



AUGUST 1997

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AUGUST 1997



*Our progress on this journey can be
measured only by the intensity of our love,
the living flame that illumines all life.
Begin to love now, don't wait—let there
be no regrets.—Muhammad Hafiz*

COVER: IMAGE BANK/ROMILLY LOCKYER
INSIDE COVER: IMAGE BANK/KAZ MORI
ABOVE: IMAGE BANK/INNER LIGHT

From the Publisher



*The winds of grace are
always blowing, but you
have to raise the sail.*

—Sri Rama Krishna

To be awakened is both a gift and the result of effort. Considering that divinity is always everywhere present, we are all Godlings, but to

realize our Godliness requires our participation.

Moments of awakening are a gift from providence. They stir our spiritual yearning for deeper connection to life. Through these experiences we receive glimpses of who we really are and why we are here. While they may trigger a deeper yearning for something more, they do not produce lasting transformation. Mystical experiences provide an opening for profound change. A calling from our deeper nature, they engage us in the purifying process, but must be joined by our willingness and involvement.

Deep transformation requires both practice and divine grace. Transformational practice includes processes, such as breathwork, fasting, and meditation, that take us into the core of our being. We engage these practices to increase the likelihood that we will catch the winds of grace, and we practice simply for the joy of practice. Anyone committed to ongoing spiritual practice knows that their sailing becomes more wondrous, even in rough seas.

One of the benefits of any self-observing practice is that we become more self aware. Being aware helps us to merge with our essence nature. This can be likened to the ability to hear the dialect or accent of our speech. By hearing our accent, we can change it if we so desire. The same is true for habits, thoughts, and behaviors. Self-observation is a key to the door of transformation. By bringing our ways of being into consciousness, observation lets us discover whether our thinking and being reflects who we truly are.

Whatever our path, it takes solid commitment, love, and awareness to develop lasting change. *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* is dedicated to supporting you along your way.

Rick NurrieStearns
Publisher

Personal Transformation

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SUSAN SLOTT

From the Editor

You live that you may learn to love. You love that you may learn to live.

—Mikhail Naimy



A commitment to transformation is a commitment to love. The fundamental message of *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* is to surrender ourselves to love. Each issue urges us to open our hearts to the fullness of life. For me, the contents and my relationship with the business of the magazine are both teachers.

This spring was a season of growth for the business side of the magazine. When some organizational changes unfolded, I felt unhappy and fearful. My heart tightened, and I resisted dealing with what was happening. For a short while, I did not love what was occurring with the business, nor did I like my internal responses.

About the same time, I read Andrew Cohen's article "Surrender to Life." He advises us that when we surrender, we give up needing to know what is going to happen. We stop insisting upon knowing what the future will bring. Letting go of the need to know, we discover that things often work out in marvelous and surprising ways. When we no longer seek security from the future, life opens to us. We discover that our experience of life is complete. Our preoccupation with the future dissolves because the experience of life becomes rich, full, and mysterious.

Contemplating his message, I realized that I was not surrendering to life—accepting and loving life as it was. Surrender means loving exactly what is. It involves taking in the present moment and being fascinated with everything that is.

Shortly after, while preparing to interview Gay and Kathlyn Hendricks, I read their premise that relationship is a primary teacher about ourselves, others, and the mysteries of the universe. In order

to fully benefit from relationship as a teacher, they propose making soul commitments about how we engage with life. These commitments affirm our intention to open our hearts to life. It is by opening our hearts that we fully manifest our essence, feel reverently connected with life, and access our creative potential.

We make these commitments with our body, heart, and soul, so that we may embody and live in them. These are commitments to process: they pertain to how we journey rather than to our destination. They do not focus on outcomes, which are in the future and uncertain. Simply stated, they teach us to put our energy on what we can control in the present. For example, we can be truthful, appreciative, open to learning, expressive, focused, and responsible.

Abiding by these commitments aligns us with who we truly are as loving, creative beings. We can only be in and live from soul commitments when we surrender to the mystery that life is.

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION as an organization is stronger than before, and I am grateful that *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* is in my life. May we all love relationship as our teacher and surrender into life's wonder by living out of soul commitments.

Welcome to *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*.

Mary NurrieStearns

Mary NurrieStearns
Editor

Personal Transformation Contributors

ANDREW COHEN is a spiritual teacher and author of seven books on the potential of total liberation. His teachings and books convey his discovery that spiritual liberation's true significance is its potential to completely transform not only the individual, but the entire way that human beings, as a race, live together. He lives in Lenox, Massachusetts.



SHAKTI GAWAIN is the author of *Creative Visualization*, *Living in the Light*, and *The Path of Transformation*. Shakti leads workshops internationally, facilitating thousands of people in learning to trust and act on their own inner truth, thus releasing and developing their creativity in every aspect of their lives. Shakti and her husband Jim Burns make their home in Mill Valley, California.



CHARLOTTE SOPHIA KASL is a psychologist, healer, Quaker, and social justice activist who is at the forefront of the new empowerment movement within the recovery field. The author of *Women, Sex and Addiction*; *Many Roads*; *One Journey: Moving Beyond the 12 Steps*; and *Finding Joy*, she brings a holistic approach to all her work. She lectures and leads workshops in the United States and abroad and lives near Missoula, Montana, where she has a therapy practice.



JONATHAN KRAMER is a clinical psychologist practicing in La Jolla, California. He has taught spiritually-based transpersonal psychology through the University of California. **DIANE DUNAWAY KRAMER** is a professional writer, has taught at seven colleges and universities over the last fifteen years and is a well-known public speaker. Both are co-authors of *Why Men Don't Get Enough Sex*, and *Women Don't Get Enough Love*.



KATHLYN AND GAY HENDRICKS are pioneers in the field of body-centered psychotherapy, nationally known teachers and seminar leaders, and co-authors of *Conscious Loving* and *At the Speed of Life*. They have been partners in life and work for nearly twenty years, share two adult children and a grandchild, and currently live in Santa Barbara, California.



NANCY NAPIER is a marriage and family therapist in private practice in New York City. She is the author of *Getting Through the Day*, and *Re-creating Your Self*. In addition, she leads workshops on spiritual and psychological wholeness.



THICH NHAT HANH is a poet, Zen Master, and peacemaker. He served as chair of the Buddhist Peace Delegation to the Paris Peace Talks during the Vietnam War, and was nominated by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., for the Nobel Peace Prize. He is the author of thirty books including *Living Buddha*, *Living Christ*, *Being Peace*, and *Peace Is Every Step*. He lives in Plum Village, a practice center in southwestern France.



JOHN ROBBINS, founder of EarthSave International, is a spokesperson and activist for health, preservation of the environment, and a more compassionate world. He is the author of the best-selling books, *Diet for a New America* and *Reclaiming Our Health*. John lives with his family in Santa Cruz, California. Ann Mortifee is one of Canada's most distinguished creative and performing artists.



Reflections



From Our Readers

TRANSFORMATIONAL GROUP PROJECT

Editor's Note: We thank all who have written in support of launching of the *TRANSFORMATIONAL GROUP PROJECT*. We were literally flooded with responses and are just now catching up with the return correspondence. We are sharing a couple of the letters we received, so that other readers may be inspired to launch or participate in *TRANSFORMATIONAL GROUPS* in their area.

VERY INTERESTED

I am writing to express my interest and excitement concerning the *TRANSFORMATIONAL STUDY GROUP PROJECT*. I am very interested in being part of such a group, possibly facilitating one.

Recently I bought a copy of *The Life We Are Given* by George Leonard and Michael Murphy. I enjoyed the book immensely, having started my own independent transformation practice. It's been a big help to me, helping me slow down and center myself. The only part of my practice missing is being in a group interested in the transforming journey.

I am very willing and eager to share with others. I have facilitated groups before, since my profession is teaching. Please let me know how I can participate in this pro-

ject.—*Jerry DeRoche, Appleton, Wisconsin.*

SPIRITUAL AWAKENING GROUPS

I have just read about your idea of starting up grassroots groups dedicated to spiritual awakening. Having just moved from Los Angeles to Poughkeepsie, NY, and finding myself for the last year in an intense process of inner searching and upheaval, I am eager to connect with other like-minded people. Any information you can give me about possible contacts in my community, or more information in general, would be greatly appreciated. I am very grateful for the existence of this new study group project.—*Bonnie Cashen, Poughkeepsie, New York.*

ENLIGHTENED

What a marvelous publication you have! I discovered it at Borders Book Store here in Memphis and read it cover to cover. I bought it to bring solace to a friend and found I couldn't put it down. Thank you for bringing us the very best in enlightened writings.—*Joy Thierman, Cordova, Tennessee.*

HONORING YOUR BELLY

I was very much inspired by Ms. Lisa Sarashohn's article, "My Soul's

Talk Power
V6N4p30

Peaceful
Choices/new
Ignite your
soul

To love and be Loved
Bantam/new

True Hunger” (June 97 issue). I am currently trying to release my eating disorder “habit,” and I would like to know more about “Honoring Your Belly” practices, which she mentions in her article. I’d appreciate it if you are kind enough to send me more information regarding this practice.—*Masako Endoh, Charlotte, North Carolina.*

S I M I L A R P R O B L E M S

I am interested in learning more details about Lisa’s eighteen hara strengthening exercises and techniques mentioned in her article. It is my hope that these meditations might be of use to my teenage daughter who is having similar problems.—*Larry Kimsey, El Paso, Texas.*

Editor’s Note: Lisa Sarasohn has developed an audiotape called “Honoring Your Belly.” Her address is PO Box 1783, Asheville, North Carolina, 28802. Next year, she plans the release of a book and video.

G R A T E F U L

I am a subscriber to your fine magazine and have been for some time. I am very grateful that you provide such an enlightening work. I am requesting information about George Jaidar. I am working with his book, *The Soul: An Owner’s Manual*, and want to know if he has published other works and any talks he may give, etc.—*Allen Nicholls, Front Royal, Virginia.*

Editor’s Note: George Jaidar’s lives in Ojai, California, his telephone number is (805)646-1091.

E N J O Y I N G I T

This is my first year subscribing to PT, and I am enjoying it very much. I wish you continued success with this very important service you are providing.—*James Jones, New Haven, Michigan.*

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 14

Hugger Mugger/v6n4p12

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At *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*, we have two important goals: to offer you the most inspiring personal and spiritual growth magazine we can, and to protect the trust you’ve placed in us.

Occasionally we offer you various new services and products through the mail.

Some come directly from *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* and some come from companies who we believe have products/services that you might be interested in.

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Reflections

Continued from page 12

S H E ' S B E A U T I F U L

First of all, let me compliment you on such a fine publication you have. What a joy it has been to read and to pass along to my patients. This area of the South, known as the "Bible Belt," is not noted for such a vast array of enlightening materials condensed in only 80 pages or so of your magazine. It is refreshing to see.

Although I thoroughly enjoyed the articles presented in Issue 27 (June 1997) especially the one on forgiveness, I must admit that the lady on the cover was a great joy also. I found her quite beautiful. For nearly 4 years, I was a resident of your fair city (Austin) while studying at the *Texas Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine* and noticed that the ladies of this city were most beautiful. For some reason, at the end of a long 14 or 16 hour day, all I have to do is take one look at the cover, and the stress is instantly gone.—*John H. Cary, LaGrange, Georgia.*

Editor's Note: In the rush to meet our printing deadline for the June 1997 issue, we made some page numbering mistakes.

In the Book Reviews, the column of text that starts on page 67 should be before the text on page 66. Also, the article on page 35, "The Second Half of Life" is continued on page 79. Please accept our apologies for any confusion caused by these mistakes. •

LETTERS —

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The Pursuit of Happiness

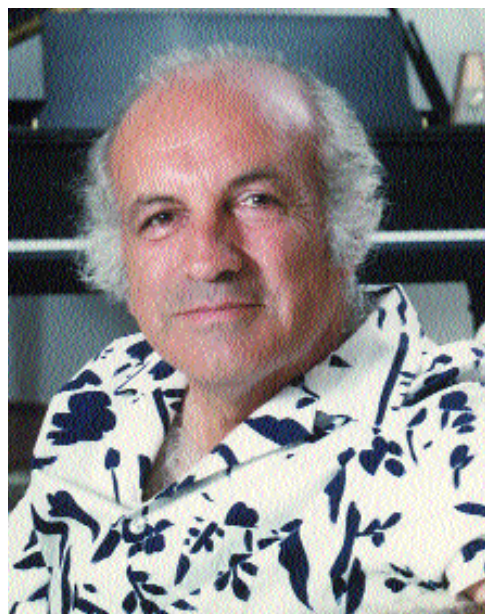
GEORGE JAIDAR

Not only is this phrase memorialized in our *Declaration of Independence*, it has also become a kind of modern mantra for our civilization. In fact, if our society had a motto, it would be *the pursuit of happiness*. On the surface, as a goal or purpose, hardly anyone but a misanthrope would disagree or reject it.

Now, I am not a misanthrope, but I do feel that, like so much that we accept uncritically in our enculturation, the pursuit of happiness leads us too often to dead ends and considerable superficiality in our lives.

It would be worth looking at the concept of happiness more critically. First of all, happiness requires that something *happens* to us. This places the source of what gives us happiness as *external* to us. Early on, this tends to restrict the source to *things* primarily. Only later in our development, if we do grow, do we learn to include the intangibles of relationships, rather than people as objects for our gratification only, as part of the externals that can bring happiness.

Nevertheless, by the time we reach adulthood, our enculturation has already programmed us not only to pursue happiness, but to expect it to happen primarily from those external sources. In fact, the *pursuit* itself comes to be a great source of what we consider happiness, and since it is to be pursued, that keeps it in the category of the external.



Further, if you stop to reflect on it, you realize that whatever experiences of happiness we have had have been quite short-lived, transitory, and often disappointing in the long run. The reason for this is that happiness is a counterfeit. It and the things and events that are supposed to bring it are part of a grand deception. We are enculturated to seek distractions and diversions from any promptings of our inner life.

A contemporary form of this pursuit is what literary critic, Barbara Neighbors Deal, calls “feel-good spirituality.” Anything or any experience labeled “spiritual” that gives us that feel-good derivative of happiness is sought for and accepted uncritically, especially if it can be had without any of the requisite inner work. Such ersatz spirituality almost invariably promises what most people are suckers for, a short-cut with minimum effort. Don’t forget that the American Dream has degenerated to winning the lottery with a one dollar ticket!

The inner work is not a pursuit, because there is no objective as there can be in the outer world of what I call our Life of Survival. While we continue that life, we must become “amphibious” in Aldous Huxley’s sense, by simultaneously *exploring* our Life of the Spirit, or what I call the Life of Fullness, which beckons to us through our inborn *yearning*.

We have learned to turn a deaf ear to the *still, small*

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 71

Personal Transformation

It is our dream to contribute to the creation of a loving, diverse, respectful society by being a powerful resource and catalyst for personal transformation through publishing the most transformative material available. Our personal mission is to promote the deepest kind of personal and spiritual transformation, healing the world one person at a time, beginning with ourselves.

Deeply felt transformation often requires an inward journey of heroic proportions. The journey requires that we free body, mind, and heart from the past, connect with our deepest essence, and fill our consciousness with truth, love, and wisdom. *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* is dedicated to supporting your inner journey.

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The *FRIENDS FUND* was established last year to furnish subscriptions to *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* for those unable to pay for it.

If you would like to contribute to this fund, send your donations to *PT FRIENDS FUND*, 4032 S. Lamar Blvd. #500-137, Austin, TX 78704-7900.

DISTRIBUTION

If you read letters from our readers, you may have noticed that in certain parts of the country it is difficult to find *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* in bookstores. We receive many telephone calls and letters from people saying they cannot find our magazine on the newsstand.

This is a frustration for us and other small, excellent publications. The number of distributors is shrinking. Last year, the size shrank by nearly one-half, from 186 to 98, according to "*Circulation Management*," an industry trade journal. Wholesalers are consolidating and the top 10 now represent 74 percent of the business.

Distributors who handle *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* are affected by overcrowding at the newsstand and fierce competition. Fortunately, our distribution has increased every year. However, we want *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* to be more accessible to our readers. You can receive *PT* at home by taking advantage of our discounted subscription rates and ordering directly from us.

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WHAT PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION IS ABOUT

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION magazine started publication in 1991 as *LOTUS* journal. We changed our name to *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* in 1996, to be more descriptive of our mission, which is:

We are committed to supporting profound personal and spiritual transformation. Deeply embodied transformation is an inward journey of heroic proportions. We are dedicated to supporting this inner journey by providing the most transformative writings in a beautiful and inspiring way. Our greatest aspiration is that we all become the remarkable women and men we are meant to be.

TRANSFORMATION STUDY GROUP PROJECT

\$250,000.00

FUNDING GOAL

We need donors, sponsors, and grants to support the work of launching the *TRANSFORMATION STUDY GROUP PROJECT*: writing and publishing a Group Handbook, a training video, and booklets about particular aspects of transformational study groups; staff and office overhead; development of web site; and training for group leadership. We have incorporated this project as a non-profit organization; this means all your donations are fully tax-deductible.

We are excited here at *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* at the promise and power of this *TRANSFORMATIONAL STUDY GROUP PROJECT*. If you are too, and wish to participate in any way, let us know. If you are interested in hosting a transformation group in your area or donating financial support to develop and implement this project, please contact us.

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Accelerate Your Transformation

M E L I S S A W E S T

Imagine meeting with a small group of others who are also committed to personal and spiritual awakening... Imagine being deeply listened to as you share the joys and challenges of your personal transformation with others, and learning from their stories as well... Imagine the excitement of sharing new ideas with your “journeying partners” as you read and discuss articles and books on different aspects of the transformational journey.

David Bohm, physicist and author of *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, likens the power of a group to a laser. Ordinary—or “incoherent”—light scatters, he writes in “On Dialogue,” since the separate light waves are not in phase with each other; there is no power. A laser beam, however, “produces a very intense beam which is coherent. The light waves build up strength because they are all going in the same direction, and the beam can do all sorts of things that ordinary light cannot.”

