



WINTER 1997

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*Right from the moment of our birth, we are under the
care and kindness of our parents. And then later on in
our life, when we are oppressed by sickness and become
old, we are again dependent on the kindness of others.
And since at the beginning and end of our lives, we are so
dependent on others' kindness, how can it be in the middle
that we neglect kindness towards others?*

—The Dalai Lama

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From the Publisher



How sharp is your vision? Can you see deep enough and far enough to make decisions that are truly beneficial for all, even the unborn? The Onondaga Tribe makes all major decisions with seven future generations in mind. Imagine if we, as a nation, were as far reaching in considering social and economic policy decisions.

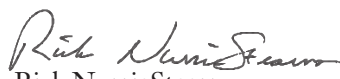
True vision is dependent upon our level of awareness and in order to act wisely, we must know what is happening in the larger world. Choosing life loving courses of action is possible only when we are knowledgeable. Acting on information—such as the depletion of ozone, the destruction of virgin forests, and the stockpile of over 12,000 nuclear bombs in the United States—vastly affects the lives of those to come. Unless we change our ways, future generations will look back mournfully, wondering why we destroyed the environment. We, individually and collectively, are responsible for the direction that our nation takes.

True vision is seeing with a quiet, clear mind and when our mind is calm, we are able to take in the larger picture. We can examine the broad and long lasting consequences of possible choices. When we do not look deeply, choices tend to reflect short-sighted interests and implications. Our decisions are likely to be based on superficial values.

True vision is viewing life through the eyes of our spiritual self. These eyes focus on spiritual principles and never condone acts of destruction, social inequity or injustice. Humanitarian, rather than materialistic values, permeate this seeing.

We can develop this vision with practice. All choices are opportunities to strengthen our sight. Even insignificant decisions, when they are thoughtful and heartfelt, exercise our vision. Small, carefully made decisions, automate the process of deeply seeing and prepare us to make wise and compassionate big decisions.

May all of our decisions be guided by our deepest wisdom.


Rick NurrieStearns
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GREGG LEVOY



JEAN HOUSTON

STEVE WOLF, AND CONNIE ZWEIG, Jungian oriented psychologists, are innovators in the use of shadow-work in psychotherapy.

They have helped hundreds of clients in their encounters with the dark side. Seeing it, meeting the shadow, is a first step. Learning to live with it, romancing the shadow, is a life-long challenge.

From the Editor

"Is not religion all deeds and all reflection... Who can separate his faith from his actions, or his belief from his occupations?"—Kahlil Gibran



This issue of *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* urges us to be centered in our *true* nature. This is possible when spiritual growth becomes most important, when embodying the *divine* is all we aspire to.

When we desire intimate communion with life, we experience deeply and come to know what life is calling us to.

We reside in our essential nature when it is our utmost desire to do so. Our deeper yearning calls us to this home, and single-minded focus keeps us there. This focus is manifested in our *doing* as well as our *being*.

My inner response to my choices lets me know when I have forsaken essence. I had a reminder the other morning, while driving to work. There on the side of the road was a dog, a full grown Dalmatian. Even though I sensed that she had been discarded, I justified driving away. In my heart, I had wanted to help, and minutes later, a few miles down the road, I cried. My busy schedule and clean hands were weak excuses, but strong enough to steer me away from essence. The next morning, the forlorn dog was at the same spot. Rescuing her was the right thing to do, and I did so, after enlisting my husband's help. The day before, inconvenience veered me off course, and that morning, resolve to follow my heart's guidance put me back on track.

It is so important to not abandon our *true* nature. In "Perspectives," Andrew Cohen discusses how we remain connected. To remain in contact, we have to look deeply within ourselves daily and to refuse to live in superficial ways. We have to live from our inner world. In the outer world, most people give much importance to things impermanent and insignificant. We have to be willing to give

the greatest importance to that which is most significant. It takes extraordinary focus and effort to discover which choices take us away from where we want to be, and which choices align us with who we *are*.

Our choices show up around us. As the poet Kahlil Gibran knew, spirituality is apparent in the way we live our daily lives, our vocations and politics. Our actions are visible indicators of whether or not we are centered in our *true* nature. When we are not centered, disharmony spreads. When we live from our deepest being, families and communities grow loving and tolerant.

Marianne Williamson sounds out a call to action in this issue's interview. She reminds us that the future of this country rests in the hands of this generation, and that it is not too late. Our wise and loving choices, individually and collectively, can preserve the greatness of this country. All we have to do is turn within for divine guidance. This guidance, from our *true* nature, most authentically directs our lives. If each of us asks how we might best use our time, energies and talents to serve the larger world, we will transform this society. Taking right action will deepen our hearts.

We have the power within us for the next steps. Contemplation and prayer, augmented by support, give us all the power needed.

We can do what we are asked to do. Our very lives depend upon it, so let us heed the call.

Welcome to *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*.

Mary NurrieStearns

Mary NurrieStearns
Editor

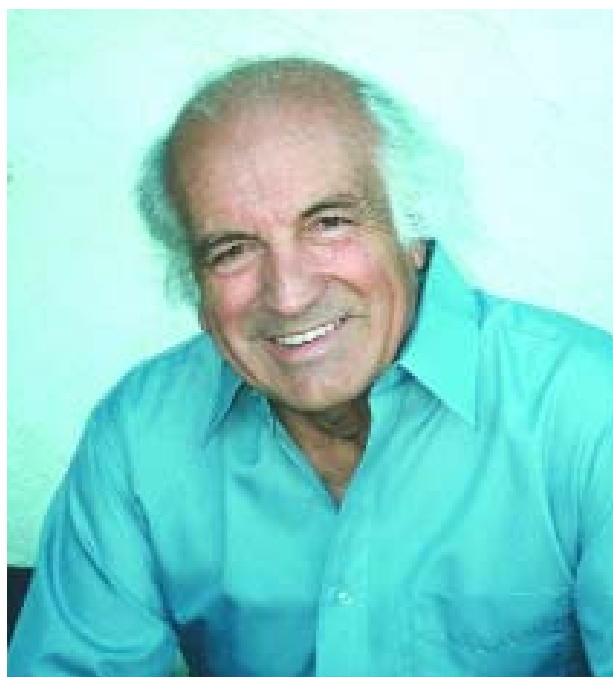
Good And Evil

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

Just because we have a word for it does not mean that there is a reality to which it refers, as for example, *unicorn*. The mere existence of a word does not imply that it refers to something real. This is an all too frequently committed philosophical fallacy of which we need to be aware so that we may avoid it.

All through the ages, the question of good and evil has too often been the subject of such fallacious thinking. If you think about it, nearly every such discussion starts by assuming the reality of its subject matter. In order to avoid such fallaciousness, we must begin any such inquiry much more basically than is usual. We must look at how these words are used and what are their foundations. This will not be an exhaustive inquiry, but the mere beginning of it will shed much needed light.

Like up and down, good and evil are oppositional, relational terms, terms whose meanings rely on their being the opposite of one another. Like the concepts of up and down, good and evil require a referent, a referential base from which these terms derive their opposition. Using the analogy of up and down is most useful and less charged. Up and down have meaning in relationship to the observer/participant's position with respect to a base, usually the center of the earth (the platform of a space vehicle could just as readily be considered the base). In this schema, *up* refers to the direc-



tion that points away from the center of the earth, and *down* refers to the direction that points toward the center of the earth. This schema still holds even if we use the more commonplace base of the surface of the earth or any other arbitrarily designated platform. So, apart from our designated base, such as in outer space, there is no objective up or down.

In like manner, the concepts of good and evil have meaning in relationship to the observer/participant's figurative position with respect to a base, usually moral or theological, in which good points *toward* some moral goal or theological entelechy (a thrust or directing force that is imputed to existence or human striving). Evil, then, points *away* or in the opposite direction from such a goal or entelechy.

Just as there is no universal or cosmic up or down, there is no universal or cosmic good or evil. Good and evil are simply judgments derived from a moral goal or theological entelechy. Imputing a divine source to such judgments is the way a society/culture, usually through its handmaiden, religion, emphasizes the importance or primacy of such judgments in its primary task of enculturating its members toward successful survival within and as defined by that society.

Consider the very contemporary issue of abortion. Those who favor its availability as a choice consider it good and may ground it as an inalienable right morally

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 79

Never Move From Where You Already Are

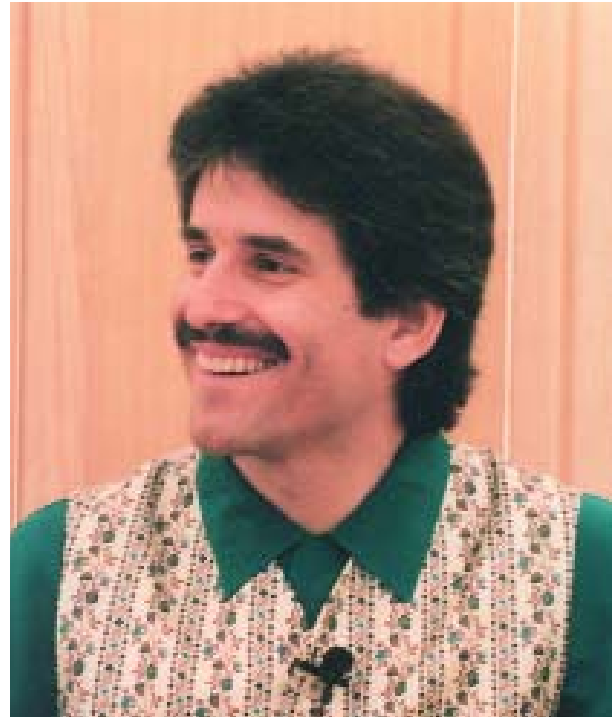
ANDREW COHEN

The meditation instructions that I give are simple. I ask people to relax as much as they can, to be as at ease and as free from tension as possible, and at the same time, to pay as much attention as they can to *everything*. We don't need to concentrate on our breath or on any *particular* point on our body. We allow our attention to become very vast, very wide and very deep, and we remain as alert as we possibly can.

It's good to reflect on the fact that deep and profound relaxation and freedom from existential tension is the foundation for liberation. It's the foundation for the discovery of true freedom. Deep and profound relaxation is not simply a pleasant state to be attained.

It's the foundation of a condition that enables us to stop running away from the truth, to stop running away from where we always are, but are rarely aware of. At the same time we want to be very alert, very aware and very sensitive. Being alert, aware, awake, sensitive, undistracted and fully present is the expression of an enlightened condition.

When we sit in meditation, it is important to be very still, because not moving and being still is a metaphor for liberation. One who has realized the goal



of liberation is one who never moves, never strays. Even though they appear to walk, to talk, to respond just like everybody else, inwardly they never move. They're always at the center. This is why it's important to learn how to be completely still, because being completely still can help us to understand these things. The deeper the concentration, the deeper the relaxation, and the more profound the attention, the easier it is to let oneself go, to fly. In this meditation, it doesn't matter if thoughts come and go. It doesn't matter if feelings, memories, doubt or happiness come and go. None of it matters. The only thing that matters is that we don't move, that we're completely at ease, and that we're fully awake.

When I speak about not moving in meditation, many people think that I mean not moving physically, not moving one's body. When some people hear "not moving," they feel that their mind shouldn't move or that their attention shouldn't wander. But the not moving I'm speaking about is deeper than that. It has to do with not moving away or straying from our true nature.

When we, for some mysterious reason, fall into a condition where we find that we suddenly want nothing at all, and we need nothing at all, we begin to dis-

T

cover what our true nature is about. At times like that, we begin to settle down. By settling down I mean we begin to fall deeply within ourselves. It's like falling into the mouth of a volcano, sinking down and down and down—way, way down, sinking so deeply that we forget about the falling.

This is what occurs when we discover or stumble upon a condition where we find that we want nothing and need nothing. When this happens, when everything falls away, there is a very deep contentment because there is a recognition that nothing is lacking. Nothing is lacking, but what is there is difficult to define. We might define it in terms of a lack of unfulfillment, but what actually is there is difficult to describe. We could say fullness, but that's a dangerous thing to do because the minute we begin to give a quality or a qualitative description to emptiness, the mind starts to paint pictures. One of the pictures that the mind paints is God. When we go deeply within, we want to try to see clearly, to know clearly, to understand, to feel, but we want to be careful about imposing pictures or fixed ideas upon our own experience, because when we do, we lose touch with a depth that can't be measured.

One way to understand the goal of liberation is to discover and experience this depth which cannot be measured, to find out what it's like not to want anything and to not need anything. As we begin to find happiness without a cause, peace without a cause, joy without a cause, the most challenging thing is to not move away from it. When I speak about not moving, this is that I'm referring to.

Moving away takes various shapes and forms. One shape is that something is wrong. This one catches almost everybody. It's the primordial problem. The minute we believe something is wrong, we seek a way to fix it. As a result, we get up from our seat, and we look for a way to fix it. As we look, we wander and wander, and we get farther away from where we were. If individuals who start to look for a way to fix their problem are ever lucky enough to find liberation, they will find that there never was anything wrong. If they could have resisted the temptation to believe that something was wrong, they could have been free their whole lives. If they could have resisted that temptation, they would never have left where they'd been all along. In profound awakening, one realizes that one has been there all along, but simply has forgotten and become unaware of it, because one has become distracted by this conviction that something is wrong. So the work that has to be done is giving up the belief that something is wrong, that something has to be fixed.

Eupsychia/v6n5p22

That we need to give up the belief that something is wrong doesn't automatically mean everything is great. As long as we are deeply convinced that something is wrong, there is no doubt that our life will be a mess, an expression of fear and confusion in a world that is frightened and confused. Throughout my travels in the modern spiritual world, I have met many people who are doing everything they can to tell themselves that everything is okay even though they don't believe it. If we don't really believe it, and at the same time we try to tell ourselves that everything is okay, we're deceiving ourselves and everyone else.

This is not a superficial matter that I'm speaking about. It's something quite challenging, because as we look within ourselves with greater and greater depth, we will become more aware of this impulse to move away. This impulse to move away, to turn away, to run away, to become, to create, is for most simply a compulsive and habitual way of being. It's a state in which we're constantly running away from where we already are, towards where we think we want to be. When we look more deeply, we may find out that what we think we're running towards is not what we want.

The lives that most people lead are quite superficial, lacking in depth. When a human life lacks depth, the individual is preoccupied, concerned and endlessly busy with matters which do not have great significance. If we want to get in touch with where we've always been, and want to learn how to resist the temptation to move away from where we've always been, we have to cease to live in a way that is superficial. There is no other way that it can work. The challenge for

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the individual who truly wants to be free, is not only to deeply experience the truth, which is that one has never been away from home, but more importantly, to look into what it means in a very practical sense to resist all of the countless temptations to move away, to become.

What I'm speaking about has nothing to do with anything passive. I'm speaking about something that's dynamic and conscious. I'm speaking about giving oneself fully and deliberately to a much deeper relationship with life and with truth. Unless we succeed in liberating ourselves personally from this compulsive need to run away, to become, to have and to be, it will be next to impossible to realize and manifest the kind of depth that I'm speaking about for more than a few moments. A life that expresses liberation is one where the individual has not only realized this depth, this stillness, this fullness, this emptiness once or twice, but they are permanently abiding there, whether they are busy or not, whether they are active or not. Unless we're willing to turn within in a way that is absolute, in a way that transcends the mere practice of meditation, the likelihood of this kind of transformation actually occurring is very small. In order to not move away, we need to look deeply within ourselves with great consistency, and cease to live in a way that is merely superficial. That is the hardest part.

Many people have told me that they find something and then lose it. They wait and they seek, and then find and lose it again. Most of the time, seekers are trying to rediscover or re-attain something that they tasted but lost touch with. The reason that we lose touch with that which is most important, pre-

Wings Seminars/v6n5p22

School of Mastery

Compassion in Each Moment

MARY NURRIE STEARNS

Spiritual life requires that we do not kill. Realizing that life is precious, most of us are repulsed by the idea of taking the life of another, and the option doesn't enter our minds. But for us to truly embody this commandment, we must look deeply into its meaning and into the ways we are asked to respond. To not kill is insufficient: more is necessary. We must live with compassion toward all life forms and do our part to eliminate violence within ourselves and our world.

We can cause death in many ways. While some are obvious and graphic, others are subtle and insidious. We can destroy with thoughts, looks, desires, actions and with our lifestyle. Acts of omission as well as commission take life. We can harm body, spirit and mind slowly or swiftly. The lives we ruin may be our own, loved one's, stranger's, animal's, or the environment's.

When we utter cruel words to others or to ourselves we wound. If we deprive ourselves and others of kindness, equal rights and basic necessities, we rob. If we do not act to end violence for our brothers and sisters in our community, we help destroy.

When we love ourselves, we heal. If we utter kind



words to others, love grows. By ingesting healthy food, drink and conversation, our health thrives. Ending violence, discrimination and economic injustice of our brothers and sisters restores peace. And preserving our environment protects all of life. This is the way of non-violence, the way of compassion. This is what is possible when "Thou shalt not kill" becomes our way of being.

Thich Nhat Hahn's community, Plum Village, in southwestern France, has rephrased the Buddhist precepts as follows, "Aware of the suffering caused by the destruction of life, I vow to cultivate compassion and learn ways to protect the lives of people, animals, plants and minerals. I am determined not to kill, not to let others kill, and not to condone any act of killing in the world, in my thinking and in my way of life." These beautiful words call us to practice compassion.

Living this precept of nonviolence requires daily practice. To begin, we must start with intention. Through intention, frequent prayer and contemplation, compassion is developed. Simply reciting "I vow to cultivate compassion, and I am determined not to

TS/ANDREA MONIKOS

kill” keeps the intention foremost in our minds. Meditating on the ways of love reinforces our determination to act upon this code.

