

Spiritual Guidance

Serving your personal journey toward enlightenment...

December 2011

Our soul intention for this e-newsletter is to create a positive, uplifting, inspiring and spirit-filled message (in amongst the conventionally-perceived journalism practiced today). We extend this offering to you and hope, if only for a moment in time, we provide a hint of another reality that is there for your embracing. Enjoy!

These monthly e-newsletters are intended for your benefit and interest. You have received this message because you are on the Spiritual Guidance e-newsletter distribution list. If you would not like to receive future updates or messages from Spiritual Guidance, please reply back with nothing more than "UNSUBSCRIBE" in the body of your message. Namaste.

Check out the resources on the Spiritual Guidance website's resources page (www.servingyourjourney.com).

You are invited to share this e-newsletter with those family, friends, colleagues and acquaintances you think may be interested.

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If you have a newsworthy item that you would like added to the e-newsletter, please forward your submission to rmeagher@istar.ca.

SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE OFFERINGS:

1. THIS MONTH'S PERSONAL STORY OF SPIRITUAL LESSONS

Live Your Life Like A Gentle Breeze

Do you remember it? That wonderful, blissful moment when a gentle breeze caressed your face; the joy and delight you felt from that unexpected moment; that moment that appeared without notice and left the same way.

Do you remember it? That serene, contemplative moment when, without asking, you were pleasantly and gratefully aware of something that touched you at your core. For a moment, you were aware of something 'other than you'. For a moment, you were aware of a force that made you realize that life is more than the clutter of our everyday thoughts.

A gentle breeze is a beautiful metaphor for the life I would like to lead.

A gentle breeze presents itself to us without notice;
and yet we welcome it with a blissful recognition that it is exactly what we need in
the moment.

A gentle breeze is unobtrusive;
it makes itself known without any fanfare or grand announcement.

A gentle breeze is refreshing;
it rejuvenates and nourishes us and our souls.

A gentle breeze is omnipresent;
it is always there...we sometimes are just not open to receiving it.

And as it came to light up our day, it leaves as it entered...

The gentle breeze leaves as gentle as it came;
we are as unaware of its departure as its arrival.

The gentle breeze makes no announcement or warning of its departure;
we just realize it is not there any longer.

The gentle breeze leaves us feeling refreshed and nourished;
we are revitalized and transformed.

Imagine what life would be like if we shared our love, gratitude, compassion and forgiveness like
a gentle breeze. Imagine for a moment the inner peace we would feel, and the inner peace we
would be sharing with our brothers and sisters. Imagine the good that would be realized for
human kind and our soul journeys.

May your life be lived like a gentle breeze.

In love, gratitude, compassion and forgiveness...

Rev. Robert Meagher

2. THIS MONTH'S CONTEMPLATIVE THOUGHTS*

"Fill every thought with determination, every step with courage and every word with love."

"Someone wise thinks about what attitudes and actions will bring about good results."

"You are still asleep if think you are being controlled by others. We saw that we cannot control
someone else so no one can control us. We have been conditioned to believe we can be
controlled. But others don't - and didn't - really control us, it just seems that way until we realize
that we we are the creator of our own responses. The awakened souls knows that they make
their own decisions, create their own thoughts and feelings, and generate their own actions
everywhere and at every moment of their life, regardless of the circumstances. Realizing this sets
us free of the illusion that we are victims or slaves. Staying awake and free in a world that
celebrates the opposite is a daily challenge."

"Waking up from illusions and staying awake is the challenge we all face if we are to live
peacefully, lovingly and joyfully. Hence the value of developing 'vigilance' in the form of attention

and awareness. It is not that we need to struggle to get rid of these illusions and beliefs but simply see them for what they are and thereby 'see through' them. Only then will they lose their power to shape our thoughts, feelings and actions."

"On the journey between 'here' and being fully and consistently awake there are the inevitable fluctuations between waking and sleeping, victory and defeat, illusion and reality, until staying awake is as natural as being asleep used to be! After a while it becomes obvious that everyone, no matter how exalted or elevated, how humble or how simple they may be, will have to make the same journey, make the same effort, undertake the same practice. If we have been asleep together, then we awaken...together!"

"Be spiritual not political. To be spiritual is to see the secrets of the drama of life, to see the best in each person in spite of their role or position in the world. To be political is to see people as their position and to manoeuvre around positions to achieve a desired outcome. When I am in a spiritual consciousness I see the soul, I see the being of intelligence that is in each person independent of their position in life. Today let me maintain a spiritual view."

"Your internal state creates the reality of your external world. Although the world is round there was a time when everyone thought the world was flat. This internal reality created fear about falling off the edge and significantly curtailed travel - except for a hardy, courageous few. In the same way, my inner reality - what I believe - will significantly impact my experience of the external world. Today let me catch any limiting internal beliefs and expand them so I can enjoy a more unlimited external world."

"Remember the essential and forget the irrelevant. I remember many things in the course of a day; pleasant things, functional things, things that have given me sorrow... For a human being remembering is natural and automatic. However, it is important that I decide what is empowering for me to remember and what is not. Today let me remember things that uplift and empower me."

"The 'art of influencing' others is the basic art of conversation. How we engage with people even in the briefest of exchanges can set a relationship hurling towards conflict or into nurturing a state of mutual understanding and contentment. Conversations can range from difficult to easy, with tricky' somewhere in between and our 'conversational inclinations' will be part of the exchange regardless of the degree of difficulty. This 'inclination' will be something we have developed in response to what life has brought to us and thrown at us so far. Depending on how we ourselves have been influenced, we may tend towards one of the three main conversational modes – discussion, dialogue or argument."

"When we argue we have an opinion and at the heart of our opinion is our belief. When we hear the belief of the other, we argue back as we perceive their belief as a personal threat. Deep in our own consciousness we are identifying our self with our opinion. We fly the flag of our point of view and stake out the ground with our belief/s. We then interpret the other's beliefs as an attack upon that ground. Before we know it we are either defending or attacking, which means we create fear and aggression, which means we are inflicting suffering upon our self and waging war on the other."

"An argument is usually a meeting of two closed minds. Each person is harbouring some insecurity and the need to be right, or at least more right than the other! Modern meaning of discussion is based on an exchange of ideas or points of view where both minds are open and receptive as they break down the subject under discussion. A dialogue on the other hand is a conscious collaboration in which there is a mutual intention to explore and find 'deeper meaning' and, in the process, the creation of a completely new way of seeing and understanding. In a dialogue there is more listening than talking, in a discussion there is an equal exchange between friends or colleagues and in an argument there is usually...war!"

"Many people come to a conversation 'armed' with their opinions, prepared to defend their beliefs. It is often easy to disarm them. All we have to say is, "That's an interesting way to see it. Not sure I agree with it, but I can see how you can see it that way". But because we believe we are right, we want to prove we are right and they are wrong. Being right, we feel superior and this is the best way to avoid our insecurity which is the fear of feeling inferior. In the process of proving our rightness we are tense and even angry that the other is either not 'getting it' or that they are not going to acknowledge that 'I am right'. The possibility of losing the argument then becomes the possibility of losing face."

It takes courage to have a point of view while being extremely interested in others' points of view to the extent that we are prepared to let go and shift our viewing point! In such moments we are saying, "I am flexible and I acknowledge there are many ways of looking/seeing/viewing". It says, "I seek to meet you on the ground we share, as opposed to fight you from a proclaimed territory." It is an enlightened soul who moves from an argument to a discussion to a dialogue, a process that is driven not by the need to be right, but the intention to understand the other and the hope that there may be some deeper meaning to be discovered."

"Soul is not just energy but pure energy. The pure energy of spirit is clean, clear and bright. Under the layers of worry, fear and darkness, the soul exists as pure light. This energy when rediscovered can bring light to the world. Today let me take time in silence to explore the world of pure energy within me and bring this light to the world."

"On the basis of your thinking, your actions follow accordingly. What I think about becomes what I do. When I understand this secret of consciousness I can be very careful to ensure my thoughts are worthy of becoming actions. Today let me create quality actions by creating quality thoughts."

"To be deeply spiritual is to see what links and connects us to each other beyond the superficial. Deep bonds of connection go beyond position and worldly power. To see these bonds is to act with full respect for everyone I meet. Today let me see with spiritual vision."

"The sign of a pure thought is that it comes only once and is filled with gentle strength. A pure thought is a thought that has the quiet energy of certainty within it. A pure thought directs me to fulfill it. A pure thought shows me how it can be fulfilled without force or worry. Pure thoughts come when I am silent and peaceful inside. Today let me create pure thoughts."

"Look at specialties and weaknesses will be erased. When I look at people's strengths and special qualities, their weaknesses become less pronounced in my mind. As weaknesses fade from view, strengths take over. Today let me focus on what is special and unique about each person I meet."

"In today's world heads have become hot and hearts cold and it is time to turn this around to warm hearts full of compassion, care and kindness. Being silent internally begins to bring these qualities to light again. When I learn to carry the experience of inner peace with me and display it at all times, then I can bring a warm heart to all situations. Today let me bring kindness to the world."

"Greatness is to see potential. Great souls take advantage of every moment and every opportunity to give happiness to others through kindness in their thoughts. Such souls are willing to overlook weaknesses and mistakes and have the desire to help everyone reach their potential. When I discipline myself to see only the best in others and to have good wishes for their fulfillment, I experience happiness. Today let me see greatness in everyone."

"Spiritual ideas connect us no matter the differences in body. As spiritual beings we are a gathering of shining stars. The intention of meditation is to emerge a higher consciousness that can then translate into an active real life. It is tender loving care that helps the seed of spiritual

awareness grow and become strong. Today let me feed my spirit and share it with others inviting them to join the journey.”

“To be trustworthy - be a trustee. A trustee means to hold a responsibility, role or relationship in trust, as if it is not mine, but something I am taking care of. To be a trustee makes me trustworthy as others see that I do not have selfish motives, but take care of everything I have been given. Today let me be a trustee of all my responsibilities, roles and relationships.”

“It is said that knowledge is light and might. Where there is light, there is clarity about what is wrong or right, dark or light, wasteful or powerful. With this clarity I am no longer influenced by actions or thoughts that are negative or bring harm. This is the aim of a spiritual life, to be free from giving or receiving sorrow; to be happy. Today let me use spiritual knowledge to create clarity and happiness in my life.”

“Respect means acceptance. True respect means to understand that I and everyone around me have their own part to play in life’s drama, in their own way and at their own time. This allows me to accept others without judgment or desire to change them. Today let me flow with the natural rhythm of a life lived respecting others.”

“The greatest good we can do for others is not to share our riches with them, but to reveal to them their own. Although the act of charity brings great benefit to others, the greatest benefit of all is to show another person their own greatness. What would it take for me to see the greatness in everyone I meet and to reflect it back to them? Today let me make it my intention to see greatness in everyone.”

“Self realization is to know my own truth. To know my own truth I must have self realization by taking the time to go deep inside. When I go deep inside I can discover my own voice amongst the voices of others . Without doing this, my own truth becomes a distant memory and an image of truth becomes my reality. This confusion between truth and the image of truth keeps me from experiencing my own power. Today let me listen deeply to discover my own truth.”

“Noise in the world becomes noise in the mind. Noise in the external world is growing day by day. When I am too busy converting the noise of the world into thoughts I lose touch with my own heart and my own wisdom. My heart is patiently waiting to speak to me about wise and beautiful things but it cannot get through the noise. Today let me create silence inside and listen to my own heart.”

“Recognize your own specialty. A specialty is a positive quality that requires no effort to use, it comes naturally to me in everything I do. When I do not recognize my own specialty, I need others to appreciate and validate me. But when I am aware of my own specialty, I can honor it with humility and self-respect and I need no attention or appreciation to validate myself. Today let me honor my own specialty.”

“The universe is not going to see someone like you again in the entire history of creation. It is wonderful to know that each soul is unique. This simple understanding can help me look out at the people in my life with deep appreciation for the kaleidoscope of unique qualities inherent in humanity. Today let me take joy in spotting uniqueness.”

“Just as going to a theatre to see a movie is entertaining, I can look through the screens of my eyes and watch the drama of life. Scenes are passing by; sometimes scenes of high drama, other times fearful scenes, each scene adding to the excitement of the film. At the end of the movie I know I will leave the cinema and go home. In the same way, I know I can withdraw my attention from the movie and be safely still and silent inside myself whenever I choose. Today let me enjoy the drama of life, knowing I can be at home inside myself.”

“Many of us live in the gap between what we would like to be and what we are now. The desire to close this gap is the spark for our self development. When I spend time clarifying the picture of what I would like to be, I re-awaken the memories of what I have been, memories that reside deep in the soul, sparking a longing to change. Today let me enjoy the spiritual journey of transformation by remembering who I really am.”

* *Complements of the Brahma Kumaris* (<http://www.bkwsu.com/index.html>).

3. THIS MONTH'S POEM

Compassion

That I feed the hungry,
forgive an insult, and love my enemy—
these are great virtues.

But what if I should discover
that the poorest of the beggars
and most impudent of offenders
are all within me,
and that I stand in need
of the alms of my own kindness;
that I myself am the enemy
who must be loved—
what then?

C. G. Jung

4. THIS MONTH'S QUOTE or QUESTION

“Judgement is the hard face of insecurity, the unforgiving face of fear...” (Richard Harvey, “The Flight of Consciousness: A Contemporary Map for the Spiritual Journey”, Ashgrove Publishing, London and Bath, page 45.)

5. A PRAYER FOR PEACEFUL SLEEP

This is a time of wondrous change and transformation on Mother-Father Earth. Energy is shifting and some quantum physicists believe time, as we know it on this plane, is speeding up. All of this change and transformation is resulting in sleep patterns shifting for many; this may be more acute for Children of the Light (i.e., spiritual aspirants). While shifting sleep patterns are thought to be merely a sign of spiritual awakening (see news item 34 below: 10 Signs of A Spiritual Awakening), sleep deprivation can be difficult to manage.

I recently read some material that offered some soulful and helpful suggestions to experience more restful sleep, even during these times of great change and transformation. The essence of the passage was to pray for surrender in giving over your sleep to Spirit, to use as Spirit thinks it is best to utilize that dimension of existence.

I have been trying this prayerful offering during November and have experienced significantly-improved sleep. Overall, I feel more rested. I awake with more energy and most days do not even feel the need for a nap (a favorite day-time activity of mine). All of this at a time of year (i.e., heading toward the winter solstice) when, historically, my sleep patterns are at their worst and

most disruptive. Here is an example of a prayer I offer to Spirit immediately before I lay down to go to sleep:

Holy Mother/Father,

I offer you this sleep to do with what you think is best. Guide me to a restful sleep. Bless me and hold me in your loving arms until I rise again, in gratitude, for another day.

Amen / Namaste

I used to worry about sleeping well, getting my rest; but not anymore. With the above prayer, even if I do not have a great sleep, I know that is what Spirit held in His/Her heart for me. It is not for me to question.

I extend the above offering in the hopes it offers you some restful respite during these wondrous times.

In love, gratitude, compassion and forgiveness...

