal and spiritual growth.

And so we began. Mary had never turned on a computer and I knew nothing about distribution or advertising. We only knew that this venture rang true to our innermost selves. Little did we know what would be involved — grueling hours and deadlines, tasks that neither of us had expertise in, financial stress, and the impact from living so closely with transformational material.

This venture has been hugely transformational for us, which is one of the benefits of pursuing dreams that emerge from our depths. In this issue, Mary Manin Morrissey helps us all determine if our dreams are worth investing life energy in. Five essential questions are: Does this dream enliven me? Does this dream align with my core values? Do I need help from a higher source to make this dream come true? Will this dream require me to grow into my true self? Will this dream ultimately bless others?

Because we clearly know the answers to all five questions are yes, we are committed to publishing *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*. There is an energy, a pulse, a quickening surrounding this endeavor. Talented people with great ideas and big hearts inspire us when we are overworked and overwhelmed. In the middle of the night, we are revitalized with visits of creative impulse.

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION aligns with and embodies our core values. The philosophical underpinnings of this publication are based upon truth, fairness, kindness, and the belief in human potential. Applying these beliefs to this dream and business venture is sometimes demanding. For instance, we have high standards for advertising, which is not always easy, for at times we turn away advertising when we need money to pay the bills.

When we started, neither of us had experience or training to publish a magazine. We simply followed our dream and learned as we went. When we wonder about the future of the magazine, our hearts hear, "It will be okay. Go forward."

May we all follow our deepest dreams.

Lotus Personal Transformation

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From the Editor...

Somewhere along our spiritual journey, we realize that the hallmark of healing is to live in a state of love. We come to understand that love is the fundamental power of life. Love has the power to transform lives, to restore health, and to bring about well-being. Love is the source of human fulfillment. Nurturing the presence of love within moves us to live with kindness and to connect deeply with all of life. Learning to live from the place of love is truly the heart of personal transformation.

In our interview, Thomas Moore says that the capacity of the heart is most powerful. The whole world can be transformed by a shift in imagination and compassion. Heart makes things live—it gives the breath of life. It is a mysterious caring from a deep place within us. This caring recognizes the value of giving to others, of caring for the world in which we live, and of being intimate with all of life, including death.

When we live from the heart, we participate with the essence of life. To do so, our hearts must be open, and we must immerse ourselves in life's mystery. In her transformation story, Betty Simmons breaks open our hearts as she discusses the aftermath of her son's tragic murder. What her family has gone through has left them more compassionate, sensitive, and caring. She is emerging through this process with an acceptance of death and a commitment to living. She knows that she must forgive the man who murdered her son—following her spiritual belief that the path to inner healing is forgiveness.

BettyClare Moffatt agrees that our life's journey is a search for love. She believes that we are here to learn our own inner guidance system and to tune into the most authentic whispers from our heart and soul. One of the ways that we do this is through a practice of forgiveness. The forgiveness process is one in which we offer up our unloving situations and ask for healing. Although it is not easy and requires courage, this inward journey is love's way.

Another dimension of love is explored by Joseph

Sharp. While facilitating people in their dying process, he experiences love as an infinite pouring forth and giving of itself. When someone is moving on, he experiences a Godself, a OneSelf, a commingling of souls. Dying becomes a psalm, praising Divine love, an experience of grace.

Our search for love begins at conception. Our ability to express ourselves as loving, whole beings is first based on our perception of other's acceptance of us.

Carmen Renee Berry advises that even our parents cannot provide us with the love and acceptance that reaches our core. We are known in the deepest places, the hidden recesses of our souls only by Divinity. Divine love and acceptance are communicated to us as insight through dreams, inspiration through nature, encouragement through relationships, and messages through our bodies, as the Divine is indwelling and permeates all of life.

The Divine is in our homes. Homes are living spaces which become sacred places when we honor them as having consciousness

and spirit. Denise Linn describes our home as a place where we can interface with the universe. It can be a place of healing and renewal, a sanctuary where we retreat and recharge. To live this reverently, we must give to and receive from our home, which is the profound meaning of "to inhabit," according to Thomas Moore.

When we live in a state of love, we recognize all of the world as sacred and mysterious, and life becomes enchanted. We then care enough to protect the earth and all life forms, and live as though we matter. We truly understand the power of love, and we know that we can make a difference.

Essentially, this issue is a directive to open our hearts wholly, and from the core of our being to love ourselves, others, and all of life. May we be so guided.

Welcome to Personal Transformation.

Mary Kurrie Stearns





The New Spiritual Renaissance

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION
TO SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

TINA RASMUSSEN

“This is a social movement waiting to happen.” So says Dr. Paul Ray, a market researcher who recently discovered a new U.S. subculture which was completely undetected a generation ago. This group, labeled “Cultural Creatives,” has reached a critical mass of 23.6% of adults, or 44 million people. It is the only one of the three primary U.S. subcultures which is growing, and it embodies the values of the human potential movement begun in the 1960s. Ray believes this group could be the key to a new spiritual Renaissance which could transform society.

The group is called “Cultural Creatives” because they are generating the most new ideas in society, operating on the leading edge of cultural transformation. Contrary

to popular belief, there a few more of them on the West Coast but they are found in all regions of the country. The male-female ratio is 40-60, their median age is 42, and they are more educated than the other subcultures. They are less concerned with success or making money, although most are middle or upper-middle class, and some have quite high incomes. They hold values of:

- **Spirituality and self-actualization**, a sense of the sacred that incorporates personal growth, psychology, holistic health, and spiritual service to others.
- **Sustainability beyond environmentalism**, rebuilding community, planetary, ecological, the sacredness of nature, voluntary simplicity.
- **Globalism**, love of

foreign travel, foreigners, and the exotic.

- **Relationships**, feminist ideology, women’s issues, family, and non-violence.
- **Social conscience and optimism**, altruism, idealism .

Contrary to critics’ views, the study found that a focus on personal development does not lead to a reduction in social conscience. “Cultural Creatives” were found to be active volunteers and donors to causes.

As with all three subcultures, “Cultural Creatives” also define themselves by what they are *not*. They reject the hedonism, materialism, and cynicism of modern society as well as the scarcity orientation of the working class, the anti-sustainability of conservatives, and the intolerance of religious extremists.

Do these values sound

familiar? It is likely that many readers of *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* are part of this promising new group. But how did this third U.S. subculture evolve? As recently as the 1960s, only two cultural forms were visible: the “Heartlanders” and the “Modernists.”

“Heartlanders” have a nostalgic image of return to small town, religious, white America which corresponds to the period of 1890 to 1930. Although this image is based more on myth than reality, “Heartlanders” emphasize recapturing the “good old American traditions.” The “Heartlanders” were 50 to 60% of America two generations ago and are now only 29%. They tend to be older than the other two subcultures and their income and education

tend to be lower. As their numbers decline, they are not being replaced; they have gone from mainstream to minority status in 50 years. The current resurgence of conservatism in America may be a “last hurrah” for this group, in which they appeal to disenchanted “Modernists” by providing an alternative to materialistic values.

The “Modernists” are now the mainstream of society, with 47% of the population or 88 million people, although this subculture is also in a slow decline. “Modernism” emerged from the urban and merchant classes who created the modern economy. “Modernist” society is idealized in the growth and expansion of the 1920s and 1950s. While “Modernists” span the range of demographics, its middle and upper-middle class members can be difficult to distinguish from “Cultural Creatives,” without understanding their differences in values. “Modernists” embody “winner” values: a success orientation, upward mobility, material acquisition, and status display. Their numbers are in decline in part because of their culture’s inattention to non-material values which give life intrinsic meaning. In addition, “Modernist” solu-

tions to the world’s problems—while once promising—have created as many problems as they have solved. “Modernists” are becoming

Because of these factors, the long run momentum and hope for the future is with the “Cultural Creatives”—if

tion of creative people who are the carriers of more positive ideas, values, and trends than any previous Renaissance period has ever seen. And they can probably be mobilized to act altruistically on behalf of our collective future.”

Ray, whose study was sponsored by the Institute of Noetic Sciences and the Fetzer Institute, believes that we are at a turning point in the history of humanity. Despite the fact that the “Cultural Creatives” have reached a critical mass of nearly a quarter of the population, our future is still not foreordained. Rather, it is a time of a “Great Divide” which we could evolve into a “New Renaissance” of rebirth and transcendence or a “Fall of Rome” followed by a “Dark Ages.”

In a recent interview with *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*, Ray said that he believes the highest leverage point in creating this Renaissance is the mobilization of “Cultural Creatives,” especially in the workplace. “My main message for ‘Cultural Creatives’ is that they can turn the tide by doing two things. First, they need to get together to invent new images of what the world could be. Then they need systematically to move altruistically into

Moving toward a “New Renaissance” can only happen when we create a collective vision which is so inspiring that people are moved to become part of it. The world needs guiding lights, people who have experienced their own personal transformations and are able to bring this light of hope into the world.

disenchanted, which is evidenced by a level of cynicism higher than the other subcultures. This cynicism is also evident in the media, which embodies and caters to the culturally dominant “Modernist” view. According to the media, the world is “in collapse”—and indeed the “Modernist” world is. In contrast, the hopeful trends and innovations being established by “Cultural Creatives” provide a note of optimism but the fact that we rarely see or hear about these in the media leaves us with a societal self-image of deterioration.

they can gain the cohesion to create and act upon a tangible vision of an alternate society. Paradoxically, most “Cultural Creatives” believe they are alone—that few people share their values. This causes them to be hesitant to disclose or champion their values in public arenas, such as business or politics. Yet, the “Cultural Creatives” have a population the size of France!! As Ray’s report says, “Take heart! Unbeknownst to most of us, we’ve been traveling in the midst of an enormous company of allies—a larger popula-

Conscious Notes

Living Color

institutions they're not as comfortable in—the ones they've opted out of, such as business, politics, the financial community, technology, and the mass media. Historically, cultural transformation has required some suffering on the part of those who led the way. If the 'Cultural Creatives' could go back to the institutions they have left and have the courage to infuse them with these new values, the momentum could sweep society in a profound and lasting way."

Forums and opportunities for public demonstration of our spiritual values abound. *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* recently featured an article on one such conference, on the *Birth of the Society of the Universal Human*. Similar conferences and workshops of like-minded people are everywhere, from small local gatherings to international events. However, none have provided a catalyzing force which has drawn more than a tiny percentage of the 44 million "Cultural Creatives."

One recent event which drew a somewhat larger crowd was the Foundation for Ethics and Meaning Conference held in Washington, D.C., on April 14. Nearly 2,000 people from a wide variety of belief systems and backgrounds gathered to begin a formalized discussion to incorporate a new "Politics of Meaning" into U.S. culture. Attendees were attracted to the underlying principle of the Foundation: that it is fundamentally wrong for any individual or group to dominate another, but that, when we look at mainstream "Modernist" society, exploitation of people and resources for financial gain is the norm. The Foundation proposes that we need a new vision of our society in which the fundamental principle is the recognition

Hampton Roads

Conscious Notes

of the inherent value of all people and the unity between us. Although the Foundation's focus is on political action, they too believe the workplace is a key leverage point in building a community of meaning which transcends materialism and embraces spiritual, sustainable values.

Many other proponents of this new vision are also urging people to be more vocal and active, to "stand up and be counted." In many of her public speeches last year, Marianne Williamson (author of *Illuminata* and *Return to Love*) encouraged people to start "coming out," to live their spiritual beliefs at a new level of robustness, within public forums. Publisher John Renesch made a similar "call to Spartacus" when he urged people in the business community to demonstrate the courage that Spartacus exhibited when he helped slaves gain their freedom in ancient times.

A "Spiritual Renaissance" could herald a new era for humankind, with the U.S. leading the world in a new spirituality which integrates the beneficial elements of our history while transcending its materialism and other drawbacks. The new sciences, as well as the wisdom of the ages, tell us that what we hold in our minds is likely to be created in our reality. Crossing the "Great Divide" and moving toward a "New Renaissance" can only happen when we create a collective vision which is so inspiring that people are moved to become part of it. The world needs guiding lights, people who have experienced their own personal transformations and are able to bring this light of hope into the world. The question is: Are they—are we—willing to take the risk?•

EMU Designs Color

Franklin Spier

Self-Awareness Lives

JACK BEAVER

Jack, give me the gun. Please. That was two and a half years ago, and I can finally put those words on a page. How does one describe the end of one life and the beginning of another, how does a butterfly tell about the metamorphosis from being a caterpillar? How does one describe what happens when spirituality comes to get you, will not let you be, will not let you continue live a life that you are not?

I called Elaine that night because there was no one else. I had tried one doctor of reputation who hastily prescribed medication, yet the cascading failure of life kept getting worse. Then counseling that kept looking for specific things in my background that were finally surfacing, and that didn't work. Everything was wrong and getting worse, and I didn't know why. I couldn't work in my privately owned business, became reclusive, couldn't open my mail, couldn't answer my phone. The walls were getting closer together, the pain unbearable. Why was this happening to me, what was causing it, why could I not change it, and the humiliation of it all? There was no alternative, and it was time to leave life. I could no longer picture my existence,



only my death and whatever lay beyond—it had to be better than this.

To this day, I do not know why I called her, except that some part of me, that I did not know then, needed to live, had more to do. Yes, I did give her the gun, for in the instant that she said those words (a woman afraid of guns), I saw, deep in her eyes, fear and caring—the real fear of losing me and the caring for my soul. That night, finally I was able to verbalize all of my failures, fears, humiliation, and one question, why. She did not have any answers, of course, no magic words, only love and caring for another and the knowing that it was not time for me to go.

Something changed that night but I do not know what. I could no longer work in my business; I did not know why then, but the fact that I could finally verbalize that aloud allowed me to accept it. So I lost the business, the bills were unbelievable, then bankruptcy, then losing the house I had for twenty years, then a room in Elaine's house that she let me stay in, then welfare; all of that on top of a marriage that had failed some years before and a son gone to live his own life. All of this had happened to a man who had lived a suc-

A RESOURCE FOR TRANSFORMATION



Mary NurrieStearns LCSW

Psychotherapist, consultant, workshop leader, and editor of *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*. Mary has extensive continuing education and twenty-two years' experience helping people to overcome personal problems and to make positive changes for more meaningful and joy-filled living. She is committed to providing safe and experiential contexts for personal growth and healing that integrate body, mind, and spirit.

Mary offers a unique union of traditional psychotherapy with transpersonal psychology. She is a leading edge therapist in the field of personal transformation.

Mary offers telephone consultations and therapy for psychological healing and personal transformation.

**To schedule an appointment call:
(800)775-6887**

McClintock

Transformations

cessful life to the age of 48. Hello bottom!

For seven months, she provided me with a safe, secure, non-judgmental and unpressured environment in which to evolve; and then an inheritance allowed me to move out and continue the work of transformation. Now, a year later, I am going back into the work force in whatever fashion it will have me, a totally different and living human being. I am sure that during the seven months that I lived with Elaine (a totally platonic female friend) that many thought that I was just another guy "who couldn't cut it" and was "leaching off a friend," and I suppose there were people who knew her and wondered why she was letting me do that. I know there was a time in my life when I certainly would have looked at it that way, but that was not the case.

What she had done was give me the luxury, and I know that it is afforded to very few, to explore and find what had happened to me, to heal, and then move on to wherever I was to go with what I found. And, the findings were indeed life changing.

Two years before, I had started writing some poetry, something I had never done in my life. It came out infrequently, surprising even me, for I did not sit down to create it—it forced its way out, would not let me be, until it was on paper. At Elaine's, in quiet silence, with time, more of it occurred, strange mystical and spiritual things that I did not understand. Things that I interpreted as being my spirituality talking to me. At the same time, in that solitude, I had time to reflect on my life that was to-

tally gone now. Who was I, why had I lived that life that way, who am I, and why am I here? All ancient questions, but questions that needed answers, and slowly with the questions, came realizations of truth.

I was a product of my culture where we are all taught to live the lives that are expected of us, rather than to find and be who we are. I was the cracked mosaic result of cultural mass-marketing. I had to be what my parents wanted me to be, what school wanted me to be, what the church wanted me to be, what friends wanted me to be, what the military wanted me to be, what employers wanted me to be, what my wife wanted me to be, what masculinity wanted me to be, and what society wanted me to be. I had tried to live all those lives, meet all those expectations, believe all their beliefs, meet all their standards, and in doing so, they told me I would find happiness and fulfillment. With values' appearance, pursuits of distraction and goals of accumulation, the superficial platform of that life collapsed. The life of here and now and ego had bruised my soul. And when nothing works outside, the only place left to go is inside—the trip that is hardest to take.

Today, happiness, fulfillment, and peace of mind do not come from competing and winning (losing was never permitted) in every aspect of life, driving a new car, living in a great house, eating in the best places, wearing better clothes, dating the prettiest women, and being in charge. It does however, come from being able finally to be myself, from

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 74

Journey toward Recovery

B E T T Y S I M M O N S

The morning of October 16, 1991, dawned bright and sunny. No one in my family dreamed our lives would be changed forever in a few short hours. Around noon George Hennard, in ten minutes of pure hell, shot forty-six innocent people, killing twenty-three. It was America's most horrific massacre.

Our son, Tom, was manager of the automotive department of the Wal-Mart store in Killeen, Texas, located across the freeway from Luby's Cafeteria. There were rumors his supervisor might be dropping by that Wednesday. Although this was usually Tom's day off, he felt he should be on hand since it was Bosses' Day. He took off the previous Saturday instead, and he and his wife, Ann, and their daughters, Christy, 5, and Diane, 9, spent the weekend in Brownwood visiting us and Ann's parents.

On that fateful Wednesday, Tom decided he'd treat his supervisor to lunch. He told Ann that morning at breakfast, then asked his family if they'd like to go with him to their deer lease that evening to spread some



feed. There was a chorus of yeses. This family enjoyed doing things together.

Ann left for her job in the school cafeteria. The children headed for classes. Tom kissed them good-by and drove to work.

A hundred miles away in Brownwood, his dad and I woke and lingered a little longer in bed—one of the perks of being retired. We ate a leisurely breakfast. My husband, Larry, turned on the TV and I began revising part of a book I'm writing.

About one o'clock, I stopped typing and fixed lunch. We watched a favorite TV program as we ate. Suddenly a special bulletin flashed—a sparse report about a shooting at the Luby's Cafeteria in Killeen. The newscaster promised more information as it became available. There was a quick shot of police and ambulances on the scene and people crying.

Unexpectedly I felt as if ice water had been injected into my veins. Goose bumps pimply my flesh. I shivered involuntarily as an irrational fear gripped me. Tom had taken us to Luby's. It was his favorite place to eat. Larry and I said this aloud at the same time—that

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Reflections



From Our Readers

I N O T I C E D

Over the past several issues I have noticed more and more advertising since the name of the magazine change to PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION. The earlier issues of *LOTUS* were almost free of advertising. I hope PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION doesn't get commercialized and greedy like other magazines that pack in as much advertising as they can get while putting very little content in the magazine.—*Richard Allen, San Diego, California.*

Editors Note: Yes, there is more advertising which supports our mission to be a resource for personal transformation. Each issue includes transformative writings, news of books, quality services and products offered by advertisers. The objective for offering these resources is to assist our readers' transformation. We have extremely high standards for everything that our company is associated with, including advertisers. We sincerely hope that they provide a service to our readers.

Our goal is to increase the number of pages of advertising to 35% which is significantly less than the industry average of 50% to 60%. The addition of more advertising has improved our bottom line but we are not yet profitable. Magazine production is expensive, particularly for our publication because of the layout, use of color, and quality of paper. Most of our efforts for increasing revenue to cover costs have been directed at increasing the number of subscribers. This is why we enlist the help of readers, with a postage paid referral card (page 16) in each issue, to get the word out about our magazine. We are happy to send a free evaluation issue to friends of readers.