Intention is followed by attention. Attention to what we say and how we speak helps us become aware of the subtle ways we all are destructive. Listening to our unspoken words reveals the violence living in our minds. By focusing our attention, we pour into our minds that which nurtures life and that which obstructs the flow of compassion is revealed.

Where do we begin? With ourselves and our immediate lives. How do we begin? By dissolving destructiveness in our thinking and embedding compassion in our thinking. For instance, when we are pulled by an eddy of unworthiness in our mind, we can intervene. We can breathe and allow the thought to dissipate. Breathing again, we dip into the truth that we all are innately worthy. To deepen our intention, we resound our vow to cultivate compassion and eliminate violence from our lives. When we think an unjust or belittling thought about another, we can do the same. It is important to engage this practice calmly and lovingly, so that we truly purify the waters of kindness.

We can begin by becoming loving in speech. When we hear unkind words leaving our mouths, we must stop, breathe and apologize for our mindlessness and offer a cup of kindness. A genuine “I’m truly sorry,” or a gesture of atonement, eases the

suffering we have caused. When we fill our mouths with truthful words that heal and help, the power of nonviolence grows in and around us. Love begets love.

We can begin by creating a healthy lifestyle for ourselves and for our families. This practice includes eating, drinking, ingesting only that which nourishes health. It means carefully selecting what we read, view, and listen to. By filling our body, senses and mind with books, movies, songs and activities which radiate love and truth, we reduce our tolerance for violence. Our river becomes mighty, and we are no longer able to sit passively by. We do whatever we have to do to decrease violence around us.

We can begin by speaking out. One strong voice or one voice in a choir influences social policies. Each letter, phone call and dollar contributed to a humanitarian cause is a current of social justice. Conversations about our vision of how life can be in our family, community and society widen the path of compassion.

Wherever we begin, it is important that we do. Moment by moment and act by act, we can grow in compassion. Every word of love, comfort and inspiration forges new streams. Every cruel thought carried away by breath quickens the currents. Every breath infused with love opens our heart, and we merge with the ocean of compassion. •

The following love meditation, discussed by Thich Nhat Hahn, in his new book *Teachings on Love*, can help us grow in compassion.

When your mind is filled with love, send it in one direction, then a second, a third, and a fourth, then above, and then below. Identify with everything, without hatred, resentment, anger, or enmity. This mind of love is very wide. It grows immeasurably and eventually is able to embrace the whole world. Practice the same way with your mind filled with compassion, then joy, then equanimity.—*Madhama Agama, Sutra 86.*

When the energy of love is strong in us, we can send it to beings in all directions. But we must not think that love meditation is only an act of imagination—we imagine our love as being like waves of sound or light, or like a pure, white cloud that forms slowly and gradually spreads out to envelop the whole world. A true cloud produces rain. Sound and light penetrate everywhere, and our love must do the same. We have to observe whether our mind of love is present in our actual contact with others. Practicing love meditation in the sitting position is only the beginning.

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We offer special discounts to subscribers who give *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* as a gift. If you are not a subscriber, the first gift is \$19.95 and the second \$15.95.

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We give quantity discounts for five or more subscriptions. Please call for information.

FRIENDS FUND

We receive many requests from individuals who would like to subscribe to *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*, but who cannot financially afford to do so. Although we give some charitable subscriptions, we are unable to provide subscriptions for all those with sincere need.

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.

YOU CAN HELP MAKE PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION ACCESSIBLE

LIBRARIES

Check with your local library and recommend that it carry *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*. If you are able and willing, offer a gift subscription to introduce the magazine to your library.

GIVE A GIFT

Give a gift subscription to your friends or family. Or send the names of potential subscribers to us, and we will send them an evaluation copy. (Use the inserted gift subscription or potential subscriber card.)

STORES

Request that your favorite book or magazine store carry *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*.

LOAN OR GIVE

Loan or give your copies to friends, colleagues, or your favorite waiting room.

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

If the possibilities of personal and cultural transformation, through participation in small study groups, resonates with you, please join us! These are ways you can help:

- Let us know if you're interested in organizing, hosting 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 a financial donation! 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. Write:

TRANSFORMATION GROUPS
4032 SOUTH LAMAR BLVD. #500-137,
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78704-7900.

E-MAIL:
transformation@netsites.net

Support Your Transformation

M E L I S S A W E S T

Greetings! We at *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* are excited about the responses we've been receiving—topics you want to explore in groups, how you want to participate or volunteer services, and your eagerness to sign up and get started.

We'd like to let you know what you will receive when you sign up to become a part of this grass roots movement across the country. For a startup fee of \$35, you will receive:

- The *TRANSFORMATION GROUP RESOURCE GUIDE*, a guidebook for starting a group, covers recruiting members, "operating instructions" for running a group, and selecting topics (the *RESOURCE GUIDE* gives plenty of suggestions.)
- A listing of your group, if you wish, in our *Transformational Groups Bulletin Board* on our *Transformational Groups* website (to be operational soon).
- The opportunity to buy our *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION GROUP WORKBOOK* at member's discount.
- The opportunity to buy books, tapes, and videos from Personal Transformation at special discounts.
- Telephone support and coaching for your group.
- The opportunity to share ideas and ask questions through the regular *Transformation Groups* column.
- Registration fees to Regional and National *Personal Transformation Group Conferences* at discount.



- Member's discount on *Personal Transformation Group Travel* opportunities.

In addition, you will receive the following "intangibles," the real benefits for participating in such groups:

- Support for your own transformational journey.
- The satisfaction of supporting others' journeys.
- The opportunity to learn through sharing of ideas and experiential exercises about new concepts.
- The power to change the world by participating in such groups and carrying the energy of what you're learning and receiving out into the world.

We're hopeful about the personal and cultural transformational possibilities of this project. Please join us in the adventure of opening to personal and global change through these groups!

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION GROUPS COLUMN

Beginning with this issue we will run a column for all of you who are starting, or participating in, a personal transformation group. Send us your questions, your concerns, your epiphanies, and your comments, and we'll print as many of them as we can.

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

WHAT HAPPENS IN PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION GROUPS?

Personal Transformation! As I tell people I work in groups with, we don't seem to be hard-wired to do this work alone. Having a group we meet with regularly, who can explore topics, share our joys and our concerns, and help us get new perspectives, is one of the greatest gifts we can give ourselves on the transformational journey. I myself have participated in groups for fifteen years: I've laughed, cried, been moved deeply by others' stories, learned new perspectives, and shared in others' wisdom. I feel supported in my own transformational journey, am blessed to participate in others, and strengthened to move out into the world with renewed compassion and vigor for doing what I can to help heal our culture.

SPECIFICALLY, THIS IS WHAT CAN "HAPPEN" IN THESE GROUPS:

- Sharing of personal experiences and stories.
- Discussing new ideas from a commonly read book.
- Watching a video or listening to an audiotape together and sharing responses.
- Participating in experiential exercises and sharing afterwards.
- Creating and participating in simple ceremonies to mark special occasions.
- Learning how to integrate new spiritual insights into everyday life outside the group.

Each group will be different, evolving out of the particular personalities and needs of those involved. This is the beauty of transformational groups: they serve, at a very deep and powerful level, the personal transformation of each member.

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.

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION GROUPS COLUMN

“What if I don't want to lead a group, but want to participate?”

If you are interested in participating in a group, but don't want to lead it, you have several options.

First, you can post your interest in a group on the *Transformational Groups Bulletin Board* on our website. Let us know your name, contact phone and address, and what sort of interests you might have for a group. You can then receive responses from people in your area who are interested.

Your second option is to sign up for the project, and receive the materials for how to start a group. The *Transformation Group Guidebook* will give you plenty of information and ideas for how to attract members. As part of your signup package you will also receive one hour of free telephone support, which you could use, if you need it, for help in getting the group started. As people contact you, or at the first meeting, you can open the group to new leadership, or perhaps shared leadership among several interested people.

(See page 17 for more information on how you can participate.)

Putting Consciousness into Action

TINA RASMUSSEN

A theme seems to be recurring in all areas of the consciousness movement. This theme centers on the notion that those who have been on a conscious spiritual path have the knowledge, skills and resources that are needed. What we must now do is manifest—to act on our beliefs and contribute to the larger whole. With the deteriorating condition of our planet, we need to act *now*.

Numerous well-known leaders in the field have begun to emphasize this aspect of the consciousness revolution, placing less emphasis on the individual and interpersonal dimensions than they have at previous times. For example, for many years Marianne Williamson has focused on the spiritual basis of personal growth and interpersonal relationships, as described in *A Course in Miracles*. In her newest book, *The Healing of America* (see the interview in this issue), she takes us to the next level—the level of the human family as a unified entity. Williamson proposes various means for healing this country, and strongly urges us to take action.

Similarly, Jean Houston's new book *A Passion for the*



Possible, calls us to “reinvent the world while we reinvent ourselves.” She calls the societal transformation we are experiencing “jump time,” urging us that “the time is now,” and “we are the generation” to bring the impending global transformation to a positive fruition.

Neale Donald Walsch, author of *Conversations with God* Book I and II, focused in his first book primarily on individual and interpersonal issues of spirituality and universal “law.” Book II, however, focuses almost exclusively on spirituality in the context of the global village and the down-and-dirty political and social requirements necessary for humanity and the earth to survive into the millennium. His proposals may seem radical, but they are worthy of consideration—especially the notion of a unified global governance structure based on the U.S. model of an administration, a House of Representatives, and a one-vote-per-country Senate. He, too, makes a strong call to action, stating that those of us in the consciousness movement do *not* need to attend more workshops, read more books, or ask advice from our counselors. What we need to do instead is use that time to *do something*—to make a contribution to actually changing the state of the world.

So, what can we do to bring consciousness into action? Often, action requires a “leap of faith,” the courage to risk and put ourselves on the line to make a difference. Following are suggestions of how to positively influence this “global mind change,” (a term coined by futurist Willis Harman in his book *Global Mind Change*, 1988), at the individual, group and societal levels.

CONSCIOUSNESS IN ACTION AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION provides abundant resources for us to raise our consciousness as individuals. The most fundamental and basic gift we can give the world is to transform *ourselves*. From Jungian analysis to yoga, the number of methods for exploring our own transformations are plentiful. Through our individual pursuit of a spiritual path that fits for us, and through our self-discipline to *stick with* our chosen paths even when it is not convenient or easy, we become our own greatest work of art. When we are centered in our own higher selves, when we can retain our inner strength during turbulent times, we become a stabilizing force for higher consciousness in those around us. Often, the moment requiring our highest level of consciousness is also the most difficult moment—a “moment of truth” which may require a “leap of faith” for us to follow through. Gandhi was a wonderful example of this, choosing peaceful resistance rather than violence as an expression of his spiritual beliefs. As a result, not only his beliefs but his courageous and determined actions changed the world. As Gandhi said, “Each of us should *be* the change we want to see in the world.”

Journey into Wholeness/new

Kundalini Research/new

J F K University
v6n5p66

Guided Journeys
first 20 pages

Moksha/new

CONSCIOUSNESS IN ACTION AT THE GROUP LEVEL

While Ghandi's statement is a fundamental truth, we cannot wait until we are "perfected" to begin bringing our light into the world. Even before we have reached a stage of mastery, we can have the courage to speak of our values and beliefs to others in an inviting, non-invasive way. Only when we begin to share our views can we give others the opportunity to join us, making everyone stronger. But speaking out requires faith and courage. As noted in Paul Ray's landmark study, the "cultural creatives," whose world view embraces this new paradigm of spirituality and renewal, are nearly 25% of the U.S. population, or 44 million people. In comparison, the Christian Coalition numbers a mere 1.5 million. As Marianne Williamson said recently, "The problem is not that there are more people coming from a fear-based consciousness; the problem is that they are more efficient, effective and organized. It seems to me that the issue is to own our voices." (from *New Age Journal*, July/August 1997). At the group level, we can take action by owning our beliefs and having the courage to bring them into the world as a source of hope, inspiration and alternative thinking that might just provide a solution to the world's overwhelming problems.

CONSCIOUSNESS IN ACTION AT THE SOCIETAL LEVEL

Ultimately, the benefits of the *inward* focus to which we dedicate ourselves at the individual level have their greatest impact when we turn them *outward* to the societal level. Experts have long

debated what percentage of a social system is required to form a "critical mass" which can sway the entire system. While there is no definitive answer, some believe this number is 25%, the same percentage of the U.S. population found to be cultural creatives. The Internet and global media such as CNN are additional examples of how a "global brain" is taking shape. If used for positive purposes, these forms of collective consciousness could make a positive difference.

The most vivid recent example of the power of group thought was the 1996 Prayer Vigil for Bosnia. The president of Bosnia—desperate for an alternative solution after trying every form of coercion and military force to stop the war—issued a plea to the citizens of the world to pray for peace in Bosnia. With the help of Marianne Williamson and Jean Houston, they publicized a campaign in which people all over the world would stop for five minutes, everyone at the same moment in the various time zones, and all would imagine peace in Bosnia. People were asked to send love not only to the victims, but also to the soldiers and persecutors, so that the carnage would end. Miraculously, at the end of the prayer vigil which lasted a few months, a breakthrough occurred in Bosnia, and a move toward resolution became possible. A coincidence? Possibly. Or maybe it was the first modern example of the power of love being stronger than the power of hate and weapons of destruction, at a global level.

A simpler, more actionable example of this was a recent incident in Billings, Montana. Skin-

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 73

Richard Moss

*In the Presence of the Teacher,
the Soul Knows Itself and Knows
Itself to be Recognized.*



Richard Moss, author of *The Second Miracle*, *The Black Butterfly* and *The I that is We*, addresses the fundamental necessity for practical spirituality, spirituality that enhances our capacity for conscious relationships, relationships that teach us how to shift from suffering and avoidance to openness and joyousness. His teaching skillfully integrates meditation, energy work, dream work, body consciousness and self-inquiry, awakening each participant to a relationship to truth and to the transformative grace of life's intelligence.

Coming soon!

Words That Shine Both Ways, Richard's newest book, a collection of meditations that have the power, very simply, to reconnect us to our center. Call now to reserve your copy!

Opening to the Infinite, his newest audio tape set, is now available.



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Richard Moss Seminars
P.O. Box 2147, Oakhurst, CA 93644
800-647-0755 or 209-642-4090
Website: www.radical-aliveness.com

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Death of My Father

V I C T O R W O N G

“A-mi-to-fo, A-mi-to-fo...” The chanting of this sacred Buddhist mantra filled the hospital room and permeated through the entire ward. The monotonous chanting relieved somewhat the unbearable sadness that weighed on me and replaced it with a new surge of peace and solace. I reminded myself that, in fact, this was no time for grief or for any other emotion. There was much to be done in the next forty-eight hours.

The next forty-eight hours saw my final transformation from a naive and carefree adolescent to becoming a young man with responsibility. Earlier that day my Mom had walked into the same hospital room and asked for my consent to let Dad pass on. “The doctors have done everything they can. He is suffering too much...” The directness of her words and the bluntness of her message pierced through my heart. Tears still come to my eyes when I recall my answering “Yes.” I wanted then, and I still do to scream with the full blast of my lungs to echo “NO-OO” through space and eternity but, instead, what came out of the deepest recess of my soul was simply a tired and mute “Yes.” Dad, you must know that in my heart I still seek for your understanding and forgiveness for my letting you go this easily. You must know that I have never and will never give up on you. What I could no longer stand was to witness your suffering the way you did. For eight years you have fought this deadly disease that they call lymphoma, and yet you have always perse-



vered and stood on your ground. Your health deteriorated over the years, but it never took away your stamina. In fact, looking back, it only brought us closer together. So many moments cherished and lived together—would we, no, could we have done so otherwise? Would they have had the same freshness and intensity that they have for all of us now, had your outcome be different? And all that boundless energy you devoted to so many charities and meaningful projects, from working with orphanages in Thailand to refugee camps in Cambodia, where did it all come from? Just a week earlier you announced to me that you would make it through the next week at the hospital and, upon your return, we would look for a new car together. The final week took you, Dad, through yet another battle. After multiple rounds of chemo, with your body debilitated by poison, you had to endure another bone marrow transplant. I know now that you knew then, even before the final moments, that it was all over. I could see that through your eyes. And yet it still had to take several cardiac arrests, intermittent coma, and profuse bleeding from every orifice of your body to have this reality sink into my heart.

I had to remind myself again that I did not have time for digressions. We stayed in a circle around Dad, with palms joined, never breaking the chant that united our hearts and made all of us even more acutely aware of the sacredness of that departing moment. At pre-

cisely 1:07 p.m. that day, with the respirator turned off, Dad moved on. I reminded myself to stay focused on helping clean Dad and change his clothes. According to Buddhist tradition, we had to prepare the deceased properly for the journey beyond. I remember fighting back tears so that they would not stain Dad or his new clothes. After all, mourning for the deceased was not only unnecessary, according to Buddhist teachings, but it would actually hamper the soul or vital force from making its final transition. Dad, in spite of all these teachings, you know that all I wanted to do was to tear the mask down and sob over you, with complete abandon, don't you? Why should I still care about protocols when my heart is really flooded with sorrow? Can't life for a moment be just the way it is, free of constraints and man-made rules? Just be... by being we live, and

nothing else? I know, Dad. You did try to console me by saying, "Look, son, you should rejoice and not mourn for me now that I'm returning to the essence of my being. You should rejoice that I have lived a full life, had a wonderful family, done some good deeds, and that this lifetime was not wasted in vain. Sooner or later each one of us will return to this circle of light. It's only an issue of time. Don't mourn over the impermanence of life." Perhaps I have not evolved this far, Dad, but, listen, I promise I'll try. For the moment, I simply cannot help but feel a profound sense of despair. The burden of facing the rest of our lives without your presence and guidance is simply unbearable...