Our culture is in the midst of a “laser-beam,” small-group revolution. People are meeting in homes and churches across the nation to share support and healing, inspire grassroots political and cultural change, and exchange exciting new ideas. We at *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*, through the *TRANSFORMATIONAL STUDY GROUPS PROJECT*, will offer guidance for setting up small groups specifically dedicated to personal transformation.

HOW WILL THESE GROUPS WORK?

THEY WILL ENABLE YOU TO:

- Meet others who are also interested in personal transformation. We believe that we were not meant to



do this work alone. Even though each of our journeys is unique, there is great power in sharing those journeys, finding inspiration in others’ stories, and supporting each other through the ups and downs of the path.

- Learn how the process of transformation works. Again, even though each of our journeys is unique, there are general road maps for the journey itself. Through reading and discussion of selected articles from *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* magazine, or other recommended topics and materials, you will gain a wider understanding of the gifts and challenges of the transformational journey.

- Experience how the power of transformational work increases within the support of a caring community. In stage two of this project, you will be able to work experientially in these same groups, with the guidance of trained leaders, exploring creative ways to deepen your personal and spiritual awakening.

We at *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* believe this project is vitally important now, not just for the individuals participating, but for the cultural healing and renewal our country so desperately needs.

As participants in these groups become more “heartful and soulful,” they will be empowered to effect change at a grassroots level, from being more loving family members or friends, to serving in new ways that create cultural, political, or ecological change. When we relate to the world compassionately, rather than from fear or anger, we have more to give, and are less vulnerable to burnout and cynicism. “Never doubt,” writes Margaret Mead, “that a small group of thoughtful, concerned citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever does.”

There is something magical about any intense, tightly knit group of people working together and playing together... A transformative community is a nearly indispensable launching pad for transformation. Such a community can create the context and the confidence for a transforming journey.—George Leonard and Michael Murphy

READERS—Thank you for your enthusiastic response to our *TRANSFORMATIONAL STUDY GROUPS PROJECT*! Here's an update of the project.

You can participate in two levels of groups over time. The first level will be a discussion group. By enrolling in this project, groups can be listed our *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION GROUP DIRECTORY*. First level groups may use whatever material they choose, giving them freedom to explore various aspects of personal transformation that interest them. We will send each group a group guide, along with a list of resources of books, music, and tapes.

The second-level groups will have more focus and direction. Each member will join the *TRANSFORMATION STUDY GROUP*, and in return receive a workbook on transformational practices, and a bimonthly newsletter featuring the latest information and ideas on transformational practices, both individual and group. We will be developing new guidebooks written by experts for specific group transformational practices, and these will become available to members as soon as they are published. A video is also being developed, giving viewers a chance to see different group exercises in practice.

Members of these groups will have the opportunity to link up with a larger network of participants in the project through our web site weekly chat line, an exciting opportunity to share with others around the world and learn from leaders in the personal transformation field.

ALSO BEING DEVELOPED

- **REGIONAL WORKSHOPS**—giving participants a chance to network with others in their area.
- **A YEARLY CONFERENCE**—featuring leaders and pioneers in the field of personal transformation
- **GROUP TRAVEL**—imagine traveling with fellow “transformational travelers” to sacred sites around the world!

Please join us! We're really excited about this opportunity to create local circles of support for the transformational journey, and also the chance for all of us to link up nationally and internationally. The time has come for such a project, and we'd love to have you along.

Melissa West, M.S., is a psychotherapist, teacher, and author. She co-founded and co-directs LifeQuest, a nonprofit organization dedicated to contemporary rites of passage. She gives workshops and speaks nationally on transformation, ritual, and rites of passage. She lives in Seattle, Washington.

If the possibilities of personal and cultural transformation, through participation in small study groups, excites you, we'd love to have you on board! These are ways we need your help:

- Let us know if you're interested in organizing, or participating in, such a group in your community.
- Tell us if you have experience and training in facilitating group experiential work. This will be especially needed in the second part of the project.
- Send donations! We particularly need donors, sponsors, and grants to support the work of getting the *TRANSFORMATION STUDY GROUP PROJECT* off the ground: writing and publishing a Group Handbook, a training video, and booklets about particular aspects of transformational study groups; staff and office overhead; and training for group leadership. We have incorporated this project as a non-profit organization; this means all your donations are fully tax-deductible.

We are excited here at *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* at the promise and power of this *TRANSFORMATIONAL STUDY GROUP PROJECT*. If you are too, and wish to participate in any way, let us know. If you are interested in hosting a transformation group in your area, or donating financial support to develop and implement this project, please contact us. Write: *TRANSFORMATION STUDY GROUPS*, 4032 South Lamar Blvd. #500-137, Austin, Texas 78704-7900. You may also E-mail us at transformation@netsites.net We look forward to hearing from you!•

We Grow to the Degree That We Want to Grow

SWAMI CHETANANANDA

Swami Chetanananda's philosophical reflections grow out of years of study, teaching, practice, and experience. Chetanananda is abbot of the Nityananda Institute, a spiritual community based in Portland, Oregon. He is the author of "The Breath of God," "The Logic of Love," "Songs from the Center of the Well," "Dynamic Stillness," and "Choose to be Happy." For more information about Swami Chetanananda or his books, call Rudra Press at (800)876-7798.

We all appear in this world as different patterns of energy, arising from a larger energy field. Another way to put it would be to say that we are each one vibration of energy among many vibrations of that same energy. Each of these vibrations, operating at different frequencies, gives the impression of having a separate existence and a distinct appearance. This leads us to take the apparent differences seriously, and to imagine that everything truly is distinct and separate. The energy patterns that emerge from within us—that we are—along with the ones that arise around us from our participation in the larger energy field not only give rise to this appearance of separateness in the first place, but also tend to reinforce it. When we encounter other vibrations of the energy, then we think that we're experiencing friction



with the people and situations in our lives—we don't usually think of it as energy meeting itself in a different form. Instead, we're convinced that real limits and real boundaries not only exist, but that they need protecting.

So, the issue of limitation arises. Then we get really fancy, and come up with the notion that because we have these limits, we also have problems. We struggle with these problems. We think about them, analyze them, and psychoanalyze them. Yet, oddly enough, the more we struggle with the things about our existence and appearance that differ from those of others (or from what we imagine those of others to be), the more powerful these differences, distinctions, and limits seem to become.

Because of the way we nurture, nourish, cultivate, reinforce, and develop these limits, we suffer more and more. And why not? They're what we've been cultivating, so why shouldn't they become stronger? Clearly, this doesn't work. Clearly, the whole thrust to analyze and intellectualize the unique aspects of the appearance-part of what we are is not in any way going to satisfy the long-term need that we have to get beyond these appearances.

The solution is to begin to pull our attention away from all the analysis and intellectualization of these distinctions—to begin to withdraw our attention into the very source of this appearance and to cultivate our awareness of its essence. Instead of intellectualizing about this source or this essence, we cultivate our understanding and our living contact with it, which gives rise to an expansion within that field of energy and vitality. This we call growth.

It is growing that lifts us up out of the realm of appearance and limitation. It takes our attention and our energy away from these limits, and away from these boundaries. We literally pull energy away from the boundaries and put it in motion as a kind of evolutionary force. This slowly but surely dissolves the limits, as we transcend our understanding of the apparition that we, and all things, are. Our understanding of the essential nature of our life begins to expand and unfold. We begin to live in the powerful certainty of the nature of the inner Self, which is, itself, completely uncertain. So, I am suggesting to you that growing is really the answer to the problem of pain, suffering, and disappointment.

The point I want to make is that we grow to the degree we want to grow. That's simple enough. But wanting to grow is not just something that can waft casually through our minds once a week, or once a day when we come to meditation. It must become an ongoing, living reality. In the Bible, it says, "Ask and you shall receive." I don't think they were joking. It is the depth from which we want this growth that makes it begin to take place. Think of a tree, or of any living event that emerges from within itself. It is the degree to which it obeys its inner commitment to unfold a certain pattern that enables it to overcome all of the resistance and the obstacles in the environment, and to demonstrate itself as a vast and vital manifestation of the energy of Life. In the same way, the extent to which we are connected with that living, inner force is the extent to which we really change and grow spiritually.

We grow to the degree that we mobilize resources that we may not even know we have at the moment. But because we deeply want to grow, because we have this deep passion for knowing God, because we have this deep love of life and love for God, then that love itself becomes a living event within us. It demonstrates every kind of potential to overcome obstacles, to overcome barriers, to move mountains. It certainly allows us to discover within ourselves vast, unrecognized treasures. The stories of many great saints in India as well as the whole of the bhakti tradition of great

Thinking about problems doesn't solve them. Getting above them, ninety-nine percent of the time, allows them simply to evaporate—or at least, for us to dispatch them with the simplest of effort. What remains in front of us may be only a small amount of what we had thought of as our problems; it also may represent the largest amount of work we have to do. Real work. But at least we have burned off the fog, and gotten rid of all the illusory programs that are causing us to chase our tails. Then we can begin to deal in a simple and direct way with the real work that we have to do in this life, in order to give expression to the potential that exists within us for our own fulfillment.

Eupsychia/new/
Healing into whileness

Innovative Learning Group
Wings/new

devotion, are based on this understanding of the deep, deep desire to know God—a desire we have to cultivate. In cultivating it, countless extraordinary capabilities organize themselves within us and manifest for the purpose of our liberation and fulfillment.

This deep desire should, in a way, make a person into something of a fanatic. Not, however, a closed-minded fanatic. Not a fanatic full of judgments about others. This desire should make us fanatics only in the sense that we dedicate ourselves totally to attaining the deepest understanding possible to a human being, and to being relaxed and open in the process of doing so. At times, we will be almost on fire with the awareness of our desire for growth and the intensity of this process of loving God and being loved by God. In a way, it burns and consumes us. That's a good thing. Then, there are other times when we are deeply relaxed and at peace within ourselves.

In time, there emerges a kind of dynamic tension between the two, which, at first, happens in cycles. For a while, we are very much on fire; then, for a while, we are very much not. As we grow, the two cycles gradually converge and become one, so that we are completely relaxed, at peace, and flowing within ourselves within the world. At the same time, we are completely on fire with the awareness of the Divine, and completely on fire with the participation in love, which is the essence of Life Itself.

What does this have to do with problems? Thinking about problems doesn't solve them. Getting above them, ninety-nine percent of the time, allows them simply to evaporate—or at least, for us to dis-

patch them with the simplest of effort. What remains in front of us may be only a small amount of what we had thought of as our problems; it also may represent the largest amount of work we have to do. Real work. But at least we have burned off the fog, and gotten rid of all the illusory programs that are causing us to chase our tails. Then we can begin to deal in a simple and direct way with the real work that we have to do in this life, in order to give expression to the potential that exists within us for our own fulfillment.

I want to reinforce that I am not saying we should simply ignore the various difficulties we encounter in our environment. I'm not saying that we should ignore anything. I don't want to be misunderstood on this point. I am saying that most of the things we think are problems are not. Most of the difficulties we have to face in our lives are structural, are of no significance whatsoever, and evaporate when we come to deal with them.

What I am saying specifically is that before attempting to solve any problem or relate to any difficulty, first, we take it inside. We get in touch with the energy from our own inner Self, and establish ourselves in our own inner work. Doing this allows us to rise a little bit above the particular situation, to a different level within ourselves. As we make this effort, we can actually feel this change in the vibration happening within us. Then, our understanding of what we are relating to will totally change. We won't give it too much importance, and we won't be out of balance with it. Then, it is from a different level that we encounter any issue and begin to relate to it. We can start dealing with anything

How Shall we live
Bantam/v6n4p25

Hampton Roads/new
Under the Inquisition

The Truth Shall Set You Free

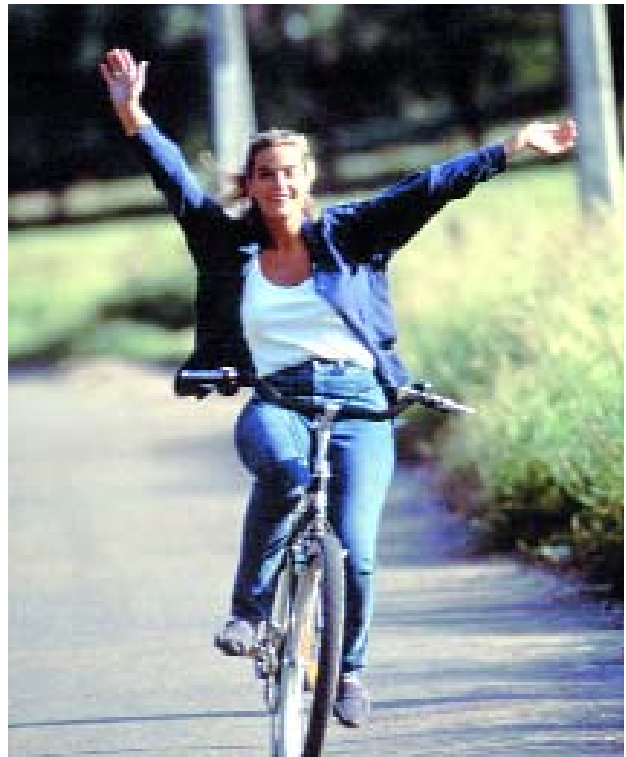
MARY NURRIE STEARNS

Deep in our being, we know that truth liberates. What we are not sure of is how to find and relate to truth. How do we come to trust truth so that we are willing to follow where it leads?

Ultimately, we seek to know the truth of who we really are. This truth is known by many names, such as the small, quiet voice within. We recognize it as those ideas, feelings, and impulses that come with clarity and resonate throughout our being. This kind of knowing comes from our depths and is aligned with goodness and wisdom. Directing our lives with this intelligence is true freedom.

Listening to, following, and honoring our feelings is one of the ways to find our true voice. Feelings are messengers from within: they reveal our inner truth. To experience and know ourselves completely, we must allow our feelings fully. A loving examination of feelings is essential in order to learn from them. Not all feelings are from our essential self, and not all feelings instruct our lives in ways that are fulfilling or evolutionary.

To grow, we must recognize and experience our feelings. If we have been shut down in our feeling nature, the act of simply *feeling* our feelings is transformational. When we are connected to our feeling nature, we are



more human and alive. With deeper understanding of our emotions, we realize that they are often linked to unhealed wounds and beliefs that were created in our childhood. Decoding these releases us from their tyranny.

Our early adaptations to life evolve into beliefs about ourselves and life. They become the foundation of our identity. These beliefs include whether we are lovable, if the world is a safe place, what is possible, and whom we can trust. Allowing feelings, and examining what they are connected to, leads us to our core beliefs. Bringing consciousness to that which has been unconscious frees us to make life-affirming changes.

When we find completion with our past and let go of old feelings, we open to the present and no longer feel the same old sadness, anger, and fear. The energy that was trapped in these old feelings is released and revives our body, mind, and spirit.

As we engage this process, our emotions forge pathways into our core. We discover feelings, ideas, and impulses that are connected with a spacious, flowing streaming of energy. These are the messages and directives from our essential self. They speak of what life is calling us to. They are guidance from our opened heart.

IMAGE BANK/DAVID DE LOSSY

Ignorance is not bliss. It is not better to ignore the truth of experience than to feel and speak it... Awareness is not painful, awareness is light and blissful. It is resistance to awareness that is painful.

—Gay and Kathlyn Hendricks

How can we facilitate this? How do we encourage feelings to surface, to come into awareness? How can we decode their messages, so that we may heal unresolved emotional wounds and clear the way to our innermost feelings and guidance?

The following meditative practice can guide you into your feeling nature:

LEARNING FROM FEELINGS

Begin with loving intention. With tender regard, give yourself permission to experience your feelings. Express willingness and intent for feelings to surface. When you notice a body sensation or an emotion, subtle or intense, breathe and allow. Do not judge, hold back, or ignore. Focus your attention on what comes up. Pausing, breathe into your body experience, whether it be quivering in your stomach or the tightening in your chest. Gently, permit your tears to fall or your anger to pulsate. Compassionately, welcome whatever emerges—a flash of anger, a moment of fear, a memory, or an insight about an old family rule. Become willing to love the way you make your feelings wrong or always play it safe. Love and allow whatever arises in your consciousness, without acting on it. Breathe into that old hurt, grudge, or wound, understanding its origins. Allowing takes you past your stuck places, and you become free to operate from a wiser, more loving place.

This process forges ever deeper, piercing into the identity layers that separate us from our essence. Love is the catalyst that allows truth to emerge, it is the steady light that illuminates our true identity. Love heals; yet it alone does not uncover layers of the truth. One way to peel back layers of our core beliefs is through questioning.

By questioning, we decipher the information in our feelings. We ask what these feelings are connected to. When feelings are associated with our old identity, the beliefs underlying them limit our lives and the lives of others. Core thoughts about our lovability and adequacy show up in the patterned ways we attempt to seek approval, control ourselves or others. They made sense in our childhood, given our abilities, circumstances, and need to form an identity. These beliefs are not wrong; they are immature. Defending them prevents our evolution. The following meditative practice can bring awareness into your identity mental formations.

UNCOVERING YOUR TRUTH

Love, breath, and allow these questions to penetrate your identity, into your essential self. Ask, listen, and answer. What am I really responding to? What am I trying to control? How am I seeking approval? What am I protecting myself from? What is the reality of the situation? What am I not accepting as it is? Am I this anger, this fear, this hurt? Do I want these feelings to direct my life? What is it that I want? Who am I really? How shall I live?

Until feelings are thoroughly explored, we react to life through the same old beliefs and re-enact the same old patterns. Love and creativity do not flow from this level of being. Processing feelings opens us to love and creativity. Our bodies tell us when we have released old beliefs or trapped feelings. We feel lighter, more energetic, and unattached to old attitudes. We see hope and new possibilities. Our hearts are opened, and we feel a oneness with and reverence for life. We know who we are and how we are to live. •

From Grief into Healing

SUZANNE FRIED

In 1985 I lost three friends to AIDS. In the early years of the pandemic, there were no drugs to halt the opportunistic infections which ravaged those stricken with the deadly virus. That year I volunteered for *Shanti*, the first AIDS organization in the nation created to work with people with AIDS and their loved ones. My urge to become a *Shanti* “buddy,” or counselor was an attempt to feel useful in the face of the frightening tidal wave of loss and despair.