N O T J U S T A B U R D E N

Thank you. Your magazine couldn't have come at a better time. I had never seen *LOTUS* before, but it really helped me find positives when everything seemed dark. I have been on medical leave since September 1995 with severe fatigue which now seems to be CFS. After reading about CFS and being unable to do even things I enjoy, for only short lengths of time, I was pretty low. Then your magazine arrived, and I realized that I could spend time working on inner healing. This makes me feel that I am doing something, not just being a burden. Thanks again for a great magazine.—*Susan Zinschlag, Hastings, Minnesota.*

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Sibyl

Synthesis

Eupsyhicia

Element Books

Reflections

EVIDENCE OF BEING CONNECTED

I am glad that you are changing the title of your magazine because I think the new title more clearly depicts what the magazine is all about. I think many people would be turned off by the name *LOTUS* because it sounds too “Eastern” and is not descriptive enough.

I wish that everyone could have a subscription to your magazine. I persuaded one of our local bookstores to carry it because no one else did. I also introduce it to anyone I think might be interested in it, and I have at least two friends who will probably be subscribing soon. I think it should be displayed at supermarket stands because it is a much, much higher quality magazine than most of the magazines you see there.

I agree wholeheartedly with what Jo Chavez said about staying away from “New Age fluff.” Two of the things that appeal to me about your magazine are that it offers different viewpoints about personal development and includes in-depth, common sense articles rather than just “New Age fluff.” Although there are many good things about the “New Age” movement, there are also things that are not so desirable. Printing different viewpoints and in-depth articles tends to negate these qualities however. I also like the fact that you publish articles about serious subjects that most publications and people tend to avoid.

I really enjoyed the two personal articles in this month’s issue, particularly the one by Ihla Nation. I had never read an article by anyone who had experienced something similar to what I have. I don’t think you have to have a near-death ex-

Reflections

perience to become a seeker, however. My desire for answers came after being torn from four different sets of caregivers and deposited in a children's home under the care of an abusive matron. I think I may also have innate qualities that were just awakened by my traumatic experiences.

It does tend to set you apart from other people, make you feel different, and often make others view you as strange. I think that with this "depth of soul" also comes a tendency to value awareness, insight, and truth more than the average person. In fact, it occurred to me as I read the article that it is almost like having "second sight."

I have known for a long time that I not only value the truth more than the average person, but I am more aware of the feelings of others as well as my own. I have only recently become aware that I am also able to perceive hidden messages better than the average person. Sometimes, I can even read the silences.

I thought everyone could do it, but I have recently become aware that this isn't true and that this ability makes some people as uncomfortable as the idea of mind-reading. They seem to be afraid you are going to imagine something that isn't true or perceive something they would rather you didn't know about. It has been my experience, however, that the main things I am able to perceive, other than feelings, are inconsistencies in words, actions, voice, and facial expressions.

I think children who undergo traumatic experiences often learn to "read" people because it is necessary for their survival, but perhaps that is also because the truth is

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 20

Mount Madonna
pickup from
page 21 Spring

Eupsychia

Charles Sweeney

Reflections

more important to me than to the average person. I also believe in speaking my truth and am trying to learn to do it in a kinder, more gentle way.

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION is one of the few places where I find evidence that others share my values and gives me a feeling of being connected to other people that I cherish. Please keep them coming. You're doing a great job.—*Sharon Norman, Abilene, Texas.*

G A I N E D I N S I G H T

I really enjoy your magazine and it has enabled me to gain much insight into my life and has assisted in my transforming into a more self-aware and spiritual person.—*Catherine Leslie, South Wales, New York.*

P L E A S E T U R N T O ...

I really like your new format—size, paper, nature picture on front, etc. But why so many “please turn to page so & so” at the end of almost every article? Surely each is supposed to read like a meditation, and it is very disturbing to have to search for the ending. The early editions were never thus. Also, I suppose it is asking too much to have all the ads together?—*Monica Michenfelder, Oronoco, Minnesota.*

T H E G R E A T B L I G H T

I like the name *LOTUS* much better than *Journal of PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*. Do you realize that's two syllables versus ten! *LOTUS* is a image—it's interesting. The other is a bunch of dry words. Tom Peters calls it “Design Mindfulness” versus “The Great Blight of Dullness.” Check out his busi-

PageMill
Use this to border the ad

Reflections

ness book, *The Pursuit of War!*—
Sara Stage, Little Rock, Arkansas.

EVEN MORE IMPRESSED

Please accept my deepest apologies for “accidentally” letting my subscription lapse. Since December I’ve been involved in two major transformations occurring in my personal journey and was still lingering in an “after April income, property, and estimated tax” poverty consciousness when I received my renewal notice.

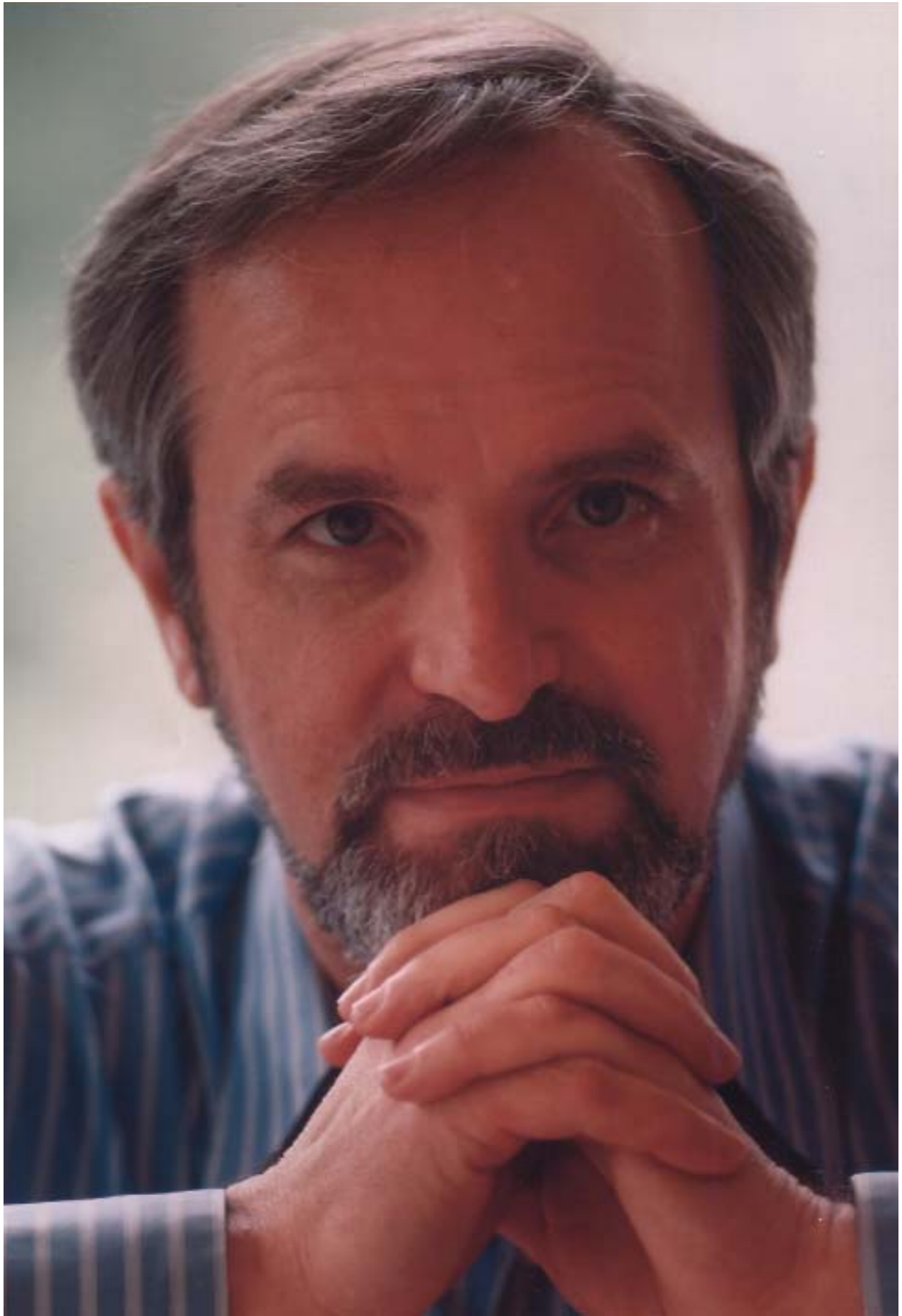
Now I am even more impressed! What an inspiring, positive message (as usual). As I thought about my own personal and spiritual transformations, as you had suggested, I realized how inspired by your magazine I was, bringing more love and peace into my life and the “others” to whom I pass *LOTUS* on after I scour the issue! Then *LOTUS* goes to Mom’s house for another much anticipated read-a-thon. Mom lost her husband of over fifty years in December, my dad. She quit taking the newspaper because “it’s too darned depressing and reads all the latest.” She has read all of Bernie Siegel’s books, Deepak Chopra, Mary Baker Eddy, etc. Being eighty-four and such a positive person, she immediately took to *LOTUS*. She participated in her first 5K walk/run-a-thon for the YMCA last Saturday with me and two of her granddaughters! One and one-half years ago, she had a triple bypass operation, and I know that the varied articles in *LOTUS* have helped in her healing.

After Mom reads everything in it, *LOTUS* journeys to my Aunt who always tells me how she loves you. Then over to my newest friend’s house. When I met her, I knew she also would be attracted to *LOTUS*. I

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Atlantic
pickup from
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Life by Design



NICOLAS BYLE

Re-Enchantment in Everyday Life

AN INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS MOORE
BY MARY NURRIESTEARNS

Thomas Moore is a writer and lecturer who lives in New England with his wife and two children. He was a monk in a Catholic religious order for twelve years and has degrees in theology, musicology, and philosophy. He was a former professor of religion and psychology, and is the author of *Care of the Soul*, *Soul Mates* and *Meditations*.

The following interview is based on his new book *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*.

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION: Let's begin with a description of enchantment.

THOMAS MOORE: Enchantment is many things. We can be enchanted in the sense of being charmed, as when a spell is cast over us by beauty, a place, a person, or an object. Rationality is put on hold and time stops or slows as enchantment pulls us away from the practical details of living. This dimension is magical. Another side to enchantment comes from the chant which is musical. Enchantment is an aesthetic response to the world which is why beauty and pleasure are a large part of enchantment. It is a perception of the aesthetic dimensions of the world which causes us to pause and contemplate. It is possible to be enchanted in a negative way, although I don't explore that in this book.

You say that the principles of enchantment are directly opposed to modernism. Please discuss this idea.

The common assumptions that we live by be-

cause we are Americans and Westerners are the myth of modernism. More than the times, it's the unconscious story that we live. Modernism is primarily an attempt to understand the world, so it values reasoning. In schools we learn research methods and our journals are filled with quantified studies. Modernism is mechanistic so we tend to see the human body and the human soul as machines. Medicine and psychotherapy are done in the manner of mechanical repair. Enchantment has no place in the myth of modernism. Scientists say they find soul in their studies but, in fact, as a cultural phenomena, science regularly weeds out enchanted elements, doing us great disservice in that regard. Scientists have written many books trying to debunk everything that is not scientific. I am speaking for the other side. In order to live a life of enchantment, it is necessary to find ways to step outside this myth, especially in our personal lives.

You also say that extreme ambition is valued in the myth of modernity.

We are futurists. The myth of modernity focuses on the future and denigrates the past, or tries to use the past to make the future better. This is evident in studies of history on a cultural level and in psychology where we attempt to understand our personal past in order to make the future better. The past is not appreciated for its own sake. Modernity is very ambitious because we try to perfect ourselves. We talk about evolution as though it is entirely positive. I speak for appreciating the past and shifting away from futurism, which automatically tempers ambition.

Why did you select the word “re-enchantment” rather than enchantment in the book’s title?

There are a number of reasons for calling it re-enchantment, instead of enchantment. Past cultures were more enchanted. Nature was more present to us. Emily Dickinson and Henry David Thoreau addressed nature as a source of enchantment. Religion was more of a factor in the past. We try to create a secular world these days. Religion is ostracized and has become a little crazy trying to find its place. Religion itself has become disenchanting. Before the age of mechanical and rationalistic thinking, there were more opportunities for enchantment. I quote the early renaissance a lot. They tried to preserve a world that wasn’t racing into the age of enlightenment and mechanics. The word re-enchantment suggests a cultural return.

Re-enchantment is also a mythic notion. Our world of disenchantment is a myth, a story that we live and believe in. That is not necessary. It doesn’t have to be. From a mythical perspective, to re-enchant means to go back in time and recover what is lost. It’s a mythic move, not an historical move.

Re-enchantment includes restoring children and childhood to our world. There was a recent gathering in Washington for children. Some established conservative groups did not participate, which shocked me, as I’m always shocked when people speak against soul and enchantment. I am amazed that people interested in moving toward the future work to keep this culture so inhumane. The presence of children in our culture would be a return to enchantment.

I appreciated your discussion of the restoration of paradise. Would you speak about that?

There are many interpretations of the notion of paradise. Psychology suggests that growing up involves moving away from paradise, a paradoxical fantasy of living in union with nature, not working, and enjoying an immediate sense of divinity. Moving away from paradise is important, and to do anything else is infantile and regressive. I say the opposite. We should dare to live within a fantasy of paradise and not be jaded about what human life can be. Cynicism keeps us out of the throne of enchantment.

Let’s move to the relationship between enchantment and ecology. What is the meaning of ecology?

Ecology is made of two Greek words, *ecos* and *logos*. We often refer to ecology, but we interpret it lightly, with *ecos* meaning a house or home and *logos* meaning a study. *Ecos* has profound meanings. It means a home first all—not a home necessarily, but a home. Our feelings about intimacy of home, memory of home, and desire for home are involved in *ecos*. The word was used by the Greeks to talk about the home of the planets, the sky, and the zodiac. Each planet had its own home or domicile, so it had an astrological dimension which placed it in a mythic plane. *Ecos* also referred to a temple—the home of a god or goddess, the home of divinity. It was a place where people could be in the presence of divinity.

Logos is terribly profound. The gospel of John says, “In the beginning was the *logos*.” If that is true, then *logos* is most mysterious. The word *logos* suggests the root of words and the root of story, which is, of course, unimaginable. It is the ultimate mystery of anything. Ecology translates to the absolute divine mystery behind the sense of home. If that meaning becomes the basis of our ecological thinking, we will have much more soul in our environmental work than we do at the moment.

Ecology literally becomes a sacred science.

It is sacred activity.

You say that the emotional sickness associated with modern life shows how home, in the biggest sense of the word, has been violated. How do we bring profound ecology and enchantment into our homes?

There are many ways, but it is individual. Whatever goes on in the home can be treated as sacred and revered. Food and housework are examples. Food and gathering of food are a big part of households. In our house, growing, buying, and preparing food occupies half of our time. Food is not just for physical health—it brings us together, it is a spiritual activity. Household work, simply keeping the home going, doing chores, and adorning it to make it beautiful, are sacred activities. I’m not talk-

The re-enchantment of our personal lives may very well feel like going back to the Garden of Eden—taking a job that delights our heart, being in or out of a marriage according to our heart's deep desire, living where the spirit of the place soothes our tired body and emotions, following through on our eccentric interests and mad inclinations.

ing about an expensive approach to the house. I'm talking about caring for a home in physical ways that makes us attached to it. Doing dishes and caring for the soil are ways of loving your home and daily life, and of being close to it, instead of remote and detached.

Another way to develop a personal ecology of home is to expand beyond your house to the land, to really be in a place, and to know the place. I walk my dog every morning. I have lived here a year, and my daily walk has allowed me to know the place. I recognize trees and lanes and hills and see them change day-to-day. This kind of intimacy with place establishes a kindred relationship between ourselves as human beings and the place, which really contributes to a sense of home.

You define "inhabit" as coming from a word meaning "to give to and to receive from." How does inhabiting contribute to the enchantment of our home?

We see nature and cultural objects, the actual items around the house we live in, as inanimate. Americans are unusual in this regard. People in other parts of the earth, even today, don't look at the world this way. Others see the world as full of life, personality, and individuality and they recognize that the world gives to us, and we give to it, so there is constant exchange. We must let go of the idea in the modernist story that the world is inanimate. We have to realize that everything is alive. Windows, floors, trees, and grass are all living and have personality. We can relate to them. In our sadness we can sit under a tree. Being by a tree,

feeling its embrace and its presence, can be consoling. The same is true of a house. Certain rooms can be comforting, and we can have a special relationship with them. This kind of give and take is true ecology.

For politics to become re-enchanted, we have to discover the holy, sacred, and spiritual dimensions of community life. Would you expand on this?

In a disenchanted world, politics is primarily a matter of power and manipulation. In an enchanted world, politics goes back to an earlier meaning of the word, which has to do with community. Politics is an occupation that cares for and pertains to the mysteries that keep a community together. For instance, we try to keep marriages together by having good communication, attending workshops, and understanding each other and ourselves. That is misguided. Something mysterious, that has to do with caring from a deep place within us, keeps us together. This caring recognizes the value of giving to others, of caring for the world in which we live, and of being intimate with death and illness. These are great life mysteries, not failures of the system. Illnesses come, and we have to deal with them. People close to us die, and we have to deal with that. These are humanizing experiences. People who are sick and dying offer great gifts to those of us who are living and healthy. This is the mysterious basis for community. Politics is the responsibility and the opportunity to sustain and nurture this deep interconnection among people. When culture becomes disenchanted, politics resorts to power and manipulation, and quickly turns to violence.

Enchantment arises whenever we move so deeply into anything we're doing that its interiority stirs the heart and the imagination. An enchanted ecology comes into being when our concern for the environment goes beyond materialistic elements in nature and culture to children rather than machines, trees rather than excessive paper products, and home rather than shelter. There need not be a conflict between technology and enchantment.

What is the power of enchantment?

The power of enchantment is the power of soul and heart, instead of the power of weapon and machine. It has more power to hold a community together, to solve social problems, and to keep marriages alive than any kind of manipulation, therapy, or medical intervention. It is tremendously powerful, like the power of nature, the power of volcanoes. It is more powerful than bombs. The capacity of heart is most powerful ultimately. The whole world can be transformed by a shift in imagination and compassion. It can't be changed by external oppression. Although communism was able to oppress us for a long time, it didn't really touch the spirit. Democracy, if it is not communal, cannot last.

How can we bring enchantment, particularly the values of soul such as slow pace, quality, imagination, and creativity, into the workplace?

These are huge topics. I can only give hints. I am very interested in the relationship between creativity and productivity, which are opposites. To be focused on productivity is to give up creativity. People greet each other with, "Hope you have a productive day." We want to produce everything possible. I knew a man who was obsessed with his particular industry. Whenever he saw an opportunity to put something on the production line, he had to do it; he had no choice. He was a productionaholic. Creativity is something quite different. It is the expression of one's individuality. We can be creative in daily life and at the workplace. This doesn't mean everyone has to be an artist or an inventor. One can be creative in cleaning a building or handling supplies. My grandfather took care of supplies in an automobile factory for years and was very creative with his work. To enchant work, we have to look deeply into creativity and move away from the limited notion of creativity.