I did bring myself together to confront the subsequent rituals that took place. The chant that started in the hospital never broke, continuing for several days with relatives

and friends taking vigil. As the oldest son, I was obliged to greet every guest that came for Dad's viewing and the whole funeral service. Dad was cremated, and I find hard to describe here that final let go of him. Of consolation to Mom and me was the support of so many friends and relatives who came at the final moments of this tragedy and took turns to stay with us through the days and nights until the ritual was completed. Without their words of kindness and inspiration, I do not believe I could have survived this loss. Actually, looking back, the whole week-long ritual, starting at the hospital room, was solemn but also indescribably beautiful. I overheard nurses, doctors and many concerned friends asking about the meaning of the ritual and one even commented, "When my time comes, I want to die this way." I still repeat the chant from time to time when I feel lone-

Tell about Your Transformation

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

Do you experience inner peace and joy? Is your life fulfilled with loving relationships? Are you directed by your wisdom and aspirations? We want to present your inspiring story. We want to tell our readers how *you* changed your life.

You may have overcome some major trauma or handicap, made a successful major career shift, developed your creative potential, or filled your relationships with love and understanding.

Please send a recent picture of yourself and a 1,000 word story, typewritten and double-spaced, describing your transformation,

why you did it, how you felt during the process, and how your family and friends reacted. Your story is important. If you are not a skilled writer, our editorial staff can assist.

In your story, please include:

- Events or experiences that launched your transformation process.
- Decisions that greatly impacted your growth.
- Coping skills during the time of change and disruption.

- Resources that helped you.

Send your story and picture along with this completed release form. If your story is used, you will receive a two-year subscription plus two gift subscriptions for friends.

I understand that I give rights for usage of the material I submit to *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* and that it shall constitute a grant for the use of my name, likeness, and story. The editors may edit and condense my story as necessary.

Release Form

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 Phone _____ 78704-7900.
 Signature _____

Mail to: Personal Transformation

ly or when I think of Dad. A-mi-to-fo (or Amitabha in Sanskrit) stands for the Buddha of Infinite Light and as such is evoked when one passes on. However, it also stands for Infinite Wisdom and Enlightenment, and its chanting serves as a reminder for me to never lose sight of this greater purpose of living.

It's ironic how sometimes it takes a tragedy of catastrophic proportions to wake oneself up to a new sense of reality or destiny—most of us would otherwise simply move on in life, dormant, and buried within ourselves. As a result of my own personal tragedy, I have acquired a greater determination to succeed and to work hard for a purpose in life than I would ever have. A part of me died with my Dad that Tuesday, March 12 of this year, but it became reborn into a much greater and purposeful self. I will study and work hard to become a physician, a

promise I made to my Dad before he passed on. Going through all this precious experience with my family only helped reinforce my understanding of how important it is to provide spiritual nurture and support to patients and their relatives in need, and not just professional, materialistic care. I'm strongly convinced that a good physician heals not only the body but also the soul. The two sides actually reinforce each other. My intent to achieve this goal is so strong that it burns through my flesh and gives me all the resolve in the world for this pursuit. In this way I feel I can fulfill my pledge, made quietly at my Dad's bedside and every day ever since, to always serve tirelessly and humbly my fellow mankind. I know that only by cherishing each moment of my life, without a minute to waste, will I be able to live my life fully and to its

utmost potential. The experience of profound sorrow that I went through also has given me a sense of compassion towards the less fortunate in life, a feeling so strong that, looking back, would not have been possible for me to grasp before. I realize today that in so many different ways, I can contribute to making the people around me happier and better. I also understand now that this path becomes effortless when one's heart is pure and sincere. I expect that by sharing a contagious enthusiasm for life while being grateful for what I already have, I will not only survive any hardships that may lie ahead but also prepare myself for that final breakthrough in my personal evolution.

And through all these moments in my life, Dad, you will always be with me. Rest in peace. A-mi-to-fo...•

Network for Attitudinal Healing/new

Mother Teresa's Gift

BARBARA NEIGHBORS DEAL

Calcutta is, on the surface, a horrible place. If one were to try to create a hell on earth, it might look something like Calcutta. It is perhaps the poorest city on the planet. There are piles of rotting, smoldering garbage on the streets. But the garbage moves like something alive, for there are pigs and dogs and rats—and human beings—all rooting through the rotting, stinking mess, looking for something to eat.

Occasionally, infants are found on the garbage heaps. But before judging from our well-fed perspective, consider the plight of the mother who throws away her daughter. So often there are two or three other children in the family, older and stronger, who are constantly on the edge of starvation. One more mouth means that much less food for the children who have a better chance to survive. With few social services in place...what would you do, what would I do if faced with that horrible choice?

Beggars are everywhere. Mothers in rags hold out their babies to you, pointing to the babies' sunken cheeks and swollen bellies, eloquently gesturing that the baby is starving. One very young mother, liquid brown eyes pleading, peeking out from a ragged sari, pushed her baby daughter into my arms, and pleaded with me to "raise her in America."

Just walking down the street is an ordeal, for one is



accosted by lepers who thrust their rotting, peeling flesh to your face, begging for a few pennies.

But there is more to Calcutta than this surface view.

My husband Bob and I were in Calcutta, working with the Indian leadership of an international world service foundation. One of our friends was a volunteer in the Missionaries of Charity work, and asked us if we'd like to have some time with Mother Teresa.

We arrived in Calcutta during Holy Week, the week that Mother Teresa always observed in silent retreat. But when our friend told her that was the only time we could be in the city and see her, she invited us to come because so many of her sisters worldwide were active in our foundation's work.

Early one morning, before the raging Indian sun turned the city into a sauna, we were met by four Missionaries of Charity, dressed in their simple homespun white cotton saris, with the distinctive blue border of their order. They took us to three of the projects run by the order.

Our walking tour of the city began with the first project Mother Teresa established in Calcutta, the home for the destitute and dying. In the early days of the work, Mother Teresa walked the streets of Calcutta picking up the dying people who lined the streets and taking them to the simple hospice she established. Most of the people in her care died. But they died in peace

and dignity: they died with a human touch, in the presence of caring and compassion. Some who looked like they would surely die did not, for love and nurturing was what they most needed, and they revived and flowered under the sisters' care.

There were young women and men from a dozen countries feeding, bathing, touching and comforting those dying people on the simple cots. One elderly man was brought in from the streets while we were there. Starving, near-transparent skin stretched tightly over bone, he was covered from head to toe with open sores and crawling vermin. The young volunteer started to undress the man, to take him to the bathing area. An older, wiser sister stopped her with the words, "The bugs can wait; he needs food first." And the elder sister in her blue-bordered habit knelt beside the man, gently gathered

him in her arms, and fed him broth, spoonful by spoonful. I looked over to the bathing area, and saw a large hand, painted sign, "This is my body!" This juxtaposition of the Upper Room story where Jesus offers his disciples bread, calling it his very body, with the teaching, "As you have done it unto one of the least...you have done it unto me" formed the heart of Mother Teresa's calling: to care for the one in need as though that one were Jesus.

From there, we walked to the orphanage. The sisters went out early each morning, searching for abandoned babies. Now that word has spread that babies will be cared for, hardly a week goes by that infants are not left at the door of the orphanage. Everywhere we looked, sisters and volunteers were holding newborns and children, playing with them, teaching them.

After visiting these two projects,

we walked on to the convent where the sisters live in community. We were shown to a little office, with just a simple table and several wooden chairs. In a few moments, Mother Teresa came into the room, bowing with hands clasped in front of her, greeting us with the traditional Indian greeting, and then taking our hands. Her head barely reached my shoulder, but her hands were enormous, strong from physical labor, the largest hands I've ever seen on a woman.

It is hard to describe that woman's presence. A serenity, a peace, a palpable compassion absolutely radiated from her. That presence touched something deep within me, and from the moment she walked into the room, tears began to stream down my face. She looked at me with such caring and understanding, and smiled a little, as though it happened all too often.

We asked her to tell us more

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 59



Experience The Power Of Healing By Phone

ANN TAYLOR HARCUS is a noted energy healer whose work by phone is as effective as her work in person. Ann's specialty is **healing on a cellular level** which combines verbal, mental and emotional repatterning with the powerful effects of prayer. This helps people release negative and self-limiting beliefs and become the designers of their own lives. Through her work, Ann has helped more than 10,000 people experience the healing touch of God in all areas—emotional, physical and psychological.

DR. BERNIE SIEGEL, author of *Love, Medicine and Miracles* and *Peace, Love and Healing*, client, friend and co-presenter with Ann Taylor Harcus, says, "Ann's intuitive ability is amazing! Her commitment to practicing her skills has made her a very effective healing practitioner, and she has the courage to help people work with natural healing energies."

What can I expect? A compassionate and empowering healer, Ann's profound gift is an intuitive ability to identify and eliminate beliefs that no longer serve you and imprint the vibrations of ones that do. Through a series, or even imprinting to allow more health, wealth and happiness into your life. Ann's work by phone is effective, convenient and individually tailored to meet the needs of every client.

Ann's healing work is very effective with: fatigue, low self-esteem, prosperity, "holiday blues", chronic fatigue syndrome, finding your life purpose, healing relationships, forgiveness, fear of public speaking, phobias of all types.

ELIMINATE or greatly reduce indoctrinated beliefs and feelings **on a cellular level** such as:

- Rejection/ Abandonment
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Reflections



From Our Readers

GREAT RESOURCE

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION is a great resource that I try to share with everyone I come in contact with who is on their own journey to transformation. My back issues with their tattered and torn covers hold a wealth of knowledge, encouragement, and inspiration. Thank you for *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*—T. D. Bradley, Rio Rancho, New Mexico.

IT'S MY BIRTHDAY

It's my birthday tomorrow! and I thought, "What better way to celebrate than to give subscriptions to *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* to some people who can't afford it." Your magazine is wonderful, and the only unfortunate aspect of it is that my clients are always asking to borrow it, so it's hardly ever in my reception area!—L.H. Missouri.

Editor's Note: The generous contribution of \$500 by L.H. to the Friends Fund will enable many to enjoy PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION on a subscription basis who could not afford to do so, like the letter that follows this note. We say "Thank you."

NO MONEY

Your publication has enriched my life in so many ways. It is a shame that I cannot renew my subscription at this time. As soon as my financial circumstances improve, I will rejoin what has been truly a life-saving network.—Sue Bowden, Los Angeles, California.

Editor's Note: To apply for a Friend Fund subscription send us a letter describing your circumstances.

MUCH JOY

I just want to share with you how much joy and confirmation *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* has brought into my life. As the facilitator and founder of our local "Love and Light Fellowship," a spiritual self-help group for those on the transformational journey, I always like to share with the group the pearls of wisdom contained in your "From the Publisher" column. Because I believe so strongly in the value of the journal, I have enclosed the names and addresses of potential subscribers who are very interested in receiving evaluation copy.—Gary J. Kolb, Arnold, Maryland.

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S O S P E C I A L

Your magazine is so special and different. The quality of everything, from the artwork to the articles even to the advertisements, is a pleasure. In your August, 1997, issue, I read the article "Creativity and Healing" by Candace Hartzler. She mentioned The Person Centered Expressive Therapy Institute. I did not see it listed in the advertisement, and I am interested in getting more information. Do you know of an address? Thank you for the gift of your magazine, the only one I joyfully read cover to cover.—*Karin Santos, Los Angeles, California.*

Editor's Note: We forwarded your letter on to Candace Hartzler. Best wishes to you.

F O R G I V E N E S S D A Y

We came across your article in *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION*, "Healing Through Forgiveness" by Mary NurrieStearns. This is the perfect article for our alliance. I represent the World Forgiveness Alliance. We are a non-profit organization, just starting up, and sponsor an International Forgiveness Day, on the first Sunday in August. We celebrated in a park this year in Corte Madera, CA, and our goal in 1998 is that all across the country in every community there will be an observance of the International Forgiveness Day on August 2, 1998.—*Robert W. Plath, Mill Valley, California.* •

LETTERS —

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Snow Lion

Never Move

Continued from page 13

cious and sacred, is not that it's far from us or distant, it's because it's not the most *important* thing for us. Often people take things for granted that are very near to them. Wives take their husbands for granted, husbands take their wives for granted, parents take their children for granted, children take their parents for granted. That which is most dear and so close to us is easy to forget the significance of. This also has to do with our own heart. It's the easiest thing to move away from, even though in certain states of consciousness it appears to be the most important thing there is. Sometimes something is so close that we tend to not give it the kind of importance that it deserves. We live in a world in which most people give the greatest importance to things that are impermanent and ultimately insignificant, and very few people give the greatest importance to that which is imperishable and has the greatest significance.

This is about a willingness to re-educate ourselves. If we recognize ourselves to be unfree or not as free as we know is possible, it is because of choices that we make all the time, without being aware of it. If that's the case, we have to make the effort to find out which choices take us away from where we think we want to be. We have to remember that the goal is never moving from where we always have been, never straying from there, and never losing touch with what's most important—always allowing that to come first before anything else. When we get to that point, our work is over: there is nothing left to do. Then we will become truly independent individuals. •

Inner Traditions/new

Institute of Transpersonal Psychology/new



Be As Powerful As You Really Are

D O R I S H E L G E

The American media promulgates victimhood, and most people in our society are addicted to “playing victim.” Why? It is easier for us to blame others than to take responsibility for our own growth and learning. Whether we blame the traffic for making us late or blame another person for inflicting a psychological wound, we all play victim. The paradox and the illusions here are quite fascinating. We all have astonishing capabilities. Yet, as a society, we are addicted to feeling powerless. Why are we so afraid to feel and be as capable as we are? Is it because we have incorrectly defined power?

TS/MARC RONANELLI

Webster's *New World Dictionary* (10th ed.) defines power as the ability to do or act, vigor, strength, influence and authority. All of these qualities are internal attributes.

Even "authority" must be an intrinsic characteristic. As evidence of that, witness those who are promoted to positions of authority and cannot maintain them because they do not feel worthy or are not effective.

Our society has promoted the illusion that being a powerful person means having power over others. This refers to external authority, such as a person in a certain position who controls or manipulates people so that they will do something that they wouldn't otherwise do.

It is not true that one person must be disempowered for another to be fully empowered. It is the *insecure* person who feels the need to dominate others and attempts to disempower them.

Such a person portrays society's distorted image of power. In truth, this is a person who *feels powerless*. The most powerful individuals I know express their power by being vulnerable. They are so *self-secure* that they are real and honest with themselves and with others. They are true to themselves. They do not need to prove themselves or their abilities to others, nor do they make personal choices designed to gain external approval. They may not always be liked by others, but they are generally respected by them. Frequently, they are not identified in our society as powerful individuals. Many have such soft qualities of real power that they are never noticed or understood by mainstream society.

Genuine power is an innate quality. It embodies tenderness, compassion and sensitivity, as well as the ability to be firm and tenacious. It includes the ability to be who we really are, no matter who is in our presence. Compare this to "power over" which involves a facade of power that comes from feeling inadequate; in such a case, our self-doubts cause us to demean others or demand that they succumb to our point of view.

Once we understand how powerful we really are, we know that our next step is to accept full personal responsibility for our lives. All of our social training has been antithetical to this concept. Our society, including the news media, glorifies playing victim.

Genuine power is an innate quality. It embodies tenderness, compassion and sensitivity, as well as the ability to be firm and tenacious. It includes the ability to be who we really are, no matter who is in our presence. Compare this to "power over" which involves a facade of power that comes from feeling inadequate; in such a case, our self-doubts cause us to demean others or demand that they succumb to our point of view.

Accepting *total* responsibility for our lives is a challenge for most of us. It is much easier to feel inadequate than to be as magnificent as we truly are.

It is easier to join a self-help group and to commiserate with others who also feel impotent than it is to be self-responsible. Although I don't judge the time and energy I spent doing this, I do remember having a lucid realization one day that I was surrounded with mirrors of others who were still blaming the past. It struck me that I was the only person who could put my life in forward motion, no matter how frightened I was of that task.

Once we are more aware of our power, we require ourselves to be more conscious, more consistently awake and aware. It is a hefty responsibility and one of the greatest joys in life.

PARADIGM SHIFT

The fact that you are reading this indicates that you are interested in stretching your comfort zones. Understanding a paradigm shift that is occurring in our society will assist you as you exit your current reality and move into your next level of experiencing life.

There is an old paradigm in our society that consists of principles such as blaming others for our lives and our circumstances. We all operate in this paradigm some of the time. When we do, we aren't accepting personal responsibility for ourselves, our situations or our feelings.

We are cheating ourselves out of the incredible freedom that emerges when we acknowledge our choices in life and consciously make decisions. When we don't trust ourselves to make a decision, knowing that all of our actions inevitably just lead to another learning experience, we stand paralyzed at another crossroad in life. We freeze action and blame someone or something else for our lack of progress.

We don't really lose anything because that's impossible. However, we "create time," which makes it seem like we lost something. We invent other opportunities to go around the wheel again, instead of going forward with our lives.

When we blame others, we give away our power. We indirectly or unconsciously ask others for per-

mission to live a certain way. We are inadvertently saying that we are not capable of making our own decisions and choices.

In the Old Paradigm, we also depend on others to comfort, heal and entertain us. We blame others because they don't fit our pictures of how they should perform in our lives. They should be happy, encourage us, love us, etc. The list is endless. In short, it's someone else's responsibility to "make our day."

The truth is that those who surround us are the individuals who resonate with us, and they are our mirrors. They show us what we don't always want to see about ourselves. How many times have we shunned one human mirror, only to walk down the street and come face to face with another individual displaying the same characteristics? How many times have we left one relationship only to create another with the same challenges?