At that time in my life, I had no firm connection to God or the Divine. I possessed a vague yearning for a spiritual connection, but as yet that was not part of my life. I was beginning to understand that my yearning for spirit had been filled, all my life, with various addictive behaviors, and I was attempting to sort this out by attending 12-Step meetings in San Francisco where I lived. The concept of surrendering to a “Higher Power” was uncomfortable, but I knew I needed something to help me sort out life on planet earth. I was also beginning to look for answers in the face of the suffering and dying of my friends.

My naive assumptions that God was to blame for violence, wars, and the Holocaust unraveled as I probed deeper into the mysteries of life. I was beginning to believe that humans abandoned their own divinity within when they judged or harmed others.

All these new ideas were borne out of my work with



my first client at *Shanti*. Ned was a 27-year-old gay man, a photography student filled with a sense of delight with the world, even in the face of AIDS. In the brief months I knew him, he never once complained. He spoke of being frightened at times, or angry that his life was now centered around AIDS or being hospitalized, but mostly he talked about the great love he felt for his family and for his partner. We spoke about riding the cable cars when he felt better and walking around the city with our cameras for a day of shooting, but we never did any of those things.

Denial is a funny thing. It places itself around our lives, hearts, and minds in a way that cocoons us from experiencing and seeing the reality of a situation until we are, perhaps, more ready to acknowledge it.

It was this way with my denial about my brother. My younger brother Richie lived in Los Angeles, was Director of Home Video for Walt Disney, and was gay.

All around us, friends were dying of AIDS. In the nation, a wall of condemnation and silence emanated from the White House, and the word “AIDS” never touched the lips of then-president Ronald Reagan. It was as if this killer disease did not exist. But it did exist, and it was killing people, not just here, but in Africa as well.

My denial was ironclad. I did not, for one moment, let in the thought that Richie might contract AIDS.

That denial was shattered on February 21, 1986. He was diagnosed with KS, Kaposi's Sarcoma, a cancer that was attacking people with AIDS. After years of symptoms that I never knew about, my baby brother crossed over into a full-blown AIDS diagnosis.

I made a decision that month to be available to Richie, and I ended my time with Ned. I felt awful telling him the news, but some small voice deep within told me I was going to need every ounce of my energy and all of my time to be there for my brother. Ned and I wept as we said our good-byes, and I did not see him again. Another *Shanti* buddy was assigned to Ned, and I lost contact with him as my life became centered around my brother's illness and life.

Four weeks after Richie's diagnosis, in March, he was hospitalized with pneumocystic pneumonia, and the roller coaster ride into hell began.

Six months later, I sat on my baby brother's hospital bed as he lay dying. It was August 17 and each month since March had been filled with one health crisis after another. No longer able to work at his beloved job, his depression had deepened, and his immune system, already compromised from years of symptoms, was unable to cope.

Richie was born exactly one week before my third birthday. I had protected him from neighborhood bullies when we were growing up, and as young adults he had shown me the ropes of life in New York City when I followed him there after my divorce. We had our ups and downs like many sisters and brothers, but between us was a deep and abiding love which saw us through many times of misunderstanding and anger.

I never in a million years

thought he would not be by my side as we grew up into maturity and older age.

That day I sat on his bed and birthed my baby bro' into death. The room was still and serene and it felt as if the world were holding its breath. The pulse in his neck stopped and my long, agonizing vigil ended. Moments later, I sat alongside his bed and felt a presence urging me to turn around.

I was alone in the room, and heeding that presence I turned and saw in the far corner of the darkened room a blaze of golden light. Stunned, I looked back at Richie's still form, and then I turned again, and saw again the light.

I knew it was Richie letting me know that he was okay. I knew that he was giving me the gift of sight into a world I barely believed existed but desperately wanted to know was there.

My grief over the years buffeted me and tore me apart. Richie's death brought me to my knees. I had to surrender finally or live my life broken and bitter. If that light was there, wasn't he there too? If that light was there, in us all, then were we not being held by a Divine presence larger and more loving than we could ever imagine?

My life over the years changed as kicking and screaming I moved closer to God. One by one, I surrendered my addictions and live a life today eons away from the woman I was in 1986. Richie's gift to me was the knowledge that love never ever dies. This gift has transformed my life in ways that mere words cannot describe. I only know that when I feel lonely and afraid, I just have to reach my hand up towards the sky, and I hear my brother saying, "God, Suzie, you look fabulous today, and you know, sister, I love you."•

Southwestern

v6n4 p30

Peaceful
Choices/New
Ignite your Soul

Voting With Money

TINA RASMUSSEN

The old adage, “Put your money where your mouth is,” provides a down-to-earth context for living our spiritual values. The term “currency” actually originates from the Latin work “currentia,” which means “a flowing.” On the material plane, energy flows to us when we receive or earn money, and from us when we give or spend it.

At the societal level, it could be argued that the capitalist system has many drawbacks. However, one of its advantages is that it provides people with the opportunity to influence the larger system by “voting with their dollars” every day, over and over. With just a little thought and effort, we can change the very fabric of our social system, simply by expressing our preferences in how we choose to use our currency.

People are becoming increasingly conscious of their ability to express their values and affect the world in this manner, and a number of organizations and publications are becoming available to help people make sense of the maze of consumer and investment choices. For example, the *Greenmoney Journal* has the following mission: “To educate and empower individuals and

businesses to make informed financial decisions through aligning their personal, corporate, and financial principles: Responsibility from the supermarket to the stock market.” (*Greenmoney Journal*, 800-318-5725).

Alisa Gravitz, executive director of *Co-op America*, encourages individuals to express their values through four actions, each of which is described below. *Co-op America* was responsible for exposing the fact that most mutual funds invest in tobacco without investors’ explicit knowledge. Once this fact was made public, vast numbers of investors switched to funds which screen out tobacco, which in turn put tremendous pressure on tobacco companies—especially those which market to teenagers. Gravitz believes that consumer involvement helps “raise the bar for business conduct,” by letting companies know that “we’re watching.” Following are *Co-op America*’s suggestions of ways to “vote with our dollars.” (*Co-op America*, 202-872-5307)

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE, AND REPAIR

One step is to change our usage patterns. This can



include adopting “green” practices, being thoughtful about discarding items, and “downshifting” to a lower consumption lifestyle—all of which are becoming increasingly mainstream lifestyle choices. In fact, in a 1995 poll conducted by the non-profit Merck Family Fund, 28% of Americans polled said they had voluntarily made lifestyle changes that had decreased their earnings and simplified their lives. The Trends Research Institute has put voluntary simplicity on its top 10 trends list for three years running (*Source: Kiplinger’s Personal Finance Magazine*).

We can also reduce and simplify our lives by giving away our “excess money”—and keeping our currency flowing—by donating a percentage of our income to charity. People often continue to save and amass wealth out of fears about security. However, the freedom from excess material wealth can be liberating. For example, two years ago, media tycoon Ted Turner gave \$200 million to charity. Initially, he was fearful of losing his wealthy status, but he is now encouraging other billionaires to do the same. (*Source: The New York Times*).

REALLOCATE

Reallocating means being conscious consumers, channeling our currency to products and companies with values we support. This is becoming easier to do, as more companies clarify their values and make them a part of their corporate mission. An obvious example of a “conscious organization” is Ben and Jerry’s Ice Cream. Companies which produce coffee, imported rugs, and children’s goods are especially worthy of consideration because they frequently utilize exploited overseas labor while the companies’ profits soar

Field of Dreams

Bantam/new

Mount Madonna

v6n4 p25

Journey into Wholeness/new

Reiki Plus
from
v6n4p32

Spirit Rest
v6n4p74

(see “Restructure” below).

A nationwide survey by Marymount University in Arlington, Va., showed that more than three of four people would avoid buying products made under sweatshop conditions. In addition, more than 8 of 10 consumers said they would pay a higher price for sweatshop-free goods. The Labor Department has even developed a “trendsetter list” of companies using humane labor practices (*Source: The Chicago Tribune*).

Our consumption patterns are so important to the economy that the worlds of high finance and glitzy marketing firms are starting to pay attention to spiritual values. Why? Because these values are gradually becoming mainstream, to the point that they are influencing societal trends, global economics, and even the products we find available in department and grocery stores.

For example, futurist Faith Popcorn, author of the best-selling book *The Popcorn Report*, has been accurately predicting social and marketing trends since 1974. She and her organization—BrainReserve—work with leading corporations to determine what trends are likely to manifest in the future, and therefore what products and services these companies should develop and offer. She predicted trends such as fresh foods, home delivery, and four-wheel drive vehicles; she also predicted that the 1990s would be the “Decency Decade” long before George Bush’s “kinder, gentler nation” speech.

In looking to the turn of the millennium, Faith Popcorn has added several trends to the original 10 found in her 1991 book, as she described in a recent speech. These

trends include:

- “being alive” (good health extends longevity and quality of life),
- “cashing out” (downshifting and voluntary simplicity),
- “save our society” (a renewed social conscience and interest in ethics and compassion),
- “clanning” (belonging to a group with a sense of community),
- “female think” (a value for relations rather than hierarchy),
- “anchoring” (reaching back to our spiritual roots),
- “icon-toppling” (a socioquake transforming mainstream America as the pillars of society are questioned and rejected).

What is interesting about Faith Popcorn’s trend predictions is that billion-dollar corporations are developing products and services based on them. These include not only consumer products (cars, food, clothing, etc.), but also the media (movies, TV, books) and other services (financial, health care, etc.). In effect, our consumerism has come to influence our world and shape our experience of society, as much as the products we buy contribute to and shape our personal quality of life.

So, consumption and our wise decision-making can have a tremendous impact on the larger society. By raising our awareness, we may change a buying decision, which then impacts society via trends and new future products. For example, being a vegetarian can be an expression of a belief in the value of all animal life. But when we know more about animal production, we learn that raising cattle also negatively impacts the environment because of water consumption. According to the Agri-

culture Department, a pound of beef requires 5,214 gallons of water compared to the 20 to 35 gallons required to raise a pound of vegetables. If one person ate two pounds less beef per week for a year, it would save over 500,000 gallons of water for that year alone. (Source: *The Green Consumer*, Joel Makower). Understanding the larger impact of our consumption can help us to make informed decisions about how to reallocate our spending.

REINVEST

Reinvesting means putting our investments in companies we support, such as the previous example of investors who withdrew billions of dollars from mutual funds containing tobacco stocks. Investors have made a strong statement in this area, with one of six investment dollars now being put into socially responsible funds. In addition, socially responsible funds are keeping pace with—or in the case of the 1996 year, outpacing—the return on investment for mainstream funds. (Source: *Business Ethics Magazine*). Books and resources on socially responsible investing abound, with numerous reputable funds from which to choose.

RESTRUCTURE

Together, these methods of “voting with our dollars” lead to restructuring the way America (and the world) does business. Ultimately, “putting our money where our mouth is” can influence the economic structure of society so that business practices begin to align themselves with our individual values. For example, once restructured, society would no longer sup-

port the practice of Walt Disney Corporation, which paid its C.E.O. \$189.7 million in 1996 (equivalent to \$100,000 an hour) while paying Haitian laborers making Pocahontas pajamas 30 cents an hour (Source: *The National Labor Committee*, Charles Kernaghan).

WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

But what can one person or group do? Perhaps, our children can provide some inspiration. For example, when learning of global children living a life of virtual slavery, 12-year-old Craig Kielburger of Toronto, Canada, formed the non-profit *Free the Children* organization. *Free the Children* is a memorial to the life of Iqbal Masih, a 12-year-old from Pakistan who spent six years shackled to a rug loom, tying handmade knotted rugs sold in western countries. *Free the Children* is working to build a rehabilitation center for children freed from sweatshop labor. (*Free the Children*, 703-534-7045). Craig believed he could make a difference, and he has.

Or what about the college seniors nationwide who wear green ribbons on their graduation caps, as part of the Graduation Pledge Alliance. Their creed: “I pledge to investigate and take into account the social and environmental consequences of any job opportunity I consider.” Founded at California’s Humboldt State University in 1987, it is headquartered at Manchester College in Indiana, where 50-60% of Manchester graduates annually support the pledge. (*Graduation Pledge Alliance*, NJWollman@Manchester.edu). As adults, we can make a similar pledge to do work which contributes to a sus-

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 79

Creativity and Healing

C A N D A C E H A R T Z L E R

In late summer 1994, I stood on the jagged edge of a profound healing process. The experience would begin in a creative arts barn tucked into the foothills of the Catskill Mountains in New York. On that warm summer morning, the barn was chock-full of people and activity, and I was terrified. My inner critic was playing yakety-yak games in my head, assuring me I was out of my league.

But I had chosen to spend 10 days in a creativity retreat because I had lost a sense of belonging to any league, the human race notwithstanding. Two years prior to the retreat, harsh lessons had begun arriving at heart-breaking speed. A sampler of loss and change prior to the retreat:

- benign lump removed from my left breast
- failed reconciliation with ex-husband
- brother died from a cancerous brain tumor
- another brother diagnosed with brain tumor
- spontaneous hearing loss in left ear.

Standing in a corner of the arts barn, watching others dance, play, and create, I vaguely recalled memories of the “old” me: bright, capable, liberated, creative. The me standing knock-kneed in the arts barn felt tumbled about by those years of grief and loss.

A woman/child full of fears... but nevertheless starv-



ing for color in my life, I faked my way through the smiling introductions and quickly moved to another corner of the barn where I began working with bright-colored tissue paper. I chose primary colors: blue, red, yellow. I drew female figures standing forlornly inside large teardrops. I cut, drew, pasted, and created. Artistic expression allowed me to be a witness to my feelings—the tears flowed as I drew a child wrapped in the arms of an angel.

The creative urge continued to guide me. Pieces of driftwood stacked haphazardly in another corner of the barn caught my eye. Feeling adrift in my own life, I felt kinship with those dried-out pieces of wood, and by using leather, small stones, lace, beads, buttons and glitter, was able to turn three pieces of colorless wood into magical-looking wands. I connected more deeply to the meaning of “dried-out-turned-magical” through writing. I wrote a fairy tale about a young girl raised among a wolf pack who spent her days picking stones from the wolf pack’s fur. She used the gathered stones to embellish twigs she found near the door of the cave. The twigs became magic wands, and the young girl used their power to gain freedom from the wolf pack.

Letting go and releasing became my soul’s creative theme over the next 10 days as I wept and danced and drummed and played. Authentic body movement

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intimidated me to the core, but before the prescribed movement exercises, I would counter my fear by repeating lines from one of my favorite angel wall hangings, author unknown: "Angels help you carry the ball, carry your weight, carry a tune, and carry on." I continued to "carry on," engaging with myself and others in the group through use of writing, painting, and clay.

Working alongside the 18 other sojourners in the group, including the loving and creative staff from *The Person-Centered Expressive Therapy Institute*, I learned ways to affirm creativity, courage, and the human spirit. The creative process, body movement, collage, painting, drawing, sculpting, and writing, served as a midwife—I left the retreat with a rebirthed sense of myself as empowered creator.

At home, I continued to use cre-

ativity as an outlet, making collages out of wood, beads, crystals and ribbon. I drew daily with paper and chalk. I continued to write poems and grew into healing partnership with my authentic, creative child within. I was living again, this time from new depths.

I traveled to California and New York over the next two years, completing 400 hours of expressive arts training, and the personal became immersed in the professional. I began to facilitate expressive arts groups in my private practice, and offer training workshops for other helping professionals.

Creativity became a tool for spiritual growth and healing. Drawing my shadow, dancing my anger, sculpting my truth helped heal the wounds of change and loss. Today, I travel life paths with a lighter step. I have creative tools

for releasing stress and addressing issues—my body no longer needs to manifest the physical symptoms of repressed emotions.

Working with the creative arts has created new dimensions of working and living. Recently, a client I had worked with three years prior to my connection with the arts reappeared in one of my expressive arts groups. She offered bold appraisal: "What's happened to you? You're different, not like the boring teacher-lady you were in those other groups. You dress differently and look happier... did you get married or something?"

I smiled while handing her paper and pastel chalk for the first group exercise, and then offered a silent prayer of gratitude to the angels of creativity flying ever-so-lowly in the room.♦

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Emotional Healing

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

Many of us find working on the spiritual level pleasant and inspiring, and most of us are relatively comfortable exploring the mental realm because we live in such a mentally-oriented society. However, a lot of us get stuck at the level on which emotional healing needs to take place. Most of us are frightened and uncomfortable about the prospect of doing deep emotional healing work. We are afraid of dredging up old pain and perhaps being overwhelmed by it. We wonder what the point is in focusing on unresolved emotional issues and uncomfortable feelings. We don't realize that effective emotional healing will actually free us from dragging that pain around for the rest of our lives.

DAVID SIRGANY

Profound emotional healing takes time. It cannot be rushed or forced. It needs to unfold in its own time, sometimes taking a number of years to move through the deeper levels. Fortunately, as each layer is healed, life becomes more and more fulfilling and rewarding, and does actually “lighten up.”

We live in a culture that has amazingly little understanding of emotion and doesn't really value the realm of feeling. In fact, most of us are taught, subtly or overtly, to fear our emotions—that feelings are unpredictable, irrational, dangerous, and we should try to keep them firmly under control. We have learned, to one degree or another, to hide and deny our feelings—even from ourselves. We've learned to bury most of our feelings deep inside and show the world only what seems safe, which usually isn't very much of our emotional nature.

In childhood we may have gotten a lot of messages, like “*There's no reason to feel that way,*” or “*Don't get so excited,*” or the classic “*Big boys (or girls) don't cry.*” Recently an adult friend of mine was telling me of his father's death and his mother's admonition to him not to cry at his father's funeral, because it would look like a sign of weakness! The attitudes we were taught root very deeply in our psyche. In this story you can see the heritage of repressed feelings my friend's mother was taught and passed on to her son.