When we image creativity in a spirited way, we come up with bright ideas and are inventive. We do our daily work with attention, craft, pleasure, and especially individuality. William Morris tried to counter the industrial revolution in England a hundred years ago. He said we should have beautiful places to work. Why not put attention and money into the beauty of the workplace so it doesn't look like the inside of a machine? Near my home are great mills, built a hundred years ago, that are more beautiful than the buildings we erect today. There is no reason we can't re-enchant work spaces. Managers can allow people to have what they need to enchant their lives in small ways. In some compa-

nies, employees have to wear certain clothes. Some policies discourage friendships on the job, yet many people work in a place primarily because they have friends there. There are many ways in which the workplace can be transformed.

Even simple things such as ornamentation on desks.

That's right, having stones around, or a painting, a plant. It doesn't take much.

In the fifteenth century, Marsilio Ficino wrote about magic and mystery. In your book you cite his test of enchantment. Does it breathe? Is it alive? Does it have a spirit to take in? Do we want to take in the spirit? These are wonderful questions to apply to the workplace.

You can feel the energy of a place as soon as you walk into it. Does the place have life and vitality? Philosophers have said for three thousand years that the soul makes things alive. It gives us breath. The workplace can have vitality if the system, the building, the ornamentation, or the work has spirit. Work ethics are also central to its enchantment. You can't have enchanting work if it is unethical. Sadly, much of our work is riddled with unethical practice.

Please talk about Ficino's notion that art objects are lures, attracting certain spirits, and how we can apply this in our daily life.

In our culture, we want to know what art objects mean. Ficino would want us to know what sort of spirit art has and what its presence does for us, so that we can bring art into our homes that has presence and spirit we are attracted to. Understanding has no relevance. Some things offer more when we don't understand them. Soul needs to be nourished every day, and it is fed by things rich in spirit. We each have to find these things. They vary from one person to another and may change throughout our lives. Being around nature is rich and feeds some people. To be near a farm is tremendously important for me. To be in the center of a city could be important for someone else. During the renaissance, people tried to develop a system by which they could discover those things that nurture them. Ficino writes about how to find things rich in spirit. He encourages us to bring those objects into our homes, to have them there, as though they were containers full of spirit.

How would he have us relate to our dreams?

He doesn't write about dreams. I think that dreams are similar though. I suggest that we don't interpret them, but have them in our presence the same way we would an art object. Wake up with a dream and tell it. In telling the

In my view, all art has magical power that may be infused into a work by the artist and enjoyed by the beholder. Art can be merely aesthetically pleasing, philosophically meaningful, and personally expressive, or it can have the special power to evoke and transmit a particular spirit to those who come in contact with it. Many traditions teach that our lives could be enriched, made spiritually alive, and even healed through the magical power of art.

dream you give it presence, and by osmosis get some of the spirit of the dream. You might write, paint, or sculpt the dream. You don't have to do that everyday, although in some cultures there is a lot of transfer of dreams to environment, so that inner life and outer life are not remote from each other and are in constant dialogue. That creates a more imaginative, soulful life. The point is to be humanized by dreams, rather than to become smarter through dreams.

You say that we can enter into the mystery world of dreams without doing anything to them. We don't have to understand them to be impacted by them. Enchantment is a state of being—it is not a message.

People often ask what my message is, and I tell them I don't have one.

In a disenchanting philosophy, the arts emphasize self-expression and/or dedication to technological advancement. What does a re-enchanting art philosophy emphasize?

The enchantment approach to art believes images and objects are full of spirit, so their very presence is most important.

The artist uses materials to construct something to house the spirit.

Material is very important, which is why I discuss talismans and magic in the book. The artist is a magician in the older sense of the word, not a slight-of-hand person but somebody who knows the power of materials to attract, contain, and give off this spirit. A good artist has a vivid sense of material and its ambulant quality. It is not enough to have a message—the material needs to be presented so that we can be in its presence and feel it. A talisman is created by imprinting images on materials or shaping materials into images so that the object connects us with the deep themes that course through our lives, whether or not we are aware of them. We talked earlier about the paradise myth. That theme could be present in our life whether or not we know it. The profound artist is in touch with archetypal universal themes, so that when we look at a piece of art, listen to music, or behold drama, we are presented with and reminded of

something that we know at a subliminal level. Plato's notion of knowledge is that it is always a memory—it is always remembering something that we know which is present deep within us anyway.

You say that artistic imagination is liberating because it enters us into our experience, rather than leading us out of it. Contemporary therapy and our education try to lead us away from ourselves, rather than moving us deeply into ourselves.

Real education and therapy moves us closer to whatever is going on with us, rather than freeing us from it.

I'd like to discuss preserving holiness, and in particular, the importance of numinosity and how it preserves holiness.

The numinous is an important notion that we know intuitively, but don't think about much. The numinous is the capacity of a place, thing, or person to manifest incredible profundity, to be a window into eternity, and to feel the eternal, unfathomable value that goes beyond any measure. These phrases sound like a definition of the divine, that which brings us into holiness. The numinous shows us and helps us to feel eminent divinity. Rudolf Otto wrote about the holy. He said that numinous experience is very attracting. It allures and draws us to it. We want to be in the presence of waterfalls, giant mountains, wonderful works of art, great buildings, and incredible events. We want to be in the presence of numinosity, but at the same time it is frightening. There is a scary element to it, tremendum is the word he used, meaning fascinating, fearful, and awe inspiring, that can make us feel small and vulnerable. The myth of modernism motivates us to debunk everything divine or numinous as a way to deal with its power, to put our hands up and shield ourselves from it. This motive comes from fear and anxiety. In other cultures, and in our own culture at other times, people found ways to contain numinosity, to give it a place, and to approach it so they could feel its awesomeness and draw upon its power to feed their souls and be further humanized.

Discuss the importance of piety in the preservation of holiness.

Most of the suggestions I make have to do with honoring the numen—allowing the spirit of a river to show itself powerfully, not leveling off all our mountains and hills for development, making things with strong imagination and handiwork, living in houses that truly are temples of natural piety, doing work that contributes to humanity and doesn't sacrifice others for personal gain—an ethical life can be as numinous as an awe-inspiring waterfall.

Piety is considered to be sentimental and naive, perhaps unimportant these days, but it is an important virtue. Piety is an attitude of reverence and a manner of acting and handling things with awareness of numinosity and holiness. When we are pious about the world, we treat one another with a respect that comes only from being aware of the infinite value of whatever is in front of us. Without piety, we manipulate and use what is around us. Exploitation and piety are opposites—one undoes the other. That is why it is important to bring back the sensibility of the pious.

What is earthen spirituality, or the spirituality of enchantment?

It is the opposite of heavenly spirituality, of spirituality that tries to find spirituality outside of the world we live in and outside of our own daily lives. These days, because of our disenchanting philosophy, even people following a spiritual path have disenchanting notions of nature and daily experience in the ordinary world. They try to find spirituality in extraordinary places or outside of this world. People meditate, thinking that if they subdue their body and thoughts and achieve high levels of consciousness, they will experience valuable spirituality. There are dangers in that approach. It often turns into an attempt to become successful in the spirit, and becomes full of ambition. When we measure ourselves by achievement, we aren't helped at all. It is anti-communal and doesn't help the world we live in every day. It's a shame when religion and spiritual practices don't have any affect on our

social lives. We badly need the vision and the sensibility that spiritual life provides. I'm suggesting that we can have a spiritual life that is not transcendent—it doesn't have to be upward. It comes from our earthly lives and is earthen, made out of the earth. Spirituality comes from our relationship with the natural world around us. We don't have to romanticize nature—we simply have to live with it. Walking, so you come to know nature daily, can be a wonderful source of spirituality.

When I began writing this book, I visited monastic ruins in Ireland, and was impressed with their incredible proximity to nature and to the awesomeness of nature. Divinity was obvious in the ocean a few yards from their community, in the animals living nearby, in the beautiful hills and mountains, and even in the winds. In Irish spiritual literature, nature is vividly present in prayers and meditation. Our religious life, on the contrary, is more mental. We want to understand the scriptures, be absolutely sure who Jesus was, and know the historical Buddha. We want to be correct and determine whether to follow Luther or Calvin, stay with the Pope, or be reborn. These are intellectual processes that have no base, no grounding for our spiritual lives. Earthen spirituality is prior to any church. It is an absolute foundation for any kind of spiritual life.

With reverence toward the earth and consideration of earth as home, we care for and take care of the earth.

It's automatic. You don't have to think about it. You don't have to make a movement on it.

“Magic” is becoming a popular word. Describe the relationship between enchantment and magic.

I first saw this book as being about magic. I intended to write about magic and to re-state old magicians, their theories, principles, and practices. Then I reconsidered and decided to put those principles in the book without making them explicit. There are applications of old notions of magic in every section of the book. The best sources are Ficino, who talks about natural magic, and Pico della Mirandola, who says that magic is a way of being close to nature and aware of nature's power. Nature has many hidden secrets and is not to be treated superficially. It takes a lifetime to learn its hidden capacity. Nature is not for exploitation—it is spirituality. You use power that you learn by studying nature for communal good. Using that power for yourself is black magic, the wrong kind of magic. Traditional magicians advocate learning the secrets of nature and developing principles for using nature's power.

I'll give you an example. For instance, the most powerful objects and actions in the world are the least conspicuous, the least noticeable, and the smallest. One principle is that you can accomplish great things with small means. Another prominent principle is that in order to be a physician, you have to be aware of the sky and be in tune with the sun, moon, stars, and planets. We don't have that sense today. How many physicians study the movement of the planets as a way to learn about human beings? Knowing that this world is potent and powerful, if we are open to it, is the central doctrine of the magician. Living that way creates a world that is enchanting, in a magical sense. The magic is being able to exercise the power of nature. Living in an enchanted world is the result.

Is there anything more you want to say about enchantment?

Prominent in my work is music and sound. I am a musician and have thought about cosmic music since I was in high school. In college I wrote about music of the spheres and music of the world. En-

chantment requires aesthetic appreciation, so the arts and the study of the arts are central, not marginal. If we had to cut school budgets, I would cut science before I would cut the arts. I appreciate science, but I don't think it is as important as the arts. I would not worry about children not learning to count and to use computers, but I would worry if they were not exposed to the arts, and to music in particular. Music can do so much. Whenever I give a talk, I ask the people to include music. I ask them to find a student to play violin or piano to put us in the place we need to be, to talk about these subjects. The disenchanting world is noisy, and the enchanted world is full of sounds that require a different sort of listening. The world speaks and chants to us in a zillion ways, but we are surrounded by noise and don't hear it. This causes us to become neurotic. We need good sound. Music therapy is not playing to calm yourself or ease your depression. Music therapy means living in a world full of sound which keeps you connected and balanced. Nature's sound gives peace, serenity, and security to life. We need that basic measure of tranquillity, yet the modern world doesn't care about the impact of noise on the way we are.

How have you been impacted by writing this book?

It's been an education for me in the best sense of the word. I am practicing making my own intellectual life more enchanted than disenchanting. For that reason, I study authors in tune with enchantment. My writing is changing. This book is less academic than the previous ones. I tried to put some magic into the making of this book. I didn't treat the book as an object. The book is made of ten sections of four chapters each, which are magical numbers. I wrote it in pieces of seven pages each, so each chapter was seven pages when I first wrote it. That changed as time went on. I was very aware of the construction of the book in those ways. I study as I go, and I write what I study. In my own life, I am more in tune with these principles than I was before I started writing the book. I live it more, although much of it is confirmation and refinement of what I have practiced for a long time. •



A Dream Worth Dreaming

MARY MANIN MORRISSEY

When something as important as your life is at stake, you want to be confident that you have chosen to pursue the dream closest to your heart. You can learn to separate your true desires from your passing fancies, those things that diminish over time. If you have children, you know what I mean about passing fancies. Little ones may whine and plead and beg for some overpriced superhero contraption they saw advertised on television. Even though it goes against your better judgment, you finally relent and buy it. A week later, you find the former object of your child's desire broken and buried at the bottom of the toy chest, never to be played with again. As adults, we like to think of ourselves as being somewhat less fickle, yet the truth is that we frequently pursue dreams that have no more substance than a cheap plastic toy. How do you know you have chosen a dream God will join you in manifesting? How can you depend on your dream?



Mary Manin Morrissey is a minister, counselor, teacher, spiritual leader, and founder of the Living Enrichment Center, a spiritual center near Portland, Oregon. Her weekly messages are broadcast to more than 80 countries and 500,000 people around the world. From "Building Your Field of Dreams" by Mary Manin Morrissey. Copyright 1996 by Mary Manin Morrissey. Printed with permission from Bantam Books, a division of Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc. All rights reserved.



What we're going to do is subject your dream to some rigorous tests, but these tests differ vastly from those you've undertaken before. Just as the FDA does not approve a drug for public consumption until it has been rigorously reviewed and analyzed, so too will your dream be held up to the brightest light and evaluated. The difference between testing a drug and testing a dream is that instead of looking for flaws—does the drug cause side effects such as nausea, dizziness, or vomiting?—you are seeking that which makes your in-

attention pure and honorable. You are testing to confirm the presence of God in your dream.

Ask yourself these five essential questions: Does this dream enliven me? Does this dream align with my core values? Do I need help from a higher source to make this dream come true? Will this dream require me to grow into my true self? Will this dream ultimately bless others? Let's look at each component of the test in more detail.

1 *Does this dream enliven me?* This is your starting point. Feel your own life energy in regard to the dream. Does the mere thought of your dream quicken your pulse? Is it something you want passionately? Do you feel an amplified sense of aliveness as you vividly imagine living the fulfillment of this dream? If you don't answer yes to these questions, if that dream is just a big "I should," then you won't harness the energy to bring your desire into form. When distraction tempts you, when you feel like turning away, you won't have any place in yourself from which to draw forth the enthusiasm required in order to manifest the dream.

Frank, a member of our congregation, had every reason to be distracted from his dream, which was to grow an orchid garden large enough to supply local florists. Frank had AIDS. Yet his passion for his dream was bigger than his disease, and he decided that illness did not mean he had to forgo his dream. Frank admired in orchids their hidden strength; despite a fragile appearance, their beautiful blooms can last for months, outliving far sturdier-looking flowers.

When the dream to grow an orchid garden first came to him, Frank didn't know much about horticulture, and while his finances were stable, he was by no means wealthy. Orchids are very expensive, and they mature slowly. Frank checked off his obstacles one by one: limited knowledge, limited finances, and—most critical—limited time. Frank knew he would very likely die before turning thirty-five. And yet every time he closed his eyes, he saw orchids. He believed that his enthusiasm, combined with God's, would bring forth his garden.

Frank read everything he could on orchids; he visited local nurseries; and he so infused others with

Inevitably you will come across some shortcut to your dream that also cuts deeply into your values. You will be forced to choose one over the other. In this spiritual venture of dream-building, it is critical that at each juncture, each crossroads, you remain true to your self.

his enthusiasm that soon friends and acquaintances were working beside him in the greenhouse. He did not allow himself to be distracted. When the first buds refused to blossom, when he grew weary in the afternoons, Frank kept going. He held his dream clearly in mind and took one step after another. As a result, not only did he create an exquisite orchid garden, but he also eventually opened his own flower shop.

Shortly before he died, Frank and I had a conversation. He smiled, his eyes full of deep knowing, as he told me how grateful he felt to have spent his final years building a dream that would live on beyond him. His happiness and peace taught me a great lesson about being fully alive, even in the face of death.

The root of the word enthusiasm is *entheos*, which literally means “God within.” In this spiritual test, it is not the obstacles to your dream that count, but rather the magnitude of the enthusiasm you bring to it.

2 *Does this dream align with my core values?* You cannot pursue a dream that forces you to compromise your fundamental sense of integrity. Pursuing your dream will cause you to make many difficult decisions; inevitably you will come across some shortcut to your dream that also cuts deeply into your values. You will be forced to choose one over the other. In this spiritual venture of dream-building, it is critical that at each juncture, each crossroads, you remain true to your self.

A man in our congregation, Richard, told me he had spent his entire life building the dreams he believed would make other people happy. He had taken over his father’s contracting business to please his parents, although he believed his true vo-

cation to be in architecture. Richard had married a woman he was fond of, but didn’t try hard to love. He raised his family in an upscale townhouse that his wife had chosen because it gave him the best access to his clients. What he really wanted was to design a Victorian farmhouse and move to the country. Over the years he and his wife, never close to begin with, drifted apart, but none of their friends and business associates ever knew. The couple maintained the appearance of the ideal family, hosting parties and hand in hand attending all the prominent functions in town. Richard knew how important this social position was to his wife. Yet at home, he and she rarely spoke to each other.

Finally he awoke to the realization that while consideration of others was one of his essential core values, he had somehow left himself out of the equation. He realized he had been living someone else’s dream, not his own. And the truth is that Richard, for all his placating, had not succeeded in making anyone happy. You cannot bring genuine joy into the lives of others when you deny your authentic self.

So Richard re-entered his own life. He decided he would find a way to design and move into the house of his dreams. He also set an intention no longer to accept mediocrity in his marriage. He would try to turn it into something meaningful by pouring every ounce of his love into it, and if that didn’t work, Richard would free himself and his wife for something better.

One day, Richard showed me something he had created to remind himself of his intentions. It was a large gilded bird cage. Inside, he had placed a Ken doll and a Barbie doll climbing a ladder that led nowhere. Richard called this his “shrine to the gods of other people’s approval.” This “shrine” helped

him bear in mind that in all his choices, he must ultimately be true to himself.

I remember a funeral I performed for the father of a member of our congregation. Vicki's father had died very suddenly at the young age of sixty. She told me about his lifelong dream of adventure. Even as a boy, he had wanted to go deep-sea diving, long before scuba diving equipment became available in Oregon. Later in life, he actually dove all over the world with Jacques Cousteau. He specialized in underwater photography so that he could share the gift of his undersea treasure with others and went on to win international photography awards. In his fifties, he took up flying, adding the dimension of air to his adventure of sea.

At his funeral, Vicki wanted to read aloud a message that conveyed her father's deepest values. It was inscribed inside the cover of a book he had given her. "This describes my philosophy of life. The only obligation you have in any lifetime is to be true to yourself. This has been the premise and the power of my life. May you find this for yourself, sweetheart. Love, Dad."

Be true to yourself! Hold your thoughts to the highest possibility that you can see at any given moment. Once you choose a dream that aligns with your values, the Spirit will guide you into even greater experiences, made available from the vantage point of a higher vision. What you chose five years ago won't be what you choose now, and what

A dream without struggle is a dream without substance. But we will not be struggling alone. We don't know exactly how our dream will be accomplished. We don't even know if it's probable. But we can believe that with God's help it is possible.

you choose at this moment will differ from what you will choose five years in the future; but if you don't make the choice for today, you cut yourself off from options that await down the road.

3 *Do I need help from a higher source to make this dream come true?* If you think you alone can accomplish the dream, then your dream is not big enough. If you think you can control every detail, then your scope is restricted. You have no room for God in your dream. To access this higher source, you need to willingly grow, which is impossible to do if you're full of your own ego. The dream must be bigger than you know yourself to be, so that you learn to allow the higher source to do for you what you cannot do for yourself.

Because the dream is bigger than you, you're going to have to grow and perhaps endure some struggle. Those who recognize and accept struggle manage to make their labor look effortless, yet they are toiling just as the rest of us do, only reaping larger results. Mother Teresa, during an interview with the BBC, was asked, "You know,

Mother, it's easy for you to be dedicated to service more so than us ordinary householders. You don't have a house, you don't have possessions, you don't have a car, you don't have insurance, you don't even have a husband."

And Mother Teresa replied, "Wait a minute, I do have a husband." She pointed to the ring on her finger, worn by her order of nuns to symbolize their marriage to Christ. She said, "I do have a hus-

band, and I want you to know that sometimes He can be very difficult.” Sometimes it does feel difficult. The dream that’s trying to be dreamed through the lens of our lives does feel big. It should feel bigger than something we think we can accomplish ourselves with our present resources.