Rev. Robert Meagher

6. WORKSHOPS



Spiritual Guidance Presents

“Exploring Spirituality”

This personal exploration workshop will facilitate, embrace and celebrate the opportunity to explore spirituality. You will have the opportunity to discover: What is spirituality to/for me? What are the characteristics of spiritual living and spiritual people? What are the impediments to spiritual growth? What spiritual practice is possible and what works best for me? To add another interesting element to the workshop, you will have the opportunity to participate in meditation and guided imagery exercises to nurture and facilitate your experience. (\$165, 6 hours in duration)

“The Laws of Spirit”

We live our lives surrounded by the ‘laws of the land’. Many of these laws are intended as a basis for social order. However, these human-made laws pale in comparison to a higher order of laws that weave themselves into our daily existence and broader human fabric. This exploratory workshop will examine these higher orders of law—the laws of spirit—in three parts:

Part 1 will see you review some of the more prominent laws of spirit.

Part 2 will have you identify the laws that are most relevant to your life path.

Part 3 will give you an opportunity to work through exercises to help you more closely examine the laws identified in Part 2 and how to address your core issues, hopefully with greater ease.

All of the material in this workshop is based upon the ambitious work of Dan Millman in his book "The Life You Were Born to Live: A Guide to Finding Your Life Purpose". (\$125, 5 hours in duration)

"Forgiveness"

Forgiveness offers us tremendous opportunities for inner peace, joy and love in our lives. From a spiritual perspective, forgiveness is essential for spiritual growth and unlocks a door—it is a key—to higher levels of consciousness. For those who recognize that their inability to forgive themselves and others is holding them back from the inner peace they seek, this workshop will be most beneficial. You will also benefit from attending if you want to develop tools to help others learn how to forgive. In this workshop we will explore what forgiveness is and, more importantly, how to forgive through a series of self-exploratory exercises. We will discuss some of the common reasons we choose not to forgive and examine some practical tools and approaches to forgiveness. (\$125, 5 hours in duration)

To register your interest for any of the above workshops, please contact Rev. Robert Meagher at 613-204-0299 or rmeagher@istar.ca

All workshops will skillfully blend personal reflective time with facilitated reflection circles to provide the opportunity for discussion with other participants.

Unless otherwise stated, all workshops will be held at the Subud Centre, 357 Wilmont Avenue, Ottawa (at Churchill Avenue, one block South of Scott Street). Please bring any food, snacks and/or refreshments you will need throughout the day. There are kitchen facilities available, with running water, and a fridge you can keep your food, snacks and refreshments in.

You are invited to wear comfortable clothing and consider bringing with you additional layers, such as a fleece, shawl or blanket. The sedentary nature of the day may result in you wanting to add layers to stay warm. Also consider bringing your favorite cushion or pillow for sitting on the floor.

* The cost of the workshop includes a workbook that you will use throughout the day and then take home with you.

Visit www.servingyourjourney.com for more information.

7. DISCUSSION GROUPS

Spiritual Guidance leads discussion groups on spirituality in Ottawa, Canada. If you or someone you know is interested in participating in these discussion groups, please contact Rev. Robert Meagher at rmeagher@istar.ca or 613-204-0299. You can also register your interest on the 'Services' page of the Spiritual Guidance website (<http://www.servingyourjourney.com/page04.html>).

8. A COURSE IN MIRACLES STUDY GROUP

A Course in Miracles is a self-study course in personal and spiritual transformation. Spiritual Guidance nurtures a community of students who study *A Course in Miracles*. If you or someone you know would like to participate in this community, please contact Rev. Robert Meagher at rmeagher@istar.ca or 613-204-0299. You can also register your interest on the 'Services' page of the Spiritual Guidance website (<http://www.servingyourjourney.com/page04.html>).

9. SUPPORTING SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

Spiritual Guidance is an interfaith ministry initiative based in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada that works with people to explore their spirituality. We offer four primary services:

- Spiritual exploration and life coaching
- Spiritual programming (e.g., discussion groups, study groups, workshops, etc.)
- Public speaking
- Traditional ministerial services focused on visitation with the sick, infirm and dying.

To learn more about the above-mentioned services, refer to the Services page of our website (www.servingyourjourney.com).

In addition to the above, Spiritual Guidance maintains an ambitious index of resources on the resources page of our website. We fulfill requests for specific resources to help aspirants on their personal journey toward enlightenment. Spiritual Guidance also creates and distributes this monthly e-newsletter to interested persons throughout the world.

The majority of the above services are offered from the heart, with participation based on in-kind donations and free will offerings. Some recipients of this e-newsletter and other services offered by Spiritual Guidance have expressed gratitude for Spiritual Guidance's presence in their lives and have voluntarily offered donations to support Spiritual Guidance's ministry work. If you would like to support Spiritual Guidance by making a monetary donation:

1. Please follow this link to make a donation via Paypal (https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=s-xclick&hosted_button_id=GRP5RLXSVRDFS). If the donation link does not work when you click on it, please copy and paste the link into your web browser.

OR

2. Please make your cheque payable to "Spiritual Guidance" and mail it to:

12B – 300 Driveway
Ottawa, ON K1S 3M6
CANADA

Please note that Spiritual Guidance is not a registered not-for-profit or charitable organization at this time. Therefore, we will not be able to provide you with a receipt for taxation purposes.

Love and gratitude for your support and generosity.

CONTRIBUTING SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND TEACHERS:

Spiritual Guidance is honored to collaborate with other Spiritual Guides and Teachers to serve your personal journey toward enlightenment. If you would like to be a contributing Spiritual Guide and Teacher to this e-newsletter, please contact Spiritual Guidance (our contact information is at the very bottom of this e-newsletter).

10. RICHARD HARVEY – WHEN GOD IS, I AM NOT

A lot of what passes for spiritual practice today is not really spiritual at all. It would hardly need remarking if it were something like the inversion of adjectives, such as bad meaning good, or get down meaning get up (and dance). But behind this devaluing is an insidious process of dilution and annihilation: the latter of grammar, the former of true spirituality. The erosion of grammar is arguably heinous, but the destruction of the spiritual is catastrophic. If we lose sight of the road, we may never reach our destination. Similarly, if we cannot recognize authentic spirituality, we lose the way back to ourselves and are truly lost.

One basic fundamental principle of spirituality is so unpopular today as to be almost completely ignored. It is that human incarnation offers us the opportunity to realize ourselves as spiritual beings. Individual self-interest, self-aggrandizement and self-importance are of interest to materialists and egoists only. A genuine spiritual event takes place in the absence of a sense of individual identity.

Only when you are absent is the numinous present. You can talk with God all you like, communicate via letters (emails?), poems, music and other art forms. But ultimately no communication is possible between two who are one, or another way to put it is that communication exists only between two separate individual entities. God is not an entity; God is more truly yourself than you are! Therefore, you have no need of speaking with God. What you do need is to rid yourself of selfhood, ego, self-contraction, the individual, separative 'I', which is what Buddha called suffering. You do this by losing yourself in God, immersing yourself in God, surrendering to God until all you see is God, because everything *is* God.

In the Seventies you could buy posters that at first sight appeared to be a lot of squiggly lines on a page. The trick was to defocus and perhaps look a little obliquely at the poster. Something would happen in your brain, sometimes quite perceivable experientially. The lines would realign themselves into fish or people or flowers. Then you realized that forms and formlessness exist together in parallel modes of perception: the way you saw things was simply *a way* and not *the way*. The method was defocusing, without that you had only the squiggles.

The method for entry into the spiritual realm is similar to perceiving the poster. In one sense you must defocus... or *really* focus. Either way, the price of admission to spiritual reality is your self. When you trick the ego, the separate small self that masquerades as you, into loosening its hold on your perception you 'fall through' into reality, into eternity, into the truly spiritual and, beyond the squiggles of selfhood and suffering, you see God.

When this truly happens, no one is there. No one is present, there is only Presence. No one has experiences of the spiritual, there is only experience, or it would be closer to say only *there is!* In a sense all of this is obvious when you think about it. Because the spiritual pursuit – meditation, self-enquiry, mystical movement, reading scriptures for inspiration, intuition, ACIM, zazen, dervish whirling – you are doing is designed to release you from the dualistic world, in which your individual separateness struggles with ultimate reality, resisting, fighting, denying, bargaining, despairing about it all and inevitably retiring for a rest in the narrow, warming, comforting confines of egocentric pleasures.

The pleasures of so-called 'spirituality', are many and varied: relaxation (sometimes very profound), pleasure (likewise), beatific moments of 'spiritual' breakthrough and experience, emotionally exalted feelings of oneness with others, love (in whatever human, blissful, but usually separate form) and so on. But none of these are strictly spiritual. Why? Because spiritual means 'not material', 'not temporal' or 'incorporeal'. The world of the spirit is usually defined in contrast to what it is not. But spirit, while indefinable semantically, is distinguishable from phenomena precisely because it is located in the absence of arising phenomena, temporal and conditional events and beings – and that's the point! Spirituality is of the noumena, of otherness, of God, by whatever name we know God. *When God is, I am not.*

In God we are met and subsumed not as a separate entity or some missing part. The divine epiphany is a profound and ecstatic homecoming that words can never describe and no concepts can ever explain. Coming home to God is returning to our Self, remembering, re-knowing, intuiting; coming back to Heart is the recognition of our True Self as all and everything, because there is no other in God, no divisible entities, nothing but a sudden leap of understanding that we have always been like this, always been here, always been perfectly safe and at rest, happy and peaceful, wise and blissful.

No experience, no insincere, superficial or misinformed spiritual practice could ever provide this realization of the truth.

ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE AND TEACHER: Richard Harvey is a psycho-spiritual psychotherapist and spiritual teacher with almost 35 years experience. He maintains an international private practice via Skype and telephone and gives workshops, retreats and training courses at his personal growth centre and family home set high on the slopes of the Sierra Nevada mountains in Andalucia, southern Spain. He is the author of *The Flight of Consciousness* (Ashgrove 2002), as well as several other books and many articles aimed at both inspiring and offering practical guidance on the process of realizing our true selves. Richard can be reached by phone at (0034) 680 741 108 or (0034) 958 953 033, by email at richard@therapyandspirituality.com, or via his website at www.therapyandspirituality.com.

11. SHERRY HARRIS, MSW, RSW, CHt, LM – WEIRD IS THE NEW NORMAL

I borrowed this from Esther Hicks who so beautifully channels Abraham. If you are not familiar with their work, please go to www.abraham-hicks.com. You will be glad you did. I have been a devoted fan of the Abraham channelings for more years than I can remember and have never once been disappointed or found their work out of integrity.

Back to my borrowed title, *Weird is the New Normal*. I have found the last four months to be very different from anything I have experienced in my life up to this date. Everything I knew to be a given has at one point chosen to show me it is no longer so. A few examples: I used to have a pain free body. Now I hurt all over most days, with the occasional day of returning to pain free. What is that all about? I used to sleep well, now can no longer stay asleep more than a few hours at a time. Yet every once and a while, I get a straight 8 hours sleep. There just doesn't seem to be any rhyme or reason to the changes. Foods I once tolerated easily now make me quite ill. Foods I previously knew my body to be allergic to, I can now eat with no reaction. Things I had long ago thought to be forgotten are now surfacing and things I have known for 24 years like my bank account number disappear at will. I wish I could say that I am beyond being surprised, but that would not be true.

I don't think anyone can deny that things are changing at a very quick rate. Weather changes are more pronounced and come up more quickly. Temperatures are not in their normal range and freak storms pop up seemingly out of the blue. Our lives are very different now and the best thing we can do is to stay grounded to Mother Earth, practice mindfulness and/or meditation, quieting a

restless, insecure mind and open the heart wide to all we encounter. We are all in this massive change together and the best way to get through it is by lovingly supporting each other and keeping a sense of humor. Sometimes the changes are so ridiculous one can only laugh and wonder what's next.

Considering we and the earth are moving into a crystalline grid formation from a carbon-based one it is not surprising how intense the changes are. Our bodies are being changed in ways we could never imagine and that change is intended to allow more and more light to come in to facilitate the shift to crystalline and to a love-based energy system. No wonder it feels tough and so unpredictable. All old structures that cannot support the vast amount of light coming in are being dismantled to make room for the new light-based structures. When old patterns arise they are attempting to make their way out of the system and this is not always possible. Then, the old heavy, dense energies are trapped and this is what is causing the discomfort physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. I liken it to a too rapid detox when the system can't get rid of the toxins fast enough so they congeal in the blood causing considerable pain and suffering. We can all ask our guides and Higher Self that our process of bringing in the new crystalline structure be made more gradual and pain free allowing us more time to shed the old before trying to bring in the new. We can also be more aware of ways to detox using sea salt, epsom soda baths or find other means for gentle detoxification including ion foot baths and the foot detox pads from Japan and China. Detoxing needs to be a priority at this time. All the old stuff is coming up to be released. For many of us it is coming up too fast for our systems to handle in a comfortable way. If your discomfort is mental, racing mind, negative fearful thoughts, take more time to meditate or still the mind; if it is emotional stuff coming up, talk to someone to help you release old limiting patterns, and if it is physical, detox and ask your beautiful body what it wants.

With a little understanding of the magnitude of changes we are going through we can take some simple steps to make it a little easier, less intense and less painful on all levels. Be gentle with yourself, do your detox and don't forget to laugh and keep your heart open.

ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE AND TEACHER: Sherry Harris, MSW, RSW, CHt, LM is a psychotherapist and spiritual coach, counsellor, teacher and minister. She also enjoys being a loving channel for God's healing energy. She may be reached at 613-236-8852 or by email at harris.sherry@gmail.com. Her websites are www.sherryharriscountesselling.com and www.sherryharris.thevoiceforlove.com. Sherry's hours include evenings and weekends and she provides an insurance receipt covered by most insurance companies.

12. DOUG HENDERSON, Ph.D – WE USE THEM UNTIL WE NO LONGER NEED THEM – PART 2 of 10

This is part 2 of a 10-part series by Doug. If you are interested in all 10 parts as one long article, you can contact Doug directly via his contact information at the end of this article.

Bill W. was an 85 year young participant in the experimental Tune me Up Program. Three months into the program, Bill phoned and asked, "Were you working on me today at 1:30?"

I responded, "No, but I was working on the LOC of the group (Group B; LOC 250 and greater.) that you are in – why do you ask?" "I was making a grill cheese sandwich and I couldn't move for about 5 minutes, it was like I was in the zone."

About a month later Bill e-mailed me and said, Doug would you check my LOC? I responded and said, "Bill, I wasn't planning on checking participants LOC until the end of the 6 month test period."

Bill replied and said, "Check my LOC Doug, something's going on." Reluctantly, I checked Bill's LOC and I couldn't believe it! I checked it 5 times. I dowsed 5 times and kept getting the same response. Then, I checked everyone else's LOC in the group. What shocked me was, Bill's LOC had increased 130 points. That's the equivalent of the quantum learning of 26 lifetimes. There wasn't anyone who hadn't increased a minimum of 35 points which is the equivalent of learning of 7 quantum lifetimes. Later, when I checked Group A, (which are participants of a lower LOC- from 0-250 on Hawkins Map of Human Consciousness) I found that there had been improvement in this group also. I then got on the phone to Bill and inquired, "What's going on Bill?" Bill responded, "You know my skin cancer? – well it's disappeared. I have also become sexually active again but what really amazes me is that I have a clarity of thought and focus that I can't recall experiencing before."