Generally, we are taught not to feel any emotion too strongly—even love or joy—because we want to stay cool and in control. We're especially taught not to feel or acknowledge so-called “negative” emotions, such as fear, sadness, hurt, anger, or despair.

While most of us have learned to repress our feelings, some of us have the opposite problem: we are too easily overwhelmed by our emotions and have difficulty maintaining any emotional equilibrium. We are often carrying the repressed emotions of other people around us, experiencing and expressing everyone else's feelings, as well as our own. Still others are stuck in one particular emotion and are constantly reacting from that place—anger

perhaps, or fear. These are all symptoms of emotional imbalances that need healing.

Unfortunately, many traditional spiritual philosophies and New Age belief systems reinforce the tendency to repress certain emotions by encouraging us to rise above them, or try to focus on more acceptable feelings, such as unconditional love. I've heard many spiritually-inclined teachers advise people to “let go” of anger and other so-called negative feelings. Unfortunately, they usually don't explain exactly how one is supposed to do this “letting go,” leaving the students floundering and wondering why they can't seem to magically make all their negative feelings disappear. If a method is recommended, it is usually something like this: just put that feeling aside and focus on a positive experience or feeling. Or the student is encouraged to identify with and develop only the spiritual aspect of his or her being, seen as the “true self,” and to view the personality with all its emotions and feelings as the “false self,” or the ego to be overcome.

These approaches are just good, old-fashioned denial dressed up in an appealing costume. Emotional denial is dangerous and destructive to the human psyche, because we are attempting to reject and eliminate an integral and important part of ourselves. Ultimately, it can never work. How can we get rid of a core part of who we are? It also causes us to be in intense conflict with ourselves—the part of us that thinks we shouldn't have the feelings fighting the part of us that actually has these feelings. The truth is that we cannot deny, control, or attempt to change our feelings this way without eventually causing more emotional damage to ourselves.

ALL OUR EMOTIONS ARE IMPORTANT

Our feelings are a deep, important part of our lives and they need to be respected and honored. None of our emotions are intrinsically bad or neg-

ative. We call things negative because we don't understand them, and therefore we fear them.

Emotions are a significant aspect of our human experience, and they all exist for a reason. Rather than rejecting or avoiding them, we need to discover the gift each one brings us. They are messages to us, letting us know something we need to pay attention to.

If you are sad, that feeling may be revealing that you need something. If you honor the feeling and ask what it is about, it can guide you to awareness of your need. Sadness may be letting you know that it's time to allow yourself to grieve as you let go of something or someone. Tears are the river of life washing away the old to make way for something new. An ancient proverb says, *"For every tear shed, a day is added to your life."*

Anger can be our protection when we feel hurt or frightened. Anger can also be a way we begin to reclaim our power if we have disowned it or given it away to others. If properly handled, it can help us learn to stand up for ourselves, speak our truth, and set our boundaries.

Of course, we all know that anger can sometimes be hurtful and destructive, which is why many of us are so afraid of it. However, anger usually comes out in a harmful way for one of two reasons: 1. It has been held in and repressed for so long that it finally (or periodically) bursts out in an explosive, violent way. 2. It is habitually used by someone to cover and conceal their deeper, more vulnerable feelings such as fear, sadness, or hurt. Fortunately, it is possible to heal these patterns and learn to express anger in clean, clear, appropriate, and non-harmful ways.

Fear is an emotion that many people strive to get rid of or at least hide. Yet fear has an important function—it warns us that something may be dangerous or difficult, so that we pay attention, evaluate the situation, and choose the appropriate action. If we completely eliminated fear, we would do many dangerous and most likely fatal things. Of course, some people are overwhelmed or controlled by fear; the solution is not to eliminate fear entirely, but to bring it into proper balance.

A popular concept in the New Age is that fear is the opposite of love, so if we want to experience

love, we must let go of fear. I would say instead that we need to love our fear, that is, learn to accept our fear as a valid aspect of our being. When we can truly accept ourselves with all our emotions and feelings, we experience real unconditional love for ourselves, which allows us to feel compassion and love for others. When we are not battling ourselves internally, trying to overcome certain emotions, we can develop an attitude of peaceful self-acceptance, which allows us to open to our spiritual essence and integrate it into our human existence.

Life is made up of paradoxes. In order to completely feel anything, we must be able to experience the fullness of its opposite. To feel real strength, we must accept our weaknesses. To feel truly powerful, we must allow ourselves to acknowledge our vulnerability. To feel profound joy, we must embrace our sadness. Kahlil Gibran has a wonderful line in his book, *The Prophet*, that says, *"The deeper that sadness carves into your being, the more joy you can contain."*

Our emotions are like the weather, constantly changing, and as with the weather, it's fruitless to try to control your feelings. Instead, we can learn to appreciate all our different moods and emotions. Just as we can enjoy a sunny day and a stormy day in different ways, we can learn to find the beauty in joy and in sadness.

Our emotions are what we feel as the life force moves through us. When we don't experience our feelings fully and allow them to move through us in a natural way, the life energy in those feelings becomes lodged in our bodies. This causes many problems on all the levels—emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical. In my experience working with thousands of people, I have found that blocked emotions are a primary cause or a contributing factor in many or most physical ailments. So emotional healing can be an important part of physical healing.

Accepting our emotions allows us to feel them. Learning to communicate them constructively and appropriately allows them to move through us easily and naturally. This enables the full free flow of the life force through our physical bodies, bringing emotional and physical healing.

Repressing feelings = blocked energy = emotional and physical ailments

Experiencing feelings = free flowing energy = emotional and physical health and well-being

DOING YOUR EMOTIONAL HEALING WORK

The essence of emotional healing is this: being in touch with what you are feeling, being able to say honestly what you are feeling to at least one other human being, and having that person respond with empathy, as in, “Oh, I understand.” This lets us know that we’re not bad, wrong or crazy for feeling what we feel and that we’re not alone in our experience.

When we were infants and children, we had many strong feelings. What we needed was to have people acknowledge and respond to these feelings in appropriate ways. For example, we needed to hear things like, “I understand that you’re very upset,” or “I can see that you’re feeling really sad.” In essence, as children we needed reflection and validation of our feelings from our parents, families, teachers, and the surrounding world. We needed to be assured that we have a right to our feelings, that they aren’t wrong or bad. We needed to feel that others can understand and empathize with us when we experience strong feelings. We needed to be allowed to have our own feeling experience. No matter how hard parents try—and they all do the best that they can—children inevitably experience some degree of emotional hurt, neglect, and abandonment. Because we’re so vulnerable as children, we are deeply wounded by these experiences and carry them inside us for the rest of our lives, or until we do our conscious emotional healing work.

In emotional healing work, we learn to give ourselves, and allow ourselves to receive from others, what we didn’t receive as young children. We learn to accept and experience all our feelings, and when appropriate, to communicate these feelings in a way that allows others to understand us. We open the way to our emotional healing through the experience of having at least one other person hear, understand, and empathize with us.

If we have denied or stuffed down a lot of our feelings, we may need to have a safe place and an

experienced guide (a professional counselor or therapist) to help us begin to get in touch with, experience, and release our emotions. Then we need to develop tools for staying current with our feelings, by allowing ourselves to acknowledge and experience them as they arise.

It’s important to get in touch with the needs underneath our feelings, and to learn how to communicate those needs effectively. Underneath most of our emotions are our basic needs for love, acceptance, security, and self-esteem. We need to get to know the vulnerable child who still lives deep inside each of us, and to learn to become the loving parent our own inner child requires. If we want to experience the full range of our being in this lifetime, we need to commit ourselves to heal the emotional wounds from our childhood and early life.

Sometimes, people fear that exploring the emotional wounds from childhood means blaming their parents or others, which they do not wish to do. It is true that in the process of deep emotional healing it is often important to acknowledge to ourselves any old, buried feelings of hurt, resentment, and sometimes blame of ourselves or others. The magical thing is that once those feelings are consciously acknowledged and experienced in a safe, supportive environment, they generally dissolve, or shift into feelings of acceptance, compassion, and forgiveness.

Often, people try to jump directly to forgiveness, not wishing to experience the more uncomfortable emotions. While this is sometimes effective, in many cases it is a kind of forced forgiveness, laid over the still unresolved emotions which often resurface later. Once the other feelings are acknowledged and worked through, forgiveness takes place naturally and automatically.

Profound emotional healing takes time. It cannot be rushed or forced. It needs to unfold in its own time, sometimes taking a number of years to move through the deeper levels. Fortunately, as each layer is healed, life becomes more and more fulfilling and rewarding, and does actually “lighten up.”•

*From “The Four Levels of Healing,” by Shakti Gawain.
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Befriending Your Body

JONATHAN KRAMER AND
DIANE DUNAWAY KRAMER

We are beauty and the beast. Each of us contains a beauty, the gentle soul of our spiritual nature, and a beast, the animal body in which we're housed that craves food, fluids, sleep, sex, and much more.

As a result, we humans have always had a love-hate relationship with our body. On the one hand, we glorify our physical form in paintings and sculpture, idolize beautiful men and women (automatically attributing success, niceness, and brightness to them), and devote enormous time, energy, and money to our physical appearance (clothing, makeup, cologne, hair care). And of course, we take great pleasure from our body (food and drink, music and dance, affection and sex).

On the other hand, our body's "animal" functions are embarrassing and usually kept private. They are also the origin of most curses and ways we express anger and aggression (full of crap, pissed off, not to mention the butt of endless jokes.) So, while we enjoy our body, we're also often shy or even disgusted by it at the same time.

From early human history, people have viewed the body as vulgar and the Spirit as sacred. As early as the sixth century B.C., various religious groups began to reject their physical bodies as inhibitors of Spirit. "Purification" (by pain, deprivation, even fire) was used to detach from or be rid of the body so the soul could be released. Methods such as fasting, celibacy, and self-mutilation were used as ways of punishing and diminishing the power of the body and its seductive, animal pleasures.

Most of us are not so radical in our fear and rejection of the body, but, in more subtle ways, we all learn to control our physical behavior and sup-

press our senses.

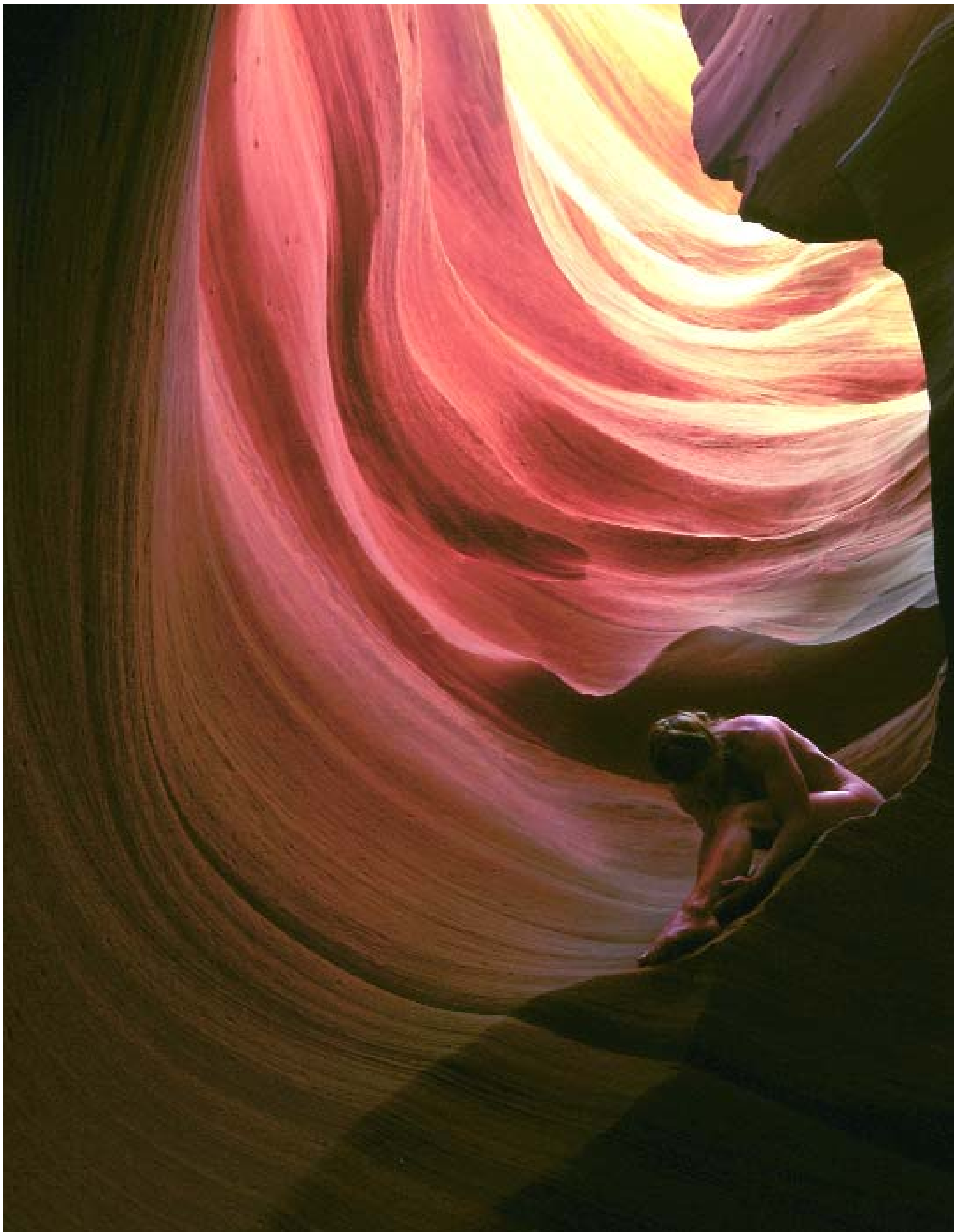
The French obstetrician Frederick Leboyer wrote that as infants we're awash in sensation:

What makes being born so frightful is the intensity, the boundless scope and variety of experience, its suffocating richness. People say—and believe—that a newborn baby feels nothing. He feels everything. Everything—utterly, without choice or filter or discrimination. Birth is a tidal wave of sensation, surpassing anything we can imagine. A sensory experience so vast we can barely conceive it.

When we are babies, the senses are undivided, mixed together in a sea of nipple/mouth/eyes/skin/milk. Only later do we learn to separate out sight from smell, touch from taste, and sound from all the rest, and begin to experience them as more commonplace.

As children, we're still very sensorially focused. But soon, little by little, we're desensitized as we're taught to limit our senses. For example, it's common for parents to say things like, "Stop crying. That isn't so bad." So we learn to tune out the pain and control our reactions. And, "Clean your plate. You're not leaving this table until you've finished." So we learn to ignore our natural sense of taste (which tells us it tastes bad) and our stomach (which is saying it's already full). And, "Don't tell me you're tired. You're fine and you're going to school." So we learn to ignore physical fatigue in order to do what we're expected to do. And, "Stop staring out the window and finish your homework." So we learn to ignore what's around (and within) us, in order to stay mentally focused on what we have to do.

This doesn't change as we get older. Indeed, while we may pay tremendous attention to our



physical appearance, we only minimally sense our physical sensations. As writer/actor Robert Benchley joked, "As for me, except for an occasional heart attack, I feel as young as I ever did."

And the heavier our burden of responsibilities, the more this is true. Yes, we're concerned about how we feel, but only insofar as it helps us continue to get our job done. We may complain of aches and pains, but only because we can't ignore them and are annoyed when they're interrupting us. This is particularly true for parents of young children who must go on whether they are tired, sick, hungry, or whatever else. The more we have to do, the more we learn to ignore our body so we can continue on.

This is also true sexually. This "out of touch" mindset contributes to inhibited sexual desire, frigidity, impotence, premature ejaculation, and more. Of course, self-control is essential and valuable, but there's a cost along with the benefits. Our socialization helps us learn self-control in order to produce law-abiding and productive citizens, but it also teaches us to ignore our physical sensations. Alan Watts described the results when he wrote that "awareness of our own existence is so superficial and so narrow that nothing seems to us more boring than simple being. If I ask you what you did, saw, heard, smelled, touched, and tasted yesterday, I am likely to get nothing more than the thin, sketchy outline of the few things that you noticed, and of those only what you thought worth remembering."

As our personality is caught up in the struggle to survive and succeed, our bodily needs often begin to seem like time-consuming chores, while our physical sensations become background noise.

We're too busy getting to work to notice our hands on the steering wheel. We're too preoccupied listening to our own thoughts to really hear the bird's song. We're too lost in conversation and newspaper to truly savor our food. And smells are mentally identified rather than sensorially experienced, as when we say, "Oh, that's a rose" or "That's a gardenia," naming it rather than fully enjoying its sweet perfume.

It's as if our thoughts and activities are jamming our system of senses. Mental static blocks out our

senses and much of the rest of reality.

How sad, because we're losing the opportunity to live in a spiritual temple that can help lighten our worldly load.

While our body may be a hassle, it's also the primary way we have to fully experience life.

COMING TO OUR SENSES

If we do come back into our body, we experience a vibrancy in the sheer act of living, and we feel more alive and fulfilled. We can discover the basic goodness of living in physical form with the simple reality of our senses.

More fully inhabiting our body brings the real goodness of simple experiences, enabling us to relax and feel at home in the midst of our daily life.

The poet T. S. Eliot wrote that we must use what God has given us to serve God, that we are

*Joined spirit and body,
And therefore must serve as spirit and body.
Visible and invisible, two worlds meet in Man;
Visible and invisible must meet in His Temple;
You must not deny the body.*

Being conscious and awake brightens the light of awareness. Being present helps us relax, content and complete. Basic goodness adds the warmth of a good heart.

Awareness of basic sensations helps us inhabit our sacred body and feel more at home inside our life.

As Chogyam Trungpa writes, "Discovering real goodness comes from appreciating very simple experiences. We are not talking about how good it feels to make a million dollars or finally graduate from college or buy a new house, but we are speaking here of the basic goodness of being alive."

We're alive in the flesh. The spiritual energy within us is manifested in a human body, and if we listen to that body, we can discover that a feast has been set before us.