Once there was a man who died and found himself in a beautiful place surrounded by every conceivable comfort. A white-jacketed attendant came to him and said, “You may have anything you choose—any food, any pleasure, any kind of entertainment.” The man was delighted and sampled all the delicacies he had only dreamed of on earth. Eventually, however, he grew bored. Calling the attendant to him, he said, “I have tried every good thing I could think of, and now I am tired of all of this. I need something to do. What kind of work can you give me?”

The attendant sadly shook his head and said, “Well, I’m sorry, sir. That’s the one thing we cannot do for you. There is no work for you here.”

To which the man answered, “That’s a fine thing. I might as well be in hell.”

The attendant asked softly, “Where do you think you are?”

A dream without struggle is a dream without substance. But we will not be struggling alone. We don’t know exactly how our dream will be accomplished. We don’t even know if it’s probable. But we can believe that with God’s help it is possible. That’s why we need a higher power. Our job is not to control every last detail, but to let God move through our lives in a more powerful way. You are a

The “you” that has dreamed the dream is not the “you” that will exist once it has manifested itself. The transition between these two states or expressions requires the lesser you to surrender to the greater you.

single point of awareness in the mind of God, and God’s gift of inspiration may reveal itself only one idea at a time. Once you follow that guidance, another idea, will present itself to you. Then you take the next idea and the next, and finally you look around and realize you have built a new life. God, the energy of creation, is at the center, urging you along, guiding you to a larger life if you are willing to seek higher help.

4 *Will this dream require me to grow into more of my true self?* If the dream is bigger than you at the outset, who will you become as you grow into it? Remember your dream is that part of you longing to express itself. Every choice you make that requires you to grow and stretch moves you closer to your true self. The “you” that has dreamed the dream is not the “you” that will exist once it has manifested itself. The transition between these two states or expressions requires the lesser you to surrender to the greater you. You’re leaving a limited life

and moving into a larger one. You are bringing out that part of yourself that’s been boxed in, tucked away. As you mold those longings into reality, you are growing and stretching, more accurately expressing your true self.

Others may doubt or attempt to dissuade you. After all, people can look kind of awkward when they stretch. Remember the story of Noah? By building an ark, he became who he was meant to be. At first this was a dream neither his family nor his friends could understand; everyone around him said, “This is crazy. You’re building a big boat in the middle of dry land.” Yet Noah kept at that ark

Every good and true dream has a seed within it that can bless and benefit others, because in this universe there is no such thing as a private good. We are all connected in the intricate web of life force, and what harms one ultimately harms all, just as what is truly good for one is ultimately good for all.

even as his neighbors ridiculed him. Others may think you're crazy to follow your dream, to risk. You yourself may sometimes feel the same way. Conformity tempts all of us at times; we're all tempted to lower our aims and conform to somebody else's expectations, thus denying our divine nature and deeply held dreams.

A woman who sings at our church, Debbie, told me a story to share with our congregation. She went through a very broken period in her life because she said no to her divine nature. Her greatest joy was singing, yet her song was drowned out by her mother's voice, heard deep in the caverns of her memory. "Singing isn't a real job," Debbie's mother had told her. "To be a success, you have to be in the business world, and if you haven't made it in business, you're nothing. You won't amount to anything if all you do is sing."

She followed that limiting voice, instead of her divine nature, and it made her sick. Living in limitation gradually squeezes the life out of you. The way it squeezed the life out of Debbie was through a gradual mental and emotional breakdown. She spent weeks lying on a couch taking drugs and watching television. After fourteen days or so of relentless channel-surfing, she began to turn on the daytime talk shows because, as she put it, they had people even stranger than she. It began to give her a little hope.

One afternoon, she flipped to Oprah. On came Dr. Bernie Siegel and the minister, Louise Hay. They were a very different kind of guest from those she'd been watching, and she paid more attention. At first, it made her angry to hear what they were saying, that you really can heal your life. No matter what's happened to you, no matter how far you've sunk, you can be led into a magnificent life. She

thought, "What do they know?" She was angry, yet something in their message resonated in her heart.

The message Noah received never stopped resonating, and thus he kept building his ark. He built one window in the ark, placed directly overhead so that the only way to look out was to look straight up. When you're building the dream of your life, look up. Build yourself an ark, a sacred place in your mind where your dream is safe from the flood of doubt, disapproval, and disbelief that drown most dreams before they ever have a chance. Just before the floods came, Noah filled his ark with animals. After forty days and forty nights of rain, Noah let a dove out the window. When the dove returned with an olive branch, he knew the flood was over. His dream had saved them all for a new life.

So Debbie began to build herself an ark. She had lain on that couch watching soap operas and feeling sorry for herself for a long time. Then a new dream began. She got up off the couch. She threw away her bathrobe, got dressed, and bought a book on self-healing. She was building a thought form, a new way of holding herself in a covenant with God. There is a covenant or promise in how the universe works. If we take one step toward a greater life, God takes a hundred steps in helping us. She yearned deeply for a new life. She both saw herself where she began—as a couch potato—and saw the true self that would be revealed as she grew into her dream. "I love singing," she thought. "I will be a singer."

This was a dream bigger than what she alone could accomplish. Debbie sought guidance from within. "Take a pen and paper," her guidance told her, and music began to flow through her. She had never written music before, but now it was all over the page. She recognized that all along life had not

been victimizing her. She'd been trapped by old ideas that limited her. Her breakdown, her shattered sense of self, was really the opportunity to break through to her whole self.

If you're feeling broken right now, you will stay broken only to the degree that you don't let God lead you. Noah built an ark. He was willing to move into a new emptiness, into a place he had never been before. Debbie took her whole self into her ark. She asked the higher power, "All right. What would you have me do?" Only this time she really listened. She heard one word, "Sing." Debbie began singing again, and as she did so, music began to pour through her. She wrote it down. The next message she heard was, "Create a cassette tape." She took her savings and made a cassette tape that she sent to Louise Hay, thanking the minister for helping to rebuild her life.

A week later, Louise called Debbie and said, "Girl, you can sing!" Louise invited her to sing at seminars she was conducting all over the world. Since that time, Debbie's whole world has opened up. There is music throughout her life. She has traveled, met the man of her dreams, and married. She continues to sing.

You may tell yourself, "I'm no Noah"; you may tell yourself, "I've got a tin ear." In other words, you don't think you have the talent or ability to create something wondrous. You feel ordinary. This may surprise you, but people who accomplish extraordinary things possess nothing more extraordinary than you do. They just have thought in bigger ways. They know that their thoughts will shape their lives. Extraordinary people are ordinary people who seek to uncover the extraordinary that already exists within themselves.

To manifest my dream, will I be required to grow into this more extraordinary version of myself? If the answer is yes, proceed.

5 *Will this dream ultimately bless others?* This is the final test of your dream. Every good and true dream has a seed within it that can bless and benefit others, because in this universe there is no such thing as a private good. We are all connected in the intricate web of life force, and what harms one ultimately

harms all, just as what is truly good for one is ultimately good for all.

My first big dream was to be a teacher. Anyone who has ever taught children or dreamed of teaching can see that in education, opportunities to benefit others abound. Your passion for learning infects the youngsters in your classroom, and they double their efforts to master reading and math; your belief in the worthiness of your students bolsters their self-esteem. In some cases, you may be the only person who believes in them. Your caring may make the difference between their dropping out of school and their going on to finish their education.

"That's fine," you may say, "But what if I just love selling real estate? What if I feel tremendous energy for a goal such as selling \$5 million worth of property a year?" Benefit to others is fairly simple to test if your dream includes joining a helping profession or one that is inherently philanthropic. Frequently, however, the benefit to others is less obvious. As a real-estate agent, say, you may find homes for families who didn't think they could afford them, and, in doing so, literally help move those people into their own dreams. Furthermore, if your dream has withstood the first four questions, you cannot help but become a real-estate agent who benefits others. Your transactions will be honest, and you will willingly struggle, going the extra mile to find the right home for each client. Your enthusiasm for the profession and your refusal to coerce a sale or compromise your integrity will do more than ensure your own prosperity; your integrity will set standards for others in the profession to follow.

Benefits may abound that are beyond your vision at this moment. Debbie's singing makes her happy, but it also brings joy to everyone who hears her voice.

Put your dream to the test. Can you answer yes to these five questions? If so, you have passed a spiritual exam more rigorous than any laboratory could administer, and you have confirmed God's presence in your venture. You have established a dream worth spending a portion of your precious life in building. •

Our Bodies Are Spiritual

C A R M E N R E N E E B E R R Y

Don't tell me," Carl's angry voice cut through Terri like a knife, "you've got another one of your headaches. At least you could come up with something original!" Terri's fingers massaged her pounding temples as tears of frustration and pain came to her eyes. "Oh, Carl. Please..." "Don't patronize me," he snarled, snatching his pillow from the bed. "I can't stand sleeping next to you another night." Terri watched her husband disappear into the hall. Throwing herself onto the bed, she cried into her pillow, "Why do I get these headaches whenever he starts to make love to me? This isn't the way I thought marriage would be." Her head throbbed and her heart ached. "What is wrong with me?"

As infants, we naturally accepted ourselves, exploring our bodies with delight. We were thrilled by the discovery of our fingers, our toes, our genitals, unaware that some body parts were considered more "acceptable" than others. As adults, however, we may believe that parts of ourselves are fine. Too few of us, unfortunately, feel loved in our entirety.

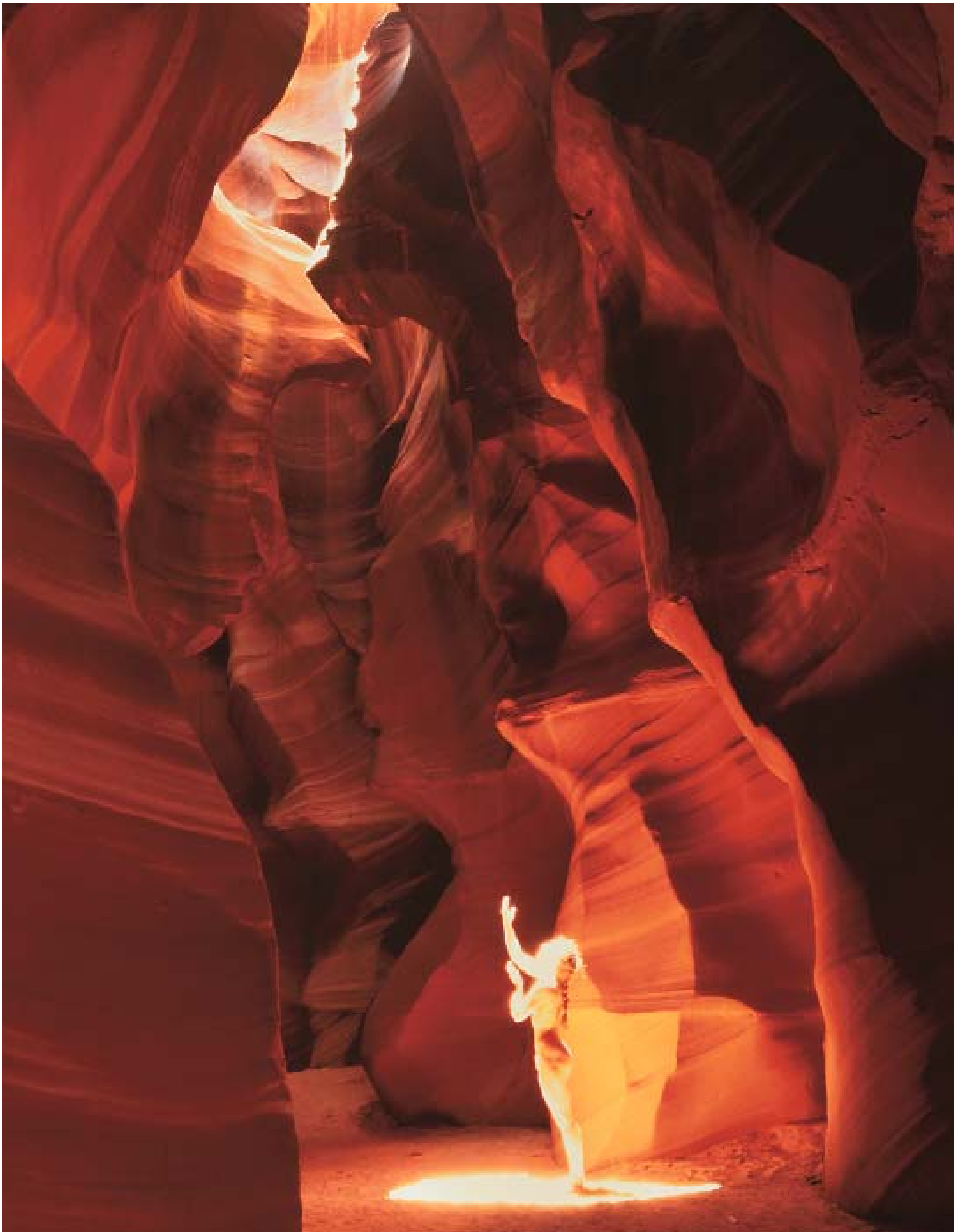
We all long to be loved and accepted completely. Since we are spiritual beings, for us to feel acceptable, we often sense that this means being acceptable to a mysterious, universal Life-Force that is often called God in this culture. And, since we are

physical beings, this acceptance must include our bodies, our entire bodies.

I believe that our ability to express ourselves as loving, whole beings is based on our perception of others' acceptance of us. We recognize the importance of feeling touched and nurtured by others, perhaps most importantly by our parents. But even our parents cannot provide us with love and acceptance that reaches our deepest needs. I am known in the deepest places, the hidden recesses of my soul only by God. Only God can attune to us so fully as to overcome our shame and convince us we are completely loved. As theologian Paul Tillich declared, It strikes us when our disgust for our own being, our indifference, our weakness, our hostility, and our lack of direction and composure have become intolerable to us. It strikes us when year after year the longed-for perfection of life does not appear, when the old compulsions reign within us as they have for decades, when despair destroys all joy and courage. Sometimes, at that moment, a wave of light breaks into our darkness, and it is as though a voice were saying, "You are accepted. *You are accepted...* Simply accept the fact that you are accepted!" If that happens to us, we experience grace.

How do we experience this grace? How do we see this wave of light? How do we hear this accepting voice?

PHOTO CREDIT: LIGHT BEING BY SUSAN SLOTTER.
SEE RESOURCE SECTION FOR MORE INFORMATION.





Carmen Renee Berry, M.S.W., M.A., noted author and speaker, is a certified body worker, social worker, and former psychotherapist who helps persons of all ages to integrate the body into the journey towards wholeness. Ms. Berry is a graduate of the University of Southern California School of Social Work and has an M.A. in Social Sciences from the University of Northern Arizona. She resides in Pasadena, California.



Divine acceptance and love is communicated to us through a variety of avenues: inspiration through nature, insight through dreams, intimacy through prayer, guidance through sacred writings, solace and serenity through meditation, encouragement through relationships. Through these means and others, we can sense the presence and intimations of a divine presence in a way that makes us feel like we have been touched.

One of the most significant avenues of spiritual communication is through our own bodies. While many spiritual traditions pit the body and spirit against each other, I believe that honoring the body is an integral part of our spiritual path. Since our

bodies are created by God, our bodies reflect God's nature and character. From observing our bodies, and enjoying our physical selves, we learn many things about spiritual life.

Our innate desire to survive illustrates that God is a lover of life. Our bodies come equipped with instinctive, self-protective impulses. Through conscious responses and automatic reflexes, our bodies sustain and protect us. And when we are hurt, our bodies are equipped with self-healing capabilities.

While God is believed to be everywhere at all times, our bodies reveal to us that we are also separate from God, and that our privacy is respected. Our bodies, specifically our skin, delineate where we begin and end. As philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty writes, "My understanding of my body is the key to my understanding of bodies and places beyond me." Through our physical boundaries, we find our definition, our identity, and our reference point in the world.

Our body boundaries do not isolate us from others. Rather our boundaries make it possible for us to be intimate with other separate personalities. We long to know we are not alone. Our own cravings for touch and closeness, certainly a positive valence in creation, reveal that spiritual intimacy is possible. Through the ages, mystics, rabbis, monks, and ordinary people from all religious traditions have shared a longing for intimacy with the divine. I believe this desire, experienced within the body, tells us about God's own desire for closeness with us.

Our sexual organs and erotic desire tell us about a divine creative love. Creative potency and intense passion bespeak a Creator who is fully conversant with our existence, with bodies full of sexual desire. Only a God who revels in pleasure could create the many nerve endings, soft skin, the erogenous zones, and the genitalia required for full-body sexual enjoyment.

If we include our bodies in our spiritual journey, we can learn these and many more spiritual truths. But if we degrade the body, rather than view it as a divine creation, we overlook important information about divine love. We must use our eyes to see, not

only our face in the mirror, but also a reflection of the divine face.

Our bodies not only reflect a spiritual character. The everyday workings of our bodies become spiritual receptors through which God communicates to us. As living, breathing, desiring, growing, changing, loving, physical beings, our bodies are designed to receive spiritual communication on a regular basis. For example, we are warned of too much stress through our back pain and headaches. We are guided to people who are safe through our relaxed body posture, or informed of danger through our sweaty palms or shortness of breath. We are called to rest through droopy eye lids, and energized to play through a pounding, excited pulse. Our desire for intimacy is affirmed as our bodies respond to passion and sexual desire. Our entire bodyselves are a delight and celebration of the Divine Presence who loves us.

I believe God values us greatly and is offended by our mistreatment. As a consequence, our bodies are designed to register misattunement or trauma. Our physiological makeup could have easily been constructed to forget the past, whether positive or negative. Instead, I believe our bodies are designed to record all that happens to us, so that future healing is possible. Nothing about us is unimportant. Nothing about us is lost. Our bodies remember.

Our lives are significant. Your life is significant, as is your body and everything about you. Love is communicated to you, through the delicate blood cells that course through your veins, through the muscle tension in your shoulders, through your sexual longings, through the beating of your heart, through each breath you take into your lungs. It's as

Our bodies are designed to record all that happens to us so that future healing is possible. Nothing about us is unimportant. Nothing about us is lost. Our bodies remember.

clear as the nose on your face—you are loved and offered grace every minute of the day.