This, and other subscribers testimonials can be viewed by going to: www.quantumru.com and then clicking on **The Tune Me Up Program** and after scrolling to the bottom of the introductory article, you will see a thread of postings, start at the bottom and follow the thread to the top.

Bill's experience is significant because, at no time did any member know either when I would be working on the group they were in or which subspace program I would use on the group because I have two different programs. So, responses are equivalent to a double blind study! The other significant point is, Hawkins says, that in the past man seldom advanced more than 5 LOC points in a lifetime.

Many things may be happening that are allowing for improved advancement of LOC. What I have noticed is that those who are on a spiritual path of study while participating in the Tune Me Up Program seem to have advanced much more rapidly than those who were not involved in any spiritual study. It appears that balancing the energetic field during spiritual study tends to enhance or facilitate growth of consciousness or awareness.

One of the things that really interested me and was a prime *raison d'etre* of the experiment was to see, if when one group's LOC improved, to what extent did their energetic field influence and uplift the LOC of those in the lower group? My observations tend to show that it has.

Another observation tends to verify Hawkins statement that each of us enters this lifetime with a preset initial LOC; appears to be true. There is a third group. Group C are infants and children and some of them were born with LOC's higher than either parent. There is one baby girl who has recently come in with an LOC of 489. The father's LOC when he started the TMUP was quite high at 425 but while on the TMUP he has shot up to 515! The mother's Loc is considerably lower.(300's) The father attributes the TMUP to assisting him and his wife with ability to conceive because of it's stress reduction capabilities.

There was another incident of this nature almost 5 years earlier but it was totally subspace (long distance) because the parents are in Russia. When Elizaveta was born, the nurses felt that she was the healthiest baby in the clinic. In this particular case, I felt very much like an uncle. Data was not kept on Elizaveta and her parents from the beginning because the concern was to be helpful and of service in the matter of conception. There are numerous stories of Elizaveta's wisdom. Here is my favorite.

Tune in to next month's newsletter for a continuation of Doug's article.

ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE AND TEACHER: Doug Henderson, Ph.D, Humanities and Theology, is a Stress Management Consultant, Ordained Minister and Internationally Certified Quantum Biofeedback Therapist. Doug uses some cutting edge quantum technologies to assist clients to return to energetic balance and when they do – dis-ease drops away. Three years ago, Doug started a program called the "Tune Me Up Program" that is having extraordinary results raising clients levels of consciousness/awareness. Go to: www.quantumru.com to read

unsolicited experiences. Seven years ago, Doug had 4 different cancers, refused conventional therapy and developed protocols that worked for him and his clients benefit from same. Doug can be reached by phone at 613-233-3888, by email at drdoug88@rogers.com, or via his website at www.quantumru.com.

13. GEOFF STRAW – THE COUNSEL WITHIN

Many people cannot stand more than a few moments a day, at first, of turning inward; it is for some a frightening experience. This is why the simple practice of mindfulness is so useful, because any moment can be the doorway through which the individual experiences the inner self, the present moment. The cup of tea, the breath, the beauty of nature, the smile of another person - and so many more examples - all can point inside - to the witness of the experience itself.

This is the aspect of self that you strengthen and come to know gradually when you are mindful, the observer self. (There is much written on this topic.) This is also known as the wise self, the essential self, the formless self, the true consciousness, the soul, and other names. This self is distinct from the human persona, or ego. The ego wants to become involved with the temporary things of the world, and resists looking inward to the experience of the formless self. So there will be resistance to this, but mindful knowing can be a good introduction to begin to identify with conscious reactions and a clearer seeing, of knowing, of cultivating the observer self.

Other ways to cultivate a relationship with this wise inner counsel may include learning to become more comfortable with silence. (Much has been written about this too!) So, it is important to turn off the TV, the computer, the phone, social interactions, etc. This wise counsel can then emerge more fully in the silence; it needs to have a space to welcome it, and allow it, invite it to be more prominent, more noticeable in your life. This is why great masters seclude themselves, or even great creators or writers. They do so instinctively. They create silence in order to accomplish their great work or task, painting, book, or whatever. Without silence, stillness and quiet, the inner self is drowned out; it does not have the attention that it needs.

Acknowledgement is important to strengthen the relationship with the inner self. In the silence that you create, you begin to acknowledge this other self; you say, "OK, I am here in the silence, and I am listening for you, I am waiting for you to speak to me, to guide me, to inspire me."

You greet this part of yourself with an invitation to come forward. Invite your inner self to be closer to you. Take time every day to do this. At first, there may be a purification process for some people, where the accumulation of emotion that they have been carrying around comes up. This can be quite uncomfortable and even frightening, but it is normal, because the usual defenses and distractions are temporarily unavailable, and so whatever needs to come forward will.

A person with a heavy accumulation may need to initially practice this with a guide, or meditation teacher, counsellor, etc. Eventually, this "unloading" process will pass through; it is not bottomless, although it may feel that way at the time. Spirit, or inner self, will use many forms or ways to speak to you, to get your attention. But you can be purposeful about consciously asking for guidance, inviting the process to come in. Notice the shifts: Take a mental note throughout your day to notice the subtle shifts that you experience with this process. At first, they may be quite small and barely noticeable, but look for them and acknowledge them when they do happen.

This act of acknowledgement gives power and strength to the process and encourages more gains. The inner guidance continues then on a more conscious level because you are paying attention to it. The key is paying attention: living a more conscious life is the outcome. The Buddha called it awakening or enlightenment - seeing clearly beyond delusion and suffering.

A very simple exercise to assist in the process of this inner noticing, and one which has been written about in so many ways, is to begin with the breath - like standing by the edge of the ocean and observing the waves moving in and out. We are not trying to breathe deeply here, but only paying close attention to what is already present in the body - the breath. This exercise can be expanded to begin to notice other parts of the body, such as toes, feet, legs, and moving up to the neck and head. Notice the sensations and feelings that are present there; acknowledge each in turn. Now you are coming closer to the inner realm; the body is not it, but by noticing the sensations there you are beginning the process of turning inward.

Another way to strengthen the inner self is to ask for guidance; ask to be aligned with the Will of GOD here. Simply by embracing the silence and inviting the process, as said before, you are making a conscious choice of aligning your will more completely with Spirit. But you can also ask in words, either silently or out loud. Some examples might be: "Thy Will be done; may I create with the mind of GOD today." "Please heal my mind, my perceptions, my thoughts." "May I be one with GOD today." "I surrender to you, GOD." You can repeat this often throughout your day, and it strengthens your intention, which is to align yourself with Spirit, with the inner self, the true self - that which is beyond the physical world that we experience with our "outer" eyes.

ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE AND TEACHER: Geoff Straw is a Counsellor with private practice in Ottawa, Canada. Geoff can be reached by phone at 613-314-4450 or by email at gwstraw@sympatico.ca.

14. KATHRYN KIMMINS – LAUGHTER YOGA

Laughter Yoga is a fun body-mind exercise that is designed to increase a healthy lifestyle and reduce stress and anxiety in your everyday life. Studies show that 60 seconds of laughter equals 10 minutes on a rowing machine.

One of my new clients came to class very stressed out and in a rush to get to the next meeting of her day. We started the class with our warm-up, then a combination of laughter and breathing exercises, followed by a cool down and a laughter/relaxation meditation to close. At the end of the class she was no longer in a hurry, relaxed and more focused for her next meeting of the day. Another client noted that her stress and anxiety attacks were reduced by over 75% and that it was the best cardio-vascular workout she had done in such a short time frame.

Laughter Yoga is quickly spreading naturally into many different areas as people come to realize how the benefits can improve their lives. Its mission is to provide good health, joy and create a world without pain and illness. Laughter Yoga helps people to deal positively with mental, physical and emotional stresses that can otherwise lead to a breakdown in the workplace and in their private lives. It seeks to build an international community of like-minded people who come and laugh together and receive multiple health benefits.

Laughter Yoga is a unique form of exercise that was founded in 1995 by Dr. Madan Kataria, a medical doctor from Mumbai, India, where anyone can laugh for no reason without the need for jokes or comedy. Dr. Kataria, and his wife, Madhuri, developed a program that combines laughter as a physical and playful body exercise with Pranayama, deep yogic breathing (no poses). Scientific research shows that the body does not know the difference between real or fake laughter. So, while the laughter often is initially forced, it soon becomes real due to eye contact and the contagious nature of laughter in a group. What started as one group of five people in a park in Mumbai on March 13, 1995, has now become a worldwide phenomenon with more than 6500 clubs in over 60 countries.

Laughter Speaker Stimulates Action While Building Team Spirit

ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE AND TEACHER: An enthusiastic and infectiously positive speaker, Kathryn Kimmins energizes attendees and directs unforgettable laughter experiences. Kathryn's sessions dissipate stress while refocusing attendees. Cheeks get rosy; eyes clear and twinkle; impish grins are everywhere to be seen; the room rapidly fills with friendly smiles. Her educational and experiential classes serve to boost morale, improve retention, and encourage team-building and creativity. As a laughter specialist, Kathryn has appeared on CTS Network Television, CHCH Television, Hamilton Community News, Cable 14 News Hamilton and McMaster's radio station FM 93.3-CFMU. Kathryn can be reached by phone at 905-574-1765 or through her website at <http://www.laughyourselfhealthy.ca/>.

OTHER GIFTS AND E-NEWSWORTHY ITEMS:

15. GOOD NEWS OF THE DAY

The stories below are reprinted from www.dailygood.org.

In 1971, Frances Moore Lappe wrote a remarkable book that started a movement: "Diet for a Small Planet." Since then, people have been asking her, "Have things gotten better or worse?" She says, both. The number of hungry people has soared to nearly a billion, despite strong harvests; just four companies control three quarters of international grain trade; conditions for farmworkers remain so horrific that seven Florida growers have been convicted of slavery involving over 1000 workers. However, there is another current that is democratizing power and aligning farming with nature's genius. Take a look at this insightful look into our global food system. Read more at...

<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169B22D:EDD6BFBA686AA7C894EBAD91349E7004B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Will bio-technology solve the world's hunger problem or only deepen it? Contemplate the reflections of various experts in the field. Read more at...

<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169B22E:EDD6BFBA686AA7C894EBAD91349E7004B4B847859706E37D&>.

"Design is an inescapable dimension of human activity. To adapt one of my favorite quotes by Reyner Banham, like the weather it is always there, but we speak about it only when it is exceptionally bad or exceptionally good. Design is also a powerful political tool, as pharaohs, queens, presidents, and dictators throughout history have taught us. It comes not only in very visible and traditional applications -- in the national identities expressed by currencies, symbols, monuments, and public buildings -- but also in less apparent and yet equally momentous applications such as the design of complex systems, ranging from territorial infrastructures to the planning of new communities, and the translation of technological and social innovation for the use of the population." Paola Antonelli, senior curator of Design and Architecture at the Museum of Modern Art, further explores the potential for design. Read more at...

<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169B33D:EDD6BFBA686AA7C8114237FC3C9E15A6B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Some intriguing words by the great thinker Vimala Thakar, called "Each of Us, a Miniature Wholeness." Read more at...

<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169B33E:EDD6BFBA686AA7C8114237FC3C9E15A6B4B847859706E37D&>.

"Happiness is defined as a sense of well being, a feeling of joy or delight, and a state of balance and contentment. However, it is easy to confuse intensity, pursuing pleasure, and thrill seeking with joy, delight and contentment. The qualities of happiness include having a sense of freedom to make choices; being loved and giving love; acting in kind and compassionate ways; and seeing life in a context greater than oneself and being connected to the 'big picture' and/or 'greater good'

through purpose, meaning and service. True happiness seems to be more related to one's state of mind than to your circumstances or the impact of transitory, external events. That is why you can impact your level of happiness by your thoughts, emotions, attention, awareness, and actions." Dr. William B. Stewart, author of "Deep Medicine," shares further. Read more at... <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169B4F1:EDD6BFBA686AA7C89E449726A418F5A5B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Make a conscious effort to impact your level of happiness by internal means: thoughts, emotions, attention, and awareness.

"A few months ago when I had worked with Macy in the recording studio, I found the circumstances even more daunting. Nearly every time I began to play, my mind would start churning: 'I'm not a professional musician. I'm going to make a lot of mistakes. The audience/album producer/recording engineer will think I'm lousy. I am lousy. I am going to let Macy down. Why did I think I could do this?' I've come to realize that my mental stumbling started when the performances stopped being about providing a musical foundation for Ms. Robison and creating a good experience for the audience -- and became about me. As soon as my focus shifted to 'How am I doing?' 'Do I sound good?' 'Do they like me?' nerves inevitably took over." Business author and advisor Whitney Johnson shares about the art of presentations. Read more at...

<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169B65A:EDD6BFBA686AA7C8171B997609A44BA1B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: "Perfection is a goal somewhere in the future, totality is an experience herenow. Totality is not a goal, it is a style of life." An interesting reflection from Osho. Read more at...

<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169B65B:EDD6BFBA686AA7C8171B997609A44BA1B4B847859706E37D&>.

"I was a widow and an expectant mother in the same day. We had bought a new home and I had filled our two bedroom apartment with nursery items in anticipation of moving in. Now the house would be taken away. I knew I would have to go back to my parents' home, at least until I delivered the baby. And the shock of my husband's sudden death had made losing the baby a very real possibility. I moved back into my old bedroom. My twin bed, a crib and a dresser was all that could fit in the 8 x 10 foot bedroom. The rest of our furniture had to go into storage. I was able to pay for three months worth of storage and then I would have to sell all the new furniture we had bought." A touching real-world story called 'Remembering Kindness 41 Years Later.' Read more at...

<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169B908:EDD6BFBA686AA7C8468298CE3E262F63B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Unleash your own 'underrated' wave of change -- do an unexpected act of kindness today.

Nearly 21 years ago, Patty Webster landed her dream job as an adventure tour guide in the Peruvian Amazon. But as she shared the area's beauty and culture with tourists, she realized there was a darker side to the rainforest paradise. "I saw how poor they were and realized that people were dying because they didn't have medical care," Webster said. She started sharing her supplies with the locals and soon began waking up to find people waiting outside her mosquito net to ask her for medicine. At one point, Webster -- who had no medical training -- gave someone stitches, following instructions from a book. "It was kind of scary," she recalled. "If they're depending on me for their health care ... we're all going to die." That's when she decided to stay and do something more. Read more at...

<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169B9FB:EDD6BFBA686AA7C8E2357474EC8ADB31B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: The next time you're visiting a new place, look for an opportunity to do an act of service there.