Our waking consciousness has a natural inclination to be attuned to our senses. Using breathing to be aware in the present helps us consciously experience our physical sensations in the here and now. Then we and our sensations are one and the same;

we are not a person with eyes who's seeing, but instead we become the act of seeing. We are the seeing. Chinese Zen master Garma C. C. Chang writes:

When one discovers this self-awareness, he finds his whole being changed. While engaging in any activity, he talks and walks, but he feels that his talking and walking is not the same as before—he now walks with an opened mind. He actually knows that it is he who is doing the walking; the director—himself—is sitting right in the center of his mind, controlling all his actions with spontaneity. He walks in bright awareness and with illumined spirit. He then senses that ordinary people, blind to their innate, bright awareness, tread the streets like walking corpses!

Millions of us are spiritually comatose and fail to inhabit our body and our life. One of the few who awakened and walked with “bright awareness” was Krishnamurti, who described an experience of seeing with “illumined spirit:”

The earth was the color of the sky; the hills, the green ripening rice fields, the trees and the dry, sandy river-bed were the color of the sky; every rock on the hills, the big boulders, were the clouds and they were the rocks. Heaven was the earth and the earth heaven; the setting sun had transformed everything.

The sky was blazing fire, bursting in every streak of cloud, in every stone, in every blade of grass, in every grain of sand. The sky was ablaze with green, purple, violet, indigo, with the fury of flame.

The hills became transparent, every rock and boulder was without weight, floating in color and the distant hills were blue, the blue of all the seas and the sky of every clime. And the road that crossed the valley was purple and white, so alive that it was one of the rays that raced across the sky. You were of that light.

We can share our experiences by offering a delicious, ripe strawberry to a friend or sitting with a

loved one watching a glowing sunset over the tree-covered hills. But each of us experiences our own sensations within our own body that intimately connects us with the world outside. When we're open to our awareness, without boundary, the strawberry, the setting sun, the mountain, our friends and loved ones are all interrelated with us. Our intimacy extends to the world and we love what is. Then we see that we are God's eyes and ears, a physical manifestation of Spirit.

GOD'S EYES AND EARS

Christian mystic Meister Eckhart wrote, “The eye by which I see God is the same as the eye by which God sees me. My eye and God's eye are one and the same—one seeing, one knowing, one loving.”

When we breathe to be aware in the present, we begin to more fully experience our self, both as a spiritual being with the light of consciousness and as a physical personality with elaborate needs and desires.

Walt Whitman wrote, “If anything is sacred, the human body is sacred.” The body is our soul's housing, the result of billions of years of biochemical evolution. It's a physical mechanism of unimaginable complexity, unbelievable adaptability, and, when used properly, tremendous magic.

We reside within a temple, but we experience this fact only when we inhabit our body.

A beginning understanding would say that our body contains Spirit, but a more sophisticated understanding would go further, realizing the oneness of our senses with Spirit.

St. Paul asks, “Do you know that you are God's temple and God's spirit makes its home in you? ...the temple of God is sacred and that is what you are.”

The German poet Friedrich Novalis wrote, “We touch Heaven as we lay our hand on a human body.”

Kahlil Gibran wrote, “Your body is the harp of your soul.” The music of our basic nature comes forth when we play in the physical temple.

Mature souls, those who have highly developed conscious awareness in the present, realize that our

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Saying Yes To All You Can Be

N A N C Y N A P I E R

When we engage the dance of probabilities, choice, and synchronicity, we also tap into the dynamic realm of “possible futures.” Just as the fluid quality of non-local aspects of reality allows life to unfold within a context of shifting probabilities, the existence of possible futures allows us to tap into new states of being in nonlinear ways. Tapping into the future self is about “experiencing” a different possibility.

TONY STONE/ZIGY KALUZY

The optimal future self is one way to talk about a deep inner wisdom we each carry inside. This wisdom knows more than we do, at conscious levels, about what's possible for us to achieve. When thought of in terms of a future self, these possibilities become more tangible and more easily grasped. For example, several years ago, a future self emerged in one of my meditations. This future self had absolute confidence that problems could be solved, messes cleaned up, and life's challenges met with greater ease than I had ever imagined. I was able to experience how my *body* would feel when I truly understood that things eventually tend to work out. This was a new learning for me, and I welcomed it. What I didn't realize was how synchronicity was going to bring me face to face with an abundance of problems and challenges so that I could learn how to move through them more easily, to bring into my everyday experience what my future self knew already.

This example points to an important point: *if you don't want to change, don't do future self work*. If you do want to change, be willing to be challenged, to let go of outworn but familiar ways of being, and most of all, be prepared to feel a lot better about yourself in the long run. In some way I can't explain, accessing the optimal future self activates our inner wisdom and elicits a response. It is a way of saying yes to our most positive possibilities, something we'll explore in more depth later.

There are a number of ways you can think about your optimal future self. You can visualize it as an internal blueprint, an inherent potential that exists within you—within all of us—from the very beginning, just as a blossoming flower exists as potential within the seed. You can think about the optimal future self as a positive self-fulfilling prophecy, a constructive self-hypnotic suggestion. Or you can conceive of the future self as a representation of a source of deep inner wisdom that guides you in powerful ways.

As we begin our journey into the future, I want to point out an important distinction to keep in mind. *Having the intention to open yourself to your*

deepest potential is different from wishing you could be more than you are today. *Intention* is an active willingness to engage in creating change and arriving at desired goals. In contrast, *wishing* usually implies that we are yearning for outcomes we actually doubt we can achieve. For this reason, it is important that you connect with your optimal future self with the clear *intention* of opening yourself to actualizing your fundamental talents and capacities—to whatever aspects of yourself are ready to blossom at this time.

ACCESSING THE INFORMATION UNIVERSE FOR A BETTER FUTURE

Using the construct of your optimal future self, you can create a means by which to access information contained in the human morphic field. Whatever you seek to develop, change, or bring into your life, chances are that some other person—somewhere, sometime—has achieved what you seek. Through the future self, you have a means of accessing and translating this information, of making it available and personally meaningful to your present-day awareness.

I often ask workshop participants to get a glimpse of how they will feel and think when they have achieved an outcome they seek. What happens consistently is that most people become aware of something they haven't experienced before. It's as though their *intention* to access a new awareness becomes an antenna that attracts what they seek directly from the morphic field, where they draw the experience from collective consciousness. Within the guise of the optimal future self, the experience is then shaped to meet each person's individual style and unique way of being.

The future self can also give you new information about how you live in your body. Remember, you are a body mind, and your physical experience has a lot to do with your sense of psychological well-being. Through your future self, you have access to more empowered, more centered body states. I have worked with large numbers of people—clients and workshop participants—who have experienced greater comfort, ease, and self-confidence by tapping into the body of their future self. Once their bodies have a chance to “try on” new

states, it is as though something awakens within them and becomes their own.

For one woman, the experience of her optimal future self was a true revelation. She was excitable—people and situations quickly stressed her and she had difficulty calming herself. When she experienced her future self from the inside and accessed a calmer body state, she had an opportunity to get a flavor of what it was like to be less agitated. In fact, she described her internal experience as “quieter, stiller.” Once she touched the experience directly, she knew what it felt like to be less easily agitated. She also sensed that her future self interpreted events in a different way—a style in which her inner dialogue eased, rather than escalated, her anxieties.

Accessing the future self is like entering a timeless library where you can discover outcomes, possibilities, and ways of thinking, feeling, and acting that are an inherent part of your potential—that increase your sense of psychological wholeness—of which you were previously unaware. Sometimes, the new information emerges into everyday life slowly, over time. Months or years may pass as you naturally grow into what you have glimpsed. At other times, you just “get it” and adopt new states of mind and being instantaneously. Then, it is a matter of practicing the new resources you now have available.

I recall a time I was on my way to my office and I was worrying about a delivery I was expecting that day. It was snowing, and I became increasingly convinced the delivery wouldn't happen. As I obsessed, a thought drifted into my mind: *I wonder how my future self would handle this moment, right here, right now?* Immediately, I felt a shift occur in my thinking

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as I accessed a calm, unconcerned state of mind. It came over me in one moment as my internal dialogue shifted to one focused on reassuring myself that the delivery would be made eventually—if not today—and, in the meantime, it wasn't nearly as big a problem as I was creating in my own mind. My body state shifted, too, into a surprisingly calm and centered quality. I went on to my office, the delivery arrived as scheduled, and I suffered much less wear and tear than usual. Since that morning—and it has been many years since then—the way of thinking I accessed has become a reliable presence in times of stress.

There is no “right way” to access information from the future self. Each of us will do so in our own way. The important thing to know is that the future self offers an impacting means of obtaining new information—possibilities we haven't yet activated on a conscious level—that supports who and how we want

to be in the world.

CONNECTING WITH THE OPTIMAL FUTURE SELF

Certain characteristics show up repeatedly in people's reports of their journeys into the future and appear to accompany the experience of accessing the optimal future self. The most important is that the future self takes whatever symbolic form most strongly communicates its qualities. For example, while most future selves are symbolized in human form, that's not always the case. Some appear as animals; some are balls or patterns of light; some are cross-gendered or younger than the present-day self; and some take no form at all. When a future self does not take a symbolic form

and instead is *sensed*, it is as though a telepathic communication occurs. There is a feeling of knowing, an intuitive awareness, that conveys the qualities, thoughts, and feelings of the future self to the present-day self.

As is true with any inner symbolic work, it is important to accept your first impressions, even when they may seem off base to your “rational” mind. Remember that accessing your future self is about tapping into awareness and developments you haven’t yet achieved. For this reason, it’s not unusual to be surprised by the image or quality that comes to mind.

I remember a workshop participant who had a future self who was a horse. The image troubled him and yet, when I asked how it had felt to *be* the horse, he reported that it was wonderful. The horse conveyed a physical exuberance, a sense of power to go where it wanted to go. Once he was able to talk through the experience, he realized that the horse had a great deal to offer. Over time, the image may have shifted to a human representation, but in that moment the horse carried the most alive way of representing his potential in his conscious awareness.

For another person, the future self was symbolized by a white light that didn’t have any specific form. Her first response to this image was one of fear that she was going to die. But as we talked about it, she realized that the quality conveyed by the light was one of vibrant aliveness, an energizing feeling she experienced throughout her body when she became her future self. The more time she spent allowing herself to explore how the light translated into her everyday awareness, the more comfortable she became with it.

These examples point to a second essential characteristic of the optimal future self. Until you have become this new part of yourself—given yourself a chance to enter the image and experience it from the inside—you won’t have a complete sense of what your deeper wisdom is revealing to you. It is important to have an opportunity to think with the mind of the future self, see with the eyes of the future self, feel with the emotions and responses of the future self, and experience the body of the future self. Once you have moved through these

states of awareness, you will have a sense of what the future self has to offer or teach you.

I recall another workshop participant who was quite put off by the way his future self looked. He described an old man dressed in tattered clothes. When I asked what the future self felt like from the inside, he said, “Oh, he’s completely comfortable with himself, totally un-self-conscious.” When I asked about the underlying intention this participant had created for his journey, he said it had been to resolve his constant worry about what people think of him. As we talked, he realized that the message wasn’t that he would grow old and sloppy, but that he could become comfortable with himself no matter how he looked.

This man’s experience underscores the fact that when working with the future self, its *form* is usually less important than its *essence*, its qualities. Even when an image appears whose form is important in and of itself, it is the underlying experience of how it is to be the future self that carries the greatest impact for change. For example, a client reported that her future self had a completely different hair style that caught her attention because she had worn her hair in the same way for many years. The new hair style turned out to be an important symbol for the change that was to come, as this woman moved into a greater sense of psychological wholeness. Even though she actually did change her hair eventually, the more significant issue was the shift that took place in her way of being in the world: the new hair style represented a greater dynamism and level of activity.

WHY EMPHASIZE AN “OPTIMAL” FUTURE SELF?

Consistent with the idea that reality is made up of a constantly available array of probabilities, one of the assumptions of working with the future self is that *there are as many possible future selves as there are probable realities existing in the universe*. Research demonstrates that most of us have a variety of possible selves we project into the future as fantasies of what might become of us. Some of these fantasies are negative—as when we fear we may become homeless—and some are positive—as when we experience ourselves attaining hoped-for outcomes.

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Creating Conscious Relationships



AN INTERVIEW WITH
GAY AND KATHLYN HENDRICKS
BY MARY NURRIESTEARN

Kathlyn Hendricks, Ph.D., and Gay Hendricks, Ph.D., are pioneers in the field of body-centered psychotherapy, nationally known teachers and seminar leaders, and co-authors of "Conscious Loving" and "At the Speed of Life." They have been partners in life and work for nearly twenty years, share two adult children and a grandchild, and currently live in Santa Barbara, California.

Personal Transformation: The book “The Conscious Heart” is a loving and wise guide for living in relationship as a spiritual path. Love is envisioned as an evolutionary path that honors the uniqueness and creativity of each partner.

Gay, in your book “The Conscious Heart,” you said “Relationships are the sacred space in which we live out our full potential.” Let’s begin with a discussion of that statement.

GAY HENDRICKS: Relationship is sacred because every moment of relationship interaction contains opportunities to reveal your essence and to know the essence of the other person. This is true in love, work, and every area of life.

KATHLYN HENDRICKS: Most people are usually unaware of the possibility in each moment, in each relationship interaction. We see relationship itself as a spiritual path. Every interaction, no matter how seemingly trivial or important, becomes an opportunity for learning how to reveal more of who we really are. The emphasis in relationship becomes how to be a space for the people around you to fulfill their potential and to continue opening up to discovering who they really are.

GAY: All relationships are a living cathedral in which you have the opportunity to worship every moment. In fact, spiritual paths don’t become real until they show up in your relationships.

What is a conscious heart?

GAY: A conscious heart is open to love in every moment and at the same time is informed by the mind about the possibilities of the moment. For example, in the workplace a conscious heart comes to life when you open to receiving and giving love and positive energy, and you open to using your mind to fulfill the possibilities of the project that you are working on. The conscious heart is a union of body, mind, and soul. It’s the opportunity to bring everything you know in your mind, and everything you feel in your body, into communion with other people.

How does the conscious heart honor essence?

KATHLYN: Most people don’t consider the possibility that relationship can be a vehicle for continuing to discover our deepest selves. They accept relationships as they were put together centuries ago, which defines and limits their possibilities. Most people settle for relationships where they tolerate each other or where they try to change each other

“... with a conscious heart, you are open to the possibility of love and connection every moment—with the paper boy, the bank teller, or your beloved. As you move through life, your philosophy is one of a constant search for the possibilities of connection and unity which inform your ideas. Your ideas begin to serve as connection between people. Your ideas flow toward communion and community.”

into a version of themselves. The conscious heart honors essence by looking for the possibility in each moment of being open to discovering who this person really is. That quality of attention opens the space for people to learn more about themselves than they could otherwise.

GAY: We assist people in learning to distinguish between their personas and their essence. In growing up, everybody has to adopt certain masks or personas in order to survive, to get their needs met, and to find ways to interact with the world. In relationships, as soon as close bonds are formed with another, personas surface. That occurrence often breaks up relationships. People discover personas that they don't want to look at in themselves, or in the other, and they turn away. Many relationships fail in the first few years when personas are revealed. We wish people would open up, love and honor their personas, and go to the deeper level of finding essence, the deeper being in which all personas reside. Relationship problems are caused by defending personas, or making them right, rather than realizing that personas exist in the larger context of your essence self.

KATHLYN: Sometimes, personas are so glued to essence that people are afraid or convinced that there is nothing under personas. When personas become revealed, people confuse them with who they are at their deepest level.

GAY: Once during a therapy session, we pointed out to an attorney that his insistence on always being right was destroying his relationships with his wife and children. We suggested that he let go of the need to be right. We asked him to honor it and go beneath it to his essence self, to feel the part of himself that's not interested in being right. He became upset and said, "I make \$350,000 a year with that persona, and you want me to give it up!" The personas that allow us to survive in life are oftentimes the ones that have to be lovingly surrendered in order to have a genuine heart connection with another person.

You describe the opening of the conscious heart as the ultimate adventure, a journey which contains infinity.

GAY: All of us are on an incredible journey, a

hero's journey of learning how to survive and prosper and connect with people, often under difficult circumstances. When we work with people, we uncover adventures of abandonment, betrayal, and all the stuff that deep human drama is made of. We think that relationship itself, forming close relationships with others, is the ultimate journey, because to do it successfully, we have to move through the personas that we developed to grow into adulthood. We have to transcend our embodied heroic stance that allows us to survive, in order to have a true living heart connection with another person. We can't get rid of personas. We have to hold them in a field of love and consciousness where they can be acknowledged, but not in control.

KATHLYN: So that we are not in their grip. To begin to allow essence to move more freely, we emphasize playing with personas, in addition to loving personas. When we acknowledge, befriend, and appreciate them, they are not experienced as the enemy. This journey is also the ultimate paradox, for the very personas that allowed us to succeed are the ones that hold us back from connecting with infinity. Once we start playing with and loving personas, an infinite field opens up because we access true creativity which is limitless. Personas have repetitive, automatic patterns. Once we loosen the grip of personas, creativity emerges in oncoming waves. There's no limit to where those waves can take us.

The conscious heart is about committed adult relationships and also extends to our relationship with all of life.

GAY: From conception, through gestation, birth, bonding, and all of the developmental cycles of our lives, relationship or heart connection, and the feeling of fulfillment or the lack of connection or fulfillment, is what is real for us. If we don't have a fulfilling connection with people, we think there is something wrong with the universe and that the world itself is dangerous and unsafe. We don't recognize our world as our projection caused by a tightening in our hearts. The more we tighten the fist in our heart and shrink from relationship, the more dangerous the universe looks. Once we

loosen that grip, open, and experience who we really are, the universe, which has been our relationships with people, looks like a very different place. It looks like a place of safety and transcendence in every moment.

KATHLYN: That shift occurs instantaneously. It's not something that people need to struggle through. Recognizing this fundamental law of relationships allows people to literally see themselves and their partners differently in the moment.

What is the philosophy of a conscious heart?