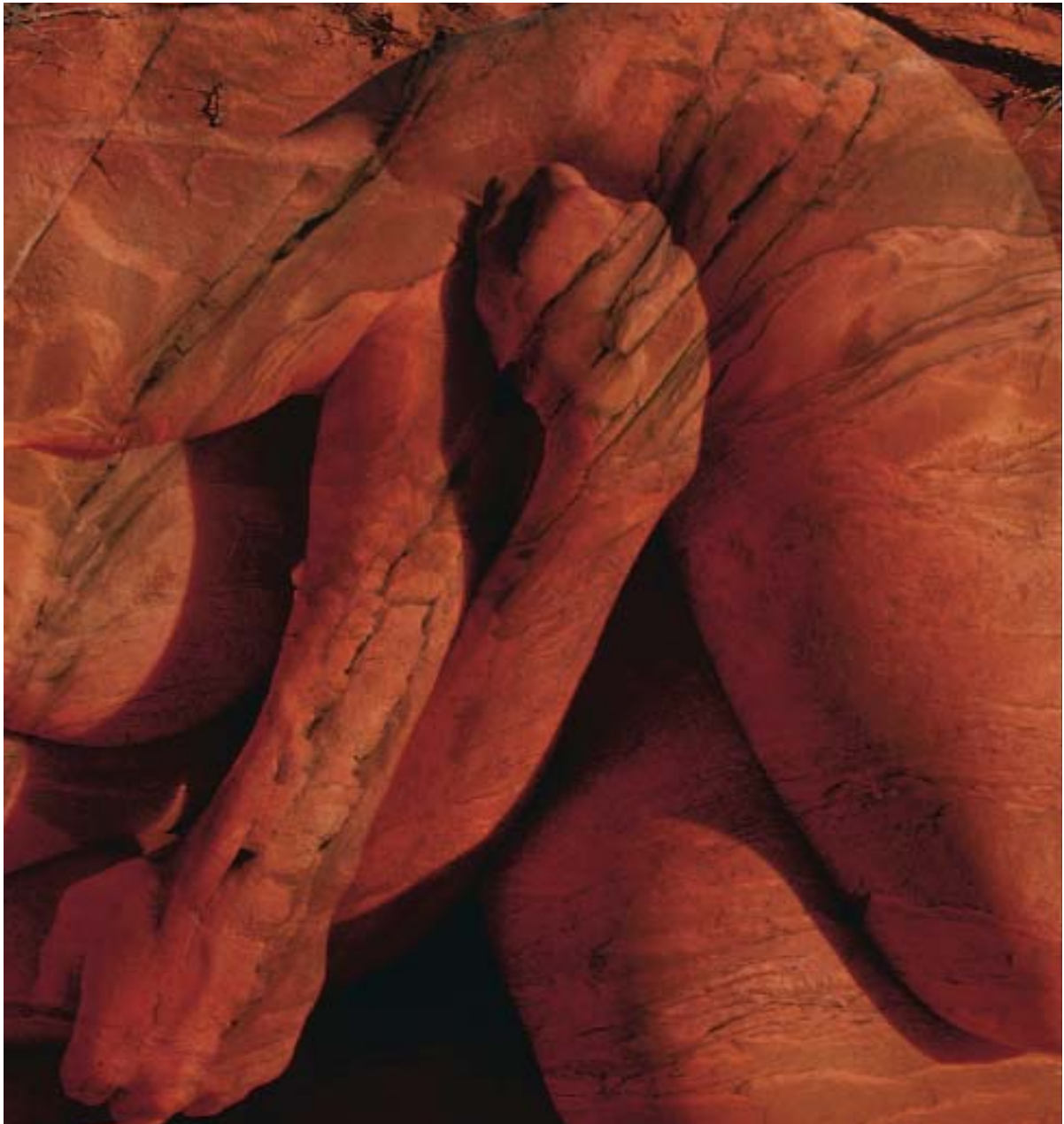
SPIRITUAL ABUSE

Unfortunately, grace may not be a common experience in all of our lives. Rather than feeling wholly loved, our lives may be splintered by past assaults on our bodies, our feelings, and our spirits. While all forms of abuse are hostile to the body, spiritual abuse is perhaps the most damaging to our sense of wholeness, because it severs our bodies from our spirituality.

As I have studied the many faces of abuse, I have been stunned to find that religious writers from all traditions are some of the most outspoken and unyielding opponents of the body. In spiritually abusive religious circles, this attitude is common, and rarely subtle, as spirit is unabashedly separated from and elevated above body. This tragic violation of our

wholeness is usually touted as a spiritual virtue.

Until I included my body into my spiritual journey, I believed my thoughts were superior and more trustworthy than my feelings. Spirituality was “up” and the body was “down.” I’d been taught to enhance my spiritual walk by decreasing my concern with “earthly” things which meant anything to do with my body. I am not the only person detrimentally affected by distorted spiritual teaching. Many of my body work clients suffer damage due to a body-mind split. Since spiritually abusive ideologies avidly elevate the spirit over the body, such religious teaching has historically warned against any association with the body. Reflecting our interior division, we come to see the world in terms of dichotomy. As James Nelson writes, “We become resistant to ambiguity and seek simple, single reasons



for things. Our conceptual worlds become populated with dichotomies—me-not me, male-female, masculine-feminine, heterosexual-homosexual, black-white, smart-stupid, healthy-ill, good-bad, right-wrong.”

Consequently, spiritually wounded people are almost always at odds with their bodies. Rather than experience our bodies as illustrations of a creative and loving grace, our physical selves often trigger bouts of shame. Theologian Alexander LaBrecque observes, “A lot of us have been taught theologically that to think badly of ourselves is a spiritual thing to do.” Specifically critiquing certain Christian traditions, LaBrecque states, “In

some quarters of the Christian church, a test of orthodoxy is how badly one thinks of humanity.”

A spiritually abusive faith demands that we illustrate our spiritual superiority by exhibiting our low self-regard. For example, one client, a seminary student named Peter, was referred to me for help by his therapist because of his irregular eating patterns. Peter, close to fifteen pounds below the recommended weight for his height, refused to eat whenever he felt badly about himself, which, unfortunately, was much of the time.

As Peter allowed me to touch him in nurturing ways and to respect his body as a source of spiritual guidance, he realized that his distorted religious be-

PHOTO CREDIT: ROCK SCULPTURE EMBRACE BY SUSAN SLOTTER.
SEE RESOURCE SECTION FOR MORE INFORMATION.

While other forms of abuse degrade different aspects of our physical selves, spiritual abuse tends to express its particular brand of body hatred by stigmatizing sexuality. The Christian church in particular has erred by dividing body from spirit and then overly eroticizing the body.

liefs were a threat to both his spiritual and physical health. He told me, “Instead of eating, I would pray for hours and hours, begging God to tell me what to do with my life. Now I can see that by ignoring my body, I was pushing away God’s guidance.”

As Peter heals from the spiritual abuse he’s suffered, the animosity between his body and spirit decreases. He still devotes time to prayer, but now he also eats regular, nutritious meals. Peter smiled when he said to me, “I can pray *and* eat! It’s not an either-or situation. In fact, now I love God, not only with my spirit, but with my whole self—my body, mind, and soul!”

Peter discovered an important spiritual truth. Healthy spirituality unifies rather than divides. Abusive spirituality drives us further from a divine connection, not closer. Normal physical functions cause us to hide ourselves in shame rather than bond us closer to God in intimate passion. In our efforts to hide our bodyselves, we forget how to be fully present. Instead of living as whole persons, spiritually wounded people are partial people, splintered by shame.

Severing the body from the spirit also severs our minds from the grounding nature of the body. We ignore the still small voice when it comes by way of our bodies. Without the needed “reality checks” provided by the body, the mind is free to float and create distorted dogmas. A particular idea may be “logically consistent,” and thereby accepted as truth by the mind, but prove to be false in a flesh-and-blood world. Intoxicated by exaggerated self-importance, the disembodied mind reasons, unencumbered by the body’s reality. As a consequence, toxic paradigms have contaminated our spiritual heritage, further barring us from receiving divine communication through the body.

While “splitting” a person into two competing

parts may have been touted as a religious virtue over the years, psychological studies illustrate that the process of splitting is an extreme, self-mutilating response to an intolerably painful or threatening experience. Frances Tustin, in her book *The Protective Shell in Children and Adults* said that “...In situations of acute bodily terror, the psychic sense of ‘being’ can be protected by seeming to be separated from the physical body. This preserves the sense of ‘being’ and guards against the dread of ‘not-being.’ ...In very insecure children... the psyche and the soma have seemed to be split apart. Before they were equipped to do so, they have had to take responsibility for their own sense of ‘being.’” Without divine love we become “insecure children” indeed. Spiritually, many of us have become like the child hiding in the corner with her eyes closed, pretending no one can see her.

The important guidance God gives to us every day through our bodies goes unnoticed. I remember times when I accused God of forgetting me as I overlooked the many ways God was communicating to me through my body. By distrusting my body, I lost contact with a viable and reliable source of spiritual guidance.

STRATEGIES FOR SURVIVAL

Spiritual abuse leaves us warring against ourselves. In order to survive this unnecessary war, we may cut ourselves off from our sexuality, cut ourselves off from God, or become a body worshipper.

CUTTING OURSELVES OFF FROM OUR SEXUALITY

While other forms of abuse degrade different aspects of our physical selves, spiritual abuse tends to express its particular brand of body hatred by stig-

matizing sexuality. The Christian church, in particular, has erred by dividing body from spirit and then overly eroticizing the body.

Perhaps this confusion is due, in part, to the close link between spirituality and sexuality. Both are passionate expressions of intimacy, creativity, and love. Both touch us deeply, and stir us on a visceral level. Sexual intimacy with our partner and spiritual intimacy with our Creator have a great deal in common. Sexual alienation and a sense of body-based shame are common experiences among spiritually wounded people.

Terri was such a person, having grown up in a conservative religious family. She believed that to please God, she was not to have sexual feelings of any kind. These, she had been taught, were “lustful” and “sinful.” Rather than learn how to behave in a sexually responsible manner, Terri avoided any possibility of failure by becoming numb to her own body’s longing for sexual expression.

Terri had assumed that, once married, she would enjoy sexual intimacy with her husband. So had Carl when he married Terri. Unfortunately, Terri’s spiritual wound was extremely profound. Rather than take pleasure in sex, Terri felt ashamed of her body and repulsed by sexual intimacy. Afraid to tell Carl how she really felt, she pretended to enjoy sex with her husband. That’s when the migraine headaches began.

Terri’s body told the truth, even though Terri tried to hide her authentic feelings. Wounded by religious teaching that divided her from her body, she was unable to fully express love to her husband. Terri’s experience is all too common. Many people have been wounded sexually by distorted religious teachings, resulting in a myriad of sexual and relational difficulties including sexually promiscuous behavior, obsession with pornography, diminished sexual desire, impotency, vaginismus, gender confusion, dyspareunia, and other sexual dysfunction.

As spiritually wounded people, we believe that to please God we must deny, hide, avoid, mistrust, and control our sexual feelings. Healing begins when we include our bodies in the spiritual journey.

CUTTING OURSELVES OFF FROM GOD

A second way we may respond to spiritual abuse is by developing a distorted view of God. Our early childhood experiences color our ability to give and receive love and nurture. Child abuse and neglect can impair not only our ability to relate to other human beings but our ability to relate to God as well.

Many of us were raised in religious traditions that promoted distorted images of God. Some view God as being abusive which may take the forms of rigid judge, cosmic shamer, or demanding narcissist. Terri, for example, was devout in her faith, but actually viewed God as cruel and dangerous. Prior to her marriage, Terri was told that God would be angry with her if she expressed her sexual feelings. In addition, she was promised that God would give her the marriage she dreamed of, only if she suppressed her sexuality and remained a “good girl.”

Following these instructions to the letter, Terri separated herself from her body and her sexuality. But when the promised “perfect” marriage did not materialize, Terri secretly blamed God. In fact, in moments of honesty, she realized she hated God for appearing sadistic.

In addition, Terri felt abandoned by God. She cried alone, feeling hopeless that God would or could help her. Like others, Terri related to God as an Absent Parent. Many of us have felt abandoned by God, especially those of us who have experienced any form of abuse, whether that be spiritual, physical, sexual, emotional, or neglect. Thoughts go through our minds, such as “Where was this so-called loving God when I needed protection and nurturance? How can such a powerless God help me now? If God could help, what makes me think God cares about someone like me?” Losing our faith in a loving Presence, we can feel isolated, unprotected, and alone.

BECOMING A BODY WORSHIPER

While some may respond to spiritual abuse by “denying the body” and trying to rise above fleshly desire, others respond by worshipping the body. Elevating the body to what may be considered

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Home As Being

D E N I S E L I N N

Our homes are mirrors of ourselves. They reflect our interests, our beliefs, our hesitations, our spirit, and our passion. They tell a story about the way we feel about ourselves and the world around us. A home is more than a place to lay your head and seek comfort from the elements. It is a place where you can interface with the universe. It is a crossing point in time and space that can attract energy or repel energy. Your home can be a place of renewal and hope. It can be a sanctuary within which you can retreat and recharge during the changing times, an oasis of peace amidst turmoil. Homes can be places of healing and regeneration. Not only can your home help to strengthen and heal you, but your home can be a template of harmony within which you and all who enter can be invited to step up to a higher level of spiritual frequency.

Our homes are going to be increasingly important as the twentieth century comes to a close. It is now essential that our homes become sacred places as we solidify our place in the universe. It is valuable to infuse our living spaces with a sense of cosmic order—to bring integrity into our homes so that they are in balance with our basic beingness and the flow of creation. Our homes can offer sanctuary and renewed hope during times ahead which may be potentially difficult, yet absolutely exhilarating. They can provide a sacred space where we can remember who we are and remember why we are here on the planet at this time.

In the evolution of our earth, as we approach the

end of the millennium, there has never been a more powerful time to be alive. Now is a time filled with potential for change, for realization of our dreams, for evolution on both a personal and a global basis. All around us, we see a world increasingly polluted and fraught with conflict as ancient prophecies come to fruition. And yet, despite these grim manifestations of possible doom, there is an underlying sense of hope.

HOUSE AS “BEING”

To understand how to cleanse and clear the energies in your home, it is essential to understand how our living spaces fit into the context of life around us. To do this, it is valuable to understand three basic tenets that underlie the space-clearing techniques.

1. Everything is composed of constantly changing energy.
2. You are not separate from the world around you.
3. Everything has consciousness.

Understanding these tenets leads to the awareness that your home is composed of energy; it is not separate from you; it is an evolving being. This article is about understanding that your home is an evolving energy that has consciousness. It has a “Beingness” with which you can communicate, a “Being” that can provide protection and healing for you and your family, as you understand and honor its livingness. Learning to interface with your living spaces can contribute to creating a life that is balanced and in harmony with the energy of all that surrounds you.



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Everything Is Energy: Ancient Native Americans understood that all forms of life—from the clouds, to the trees, to the buffalo that roamed the Great Plains—were all transient swirling patterns of energy. This is an understanding that goes back to the most primordial times in cultures spanning the world. It is one of the most basic underlying perceptions of life held by native cultures. Our present-day concept that the universe is fixed and staid is dramatically at odds with this fundamental insight.

All life is energy. We are immersed in an ocean

of energy. The energy that is around us flows and moves in constant, ever-changing currents through time and space. Physicists acknowledge that the atoms and molecules in all things are in constant motion. Beneath the surface of fixed objects, existing in a linear river of time, is the reality that energy swirls into form, dissolves, and coalesces once again. The world is a dance of the two opposing yet harmonious forces in the universe: yin and yang, mystery and form. The world around us and within us is an interplay of these patterns of energy in ever-fluid relationship. Energy ebbs and flows around us, not constrained by the limitation of the past and future. We are in an infinite, yet patterned, timeless drama of light and dark. Underlying this motion is a cosmic order. There is an innate harmony inherent in all life as waves of energy and pulsating electrons spiral "form" in and out of existence.

WE ARE NOT SEPARATE FROM THE UNIVERSE AROUND US

There is nothing "out there" that isn't you. Because of the linear way in which we perceive reality, I don't think that we can ever understand this intellectually, communicate about it verbally, or even write about it in a comprehensive way. However, I do believe that deep inside each of us, *we all do know this*. I believe that inside each of us is a longing, a yearning, and a remembering of an exquisite place of oneness and unity beyond time and space.

Many of the difficulties people are experiencing at this time in the evolution of our world stem from one erroneous belief—the idea that we are separate beings, unconnected to our planet, to its animals and the trees, separate from each other, and sometimes even divorced from ourselves. The Western belief is that we are separate from our living spaces and our environment. The idea that we can exist independently of our environment is an illusion. And it is an illusion with potentially grave consequences for our health and happiness. It is the belief in this illusion which makes possible the epidemic of global pollution, racial hatred, wars, greed, and so many other ills which fill our newspapers and trouble our sleep.

As we move toward the new millennium, huge



IMAGE BANK/C. BRON

Homes, as well as people, are nourished by how we hold them in our heart. They have a living spirit that is sustained through the reverence and love that we hold for them. Without that care, they become inanimate and lifeless; the spirit recedes and they become merely physical structures that can neither sustain nor nurture us.

changes in technology, natural resources, and the force fields surrounding the planet are taking place. In our modern, Western culture, it is often difficult emotionally to feel our connection to things further than our private domain. Yet, it is essential now that we not only expand our “identification of self” to our personal environments, but that we extend our “sense of self” beyond the boundaries of time and form to encompass not just our home, but our community and our planet. Extending your “sense of self” to your home is a good first step, and an essential one.

Our planet is changing so quickly that it is affecting deeply the way we relate to each other and to our environment. Though advances in technology have added much to our lives, they have also separated us from the environment around us. In our dash for technology, we have “forgotten” the primordial wisdom that all creatures and all things on our planet are connected. We have “forgotten” that we are connected within a living pulsating universe—a universe that sings with life, that pulses with intensity of spirit. We have forgotten that everyone and everything has a living energy.

Our ancient ancestors all over the world did not share this belief of separation. Their world-view centered around the fact that none of us exists independently of our fellow creatures, of the sun, the moon, the soil, the flowers, the oceans, and all the other wonderful myriad beings and things which make up reality as we know it. Everything is relative to every other being: nothing exists in isolation. An example of the Native American comprehensive view of “relationship” is expressed in the sacred

Ceremony of the Sweat Lodge. When entering into the sweat lodge, one declares “to all my relations.” This isn’t just an acknowledgment of the others attending the lodge or members of immediate family. It is an affirmation of the inter-relatedness of all of life and the intimate connection with all of creation.

In modern Western culture, the usual way of interacting with the world around us is to feel that we are separate and autonomous. We usually identify with our body and feel separate from all the other parts of ourselves. Most of us identify ourselves with our physical bodies. We draw a kind of boundary line that stops with our skin. But this is not the only way we define ourselves. Many of us occasionally identify with things further beyond our physical selves. Sometimes, we identify with our children or even our possessions (a man will run into a burning building to rescue valuables at great danger to his physical body because in that moment he is identifying himself more with the valuables than with his body). We may identify also with the clothes we have on. For many people, the way they dress is an expression of who they believe themselves to be. It is also clear from the way that some people react while driving in heavy traffic that they identify with their cars.

Yet, when you take a moment to reflect on it, you will probably remember a number of times when you suddenly felt at one with the world around you. You may have had the sensation of being drawn into the beauty of a sunset illuminating the evening sky. Or you may have felt a joyous and cleansing sense of your own relationship to the universe while watching the pounding of waves on

the shore. These experiences remind us of the truth we all knew before this life—that we are essentially one with all things. We are no less part of the mountains, the sea, the clouds, or the stars than we are of our own bodies. We are all manifestations of pure energy, forever fluctuating in its manifestations, and forever connected. Everything that is and ever will be is within you. The universe is your extended body.

I believe that it is essential to make the journey back to this connected view of reality, a view which is as innately natural to us as our connection was to our mothers when we were in the womb.

EVERYTHING HAS CONSCIOUSNESS

Not only is the universe around you a vast flowing energy field to which you are intimately connected, but *everything in the universe* has consciousness. Even the most hardened skeptics would agree that animals are conscious beings. And modern science has proven that plants have intent and can respond to the energy field of humans. However, no less conscious are the stones and mountains and rivers. Native people understood this well and would ask for the blessings of the Spirit of the Sea before embarking on a fishing trip. Plants were thanked when they were picked. Before a hunt, the hunters asked for forgiveness from the animals. After the hunt, the animals were thanked for the “giveaway” of their life for the benefit of the tribe. The Earth beneath their feet was not inanimate and inert. The Earth was Mother. Thanks were given to her, and forgiveness was asked before digging into her flesh. It was, in this way, that native people recognized and honored the consciousness of everything in the world around them.