"For most of my life, I believe I inherited my values from my context. Working at Facebook, efficiency and leverage became important to me, along with openness, connectedness, impact. These were the things that kept me up at night. What should've kept me up was my dad's cancer. He'd been diagnosed sometime while I was in college, but I'd mostly pretended he hadn't because that was easier. I assumed he'd just get better. But then one day, during my Facebook

years, he got worse. X-years-to-live type of thing. I was tempted to push the news aside again and go back to helping democratize the world's information (also known as processing my email) when something inside me flipped, snapped, woke up, sang out. I saw suddenly that I was living on autopilot." Leah Perlman, co-author of Facebook for Dummies, shares a heartfelt deep-dive about uncovering her own values. Read more at...

<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169BC43:EDD6BFBA686AA7C885F7602091C8EA5BB4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: What are your own values -- explore the question with a friend.

"At the start of my junior year at USC, my left lung spontaneously collapsed unexpectedly. After being admitted to the ER, I spent four days at the Good Samaritan Hospital with a uncomfortable chest tube jutting out of my body. This was my first, real, and personal encounter of the true fragility of life: the fact that I could possess perfect health one day then instantly have to cling on for dear life the next - without any warning whatsoever. I recovered quickly, and I did my best to learn the lessons from this challenging but extremely revealing experience. Lessons like: being grateful for good health, keeping a powerfully positive attitude, and living life fully each day. So, just five weeks later, with no tubes to hold me back, I made a huge turnaround by seizing my dream of walking-on to the USC football team." Social entrepreneur Bronson Chang shares an inspiring personal story. Read more at

<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169BDA5:EDD6BFBA686AA7C837383F7EA38066D2B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Approach the next adversity you face, no matter how minor it is, with gratitude, positivity, and fulfillment.

Uncluttered, Ecological, Family, Compassionate, Soulful, Business, Civic, Frugal. According to Duane Elgin, author of the classic 'Voluntary Simplicity,' these eight words constitute distinct aspects of simplicity. "As these eight approaches illustrate, the growing culture of simplicity contains a flourishing garden of expressions whose great diversity -- and intertwined unity -- are creating a resilient and hardy ecology of learning about how to live more sustainable and meaningful lives. As with other ecosystems, it is the diversity of expressions that fosters flexibility, adaptability and resilience. Because there are so many pathways into the garden of simplicity, this self-organizing movement has enormous potential to grow." Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169BFC2:EDD6BFBA686AA7C8C6FFFBE6C0003CCFB4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Try out one or more of Duane Elgin's approaches to simplicity today.

One of the oldest, most widespread, and effective tools for creating personal and social change is the Circle. This organizational form is used for an array of purposes and appears under different names in a variety of contexts and cultures in countries around the world. In the United States, millions of people form self-organized literature circles, otherwise known as book clubs. In Japan, hundreds of companies like Toyota and Honda invite employees to join quality circles, a kind of self-managed work team. And in India, NGOs and banks regularly create lending circles to deliver financial services to the poor and to encourage community development. This article delves into the beneficial power of circles and how to leverage them. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169C3F5:EDD6BFBA686AA7C8F2CD302FCF54D6A0B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Take a moment to reflect on the circles you are a part of in your own life and their impact on you.

Today (November 13) is World Kindness Day, and we thought you'd enjoy this real-world story of spreading smiles. "'Right on. This is my kind of protest,' he says while going past me. I hadn't thought of it way before. But perhaps it is a protest -- for lack of smiles in the world. About 15 of us gathered earlier today to create poster boards that we would proudly hold up on busy street intersections of San Francisco. The posters would say simple things like 'Smile' or 'Smile Anyway' or 'Spare a smile?' or 'Smile, it's Free.' We weren't doing this as a part of any organization but rather as friends and well-meaning citizens of the world. After our morning creative sessions, we split up into teams of four and spread out over various intersections on San Francisco's Van Ness Road." Read more at

<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169C48D:EDD6BFBA686AA7C815D37F59AB029300B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: For World Kindness Day, do your bit to shine your corner of the world. Ideas:
<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169C48E:EDD6BFBA686AA7C815D37F59AB029300B4B847859706E37D&>.

What happens when someone who has spent much of his life on volunteerism and generosity keynotes an event for venture capitalists and entrepreneurs? "My instructions for the talk were: don't be humble, talk about scale. I actually laughed out on the phone, when I heard that, only to realize that it wasn't a joke. The other keynote was a billionaire, who had invented 33 medical devices and held 150 patents. And I was warned that this will be an audience of hyper-alpha-males. :) I like entrepreneurs because they are always looking to broaden the pie. The best of them don't hold a scarcity mindset but rather focus on creative expressions for creating new value in the world. [...] Unfortunately, what was also run of the mill was a singular focus on money. Greed. People cheered when a speaker spoke about unethical behavior to get ahead, as if that was truly heroic." Read more at

<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169C4D5:EDD6BFBA686AA7C860C1B23AE09571D1B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Today, do something for someone for which you can't be repaid.

"For at least a couple of years, Zen Habits was one of the top productivity blogs, dispensing productivity tips for a nominal fee (your reading time). I'd like to think I helped people move closer to their dreams, but today I have different advice: Toss productivity advice out the window. Most of it is well-meaning, but the advice is wrong for a simple reason: it's meant to squeeze the most productivity out of every day, instead of making your days better. Imagine instead of cranking out a lot of widgets, you made space for what's important. Imagine that you worked slower instead of faster, and enjoyed your work. Imagine a world where people matter more than profits. If any of that appeals to you, let's look at some traditional productivity advice, and see why we should just toss them out." Read more at

<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169C85E:EDD6BFBA686AA7C8A3989D0F92C1BA66B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Experiment with your own day: is there a balance between uber productivity and tossing productivity out?

How amazing would it be to start the first day of school receiving random acts of kindness from your fellow students? Last year, a hundred students at Kansas State huddled early in the morning to see just how they could pool their time, money and creativity to surprise (and even shock!) their fellow students with unexpected generosity. From a welcome applause to paying for meals to wowing a driver with parallel park assistance, this is a short video that'll make you smile. Follow this link to the video

<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169C96F:EDD6BFBA686AA7C8CBC2AE5B463BC13AB4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Become a neighbor helping neighbors: explore 366 ways you can help your community. Read more at
<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169C970:EDD6BFBA686AA7C8CBC2AE5B463BC13AB4B847859706E37D&>.

"Last weekend, my friend Nimo came to the group with a problem. On the main pathway between a slum and the nonprofit Manav Sadhna (MS), a stream had built up due to the persistent rain we've been getting lately. The issue was that kids from the slum trying to get to MS had to cross the stream daily or more with no proper way to walk, and between the water's filthiness and the pressure it was rushing with, it was becoming a dangerous situation. Rumor even had it that one kid had climbed a parallel drinking water pipeline to cross the stream and had fallen from a considerable height. So our Sunday project was to go down to the stream and fashion together a safe walkway across the water." What follows is an honest reflection on exploring service in action. Read more at

<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169CD03:EDD6BFBA686AA7C80886500F1BFFE520B4B8>

[47859706E37D&](http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169D185:EDD6BFBA686AA7C8260CE58B3BA7CC03B4B847859706E37D&). Be The Change: See something that needs to be done for the common good, but has no takers? Give it a shot and see what you learn.

"I have the pleasure of meeting hundreds of incredible heroes, but this one caught me off guard. Your hair will stand on end as you read the story of this man and this dog who picked one another up time and time again: 'I saw in the front yard what appeared to be a very old dog that was in obvious distress. He would walk in a semi-circle, then fall to the ground, then struggle back to his feet and do it again. I saw him do this same thing at least three times as I walked over to him. This was to be by far my easiest rescue because this poor old boy was in no shape to run from me, but also the most heartbreaking.'" Laura Simpson, a tireless advocate for animals, shares a touching story of Roadie, the 15-yr old dog, and his gift to a grieving man. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169D185:EDD6BFBA686AA7C8260CE58B3BA7CC03B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: The next time you are a little down, do an act of service -- it might just be the gift you need.

Many people are facing their most significant economic challenges in generations. From the hardships of unemployment to the perils of mounting debt, worry about the health of a national economy that depends on consumerism and market success dominates our conversation. But what is the economy is really for? "We've had enough of the official mantra: Work more, enjoy less, pollute more, eat toxic foods and suffer illnesses, all for the sake of increasing the gross domestic product. Why not learn ways to work less and enjoy it more; spend more time with our friends and families; consume, pollute, destroy and owe less; and live better, longer and more meaningfully? To do all this, we need fresh solutions," say John De Graff and Linsa Sechrist in their article on Economics of Happiness. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169D249:EDD6BFBA686AA7C8222350A3E3D742CAB4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Explore research on well-being, at the New Economics Foundation. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169D24A:EDD6BFBA686AA7C8222350A3E3D742CAB4B847859706E37D&>.

"People buy iPhones to be universally connected and have a ton of cool functions and features at their fingertips. But as the wise monk Rev. Heng Sure once said, everything we create in silicon already exists in carbon. I'd add that the silicon technology is a poor facsimile at best. So how exactly do you tap into the wonderful carbon technology you carry around with you all the time? Meditation is a phenomenal tool to do just that." This post offers a witty comparison -- in terms of connectivity, social networking, features & functionality, environment, and cost -- humorously reasoning why meditation beats an iPhone. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169D53C:EDD6BFBA686AA7C80FB67864555A0D3BB4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Is meditation the push-up for the brain? A new study at UCLA suggests that meditators have stronger connections between brain regions and lesser age-related brain atrophy. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169D53D:EDD6BFBA686AA7C80FB67864555A0D3BB4B847859706E37D&>.

"One of the many paradoxes of human creativity is that it seems to benefit from constraints. Although we imagine the imagination as requiring total freedom, the reality of the creative process is that it's often entangled with strict conventions and formal requirements. Pop songs have choruses and refrains; symphonies have four movements; plays have five acts; painters still rely on the tropes of portraiture. Perhaps the best example of this phenomenon is poetry. [...] Instead of composing free verse, poets frustrate themselves with structural constraints. Why? A new study led by Janina Marguc at the University of Amsterdam, and published in The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, provides an interesting answer. It turns out that the obstacles of form come with an unexpected psychological perk, allowing people to think in a more all-encompassing fashion." Jonah Lehrer of Wired Magazine explores the psychology of constraints. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169D2D9:EDD6BFBA686AA7C80F67E5E54298E829B4B847859706E37D&>

[47859706E37D&](http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169D872:EDD6BFBA686AA7C8065363F486ABE6EEB4B847859706E37D&). Be The Change: Choose a creative constraint today, whether in a project, relationship, or even your own daily routine.

Cultivating an "attitude of gratitude" has been linked to better health, sounder sleep, less anxiety and depression, higher long-term satisfaction with life and kinder behavior toward others, including romantic partners. A new study shows that feeling grateful makes people less likely to turn aggressive when provoked. How to practice gratitude? Research shows that those who keep a simple gratitude journal felt happier, more optimistic, and even slept better at night. Renowned psychologist Dr. Martin Seligman guarantees that if you (a) write a 300-word letter to someone who changed your life for the better, (b) hand-deliver it to the recipient, (c) read it out loud to them, then "You will be happier and less depressed one month from now." Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169D872:EDD6BFBA686AA7C8065363F486ABE6EEB4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Write a gratitude letter to someone you appreciate.

Like many 14-year-olds, Katelyn Eystad has a lot of clothes in her closet -- but hers are to give away. In 2009, Katelyn founded a Clothing Closet to provide clothing, diapers, deodorant and more to people in need in her community. With the help of her sisters and mother, she has already served 1,500 families. "What a blessing this child has been to many. Katelyn is always volunteering and giving back to others," says her proud mom, Elissa. Three days a week, clients can come for shopping sprees by appointment. They shop as usual, they just don't have to pay anything. Some of them leave grinning, and some of them leave crying in gratitude. "Me and my family have been in need before ourselves," says Katelyn. "The people who are coming in, I know how they feel and I can relate to them." Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169D91D:EDD6BFBA686AA7C857F5F58A319E415BB4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Support a child this week in expressing his or her own generosity.

"To call Robert Fogarty an accidental entrepreneur is a bit of an understatement. If you haven't heard of Fogarty's Dear World, a venture that grew out of a not-for-profit fundraiser called Dear New Orleans, it's likely to hit your radar screen soon. He's a photographer whose striking portraits feature people with heartfelt messages written on their hands, arms, and faces in black marker. The images live primarily online, where they're attracting more and more viral attention. And Fogarty has gone from collecting crumpled dollars in a bucket for his photos to getting large organizations to write big checks. So his dilemma is this: how to define his venture (art project or company?) and how to scale it without sacrificing the values he holds dear." This Inc. Magazine article shares his story. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169DC84:EDD6BFBA686AA7C878B71C9E7DA5B55DB4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Soak in some of Fogarty's latest Dear World picture messages. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169DC85:EDD6BFBA686AA7C878B71C9E7DA5B55DB4B847859706E37D&>.

"As I continue along the path of giving, I'm learning of the constant opportunity to act from a space of service. A recent personal insight in this space is how communicating with an intention to serve leads to markedly different behaviors. The behaviors themselves are simply manifestations of the inner desire to serve. Behaviors without the intention may fool people for a while, but in the end the inner motives are discovered. The funny thing is, as these behaviors come out from intention, more often than not, they are reciprocated. What we end up with is true communication - no giving or receiving but instead sharing at the deepest level." Here are nine ways to make communication an act of service. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169DCD2:EDD6BFBA686AA7C8382E223EF655909FB4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Make an effort today to make your communication an act of service.

The night before, Pancho Ramos Stierle heard about growing tensions in the community and thought, "If police are stepping up their violence, we need to go and step up our nonviolence." So

on that Monday morning at 3:30AM, Pancho and his housemate Adelaja went to the site of the Occupy Oakland raid. With an upright back and half-lotus posture, they started meditating. The photos of Pancho meditating while being arrested by the police have become iconic. Yet that was just one blip in the story of an everyday hero with a truly remarkable tale. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169E070:EDD6BFBA686AA7C839DE5EE6A22495DCB4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Take a stance on something that you deeply care about, with nothing but love for your "opponent."

Sixty-four Stanford students escape from the campus hustle and find tranquility for two hours a week in the lower level of a campus library. There, they might start class by telling the person next to them about a positive experience from the day, or by updating their gratitude journals. Or, they might simply close their eyes and sit silently, concentrating on relaxing tense muscles and breathing deeply. "These students are stressed," course instructor Fred Luskin says. "They're all high achievers, but they don't know how to turn that drive off. The consequences are exhaustion, a sense of feeling older than your peers, and lack of relationships. This class helps them learn they can be productive without the wear and tear." Students have often described this popular course as their "most valuable class". Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=169E17F:EDD6BFBA686AA7C8A961D71D47087576B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Do an action suggested in the Stanford course -- make a habit of sharing the highlights of your day with someone close to you.

16. FINDING THE DEEPEST JOY IN RELATIONSHIPS

Reprinted from InnerNet Weekly via www.iJourney.org.

One very helpful tool in both clarifying and working with our relationship difficulties is to return to the three questions:

Am I truly happy right now? What blocks happiness? Can I surrender to what is?

The first question helps identify what we're actually feeling (often we don't know).