Our civilization is now moving into a new paradigm where we take responsibility for our own lives. The New Paradigm empowers us and gives us tremendous freedom of choice in our lives. It also stretches our comfort zones because we are not used to acknowledging how capable we are. We sometimes find ourselves engaged in skirmishes in our inner combat zones.

Our egos fight our changing, even when change is for our benefit. Our known realities are challenged because we are used to discomfort, and we have learned how to act when in pain. We find ourselves experiencing "approach-avoidance." (Our behaviors are inconsistent—we both approach and avoid allowing ourselves to have what we have said we desire.)

On the other hand, self-responsibility results in personal freedom, and that is accompanied by feelings of bliss. Most of us have conditioned ourselves to accept occasional bouts of joy or bliss, but it threatens our egos to invite them as permanent guests in our psyches. It sets off *joy alarms*, and we become anxious. Sometimes we re-create pain so that we can dive back into our comfort zones!

THE OLD PARADIGM

The framework in which most of us function.

- We live in a *Victim Mentality*.
- We prefer to blame others for our circumstances.
- We judge our feelings as positive or negative. We want to avoid our painful feelings, but they are part of who we are. Thus, we are always battling ourselves (and therefore each other).
- We use most of our energy to repress and deny our feelings and experiences.
- We rely on elements and people outside of ourselves to comfort, heal, entertain and empower us.
- We endure life and feel isolated from ourselves and each other.

In the Old Paradigm, our judgments of our experiences or feelings as negative or positive create self-perpetuating cycles. We repeat our painful experiences because we keep trying to justify our evaluations of them as negative. We attempt to eradicate our unpleasant feelings or experiences. We either do not express our feelings (we stuff them) or we express them in ways that are not safe to ourselves or others. Examples include being numb to life (the walking dead), withdrawing from others instead of solving our problems, covert passive-aggressive actions, and hiding our problems in drugs or alcohol. As the pattern continues, we may engage in violence, substance abuse, suicide attempts, anorexia and bulimia, or other self-abuse.

These behaviors result from our inaccurate perceptions. Some of us fear anger because we believe its natural consequence is violence. We may think grief culminates in the destruction of our open hearts. Many people assume that fear automatically results in shame or running away from a situation or person.

In the Old Paradigm, we cheat ourselves out of experiencing the present. We live in the past or the future because we haven't resolved the issues from our past. We feel victimized by other people or life's circumstances. If we are using half of our energy to live in the past, only half of it is available to function in the present. We incorrectly assume that our earlier experiences will automatically be extrapolated into the future.

We allow the past to continue to pull at us like

an expanded rubber band, and we are afraid that the band will snap at any moment, causing unbearable pain. If we don't spend some time with our suppressed feelings, we remain half of a person because we don't accept these emotions as parts of ourselves. It is essential to process our old issues, whatever they are. The secret is that it is not a life-shattering process to visit our feelings. All that is required is to feel our repressed emotions. When we do so, the past and the old feelings of hurt become *just experiences*.

In the Old Paradigm, we think that we must fix or change ourselves. We over-analyze how our personalities and characteristics emerged. We may spend years trying to decide if our insecurities or our fears of intimacy originated because of abuse or neglect. We label ourselves as victims because we assume someone or something else is responsible for who we are in the present. It is important to feel the emotions that are inside of us, particularly those that have been trapped or suppressed in our bodies. It is also important to advance to our next levels of self as soon as the time is right for us, and each of us knows that precise time.

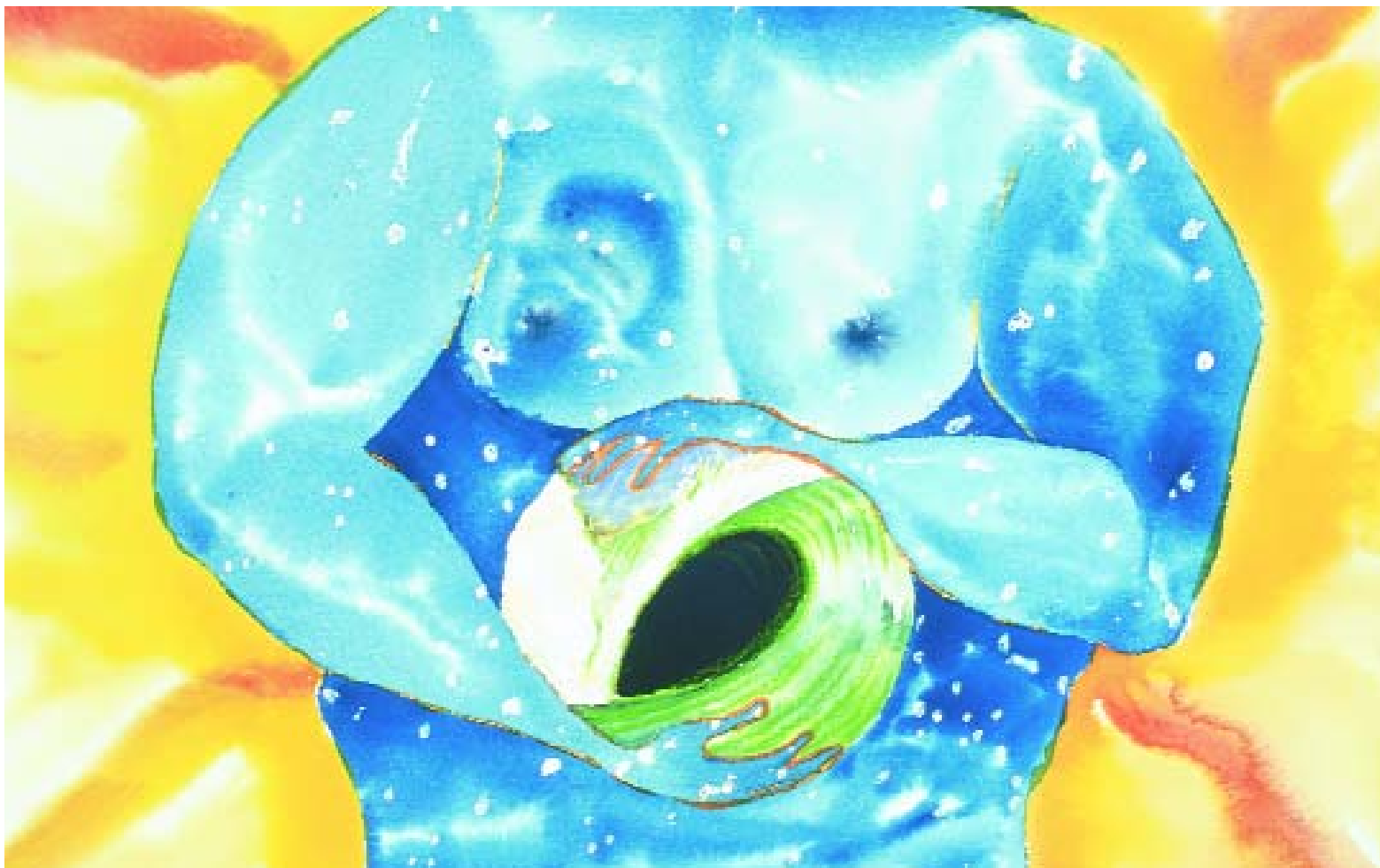
THE NEW PARADIGM

What we are working toward

- We live in a creative mentality.
- We choose to take responsibility for the realities of our lives.
- We allow ourselves to feel and express all of our feelings, and we know how to do this in safe and constructive ways.
- This energizes us and allows us the freedom to be the powerful beings that we are.
- We know how to comfort, heal, entertain and empower ourselves.
- We know we each have the choice to be as whole, real and alive as we are willing to be.
- We welcome life. We feel connected to ourselves and to each other.
- We look forward to the next moment in our lives while fully experiencing the present.

In the New Paradigm, we understand that all experiences in life are purposeful. We know that pain is just a wake-up call and that we label experi-

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 59



DAVID SIRGANY

The Human Heart

J O H N O ' D O N O H U E

Though the human body is born complete in one moment, the human heart is never finally born. It is being birthed in every experience of your life. Everything that happens to you has the potential to deepen you. It brings to birth within you new territories of the heart. Patrick Kavanagh captures this sense of the benediction of happening: "Praise, praise, praise/The way it happened and the way it is." In the Christian tradition, one of the most beautiful sacraments is baptism. It includes a special anointing of the baby's heart. Baptism comes from the Jewish tradition. For the Jewish people, the heart was the center of all the emotions. The heart is anointed as a main organ of the baby's health, but also as the place where all its feelings will nest.

Sometimes, it is easy to be generous outwards, to give and give and give, and yet remain ungenerous to your self. You lose the balance of your soul if you are a generous giver but a mean receiver.

The prayer intends that the new child will never become trapped, caught or entangled in false inner networks of negativity, resentment or destruction towards itself. The blessings also intend that the child will have a fluency of feeling in its life, that its feelings may flow freely and carry its soul out to the world and gather from the world delight and peace.

Against the infinity of the cosmos and the silent depths of nature, the human face shines out as the icon of intimacy. It is here, in this icon of human presence, that divinity in creation comes nearest to itself. The human face is the icon of creation. Each person also has an inner face, which is always sensed but never seen. The heart is the inner face of your life. The human journey strives to make this inner face beautiful. It is here that love gathers within you. Love is absolutely vital for a human life. For love alone can awaken what is divine within you. In love, you grow and come home to your self. When you learn to love and to let yourself be loved, you come home to the hearth of your own spirit. You are warm and sheltered. You are completely at one in the house of your own longing and belonging. In that growth and homecoming is the unlooked for bonus in the act of loving another. Love begins in paying attention to others, in an act of gracious self-forgetting. Paradoxically, this is the condition in which we grow.

Once the soul awakens, the search begins, and you can never go back again. From then on, you are inflamed with a special longing which will never again let you linger in the lowlands of complacency and partial fulfillment. The eternal makes you urgent. You are loath to let compromise or the threat of danger hold you back from striving towards the summit of fulfillment. When this spiritual path opens, you can bring an incredible gen-

erosity to the world and to the lives of others. Sometimes, it is easy to be generous outwards, to give and give and give, and yet remain ungenerous to yourself. You lose the balance of your soul if you are a generous giver but a mean receiver. You need to be generous to yourself in order to receive the love that surrounds you. You can suffer from a desperate hunger to be loved. You can search long years in lonely places, far outside yourself. Yet the whole time, this love is but a few inches away from you. It is at the edge of your soul, but you have been blind to its presence. Through some hurt, a door has slammed shut within the heart, and you are powerless to unlock it and receive the love. We must remain attentive in order to be able to receive. Boris Pasternak said, "When a great moment knocks on the door of your life, it is often no louder than the beating of your heart, and it is very easy to miss it."

It is strangely ironic that the world loves power and possessions. You can be very successful in this world, be admired by everyone, have endless possessions, a lovely family, success in your work and have everything the world can give, but behind it all you can be completely lost and miserable. If you have everything the world has to offer you, but you do not have love, then you are the poorest of the poorest of the poor. Every human heart hungers for love. If you do not have the warmth of love in your heart, there is no possibility of real celebration and enjoyment. No matter how hard, competent, self-assured or respected you are, no matter what you think of yourself or what others think of you, the one thing you deeply long for is love. No matter where we are, who we are or what we are, or what kind of journey we are on, we all need love. •

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We Can Heal America



AN INTERVIEW WITH
MARIANNE WILLIAMSON
BY MARY NURRIESTEARN

Marianne Williamson is a well-known author, teacher and speaker. She is the best-selling author of "A Return to Love," "A Woman's Worth," and "Illuminata." She is also the author of a children's book, "Emma and Mommy Talk to God." She lives in Santa Barbara, California.

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION: *Your new book, “The Healing of America,” stirs our social conscience and disturbs our political apathy. It is a detailed social commentary about how our country has traded the spirit of democracy for materialism. It is also instructive, telling how we can again become a country where equal opportunity, justice, and love of life guide social and economic policy. What prompted you to write this book?*

MARIANNE: After I wrote *A Return to Love*, I was offered the chance to write another book. I knew then, in 1992, that I wanted to write a book called *The Healing of America*. I ended up writing *A Women’s Worth* and *Illuminata* in between, mainly because it took a long time to study and research for this book.

The research behind this book makes it a compelling call to action. How do we each discover our own personal call to action?

Each of us receives direct guidance from the highest wisdom in the universe. All we have to do is ask for it. If each of us would ask, “how might I best use my time, energies, and talents to serve the larger world,” we would transform this society and transform the planet. It is not for me or anyone else to tell people what to do. It is up to each of us to do those things that we know in our hearts we should do. For some people, it’s getting sober. For some, it’s forgiving someone. For others, it is giving service. For all of us, becoming more aware and involved in the social and political issues of our day bears directly on what will happen in this world over the next 20 years.

You say that our society is organized according to obsolete social principles. What do you mean by that?

We have allowed ourselves to fall in line behind the gross delusion that economic principles are more important than humanitarian principles. We allow those in power to make balancing the budget more important than balancing the universe. We have witnessed the terrible social disruption that results from placing money before love on such a mass scale. We have allowed this to happen, and it is our responsibility to change it. It’s not enough to whine. It’s definitely not enough to just tune out and throw up our hands.

You cite the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, the Emancipation Proclamation, Kennedy’s Inaugural Address and King’s letter from Birmingham Jail as tablets on which are inscribed our fundamental yearnings and highest hopes. What are these fundamental yearnings?

AMERICA’S FIRST PRINCIPLES

- *Equality of Rights and Opportunity:* that all of us are equal before God and should be treated that way by the American government;
- *E Pluribus Unum:* that within our diversity lies a national unity—that we are at the same time a people who reflect and embody diversity, yet are united by fealty to these treasured first principles;
- *Balance of Individual Liberty and Protection of the Common Good:* that it is the responsibility of government to protect the general welfare, yet with enough checks and balances to ensure that it remains limited enough to guarantee our individual liberties;
- *Religious Freedom:* that every American shall worship how he or she wishes, according to the individual’s own conscience and with no governmental interference in that right.

RENAISSANCE POLITICAL PRINCIPLES

1. The power within us is greater than any power outside us.
2. Government should concern itself less with how to allocate our external resources and more with how to harness our internal ones.
3. The source of wealth is our capacity for genius. Creation of wealth through the stimulation of creative thinking is thus the primary source of economic recovery and stimulation.
4. The highest political dialogue is not adversarial, but rather a synergistic conversation between high-minded liberal visions for the country and high-minded conservative ones.
5. The politics of hate is a branch that does not bear fruit. That is why another branch is starting to grow. Love is a more powerful political and social tool than hatred.
6. We will not move forward as a nation without repenting for our lack of righteousness toward other Americans in the past and present, and all other nations of the world.
7. We must acknowledge the power of the inner life, the wisdom found in silence, and the primacy of the voice of conscience. Otherwise, the American experiment will end. It shall have failed.

Our founders, as children of enlightenment, believed that there is a spirit of goodness within each person and that from that goodness we can derive the wisdom and intelligence to govern our own affairs. Democracy demands an aware mind. Democracy demands depth of intelligence, soul and participation. It's not enough that Jefferson said brilliant things or that King said brilliant things or that Lincoln said brilliant things. If the things they said don't live in our hearts, and the things they said don't spur us to action, then one of the greatest miracles in world history will turn into mere memory.

You state that the Trail of Tears, the Vietnam war, systemic racism, economic injustice, violence and militarism form a force field, a barrier before our hearts, that prevents us from grasping these tablets. Describe this force field.

Lack of social and economic justice, and the rage it produces, encroaching militarism, government secrecy and government hypocrisy encourage the average American to think that America is not what it's cracked up to be.

You indicate that the way we break through this wall that separates us from acting on the principles and the spirit of our founding documents is to begin an archaeological dig into the American psyche. How do we dig?

President Roosevelt said that to some generations much is given, and from some generations much is expected. He said that his generation had a rendezvous with destiny. Our generation is one to whom much has been given and one from whom much is now expected. We also have a rendezvous with destiny. The question is whether we're going to sleep through the date. When we watch too much television, we're asleep. When we choose to remain ignorant of social and political issues that affect our lives and the lives of our children on a daily basis, we're choosing to remain asleep. When we take anti-depressants before trying serious spiritual, psychological and emotional work as an antidote to our despair, we're choosing to sleep. Once you tune in to what is true, once you tune in to what is real, once you tune in to your authentic knowing and your deeper connection to your purpose in the world, you find easily enough what you should do. Until we tune in, we're too disconnected from our own knowing to have any idea what to do next. That's why the social revolution of our time—and we do need a mass social revolution, cannot be organized. It must be initiated by passion. It must be led, as Ghandi said that

the Indian Independence Movement was led, by the small, still voice within. The power residing within the individual aligns with the basic tenets of democracy. To retrieve democracy, we have to start practicing democracy. We can't blame others for taking it away, if we, ourselves, abdicate all social responsibility because we are too busy tending to our own gardens.

Martin Luther King said, "We need tough minds and tender hearts." What's the relevance of that sage advice now?

Most Americans fall in one of two categories: tough minds that lack tender hearts, or tender hearts, that lack strong critical thinking. Many people with tough minds need to soften their hearts, but many people with tender hearts need to read a book or two. We must have both and be both if we're serious about turning this country around.

We're exiting the material age and entering what you call an ideational age. Define ideational age.

Ideas are more powerful than things. We have looked to the external world as the source of our power, and we are coming into an era where we recognize ideas as the source of our power. That is a huge historical transformation.

Can the tenets of higher consciousness become a major force for social change?