GAY: The philosophy of a conscious heart is that each moment is alive with connection, fulfillment, and creative possibility. As you move through the world with a conscious heart, you are open to the possibility of love and connection every moment—with the paper boy, the bank teller, or your beloved. As you move through life, your philosophy is one of a constant search for the possibilities of connection and unity which inform your ideas. Your ideas begin to serve as connection between people. Your ideas flow toward communion and community. Your ideas begin to serve your heart.

KATHLYN: Practically speaking, the miraculous choice in each moment is to open up to the learning possibility. What can I learn in this moment? What is the learning opportunity? What is the universe offering me here? In that openness to learning, connection and creative possibilities flow.

What are the barriers on the path to becoming a conscious heart?

GAY: The main barrier is not taking advantage of the learning opportunities in every moment. Many of us, because of our traumas, experience every moment by questioning "What's wrong with me, with the world, or other people?" These questions come out of painful experiences where we've been made wrong or traumatized in some way. Real magic begins when we shift to asking, "What can I learn in this moment about life, myself, and other people?" We believe there is a primary commitment that makes the conscious heart possible. The commitment is to treat each moment as an opportunity to learn about yourself and other people so that you can learn how to connect with others. You

treat each moment of relationship as the sacred space in which you learn exactly what you need to be learning in this moment.

KATHLYN: We encourage people to open up to the reality that they are having the perfect experience in each moment. The basic human complaint is that we are having wrong experiences. We believe we should be having a different, more harmonious experience. That kind of thinking closes down the opportunity to learn in the moment. One of the major obstacles in our marriage that we needed to love our way through was letting go of controlling each other.

Learning to control, to manipulate our environment, is part of our development. Yet, at a certain point, it no longer serves us.

KATHLYN: Yes. We needed a control persona in order to survive in the world. It is now possible, in our evolution, to move beyond the necessity to control. This possibility brings up the deepest levels of fear in people because being about control is all that they have known. Stepping into that great unknown brings out both excitement and terror for most people.

GAY: It is really a step into creativity. Look at what happens when you are not trying to control yourself and other people. The moment you let go of control, incredible creativity wells up out of yourself and the other person. Most of us have not known how to be alive to our creativity in every moment. It seems frightening to let go into being creative; yet, we have seen over and over again when people let go of trying to control themselves and others, they access depths of creativity in themselves that are very satisfying. At the moment of letting go, you become a different person. It's a giant step into the unknown, but we want to let people know that it's a totally safe unknown.

How do we let go?

GAY: First of all, find those places in your body where you hold things in, that fist in your heart, or your shoulders, or jaw. Instead of making yourself wrong for having a tight jaw, ask what you can learn from this. Begin to relax those parts of yourself. Open up to them, and you'll find at the physical

THE SEVEN SOUL COMMITMENTS

As our relationship grew in depth and understanding, we found that there were seven major process commitments that really made a difference. We took years to develop, understand, and embrace these commitments in our souls. Once we did, however, the heart-level satisfaction of our relationship became much more profound. Here are the commitments that we discovered to be essential:

THE FIRST

I commit to realizing my full potential for both closeness and autonomy. I open myself to learning about and honoring my essence—rhythms of closeness and separateness, and to learning about and honoring those rhythms in others.

THE SECOND

I commit to full expression, to holding back nothing. This means telling the truth about everything, including my feelings, my fantasies, and my actions. I commit to telling the unarguable truth—truth that no one can argue with—instead of giving my opinions, beliefs, and prejudices. I also commit to listening, non-judgmentally, to what people say to me.

level your body has been holding your history. We work with body-centered techniques like breath work and movement because our bodies hold our history and our personas. To move beyond them, into that vast field of essence, you have to focus on the stuck places. Learn how to relax and let go, and not just on the physical level. Look at what you try to control in the relationship, and move from control to full acceptance of it. For example, if your partner feels sexual feelings for another person, notice how desperately you want to control those feelings, and how that does no good at all. The moment someone lets go of trying to control their partner's feelings, the issue for the other person usually ceases. Many times, when a person feels sexually attracted to someone else, as soon as their partner lets go of the censorship of those feelings, interest is lost in the other person as a sexual object. What the partner really wanted was full access to themselves.

KATHLYN: Not just their sexual feelings, but all of their feelings, and ultimately their creativity. Both flow out of our basic aliveness.

Gay, you said earlier that when we let go and feel our creativity, we discover that the universe is safe. How can you say that?

GAY: When you look in nature, you see creativity itself: the universe produces an oak tree, and the oak tree produces an acorn. They emerge out of a field of creativity. If you participate in the same flow of creativity that the world participates in to create an oak tree, and the oak tree an acorn, you see there is no real danger involved in that experience at all. The universe doesn't wonder if it would be safe to make a oak tree happen here. Here on earth in this present era, we've evolved fear as a way of surviving hostile environments, but fear doesn't come as part of the basic creative force of the universe.

How do you define evil?

GAY: Evil is the ultimate outcome of defending against love. Evil is the fist in the heart made permanent by contracting away from the possibilities of love in every moment. The more you contract, the more you catapult yourself away from love and creative possibility.

KATHLYN: Away from connectedness. The healing of conflict and the transformation of evil is in the moment of true connection between human beings, and between human beings and the environment. Evil disappears in the moment of freely opening the heart and experiencing at a

deep physical, emotional, and spiritual level the connection of everything.

Kathlyn, you said that we want to feel all our feelings, that we need to allow and go through complete cycles of feelings. What are complete cycles of feelings?

KATHLYN: Feelings have a beginning, middle, and end, just like a wave building, cresting, and residing back into the ocean. Feelings arise in us all the time, and they have their own cycles. Most of us learned as children to control those cycles because they were inconvenient for the people around us. In most families, certain feelings are not allowed. Feelings of fear and/or anger are forbidden in certain families. Children learn these rules quickly. Children learn how to hold and control their feelings by holding their breath. Holding onto and not expressing full feelings becomes a part of the history of the body. Suppressed feelings become part of those tight places, part of the fist in the heart, which then combines with the personas that we all develop to survive. So the fist could then turn into a fixer, a controller, or like in my case, a very devoted persona. I was aware of other people's feelings, but I wasn't aware of my own because I had placed all of my attention on how the other person was feeling. Out of holding feelings, we develop interaction patterns with each other that don't allow for the celebration of the actual creative aliveness that is inherent in feelings. It's a thrilling revelation for me to see when I open up to and express my true feelings that I immediately have more creative thoughts. Right on the heels of expression, I directly experience more connectedness and creativity. Most people haven't had the experience of being able to be in the presence of celebrating feelings and the joyful connection to our deeper self that comes through feelings.

Is allowing complete feeling cycles like riding a wave, but not getting lost in the wave?

KATHLYN: It's not getting lost in the wave at all.

GAY: It's connecting with the ocean, rather than identifying with the individual wave.

How do we distinguish between riding the wave and allowing emotion from becoming submersed and drowning in emotion?

GAY: It's a matter of practice. We live near the ocean, and it can be battering when you first learn how to bob over waves. When we got together almost twenty years ago, I had feelings arise such as fear of abandonment and anger. I didn't know how to deal with them, since I hadn't relaxed

THE THIRD

I commit to becoming the source of full responsibility for my life, including my happiness, my well-being, and my life-goals. I absolve everyone, living or dead, past or present, from any implication that they cause my feelings or actions in any way.

THE FOURTH

When faced with the choice between being happy and being defensive, I commit to choosing happiness; I commit to doing this especially in those situations when my defensiveness seems most warranted and when it is totally obvious to me that I am right and the other person is wrong.

THE FIFTH

I commit to learning to love and appreciate myself and others in my close relationships.

THE SIXTH

I commit to the full expression of my creativity, and to inspiring the full creative expression of those around me.

THE SEVENTH

I commit to celebration as the dominating emotional tone of my relationships. Particularly, I commit to celebrating the essence of myself and those close to me.

The Master Commitment

The master commitment is a diamond with several facets. It begins in this way:

- I accept relationship itself as my primary teacher about myself, other people, and the mysteries of the universe. I open myself to letting every relationship interaction, no matter how seemingly trivial, deepen my connection with my essence and the essence of others. I invite all healing powers in myself and the universe to remove any obstacles to my relationships being a source of joyful fulfillment to me in all my depths.

The master commitment continues:

- I commit to clearing up anything in me that keeps me from full loving unity with myself and my loved ones.
- I make a commitment to intimacy that is greater than my commitment to being right and perpetuating my conditioned patterns.

into them and accepted them fully. I resisted them, which is like turning my back to the ocean, and I got battered by my feelings. I learned to face and open up to them. Breathing with feelings became a skill I used for surfing the waves of emotion. We teach breathing and movement. You have to make friends with your body and use all of its organic wisdom in order to ride the waves of emotion that need to be ridden in order to have a connection with another person. When you connect with another, you connect with a full range of feelings in yourself and in them, which requires a kind of cosmic surfing not previously needed.

What are soul commitments?

GAY: Many people make commitments from their personas, and therefore fear is built into their commitments. For example, it used to be common in wedding vows for a person to promise to love, honor, and obey another person until parted by death. That's a persona commitment, as it tries to predict the future which is uncontrollable. A soul commitment is made at the deepest level in yourself about something over which you have complete control. For example, I have complete control over whether I choose in any moment to tell the truth about myself. If you ask how I am feeling, I have the choice to say, "I'm feeling scared, angry, hurt, or joyful." A defensive response would be to say, "I'm fine, everything's OK, or don't bug me right now." People don't keep commitments because they make the wrong kind of commitments. A true soul commitment is something that you commit with body, mind, soul, and heart and is something that you have control over. You yourself can make happen.

KATHLYN: There is tremendous power in acting on and standing in a commitment that you can practice in daily life. Commitments that have a disembodied quality and are about things we have no control over are not usable and don't provide learning opportunities. Through practice, soul commitments deepen and become a practical vehicle to take us into the infinite opportunity to reveal essence. Soul commitments are a wedding of the practical and the infinitely creative.

GAY: Soul commitments allow your soul and the other person's soul to come forth in relationship. If you don't practice these commitments, there's little chance for you to reveal who you are in the deepest level and to feel who the other person is at his or her deepest level.

Are these process commitments rather than outcome

commitments?

GAY: Yes. Many people make outcome commitments which focus them on the wrong thing. For example, promising to always be there for another is an outcome commitment. Promising to always tell the truth to another is something you have complete control of. You cannot control whether you can always be there for another. Commitments need to focus on the process of how you're going to go about every moment.

KATHLYN: Enormous confusion is created when people focus on things they have no control over, believing they can produce an outcome they've committed to. Such focus neglects essence. Yet it is essence that enters us into an ongoing process that will achieve what we really want. Most people want a sense of connection, of being able to express who they are in the presence of another person. We long to see and be seen as we are. The ultimate safety is to be able to be yourself. The question for most people in relationships is can they be in relationship and fully be who they are. Process commitments allow people to discover who they are and don't perpetuate the personas that got us into trouble in the first place.

You mentioned telling the truth. How important is the truth?

GAY: If you tell the truth all the time, you have a relationship, and if you don't, you don't. If there is not truth telling, a relationship is an entanglement of two or more people who are holding their breath, fearing that the truth will eventually come out. Fear and lies make a destructive environment at home and at work. We go to the radical extreme. We have committed to telling each other the truth about anything within ten seconds of its occurrence. We define truth as things that can't be argued about. If I say, "Mary, you are a jerk," that can be argued about. If I say, "Mary, my stomach felt tight as we were talking a moment ago," that would be unarguable. The truth produces intimacy.

KATHLYN: This is a difficult skill for people to discover and then to practice. Most up-bringsings led us to believe that the truth is unsafe, and that telling the truth is a moral issue about right and

wrong, rather than talking about our own experience, thoughts, internal images, and feelings. Many people confuse the truth with a loudly expressed opinion or judgment. In our ongoing relationship, we continue to refine our ability to discern that which is arguable or unarguable. When I say something that is arguable and then shift and say something that matches my inner experience, I experience vitality, a sense of connectedness with myself, and a sense of discovery about what is authentic, that which is occurring in this sacred un-repeatable moment.

Is that how the truth heals us?

KATHLYN: Yes. We go to great lengths to devise activities for people to discover the healing and vitality that comes with practicing authenticity and transparency. When people say things that can't be argued about for a length of time, there's a connection between mind and heart and body, and they ride the wave of vitality and aliveness. You can see aliveness on people's faces. They light up, and start to smile. They say things like, "I see you completely differently than I did a moment ago," or "I'm feeling this happiness welling up inside that I didn't know I had, even though I've been talking about feeling sad."

Generosity is also associated with the conscious heart.

KATHLYN: Generosity is an outcome of the healed heart. When you open the conscious heart, generosity flows naturally. Appreciation is the process commitment that allows you to experience generosity on an ongoing basis. You have total control over whether you appreciate another. You can practice appreciating, and in the act of appreciating, grow the organ of generosity that then begins to flourish.

GAY: Many people wait for something good to happen before they feel generous or express gratitude. This is the wrong way to go about it. No gardener goes into a garden and says, "Garden, give me some vegetables, and then, maybe, I'll water you." You have to practice appreciation by expressing it every time you get the opportunity. Doing that awakens that flow in you, and you begin to feel

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Finding Your Heart of Love

C H A R L O T T E S O P H I A K A S L

Love is the energy at the center of all life. It is the reality beneath our fears, the breath within the breath, the seed of all that grows. Loving ourselves, loving others, and loving spirit/God are inseparable, for all life is interconnected and sacred. Love is an energy force like the air you breathe; if you withdraw your love from anyone, you take your breath away.

TONY STONE/ELAN SUN STAR

We become increasingly able to love as we integrate ourselves and become whole. Our wholeness is expressed in a lust for life and a capacity for joy, delight, and adventure. Our wholeness gives birth to compassion, which Ram Dass describes in *Compassion in Action* as “the tender opening of our hearts to pain and suffering.” For most people, the journey toward love requires that we penetrate the armor around our hearts, feel our grief, and open ourselves to all our feelings. In doing so, we become more truly alive, deepen our self-acceptance, and become less and less dependent on others to validate our worth. This frees us to stand in the center of our power and to give generously of ourselves from a sense of inner safety, potency, and vitality. The ability to give generously of ourselves without feeling we are giving up something or being controlled is at the heart of intimacy because it reflects our individual strength and development.

We reach for words to describe love, but, ultimately, love is an experience of unity, peace, or ecstasy that goes beyond words. Too often people mistake love for fancy presents, sentimental greeting cards, or lavish praise. But love is not sentimental; love takes discipline, awareness, and a willingness to step into the fire of transformation. It is born of the minute-to-minute choices we make throughout our days as we bring honesty, integrity, and compassion to all we do and say.

People often treat love like a commodity that you can turn on for some people and off for others. But you can't truly love your partner and hate your neighbor, or exploit the people who work for you. Love can't be compartmentalized because it is central to your being. You can't turn on half a light bulb. You can dim it or make it brighter, but when it's on, the light shines equally in all directions.

Disconnection and separateness, nearly always stemming from fear, are the opposite of love. To be disconnected can be a dull anxious feeling of inner detachment that makes life seem mundane, superficial, and routine. We feel controlled by

external events and lack an inner core that allows us to be spontaneous, fluid, and flexible. We see people as bodies, but not as souls—they have form and shape and even beauty, but we don't feel their essence. When we are disconnected from our inner core, we are unable to absorb and be moved by beauty, wonder, and kindness. We hear music, but it doesn't make our heart sing. We see flowers, but they might as well be plastic. We touch someone, but there is no connection. When we feel separated, it's hard to trust that anyone cares, or could possibly love us if they were to see our hidden, shameful side.

We can bring ourselves back to love—to the home of our heart—by remembering that we are all children of our Creator, sacred because we are alive. If we accept our intrinsic worth, we can give up the futile search for external validation and put our energy into developing our ability to develop our talents and strengths. We can also remember that we have free will. Because we are pure potential, we are not locked into our past, but have the ability to re-create ourselves moment to moment by our thoughts, actions, and willingness to experiment with new behavior and give up old rigid patterns that no longer serve our growth. We also become willing to dive deep below the surface into our buried wounds. We have an amazing ability to heal and transform as we tap the powerful energy source underlying all our feelings and emotions. Instead of labeling our feelings as good or bad; we see them as energy that can be redirected for our growth. The inward journey becomes easier as we tap into our heart's capacity for humor, compassion, and mercy. We become able to take ourselves into our heart, embracing all that we are and all that we have been. It becomes a mystical, humorous, fascinating show as we learn to observe ourselves, yet immerse ourselves in life.

From this point of self-acceptance and compassion, we develop the willingness to share our feelings in their raw, vulnerable state, not after we've figured them out or gotten them under control. This doesn't mean that we unload our emotions on others; it means that we stop hiding, faking a smile, or presenting ourselves as we wish to be seen. We

accept our humanness and allow it to be seen.

One of my favorite phrases from one of the dances of universal peace is “God is love, lover, and beloved.” If we break “beloved” in two, we have “be loved:” be loved by spirit, be loved by yourself, be loved by others. If we remove the last letter of “beloved,” we have “be love.” Don’t seek love or lover; simply *be love*. Be at peace with All That Is, and know you *are* the beloved. And when you find a lover, know that the journey is to dance together in the circle of love, growing, playing, struggling, and accepting with a smile the incredible predicament of being human. When we can do this, even for a few moments, we will feel a flow of energy like the current of a river dissolving our separateness and bringing us to greater unity.

To become love, lover, and beloved means making love your highest priority. It doesn’t necessarily mean you quit your job or change the external situation of your life, although that might be part of the process. It means giving yourself to the daily practice of bringing love and awareness to everything you do. It also means stretching, reaching, growing, and stepping through fear again and again. This usually involves some form of daily spiritual practice or a daily plan to go deeper into yourself and break old patterns that sit like ice jams inside, blocking your ability to reach out and love generously or be reached by those who would love you.

Love involves a fundamental change in consciousness of realizing there are no “others” out there; rather, we are all intertwined in a single web that is the miracle of life, a cosmic energy field. On a concrete level, this means internalizing in the deepest part of yourself the thought, “There but for the grace of God go I,” or, more accurately, “There go I.” When you feel scorn or contempt for someone, a part of you can remember that given different circumstances, you could be like that person or in that person’s situation. Likewise, when you see someone show greatness, you can know that you too have a great nature within you.