The second question shows us where we're stuck in our conditioning—our expectations, demands, or unhealed pain. Once we see our expectations clearly, and once we work through our surface emotional reactions, we usually reach that uncomfortable place where we begin to feel our deepest fears -- such as the fear of being unworthy, the fear of being alone, the fear of being hurt again, the fear of rejection, or the fear of the loss of control or safety. Our fears may not necessarily be logical, but we still believe at our core that they are the truth, and they certainly dictate how we feel and how we live, thus blocking any chance for true contentment.

Finally, the third question leads us directly into the experiential process of coming face to face with our own fears—the fears that are almost always at the root of our unhappiness in relationships. Asking the third question -- Can I surrender to what is? -- allows us to do the one thing that can help free us from the domination of our fears: that is, to welcome them in and actually feel them. We may think we can't stand to feel our fears, but the truth is we just don't want to, primarily because they feel so uncomfortable. But over time we can develop the courage and confidence to stay present with our fears. We learn again and again that it's awareness that heals; and gradually, the fears, which at one point felt so solid and unapproachable, are now much more workable.

As we become more inwardly free from our conditioning and our fears, the love and connection that are possible in relationships tend to flow through us more naturally. As our defenses are lowered, our heart opens, and there is a natural desire to give from the generosity of the heart. We discover that genuine happiness in relationships is not a product of having our expectations met or getting what we want but rather it is the consequence of freely giving in order to bring

happiness to another. Nearly every parent has experienced this at some point -- their deepest joy coming from giving unselfishly to their children. Unfortunately, this truth is often forgotten as relationships become more complex, and especially as fear supersedes our innate desire to give from the heart.

-- Ezra Bayda, from "Beyond Happiness, The Zen Way to True Contentment"

17. STAND IN THE TRAGIC GAP

Reprinted from InnerNet Weekly via www.iJourney.org.

The bad news is that violence is found at every level of our lives. The good news is that we can choose nonviolence at every level as well. But what does it mean, in specifics, to act nonviolently? The answer depends on the situation, of course, and a thousand situations might yield a thousand answers. Yet running through all of these answers we will find a single "habit of the heart": to be in the world nonviolently means learning to hold the tension of opposites, trusting that the tension itself will pull our hearts and minds open to a third way of thinking and acting.

In particular, we must learn to hold the tension between the reality of the moment and the possibility that something better might emerge. In a business meeting, for example, I mean the tension between the fact that we are deadlocked about what to do and the possibility that we might find a solution superior to any of those on the table. In a post-September 11 world, I mean the tension between the fact that we are engaged in the endless cycle of war and the possibility that we might someday live in a world at peace.

Of course, finding a third way beyond our current dilemma may be possible in theory, but it often seems unlikely in life. In a contentious business meeting, a better solution may well exist, but the pressures of ego, time, and the bottom line make it unlikely that we will find it. In a world at war, peace may be our dream, but the grim realities of greed, fear, hatred, and doomsday weaponry quickly turn that dream into a delusion.

The insight at the heart of nonviolence is that we live in a tragic gap -- a gap between the way things are and the way we know they might be. It is a gap that never has been and never will be closed. If we want to live nonviolent lives, we must learn to stand in the tragic gap, faithfully holding the tension between reality and possibility.

-- Parker Palmer

18. PIMGRIMAGE TO NON-VIOLENCE

Reprinted from InnerNet Weekly via www.iJourney.org.

First, it must be emphasized that nonviolent resistance is not a method for cowards; it does resist. If one uses this method because he is afraid or merely because he lacks the instruments of violence, he is not truly nonviolent. This is why Gandhi often said that if cowardice is the only alternative to violence, it is better to fight ... The method is passive physically, but strongly active spiritually. It is not passive nonresistance to evil, it is active nonviolent resistance to evil.

A second basic fact that characterizes nonviolence is that it does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his friendship and understanding. The nonviolent resister must often express his protest through noncooperation or boycotts, but he realizes that these are not ends themselves; they are merely means to awaken a sense of moral shame in the opponent ... The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community, while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness.

A third characteristic of this method is that the attack is directed against forces of evil rather than against persons who happen to be doing the evil ... We are out to defeat injustice and not white persons who may be unjust.

A fourth point that characterizes nonviolent resistance is a willingness to accept suffering without retaliation, to accept blows from the opponent without striking back. 'Rivers of blood may have to flow before we gain our freedom, but it must be our blood,' Gandhi said to his countrymen. The nonviolent resister ... does not seek to dodge jail. If going to jail is necessary, he enters it 'as a bridegroom enters the bride's chamber...' "What is the nonviolent resister's justification for this ordeal to which he invites men, for this mass political application of the ancient doctrine of turning the other cheek?" The answer is found in the realization that unearned suffering is redemptive. Suffering, the nonviolent resister realizes, has tremendous educational and transforming possibilities.

A fifth point concerning nonviolent resistance is that it avoids not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. The nonviolent resister not only refuses to shoot his opponent but he also refuses to hate him. At the center of nonviolence stands the principle of love ...

A sixth basic fact about nonviolent resistance is that it is based on the conviction that the universe is on the side of justice. Consequently, the believer in nonviolence has deep faith in the future. This faith is another reason why the nonviolent resister can accept suffering without retaliation. For he knows that in his struggle for justice he has cosmic companionship... a creative force in this universe that works to bring the disconnected aspects of reality into a harmonious whole.

-- Martin Luther King, Jr., in *Stride Towards Freedom*

19. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NATURAL AND UNNATURAL

Reprinted from *InnerNet Weekly* via www.iJourney.org.

For thirty years I lived only in my farming and had little contact with people outside my own community. During those years I was heading in a straight line toward a "do nothing" agricultural method.

The usual way to go about developing a method is to ask, "How about trying this?" or "How about trying that?" bringing in a variety of techniques one upon the other. This is modern agriculture and it only results in making the farmer busier.

My way was opposite. I was aiming at a pleasant, natural way of farming which results in making the work easier instead of harder. "How about not doing this? How about not doing that?" -- that was my way of thinking. I ultimately reached the conclusion that there was no need to plow, no need to apply fertilizer, no need to make compost, no need to use insecticide. When you get right down to it, there are few agricultural practices that are really necessary.

The reason that man's improved techniques seem to be necessary is that the natural balance has been so badly upset beforehand by those same techniques, that the land has become dependent on them.

This line of reasoning not only applies to agriculture, but to other aspects of human society as well. Doctors and medicine become necessary when people create a sickly environment. Formal schooling has no intrinsic value, but becomes necessary when humanity creates a condition in which one must become "educated" to get along.

Before the end of the war, when I went up to the citrus orchard to practice what I then thought was natural farming, I did no pruning and left the orchard to itself. The branches became tangled, the trees were attacked by insects and almost two acres of mandarin orange trees withered and died. From that time on, the question, "What is the natural pattern?" was always in my mind. In the process of arriving at the answer, I wiped out another 400 acres. Finally I felt I could say with certainty: "This is the natural pattern."

To the extent that trees deviate from their natural form, pruning and insect extermination become necessary; to the extent that human society separates itself from a life close to nature, schooling becomes necessary. In nature, formal schooling has no function. [...]
Almost everyone thinks that "nature" is a good thing, but few can grasp the difference between natural and unnatural.

If a single new bud is snipped off a fruit tree with a pair of scissors, that may bring about disorder which cannot be undone. When growing according to natural form, branches spread alternately from the trunk and the leaves receive sunlight uniformly. If this sequence is disrupted the branches come into conflict, lie one upon another and become tangled, and the leaves wither in the places where the sun cannot penetrate. Insect damage develops. If the tree is not pruned the following year more withered branches will appear.

Human beings with their tampering do something wrong, leave the damage unrepaired, and when the adverse results accumulate, work with all their might to correct them. When the corrective actions appear to be successful, they come to view these measures as successful accomplishments. People do this over and over again. It is as if a fool were to stomp on and break the tiles of his roof. Then when it starts to rain and the ceiling begins to rot away, he hastily climbs up to mend the damage, rejoicing in the end that he has accomplished a miraculous solution.

It is the same way with the scientist. He pores over books night and day, straining his eyes and becoming nearsighted, and if you wonder what on earth he has been working on all the time -- it is to become the inventor of eyeglasses to correct nearsightedness.

-- Masanobu Fukuoka in *One Straw Revolution*

20. A SPIRITUAL CONSPIRACY

Reprinted from InnerNet Weekly via www.iJourney.org.

On the surface of the Earth exactly now there is war and violence and everything looks horrible. But, simultaneously, something quiet, calm and hidden is happening and certain people are being called by a higher light. A quiet revolution is settling from the inside out. From bottom to top. It is a global operation. A spiritual conspiracy. There are cells from this operation in every nation on the planet.

You will not watch us on TV. Or read about us in newspapers. Or hear our words on radios. We do not seek glory. We do not use uniforms. We arrive in several different shapes and sizes. We have costumes and different colors. Most work anonymously. Silently we work out of the scene. In every culture in the world. In large and small cities, in the mountains and valleys. In the farms, villages, tribes and remote islands.

We might cross paths on the streets. And not realize ... We follow in disguise. We are behind the scenes. And we do not care about who wins the gold of the result, and Yes, that the work gets performed. And once in a while we will cross paths on the streets. We exchange looks of recognition and continue following our path. During the day many are disguised in their normal jobs. But at night behind the scenes, the real work begins.

Some call us army of consciousness. Slowly we are building a new world. With the power of our hearts and minds. We follow with joy and passion. Our orders reach us from the Central Spiritual Intelligence. We're throwing soft bombs of love without anyone noticing; poems, Hugs, songs, photos, movies, fond words, meditations and prayers, dances, social activism, websites, blogs, acts of kindness ...

We express ourselves in a unique and personal way. With our talents and gifts. Being the change we want to see in the world. This is the force that moves our hearts. We know that this is the only way to accomplish the transformation. We know that with the silence and humbleness we have the power of all oceans together. Our work is slow and meticulous. As in the formation of mountains.

Love will be the religion of the 21 century. Without educational prerequisites. Without ordering an exceptional knowledge for your understanding. Because it is born of the intelligence of the heart. Hidden for eternity in the evolutionary pulse of every human being.

Be the change you want to see happen in the world. Nobody else can make this work for you.

We're recruiting. Perhaps you will join us. Or maybe you have already joined. All are welcome. The door is open.

--Author Unknown

21. SPREADING SMILES IN CALCUTTA

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

I was catching a flight from Calcutta to Madras and had arrived at the airport rather early. Have always thought of airports as rather happy places- everyone at the beginning or the end of a journey- or both- such a sense of adventure in the air- and warmth- because people travel to see people and you know as you look around that that's someone's daughter/son/husband/wife/friend/grandmother/uncle/cousin/nephew/have you and someone on the other end is going to be So Very Glad to see them.

So until I saw the young couple sitting a few seats away from me, and noticed that the woman was crying-I'd never stopped to think that though airports are places of Adventurous Arrival they can also be about Difficult Departure. The young woman was crying, the young man was- not. He looked distinctly connected to her and decidedly uncomfortable (and yes that is judgemental of me but so be it) I kept waiting in an out-of-the-corner-of-my-eye sort of a way for him to do Something Soothing. But he didn't. So after a certain amount of indecision and hesitation I walked over with a Smile Stone (a small marble with a smile drawn on it with a permanent black marble) in my hand and said, "Excuse me- can I give this to you?" And I held out a the skyblue Smile Stones. Tearsmeared puzzled eyes. "Why?" she wanted to know. "To make you smile." She took it quickly and flashed me a quick, faltering, touched-by-gratitude smile- and then I walked quickly away because there wasn't really anything more to say.

Later as my bag was going through the security check a uniformed, unsmiling young lady hauled my backpack onto a side table and started unceremoniously unzipping its various sections and rifling through the contents in the impersonal, mildly aggressive manner that airport security staff sometimes have. When she dipped her hand into the front pocket she came up with a fistful of smile stones- they grinned up at her cheerfully and on her face came a look of priceless bewilderment swiftly followed by an involuntary smile :-). The whole tenor of her interaction with my backpack and with me shifted in that second. As she carefully zipped up my bag I pulled out

one of the smile stones- a pale green one with a particularly friendly face. This is for you I said- to remind you to Keep Smiling. She took it eagerly and then hesitated for a moment- We're not supposed to take anything from anyone- she said in Tamil (as it turned out she was from South India) - and then her voice trailed away as she grinned down at the face grinning up at her. Then- But this is Okay- she said and slipped it into her pocket.

A smuggled smile stone snuggled into the bottom of her security check uniform because sometimes it really is okay to bend the rules :-)

22. DINING WITH MR. YEPP, A SMILING FACE IN THE CAFETERIA

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

I was a freshman in college when I met Mr. Yepp. He was friendly and smiled a lot. He was almost always standing by the cashier that checked us into the university cafeteria, and I would run into Mr. Yepp during three of my daily meals.

However, as the years past, I became annoyed by him. He would stand there and shake every person's hand that came through the cafeteria. This was a problem for me because I did not want to offend him by refusing his handshake; however, I did not want to shake hands with him before coming into the cafeteria to eat because he was shaking every single person's hand, and I had sanitary concerns. When we had the swine flu outbreak at the university, I started to avoid him by going through the back door.

I am out of college now, work full-time, and Mr. Yepp is still standing by the cashier doing the same thing that he has been doing for many years. A few weeks ago, I took some time to sit down and talk with him. It turns out he is not on the payroll, and he comes to the cafeteria of his own free will. Many times one may see him cleaning up after the students, and he sometimes even fills in for the cashier at the door, so I was surprised to learn that he is not a paid employee. When I asked him what motivated him to do what he does, he told me that he enjoys the stress-free environment. He is 79 years old but looks to be in his 50's. He retired many years ago and comes to the cafeteria to keep his mind and body active.

I noticed that he always takes a to-go plate before leaving the cafeteria. It turns out that he takes this plate home to his wife, who suffers from dementia. I asked him about her, and he told me that he wakes up every morning at the same time, makes her breakfast, then leaves the house to give her space, which he says they both need, and he returns in the evening with dinner. He says that she took such great care of him when they were young and that he does the same for her now.

I asked Mr. Yepp, "Is a college campus really less stressful?" His answer was that he enjoys seeing and interacting with the young kids who have so much potential. After my talk with Mr. Yepp, I was embarrassed to have had the thoughts I had about his kindness. It never occurred to me that many times, he was probably the first smiling face that many the students at the university saw in the morning, or that his speaking to everyone who walks into the cafeteria is a gesture that probably means a lot to many of the students, whose days he brightens. So now every time I run into Mr. Yepp, I make it a point to stop, give him a high five, and smile before moving on. Mr. Yepp spends an average of 8 hours a day just to be a smiling face in the cafeteria. He can be seen going from table to table and speaking words of encouragement to many young men and women.

So today I name Mr. Yepp one of our many "Everyday Angels."

23. THE MISSING CHEESE BUN FEEDS TWO SOULS

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

Any passenger on the subway who caught a glimpse of me may have already thought that I was strange as I was smiling while reading Dostoyevsky's Notes from Underground. In particular this one gentleman sitting diagonal from me was staring at me, at the cheese bun on the floor in front of me, and then back at me. "Next stop, St. Patrick Station" – my stop was quickly coming up. I had minutes to either take the cheese bun, which nobody else was claiming (as a passenger probably dropped it by mistake and got off at a previous stop), or leave it there and hope that it didn't go to waste.