Everything we do is infused with the energy with which we do it. The first higher consciousness principle to consider is that who we are is as important as what we do. I asked the Dalai Lama, "If enough people meditate, will that save the world?" He answered, "If we wish to save the world, we must have a plan, but unless we meditate, no plan will work." From a higher consciousness perspective, our spiritual work increases our personal power, and thus our effectiveness in the world. Ghandi and King claimed that soul force is more powerful than brute force. Our current dominant political structure defines power in terms of brute force. We have the opportunity, if we're serious about it, to usher in an era in which power derives from soul force. Soul force is neither cheap nor easy to obtain. Many people give lip service to soul force while avoiding its use as a political tool. It's easier to talk about than to practice. In fact, there is a temptation to use spiritual seeking as escapism, an easy opportunity to avoid looking at, dealing with, or seeking to transform the suffering of the world. It's an insidious game that the mind plays. We can't resurrect a world whose crucifixion we've ignored.

RULES OF RENAISSANCE

1. It is always our prerogative, as individuals and as nations, to choose again: to say no to a direction we've been moving in and yes to a new one. Our greatest power is our capacity to change our minds.

2. Alignment with higher principle is always supported by invisible forces.

3. If an energy is not in alignment with divine truth, it is ultimately temporary. It will not last forever, and is more vulnerable than it appears.

4. The universe is impersonally invested in evolving toward goodness and uses any available conduit for the purposes of doing so. Willingness to be so used activates the conduit. You're as good for the job as anyone else, and your past is totally irrelevant.

In the words of Dr. King, "Even though the arc of the moral universe is long, it bends toward justice."

5. Don't expect the old order to like you.

6. A life of love and effort on behalf of the collective good promises the satisfaction of knowing that you are doing what you were born to do. You are not, however, promised specific results as you might define them.

7. Your happiness regarding the reality that's coming is a more potent method of social conversion than is your anger regarding the reality now.

How have we drifted away from the first principles of our founding documents?

Over the last thirty years, opportunity—particularly economic opportunity—has tilted in the direction of the already privileged. The main form of drifting is economic injustice. We give gargantuan subsidies—\$65 billion dollars over the next five years—to wealthy corporations, while our inner cities are filled with millions of people, primarily African Americans, living under social and economic conditions as desperate as those during the worst days of the Great Depression. This country is in major denial regarding critical violations of our own first principles, not to mention the love of God.

When we take tax money away from nutritional, medical, educational and job training programs for those with the most need, then give tax cuts to the most privileged, we practice economic injustice.

Martin Luther King, Jr., said that when we give money to the poor, people call it a handout; but when we give money to the rich, people call it a subsidy. Why should we be subsidizing the richest companies rather than America's children? We must repudiate the notion that the market alone fuels the social good. It doesn't. And neither does government, by the way. Love does. Americans need to wake up to the fact that seriously disabled children, children who are undereducated, children who receive inadequate care of whatever kind—when cut off from societal compassion—become our main prison population in following years. Our public policies, which perpetuate the disadvantaged state of so many millions of children, are the root cause of crime and most social dysfunction in this country. This is criminally insane, in my opinion.

Which comes from policies being driven by economics?

It's not just policies driven by economic principle; it is policies driven by short-term, old paradigm, spiritually bankrupt economic principles. For those of us who embrace new paradigm thinking, it ultimately makes no economic sense to spend

more money on the military than on educating our children. Federally, we spend 22 percent of our budget on the military and 5 percent on education. We're building a B-2 bomber for \$1.5 billion—which the pentagon doesn't even want—when that money would pay for the annual salaries of 56,000 elementary school teachers, or 125,000 child care workers. Public schools throughout the country ask private schools if they could borrow paper. Schools throughout the country not only don't have enough paper to write on, many schools in the inner cities don't even have working toilets. It would cost \$112 billion to make the public schools of the United States come up to minimum building standards. The Democrats suggested \$5 million on seed money to begin the process; the Republicans cut it to zero. Clearly, the political system, as it now exists, fails to recognize that taking care of our children should be our top priority. According to the laws of metaphysics, this isn't a matter of opinion. There is one principle that rules the universe—cause and effect or Karma. What goes around comes around. From a spiritual perspective, no society as wealthy as ours, that has as many underprivileged children as we have, has any basis for long term economic optimism.

To make the fundamental changes that we are being called to make, you say that we must be as committed to our spiritual goals as we are to our political goals. How do we marry the two?

We marry the two by being awake. When you read that 95,000 children are being cut off from disability payments, saving something like \$5 billion, but you read that fifty times more than that is going to corporate welfare, you call your congressman. You write a letter to your local paper. You write a letter to your senator. Public pressure makes the world go around, and that's how it should be, particularly in a democracy. Thomas Jefferson said it is our responsibility to keep the spirit of rebellion alive. Too many of us who have passionate feelings don't turn those feelings into action; we don't turn our energy into social force. The most we ever do is to yell at the television set. Taking the energy in our hearts and transforming it into constructive

social action is the next step toward our personal and political maturity. That's the essence of democracy, and it's the essence of the spiritual power inherent in a democracy. Democracy means that this country will go in whatever direction the people choose for it to go. Right now our democratic rights are being unraveled for no other reason than that we're not protesting. We act more like the royalists in the days of the colonies than like our own revolutionary forebears. We are not being attacked directly by the power structure, by taxes and other burdens such as George III imposed on the colonies. Our oppression is not through pain, but through pleasure. The system provides us with so much pleasure—things to buy and toys to play with—that we're on the brink of being consumed by our own consumerism. We are literally stoned on our lovely lifestyles.

In writing about the marriage of spiritual and political goals, you say that learning to love effectively is the highest form of political training.

Learning to love is the highest form of political training for two reasons. First of all, our love for people, particularly children on the other side of town, must become a passionate commitment if we're to save this world. Secondly, we must not allow anger to obstruct our effectiveness. It's our own fault that we have allowed this radical deterioration. We must personal responsibility for this, and assert ourselves now. As Ghandi and King made so clear, the only way to eradicate institutionalized forms of injustice is by awakening the conscience of mankind. We must not attack the power structure; we must speak to its conscience. Dr. King used this image: the rich and the poor of America are all on the same boat, and if a hole forms underneath the seat of the poor, we will all go down. If we don't redress the terrible economic inequalities in this country, within five to ten years we're all going to be living in gated communities, shopping in privately guarded entertainment complexes, and traveling in police protected caravans. We already employ in the United States more private police than public police. Other countries find that horrifying, and we should too.

None of this is to say that I'm cynical or pessimistic about the United States, because I'm not. I'm as much of a champion about what's right in this country as anyone is, and I'm as blessed by what's right in this country as anyone is, but we must seek to make opportunity universally accessible here, or this house will fall. In his inaugural address, President Kennedy said, "The free society that doesn't take care of its many who are poor will not be able to save its few who are rich."

You define economic injustice as, "An internal wounding of the American psyche which is our economic obsessiveness and our moral paralysis in the face of huge amounts of human suffering. Thirty-six million Americans live below the poverty line, a fifth of American children live in poverty, and the top five percent of our population takes home half of the nation's income. Economic injustice doesn't violate the letter of the law, but it violates the spirit of the law, and it's the consequence of market-based, rather than conscious-based policy." You add that we should set morally outstanding goals, such as having the best educated children.

Definitely. We are supposedly a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. We should have the best educated children in the world. Period. Notice that if we make enough money in America, we send our kids to private schools. It didn't used to be that way. Our public education system should reflect our genius, not our shame. We need possibility thinking, not just in our private lives, but in our public life as well.

So the way we have economic justice is to have morally outstanding economic goals?

Balancing the budget is important, but balancing our hearts and actions with the laws of God is more important. Love should come before money. I don't believe that God is asking us to balance the budget on the backs of poor children.

Another facet of healing that you discuss is cultural amends, atoning for our violations against others. What's the value of national atonement in dealing with this country's legacy of slavery?

Social change occurs most powerfully where

conscience has been aroused. An apology for slavery carries with it the potential to shift the national consciousness by touching the national conscience. We need external remedies as well as internal ones, but an apology is a beginning.

How would we apologize as a nation?

There are many ways such a ritual could be performed. If we wanted to do it, we could come up with a way. When representative Tony Hall of Ohio, submitted a bill in the House of Representatives suggesting that Congress apologize for slavery, there was such an outcry the bill didn't have a chance of going forward. Newt Gingrich called a congressional apology for slavery mere "emotional symbolism." He asked if it would teach one child to read. I say that yes, it would, because it would remove some heavy blocks to our awareness of love. The government recently spent 25 million dollars on a study of adolescents that proved love is by far the most potent positive force in the lives of young people. The word love was actually used in a headline in the Washington Post. The world is changing and it doesn't matter what the old order thinks.

Once the ideas are put on the table, something starts to happen. We have to ask, "What is real political power?" I speak in my book about holistic politics. We need to create in politics what we have created in medicine. The holistic model has revolutionized our health care system because it has revolutionized our mentality. Whereas we used to think that what the doctor said and the medicine he gave us was the core of healing, we now know that a patient's mental, spiritual and emotional involvement is critical to the healing process. We look at politicians the way we used to look at doctors, and we look at legislation the way we used to look at medicine. But in a democracy, what's going on inside the mind and the heart of the average citizen must be a significant factor in correcting, healing and maintaining the system. Without that, democracy is a sham.

Politics, the way the ancient Greeks used the word, did not mean of the *government*; it meant of the *citizen*. The ancient Greeks thought of politics as something more than the purview of govern-

mental leaders and the actions they took. Politics has to do with every individual's involvement with a larger community and the issues that affect us all. When a congressman suggests that we apologize for slavery and Congress strikes it down, that doesn't mean the political power behind the idea is completely lost. Political power is only increased if a critical mass of people sees the idea as a good one. Later on, it will turn into specific action, when the intellectual and emotional soil is fertile. Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come. Our job is to promote the ideas we care about.

Does one individual's prayer, one individual's letter to a congressman, make a difference?

Most congressmen receive fewer than a hundred calls on any particular issue. When you read an article about injustice, or whatever bothers you, call the main switchboard at the Capitol in Washington, D.C., (202)224-3121. Ask for your congressman's office and tell them what you think. It's called a constituent call. One call doesn't make that much difference, but a hundred calls make a lot of difference.

One person, as a part of a critical mass, makes a difference. That's the message of empowerment.

Absolutely. When you make that call, an amazing thing happens: you feel more powerful. You feel more powerful because you expressed your power. Receiving such calls is not a joke to congressman. These people do run for election. Unfortunately, in America most people are either turned off to what's happening and are politically resigned, or they merely accept and complain, rather than exercise their own rights and power.

The critical mass emerges when we take part, in small ways or large ways.

We should feel that we're part of a broad-based social movement. We should feel absolutely sure, when a headline like 95,000 severely disabled children are being dropped off government assistance rolls, while at least ten times more than that is being given to wealthy corporations, that not only we are on the phone calling our congressmen and senators, but that we know, without a doubt, everybody of like mind is making the same phone call.

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DAVID SIRGANY

Loving Yourself Madly

J A M E S M . M C M A H O N

Radical self-acceptance is receiving oneself willingly and completely. It means that we completely accept as ourselves “any” particular characteristic or behavior or feeling. Does this mean that we never wish to change something? Not necessarily. However, the desire to change is not prompted by self-hate, self-criticism, self-loathing, guilt or shame. We may have a sense that we are not yet fully who we truly are, and we may wish to move toward that fulfillment. But we are humble in that ambition, realizing the difficulty of relinquishing old ways, understanding that, in some sense, these behaviors have been friends. We also acknowledge that our notion of what would be best for us at a particular moment may be incorrect, or at least limited.

Loving yourself madly is not selfishness. Selfishness is parsimonious; love is expansive. Selfishness exists when you think there is not enough, and you must hoard everything for yourself. Radical self-acceptance is knowing that you are enough, and that there is enough. When you love yourself madly, you want to give, you want to share.

Radical self-acceptance is accepting yourself exactly as you are: receiving yourself with no strings attached. *This is who I am.* You bring no evaluation or judgment to yourself, either positive or negative; you need not do anything except to take yourself in and enjoy your experience of being alive—just noticing, observing, and, in as neutral a way as possible, *receiving* yourself exactly as you are in this moment with no caveats or conditions. “Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin. But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them” (Mt. 6: 28-29).

Is this not freedom? Relief? This is *release* from all our demons and *is more important than change itself*. Radical self-acceptance is *ceasing to aspire toward anything*; we move in the direction of joy. *To give up self-evaluation is psychological separation.* We are what we are; what is of necessity is, and that is to be one with the transcendent. Love of self and others is the celebration of *what is* with *no desire to change it*. As soon as you want to change it, it is less love. Love is *knowing* without trying to change, knowing the other *just as is*, not a mixture of “as is” and “as I want you to be.” Self-acceptance is the same. And lo and behold, just as we lose interest in change, it often occurs “behind our backs.”

In group therapy one night we batted about this question: “Is it possible to have nothing about us—present behavior, memories of the past, thoughts of the future—elicit suffering and shame?” Every-

body became disoriented. It is hard even to think of these things. It is hard because such a state of existence implies psychological separation. When we have separated from mother, we are free to accept and approve of ourselves, free to approve *just because we decide to*, not because we meet any standard. We no longer need parental approval. We no longer need the approval of anyone. We are free. We can then release ourselves from the agendas of the past and choose the new in our lives as we come upon it.

The reason that we experience joy in spiritual events, or in a new love, or the birth of a baby, is that these release us, for the moment, from the chronic sense of unworthiness that each of us carries within. This release seems possible for us with a guru, or fellow seekers, or in the presence of new life, or a beloved. But to release unworthiness *by oneself*, alone—that is the challenge. This is more than *replacing* a fierce and critical parental image with a more loving and nurturing one. This is psychological separation, *a decision to know your worth simply as an alive person, a co-creator with the transcendent.* You overcome your resistance to wisdom, see freely what you can see, and, in your own “God-sense,” look at yourself and others and joyfully say, “It is good.” You give up the compulsive need to have control over yourself and others. Not only are you not more self-centered and selfish, you are actually more loving, tolerant and generous to all living things.

Loving yourself madly is not selfishness. Selfishness is parsimonious; love is expansive. Selfishness exists when you think there is not enough, and you

must hoard everything for yourself. Radical self-acceptance is knowing that you are enough, and that there *is* enough. When you love yourself madly, you want to give, you want to share. There is no room for selfishness, avariciousness, greed. You love yourself, and it spills over onto others. You are generous and giving because you are safe in your self-caring. Selfishness comes from fear. Radical self-acceptance transcends fear. It is joyous, it is expansive, and it is sweetly humble.

The charge of “selfishness” toward someone truly striving to love himself comes from the demons within, which do not want to see anyone truly psychologically separated. It threatens their secret pact with mom with its hidden grandiosity and its willful ambition to control, its hubris. The deep acceptance of any limitation, our essential humanness, is very hard for us. There is in each of us a grandiose belief that we should have no limitations or parameters at all. We may disguise this by self-criticism, masochism, or whatever, but it is there, an underground standard by which we measure and torture ourselves. We cannot accept ourselves because we refuse to give up this grandiose image. Once again, it is ego, and fusion with mother fuels this delusion. Making peace with life demands continual surrender to reality, acknowledging that we are limited, that we will die, that we are not in perfect control. This last surrender is the hardest—that we are not in perfect control, even over our destinies. It is a dramatic blow to our narcissism.

Actually, we are flawed only when compared to our grandiose expectations of ourselves. We are what we are—merely human. It is when mother-ego distorts what we are that we have trouble, whether you call it psychopathology, hindrances, evil or sin. The very notion of perfection only comes from our perception of the demands of mother, real or imagined, and the need for her acceptance. Self-acceptance is the ultimate psychological separation, the spiritual act of knowing that you are not God, but that you are just fine in your humanness and “imperfection.”

Radical self-acceptance is so torturously difficult for us! To accept ourselves as perfectly OK with all our limitations, relinquishing ego and grandiosity,

means leaving mother. And leaving mother means accepting graciously the omnipotence of our transcendent, and even surrendering to death as none of our business. The payoff for all this is a life of joy, pleasure and love, experiencing a fullness and power we did not know was possible. By our gift of surrender to the universe, by our generosity, by our goodwill, we get all life has to offer.

Have as your intention a complete and total acceptance of yourself and everything about you. *Stop trying to change yourself.* Accept yourself as a given. Notice “mistakes” but don’t “try” to change them, and *never* make your mistake an excuse for self-abuse. It is human to make mistakes. You are what you are. If you surrender to that, and *sincerely intend to be* what you are supposed to be in the transcendent (as opposed to egoistic) scheme of things, then that is what you will become. Whatever that is, humbly accept it. Remember: self-acceptance *precedes* any change. If change is to occur, it must start with loving yourself radically! It is such an irony that we fear that we will not change if we totally accept ourselves. When we love ourselves madly, we will not tolerate any behavior in ourselves that will interfere with that love. *For this reason, radical self-acceptance (RSA) is the most powerful agent of change there is!* No real and long lasting change is possible without it.

When I am disturbed, the essence of my disturbance is what I call “shortness of RSA.” Like shortness of breath, I don’t have enough life-sustaining self-love. When anything about life disturbs me, it is shortness of RSA. When I demand too much of others because of my dependencies, the disturbance is shortness of RSA and the need to get it from outside myself. When I criticize others, it is shortness of RSA. When I am contemptuous, it is shortness of RSA. Shortness of RSA often comes from shame, and we know that shame often prompts us to humiliate others, whereas RSA expands and tends to envelop others in loving affirmation. Whenever I behave badly, for any reason, or about anything, or with any provocation, it is shortness of RSA. I am not loving myself sufficiently that day.