Ancient people understood that we are all connected and that everything is alive. A smooth, river-tumbled stone is no less alive than a great Orca whale. A tall proud cedar tree is no less alive than a cougar padding through a verdant meadow. My Cherokee Indian ancestors called the trees their brothers because they recognized the livingness in the trees. Everything is alive.

From these three tenets, it follows naturally that:

1. Your home is comprised of endlessly trans-

forming energy fields.

2. You are not separate from your home.
3. Your home is alive and has consciousness.

YOU ARE NOT SEPARATE FROM YOUR HOME

You are not separate from the home that you live in any more than you are separate from the air you breathe. Your home is not just an extension of your thoughts and feelings, but in a larger sense your home is you. You are no less your home than you are your body. Both are outer manifestations of your inner energy fields.

In the deepest sense, your home reflects and mirrors your consciousness. Just as the body is symbolic of our inner states, so your home reflects your inner state. Even the most traditional doctors are beginning to acknowledge that there is a mind/body connection and that the body can reflect consciousness. If people get a sore throat and lose their voices, this has often been shown to mean that there is something that they want to say but can't. Emotional difficulties manifest in the body. A house mirrors your inner states no less than does your body. For example, plumbing in a home can represent emotions. Clogged plumbing can mean clogged emotions. Overflowing plumbing can mean overflowing emotions. You can shift personal consciousness by shifting energy in your home. The windows are your eyes to the world around you. Just the simple act of cleaning your windows, *with the intent of being able to see your way in life more clearly*, will have an effect on the clarity in your life.

YOUR HOME HAS CONSCIOUSNESS

Not only does every part of our world have consciousness, but your home has consciousness. Homes, as well as people, are nourished by how we hold them in our heart. They have a living spirit that is sustained through the reverence and love that we hold for them. Without that care, they become inanimate and lifeless; the spirit recedes, and they become merely physical structures that can neither sustain nor nurture us. Our homes have become lifeless structures, rather than vibrant, alive, pulsating power points which we can enter for rejuvenation and renewal. Your home is an evolving

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Moment to Moment and the Moment of Death

J O S E P H S H A R P

I remember the first time someone asked me to assist her in dying. She was a mother in her late forties, with a wide round beautiful face that was not uncommon for the rural people of northeast Texas. Though she was on a morphine drip and not, in her own words, “in too much pain,” the tumors in her had grown to such a size that they pressed against her spinal column, paralyzing her from the upper chest down. Almost every function of life had to be performed for her. She couldn’t urinate or defecate for herself, or even press the buzzer to call a nurse. Her doctors didn’t know how much longer she would live, perhaps another week, perhaps a bit more or a lot less. It could be a withering, slow death.

IMAGE BANK/JEFFREY COOLIDGE

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When I walked into the hospital room, her husband put his chin to his chest, shook my hand, and excused himself without looking me directly in the eyes. He left

the room, glancing down to the floor. A teenage daughter was also present, and though there were tears in her eyes, she was smiling. “I’ll be outside,” she said. “Momma wants to be alone with you.”

As I moved bedside, I noticed the glow you sometimes see around those who are in the final stages of their dying process. “Hello, my name’s Joseph. I’m the chaplain. The head nurse said you wanted to talk to me.” The wide thick face softened more as she smiled. Her eyes glistened.

It was as if she reached out her hands and gave me a long, slow embrace, as sweet and thick and moist as those east Texas summers she had lived her whole life through. But of course only her face had moved. Everything else was still. “Yes, honey, I wanted to see you. They told me you do other things than just regular preaching and praying.”

She watched me closely. I nodded, not quite sure what she was getting at. The woman tilted her head toward the bedside table. I saw a copy of Bernie Siegel’s book *Love, Medicine and Miracles*. “I’ve been doing the kind of things that Doctor Siegel said to do. Visualizations an’ such. I think they helped some, but they didn’t cure me. I’m not in too much pain right now, but sometimes it gets real bad. They don’t know how much longer I’ve got.” She smiled and closed her eyes for a moment. She seemed to float off somewhere for a few seconds but then was back, eyes shining at me. “I’d like to know if you’ll help me do something?”



“Of course,” I said softly. “Anything.”

“Well, I’d like for you to do a visualization for me. I want you to help me go ahead an’ die. Can you do that, honey? Can you do me a visualization where I just go into God’s arms an’ don’t come back?”

I felt my stomach grab and my breath stop. At that moment it was clear to me that everyone else in her family knew what was happening. They’d paid their last respects and had been waiting for me to arrive and do what Momma wanted. There are no words that can begin to convey how, in that moment, my heart broke at her pain, at my own pain, at the whole world’s pain. Or, at how, in that same intolerably painful moment, God was also right there in all His grace and strength. And I felt a tingling of fear, but a good fear, a grounding, humbling fear—truthfully, an awe at this very moment. A sacred paradox. Her eyes shimmered, vibrant black dots of total aliveness and invitation. “Will you, honey?”

I spoke carefully and slowly, “Yes, I can try.”

She closed her eyes and the gentle smile softened as her face smoothed out into a deep, peaceful sea. “Thank you. I’m ready now. Go ahead.”

At the time I was asked to do this, I had been a chaplain for maybe two weeks. I hadn’t had time to

Death tells us that we must live life now, in the moment—that tomorrow is illusion and never comes. It tells us that it is not the quantity of our days, or hours, or years that matter but rather the quality of the time spent. Every day is new. Every moment is fresh.—Leo Buscaglia

prepare for such a thing—this ritual of passage. Of course, I'd read conscious dying meditations in books, but I had never actually led one. (I had led similar meditations at our Healing Circle support group, but then the point had always been to go "into the light" and then come back. In this visualization, there was no coming back.) I tell of my inexperience with doing this sort of care because, in doing any kind of conscious-dying work, there is always a first time. It's important to understand that, whether our egos consciously know it or not, we are usually ready—if our hearts and intentions are in the right place. There's an old religious saying that goes, "You are never called upon to do something for God unless you're ready to do it." On a level far deeper than the conceptual, I understood that this was a great gift being offered to me. This beautiful woman, this ancient sage, was blessing me with my own initiation into faith and trust. She knew. And it was time for me to taste of that knowledge, as well. So she closed her eyes, snuggled back into God, and told me, "I'm ready now. Go ahead."

I did the visualization. When I finished, she was unconscious. I don't know if she ever awoke or not; she died later that night. But even if she had gone on to awaken later, or not lost consciousness during the meditation, even if she had looked up at me immediately after my finishing and said, "Honey, this visualization didn't work either; I think you're full of it," it wouldn't have mattered. Nothing could change the fact that something had died in me—and, I believe, in her. I believe that every time I've done a guided visualization to facilitate someone in

completing their dying process, something has died in both of us. There is a letting go into the moment by moment by moment... an uncertainty of where the visualization is going, of its ending and completion. During these heightened times of awareness, I find that I'm doing this work for the One Self—the commingled souls into a Godself—that is both me and the other person. It's a psalm praising God's love. An offering, the acceptance of an initiation rite. During a joining of such holy intentions, parts of us both die into the light and don't come back.

What died in me? In a manner, my fear died, consumed in the moment-to-moment experience of life—which we might call grace. This is a very delicate healing process and some of the most vital work we need to understand in living our dying. Metaphorically, it is an inner dying process and subsequent rebirth.

On a very literal level, this woman who was in the final stages of her dying had something I wanted. What could this have been? She had a moment-to-moment existence. She had a fearlessness about death—going "into God's arms." She had a plain, straightforward way of speaking about her pain that cut through my defenses. Perhaps the simplest way to say it is that she was as close to death as one gets in this life, and still she wasn't scared; she didn't want to run away; she wanted only to complete her living/dying process. I sensed no anxiety about her, none of the desperation that sometimes accompanies someone's wish to die before a disease progresses into its final moments. She seemed to be coming from a different level of mind entirely. And as I proceeded, I actually felt

she knew on a deeper level that she was offering a gift to me, for me. She was offering to share intimately her experience of being that close to death without fear. This was the “something” she had that I wanted.

I’d come to the chaplaincy to experience and face my own fears of dying. In hindsight, I can understand that if this patient had been a man dying with AIDS, the situation may have been too fearful for me to let go into a healing. In the actual circumstance, however, it seemed as if she embraced me and held my hand every step of the way. My experience with her was an opportunity for me to move out of my intellectual-head and into my emotional-heart and experiential-body. As I said, I’d read the meditations on guiding someone to death’s door before. But reading to myself was one thing; standing forth and taking the trip with someone who was willing to go “all the way” was quite another. I came up against my bodily fears, the tension, the heavy pulling in my stomach. I came up against my emotional fears. And then moved through them—guiding the visualization, following along with her. When we openly connect with someone in the final moments of the dying process, we come about as close as anyone can get to the ultimate letting go. It need not be so dramatic as facilitating someone in a guided visualization of dying. It need only be an open, honest, and willing connection. We open through our own fears and re-emerge on the other shore. The other shore is a moment-to-moment experience of life. With this beautiful sage, I came as close to the ultimate letting go as I’d ever been. Part of me died too.

Though this particular experience was a radical step, in the whole of my experience most inner deaths have been subtle and gradual. An honest sharing of thoughts and fears with someone. A softening of the belly. A gentle tear. Or a flood of tears. A courageous joining of hearts and intentions as two people openly look into each other’s eyes without speaking a word. The possibilities are endless.

In our work with living our dying, often what dies is a “protective idea” we have about ourselves and life. A protective idea of self—of defensiveness, of fear—dies and is reborn into an immediate expe-

rience of opening and spaciousness. This is what I understand as resurrection. Metaphorically, the fearfully closed and separate mind dies and ascends from the head into the heart and full body, where the mind, no longer separate but whole, is felt and known in a whole living moment of experience. No longer is our connecting to God and our fellow human beings a mere concept, but a living, breathing reality. No longer lost in thoughts of correctness and incorrectness, of self-definition and protection, we are simply open to the moment-to-moment “what is” of life before us. This is living in grace, as I understand it. Moment-to-moment resurrected life.

To this day, when I visit someone who is nearing the final stages of the dying process, I still feel a resonance of the same feeling I experienced when this woman first asked me to help her die. This resonance might be described as a “little fear” tingling inside me. For me, it’s located just below my navel and deep within. My visual image is of a peach seed: that hard, shriveled, hollow core at the center of a peach. It’s a tightness that grips—and if I let it continue unnoticed and unacknowledged, it can grow to grip my entire body, heart, and mind. This hollow core is the secret, personal place where I do my most earnest work of letting go and softening. And when I soften and open to whom I’m with and to my self and my fears, I also feel a resonance of the safety and grace, the greater trust I later experienced with this same dying woman. I feel her embrace, the Beloved’s embrace.

Yet my “little fears” still arise. Perhaps they never go away fully. Perhaps they are ultimately what makes us human. I don’t know these answers. But “finding an answer” has never brought me any closer to the whole mind-body-soul integration of the moment-to-moment grace I experience when willing to go deeper into my little tight fears. I’ve become suspect of finding formulaic ways to explain or understand this miracle. Grace doesn’t follow the linear laws of the world. It must be lived and experienced moment to moment. •

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What Is Forgiveness?

B E T T Y C L A R E M O F F A T T

I believe that we shape our lives and we shape ourselves in response to the small and large moments of truth that come into our lives daily and ask us to choose what kind of a person we are becoming, what kind of a life we will have. These moments of truth become our life choices. These moments of truth become our journey. If life is a series of choices, then life is a series of journeys as well. Not a straight line from birth to death, but rather steps forward, from the first faltering steps of childhood, through the leaping and the soaring steps of young adulthood, to the bold and purposeful steps of our maturing years, to the (again) wise and yet sometimes faltering steps of our final years.

IMAGE BANK/MARC ROMANELLI

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We look for both love and direction along the way. There are unexpected turnings, veerings, switch-backs from an original path, a brave journey across uncharted wilderness. There are steps forward and steps toward home and inevitably, missteps and wrong turns along the way.

And there are signposts along the way, as well, if we pay attention through the sometimes bewildering and contradictory directions that the world serves up.

I believe that we are here to learn our own inner directions, our own guidance system, to tune into the best, the highest, the deepest, and the most authentic whispers from our heart and soul. To find our own pathway through the maze of outer signposts.

One of the ways that we do this, amazingly, is through the practice of forgiveness.

In a recent spiritual workshop I attended, the teacher spoke of a client who had been stopped in her tracks and had finally, after much anguish, decided to forgive a family member. But still nothing happened. Her problems continued, and she became more and more depressed. "She had forgiven in her mind," the lecturer told us, "but she had not forgiven with her body. Her body still held the imprint of the un-

forgiven hurt and anger. Her body told the story. She could not go further in her own life journey until she forgave totally. Mind, body, emotions, and spirit."

I was intrigued by this story because I have long believed that forgiving by reciting words or phrases designed to alleviate our own discomfort at an intractable situation is only the first step on our journey to forgiveness. It is a necessary step, it is an opening step, it is a willing step. But it is only the first of many steps we will take in our journey toward forgiveness.

According to Rumer Godden in *A House With Four Rooms*, "There is an Indian proverb or axiom that says that everyone is a house with four rooms, a physical, a mental, an emotional, and a spiritual. Most of us tend to live in one room most of the time, but unless we go into every room every day, even if only to keep it aired, we are not a complete person."

Why forgive? We do have a choice, after all, to hold our hurts and nurture them, to hug our resentments, to project our frustrations outward, to recycle our interior garbage through a lifetime of ever-increasing reasons for unhappiness. We have a choice. Yet even when we choose to forgive, do we know how?

Sometimes we do not have the tools. Sometimes we need help along the way, to lighten the load, to cast off outworn attitudes, to jettison the baggage of unresolved pain from the past.

In my own life, I have found it helpful, indeed imperative, to simplify my journey by identifying and applying seven steps toward forgiveness.

These seven steps are: Recognition and Acknowledgment, Desire, Definition and Decision, Meditation and Prayer, Inner and Outer Action, Surrender and Release, Understanding and Awareness, Healing and Change.

WHY FORGIVE?

Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door of resentment



BETTYCLARE MOFFATT

and the handcuffs of hate. It is a power that breaks the chains of bitterness and the shackles of selfishness.—William Arthur Ward

I once knew a brilliant man with a great deal of potential for making a difference in the world. He was respected in his field, and his family and friends struggled to understand and love him even with all his faults. This man would often boast, “I never forgive and I never forget.” This was his mantra, his rallying cry. He could skewer a subordinate with one look. “No one ever gets the better of ME!” He would declaim. He was the unhappiest man I ever knew.

Eventually, despite his hard work, his innate intelligence, his own interior struggle with addiction, and the prayers of his family, this man destroyed himself. And left such havoc in his wake, that it was years before his wife and children could come to terms with the impact this man had on their lives. To this day, they are still struggling with forgiveness. His cry, “I never forgive and I never forget,” is only another way of saying, “I WILL not forgive.”

We have all known people like this man. We have all, I venture to say, struggled at some time in our lives with our own need to forgive. To forgive ourselves, to forgive others, to forgive the past, to forgive the world, to forgive God.

We are told TO forgive. But we are not told HOW to forgive. And many of us, until and unless we are caught in a resentful, sorrowful, or life-altering situation, seldom consider forgiveness. What it is. What it is not. And how it can change our lives.

DEFINITIONS OF FORGIVENESS FORGIVENESS IS NOT...

True forgiveness rejects:

- Sanctimonious, holier-than-thou pronouncements: “I forgive you because I’m a better person than you are.”
- The martyr approach: “I’ll forgive you even though I know you’ll just keep on hurting me.”
- The patronizing approach: “I forgive you because I know you don’t know any better.”
- The disrespectful-to-self approach: “I’ll forgive you even though you treat me badly.”

- The no-boundaries approach: “I’ll forgive you for anything and everything forever and ever in order to keep your love.”
- The fearful approach: “I’ll forgive you because if I don’t, I’ll lose my job, status, security. I’ll forgive you because I need your approval or presence. I’ll forgive you because I’m afraid of you.”
- The brush-off approach: “Yeah, yeah, yeah, I forgive you. So now can we talk about other things?”
- The tit-for-tat approach: “I’ll forgive you when and if you forgive me.”
- The measurement approach: “I forgave her much more than she forgave me.”
- The denial approach: “There’s really nothing to forgive. I could never be angry with you.”
- The grudging approach: “I’ll forgive you if it will bring peace in this household.” Akin to children being told to “make nice” and share their toys.
- The conditional approach: “I say I forgive you, but I’m still holding onto my resentments.”
- The proud to be an executioner approach: “I never forgive and I never forget.”
- The proud to be a victim approach: “I can never forgive or forget what you’ve done to me.”

TRUE FORGIVENESS IS...

- A step-by-step inner and outer change in consciousness.
- Practiced in increments, depending on your conscious ability to forgive at the time.
- On-going, depending on the extent of trauma and the intent to resolve.
- Four-fold, engaging the body, mind, emotions, and spirit.
- Active—a form of energy that changes the person forgiving and sometimes, but not always, changes the situation or person being forgiven.
- Expanding, with an intent to forgive one person or situation in your life, which often leads to exploring deeper issues of forgiveness that include self, God, others.
- Prayerful, contemplative, meditative, reflective, and devotional.
- Healthy. Many physical and emotional and

This is a perilous journey indeed, this journey toward forgiveness. It requires a commitment to our own integrity and growth, a commitment and a courage that will change our lives. It is not easy. But it is possible.

mental problems can be greatly alleviated by the practice of forgiveness.

- Loving, both to the person or situation being forgiven and to the self.
- Enriching. Energies once bound up in hatred, fear, rage, or guilt can now be released and used for continual growth, happiness, and prosperity.
- Wise and creative. Forgiveness is always life-enhancing.

The seven steps to forgiveness are an orderly way to make sense of the forgiveness process. Sometimes understanding and awareness may leap forward before any action is taken. Sometimes change explodes in our lives before we have done more than offer a prayer for forgiveness. Sometimes release is hard-won, and action seems impossible. Sometimes our desire to forgive outruns our capacity to forgive.

But by following the seven steps to forgiveness, whenever and wherever we can, we become active participants in the forgiveness process. We become the creators of forgiveness in our own lives. We take charge. We offer up our unloving situations and ask for help and healing. We become a co-creator, with God, for healing and change in our lives. The seven steps to forgiveness are courageous steps. They move us from unresolved rage or bitterness or fear into a more peaceful country. When we practice the seven steps to forgiveness in any area of our lives, we move from divisiveness and war (with others and within ourselves) to resolution and reconciliation.

This is a perilous journey indeed, this journey toward forgiveness. It requires a commitment to our own integrity and growth, a commitment and a courage that will change our lives. It is not easy.

But it is possible. And wherever you are on this journey toward forgiveness, I will say to you that it is also a joyful journey.

No matter how painful your past, no matter how anguished your present circumstances, no matter your age, your gender, your career, your interests, your intelligence, your health, you still have the capacity and the courage to receive, during the very journey itself, a sweetness and a gentleness and a safety that does not require the outer world to notice or approve or keep score. This is an inward journey. This is a safe journey. This is ultimately, a journey of love.

A MEDITATION ON THE SEVEN STEPS TO FORGIVENESS

Your meditation or prayer time is ideally a private, solitary, daily, disciplined endeavor of both asking and listening. Early morning is best, although some people prefer a solitary time before bed as well. Some people use long walks in order to contemplate and solve their problems. Others seem able to turn within and focus in the midst of chaos, while others can work within a group in a prayerful, energetic, disciplined manner.

Yet, I have found for myself that nothing clears the mind, calms the emotions, balances the body temple, and strengthens the soul as much as a daily private endeavor of meditation and contemplation. Here are some guidelines for the Seven Steps to Forgiveness. You may, of course, find your own way to their truth and application.