In those few minutes I felt my pride getting in the way. "What would other people on this subway think of me if I took the cheese bun? Would they think that I wanted it for myself? Would they think that I was poor and hungry? Would they think that I'm stealing?"

The ignorant thing to do was say "yes" to any of those self-imposed questions, which would only justify my ego and not put myself in an uncomfortable position. But then I'd get off the subway, walk a block up the street to my office, get settled at my desk, and despite feeling comfortable, warm, and being well-fed myself for the whole day, there would be a weight of guilt and regret weighing on my consciousness.

My thoughts were pushing me towards pride and ignorance when the truth was evident: this missing cheese bun is a gift. For a homeless person who is hungry and cold in this morning's -25 degree weather. For me to overcome a little bit of ego and pass along so much kindness that has been selflessly given to me. For both the homeless person and me to connect. It was clear that the homeless person who would receive this cheese bun needed it just as much as I did. I remembered Lila Watson's words: "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time; but if you are here because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."

Just as the doors opened at my stop I grabbed the cheese bun and exited the subway. It felt awesome and I didn't care if people were looking or what they thought. Instead of going directly to my office as usual, I walked a few more blocks up to Queen's Park where I have seen a homeless man sitting outside many times on my walk from the gym to my office. I always wanted to give him something. There he was this morning, wrapped in a sleeping bag, wearing a baseball cap with the word "Jesus" stitched on, and his makeshift cardboard sign propped up behind two Tim Horton's cups for spare change.

I sat down to his level, smiled, and said good morning. He was receptive and just started talking. His name is Wayne and he's from the east coast of Canada. He looked clean but very cold as his cheeks and nose were red. When I asked him if he knows about Hope Shelter five minutes away on College Street, he cringed and began to describe the shelter situation to me – how unsanitary they are, how there are so many drug addicts there, and how the beds and services are horrible. Like many homeless people, he prefers being on the street. He has been sober and clean for three years, sits alone on the streets to stay away from the addicts, and goes to a job training agency every afternoon. He is really trying to make a better life for himself and get off the street. Wayne told me how hundreds of people walk by him every morning without even glancing at him, as if he didn't exist. He just wants to be acknowledged. He was thankful for the cheese bun that I gave him as he tucked it under his sleeping bag for later.

I didn't expect to receive anything from him but he told me something that I hadn't realized I needed to hear. With his genuine and kind tone, he reassured me that even if I had nothing to give him, just say hello.

That really eased a lot of the stress that I often have when it comes to giving to others. Sometimes I don't give anything because I don't have spare change or food, and I just walk past homeless people with a look of longing...longing to give them something.

This morning Wayne reminded me that even when I don't have money, even when I don't have food, even when I don't have anything, I can give myself. I can say hello in recognition that we exist together. So thank you, Wayne, for making me feel full, warm, and comfortable. The cheese bun pales in comparison to the fullness in my soul because of you. I hope you have a great day and I will definitely say hello next time! :)

24. 24 HOURS OF NON-STOP KINDNESS

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

I had titled the event "24 hours of kindness." The goal was simple: to stay out for a full twenty-four hours without sleep, performing as many acts of kindness as possible. Thanks to our local radio station, Coast 93.1, and the support of Tim Wright and Eva Matteson, (two of the most kindhearted DJs you'll ever meet) all of southern Maine now knew about The Kindness Center's crazy event. Now known as "The Kindness Guy," this was my first attempt at something this big. The local and even national media buzz was incredible. Since 9:00 that morning, two of my kindness cronies and I had been all over town delivering free baked goods to nursing homes and schools, buying coffee for strangers, giving out hugs, moving furniture, giving free city bus rides and completely flooding the town with a rainbow of flowers and balloons. Since it was April 15th, "tax day," we even spent time making grouchy taxpayers smile as they rushed in and out of the post office, a task we would repeat later that night with miraculous results.

It was now just before 5:00 pm and although there were still sixteen hours to go, my adrenaline showed no signs of waning. After giving out a few more flowers and offering up free hugs at the local grocery store, we were about to make our next stop, the local soup kitchen, before heading into the city for a night of non-stop kindness. Arriving at dinnertime, we walked through a sea of hungry souls waiting to get inside for their final meal of the day. After looking into the eyes of just a few of the children standing in line, my upbeat energy was quickly softened and it brought me down to earth. Up until this point, we had spent our time making people laugh and smile with our acts of kindness, but something about this stop was very different. Standing there and seeing the tattered clothing and leathery faces I instantly felt my heart breaking. I also couldn't help but feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude for the fact that I had a warm home and was blessed with all of the necessities in life. This also prompted the slight feeling of guilt.

Walking through the back door and into the kitchen, we found volunteers busy preparing salads, desserts and gallons of ice tea, as people were now filtering in and the dining area began to buzz. The main dish would be ready soon and we would have an opportunity to deliver the meals. Looking around the room and still waiting for the food trays to be filled, I became inspired with an idea to brighten up the room. Local florists had donated hundreds of carnations to our 24-hour mission and we still had dozens of them in the truck. This seemed like a wonderful opportunity to create smiles between my kindness crew and the women and children now sitting at the tables. It was absolute magic. With each carnation offered, eyes sparkled with excitement and gratitude. I joyfully bounced from table to table receiving everything from soft grins to laughter to an occasional big hug...to even tears.

After giving out most of my carnations, I began making my way to the back of the room, where I noticed a woman sitting alone and appearing quite worn down. But unlike many of the other people there, she continued making direct eye contact with me until we were finally face to face. Smiling, I extended my hand and offered her one of my remaining white carnations. She instantly looked confused and overwhelmed by my gesture. Slowly opening her hand, she accepted the flower, bowing her head as tears now began to well up in her eyes. Hoping that she was okay (or

that I had not upset her), I quietly asked if she was all right. Seeming somewhat embarrassed, she lifted her head and stared up at me with tears streaming down her cheeks. She said, "This is just so nice...and...I haven't received a flower from anyone in over ten years." A large lump was now forming in my throat as the moisture settling into my own eyes quickly impaired my vision. I knew I was about to lose it any moment and there was only one thing left to do. Dropping the remaining flowers from my hand, I bent down, wrapped my arms around her and hugged her as tightly as I could.

Shortly after dinner, my kindness crew and I quietly shuffled out the back door to prepare for our night in the city. The next fourteen hours would be filled with everything from feeding homeless people to delivering free coffee and bagels to police stations, mopping floors at a food pantry and even bringing peace to an angry crowd of last-minute taxpayers attempting to get their envelopes into the mailbox before midnight. It was an absolutely crazy day. And although both my body and my mind were completely shot by the time our 24th hour rolled around, I can honestly say that my spirit was ready to do it all over again. Next to my wedding day and the birth of my son, it was without a doubt the greatest day of my life.

It has been over a year now since the first "24 hours of kindness" event (we recently completed another) and I still don't think I have fully come down from the high. But after performing hundreds of kind acts, giving multiple interviews to the media and sharing this experience with thousands of people around the country, each time I think about it, my heart always goes back to the grace of a sweet little lady holding a single white carnation. What a wonderful reminder that it truly is the simple things in life that mean the most to us.

25. AN UNFORGETTABLE FISHING EXPERIENCE

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

Several years ago, I worked for a trucking outfit as a driver. It was my habit to go in on Saturday and spend a couple hours maintaining my truck. As I was under the truck greasing it, I noticed the owner's elderly father making his way over to his grandson's truck next to mine.

The old man was in his high eighties, had been an avid fisherman all his life, and had come out to ask the kid to take him fishing after work. The grandson told him all about how much he would love to do that, but, he just couldn't that day due to prior commitments. The old man accepted the answer and hobbled off to the house.

A few minutes later, the father came out and asked his son what the old man had wanted. After telling the story, the kid ended it with telling his dad, "I'm not taking that old man fishing! It's worse than taking a kid."

That just broke my heart.

I quit working immediately and headed for home. I loaded up a lawn chair, some tackle and a pole, and headed back to the yard. On the way I stopped at the sporting goods store and bought the biggest bobber I could find and some worms. When I got there, I knocked on the door and invited him fishing. Due to his age I was sure his eyesight wasn't what it had once been, hence, the big bobber. If he was like taking a kid fishing, I had determined to take him where I'd take a kid, in the cattails where the bluegill live!

When we got there I put him in the lawn chair at the edge of the water, baited and cast the line, and handed him the pole. It wasn't long and that big old bobber started to dance; he set the hook, reeled the fish in, and handed the pole to me. I unhooked the fish, put it on a stringer, re-baited and cast, and again handed it to him. This went on, bluegill after bluegill, for a bit over half an hour at which point he informed me he was tired and needed to go home.

I loaded up our gear and we headed out. On the way, we made a detour to my place where I filleted all his fish and put the meat in a ziplock. When I got him home I gave the fish to his daughter-in-law with instructions to make sure he got them for dinner and then left.

Two weeks later, the old man died. His family told me later that all he talked about during that time was his fishing trip.

While I get the immense satisfaction of knowing I took an old man on his last fishing trip, his family has to live with the knowledge that a stranger took their grandpa on his last fishing trip.

Whenever you get the chance, don't forget about taking grandpa fishing, metaphorically speaking. Someday, you may be in the same place and you'll want your family to care about you too.

26. FLOWERS THAT SHE COULDN'T SMELL

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

"Everyone says the flowers smell good but I don't smell anything. Nothing. Do you smell them?" she asks, in her heavily accented voice. After walking around a busy street looking to do a random act of kindness, I had stumbled into this flower shop. Even though my mind was busy devising possible scenarios, I had a gut feeling that something was going to present itself.

A little startled by the flower lady's question, I tell her that "the flowers smell ah-mazing and perhaps you should take a break once in a while so you can enjoy them too." Before I realize, I find myself in the midst of a conversation about her life -- she got laid off from United Airlines a few years back, took the unemployment money and traveled the world for a year. Then, she ran out of money and came back to work at the flower shop.

We talk about all sorts of things as I try to decide on the flowers. Unsure of which ones might be appropriate, I pick up and smell some Gerbera daisies. The leaves are starting to turn a little brown around the edges. That won't work. These must be perfect, they're a special offering for someone else. I place them back in the bucket of water and pick up a few other large stunning maroon and rusty orange ones. They definitely scream, "You're special." I'm amazed at how beautiful and perfect they are. If a tiny seed can turn into such an enormous affirmation of beauty, love, and hope, how much potential do we all have as humans?

They're a little expensive but I can easily skip lunch today. I take them over to the register and chat some more. The lively Chinese lady smoothly wraps them up in a sheet of clear plastic with a pink satin ribbon bow around it. I can't wait to pass these on. I'm all set to leave when I realize that she's not quite finished with our conversation yet. It was when we moved on to talking about her daughter -- who does a lot of volunteer work -- that I realized that this IS my "service" opportunity. This is my "act of kindness" for the day. I surrender to the moment and rest my flowers on the counter, and -- just listen.

She jokes about how her daughter helps at soup kitchens and she's been a volunteer for the zoo for two years. "But if I ask her to sweep the floor, she's too tired," she complains. I'm amazed when she mentions that her daughter is only sixteen. "She's wiser than most of us." I proclaim, "Your daughter will never be lonely or unhappy in her life because she's figured out how to -- give." I'm starting to get the feeling that she's secretly proud of her. She goes on, "I don't really know what my purpose in life is, I just do this work for a living." I quickly chime in, "I don't know what my purpose is either but there are some things that I know that are more 'right' than others. And one of those things for me is service. It doesn't have to be big things. In fact, I think they're usually small things. Like being kind to others around you, for example." And then suddenly, she

asks, "What do you do?" I tell her that I was also laid off from work too, and took the unemployment money -- and went abroad for a year (but it was more of an inner journey). And now I'm a volunteer with a non-profit and do other "random" stuff. She's amused. "Actually I can show you some of my random stuff," I tell her. I cheerfully take out the Smile card from my pocket and tell her about the pay-it-forward concept. "It's really about the small things like these flowers for example -- I plan on giving them to a random person who looks like they could use it. Perhaps an old couple sitting on a bench somewhere," I smile realizing I have a lot of work to do.

After fulfilling her request to leave some Smile cards on her counter and telling her to make sure that she gives one to her daughter, I bid her goodbye. I'm almost out the door when she calls me back and pulls out a bunch of fresh flowers that look like lilies. "Can you give these to someone nice also?" Wow! I can't believe she wants to be a part of this. As she wraps them beautifully into three separate bouquets, I am overjoyed. Lost for words, I tell her that this "act of kindness" is on her behalf. "It's under your karma," I joke. She refuses any credit and wouldn't hear of it.

I walk back onto the street armed with four beautiful bouquets, feeling ecstatic and grateful for her contribution. Fully confident that I'll "know" exactly who to give these to, I keep walking until I see a middle-aged couple sitting at the bus station. The big guy in the leather jacket is on the cell phone with his arm around his wife or maybe girlfriend, with spiky orange hair. They look like they just rode in on a motorbike from one of those 80's movies. Instantly, I know she's the first candidate. I walk up to her and hand her the gerberas (which is now my favorite flower in the world), "You look like you would appreciate these flowers," I smile. The guy immediately gets off the phone, "God Bless you!" The lady is all smiles. They seem like a good couple. And before they have time to register what's happening I take off, leaving the smile card in the bouquet.

Less than 100 feet away, I spot a small, old lady sitting quietly on the passenger-side of an RV/Trailer by the gas station. I'm still smiling from my last interaction. She smiles at me and I'm taken back a bit and look down. She has one of the most genuine smiles I have ever seen; it seems to instantly light up the entire street. When I reach the RV, I signal her to open the window. She eagerly opens it, "Can I give you some flowers?" I smile. As her small frail hands gently take the bouquet from mine, her smile widens even more and now I'm close enough to see the twinkle in her eyes. "Wow, thank you so much." "I hope you enjoy them."

Feeling like Santa Claus, I march onwards. The third person takes a while to find. I almost miss her, actually. I see this short grey-haired lady from the back, walking with her head half-way down; after passing her once, I decide that she is "it" and take a u-turn to walk back two blocks. "These are for you," I hold them out with both hands and a huge smile. "They're beauty-ful. Wow!" Her face lights up. I walk off quickly in my usual style. I hear a surprised "Thank You" in the back. "I hope you enjoy them," I yell back.

I can't believe I'm already down to the last one. Right when I'm thinking of leaving it on a windshield of a random car with a Smile card, I spot a young lady. She's probably in her early twenties, average-looking; from her backpack and clothing, she looks like a typical college kid lost in her thoughts. There's something about her that reminds me how hard it is sometimes be that age. Just as I pass her, I decide to hand over the lilies to her. Her face just blossoms. She turns from average looking to amazing. It feels -- just right.

Walking back, I feel so full, so full of love. Astonished that such small acts can bring so much joy to someone's life; grateful that all it takes is the right intentions and the whole universe beckons by your side; hopeful that someone at a random flower shop can open up her heart to give beautifully wrapped flowers, free of charge for three random people she'll -- never meet.