In Nepal, where many religions and customs meet, it is customary to greet people by saying “*Namaste*,” which can be translated as “I salute the divinity in you,” or, “To the light in you,” or, “To the God in you.” It is like taking a breath of life and

combining it with the knowledge that we are all children of creation and are sending this energy out to everyone we meet. *Namaste*. I salute the divinity in you. This is where we begin.

ALLOW YOURSELF YOUR LONGING

Reach down inside, past the worries of the day, the thoughts of tomorrow, and listen to the deepest part of yourself. Tap into your longing for love, connection, and understanding. Can you hear it? What does it say? When I listen deeply, I think of the relationships and community I have, and I feel good. Then, as I listen longer, I crack open to a deeper layer that longs for closer connections with more honesty, passion, consciousness, and a greater ability to give and receive love. I want to know love in all of my being, to feel free to experience a deeper sense of unity with people, animals, and the earth.

Many of us bury our longing for greater love and intimacy because we believe it is out of reach—it is not for ordinary people. We might tell ourselves it is too painful to long for passionate, intimate connections because we have been hurt, rejected, or betrayed. Maybe it’s hard to have faith in our worthiness because we have internalized the notion of a judgmental, fearsome God, or have been taught that we are inferior. Maybe we’ve hid out so long in a role, it seems unimaginable to let it slip away and feel the nakedness of our longing. So we put on a protective coating that keeps us from ourselves and others. We dissociate from our true selves in a myriad of ways. We put on a mask, we drink, smoke, eat too much, or get busy and productive. Yet what do we produce? Even if we rush through the day obsessed with tasks to accomplish, read a ton of books, or exercise compulsively, we can only mask the longing for connection because it is natural to human existence. We are all tribal people and our health, joy, and happiness are intricately tied to interconnecting with others and with spirit.

Take a look at the motivation underlying all the things you do. If you look deep enough, you will realize that many of your actions are motivated by a desire for love and connection—to find it, maintain it, or keep from losing it. Remember the miles

you have traveled, the money you have spent, the heartaches you have survived, the times you stayed up all night, worried about your looks, or sought wealth, status, and fame. Wasn't much of that all about a great longing to feel special so that someone would love you or say, "Good for you"?

Think for a moment of how you spend your time. What are you truly seeking? What do you want to have accomplished when you finish this life? Go as deep as you can. Is there a place that simply wants to slow down, tune into life, know yourself, and feel close to others? A turning point in my life came at the age of forty-four when I saw my father die a very lonely man. He had waited until retirement at age sixty-eight to travel, but it was too late; he had Alzheimer's disease. He had written books, been admired, and had received numerous awards, yet he was profoundly lonely. It jolted my complacency about work and relationships. I resolved to make a priority of friendships and spiritual growth, along with doing work I loved.

If you are seeking greater love and intimacy in your life, you might ask yourself how much time you give to growing, reaching out to others, and nurturing your relationships. How deep is your capacity for stillness and quiet, which allows the wisdom within you to emerge? How honest are you with yourself and others?

Your longing is your connection to your soul, the part of you that cries out for spirit and for love. To hear this inner cry is to touch the earth, reach for the sky, and open yourself to your awakening heart, the source of compassion and understanding. To feel your longing creates a thirst and hunger for the true nourishment of life. Dare to feel it and immerse yourself in a passionate journey for all that will truly fill you and bring peace.

MAKE FRIENDS WITH YOUR EMPTY PLACES

When we allow ourselves our longing, we sometimes find a big, empty place inside. It makes us uncomfortable and anxious. We want to run. If this is your experience, instead of running away, you might take a few deep breaths and slide down into that scary place inside. Stay with it. The empty place won't swallow you up. Notice how you feel—

sweaty, jumpy, scared, or fascinated, excited, and curious? If it's frightening, breathe, soften your belly, and elicit compassion for this wounded part of you that has been ignored for so long. Feel it. Embrace this part of you. Remember, it is out of the womb, the emptiness, that life is created. In this place of anxiety or emptiness, you will come to know your rejected self and your fears. It is from this scary place that you will free yourself and open the door to love and intimacy.

One way people become more at peace with their empty place is to visit it daily. Every time you want to detach, numb out, or run away, stop, go inside, and make friends with your fears. Stay with the terror of silence, of nothingness. One woman I knew drew her empty place. It started as a frightening dark hole. Then a day or so later, she drew the hole with herself sitting at the bottom with a ray of light shining in. Over time, as she drew pictures of her empty place, she added flowers and books and a comfortable chair. She was increasingly able to breathe and relax in her empty place without wanting to eat or get busy—her usual escapes. Then she drew a ladder on the wall of the empty place and saw someone peering over the rim. She invited him to come sit with her. They both talked about their empty places, and as they did, they felt a sense of happiness and warmth coming over them. Like everything, the empty place is energy. When we meet it with consciousness and simply breathe into it and stop labeling it as bad, it begins to dissolve into a peaceful stillness.

Denying our empty place creates fear and anxiety. So long as we run away, the dark hole seems bigger and bigger, scarier and scarier, like a villain or a big dragon chasing us in a bad dream. If we stop and face the dragon, we begin the process of knowing and integrating ourselves. When we hide from parts of ourselves—our fears, anger, grief, power, and joy—we feel split inside. It's like locking up parts of ourselves in little boxes and using a lot of energy to keep the boxes from flying open. The distance we keep from our buried selves is reflected in the distance we keep from others. In a hundred ways we transmit the message, "Stay away, you might see me." Stay away, I might see myself. In this state of self-absorption, we have little ability to

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Surrender to Life

A N D R E W C O H E N

There are times when suddenly everything becomes clear in a way that is profound, when everything falls miraculously into place, when the burden of confusion lifts and one is able to see the way things actually are. In moments like these, one experiences Liberation. Many, at one time or another, have experienced moments of Liberation, but few have been so deeply affected that their lives have become transformed as a result. Indeed, if one looks closely at the personal lives of many who seem to sincerely pursue spiritual teachings, often one will find much of the same confusion as there is in the lives of those who express no spiritual interest whatsoever.

TONY STONE/DARIEL TORCKLER

Why is this? *Because it is not spiritual experiences in and of themselves that set us free.* It is not the experience of overwhelming love, unbearable bliss or even penetrating insight that allows people to change in an extraordinary way. What allows the event of profound insight and revelation to become extraordinary transformation is ultimately only the readiness and willingness of the individual to surrender unconditionally to that which is discovered in the spiritual experience.

One who is truly ready and willing to surrender, once having tasted what it means to be awake, will stay awake. If one is not ready to surrender unconditionally, if the context in which the experience of revelation occurs is one of profound attachment to the way things have been, then even the direct experiential revelation of the spiritual dimension of life in all its glory will not be enough to deeply affect that individual's relationship to life. *The context in which we seek is an absolute choice.*

Again, what allows the event of profound insight and revelation to become extraordinary transformation is ultimately only the readiness and willingness of the individual to surrender unconditionally to that which is discovered in the spiritual experience. Spiritual experiences in and of themselves do not set us free.

Surrender means we don't know what's going to happen. When we surrender, we give up needing to know. If surrender is genuine, that means in the very depths of our being we don't know what's going to happen.

Something extraordinary occurs when we allow ourselves the freedom to not know because it is then that everything opens up. It is then that the experience of life becomes profoundly joyous and unthinkably mysterious. Not knowing what's going to happen means ceasing to always insist upon knowing what the future will bring. When we surrender the need to know, we discover that things often work out in marvelous and unexpected ways that we could never have previously imagined. Only when we transcend the need to always be sure of what's going to happen in the future will there be room for that which is extraordinary and miraculous to reveal itself.

What would the experience of life be like if we were no longer seeking for any security whatsoever from the future? Everything would open up, everything would become possible. Why? Because we wouldn't be waiting any longer for the experience of life to become complete. When we realize that everything is possible, then the way we respond to life begins to break boundaries. All that was fixed is undone as that which was previously unthinkable becomes known. Many talk about surrender, but the truth is very few seem able to surrender to the degree necessary to achieve Liberation.

Genuine surrender is unconditional, absolute and always liberates. That means you have let go of everything to such a degree that you have found the very center of it all. You know, you see, you actually feel that is where you abide—at the very center. True surrender means you have found it. You always know that that's where you are. Even physically, you feel that is where you abide.

The reason you are no longer preoccupied with the future is because the experience of life has become so rich, so full, and so mysterious. If surrender is genuine, this revelation is always being reaffirmed. Over and over again, you will recognize, "Yes, this is true." It's a knowing that is absolute, a knowing that is constantly being affirmed and reaffirmed.

Surrender is dynamic and explosive because it is Liberation. When you say, "Not my will but Thy will be done," and mean it, then something very big happens. The life of the personality comes to an end, and a life that is truly unknown begins. If this has not happened in a way that is unmistakable, mysterious and profound, then one has not yet surrendered.

Only if you have let go to the degree that you feel your life is actually being taken away from you, literally swept away, can you know for sure that surrender has occurred. It's as if you have been picked up by a hurricane and thrown around like a little twig, having lost control of your destiny.

In the end, you will discover true happiness because you are not trying to hold on any longer. Indeed, it is ecstasy to be thrown around when you are not holding onto anything. Realize that it is only because you try to hold on that you suffer so much. •

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Conscious Heart

Continued from page 55

more grateful and generous. I recently came across a quote from the late John Paul Getty, who was at one time the wealthiest man in the world. Toward the end of his life, he said that he would gladly trade all of his millions for one lasting marital success. It was so poignant because that is true for most of us. If we don't resolve this constriction in our hearts, nothing we do in life matters much. Making millions, recording music, or writing books means little if we haven't opened to the fundamental flow in each moment that makes life rich.

KATHLYN: We use the image of the garden hose. Flow is moving in us all the time, but many of us tighten the nozzle of flow and experience ourselves as stingy. There is a scarcity of flow. The moment people learn to open the nozzle by expressing appreciation, they realize they are the flow. We are the flow. There is no difference between us and the flow of creativity, aliveness, and the rest of the universe. We separate ourselves from it by the contraction of fear. We teach people how to recognize the gateway into flow. Embracing and loving fear opens their nozzles.

What is the relationship between creativity and the conscious heart?

GAY: Creativity is the major outcome of opening the conscious heart. The deeper flow of creativity can only be accessed by opening to what you most want to create in the deepest parts of yourself. Many people do their creativity from the level of persona, and it doesn't feel very satisfying. Artists and composers often hit their stride after midlife. Until that time, most people function from personas and haven't awakened a deep connection with their essence.

KATHLYN: When we first got together, my relationship to creativity was expressed primarily through my super-competent persona. That persona organizes, bring things into form, and carries projects out into the world. After several years, I realized that acting competent wasn't satisfying to me. Letting go of being super-competent was scary for me because I had it glued to who I am. I thought that I wasn't creative. I began to put creative questions first—what I want to express in the world and what is uniquely me that gives me immense satisfaction to express and to be. I discov-

ered that my true creativity could be expressed in many arenas, but wasn't tied to any of them. By experiencing more deeply who I am and what I truly want to express, I moved into a harmonious flow of co-creativity with Gay. We now support each other's full expression. We do not compete over the field of limited creativity in which personas reside. We both see that creativity is truly unlimited.

GAY: And we strongly believe that creativity will enable the world to prosper in the twenty-first century. If we all commit to accessing our deepest creativity, and grow fields of love in relationships in which people can express their creativity, there will be no shortages of anything in the world. Human creativity is awesome. Buckminster Fuller once said that there are enough resources on the planet to make everyone billionaires. It is simply a matter of accessing our creativity and bringing that forth into the world.

You have the opportunity every moment to open your conscious heart. It doesn't matter if you are home alone on a Saturday night feeling lonely, or at the beach holding hands with your beloved. If you are home alone on a Saturday night, you have the opportunity to open up and come into relationship harmony with that feeling of loneliness. In that moment, you awaken the same creative flow in yourself that is possible when you stand hand in hand with your beloved watching the ocean. In each moment, you have the opportunity, no matter what the experience is, to embrace it fully or to shrink from it. If you embrace it fully, you experience that open-handed heart that we call the conscious heart. If you close to it, you make that fist in the heart that takes you away from the possibilities of love and transcendence in every moment. We want to do whatever we can in the world to open up the possibility for people to taste and revel in the deep joys of opening up the conscious heart.

Is there an expectancy about the conscious heart that you offer people?

KATHLYN: You can expect a flow in every moment. No matter what your previous experiences have been, and no matter what you are carrying, each moment offers the opportunity and the choice to open the conscious heart. •

Say Yes

Continued from page 47

For this reason, when you create intentions to connect with a future self, it is important to keep in mind that you want to access positive, constructive, *optimal* outcomes and states of being. If you find yourself connecting with a future self that is in any way abusive, shaming, critical, or otherwise represents a shadow or negative aspect of yourself, stop the exercise, and let go of the image. Usually a negative future self emerges because there is some issue that needs to be resolved and is getting in the way. If this happens, let go of the future self exercise and go back and take the quality of the negative future self into your shadow work. You are likely to discover that, after you have explored the issue that emerged, subsequent future self journeys will move along in positive directions.

The bottom line is that you want to invite *the very best you can be* at this point in time. What is best for you may be represented by a seemingly small step or by a change that feels revolutionary to you. Big or small, remember to emphasize that the steps you take into the future will enhance your sense of psychological wholeness and well-being, your capacity to live more consciously. Know that an indication of a negative future self is a call to do additional shadow work, not a prediction of a negative future.

As you focus on optimal outcomes, remember that it often takes time to notice the changes your future self is actualizing. A man I worked with used his optimal future self to access and then practice mindfulness. He was having trouble learning to let his thoughts, feelings, and impulses move through his awareness without acting on them—or reacting to them. By connecting with his future self, he tapped into a different way of perceiving moment-

Consistent with the idea that reality is made up of a constantly available array of probabilities, one of the assumptions of working with the future self is that there are as many possible future selves as there are probable realities existing in the universe... most of us have a variety of possible selves we project into the future.

to-moment hassles. He discovered that his future self didn't take problems or irritating circumstances so personally. His future self had learned that there were some things he just couldn't control and that breathing through them was much more comfortable than falling into old patterns of anger and agitation. For many months, this previously impulsive, irritable man practiced connecting with his future self's more mindful attitude and slowly learned how to achieve it himself.

SAYING "YES" TO YOUR OPTIMAL FUTURE SELF

Underlying all my work with the optimal future self is an assumption that shapes much of what I do: *life needs each of us to be all that we have the capacity to be in order for it to express itself fully through us.* By creating an intention to say *yes* to the potential within us, we send a message to our inner wisdom that conveys a willingness to stretch, change, and move beyond present

limitations. Once we willingly *choose* to take whatever steps will allow us to express more of our potential, synchronicity and our own inherent talents and uniqueness then come together in a dynamic, if mysterious, interplay.

One way of empowering your choice to expand or enhance your unique self-expression is to say *yes* to your optimal future self. When you do so, you activate a response that awakens aspects of yourself that were previously dormant. The *yes* becomes a wake-up call that awakens latent aspects of ourselves—talents, interests, personality traits, and more.

I recall a young woman who came to see me specifically to work with her optimal future self. She felt stuck in her job and wanted to return to

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Anger

J O H N R O B B I N S A N D A N N M O R T I F E E

Anger is an intense and primal expression of the life force, a burning flame that cannot be ignored. It is the psyche's alarm system, demanding that attention be given to a limit or boundary of ours that is being invaded, to an injury or pain that is being denied, or to an area of our being that has become unhealthy. The function of anger is similar to the function of a fever. It helps to burn out unwanted, inharmonious elements. Its purpose is to restore balance and well-being.

If the symptoms of a fever are suppressed and ignored, then the illness will remain unchecked. So it is with anger. It is useful to listen for the message it brings and then to use it for growth and well-being.

We need to remember that the anger we feel toward someone else is not an accurate evaluation or judgment of who that person actually is. It is merely our own feelings communicating with us, telling us more about ourselves than about the other person. It is the beginning of greater clarity and discrimination, so that we can live our passion with integrity, develop our inner power, and become capable of acting assertively, rather than aggressively, on behalf of what we cherish.

There should really be two different words—one for “anger-with-the-heart-closed,” and one for “anger with-the-heart-open.”

Most anger in our society is “anger-with-the-heart-closed.” Many of us are in the habit of automatically using our anger vindictively to protect ourselves or to impose our will upon others. We may believe ourselves totally justified in demeaning others' self-esteem. We may believe that we do this for “their own good.” We may even believe that the will we are trying to impose is God's will. From such unconsciousness have come generations of abuse. From such self-righteousness have come millennia of “holy” wars.

“Anger-with-the-heart-closed” is destructive. But there are times when our anger can be a gift to the other person, when it is not simply our own ego twisting in a knot, and trying to use the other person to undo the strain. Though we may feel great heat and urgency, there need be nothing mean in the way we express ourselves. For when there is no desire to wound or punish or blame, we become able to speak with great clarity and power. We may roar like a lion, but it is a healing roar. We may be challenging, but we are infinitely fair. We may be outraged, but we are respectful. This is “anger-with-the-heart-open” and it has a beauty, a passion, and a clarity that is unmistakable. •

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IMAGE BANK/MICHAEL GOSBEE

Book Reviews



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

There could not be two books more different from each other than those reviewed in this issue. Wayne Dyer posits a world where one becomes a co-creator with God in manifesting one's heart-desires, while Nathaniel Branden looks to mind and living consciously as the highest spiritual experience.

Manifest Your Destiny, The Nine Spiritual Principles for Getting Everything You Want by Wayne W. Dyer. HarperCollins Publishers, 1997. 191 pages, \$23.00.

Because of its subtitle, I would never have opened this book had it not been assigned for review (what is interesting about getting everything you want?). I suspect someone in marketing got hold of Dyer's original subtitle, and massaged it into best-seller vocabulary. In any event, the book is less about getting "everything you want," and more about exploring some foundational principles that have been articulated for eons, from the *Vedantas* to *A Course in Miracles* to *Unity* and *Religious Science*.