Just as is true in our struggle with shame, we need to develop strategies to help us love ourselves. Strange as it is, loving ourselves does not seem a

natural thing for us humans. Self-centeredness, with its connection to mother fusion, seems more “natural.” The spontaneous love of the toddler appears awkward for us as adults. Each day I am engaged in the struggle between my transcendent born spirit which wants me to love myself madly, and my mother-fusion which wants to keep me dissatisfied with myself, wallowing in an unseparated swamp of trying to better myself to win mommy’s approval. If I keep on trying to improve, she will be proud of me, and I will be safe with her in the familiar feelings of malaise, and I will live forever. Or I rebel only to come sheepishly back in search of her approval, real or symbolic.

I need all the help I can get to love myself. I start each day reminding myself that I am not God and asking for help in doing what is right for me to do that day. I sign up with the universe. And I form the intention to love myself. Sometimes, I say, “I love you, Jim.” Try that yourself. Tell yourself that you love you, and use your name. How did it feel? Sometimes I have great resistance to saying it to myself, to telling myself, in a personal way, that I love myself. Other times it is easier, though it’s generally a little awkward. I have no trouble telling my children or my friends that I love them, but it’s a little awkward telling myself. Strange, isn’t it? But I do it, like a shy teenager.

Most important, I *form the intention* to love myself that day. I get myself on track. I do all the things I suggested to you when we spoke of “growing out” and “breaking the shame habit.” Sometimes, I’ll discuss my self-accusations with myself when they arrive—and they generally arrive at some time or other—and try to reason with myself. This rarely works. If I am inclined to blame others, I pray for them, wishing that they receive all the good things I want for myself. Sometimes I join the self-attacks and make them deliberately worse. I help myself “bottom out,” and sometimes I actually feel better because I have stopped fighting. Mostly I *enter deeply* into the feeling, whatever it is, trying not to pay too much attention to the racket in my head, just as I might try to ignore the overly loud bass on my neighbor’s stereo. I go about my business. I can always do that no matter what is going on within. And I try not to act out. I try to avoid

doing something that my demons desperately want me to do, something that I can regret later, something that will fuel the fire of my self-contempt. I go about my life. I take care of business.

I’ve arranged my life so that I have wonderful friends, membership in organizations, and hobbies that give me great joy. I’m blessed with a loving and psychologically separating family. I try to be of service where I can, and I make some effort to keep in shape physically. I work on my spiritual life, particularly mindful of the shortness of my life, and how happy I am to be alive. And over time I feel better about myself. As a result I am more and more happy and eager to pass on what I have learned, as so many others have done for me.

Loving oneself madly, radical self-acceptance, does not so much mean that we always are feeling good, but rather *that we have taken a stand about ourselves*. We become determined to love and accept ourselves as we are, and we will receive whatever comes to us about ourselves from that vantage point. To be self-critical, as the Buddhists teach us, is *delusion*. We can be aware of the delusion, stand apart from it somewhat, take a position about it. We need not prove our value to anyone. We need not fight with anyone. But we shall never join our demons by public self-deprecation. We will respect all living things, especially ourselves. Our philosophy will be to feel deeply what we feel, affirm our self-love, and do the dishes when they need doing.

Bad feelings and crazy, self-critical thoughts will pass like a river running to the sea, and our basic love will seep through from under the hatred just as sure as the sun will rise and the tide will come in and there is a wisdom guiding the universe. Our deluded self-centeredness can fool us for just so long. Joy awaits.

Loving yourself is not self-centered, not uncaring, not indifferent to the plight of others. Loving yourself madly, radical self-acceptance, total, unremitting, profoundly deep self-respect is the purpose of life. It only takes two things: the deep intention to do it, and all the courage you can muster. •

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Letting Our Essence Lead

J A N P H I L L I P S

Whenever the subject of creativity comes up, there's always someone who says, "I'm not creative. I can't even draw stick figures," like creativity is all about drawing. Somewhere along the path, most of us have picked up this fallacy about creativity, that it's an attribute of only a chosen few, and if we don't produce artistic or painterly things, we are probably not creative. My hope is to expand the definition of creativity so that more of us—all of us—can begin to perceive ourselves as creators, to pay attention to what rises up from our depths in response to our daily experiences, and do something with it to communicate on some level, in some form, what we notice occurring between our inner world and our outer world.

Whether this action results in a poem, a painting, an intimate conversation with someone we trust, the act of giving words to the previously unspoken

is itself a creative act. It is a noble gesture—one of giving honor to the elements of our lives. I have these thoughts: here is a poem I made with them. I carry this image in my mind: here is a crayon drawing of what it looks like to me. I have these fears: this is a story I wrote to help me sort them out. To be engaged with our lives on this level is magical. It allows us to see ourselves as actors in the drama, to take part in the creation of our own lives and move in the direction our spirit is calling us.

The other day I read an article by psychologist and philosopher Jean Houston. At first it seemed so dense I could barely wade through it, but there were sentences here and there that made my heart leap, ideas that felt at once totally new and profoundly familiar.

The article is on the subject of *entelechy*, which is from a Greek word that means the dynamic, purposeful unfolding of what we are. *Entelechy* is that which “propels us to actualize our essence,” Houston writes. “It is the *entelechy* of an acorn to be an oak tree, the *entelechy* of a baby to be a grown-up human being.” Some of us have the experience of sensing at an early age what we are destined to become, but many of us find

ourselves middle-aged and still wondering what we are supposed to be when we grow up.

Of all the educational training we receive in this country, little attention is focused on tuning into our essential selves and letting that essence lead us into the future. I hear high school students saying they want to be doctors so they can be rich or lawyers so they can be like the stars on *Law and Order*. It’s an “I’m going to do this so I can get that”

motivation rather than a response to a passion they feel in their bones. What’s tragic about this is not that these young ones don’t have passion, but that they get so little assistance in finding and articulating it. We have the army’s “Be All You Can Be” recruiting slogan and Nike’s “Just Do It” campaign, but who do we have out there saying this is *how* you can be it and do it, this is *how* you get at your passion and *how* you tune into your inner voice?

I craved that when I was young. I longed for someone to talk to me about what was possible, about who I was and what I could do, and about the vast unfolding universe that I was somehow an important, though tiny, part of. My mother did this in small ways, but she was confined by her culture and her role of keeping us in line. And she herself was never coached in finding her essence. Her programming was to find out what needed doing and do it.

When I was in sixth grade, I was extremely shy and lived quietly in my own little cocoon. I never spoke out in class, had only one friend, and never exuded much of a personality. I

Even though essence is a concept that cannot be adequately described, we each know when it happens if we have somehow touched into it. There is a certain charge to that moment, a certain lightness to the energy around our body.

was afraid no one would like me and didn't think I had much to offer. My teacher, Sister Helen Charles, took me on like a project. She saw some potential in there somewhere and started a positive reinforcement campaign with a vengeance. Though it now seems unfair to the rest of the class, she singled me out as her shining star, called on me constantly, had me do special jobs for her after class, named me the official "board writer" because I wrote so well and straight, "like you have a ruler on the end of your nose," she'd say.

Every day after class when I was helping out with the bulletin board or some other project she had me working on, she would tell me how great I was—what a great cheerleader I would make, how smart I was, what a leader I was in class, how good at athletics. At first I didn't believe a word she said. I thought she was stupid to think I had any of those skills, but eventually I began to believe her. As she fortified me with confidence, I found myself living up to her expectations. I *was* becoming a leader, I *was* the smartest kid in class, I *was* good at sports and the best blackboard writer in the class. On the day we held class elections, when Sister Helen counted the votes, every single vote but one (mine) was for me. I was elected class president, and I ran 14 blocks all the way home to let my mom know that the kids really liked me. A metamorphosis had occurred, and a brand new butterfly was loose in the world.

It was that year I decided to become a nun when I grew up so I could do for other kids what Sister Helen Charles had done for me. It was like magic, and I couldn't wait for six more years to pass so I could enter the convent and start making other kids feel as good as she made me feel. The only other career choice that had to go was circus acrobat. Even though I loved performing and doing dangerous tricks from the treetops for the neighborhood kids, I knew that my new calling was to be a nun, and I never wavered in that knowing.

As it turns out, it wasn't the convent, but the part about service that rattled in my bones. What I felt to be my calling was not about poverty, chastity, and obedience but about nurturing others, feeding

their spirits, helping them find their own beauty and strength. That, I can do anywhere.

In her article, Jean Houston reminds us that it is a privilege to be able to act on what one feels as a calling or destiny, as in many cultures children have no choice about what they will be when they grow up. For those of us in developed countries, she asserts that barriers to personal growth are caused more often by inertia than lack of choice. We end up spending our lives doing one boring job rather than do the work of discerning where our true passion lies and following that. And this happens not so much by intention as by default. She writes:

We are educated, not for our time, but for some time around the mid-20s. We need another training from somewhere else. We have to stop living as half-life versions of who and what we really are. If we are to become in reality stewards of the earth, co-creators in the great enterprise of an expanding reality, if we are to respond adequately to who and what is calling us, then we must democratize greatness and do remedial work in essence.

Even though essence is a concept that cannot be adequately described, we each know when it happens if we have somehow touched into it. There is a certain charge to that moment, a certain lightness to the energy around our body. A tingly feeling might race through us, or we might find tears of joy in our eyes or a trembling in the bones. We are never tired, never sluggish, and our bodies feel energized by an uncanny and unusual force.

Whenever I touch into my essence, I have the strongest feeling that I am doing just what I came to this earth to do. It doesn't happen often, that I feel it in my physical body like that, but when I do, I am suffused with joy. For me, it happens when I am serving people, in the simplest of ways—if I am making tea for a sick friend, carrying a grocery bag for an older woman, or simply being watchful for the special needs of someone with a disability. •

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Making Pilgrimage

G R E G G L E V O Y

My father's favorite game to play with my two brothers and me when we were children was something he called the Alien Game, in which he was a visitor from another planet and we were his guides here on earth. He would point into the sky, for instance, and ask, "What are those formations that move through the atmosphere?" "Clouds!" we'd say with great confidence. "Clouds? What are they made of?" "Water," we'd all say at once. "How does the water get up there?" he'd inquire, "and what holds it up, and why does it move?"



TSU/JOSH MITCHELL

In no time at all, it would become apparent to us earthlings that clouds weren't the only things that were over our heads. Entire afternoons could go by as we pondered the mysteries of water and wind, and how it's possible that we can know so much and understand so little, that we can live with something every day of our lives and never really come to know it.

What the Alien Game taught me—and what I keep trying to remember—is to see with the eyes of a child, who, after all, is in most ways an alien to this world.

In searching out the mystery of our own callings, in trying to find answers to our most basic why-is-the-sky-blue questions of meaning and purpose, we, too, can leave our houses, go out under the clouds, and, with the guilelessness of children, simply ask those questions that seem obvious but often aren't—"Who am I? What matters? What is my gift? What do I need to hear? What on Earth am I doing?" We can also try to approach these questions as if each were an emissary from some

Great Unknown, each itself a mystery, and any number of lifetimes insufficient to get us much closer than the outskirts of the thing.

Questioning is at the heart of spiritual journeying, of leaving home for time to go on a retreat, pilgrimage or vision quest, of removing ourselves from the duties and dramas, the relationships and roles that bombard us with messages that may be distracting or irrelevant or even destructive to our emerging sense of self, and that interfere with our asking for responses to our burning questions. In making pilgrimage, we're calling on God rather than the other way around. We're "crying for a vision," as the Oglala Sioux holy man Black Elk called it, the one that may reveal our true vocation, our real name, our purpose; the one that may come as a dream, a fantasy figure, a voice in the head, an animal encounter, an overpowering emotion, a sudden inspiration or surge of creative energy, a chance meeting out at a crossroads. We're practicing the art of following calls because spiritual journeys, like calls, involve a break with everyday life.

"I went to strip away what I had been taught," Georgia O'Keeffe said, describing her retreat to New Mexico from New York City in the 1920s, "to accept as true my own thinking. This was one of the best times of my life. There was no one around to look at what I was doing, no one interested, no one to say anything about it one way or another. I was alone and singularly free."

In taking a walkabout, in leaving home and the distracting fusillade of activities that often keeps us from ourselves, what is in the background becomes foreground, what is overlooked has the chance to get looked over, what is waiting in the wings is given an entrance cue. We ask for a calling and the faith to follow it. We go a'courting. We stand beneath the balcony and croon. We cry out with the longing we feel. We drop our handkerchiefs.

We may or may not get an answer, but what's important is not to cease asking. Perhaps we mispronounced the question, or our timing wasn't right. Perhaps we received an answer and didn't recognize it, or perhaps the answer we heard wasn't the one we wanted to hear, so we ignored it. Maybe we need to travel still further on our journey, around the next turn in the road, over the next pass, into the company of someone we have yet to meet.

Pilgrims, says the theologian Richard Niebuhr, are persons in motion, passing rough territories not their own, seeking... completion or clarity; a goal to which only the spirit's compass points the way. Sometimes that motion is religious and sometimes secular. Sometimes we design our own journeys, and sometimes we follow in the paths of those we revere: pacing the garden Jesus paced, sitting beneath the tree where Buddha saw the light, praying in the chapel where Merton prayed, visiting the house where Shakespeare wrote *Romeo and Juliet*, walking the same streets of a village in Mexico or a shtetl in Russia that your own grandfather once walked.

Sometimes we journey with the body, on a long walking meditation or a bicycle trip through the Holy Lands, and sometimes with the mind, as Joseph Campbell did early in his life by holing him-

self up in a cabin for five years and doing nothing but reading, which the Hindus call *ynana yoga*, the search for enlightenment through knowledge and the mind. Our approach depends on our primary way of experiencing the spirit. Sometimes we make the journey entirely in private, in solitary retreat or solo vision quest in the wilderness, and other times in crowds, like the great pilgrimages—to Mecca, Benares, Rome, Jerusalem and Compostela in Spain—which resemble enormous migrations.

Simply taking up a bedroll and hitting the road won't generally suffice to alert the forces of enlightenment, however. They require that you do more than just move around. Whether we go to the Ganges or Graceland, maintaining a spirit of observance and self-reflection is key. We must be intent on spending time searching for soul, moving toward something that represents to us an *ideal*—truth, beauty, love, perspective, strength, serenity, transcendence, sacredness, whatever.

Without this intention, our pilgrimages are only vacations, our vision quests are struck blind, our retreats are not also advances. We're merely tourists and window-shoppers or curio seekers. Perhaps we're even escapees, people in flight rather than in quest. Something like a Law of Spiritual Enthusiasm seems to dictate what sort of response we get to our inquiries, intents, and purposes and to highlight the importance of being earnest. The hungrier we are to learn and be guided, the more we're taught and the more we *allow* ourselves to be taught. We can't fake it, though. The gods and our own souls know when we're being sincere and when we're just smiling and saying cheese.

Spiritual journeying, whether we walk around a holy mountain or sit in a single place on a five-day meditation retreat, is about interior or exterior movement *toward the deep self*. A geographical journey is symbolic of an inner journey for which we long. •

From "Callings: Finding and Following an Authentic Life," by Gregg Levoy. Copyright 1997 by Gregg Levoy. Printed with permission from Harmony Books, a division of Crown Publishers Inc.

Powerful

Continued from page 39

ences as painful simply because we wish they were different. Once we integrate the wisdom from an experience that feels unpleasant or painful, there is no pain.

We don't feel a need to fix or change ourselves because we no longer resist or deny who we are. Because we don't judge ourselves, we accept all of our characteristics. Owning our individual attributes, instead of disputing who we are, brings our freedom right to our doorstep.

This means that we have our full energy available to us: we are whole instead of half. We have the highest levels of self-respect because we are self-responsible. Therefore, self-love and self-trust continue to blossom in our lives.

We have moved beyond blaming others because we have recognized that all of us on this planet are still in school. Everyone is learning by experiencing life, even though some people are more consciously involved in the process than others. Once we recognize that all of us are doing our best given our state of maturation, we feel a deep sense of relief.

We have learned the value of experiencing polarities. We know that when we allow ourselves to feel the unpleasant side of a polarity, its opposite will immediately follow. So we embrace, or at least accept, our uncomfortable feelings.

We feel our fears and continue to move forward in our lives. We know we have an option to celebrate when we feel our fears and self-doubts because every time we shake hands with "Fear," "Personal Power" walks up and asks for our other hand. The twins travel together. This is the beauty of polarities.

We are willing to feel all of our emotions, no matter what they may be, because we have learned that they enrich our lives and empower us. We feel and express our emotions in ways that are safe to ourselves and others. We are honest, real and vulnerable. This automatically gives other people permission to be who they are. Thus, the mirrors surrounding us are individuals who are also consciously growing.

We deal with "Insecurity" and "Fear" by owning them. They don't threaten us because they are just a component of all of us. Neither do we adopt them as core identities; we simply acknowledge and feel them. As a result, their traveling companions, "Personal Power" and "Self-Confidence," automatically become more visible parts of us.

We fully use our past, so it no longer controls our lives. It has become the catalyst that moves us right into the core of ourselves so that we can take a good look at ourselves and gain valuable insights and understandings. All of a sudden, the experiences we previously labeled as painful have lost their emotional charges. They have become *just experiences* that we learned from. The energy that was bound up in repression or judgment is now available for use. It was released as pure neutral energy, and it burst into a profound sense of personal freedom and empowerment.

Because of our courage and our understanding of life, we have now allowed ourselves to fully live each moment as it occurs. We no longer live in the future by wishing it were now. Neither do we extrapolate our past into events that are approaching. We have provided ourselves the freedom of a newborn infant kicking its legs, waving its arms, and announcing, "Stand back, world.

This is now, and I am fully here!"•

From "Transforming Pain into Power," by Doris Helge, Ph.D. Copyright 1996 by Doris Helge. Printed with permission from Shimoda Publishing.