27. IN MEMORY OF OUR SON

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

After becoming a recent single mom, that had no family within 2,000 miles, I found myself and my children with nowhere to spend last Thanksgiving. So I decided to make the best of it.

My kids and I (they were 6 & 9) volunteered at the Salvation Army soup kitchen, handing out meals to the homeless (helped me be grateful that I have what I do). Then, I splurged and the three of us went out to a very nice dinner downtown (I was behind on bills, and did not have the money for extra expenses).

We sat down and enjoyed a wonderful meal ... they were impressed how nice it was (not our usual McDonalds). We had decided to eat dessert at home, but when the waiter came over he told me that another family in the dining room wanted to treat us to dessert, the kids were so excited and I was grateful. When we were done (and stuffed) I asked our waiter for the bill (I was guessing it to be around \$125), he came by handed me the bill holder and told me to read the card inside, and that our bill was taken care of.

It had a business card that said "Please except this random act of kindness in memory of our son _____". I looked at the waiter, who was tearing up..and I started to cry. He was asked not to tell who had paid for our meal and the room was full of seemingly unaware people. I got myself together and the kids and I left.

I think of that moment often! I was very alone and depressed that day, and knowing that someone wanted to help meant the world to me. I thought it was a wonderful thing to do to remember a loved one by during the holidays...and it is something that truly touched my heart.

If you are a part of that family, I thank you, and your son's name will forever be engraved in my mind.

28. POCKET MONEY IN TANZANIA

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

I was doing a year of voluntary service in a residential home for people with learning disabilities. It was set in an English village, deep in the countryside, quite different from my home in Sweden. One of my fellow volunteers, a girl from Tanzania, seemed a bit desperate, so I asked what the problem was. She told me she had a friend back home who was really struggling with her university studies. It was beginning to look like financial difficulties would make it impossible for her to complete her course.

So this friend of mine had done something incredible: she had sent all her pocket money for the month to Tanzania to support her friend! This meant that she didn't have much food to eat, no money to go anywhere outside the village, no money to buy any clothes, and so on.

We lived in our workplace so not being able to leave the village tended to make you go a little bit nuts after a while. Now her only chance to go anywhere was to take a bicycle, or ask for a ride. We got lunch at work during weekdays and food at other times when we worked, but everyone knew this wasn't enough.

I was so touched that she did this for her friend and I felt I had to do something. So, during my next trip to one of the nearby towns I walked into the fair trade shop to buy some food. I didn't have much money left myself but I thought I'd buy her an extra box of the muesli we both liked

and some rice. I started talking to the woman working in the shop (who was also a volunteer) and eventually told her about my friend.

The woman looked at me, amazed. "Does she eat pasta?" she asked. "Yes," I replied.

She immediately started loading a bag with pasta, cookies, more muesli, sweets and other things until the bag was full. "Give her this for me. It's my treat!" I couldn't believe it but cried with happiness.

As I left the shop and to go home with my unexpected bag of food I asked the woman her name. "Just Gloria," she said. "God bless both of you!"

Imagine my friend's face when I arranged the gifts on my kitchen table and fetched her from her room to see! I have never seen her so happy! She told me that only that morning she had been praying for God to help her get through the month. A few weeks later she found Gloria in the shop and thanked her in person.

These two extraordinary women really showed me what true kindness and compassion is, and the impression will stay with me for the rest of my life!

29. A BLAZER, RED SCARF, AND FIFTY BUCKS

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

I have this college friend, Eric. One thing used and still does always intrigue me about him is how he deals with the poor.

We have a lot of poor homeless people that come walking around our neighborhood day in and day out, either collecting stuff from our trash to recycle or physically coming to the door to ask for anything. Walking to and from class you pass by at least 4-5 of them daily. Most of the time, the constant rush against time makes me pass by them without noticing, but Eric would always take the second (even if he's in the middle of an important conversation!) to take out his wallet and give him/her a dollar.

This may not seem like a big deal, because most students at USC have a dollar to give away. Sure, Eric also isn't dead broke, but like all of us film school students, he doesn't have money to squander either. What's more is that he doesn't just give them the dollar and walk away -- he makes sure he says a good word or sometimes actually sits down and has a conversation with them. His sincerity is moving.

The reason I decided to sit down and write this, though, is because of what happened last night.

Last night, another one of these homeless individuals came up to the house next door. Four-five of us ignore him but Eric tells him to hold on a second. He goes up to his room, grabs a blazer, a beautiful red scarf his sister gave him for Christmas and fifty dollars. He runs outside, dresses the man in the blazer, the scarf and then hands the man the money!

I watched from inside the house, and I was brought back to my own life experiences where I understood the capacity for human compassion. As you might imagine, the homeless man was beyond grateful, and he simply said, "There must be a God."

Eric walks back in, and I'm totally dumbfounded. I asked him, "You just said you were broke. Don't you need that money?" He says, "I have to read something to you." I go upstairs to his room and he pulls out this book he's been reading -- Gandhi's *Experiments with Truth*. Then, he reads me this quote:

"Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to have control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and yourself melting away."

He shuts the book and says, "See it all makes sense."

I've been thinking about the experience and the quote all day today.

30. OF FORESTS AND MEN

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

To commemorate 2011 as the International Year of Forests, the United Nations appointed Yann Arthus-Bertrand to create a short video to raise consciousness about forests. Using stunning aerial photography and video footage, the producer (whose previous online movie was seen by 400 million people) has done it again. Follow this link to the video...

<http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=2387>.

31. SOUNDS OF KINDNESS

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

In honor of World Kindness Day on November 13, we offer this video of the impact kindness had on a grieving family. Jeanette Mare and her family honor the memory of their son's spirit by creating Ben's Bells - beautiful, hand-crafted ceramic wind chimes that are placed randomly and anonymously in public places around Tuscon, and beyond. The bells are a musical reminder of the power people have to change the world by being kind. Follow this link to the video...

<http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=2227>.

32. YOUNG LEADER IN RURAL INDIA

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

This amazing 30-year-old woman leaves her senior management position in the corporate world to become the youngest person to head a village in India. She has brought about tremendous change by promoting education, providing access to clean drinking water, and building toilets for the people of her desert village. Follow this link to the video...

<http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=2340>.

33. I GIVE THANKS

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

Let Kathryn Mostow's gentle acoustic music and Marianne Hale's photography help you contemplate all that you have to be grateful for in this world. The words, the music and the nature scenes inspire love, hope, gratitude and generosity. Sit back and enjoy. Follow this link to the video... <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=188>.

34. 10 SIGNS OF A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Do you think you are experiencing a spiritual awakening? Watch this 5-minute YouTube video for insight to this wonderful and transformation experience. Follow this link to the video...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=txTsbeuY5gM>.

35. THE SECRET OF SECRETS

An analysis of recent events and a staggering Revelation! See how the Sun's effect on Radioactive decay on Earth is related to the coming shift in Consciousness. Follow this link to the video... http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5_6R8YBlv4&NR=1&feature=fvwp.

36. LIFE IS LIKE COFFEE

Sometimes we all need to be reminded of what's truly important. And this video does exactly that. Follow this link to the video...

<http://www.flickspire.com/m/MBT/LifeIsLikeCoffee?Isid=8319931d9f49825be07b5c2dbac90fd4>.

37. SIMPLE GRATITUDE

This time-lapse photographer shares his gifts and a timeless message for humanity. Follow this link to the video... <http://www.wimp.com/simplegratitude/>.

38. HALLELUIAH CHORUS – YUPIQ ESKIMO VILLAGE

Done like you've never seen before. This video from the small Yupiq Eskimo Village of Quinhagak, Alaska, was a school computer project intended for the other Yupiq villages in the area. Much to the villagers' shock, over a half million people have viewed it. For your turn to view, Click: [HERE](#).

39. OCCUPY CHAPLAINCY

I spent an inspiring Day of Solidarity with the Ottawa (Canada) Occupiers yesterday; first helping to lead the singing at the Human Rights Monument on Elgin Street (those kids don't know the words to We Shall Overcome! What do they teach them at school these days? Us silverbacks, some from the Unitarian Church and Shout Sisters choir, fixed that. It was fun), before moving on to the American Embassy and Parliament Hill. There was a small attendance due to concurrent teach-in at the university, but a lot of spirit. Paul Dewar, Member of Parliament, was there from the NDP. I really missed Jack Layton and wondered what he would have said.

I was moved by the passion and articulateness of the speakers, the humour, compassion and inventiveness of the campers, their tenacity and optimism even here in Ottawa's cold weather and frigid political atmosphere. I heard a lot of stories over the day. Such great young people! Some stories, from current or former street kids, were both horrifying and inspiring. I am so impressed that, in the camp, they take such care of the down and out, addicted, and disabled homeless who show up at Occupy, noting that these street people were in fact there first. My sense is that the campers are slugging it out through all the mess and challenges of creating non-violent direct democracy through mindful process. They were unfailingly polite to me and shared what they had and welcomed what I offered. Lots of dialogue went on. They said they really appreciated the presence and contributions of us older ones.

Who knows what form Occupy will take, but I believe it is the sprouting seed of our evolutionary next stage. If you have not already done so, I urge you to visit and learn for yourself.

I found this website, which I found useful. Also, I am finding much insight on Alternet and Common Dreams, where Rebecca Solnit, Robert Reich, Naomi Klein, Tikkun, Amy Goodman + Juan Gonzales of Democracy Now! and many others are publishing articles.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Occupy-Toronto-Protest-Chaplains/292151800814707?sk=wall>

With love, in solidarity...

Vanessa (Ottawa, Canada)

40. MOTHER ANTONIA: THE PRISON ANGEL

Reprinted from www.circleofa.org.

By Greg Mackie

The goal of *A Course in Miracles* is to produce miracle workers, people who devote their lives to extending love and forgiveness to others in thought, word, and deed. This extension heals others and thereby makes our own healing complete. What does a life of miracle working look like? One way to answer this question is to look to real life examples of miracle workers in our midst. One amazing example is Mother Antonia, the "Prison Angel of Tijuana," who left a comfortable life in Beverly Hills to spend the last thirty years serving her "beloved hijos" (sons) in a squalid Mexican prison.

Mother Antonia began her life as Mary Clarke, daughter of a prosperous businessman. Though she was raised a child of privilege in Beverly Hills, she was drawn to help others from an early age. She participated in projects such as sending medical supplies to suffering people around the world, and aiding the United Farm Workers movement. She grew up and settled into a conventional life, marrying twice and raising seven children, yet continued her charity work as she ran her deceased father's business.

In 1965, a priest heard about Mary's charity work and brought her to a prison in Tijuana, Mexico called La Mesa, a notorious hellhole of filth, drugs, corruption, torture, and death that was known as the "Black Legend." Though she was appalled by the conditions there, she also felt a stirring in her soul as she met the inmates. She says, "I immediately felt this caring and a love for them. I felt their goodness." Over the next decade, she would travel to La Mesa several times a week to offer any help she could to the prisoners. In 1977, when her children had left the nest and she had divorced after twenty-five years of marriage, she felt a deeper calling within her: a calling to give up her life "completely." She did just that. At age fifty, she sold everything she owned, sewed a black dress that she thought looked "nunny," named herself Mother Antonia (a name inspired by a former spiritual mentor), and moved into La Mesa for good.

Mother Antonia originally lived in a "cell" located over a raw sewer drain; it smelled so bad that she had to wear a surgical mask to stave off the stench. Even today, at eighty years old, she lives in a 10' x 10' cell within the prison walls, with nothing more than a cot, a Bible, and a Spanish dictionary. In her years at La Mesa, she has worked tirelessly, for up to eighteen hours a day, to provide whatever those at the prison need. She provides food, medicine, and spiritual counseling. She pays to get nonviolent prisoners released, and helps them find jobs and apartments. She prays for murderers and visits the families of the victims to help them forgive. She has stepped into the middle of gunfire during riots and negotiated truces between the prisoners and riot police. She makes sure that prisoners who die but are unclaimed by any family members get a proper

burial, providing a wooden cross that says, "We Love You." And she doesn't limit her ministry to the prisoners and their families; she also helps the prison guards, who like the prisoners are often suffering from poverty, depression, and drug addiction.

Over the years, Mother Antonia's mission has grown as others heard of her work and felt called to serve as she has. In 2003, she founded a new religious community, the Eudist Servants of the Eleventh Hour, whose members are women like her: "mature women who love Jesus and want to follow Him by serving the poor and the needy." As more and more people have heard of her work through various articles and a book (*The Prison Angel: Mother Antonia's Journey from Beverly Hills to a Life of Service in a Mexican Jail*, by Mary Jordan and Kevin Sullivan), she is touching more hearts than ever. Her thirty years of devoted service to the most outcast of outcasts have led many to regard her as a living saint.

All of this may sound grim and difficult, and Mother Antonia does speak of her work as a kind of self-sacrifice. I'm exhausted just reading about her. Yet paradoxically, this life that looks like such a sacrifice is in fact a life of radiant joy; Mother Antonia's exuberance inspires everyone she encounters. Maura O'Connor, the author of the article linked to in this piece, says that "she is perhaps the most effusive and enthusiastic person you could ever meet." O'Connor adds that whenever she spoke with Mother Antonia while researching the article, "I found myself strangely lifted, as if I had been in touch with the Divine....I was in awe of her seemingly bottomless joy."

Just as Mother Antonia's "sacrifice" has paradoxically led to bottomless joy, so her thirty years serving in a prison have paradoxically led to freedom. She says, "Somehow prison was the place where I finally experienced the freedom to be myself, to really be myself. I think prison freed me." It freed her to become a person that a friend of hers summed up this way:

The first time you meet her, you think she's not real. She's nuts, she's not normal. But in twenty years I've never seen her change....There's an exuberance about her relationship with God....It is normal. It's what we're supposed to be and we all wish we could be.

Miracle working takes many forms. Most of us will probably not be called to give up everything and go live in a Mexican prison. Yet if *A Course in Miracles* is right, this is the *kind* of life we are all meant to lead. This is what a life of miracle working looks like. This is what we're supposed to be and all wish we could be. This is normal. How would our lives be transformed if we followed Mother Antonia's example and answered the deepest calling of our hearts, the calling to become miracle workers?

41. THE HIDDEN BEAUTY OF POLLINATION

We will let the majesty of this magnificent video speak for itself...
<http://www.youtube.com/v/xHkq1edcbk4?version=3>.

42. THRIVE – FULL LENGTH MOVIE

Embedded below is a link to the movie entitled "Thrive". Thrive explains the shift in consciousness that the entire world is in the midst of and it does it elegantly. The movie is over 2 hours long, so set the time aside to view it. Follow this link to the video...
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9eRooYZJL-E>.

43. PHILOSOPHICAL LESSONS IN OCCUPY? ONE YOGA TEACHER'S QUEST

Reprinted from Globe and Mail, November 28, 2011

"I make a point of not coming north of Bloor Street," explained the yoga teacher, psychotherapist and founder of Centre of Gravity, a Buddhist community in Toronto, when I met him uptown. "This is the first time in a long time," he continued, a tad forlornly, as if the experience was somewhat disconcerting.