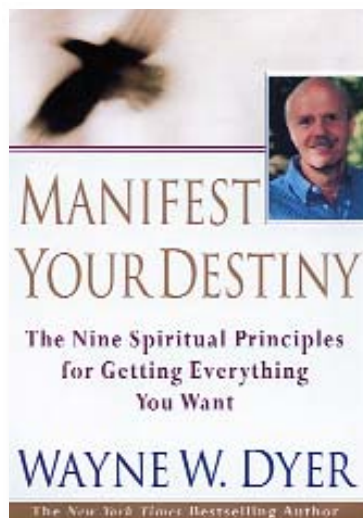
In the introduction, Dyer (author of popular self-help and spirituality books such as *Your Sacred Self*, *You'll See It When You Believe It*, *Gifts From Eykis*, and *Your Erroneous Zones*) says he felt so strongly drawn to the subject of manifesting one's destiny that he

could not ignore it. He writes, "I know that these principles work. Their miraculous power is not based on a belief; it is a knowing. I know that we have divine power that has gone untapped primarily because of our conditioning..." In the text, he explores our conditioned concepts of scarcity, limitations, the consciousness of the group, and individuality or separateness.

Dyer points out the necessity to transcend cultural conditioning and the assumptions we share. "You must unplug from your conditioning and know in that private space behind your eyes that you can and will take on the challenge of manifesting your destiny. When you cultivate the inner conviction to manifest from the world of the unseen into the material world, you understand that there is a universal God force that is in all things in the universe... Consequently, that which you perceive to be missing from your life also contains the same

God force or universal intelligence that is within you. Manifesting, then, becomes the business of doing nothing more than bringing into form a new aspect of yourself. You are not creating something from nothing. You are learning to align yourself with an aspect of your being that your senses have not known they could activate."

This book has no chapters, but rather nine principles. It also has no index, regrettably—there were quotations from Muktananda, Rumi, Gibran, etc., that I'd like to be able to easily relocate.



J F K University
v6n4p14

Little Brown/new
Straight from the Heart & Soul

Dead Doctors
v6n4p67

Reviews

The first principle is “Becoming aware of your highest self.” Dyer asserts, “Within you is a divine capacity to manifest and attract all that you need or desire.” Building on Carl Jung’s four developmental stages of adulthood (the athlete, the warrior, the statesperson, the spirit) Dyer points the reader to an awareness of the higher self, where true creativity arises. He challenges four common assumptions that inhibit “materializing what you desire and what desires you.” They are the notion that we are powerless and not in charge, that all that happens is a result of chance, that previous failures limit us now, and that “only highly evolved beings can manifest.” (It could be said, and Dyer hints at it, that we are all manifesting the fruit of our level of awareness all the time, not just when attempting to bring forth material things we hanker...)

Dyer’s second principle is, “Trusting yourself is trusting the wisdom that created you.” Here he explores a deeper wisdom than the subtitle implies, that of getting past the fantasy that God is some sort of “gigantic vending machine in the sky who will grant us our wishes when we put in the proper tokens in the form of prayers...” He describes this sort of prayer as practicing the “absence, rather than the presence of God.” In this and several other chapters, Dyer concludes with exercises, affirmations, and suggestions for internalizing the principle.

Our place in the world is explored in the third principle, “You are not an organism in an environment: you are an environmental organism.” The environment is described as an extension of ourselves, rather than as something distinct or apart from us. The concept of hologram is offered as a

Reviews

way to visualize our relationship to the whole.

The fourth principle: "You can attract to yourself what you desire." Dyer suggests visualization, or mental picturing, as one way to bring desires into manifestation. He writes, "...there is an intelligence and a power in all of nature that is creative and responsive. This intelligence is amenable to suggestion from us."

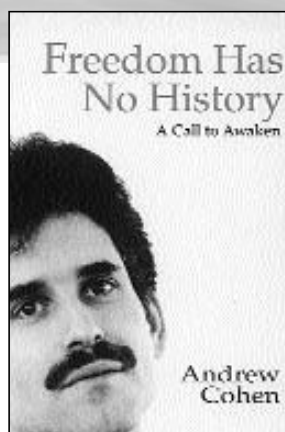
A fifth principle: "Honoring your worthiness to receive." Challenging enculturated notions of selfishness and unworthiness, Dyer says the solution is to simply change your mind and know that you are worthy of receiving all of God's blessings. There is a helpful passage on letting go of past traumatic experiences—illness, abuse, addictions, etc.—by refusing to reinforce them in conversation with others. "Don't lead with your injuries!" "The way out of bonding to your wounds is through forgiveness."

Dyer cites unconditional love as the greatest power in heaven and earth; his sixth principle, which he calls the cornerstone of manifesting, is: "Connecting to the Divine Source with Unconditional Love." Describing the nature of God as pure, unconditional love, he describes human being as "localized extensions of that force."

The seventh principle is "Meditating to the sound of creation." Dyer rightly observes that this challenges our conditioning more than any of the other eight principles, though he claims he and others have seen miraculous results from practicing it. He says "Sounds have the power to generate your ability to attract to yourself that which you desire." He suggests two sounds, "Aaaah" (this syllable appears in every culture's name for

Richard Moss/new

ANDREW COHEN



New Release

"Andrew Cohen is dedicated to the liberation of others. Of *all* others. His tireless dedication to communicating the depth of beauty, of joy and of love that he has seen, seen with his *whole* being, is a wonder to behold. When Andrew sniffs illusions, laziness, denial, and abuses of trust and integrity, he is a raging fury of Truth and clarity unleashed.... *Freedom Has No History* may seem too 'orthodox' for some. Andrew does not leave room to wiggle out of his absolute demand. One must be serious, absolutely serious. As Andrew says in the pages that follow, the Universe is depending on *you*."

—from the Foreword by lee lozowick

"The author here has highlighted the principle of Wholeness operating in every stage of the March of Evolution, right from the atom, to the galaxies and the entire Space-Time Continuum."

—Swami Krishnananda, The Divine Life Society, Rishikesh

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God, and is “the sound of creation,”) and “om,” which he calls the sound of that which is manifested. Dyer acknowledges employing these sounds is “magic”—and while it has an ancient tradition (chanting, reciting the name of God, affirmations), it should be noted that like all magic, it sits on a desire to attempt control.

Yet Dyer sees beyond control in his eighth principle, “Patiently detach from the outcome.” He writes, “...remove any and all demands from your desires, and shift to the inner, knowing that you are bringing the universal intelligence into your life, and that you will leave the how and when up to that intelligence, without judging, demanding or insisting upon your own personality’s prerequisites. Your knowing is enough. Then, cultivate the power of patient detachment from the outcome.”

The last principle is “Reacting to your manifestations with gratitude and generosity.” “Gratitude contributes a loving response to the whole of creation and to your relationship with creation. That relationship illustrates for us how interconnected and interdependent everything is, including the manifestations in our lives.” Dyer says that the natural response to our desires being manifested is the desire to be generous and to be of service to others.

Manifesting Your Destiny will be of help to those who are reaching the limits of traditional belief, and looking for guidance in creating a more satisfying, harmonious life. However, those who have reached the limits of controlling and magical thinking (they do “work” for a time, but if pursued far enough ultimately prove shallow) will not

find here an impetus to grow on to the real, transcendent inner work. Beyond the desire to manifest any “thing” in the outer lie the principles of radiant acquiescence, of trust that—as for the birds of the air and the lilies of the field—all that is required for the meeting of our needs is our radical openness.

The Art Of Living Consciously, The Power of Awareness to Transform Everyday Life, by Nathaniel Branden. Simon & Schuster, 1997. 255 pages.

Psychologist Nathaniel Branden is known for his previous works dealing primarily with self-esteem, including *Taking Responsibility*, *The Six Pillars Of Self-esteem*, *The Art Of Self-discovery If You Could Hear What I Cannot Say*, *Breaking Free*, and *The Psychology Of Self-esteem*.

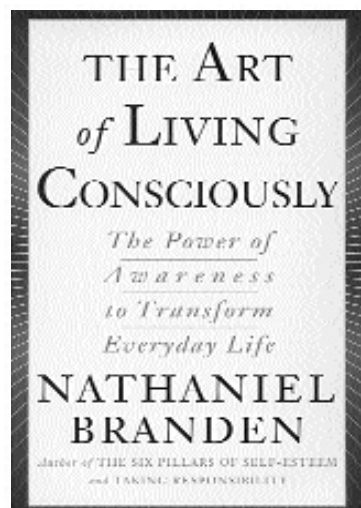
In this volume, Branden sketches a rigorous philosophical background for a psychological examination of what it is to live consciously. Answering the charge that to live consciously is too painful, Branden responds, “Is it less painful if we live unconsciously and mechanically, without knowing what we are doing, and blind to opportunities to make things bet-

ter?” He sees living consciously to be a source of power and liberation.

Living consciously is defined as “Being mentally active, rather than passive. It is the ability to look at the world through fresh eyes. It is intelligence taking joy in its own function. Living consciously is seeking to be aware of everything that bears on our interests, actions, values, purposes, and goals. It is the willingness to confront facts, pleasant or unpleasant. It is the desire to discover our mistakes and correct them. Within the range of our interests and concerns, it is the quest to keep expanding our awareness and understanding, both of the world external to self and of the world within. It is respect for reality and respect for the distinction between the real and the unreal. It is the commitment to see what we see and know what we know. It is the recognition that the act of dismissing reality is the root of all evil.”

Branden writes this book as a “wake-up call” to the mind millennium, where consciousness, thinking and learning are essential to take us beyond that which is known and familiar.

For those readers whose education did not include serious study of Aristotelian logic, the first chapter gives a good introduction; it is this system of logic on which Branden’s understanding of living consciously is based. He is, in fact, so passionate in his defense of Aristotelian logic that he takes on some of the baggage of the fundamentalist of any persuasion—conviction that this way is the only way of looking at reality. In truth, Aristotelian logic has been challenged and its limits observed by many



Reviews

philosophers, linguists, and now scientists. As philosopher George Jaidar has written, "Whenever we use the terms 'real' or 'reality,' we must realize that we are just extending an invitation to others to agree with us about what we are positing. This, in turn, is grounded in the language being used and based on an implicit but consensual logic that is rooted in our enculturation." The old Aristotelian law of non-contradiction (nothing can be A and not-A at the same time and in the same respect) loses its sense of infallibility when the new physics describes particles that are simultaneously there and not there, and that are there only at the point of observation.

Nevertheless, Branden's call for an unstinting examination of one's assumptions about oneself and the world will be helpful to anyone seeking to live more consciously. Chapters deal with such topics as choice and responsibility, knowing what we're doing while we're doing it, consciousness in relationships, self-awareness, and self-esteem.

His concluding chapter on consciousness and spirituality will present a challenge to many who are embarked on a spiritual quest as an aspect of personal transformation. For Branden, it is essential to have "clear definitions" of such terms as spirituality, God, and other "mystical" terms. He defines spirituality as that which pertains "to consciousness and to the needs and development of consciousness." "Whoever continually strives to achieve a clearer and clearer vision of reality and our place in it—whoever is pulled forward by a passion for such clarity—is, to that extent, leading a spiritual life."

He has no use for "those who

claim to have gone beyond reason," nor for that realm or dimension that does not submit to our human logical constructs. Branden does a good job of sketching the difference between religion and spirituality, and rightly observes that religion "may support the illusion of spirituality while leading in the opposite direction..." He points to the evolution of human consciousness in terms of mind. But those who have reached the limits of human reason and the enculturated assumptions we share about the nature of reality will find his stance of utter dependence on reason to fall far short of that which calls them beyond the limits of mind, to the evolution of the soul. •

Happiness

Continued from page 15

voice within which is the calling of our yearning. Happiness is a pale imitation of *joy*, which can only come from within. *Within* is where we find the kingdom of heaven, enlightenment, nirvana, the Tao, the ultimate, the state of bliss, God, or whatever designation you may give that Oneness which is the Life of Fullness.

A wise one has said "Joy is the echo of God's life in us." •

Philosopher George Jaidar, of Ojai, California, is the author of "The Soul: An Owner's Manual; Discovering The Life Of Fullness" (Paragon House 1995). A spiritual ecologist, he does a great deal of reclamation of old words. He loves rescuing terms and concepts from the misunderstandings or perversities arising from religious and conventional usage. This is another in a series of columns by Jaidar which shines new light on words and concepts that need to be redeemed, that can be springboards to personal transformation.

Befriending Your Body

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Spirit is housed within the physical body with its needs and desires, pleasures and pains, and five senses. But the eternal light that shines within is not dependent on the physical for its existence. Spirit exists within and beyond the physical plane.

By attending to our body, we gain access to Spirit as it manifests in our physical being. Our body can be a door into the dining room to enjoy a "meal" of conscious intimacy with our self.

As we return again and again to awareness of our bodily needs and desires, pleasures and pains, and the five senses, we can pay attention to what is. The body walks with awareness. The body sits with awareness. The body sees, smells, and hears with awareness. The body eats with awareness. The body breathes with awareness.

The body rests with awareness. The awareness animates us as it's channeled through our body and our bodily senses.

The spiritual presence is lived through the body itself. When we live more richly within our senses and learn to "caress the divine details," we can appreciate all that our body can experience in daily life, and realize that a feast has been set before us. •

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Say Yes

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school to prepare for another profession. During her first journey to meet her future self, she experienced this part as filled with enthusiasm and self-confidence. While this young woman wasn't sure whether her future self was in school or working somewhere else, what she *did* know was how empowering and satisfying the *body state* of her future self felt to her. When I suggested that she say *yes* to the intention of becoming her future self—and thereby express her heartfelt willingness to be guided by her own deep wisdom and the workings of synchronicity to create this outcome—she reported a powerful experience. As she said *yes* to herself, she felt a kind of “thrill” run through her body, just like an electric current. Then she felt her heart open “as if it were a flower.” It was as though she could literally feel herself blossoming.

As we talked about the experience later, she still felt the thrill of saying *yes* and was confident she had shifted something inside herself. I suggested she take a few min-

utes each day to reconnect with her future self and repeat her *yes* many times.

For one workshop participant, saying *yes* to his optimal future self brought some mixed feelings and deepened his understanding of an unresolved conflict he had brought to the exercise. A long-term and very close friendship was ending, creating a great deal of pain for all concerned. Even as he knew that the changes in the friendship were irreversible and the result of the natural growing apart that sometimes happens even to the closest of friends, he had difficulty finding a comfortable way of accepting the change. His future self offered a new way of experiencing the loss of such a close friendship, so he eagerly said *yes* to this new part of himself. As he did this, though, he also heard a quiet but insistent *no*. Paying attention to his mixed feelings, he looked more closely at the *no* and discovered that there was a step he had to take between where he was in the present moment and the resolution offered by his future self. He needed to grieve the loss first, and that was what he had been struggling to avoid. Until he dealt with his disappointment and feelings of loss, he wouldn't be able to fully embrace the comfort offered by his future self.

This man's experience points to an important element in saying *yes* to your own deepest potential: you also need to be able to say *no*. To overlook mixed feelings wastes time: while part of you says *yes*, another part holds back and prevents you from bringing the full measure of what it is you seek to achieve into your everyday life. Living consciously requires bringing along your full self. To do so

demands that you listen to your response of *no* and explore the underlying reasons for your resistance to a particular change. As in the example above, often a response of *no* serves to bring to light a situation or issue that needs to be understood or resolved before your response of *yes* can be wholehearted.

Ultimately, the changes that occur as you become your optimal future self will emerge in the ways and at a pace perfectly suited to what is possible for you. The entire process is guided by your own deep wisdom, so that even when you feel stretched or challenged beyond your usual level of comfort, know that you wouldn't ask yourself to become more than what you have the capacity to be. •

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Finding Your Heart

Continued from page 59

see or empathize with others.

The more we heal the split-off places within us, the more our fears dissolve and the more we feel centered in ourselves. This allows us to take the armor off our heart and say, “Come close, I want to know you and be known by you.” Another way to start the process of making friends with your empty places is to talk with a friend about the parts of you that seem shameful and unlovable. You might find that your friend understands you very well. •

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McClintock

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Voting Money

Continued from page 31

tainable, compassionate society.

With this influx of socially responsible youth flooding the marketplace, one can only imagine the potential future of business and commerce to reshape society. In fact, a study by the accounting firm, Coopers & Lybrand, of 1,200 college students in 10 countries, found that 73% expected the global economy to strengthen and flourish in their lifetimes. And two-thirds said they expect business to become more influential than politics in the future, as national boundaries lose importance.

As product users, consumers, investors, and participants in a capitalist system, we can make a difference by flowing our currency in a conscious manner. As Margaret Mead said, "Never believe that a few caring people can't change the world. For indeed, that's all who ever have."

Tina welcomes your thoughts and responses at rasmussent@aol.com•

We Grow

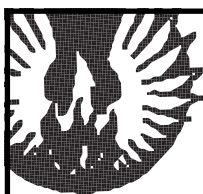
Continued from page 23

from a deeper sense of self-control, which allows us to dissolve an event, instead of feeding it. At this point, we can start talking. We simply deal with the event, get rid of it, and are finished with it.

In this way we, save tremendous amounts of time and energy, and don't waste it in worrying about essentially nothing. Then, we have this time and energy to invest in what has the possibility of bringing us a real return in our life, and an enduring return—a return to the larger field of energy that we are and always have been.•

Touched by the
Light
Unarius/new

Talk Power/
Why Hide
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Hugging Meditation

THICH NHAT HANH

Hugging meditation is a combination of East and West. According to the practice, you have to really hug the person you are hugging. You have to make him or her very real in your arms, not just for the sake of appearances, patting him on the back to pretend you are there, but breathing consciously and hugging with all your body, spirit, and heart. Hugging meditation is a practice of mindfulness. "Breathing in, I know my dear one is in my arms, alive. Breathing out, she is so precious to me." If you breathe deeply like that, holding the person you love, the energy of care, love, and mindfulness will penetrate into that person, and she will be nourished and bloom like a flower.

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