Mother Teresa

Continued from page 28

about her work and her vision. She responded with, "It's God's, it's God's work," and would immediately ask Bob another question about our work, probing, thoughtful questions that revealed a keen mind and lovely sense of humor. Still tears flowed, as the Calcutta street scenes replayed themselves over and over in my head, crashing hard against this compassionate presence.

When I could finally speak, I said, "Mother, how do you bear it? The work your sisters and brothers do is wonderful, and helps so many people. But it doesn't begin to meet the need. For every one you are able to help, there are ten-thousand more, ten-thousand behind that one, who are starving."

She looked at me with those eyes of compassion and said simply, "I cannot help ten-thousand. But I can help one. I can help the one who stands before me."

While there is room for differing opinions about some of the controversial issues that swirled around Mother Teresa, few would disagree that she made a difference for the poorest of the poor. Mother Teresa brought transformation to individuals in need, one at a time. I hope rather than building a memorial of marble to this remarkable woman, many will build a living memorial of transformation and compassion in their own lives: to help the one who stands before you.•



The Family Shadow

C O N N I E Z W E I G & S T E V E W O L F

Shadow-making happens in families and makes us who we are. It leads to shadow-work, which makes us who we can become. Families are our origin and, for many of us, our destination. We are born into families, contained in families, nourished by families and cherished by families. At the same time, we are neglected by families, betrayed by families and witness violence in families. In the end, we die among family. The family holds mythic power—the source of all good, the defense against evil. It's exalted as a sacred ideal, which promises roots, blood relations, future generations. It ties each individual life to its fate, imprinting it genetically, biochemically and psychologically with blessings and curses. To imagine life without family is to imagine life in free fall, without a container, without a ground on which to stand.

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Many families appear to deliver us into the very kinds of suffering from which they promised to protect us. If we open our eyes and look closely, instead of averting our gaze, we will see that, everywhere, love and violence, promises and betrayals, go hand in hand. Home is also a dwelling for the shadow.

In the last 30 years, as a society, we have come to realize that our image of the family is just that, an image. But it's not just an image. It's a fantasy that drives us because the archetype of the family is at the center of this image. And it compels us to follow it, to bond, to love, to re-create ourselves, thereby forming family. So, we long for a vessel of blood relations; we yearn for a community of kin that understands us implicitly, that offers safety and acceptance. And, wherever we find family, we find home: more than a place, home is a dwelling for the soul.

Recently, as family secrets such as childhood abuse, wife battering and epidemic addictions have emerged from the cultural shadow, our fantasies of the perfect family, à la Norman Rockwell paintings, have been shattered. In fact, many families appear to deliver us into the very kinds of suffering from which they promised to protect us. If we open our eyes and look closely, instead of averting our gaze, we will see that, everywhere, love and violence, promises and betrayals, go hand in hand. Home is also a dwelling for the shadow.

Just as individuals remain unconscious of their personal shadow material, so family members remain unconscious of the family shadow, which contains buried secrets like a treasure chest stowed away in the attic. Like the personal shadow, the family shadow may appear unexpectedly, acted out in the breaking of family rules ("We don't use that kind of language here"), impulsive acts (a child is caught stealing), compulsive behaviors (a teen suffers from an eating disorder), or mood disorders (chronic depression and anxiety). It also can be projected, such as when one member angrily blames another for a trait he cannot accept in himself ("I

can't stand when you cry like a baby and don't act like a man") or when one parent disowns a child's bothersome trait ("That comes from your side of the family").

Families expel or hide from the shadow in another inventive way: family triangles. Partners may avoid conflict or reduce anxiety by focusing on a third person and projecting the shadow *over there*. A husband may displace tyrannical anger at his wife by routinely punishing a child. A wife may bond too closely with a young son, turning him into her idealized spouse and leaving her adult spouse holding the shadow. A woman may get rid of her own nagging witchiness by attributing it to her partner's ex-wife, "that other woman." A family unknowingly may turn one child into a "bad seed," a scapegoat for the whole group, so that the others may carry on business as usual. As a result, the third person becomes the Other, the identified problem, keeping the temperature down between the partners and thereby maintaining the status quo, which camouflages deeper underlying patterns.

In these ways, family persona and family shadow play against one another like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, in an ancient antagonism that keeps family members concerned with the outer props of life—an appearance of decency, financial security, the children's education, caring for the next generation. But privately, deep in their souls, many feel as if they have missed the boat; they suffer with the suspicion that they have failed as partners and as parents. They surmise that there must be something more to family life than this facade.

THE MISSING INGREDIENT: FAMILY SOUL

We suggest that this missing element is family soul, a natural environment or psychic space that

allows for the deepening and unfolding of family members' individual souls. When the family soul is present, the members feel contained; they carry an internal connection with one another, rather than an imposed or obligatory relationship. When the family soul is palpable, the members feel deeply at home, seen and accepted for who they are. When the family soul can be felt, its members do not have to hide.

When the family soul is present, the members feel genuinely loving toward one another and loved by one another. The Greeks had a term for this kind of family love: *storgé*. It refers to the naturally occurring devotion and affection that arise among family members, as distinct from *agapé*, spiritual love, or *eros*, erotic love.

A soul-centered family honors individual differences and may even welcome, rather than repress, conflict as grist for the mill. It encourages learning and exploration of new attitudes, feelings and competencies, rather than imitations and conformity. It works together to meet challenges and plays together to share the joys of life. The family soul creates a safe psychic space in which to do shadow-work and recharge individual soul.

Family soul may be linked to the virgin goddess Hestia, who symbolizes the hearth containing the fires at the center of the household, the city and the earth. There are no myths about Hestia; she merely stands firmly at the threshold of the home spreading calm, protection and dignity. She turns the house into a home, a dwelling place where family members can feel that their own natures are accepted. When Hestia's fires go out, as they have in so many homes today, there is no place for family soul, no calm that radiates out from the center. Instead, order may be imposed from any direction, creating a facade of togetherness.

When this facade or family persona is strong, the space for soul shrinks. Members' capacity to be present with each other in an authentic, vulnerable way is limited. Instead, they begin to act habitually, even mechanically with each other, losing honesty and vitality. A five-year-old boy begins to act "like a little man"; a woman barely out of school behaves like a dutiful wife. Unconsciously, they fear risking disclosure because their feelings will be seen as

unacceptable to those whose acceptance they depend upon. They fear risking nonconformity because they will be shamed and punished. Eventually, they feel that they have to hide from the very people who could offer them healing acceptance.

Like precious heirlooms, the mother's family shadow and the father's family shadow become woven together, creating a tapestry of artificiality, disappointments, secrets, lies and betrayals. If this is not recognized, it gets passed down to the next generation, bequeathing another legacy of pain. Without shadow-work, family members remain trapped in this web of parental complexes, homebound no matter how far away they travel.

But with shadow-work, the unconscious wounds of the family can set us on the path toward consciousness. Instead of remaining profane wounds, instilling feelings of bitterness or thoughts of revenge, which restrict awareness from the ego's point of view, they can become sacred wounds from the soul's point of view, opening our awareness to a higher order. Instead of unconsciously learning to bury our wounds, we can consciously learn to carry them, identifying our projections and deepening our empathy for others and for ourselves. In this way, the betrayal and its wound become a vehicle for soul-making.

If one person in a family begins to make these wounds conscious ("Yes, I can see I failed you in that way"), then that individual can bring reconciliation to the group, creating the potential for a greater family awareness and for the emergence of family soul. Learning to use the experiential tools of shadow-work, he or she can fulfill the Jewish proverb: "A son wishes to remember what his father wishes to forget." For instance, when a man can feel the rage of his father well up in him in the presence of his young son, but instead of expressing it he can observe and contain it, he spares the next generation. When a woman whose mother remained disconnected from her own feminine beauty can discover the nature of the disconnection in herself, she can learn not to inhibit the feminine in her daughter.

What lies in your family shadow? How is family soul sacrificed in your home?

Facing these intergenerational family shadows, we can begin to redeem the family soul. The first step is to identify the sins of our fathers and mothers.

SINS OF OUR FATHERS AND MOTHERS:
SHAME, ENVY, DEPRESSION, ANXIETY,
ADDICTION AND SELF-HATE

The reenactment of family sins seems to be the shadow's cruel way of challenging us to learn the lessons that our ancestors failed to learn. If we, in turn, fail to change, we perpetuate the family curse, as illustrated by adults who were abused as children who then abuse their children, and so on through the generations. Either we do some form of psychological work, like shadow-work, or the issues continue to haunt us. As Jung wrote: "when an inner situation is not made conscious, it happens outside, as fate." It also appears in the lives of our children and in the lives of our children's children.

Certainly, intergenerational sins may be passed on in biochemical predisposition, such as in fetal alcohol syndrome, endogenous depression or schizophrenia. But we are not using "sin" in that way. And we are not using it in the conventional way, as the breaking of religious or moral law. We refer here to sin as maintaining destructive unconscious patterns that keep us trapped in the family shadow. If individual development has meaning and purpose, as we suggest in this book, then the etymological root of "sin" applies: to sin is to be off the mark, that is, to inhibit development, contracting backward into regression rather than expanding forward into growth.

In the psychological transmission of sins, unconscious feelings and attitudes are passed on from grandparents to parents to children or from older siblings to younger ones. The elders' hidden conflicts, anxious worries and buried wishes are absorbed by vulnerable young minds, leading to the same attitudes, gestures and emotional states. Like little sponges, children pick up hatreds, depressions, fears and addictions, even if they have never been mentioned aloud.

These sins are transmitted in a variety of ways. If a man continually makes belittling looks or degrading remarks about his wife's appearance, he shames

her in front of the children. They, in turn, begin to devalue her, naturally identifying with the more powerful parent. At an unconscious level, the children absorb sexism, perpetuating a collective shadow; both boys and girls learn to devalue the role of wife and mother. But, at the same time, even though the shame is not directed toward them, because they love and identify with their mother they internalize her reaction. In this way, they themselves are shamed, and they learn shaming behavior.

Eventually, they may develop a shame complex, becoming sensitive to rejection, eager to accept blame, and hungry for acceptance and approval. At the level of soul they feel unworthy, debased and unlovable, anxiously anticipating the next shaming moment. At the center of the complex sits an archetypal image: a worm, a termite, a dark spot or glob of black goop. As a result, a shame-based person longs to be invisible, to remain hidden like a sea anemone which, when touched, quickly closes up.

Shame, then, is a gatekeeper of family shadow. It props up the family facade and reinforces denial. It encourages projection and guards against any new knowledge that might puncture the family image. Shame divides us from ourselves and from those we love. It banishes the family soul. For all of these reasons, arenas of shame point toward healing; they carry the potential for the restoration of authentic feeling.

Who shamed you? Who is the character at the table who carries your family shame? Whom do you shame? What is the deeper need lying hidden in your shaming behavior?

Envy also transmits family sins. A man who strives to provide for his family may envy his non-working wife's solitary time. On the other hand, a woman who sacrifices her career opportunities to be a stay-at-home mother may envy her husband's achievements. In addition, she may succumb to the danger of envying her children's opportunities as well. If she lives vicariously through her daughter with conscious pride, she also may suffer with unconscious resentment and express it with unconscious anger. If her own dreams and ambitions have gone unrecognized, if she regrets her unlived life

and feels herself to be a failure, she may develop a vested interest in shaping her daughter's direction. Her daughter, in turn, may feel trapped by the mother's need to live through her. She may silently rage against the older woman, eventually sabotaging her own success with self-destructive acts, such as eating disorders. Or she may accommodate her mother's wishes, becoming an obedient daughter but sacrificing her own authenticity.

The shadowy feeling of envy, then, arises from the discontent and resentment aroused by obstructed desire. We feel that if we lack a coveted possession or a prized opportunity, we are less than the person who has it and less than who we can be. As a result, we kneel and bow before the object of desire, placing ourselves in an inferior position, creating the two poles of have and have not. For some, to envy a person is to project a god, missing altogether their human foibles and limitations.

Whom do you envy? What is the deeper desire lying hidden in this feeling? Who envies you? How does it feel to be envied?

Anxiety also transmits family sins. If a parent did not feel safe as a child and became distrusting of others, fearful of simple behaviors such as flying or driving, or unable to relax or sleep properly, her child is probably susceptible to this same anxiety. One woman, a highly successful screenwriter from Chicago, had so internalized her anxious mother's fear of life that she thought constantly about the impending disasters that would arise from any decision she might make. She lacked any kind of spontaneity and felt dread about the smallest risks. She developed intricate perfectionistic behaviors for fending off the shadow. And her own self-worth remained inaccessible until she acknowledged her long-concealed rage at her mother's imperfections.

Who in your family carries the anxiety? What makes you nervous, anxious, afraid? How does an anxious shadow character sabotage your intentions? What do you need to feel safe?

Depression is also a carrier of family sin. A parent may look at a child without hope or touch a child without warmth. A mother may not get out of bed for days at a time; a father may withdraw into

television night after night. Through repetitive behaviors that suggest feelings of emptiness, helplessness or hopelessness, a parent unknowingly leaks depression into a child. In this way the pain of depression is perpetuated through the generations, much like a contagious disease.

Family therapist Terence Real has written eloquently of this transmission of family shadow from fathers to sons. He distinguishes between overt male depression, which has debilitating but highly visible effects, and covert male depression, which may be chronic but well hidden by denial in heroic behaviors and addictions. Real points out that an epidemic of male depression has remained undetected due to cultural shadow issues about gender. Women are raised to internalize pain and blame themselves for distress. Therefore, they typically suffer from overt depression, which can be viewed as internalized oppression or the experience of victimization. On the other hand, men are raised to externalize pain and blame others for their distress. Therefore, they typically suffer from covert depression, which can be viewed as internalized disconnection or the experience of victimization that is warded off through grandiosity and perhaps victimizing others.

The unconscious, unresolved suffering that stems from the depression of previous generations operates in families like an emotional debt, according to Real. "We either face it or we leverage our children with it."

Who in your family carries the depression? Who denies it? What is the depressed character at the table trying to tell you? What are its deeper intentions?

When anxiety or depression threaten to break through the threshold of conscious awareness, many people suffer addictions; they turn to alcohol and drug abuse, or compulsive sex and work to avoid their feelings. One woman reported that she felt so polluted by her alcoholic father's blood running in her veins that she feared she could not escape her family's fate. Both her older sister and twin brother succumbed to alcoholism, while she fought desperately to avoid the gravitational pull of her family shadow.

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 79

Book Reviews



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

The two books reviewed in this issue offer practical counsel for growth in two spheres, the realm of spirituality and the realm of relationships. You may notice something new in these reviews, the questions at the end of each one. These are questions that may be explored by the reader individually, or with others in your *PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION* or other growth group.

A HOME FOR THE HEART: Creating Intimacy and Community with Loved Ones, Neighbors and Friends, by Charlotte Sophia Kasl, Ph.D. Harper Collins, 1997. 382 pages, \$24.00.

Charlotte Sophia Kasl is a psychologist in private practice and a Quaker. Her previous books include *Women, Sex and Addiction: A Search for Love and Power*; *Many Roads, One Journey*; *Moving Beyond the 12 Steps*; *Finding Joy: 101 Ways to Free Your Spirit and Dance with Life*; and *Yes, You Can! A Guide to Empowerment Groups*.

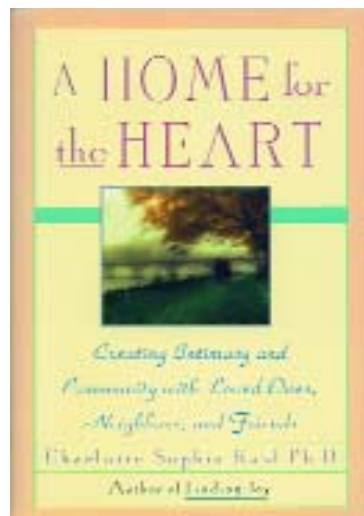
Beginning with the premise, "Love is the energy at the center of all life," Kasl's new book offers skills the reader may use to deepen intimacy in personal and social relationships. Kasl writes with warmth, and the book is enriched by many stories drawn from her own life and the lives of those with whom she works. The book contains lots of exercises that an individual could practice, or that mem-

bers of a group might work on and share their results.

The reader is encouraged to examine the longing for deeper intimacy and community that so many people feel. Moving through an exploration of the longing, the empty places, Kasl suggests contemplating the nature of intimacy and the nature of one's relationships with others. Relationships are a place to learn and to build trust.

The section called "Many Small Steps" offers good ideas for taking care of oneself in relationships. Kasl counsels the reader to become more conscious about making agreements, and to honor the agreements we make. In a chapter called "At the Heart of a No Lies a Yes," she encourages the reader to learn to say "no" as a way of defining personal boundaries and taking care of oneself: a way of honoring oneself is to be willing to say "no" when "no" is needed.

Kasl offers the reader a humorous mirror: "When clients talk about the ways in which they've tried and tried to get others to change or do something, I start talking about baking-powder biscuits. 'If you made baking-powder biscuits a hundred times without the baking powder and they always went flat, what would you expect the hundred and first time?' 'That they'll go flat.' (Everyone always gets the answer.) 'So why would you keep doing it, unless, of course, you want little dough pellets to throw



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Reviews

at someone?' I then ask."

The reader is encouraged to examine personal styles of problem solving and conflict resolution. Conflict is described as "the seeds of growth and intimacy," a concept which will be healing to those who find conflict to be a source of pain or fear. To prevent conflicts, Kasl offers an eight-step plan, with strong examples for each step. The steps include agreeing on the essence of the experience you want together, brainstorming ways to actualize the essence of what you want, soliciting each person's solution, listing points of agreement, exploring the differences, stating what each is not willing to do, asking for other considerations, and finally, making the actual plans with dates, times and other logistics. That strikes me as a pretty good format for planning for any group.