To placate him, I find an alternative eatery – an organic, vegetarian joint – and over herbal tea, out pour his thoughts on why the Occupy movement shouldn't be underestimated and how it will reappear in unexpected places.

To a famously inchoate phenomenon of urban squatters that has flummoxed media onlookers, he has become a voice on YouTube and CBC Radio that attempts to cast a philosophical net of meaning around the disparate groups of people who gathered in city parks and captured headlines.

But that doesn't mean he provides easy or clear answers. Talking to Mr. Stone is an exercise in frustration. He is as obtuse in his responses as the Occupiers are in their demands.

Weirdly, though, that's what's interesting about him. The Occupy movement, if you go by his take, is not just about economic disparity. He makes you feel that to not understand what they represent is to be on the other side of a philosophical/spiritual divide. If this is a revolution, it's very Zen. Listening to him is like being in some wannabe 1960s love-in, where everyone is feeling something so big and spacey, they can't quite articulate it. Then again, if you feel that, you just might be too mainstream, too Establishment, too square, too much of a 99 per cent-er, suffering, as he says, from "a failure of the imagination."

"This is the kind of movement that when it loses its focal point – eviction from the park – it actually becomes more successful. So maybe we needed to lose the park in order to transcend the park," he says gently over his detoxifying agent.

In September, Mr. Stone, a 37-year-old single father of an 8-year-old boy, was in Sante Fe, N.M., teaching at a Zen Buddhist monastery, when Occupiers called to ask if someone could help them moderate a conversation with the Pueblo people. They had been trying to get the native Americans to join their protest.

"I got there and I cried," says Mr. Stone. (He speaks easily about his life and emotions.) "I saw about 50 people in a circle, trying to have a conversation across ethnic lines, across economic lines, across racial lines, and I had this feeling that everything I believe in was being embodied there." He helped them initiate a conversation with each other, and when Occupiers showed up in New York, he went there to observe what was going on. He has visited a total of five Occupy encampments across Canada and the United States.

His interest in understanding the marginalized – or those whom he says the culture discards – began as a young boy. Growing up in Forest Hill, a well-to-do neighbourhood of Toronto (well north of the Bloor Street divide, it should be noted) he became aware of what he calls "compartmentalization" in his socio-economic class. The eldest of three children, born to a father who is an architect and schoolteacher mother, he was drawn to an uncle who lived in a mental institution after being diagnosed as schizophrenic. "He didn't fit in our family, and he didn't really fit in our economy," he says.

After dropping out of University of British Columbia, where he was studying philosophy, he took up Buddhism, convinced he needed to find stillness within himself. He enrolled at the University

of Toronto, graduating with a degree in psychology. Later, he added a degree in psychoanalysis that allowed him to open his own psychotherapy practice. In 2004, he began Centre of Gravity, a not-for-profit facility, where people can come to practice yoga, meditate and have psychotherapy sessions.

"I have this hypothesis that the path to healing wounds and building community is about learning where there are parts of ourselves that we compartmentalize and parts of society that we treat like garbage ... Meditation brings into awareness all the stuff you haven't wanted to look at. And the Occupy movement is trying to bring into public awareness the parts of our environment, the parts of our community, that we haven't wanted to look at."

What was happening in all the Occupy camps was "real democracy" he explains. Some may have drawn homeless people and drug addicts, but "every day there were meetings about how to live together in the park ... What the Occupy movement achieved is not that they've developed a place as much as they have developed a space where the compartmentalized parts of our cities have been having a conversation with each other."

He cautions onlookers not to dismiss the Occupiers' significance. "We have this idea that if something isn't hierarchical and doesn't have a leader at the top, that it's structureless." In addition to strong online communication, there are ongoing meetings taking place every day, he says.

Still, he is unwilling to predict its direction. Sitting back in his banquette, he laughs gently at the mainstream culture's desire for sound-bite explanation.

"The movement will gel in ways we don't understand," he offers.

"If anyone told you this would happen two months ago and it would look like this – that there would be 50,000 people in Times Square last week – no one would believe you. One thing about this movement is that even at its core, we don't know where it's going."

HEART AND SOUL ADVERTISEMENTS:

Consistent with Spiritual Guidance's philosophy, mission and vision (refer to <http://www.servingyourjourney.com/about.html> for more details) Spiritual Guidance offers free advertising in this e-newsletter to those persons and organizations interested in promoting their spiritual-related products, services or events. If you do choose to advertise in this e-newsletter, Spiritual Guidance requests you submit your text ad (no graphics please) to rmeagher@istar.ca by the 25th of the month, for distribution in the following month's e-newsletter. If you would like to be informed of an analysis of the audience/demographic reached by this e-newsletter, please contact Spiritual Guidance (our contact information is at the very bottom of this e-newsletter).

44. ESTABLISHING A SACRED PRACTICE

...with James Schmeiser and Prajna (Teresa Bryant)

Sunday, January 15th, 2012, 7pm to Friday, January 20th, 2012, 2pm at Medaille Retreat House, London, Ontario, Canada.

Sacred Practice is the bedrock of a spiritual life, but what practice(s) and how to remain dedicated are questions for personal discovery. This retreat includes daily prayer and meditation, as well as teachings. Each participant will meet for spiritual direction at the beginning and end of the retreat

and create a personal sacred practice schedule. This retreat will draw inspiration from both the Buddhist and Christian traditions, and is primarily held in silence. Cost: \$495.00 includes food and accommodations. Register online: www.mosaicretreats.ca.

45. INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE INSTITUTE 7TH ANNUAL DIALOGUE & FRIENDSHIP DINNER

Intercultural Dialogue Institute (IDI) Toronto will hold its 7th Annual Dialogue & Friendship Dinner with the theme "Living as Neighbours in the Global Community of Toronto" on Thursday, January 12th, 2012 (6:30pm - 9:30pm) at The Fairmont Royal York, Imperial Room, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Please save the date and expect to receive an invitation in your mailbox soon.

Keynote Speakers:

Dr. Mamdouh Shoukri, President & Vice Chancellor of York University
Dr. Usha George, Dean of Community Services at Ryerson University

Closing Remarks:

MP Chungsen Leung, Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism

Hosting Committee

- Joe Daniel, MP for Don Valley East
- Judy Sgro, MP for York West
- Cheri DiNovo, MPP for Parkdale-High Park
- Joe Mihevic, City Councillor for St. Paul's West
- William Bill Blair, Chief of Toronto Police Service.
- Dr. Paul Gooch, President of Victoria University in the Univ. of Toronto
- Abdul Hai Patel, President of Ontario Multifaith Council
- Dr. Gary Polonsky, Chair of Canada Sci. & Tech. Museum Board of Trustees
- Rev. Damian MacPherson, Director, Ecumenical & Interfaith Affairs, Archdiocese of Toronto
- Dr. Karen Hamilton, Minister, United Church of Canada
- Armand La Barge, Retired Chief of Police, York Region

Intercultural Dialogue Institute Toronto
777 Supertest Rd., Unit2
Toronto, Ontario M3J 2M9 CANADA

46. UNIFY EARTH

The biggest live entertainment (Sacred) event that has ever happen on Earth has begun. It will be held on December 21, 2012, at Chichen Itza, Mexico, at the exact moment when the Earth, the Sun and the center of the galaxy are in perfect alignment, and it will be broadcast via TV, internet and mobile streaming. This cosmic alignment only happens once about every 26,000 years, and it is expected that two billion plus people will be watching this event as it unfolds.

Some of the groups that have aligned with **Unify Earth** at this moment are Cirque Du Soleil, Google, Live Earth and Live Aid, and they will feature Sting, Carlos Santana and many other luminaries. It is just beginning.

But most importantly, the Itza Mayan Council of Elders from the Yucatan has approved this event and will be intimately a part of the ceremonies, and the ceremonies that they perform at the moment of the alignment will be REAL, and will fulfill the Mayan Prophecy. It is the Mayan calendar, the most accurate calendar on Earth, that predicted the timing of this cosmic cycle, and it is the Mayan people who are being honored during this event.

Cirque Du Soleil will present the creative aspect of this event, and they will be giving simultaneous presentations all over the world, but focused on Chichen Itza, the Heart Center of the Mayan people. It is a story about humanity's journey throughout the ages that brings fantasy and reality together and takes the viewer on an epic musical media experience.

But deeper than the outer display, Unify Earth will begin March 21, 2012, to educate the world as to what the date of December 21, 2012, means from a Mayan Prophecy point of view: not the end of the world as many have believed, but the beginning of a new cycle of human consciousness expansion. This will be the most important moment of human experience since we were conceived, and a moment of great beauty. It is a time to celebrate!!! For what follows that event is inevitable, the birth of a new humanity.

Unify Earth's purpose is to get 2 billion plus people into their hearts simultaneously at the very moment of this cosmic alignment, which allows us to dream a New Dream for Humanity. It is our choice to continue on the path of darkness, or to turn abruptly and face the brilliant Light that is all around us. This will be the moment for us to take a stand for Life, and for you to be there in your beautiful Tiny Space of Your Heart creating a new world for all of us, our children and all Life on Earth.

Remember to breathe.

In Lak'ech

47. CHANNEL HIGHER SELF

A spiritual teacher with over 100 channeled videos, Lincoln has guided many with his messages of unconditional love. Born with the gift of a quiet mind, it was only natural that he would be available to Higher Self to bring clear messages through to those who seek his services. His sessions go to the heart of the matter and bring forth direct messages from your Higher Self. The Higher Self empowers you by guiding you to the deeper issues beneath the questions. Visit Channel Higher Self at <http://channelhigherself.com/>.

48. PERSPECTIVES ON CHARITY

IDI Toronto cordially invites you to attend its Interfaith Gathering with the theme:

"Perspectives on Charity"

SPEAKERS

DR. GORDON RIXON - DEAN, REGIS COLLEGE
ED ILKIN - RABBI, FIRST NARAYEVER CONGREGATION
WARIS MALIK - ISLAMIC FOUNDATION OF TORONTO
SHERMAN HESSELGRAVE - REVEREND, CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY

MC: JOHN HILL - SECRETARY, TORONTO AREA INTERFAITH COUNCIL

Thursday, December 8th, 2011, 6:30pm

Complimentary dinner will be served
Please RSVP by 5th of December, 2011
toronto@interculturaldialog.com

Turkish Cultural Centre

777 Supertest Road, 2nd Floor
Toronto, ON M3J 2M9

Click here to see the invitation card

<http://toronto.interculturaldialog.com/recent-upcoming-events/interfaith-gathering-perspectives-on-charity-dec-8th/>

49. THE NEXT QUANTUM STEP

The Times

Mother Earth and her inhabitants are going through some amazing changes. I believe these changes are taking us to something so much better. But getting there can be a bumpy ride. We either adapt to this higher vibrational state or we struggle. The symptoms you may be experiencing tend to vary according to our level of consciousness. Whatever you may be experiencing is an indicator of a need to return to balance. My purpose is simply to be of service to help you facilitate your return.

The Journey

Like each of you, over the last 7.5 years, I have been going through some major changes. (see first Testimonial www.quantumru.com) My experience indicates that as we have a desire, intention and willingness to change and raise our level of consciousness and heal our mind, we not only perceive the world differently, we respond differently, we adapt more easily and we heal. The interesting thing is that as we heal, others around us heal and this is how we bring peace to the world. We do it by becoming peaceful and recognizing that our very essence is loved, loving and lovable. However, this can be a challenge for some.

On July 1st 2008, Spirit inspired me to create a quantum long distance energetic balancing program called the Tune Me Up Program. This was a subscription program that reduced the cost to the subscriber to 1/13th what it would have been for in office visits. Although the stated purpose of this program was to enhance general well being via; physical balance, emotional and spiritual growth. The real purpose of the program was to see if the levels of consciousness of participants improved. Once again, amazing things happened that you can read about at the website mentioned above. It seems that, when you have a genuine desire/intention to be of service, you enter into a partnership with something so much greater than you ever thought possible.

In May of this year, there was another shift. Etheric musician, Jeremy Sills and I collaborated on 4 cds in which listeners are taught how to heal themselves. Both the writing of the script and the recording of these guided meditations, occurred during a very inspired state. Recently, it occurred to me to test the level of consciousness of each cd. Measurement is according to Dr. David Hawkins logarithmic Scale (0-1000) or Map of Human Consciousness as first discussed in his book, Power versus Force. This is what I found. The first cd in the series; **I Choose Love**, has an LOC of 625. This is significant because at LOC 540 (Unconditional Love) dis-ease drops away. Could this be why many audience members report a healing of some kind during its performance? But each cd builds upon the next. The next cd entitled; **Forgiveness** – teaches a different approach to forgiveness and has an LOC of 769. Forgiveness is the key to recognizing our own enlightenment. It is the key that unblocks the blockages to love. **Spiritual Evolution** takes the listener further and has an LOC of

775. The 4th cd in the series entitled **Healing**, has an LOC of 969! Do you think these cds might make great Christmas gifts?

A Shift to All-Inclusiveness

Today, there is a new shift taking place in my life of service. Effective November 15, 2011; **all in office sessions will not be by fee but by donation only**, according to what you can afford! No one will be turned away. For me, this is a quantum leap from mind to the spiritual heart! As results are achieved, gratitude can be expressed via donation. Gratitude is a form of giving that heals both the Giver and the Re-Giver. It is considered the highest form of praise in which both parties are blessed.

Please forward this message to any one you feel might benefit.

Namaste

Doug Henderson Phd, O.M., ICQBT
drdoug88@rogers.com
www.quantumru.com
613-233-3888

50. FREE EMF TESTING AND PRESENTATION

Please see the attached poster for details.



Catch the Wave -
EMF testing - Jan. 8th

51. HENDERSON AND SILLS PRESENT THE SELF HEALING SERIES

selfhealingseries.wordpress.com

Henderson & Sills
present the: Shelf Healing Series
A series of guided singing bowl meditations designed to increase
your vibrational state, Level of Consciousness & build Spiritual muscle

Single CDs \$35.00
The Collection of 4 CDs \$98.00

Contact: Doug Henderson: 613.233.3888 Jeremy Sills: 613.627.5475

The Spirit of Christmas
Love is Christmas. Forgiveness is Christmas.
Spiritual Evolution is Christmas. Healing is Christmas.
Give the Spirit of Christmas!

I Choose Love
Henderson & Sills
Self Healing Series Building Spiritual Muscle 1

Forgiveness
Henderson & Sills
Self Healing Series Building Spiritual Muscle 2

Spiritual Evolution
Henderson & Sills
Self Healing Series Building Spiritual Muscle 3

Healing
Henderson & Sills
Self Healing Series Building Spiritual Muscle 4

SHS-01 - LOC 625 SHS-02 - LOC 769 SHS-03 - LOC 775 SHS-04 - LOC 969



SHS-Christmas_low_r
es.jpg

In love, gratitude, compassion and forgiveness...

Rev. Robert Meagher

Spiritual Guidance

Serving your personal journey toward enlightenment...

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