Sit quietly and privately, with no interruptions or distractions or noise from the outside world. Close your door, turn off the telephone, ask not to be disturbed, do not engage in chatter. This is your time. Begin by taking several deep, slow breaths,

inhaling light, exhaling any frustrations or heaviness. Ideally, your hands are held loosely open in your lap, your feet are on the floor, your spine is straight, your eyes are closed, your head is erect. You may prefer to sit cross-legged on the floor or allow soft soothing music to play in the background, or to repeat a word or sacred phrase to yourself, something as simple as God or One or Om. But that is not necessary unless it leads you to a calmer focus as you turn within.

As you inhale light, envision in your mind that the light is pouring down from above the crown of your head and surrounding you with a soft and gentle clearness. Allow the light to flow down your body and into the earth as well, so that you are grounded in the light. Allow the light to surround your entire body with its peacefulness and safety. You are held within the light and all is well. Continue breathing deeply, as if you are both taking in and breathing out light from every cell of your body. Be still. Nothing moves but your breath.

Now bring into your mind the problem, situation, event, relationship, or emotion that you feel you need to forgive. Present it to yourself and to God as a scene, complete with details, as if you were telling a story. You are the detached observer. Here is the scene. Acknowledge the need for forgiveness in this situation.

Speak the words to yourself

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the capacity
and the
courage to
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journey itself, a
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or aloud, “I desire to forgive. I make a decision to forgive.” If emotion wells up within, do not hold it back. Simply breathe through the emotion and continue.

Ask for the truth of the situation in all its aspects. Ask for help and guidance. Ask how to proceed in order to heal the situation needing forgiveness.

Listen. Listen for some clue as to how best to proceed, some word of wisdom or comfort, some easing of the situation. You may receive actual words of comfort, such as, “Be at peace about this” or “Let it go.” You may receive definite instructions as how to unknot a difficult situation. You may simply receive a sense of comfort or ease concerning the situation. You may find emotion welling up from the depths of your being. You may need to cry. You may feel some physical discomfort. You will need to let go of your logical mind’s previous analysis of the situation. You will need to let go of how the answer may come or what the answer should be. You will certainly need to let go of any criticism, resentment, hatred, guilt, or fear that surrounds the situation needing forgiveness.

Beyond the emotion of the situation, there may be clear instructions that require more than a reaction from you, that require instead action from you to the person, situation, event, that needs forgiveness. Pledge to follow through on the help and guidance you have received in

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Book Reviews



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

The Lotus in the City: How to Combine Spiritual Practice with Everyday Life
David Fontana, Element Books, 1995
245 pages, Paperback.

Psychologist and University of Wales professor David Fontana offers a wide-ranging exploration of spiritual practice drawn from several religious traditions and informed by a solid grounding in contemporary Western psychology.

Using the Lotus as metaphor for the inner spiritual life, and the City as metaphor for our conditioned conscious life and activity in the modern world, Fontana asks "...how can we live a 'spiritual' life within the everyday world? How can we find the lotus flower of spirituality (ultimately of spiritual enlightenment) in the dust of the City?" The book explores answers Fontana finds in the world's great religions. Many examples and experiences are included from Fontana's own eclectic spiritual searchings (through Buddhism, Hindu disciplines, Christian mysticism, and more) examined through the best of humanistic and transpersonal psychology.

A unique and helpful feature of this book is a device that resembles the sidebar in magazine articles. Most chapters contain a bordered section that suggests practical exercises or a deeper experience of the theme of the chapter. For example, the chapter, "The Value of Meditation" gives a step by step process to practice the Buddhist koan exercise.

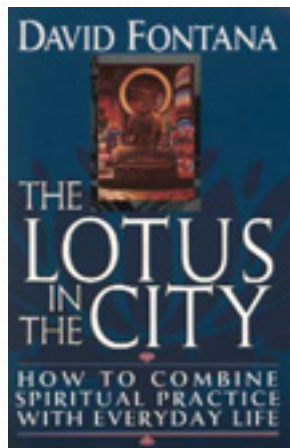
Topics examined include the intersection of personality and spirituality, and how the reader may

discover a spiritual path most congruent with his or her temperament. The value of myths and archetypes as a springboard to growth is suggested, and methods are offered to "decondition" the mind to recapture the openness and innocence of a child. Helpful exercises are offered to experience meditation and mindfulness, which lead to contemplation of the great existential question, "Who Am I?"

Later chapters give advice on pilgrimages and retreats, using dreams as a key to spiritual growth, and finding the path best suited to the individual seeker. Sound and practical advice is given to those who are looking for a path and/or a teacher, including how to recognize authentic teaching, and how to spot charlatans—those who create dependence in their followers, encouraging an attitude of exclusiveness and superiority within their group towards outsiders, more interested in receiving than giving, etc.

This book distills much ancient wisdom, and presents it through the prism of modern psychology. It will be a treasure for those on the early steps of "seeking the lotus" and a good resource and reminder for those who are further along. An excellent bibliography can lead the serious student deeper into the wisdom literature and psychology that Fontana introduces.

Fontana describes many paths that can enhance one's openness to spiritual truth. He also emphasizes the importance of bringing back what one learns to the City, and employing the creativity and insight one gains for the service of humanity. He



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concludes, “The Lotus we search for in the City is our own enlightened mind, our real nature, our contact with the ground of our being, our perception of the absolute, our spiritual rebirth, the discovery of our Buddha nature, of the Self, of the Christ spirit. People have given it many names but the thing (or the ‘no-thing’) to which they refer would seem to be the same. In the dust and confusion of the City, it may be harder to find the lotus than it is in the peace and solemnity of the monastery, but perhaps this very dust and confusion is a necessary part of the search. We may have wonderful insights on retreat or on pilgrimage, in the monastery or in the hermit’s cell, but all of these must be tested against the City before we know for sure whether they are real. Far too many golden dreams of enlightenment fade when we subject them to the realities of earning a living, of raising a family, of getting on with neighbors and colleagues, and friends. The City is our challenge, our teacher and our quality controller...”

***Walking a Sacred Path:
Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool***
Dr. Lauren Artress, Riverhead Books, 1995
201 pages, Paperback.

San Francisco’s Grace Cathedral has long been a place of openness to new and farther out spiritual exploration, and is once again on the leading edge, though this time through resurrecting and exploring a very ancient mystical tradition: the labyrinth.

The Rev. Dr. Lauren Artress is Canon for Special Ministries at Grace Cathedral, and the founder of Quest: Grace Cathedral Center for Spiritual Wholeness, the home of the Labyrinth Project.

A labyrinth is a complex geometric design that contains a path to be walked, a path that takes the pilgrim from the outer perimeter of the design, through an intricate series of turnings, to the center, and back out to the outside again. To walk the labyrinth is to experience what Artress describes as a walking meditation.

The labyrinth is a symbol found in many religious traditions and cultures. In addition to their

religious functions, labyrinths seem also to have been used as ancient cosmological maps, charting the heavens and the earth’s place in the universe. The oldest labyrinths yet found are more than 4,000 years old; they were in common use until about 350 years ago, when modern science began to supersede many of the older mystery practices.

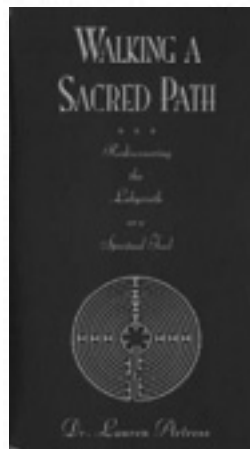
Artress writes, “...there are invisible patterns throughout all of nature and these patterns are imprinted within each species... This book is about the sacred pattern of the labyrinth, an ancient mystical tool that can help us prepare ourselves for the ‘transformation of human personality in progress’ and accomplish a ‘shift in consciousness’ as we seek spiritual maturity as a species.”

The book examines the history of the labyrinth, and speculates on how it may have been used in ancient times. Artress shares her own experience walking the labyrinth embedded in the floor of the medieval Chartres Cathedral in France, constructed some time between 1194 and 1220. She and colleagues took careful measurements of the Chartres labyrinth, and constructed a canvas model based on its dimensions; this labyrinth was used at Grace Cathedral and at workshops Artress conducted. In

1994, a labyrinth floor tapestry was laid in Grace Cathedral, and in 1995, a permanent labyrinth was constructed from terrazzo stone and installed in an outdoor garden. “Opening the labyrinth to the public was like opening the floodgates of a dam—there was no way of containing it; there was no going back. Things would never be the same again.”

One of the joys of this book is the beautiful, and at times numinous, writing. “The labyrinth provides the sacred space where the inner and outer worlds can commune, where the thinking mind and imaginative heart can flow

together. It can provide a space to listen to our inner voice of wisdom and come to grips with our role in humankind’s next evolutionary step. Troubled communities can come to the labyrinth to discover and synchronize their vision. It gives us a glimpse of other realms and other ways of knowing.” Enriching the text are the stories of dozens of



Reviews

people who have made the labyrinth pilgrimage and then written their experiences.

The book closes with a description of the Labyrinth Project and an invitation to a global New Year's Eve party: "...by then, you will be able to find a labyrinth in your area to join the cosmic community that celebrates all life on planet Earth. We will celebrate our pilgrimage to embrace a new vision of spiritual maturity—a maturity that values ethnic, cultural, and gender differences, supports creativity and the work of Spirit among all forms of life..."

I don't know how other readers will respond, but the book made me want to find a labyrinth to walk!

A God Who Looks Like Me: Discovering a Woman-Affirming Spirituality

Patricia Lynn Reilly, Ballantine Books, 1995
350 pages, Paperback.

Patricia Lynn Reilly, a Princeton Theological Seminary graduate with post-graduate certification in Women's Spirituality and Feminist Theology, has written a volume that will be comforting to many, and challenging to others. Women who carry deep childhood scars as a result of the behavior and attitudes of men who should have been trustworthy and weren't, coupled with religious instruction that celebrated all things masculine while shaming the feminine, will meet themselves in this book and find tools to move beyond early conditioning. Men who are in relationships with such women and are confused by their loved-ones' pain and challenge will themselves be challenged by this unveiling of the damage done to girls and women when God is pictured solely in masculine imagery, and religion is seen to be the province of the male.

Reilly writes, "Whether shouted at women in the religious institutions of their childhoods or whispered to them in the culture, the religious words and images of Father God, of judgment and punishment, of unworthiness and shame, of a sinful Eve and an obedient Mary, linger in women's memories. Whether recited weekly in Sabbath

School or experienced daily in the design of their parents' relationship, the religious myths of the exclusively male God, of Original Sin, and of the necessity of a male savior are deeply ingrained within women's lives. These remnants of our religious past pursue us into adulthood and interfere with the development of a self-defined spirituality..."

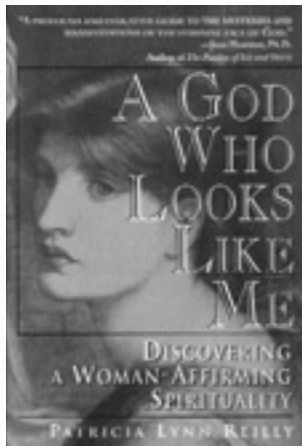
Through her own story and the stories of many women with whom she has worked, Reilly examines ancient scriptural depictions of women and men (primarily from the Judeo-Christian tradition) and examines how our culture's subtle insistence on masculine superiority undermines the confidence women need for the spiritual quest.

Many exercises are offered, including experiences in writing, the arts, and discussion with others. There are meditations and prayers, affirmations and assignments. The book is meant to be a workbook that is worked—leading from examination of one's ideas about God, man, and woman to the development of an authentic spirituality that is woman-affirming.

"The Ultimate Truth, Wisdom, and Power of the Universe is deeper, higher, wider, and richer than any name or image we use to refer to it. Every name and image has limitations and must be used loosely. Whatever or whoever God is cannot be confined within language." Having acknowledged that, Reilly goes on to

reframe God in feminine terms, and calls for including female as well as male imagery as we nurture our spirituality. In an exercise designed to increase a woman's appreciation for her body, Reilly writes, "...Begin at the top of your head. Acknowledge your head. Move it. Massage it. Love your hair. Touch it now. Stroke it... [similar acknowledgment and celebration of the body continues until finally] As you do, celebrate your connection to Woman God. She who has breasts, thighs, and a vagina like yours..."

This book may be a welcome invitation to re-explore spirituality for many women who have felt excluded from the quest by a God-as-male patriar-



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Calendar

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS, SEMINARS, AND EVENTS



JULY 22—26 RHYTHMS AND CYCLES OF THE COSMOS

Join astrologers and numerologists for a week to compare and learn from different approaches to these spiritual sciences. This event is an outgrowth of several separate events and promises to provide new insights and information about understanding the Self. Call or write: Sancta Sophia Seminary, Sparrow Hawk Village, 11 Summit Ridge Drive, Tahlequah, OK 74464. (800)386-7161 or (918)456-3421.

AUGUST 11—15 THE CIRCLE OF ECSTASY

Come together to co-create a theater of Communion from a safe place of love, trust, and honoring spirit. Your mornings with Gwynne Warner, a professional classical actress from London, England, will begin with devotional practice, dancing, writing, chanting, reading poetry, and theater exercises. Afternoons are free for resting, soaking/steaming, and yoga classes. The evenings will invoke on creating ceremonies. For details contact: Breitenbush Hot Springs, (503)854-3314.

AUGUST 14—20 BODY-CENTERED TRANSFORMATION

Taught by Kathlyn and Gay Hendricks. The quickest path to psychological and spiritual growth is through

deeply honoring of the body and all of its experiences. This is Phase II of training designed for those professionals and others who have completed Phase I and want to further explore the potential of organic processes to create harmony and fulfillment. Workshop location, Breckenridge, Colorado. (800)688-0772.

AUGUST 17—25 PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY

Join Richard Moss for this retreat in Germany. Richard integrates meditation, energy awareness, depth psychology, and body conscious work. For details and other retreats, workshops, or lectures contact: Richard Moss Seminars, PO Box 2147, Oakhurst, CA 93644, or call (800)647-0755.

AUGUST 18—26 TEMAGAMI VISION QUEST

A unique program combining the understandings of modern depth psychology with the ancient rituals of the sweat lodge, the Vision Quest and Shamanic teachings. Call (704)877-4809 for details.

AUGUST 21—25 TRANSFORMATIONAL AND HEALING CONFERENCE

Transformation is a result of conscious awareness, a potential or a level of psychological functioning which serves to change personal characteris-

tics or behaviors that are ineffective, limiting, or disturbing to the expression of health, well-being, and fulfillment. Conference participants will have opportunities to discover the many ways available in Santa Fe and surrounding areas to open to new levels of expression in mind, body, and spirit. Michael Harner, international authority on Shamanism, will give a workshop entitled, "The Shamanic Journey for Transformation and Healing." Call (505)471-5756 for more information.

AUGUST 23—24 EMOTIONAL SKILLS

Join Ron Kurtz for this residential retreat in the beautiful wilderness of Oregon. This workshop is for people who want to increase their own emotional intelligence and be helpful to others by providing emotional support. The work will be experimental with short talks, exercises, and demonstrations. For information call: (541)482-6776.

AUGUST 23—25 PSYCHOSYNTHESIS AND SHAMANISM: ALTERNATIVES TO THE ILLNESS MODEL OF MENTAL HEALTH

Psychosynthesis provides a conscious cooperation with the natural movement toward wholeness within each of us. It offers a transpersonal perspective, which includes soul explo-

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ENNEAGRAM
Hurley Dobson
Back

Calendar

ration, and help the individual find his or her essence through a process of deep exploration. This lively, experiential workshop will compare and contrast these two with each other and with the medical model of mental health. For further information contact: Synthesis International POB 480742, Kansas City, MO 64148. (816)941-9926 or Fax (816)941-0791.

AUGUST—OCTOBER
PROGRAM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTUITION AND PERSONAL GROWTH.

Join Karen Yuskaitis (a licensed massage therapist, nurse, yoga instructor and cranio-sacral therapist) in the Colorado wilderness. These retreats are scheduled for limited participants. Come and join the magic of Magic Mountain, the wildflowers, and splendor of nature's gentle wildlife. For more information write to: Karen Yuskaitis, Drake Post Office, Drake, Colorado, 80515.

AUGUST 29—SEPTEMBER 2
EMBODYING THE SPIRIT

This workshop is based on the philosophy and training methods of Butoh, a contemporary dance movement born out of the turmoil of post W.W.II Japan. Reduction of the physical body and ego self, leading to continual transformation, are fundamental to Butoh. To register for this workshop with Joan Laage call: (503)854-3314.

AUGUST 31—SEPTEMBER 7
INTUITION CRUISE

This specially formulated shore excursion throughout the Hawaiian Islands will include lunch meetings with Shakti Gawain and Alan Cohen. Conference activities will be on board the ship. Contact Dreamtime Cruises & Tours at (800)787-8785.

SEPTEMBER 5—8
BODY—CENTERED PSYCHOTHERAPY

Join Ron Kurtz for this residential retreat in the beautiful wilderness of Oregon. This workshop presents the

basic concepts and methods of body centered psychotherapy with special concentration on the Hakomi method. For a more complete description of this method, call for a free document. The Essentials of Hakomi Therapy, (541)482-6776.

SEPTEMBER 6—8
JOURNAL TO THE SELF

Journal exploration enriches the connection to the Self, aids in creating closure around old wounds, and opens pathways to greater self acceptance and understanding. This workshop is based on the book *Journal to the Self* by Kathleen Adams, M.A. Registration: (503)854-3314.

SEPTEMBER 8—13
REVITALIZE YOUR SPIRIT

Rekindle the simple joys of living. A small group retreat at the Option Institute will combine the privacy of an individual program with the benefits of learning as part of a group where you work with various tools and methods to create more happiness in your life. Contact the Option Institute at (413)229-2100.

SEPTEMBER 15—20
CRISIS OF THE EARTH
OPPORTUNITY OF THE SOUL

Come to the beautiful Black Forest village of Todtmoos, Germany where Healers and teachers from every corner of the planet will guide you through rituals which will teach you experientially about crisis and renewal and ancient practices. Collectively you will share visions of personal and planetary healing and support each other as you discover the potential opportunities for the new millennium. For details: Call (510)682-4959 or write: JMA, 2455 Marcia Drive, Pleasant Hill, California 94523

SEPTEMBER 15—29
ANDEAN SPIRITUALITY CONFERENCE
IN THE SACRED VALLEY OF PERU

Join others at a three day conference
PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 69

*Find your
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Magnificent North Carolina country setting. Five acres of pristine beauty. Earth energies call to your spirit and sing to your soul.

Facilities include lovely, spacious meeting room with fully equipped kitchen, five private sleeping rooms (each with bath), and small Spring house with dorm style accommodations. Call or write for details to plan your next meeting, workshop, or retreat.

Phone 704-683-2940

**GLADE
MOUNTAIN
RETREAT CENTER**
631 Willow Creek Rd.
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Calendar

ence on Andean Spirituality featuring presenters from across Latin America. Attending the conference is part of an Incan Medicine Wheel tour of Peru's Cuzco and Machu Picchu, led by Merican Bonita Luz, M.A., L.P.C. Contact John Buzenberg, Harmony Tours, (707)299-0396.

SEPTEMBER 20—22 THE TAO OF YOGA

Conrad Zevely will be your guide in this retreat. Pranayama (breath meditation), Asana (mindful yoga posture meditation), Meditation in Motion (an ancient form of loving kindness in motion), Guided Sitting, Reclining, and Visualizing. These practices give us the opportunity to experience our innate divinity and unity with life. Contact Breitenbush for details. (503)854-3314.