Kasl's Quaker background, with its emphasis on community, shines through the book, particularly in the section called "What the World Needs Now: Community." Portions of the Goodenough Community Covenants appear scattered throughout the book, and the text appears as the introduction to this section. It reads, "I commit... to become the best version of myself, to make and keep agreements with great care, to be constant through conflict, to give myself fully to the process of transformation through the expression of love, to trust the good intentions of each of us, to relate with respect and acceptance, to enter fully into life's experiences, to awaken to my awareness of my unique role in the universe, to acknowledge the inner and interconnectedness of all creation..." Kasl believes that doing the work outlined previously in the book, to

Reviews

“clear out negative influences from childhood, define ourselves as adults, create a circle of friends, focus on communication skills, and deepen our intimacy in all relationships” prepares one for the ultimate challenge and ultimate richness: to be part of healthy community.

A Home For The Heart could be of great help to those who feel themselves isolated, and who want to learn the basics of honest communication and interaction skills. However, I had some difficulty with the book, and the problem may lie more in the reviewer than in the contents. The problem I see in this book, and so many others like it that fill the self-help sections of bookstores, is that it offers a wrong answer to an ultimate question. What Kasl calls “the sacred song of longing,” or that great Yearning that woos us to Oneness, cannot ultimately be fulfilled in relationships, no matter how magnificent, nor in improved self-esteem, no matter how good one feels about oneself, nor even in community, no matter how rich and full the interactions. It’s like trying to drive from Los Angeles to Hawaii—it’s not that you can’t get there from here, but rather that you need the right vehicle. And we wonder why we keep having near-drowning experiences! The ultimate transformational journey is an inward journey, a solo journey, and the discovery and exploration of our Oneness makes even the richness of community seem like a candle compared to the blazing sun of our true heritage.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION OR GROUP EXPLORATION

1. Think of your closest rela-

Quest/new

Wise/new

Yes!



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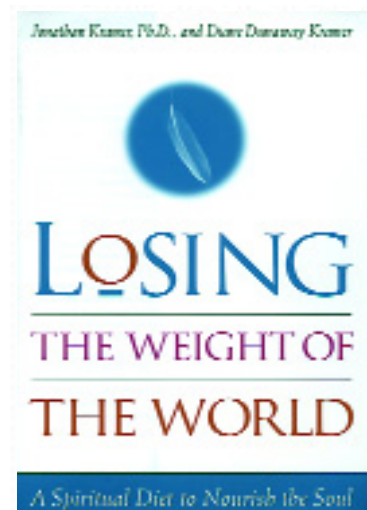
tionship. How do you feel about the level of intimacy? In what ways would you like it to be more intimate? What steps can you take to help that happen?

2. Consider your own communication style. Do others seek you out as a good listener? Do you feel good about how you express your needs? In what ways would you like to improve your communication and listening skills?

3. Think of a recent experience of conflict with another. How did you attempt to resolve the conflict? What skills would help when you find yourself in conflict?

4. Do you feel part of an intimate community? If so, examine its value to you. How does community nurture and nourish you? If not, and if you feel the need for increased community experience, what will you do to become part of a supportive community?

LOSING THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD, A Spiritual Diet to Nourish the Soul. Jonathan Kramer, Ph.D., and Diane Dunaway Kramer. Doubleday, 1997. 319 pages \$22.95.



Jonathan Kramer is a clinical psychologist, Diane Dunaway Kramer a professional writer; their

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Heal America

Continued from page 48

I've started an organization called the American Renaissance Alliance, in the hopes that it will contribute to that process. Its phone number is (805)565-8757.

Thomas Jefferson said that the forces of tyranny must be put on notice that we are a free and sovereign people and plan to remain so. Social injustice occurs in America mainly because its agents know that we won't complain. They know we're asleep, and they count on our remaining asleep.

This call to action is a call to participation.

Absolutely. We retrieve democracy by exercising it. Democracy isn't a static mechanism. To have a democracy, we must use the tools of democracy. As it is now, out of 163 democracies the United States ranks somewhere around 140 in democratic participation. In our last congressional elections, only 40 percent of eligible voters even voted.

In that sense, the solution isn't overwhelming.

Exactly! That's what's so incredible. We are to act on spiritual principles—have faith, forgive and act with love. People think there is a more complicated job to perform than there actually is. That's why the story of David and Goliath is so significant. Goliath is much bigger than David, and much older than David, and better armed than David, but David struck him in his third eye. There is one place where the old Goliath order, the giant in our midst, has no defense. Bring love into the process and bring faith to bear upon it. Once you touch the conscience of the giant, the giant is transformed. •

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Reviews

previous book is *Why Men Don't Get Enough Sex And Women Don't Get Enough Love*.

Growing out of many years of searching, which led them to explore many spiritual paths, the Kramers use "diet" as a metaphor for spiritual practice: "We wanted to provide a 'spiritual diet' that would help individuals lighten the load of the burdens we all carry, and thus *lose the weight of the world*."

Beginning with an examination of the personal identity that "separates us from our spirituality," they encourage the reader to draw from their suggestions to create personal "recipes for losing the weight of the world." Chapter I calls life a "spiritual feast," and urges the reader to taste what is set before us. In a chapter called "The Breath of Life," the Kramers introduce the practice of focusing the attention on breathing as the key to the Spiritual Diet. Conscious breathing allows the practitioner to slow down, relax and be present in the moment. A "Breath of Life recipe" is introduced, and it is built on in later chapters.

Other chapters examine living here and now, soul food (discovering and being nourished by our basic goodness), and "Singing the Body Electric" (a call to come to our senses). A chapter called "Endless Lust" isn't quite as much fun as its title implies, but rather is an exploration of the desiring process, and the sense that there is never enough. "Meeting our basic needs is essential. The problem comes when we're forever wanting reality to be just the way we want, always wanting it to be different than it is right now. For, as the Buddha taught, the root of human dissatisfaction and suffering is endless desiring."

In another chapter, recipes are offered for dealing with "jumping monkeys," the mind that constantly leaps from one distraction to another; prayers, mantras and other mind focuses are offered.

Later chapters explore dealing with emotions by fully experiencing them, and then letting them go; the great "Why Am I Here?" question, and the dangers of individualism and ego.

The final chapter, "Luscious Living: A Daily Spiritual Diet," encourages readers to "cook up our own Spiritual Diet recipes" which the Kramers believe will facilitate the integration of personality and spirituality. "Our ultimate challenge is to be both a doer and a witness, to 'be' in the midst of 'becoming,' to merge personality with Spirit. Finding this harmonious balance is the ultimate living out of the Spiritual Diet and the final way to lose the weight of the world. These personal recipes may serve to help the practitioner bring greater awareness to the daily tasks of life, to living fully and living intimately."

While there is little truly new material in this book, other than the diet and recipe approach to spiritual growth, the Kramers do a good job of gleaning delicious nuggets from many religious traditions. They are aware of the essential similarities in the teachings of the world's great religions, and the authors' appreciation for the great universals is clear. The book is full of wonderful quotations from Gautama Buddha, Lao-tzu, the Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa, Meister Eckhart, Gandhi, Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, contemporary Zen masters, Native American spiritual leaders, the Sufi poets, and Americans from Albert Einstein to Ram Dass to Walt Whitman. This

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 78

Into Action

Continued from page 23

heads had moved into town and started harassing the Jewish residents by throwing rocks through their windows, which sometimes injured children and damaged property. A multi-faith coalition got together to find a solution. They also invited business leaders in the community to participate. Their solution was so simple, radical and perfect—it could have only come from a source of heightened collective consciousness. It turned out that the skinheads identified Jewish homes by the Menorahs in the windows. So the coalition asked *all* the people of Billings to light Menorahs in their windows—whether they were Jewish or not. People all over Billings started putting Menorahs in their windows, despite the risk to themselves. At this moment, those people demonstrated the courage to take the “leap of faith.” By the way, the skinheads left Billings, and the harassment ended.

A future opportunity for all of us to exhibit the power of collective thought is “One Day in Peace,” which will occur on January 1 in the year 2000. It is a “thought-wave” campaign, which was distributed at one point by the Online Noetic Network of the Institute of Noetic Sciences. The idea for One Day in Peace is that it will be a 24-hour period in which no guns are fired anywhere on earth... including on television. As the email said, “What if, for 24 hours, whosoever happens to be at war on December 31, 1999, agrees that for one whole day no guns would be fired? The silence would be golden.” The more people who support the thought of Peace Day, the more it comes into reality... so pass this “thought-wave” on!

Individual and societal, our consciousness and our world each reflect the other. As Frances Vaughan noted in *Awakening Intuition* (1979) “Inner and outer are two sides of the same fabric. If one tries to change society without changing consciousness, one is simply rearranging the contents of experience. If one works exclusively on conscious and abdicates social responsibility, one separates oneself from the world and again falls into the trap of identifying with a part instead of the whole. Like breathing in and breathing out, one needs both activity and receptivity. Exclusive emphasis on either mode becomes imbalance.”

We are now being *called* to be the catalysts for our world—to become triggers for a quantum leap into the next millennium. By taking the “leap of faith” and having the courage to put consciousness into action, one day for peace could become an eternity. •

Tina Rasmussen Ph.D., has been a coach, consultant, and teacher who helps individuals, groups and organizations clarify their vision and humanistic values. She is also the author of several books and articles on progressive business, leadership, and workplace practices.

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Reviews

treasure trove of collected wisdom about the spiritual life is worth the price of the book. I found myself copying out gems from nearly every page. There are also some truly hilarious stories; I laughed aloud three times in the first 30 pages.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION OR GROUP EXPLORATION

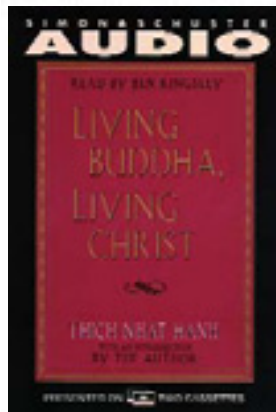
1. What am I hungry for, spiritually?
2. What would I like to lose or shed?
3. Experience the breath awareness exercises in the book. Am I willing to use breathing as a tool for more focused awareness?
4. What do I want to work on, specifically, as a personal "recipe" or "recipes"?•

BRIEFLY NOTED

For those interested in eastern wisdom, listed below are outstanding resources on eastern spirituality. These are powerful catalysts for deepening your practice. We highly recommend these. These can be ordered from *Personal Transformation Resources* (800)775-6887.

Living Buddha, Living Christ
By *Thich Nhat Hanh*, *Audio Tape*, From *Simon & Schuster*, *Two Cassettes \$16.00*.

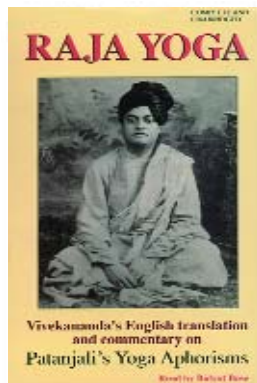
If Buddha and Christ were to meet on the road today, what would each think of the other's spiritual views and practices? Thich Nhat Hanh, beloved Buddhist teacher and Vietnamese monk, explores the crossroads of compassion and holiness at which the two traditions, Buddhism and Christianity, meet and reawakens our understanding of both. "On the altar in my hermitage," he says,



"are images of Buddha and Jesus, and I touch both of them as my spiritual ancestors." There is an introduction by the author and text is read by Ben Kingsley.

Raja Yoga, Vivekananda's Commentary on Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms, Audio Tape, *Vivekananda Foundation, Four Cassettes \$30.00*

From our childhood upwards, we have been taught only to pay attention to things external; hence most of us nearly lost the faculty of observing the internal mechanism.

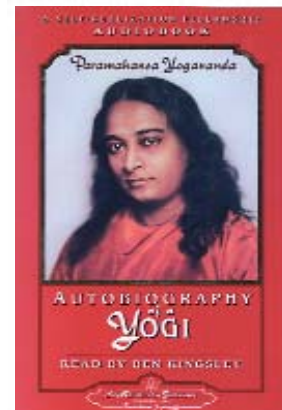


To turn the mind, as it were, inside, stop it from going outside, and then to concentrate all its powers and throw them upon the mind itself, in order that it may know its own nature, analyze itself, is very hard work. The science of Raja-Yoga proposes to give us a means of observing the internal states.

Vivekananda's commentary is read by Bidyut Bose.

Autobiography of a Yogi
By *Paramahansa Yogananda*, *Read by Ben Kingsley. Self-Realization Fellowship Audio Edition Twelve Cassettes \$50.00*.

Paramahansa Yogananda contributed in far-reaching ways to an awareness and appreciation in the West of the spiritual wisdom of the East. The Autobiography, first



published in 1946 is widely regarded as a modern spiritual classic and has been translated into eighteen languages. It remains one of the most important and enduringly popular works of inspirational literature.

The Book of Enlightened Masters
By *Andrew Rawlinson*, *Open Court Publishing, Paper, 650 pages, \$29.95*

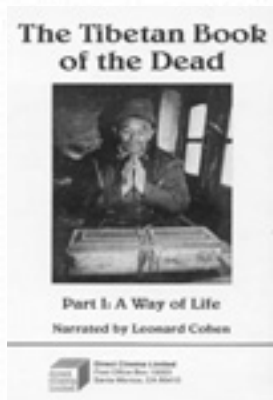
A century ago there were no known Western masters, no Westerners who were Hindu swamis, Zen roshis, or Sufi sheikhs. Now there are hundreds. These people are changing Western culture by making available a view of the human condition which is new in the West. Based on four principles that make up a way of life, the writer calls it "spiritual psychology." This book contains biogra-



phies on most all of the Western teachers. It explains who they are, what they teach, who influenced them and what their personal lives are like.

The Tibetan Book of the Dead, Direct Cinema, Narrated by Leonard Cohen, Two VHS Video Tapes, \$29.95 each.

A text unique to the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, *The Book of the Dead* is read aloud to dying persons as they pass from this life to the next. Part I; "A Way of Life," documents the history of the *Book of the*



Dead and explores its traditional application in northern India, as well as its use in hospices in Europe and North America. The film uses remarkable footage of the rites and liturgies performed for a recently deceased Ladakhi elder. Part II: "The Great Liberation," presents a

detailed account of the contents of the *Book of the Dead* and of the traditional Buddhist teachings on compassion and the search for truth which are its foundations. This film observes an elderly priest and his young student as they guide the soul of a recently deceased man into the afterlife. •

Good and Evil

Continued from page 8

and legally guaranteed by the Constitution and our humanistic legacy. Those who oppose it as a choice consider it an evil act that is morally reprehensible and prohibited by their theology and scriptural legacy. Remarkably, people holding such opposing views may also belong to the same political party, sometimes even to the same religion. Good and evil are so very much in the eye of the beholder.

Nevertheless, just as it is important to our survival to know the difference between up and down, it is also important to our successful survival in a given society to know the difference between what is considered good and evil. However, our spiritual unfoldment and evolution is not limited thereby and would transcend such limiting considerations. •

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

Family Shadow

Continued from page 66

*Who is the family addict?
Who takes care of this person?
Who denies the problem? What
shadow issues are camouflaged by
the addictive behavior?*

Of course, some sins are brutally enacted within the walls of the family home. A child who witnesses a man battering his wife or a mother beating a child may not appear to be the victim per se; however, this child's soul is brutalized. She or he loses a sense of innocence and safety, as well as the freedom to feel fully and to express feelings, out of fear of becoming the target. Becoming passive and depressed or anxious and hyperalert, a witness to violence may unknowingly banish authenticity and aliveness into the shadow.

Other sins are not so cruel or concrete but may be passed on in a silent attitude or an invisible projection. A family with a lineage of strong women may imply to children that men are ineffectual, creating disrespect at a young age. A high-achieving family may teach that "we are what we accomplish," so the children do not learn to value feeling or interiority. Another may teach that those with less socioeconomic status are trash or that those with higher status are evil; or they may teach disrespect and disdain for their elders. In every case, the soul of the child is diminished as the child identifies with the parents' feelings of inferiority and superiority. •

From the book "Romancing the Shadow," by Connie Zweig, Ph.D., and Steve Wolf, Ph.D. Copyright 1997 by Connie Zweig, and Steve Wolf. Printed by permission of the Ballantine Publishing Group, a division of Random House, Inc.



Who Are You

J E A N H O U S T O N

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living. I want to know what you ache for, and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.

It doesn't interest me how old you are. I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool for love, for your dreams, for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon. I want to know if you have touched the center of your own sorrow, if you have been opened by life's betrayals or have become shriveled and closed from fear of further pain! I want to know if you can sit with pain, mine or your own, without moving to hide it or fade it or fix it. I want to know if you can be with joy, mine or your own, if you can dance with wildness and let the ecstasy fill you to the tips of your fingers and toes without cautioning us to be careful, be realistic, or to remember the limitations of being a human.

It doesn't interest me if the story you're telling me is true. I want to know if you can disappoint another to be true to yourself, if you can bear the accusation of betrayal and not betray your own soul. I want to know if you can be faithful and therefore be trustworthy. I want to know if you can see beauty even when it is not pretty every day, and if you can source your life from its presence. I want to know if you can live with failure, yours and mine, and still stand on the edge of a lake and shout to the silver of the full moon, "YES!"

It doesn't interest me to know where you live or how much money you have. I want to know if you can get up after a night of grief and despair, weary and bruised to the bone, and do what needs to be done for the children.

It doesn't interest me who you are, how you came to be here. I want to know if you will stand in the center of the fire with me and not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me where or what or with whom you have studied. I want to know what sustains you from the inside when all else falls away. I want to know if you can be alone with yourself, and if you truly like the company you keep in the empty moments. •

*From "A Passion For The Possible," by Jean Houston.
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