OCTOBER 4—6 ANIMALS AND SPIRITUALITY

Join in the beautiful red rock country of southern Utah at Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, the nation's largest no-kill sanctuary for domestic animals. Topics include Caring For The Souls of Animals, Telepathic Communication, Animals and Healing, Animals and the Sacred Traditions, and much more. Speakers include author Susan Chernak McElroy (Animals as Teachers and Healers), Sharon Callahan, animal communicator and creator of Anafloa Flower Essences for Animals, and others. Call Earth Spirit Adventures at (801)644-5457 for information.

OCTOBER 19—25 SWIM WITH DOLPHINS

Come and swim with the dolphins in the crystal blue waters of the Caribbean. To enjoy the dolphins, sunshine, great food, and wonderful people call Dolphin trips at (303)337-7974.

OCTOBER 9—13 CONSCIOUSNESS WITH PRACTICALITY

Work side-by-side with eight of the

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Innovative

Breitenbush
from spring
issue page 90

American Dance
1/12 pg

COMMENTARIES ON BHAGAVAD GEETA,
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1/12 pg from
page 88 spring

Assoc for

southwestern
pickup from
page 23 Spring

Calendar

world's most pioneering visionaries. This spiritual "classroom" is a feast of ideas and experiences. For details call (800)893-1000 or write to: Namaste Retreat Center, 29500 SW Grahams Ferry Road, Wilsonville, OR 97070.

OCTOBER 17 - 20
CROSSING BORDERS AND
EXPANDING VISIONS

Conference will focus on the following areas: professional identity, community service, managed care, wellness, preventive care programs, and education. For further information contact: American Dance Therapy Association, 2000 Century Plaza, Columbia, MD 21044. (410)997-4040.

OCTOBER 25 - 27
THE SCARED FOOL: CLOWNING AS AN
OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

Clowning, often seen as "fooling around," can also be a powerful tool for personal development. Join Phyllis L. Clay, Ph.D. in this playfully experiential workshop. Participants will learn and practice clowning skills while simultaneously gently nurturing a part of themselves which may have been hidden for a long time. Come explore a part of yourself which you often hide. Prepare to be surprised and delighted! Presented by Synthesis International, Inc., PO Box 480742, Kansas City, MO 64148. (816)941-9926 or Fax (816)941-0791.

NOVEMBER 4 - 10
ATTITUDINAL HEALING RETREAT

For women who are ready to explore their souls and with a desire to heal into life through love, forgiveness, and being fully present. Join Glenda Logan Harrison, biofeedback therapist. Daily activities include guided meditations, group process work on our blocks to happiness and self-appreciation, as well as free time to hike, swim, explore, or just relax. Call: (505)474-3710 or write Peaceful Choices, 2442 Cerillas Rd. #248, Santa Fe, NM 87505 for details.

NOVEMBER 15—24
EXPLORATION OF CONSCIOUS
RELATIONSHIPS

A ten-day foundational workshop in Sedona, Arizona. Activities will focus on meditation, body work, energy work and psychological understanding, with Richard Moss. For more information call (209)642-4090.

DECEMBER 2 - 8
JOURNEY TO CENTER,
JOURNEY TO SELF

Heal into life through love, forgiveness, and being fully present. For men and women who are ready to work through the blocks that keep us from our joy! Join Glenda Harrison who has been in private practice lecturing, leading workshops, and facilitating groups since 1980. Call: (505)474-3710 for details. •

Emissary

Transformation

Continued from page 15

happens when you've been married for forty-five years. We read each other's minds, as well. He tried to reassure me that Tom probably wasn't even at work today, but we both knew he had taken a substitute day last Saturday. The hairs on the back of my neck bristled.

A few minutes later, our phone rang. We both jumped. I grabbed the receiver first, almost knocking over the phone. It was a counselor from Killeen. She asked if someone was with me. I said, "Yes," then almost choking on the words, asked, "Is our son dead?"

There was silence at the other end for what seemed like an hour, but I'm sure was only a second or two.

"Yes," she said. "I'm sorry."

It was as if someone had struck a physical blow to my chest. I felt myself going limp. I heard my voice saying, "Nooooooooo." It came out like a low moan. I asked if his wife knew.

"She's here in my office now," the counselor said.

Ann came on the line. "Tom's dead," she sobbed. "He's dead."

I was aware of moisture. Tears poured down my cheeks. "Where are the girls?"

"They're in another room with a children's counselor." Her voice sounded far away.

Larry and I clasped hands while he took the phone from me.

"We're leaving now." His voice broke. "We'll be there as fast as we can. Hold on, Ann. We love you."

After he hung up we clung to each other. It felt like the end of the world.

Copperas Cove is a medium-sized town located eleven miles from Killeen and Fort Hood. Between long silences during our

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OTS Foundation

Rudra Press

Windstream

Transformation

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drive there, we talked about Tom. Memories mingled with tears—the day he was born, his first step, first day at school—when he was baptized. We recalled how hard he had worked to become an Eagle Scout, the happiness of his wedding day, his delight with the birth of each beautiful daughter—the excitement over purchasing their first home a few months ago.

Yet we were still in partial denial. In between remembrances we kept declaring, “This can’t be real! Please, let us wake from this nightmare! It’s a mistake! He’s only thirty-three.”

But it wasn’t a mistake.

As we drove up in front of Tom and Ann’s house, the dreadful realization continued to unfold. People were gathered outside on the lawn. Ann’s parents had just ar-

rived. They were crying. They loved Tom like a son. Jim and some of Ann’s friends surrounded her and the children who clung tearfully to their mother.

Grief carries its own anesthesia. It permitted us to make decisions, carry on responsibilities, comfort each other. There were many frustrations. Because of a law requiring an autopsy on victims of violent deaths, it was five days before Tom’s body was returned from the forensic laboratory in Dallas. We were unable to set a day for the funeral until then. All the funeral homes in the area were booked because of the tragedy.

We did learn from the police that Tom and his companion had been sitting at the front of the restaurant. The truck crashed through the window, stopping as it overturned their table.

Tom was the first to die. As he got up to try to help what appeared to be an accident, George Hennard burst from his truck and shot him three times in the chest. Tom died instantly.

It is impossible to describe fully our pain. Ann faces life without Tom and has the responsibility of raising their children without his love and support. The girls have lost their daddy.

As for us—we have suffered a previously unthinkable shock.

We are still fighting depression. Both Ann and I cry easily. Larry and our son’s grief is more private—locked inside. The girls miss their father so much and mention him often. They are being brave. It helps that they are involved in many activities. Their daddy always taught them to be strong.

We all feel shock, anger, and

American

emptiness. For me, some days are like a yo-yo. I'm smiling and getting on with life, then something reminds me of Tom, and the tears spill.

Unfortunately, most families will feel the weight of the world on their shoulders at one time or another. It is a frightening experience. Professional counseling is an option, but there are other methods. I've found it helps to live one day at a time. One seldom collapses under the burdens of a single day.

When all is going well, we tend to forget that life isn't always fair. I found out how important it is to have faith. It takes up where sight leaves off. I was afraid I had lost my beliefs for a short time until I finally realized that sorrow stemming from death is not a lack of faith. It is not unusual to feel confused during the grief process. Grief can shake the theological foundations of life. At first, when well-meaning people tossed out concepts such as "hope," "affirmation," and "faith," they tended to sound hollow to me. But as time passed, I found my faith returning even stronger than before. I sensed it deep within the quietness of my being. Nothing in the arsenal of medical or psychological help has equaled, for me, the power inherent in simple faith in the winter of my life. Someday I believe, I will see my son again.

This helps to put together the fractured pieces of my life and me to move forward.

When Tom died, it seemed impossible that someone still young, with so much more to give, would not be allowed to finish out his life. I never dreamed he wouldn't live to see his children graduate, marry and have children of their own. I

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 74

DreamWalker

1/12 pg

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Transformation

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had experienced grief before, but never like this.

When someone is sick and in pain, you have a chance to prepare for death by grieving ahead of time. It is a comfort if they have lived a long and full life. The unexpected loss of a child, even one who has reach adulthood, leaves one totally unprepared.

When I lost my parents, I felt I had lost my past. When Tom died, I felt I'd lost the future.

Although we may never completely accept his untimely death, we are trying to live without him. We know the pain will ease, eventually, but never completely disappear. It has left a wound on our souls. We are grateful for our memories, for the years we had our son with us. He still lives in our hearts and in our precious granddaughters.

There is still anger. I have read several books on grief as part of my own healing process. It is reassuring to know my reactions are typical. It's sometimes easy to forget that others have experienced these same traumas and survived. What we have gone through has left us more compassionate, more sensitive to others, more caring. We are more aware of the things we still have, even though we will always carry the emotional baggage from what has happened.

Few of us will be lucky enough to be untouched by tragedy. Life is so fragile. Once you've been emotionally hurt, you look at life differently. You feel the pain of others. A difficult experience helps redefine values. Heartaches, I have learned, bring people together. Many who have suffered loss contact us. We received over two-hundred cards and phone calls after

Tom died. I remind myself daily that Tom would want all of us to get on with our lives.

Life is at best a risk, an uncharted voyage, but it is a trip I want to continue, even though I am more aware now of the perilousness of the journey—even knowing that death doesn't always follow a predictable timetable. As I see it, there are two choices—to live in grief, or work through it and emerge with an acceptance of death and a commitment to living.

I'm grateful our son's life was in order and that he let his loved ones know how much he cared.

Only the body dies. We will never know the rippling effects of a smile or word of encouragement he gave to those with whom he came in contact.

I know I must forgive the injustice of George Hennard's actions. He was a tormented man who killed himself at the end. I was taught that the path to inner healing is forgiveness. Releasing the hurt is difficult, but by doing so, I will move toward tomorrow on my journey toward recovery. •

Reflections

Continued from page 21

gave her a copy, and we soon formed a deep friendship. So *LOTUS* also goes on a journey of its own.

Thank you, *LOTUS*, from the bottom of my heart. Enclosed is my renewal for three years. I couldn't do without my *LOTUS*.—*Paula Myers, El Cajon, California.*

MY OWN HERO

Your spring 1996 issue was my first exposure to your wonderful and affirming magazine. I truly enjoyed it from cover to cover.

Not only did I enjoy most of the articles, but have lived them experientially. I have learned the value of listening, learned the rewards of spiritual communication, have become my own hero, live the struggles of creativity. I also had the honor of helping my father die well. So you see, there was a lot to identify with.—*Jack Beaver, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.* •

Transformations

Continued from page 14

knowing who I am and why I am here.

I know that I am just one expression of the Manifestation Of Life. I know that I am related to the river, the tree, the mountain, the sky and all therein, and that I am here to experience and bear witness to this Manifestation. I know that love of all, tolerance of mistakes and acceptance of unknowing are the true qualities of the spirit, and my responsibility is to be the best representation of my spirituality that I can be. I know that wrongdoing is a frailty of being human and is not a sin against some God that is easily forgiven, but rather a violation of my own best knowing, and therefore a violation against myself.

Today, experiencing more peace than I have ever known, my needs are few, my friends are deep, true and invaluable, my learning a joy, and my transformation an ever evolving knowing. Today, silence, meditation, writing, listening, and reading have replaced greed, lust, manipulation, anger, and fear. Today, self-awareness lives in quiet where self-serving once yelled for attention, and all in the framework of an interactive life. •

Home as Being

Continued from page 49

creative being. It can be introverted or it can be outgoing. It has cycles, just as you and all of nature have cycles.

You can communicate with your home. Your home can be your ally or it can be an adversary. Your home cares about you and would like to befriend you. Your home doesn't just reflect you and your feelings and interests, but in a much deeper way, your home interfaces with you, and through that interconnection you both can grow. Your home evolves as you evolve. The regard in which you hold your home can rouse an ancient and replenishing spirit from the deep to fill your home; this power can heal you in the very center of your soul and heart.

Understanding these tenets creates a groundwork from which you can cleanse and enhance the energies in your home. •

Reviews

Continued from page 61

chal religious tradition. The longing to understand the nature of the Divine has made several wide pendulum swings over the millennia—from the earth goddess, fertility images of pre-monotheistic religions, to the patriarchal, masculine monotheistic understandings that have followed us into the 20th century, and now some are exploring again the feminine through the feminist stance. Beyond what is presented in this book, my hope is that as the wounds are healed and the feminine reclaimed, women and men may move beyond the limitations of gender imagery, beyond the enculturation-serving purposes of religion, and begin to explore the life of the Spirit—the realm of reality, and our essential Oneness—in which gender has no part. •

Earth Spirit

Zen Mountain

North Star

Miscellaneous

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Psychic

1" Susan Ford
from page 79 May-July 96

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Macro Link, Connect macrobiotic singles. PO Box 214-L, Mt. Shasta, CA 96067.

Single Booklovers — National. Getting people together since 1970. P.O. Box 117, Gradyville, PA, 19039-0117. (610)358-5049.

Forgiveness

Continued from page 58

your meditation. Within the meditation time itself, surrender and release all of your preconceived notions about the situation needing forgiveness.

If it is a long-standing situation, you may very well have to give the situation into the arms of God or the Angels. It may be a situation that requires more than your human mind, your human emotions can handle at one time. So you surrender and release the situation to the highest good of all concerned. You do this in the meditation time itself and you follow through during the days to come, by continuing to release the situation to the highest good of all concerned. Even while you take outer action, if so indicated, you continue to release the situation. You continue to ask, "Thy will, not mine, be done."

Within the meditation itself, if it seems wise to your inner guidance to continue with the seven steps, you look for and ask for an increased understanding of everything that led to the situation requiring forgiveness. You look for the spiritual lesson. What have I learned from this? How will my words and actions be different? How can I see things differently? How can my life be changed by these new insights? How can my life be healed?

You then move to acceptance. You accept that your prayer has been answered for the highest good of all concerned. You accept that the healing of the situation has begun and will continue. You accept the real truth of the situation. You welcome the energy of healing and change through the practice of the seven steps of for-

giveness. You allow the energy of healing and change to spill over into other areas of your life. You give thanks that this is now so. You are grateful. You continue with your day. You continue to forgive.

It is wise to slowly allow yourself to come back into the everyday world after your time of meditation with a phrase of completion such as "Amen" or "And so it is" or "Thy will be done" or "Thank you, God." Then quietly ease yourself back into the workaday world. It is important to have this quiet time for yourself as a regular practice.

You do not have to have a need for forgiveness in your life in order to use this meditation or any other. You do not need a problem in order to pray or meditate. A disciplined contemplative time for yourself is so valuable and enriching for health and discernment and spiritual development that once practiced it will be difficult for you to go back to your accustomed way of reacting to events in the world. Here is a pledge and a promise. If you will practice the seven steps to forgiveness for forty days, your life will be changed in depth. •

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Bodies are Spiritual

Continued from page 44

divine status, these people find themselves completely devoted to the maintenance and development of their bodies.

"Fitness fanatics" can be as devout as any other religious addict, committing time, money,

and energy to the pursuit of the perfect body. A person may try to feel acceptable by carefully sculpting his/her body into a specific form. An excessive focus on the body cuts a person off from a relaxed sense of acceptance and intimacy with others.

First, a body worshiper tends to work out alone and devote attention strictly to cultivating fitness. In his article, "The Body Politic: Can Fitness Buffs Become a Force for Social Change?," Robert Chi-anese points out that "concerted group action seems foreign to exercise. While camaraderie may spur one on to more repetitions or laps, rarely does it promote friendship or genuine teamwork."

Rather, excessive exercise requires that fitness seekers develop strict self-discipline. Again, Chi-anese asserts, "control becomes an end in itself. One must become a control freak to sustain a serious fitness regime... One engineers oneself into shape with a calculated narrowness and a dependence on expert authority."

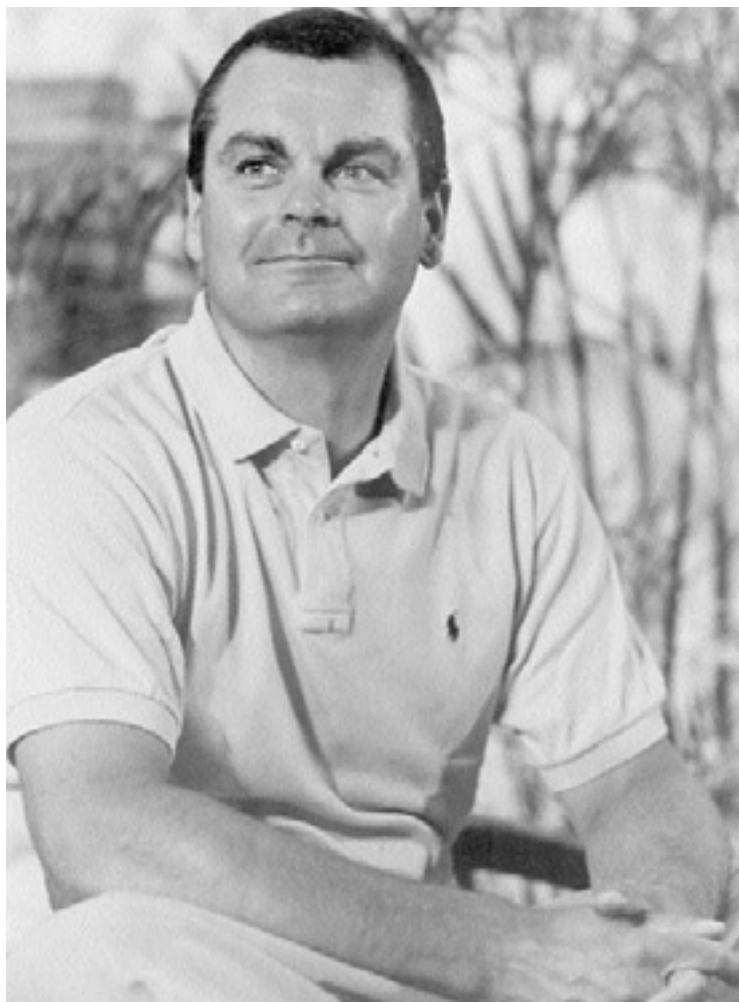
Cut off from intimacy with others and a realistic sense of the limitations of our bodies, a fitness-fanatic views the body as a machine. This body machine is to be crafted into a particular size and shape, and brought under control, rather than to be viewed as a source of information or guidance. The "living essence of the body, its indefinable substance, and its mysterious marriage to self and mind are lost." •

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Growing

S W A M I C H E T A N A N A N D A

The wish to grow, to evolve and mature into the finest person we can possibly be, is one of the fundamental driving forces behind any extraordinary life—certainly any spiritual life. We only get out of life what we’re willing to demand from ourselves, and if we want to attain our highest potential, growing will have to be our number one priority.

In its most intense and powerful form, this wish to grow does not include any personal agendas or desired outcomes. We understand that our minds are too limited to conceive of the greatness we might become or the ways in which that greatness might unfold in our lives. In fact, there is no finer wish because we are surrendering all of our desires and limitations into the hands of God.

The words themselves, “I wish to grow,” when deeply felt, plant a seed in us which has within it the power to completely transform our lives. While this transformation is wonderful, it is also a challenge. Real growth brings us face to face with uncertainty, testing our strength, our commitment, our flexibility, and our trust in Life itself. The alternative—staying the same—is unthinkable to a person who truly wants to know God.

American-Born Swami Chetanananda brings a rich contemporary Western perspective to his articulation of the practice of meditation and spiritual work. From “The Open Moment” by Swami Chetanananda. Copyright by Rudra Press, PO Box 13390, Portland, Oregon, 97213. Printed with permission. For more information on this book see the resource section.