

Spiritual Guidance

Serving your personal journey toward enlightenment...

March 2012 e-Newsletter

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!

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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 newsletter@servingyourjourney.com.

SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE OFFERINGS:

1. PERSONAL STORY OF SPIRITUAL LESSONS

Responding vs. Reacting

The sound of shattering glass; it is one of the most startling sounds there is. It also happens to be a very common sound we react to.

As I have shared in previous passages, my partner has Parkinson's disease. As the disease progresses, my partner's ability to grasp and hold on to items diminishes. Recently, my partner and I have gone through the unsettling, yet rejuvenating, experience of moving to a new home.

As you know, the process of moving involves packing up the contents of your home. On more than one occasion, as I was occupied packing up items in one room, the sound of broken glass reverberated throughout the house as my beloved partner dropped a plate, a glass, or some other fragile object on the floor in another room. The first time I heard the sound of glass shattering, I reacted by running to the room to make sure my partner was okay. I thought I was doing the right thing by reacting this way; I thought I was being caring and helpful.

During the ensuing days of our packing, the sound of broken glass echoed throughout our home more than once (stated with a gentle and compassionate smile). Each subsequent time I heard the sound of breaking glass, I became less likely to run to the room where the object had fallen to the floor and broken. From a light-hearted perspective, I quickly realized to listen for the sound of my partner cursing at his clumsiness. As long as I heard his cries of woe for another shattered family heirloom, I knew he was okay. After hearing his cursing finish, I would simply call out... "let me know if you need me to clean up."

As serendipity and spirit would have it, within a week of the last broken dish being swept into the garbage, I came across an article that spoke about the paradigms of helping versus being of service. The author suggested that our goal should not be one of helping people but being of service to them. The author went on to explain that the paradigm of helping presupposes inequality; that having an attitude of helping someone assumes the person is helpless and/or fractured. However, when we come from a space of service, we come to the person on a level playing field; we establish an atmosphere of equality in serving them. We enable the people to remain in a space of independence, pride and self-sufficiency.

The concepts in the article on helping versus service were timely indeed. I realized that the first time I heard glass breaking, I reacted and immediately went into "I need to help" mode. While this may have been the customary socially-accepted convention, the act of reacting actually presupposed inequality. My reacting assumed my partner was helpless and/or fractured. After several more episodes of shattering glass, I came to realize that by not reacting to the sound of broken glass and waiting to hear my partner was actually okay, and then calling out "let me know if you need me to clean up", was an act of responding to my partner. In responding to my partner, I was being of service.

I am not suggesting to stop being helpful to your fellow brothers and sisters. But I am suggesting you explore what possibilities there are to be of service. The difference between helping and serving, or reacting and responding, may be subtle from an intellectual perspective. But there are significant differences from a heart perspective.

Be gentle and kind in your service to each other.

In love, gratitude, compassion and forgiveness...

Rev. Robert Meagher

2. CONTEMPLATIVE THOUGHTS*

The most influential 'presence' comes from someone who is completely undistracted by anything external or internal. They have an inner freedom from all mental distraction or pre-occupation and an undisturbable easiness and a stillness of being that allows the emanation of the clearest radiant energy from their consciousness. They never 'react heatedly' and are always able to generate a 'cool response'. It appears that such a state of consciousness has the power to touch and influence others well beyond the immediate vicinity and at the most subtle levels. It is something we can all cultivate and experiment with, even in the midst of our daily distractions!

How people treat you is their karma; how you react is yours. No matter what comes at me, I will always bear the consequences of my response to it. If I respond in a negative way - anger, frustration, pain - then I am responsible for my reaction and its consequences. Why would I change my noble personality just because someone has treated me badly? Does this mean I have given up myself for their behavior? Today let me take responsibility to be myself in all situations.

Dignity means that I truly honor and care for my life and the way it impacts the world around me. It means that I treat each moment as a precious chance to create pure and noble thoughts so that my own being as well as the entire world is nourished by my presence. Today let me honor myself and my world.

Most of us are affected by the restless energy of others. It ignites a discontent in me that spreads like a contagion. I can stop the contagion by observing and catching myself being restless and by focusing inwards in the silence and the peace to find comfort. Today let me spread a wave of comfort in the atmosphere.

Forgiveness is to give myself permission to let go of old hurts and to give up expectations that the other person will change. Other people will only change according to their own effort. Subtle ego does not allow me to forgive, convincing me I must get others to change. Today let me free people from my expectation that they should change.

In the light of my own dignity, others have the courage to be themselves. Dignity silently accepts each person and guards their self-respect. Today let me use dignity to give space for others to safely grow.

When the mind is tired, every single action requires great effort. To refresh the mind I must take it up out of the details of daily living to experience a break, a slight distance and perspective from the actions and thoughts I have been so involved in. I can sit quietly and allow my mind to rise above everything, looking down at my world with detachment. Today let me refresh my mind by giving it a break.

Sitting quietly, using my intellect to remind me that I am a soul, and experiencing the beauty of the state in which the soul is aware of itself as truly distinct from the body, is the essence of meditation. Today let me make time to practice this awareness.

Action and reaction make the world go around. Each day I perform many actions. Each of these actions is a vehicle for me to share energy with those around me. When I fill each action with care, kindness and attention I receive the return of a graceful response from others. Today let me fill each action with high quality energy.

When I flow with life I move easily into situations that support my growth. Like water I flow around obstacles untouched and undaunted. When I resist life's challenges I lose the opportunities hidden within them. Today let me flow with life.

Survival of the soul is based on love, peace, happiness and power. Just as the body will die if it lacks oxygen, water or food in the same way the soul, a divine spark of spiritual light, will die without these qualities. Today let me feed the soul by ensuring that I experience the inner qualities of love, peace and happiness.

Develop a mental attitude that is able to cope with global problems on a personal level. Every global problem was created by a thought that grew over time in the minds of individuals. I can identify the thoughts that serve as seed of global problems and transform these thoughts in myself. When I am no longer a carrier of these thoughts, I begin to affect valuable change in the world. Today let me change my thoughts to change the world.

Become an embodiment of what you know. To be spiritual is to apply the awareness of the self as a spiritual being in every thought, word and action throughout the day. This practical application of spiritual knowledge is known as embodiment; bringing into practice the spiritual understanding of the soul. When I embody what I know, I experience myself as integrated and coherent. Today let me put into practice the spiritual knowledge I have acquired.

If humankind cannot find peace inside, can there be peace in this world? At the heart of the human being is a deep pulse of peace. It continues to beat no matter how peace-less the outer world becomes. When I reconnect with this pulse I remember my original nature. Today let me bring peace to a peace-less world.

True friendship is to light someone's inner light. There are many ties that bind friends together. Some of them are pure love and some are bondages of familiarity, dependency etc. True spiritual friendship is to celebrate someone's light and to offer more light that they may shine as brightly as possible. Today let me celebrate the spiritual friendships in my life.

Self-respect is the experience of stability, equanimity and self-regard. This is unshakeable by circumstances. However, negative energy creates a noise that destabilizes a soul from its seat of self-respect. To keep my distance from negative energy, internally or externally generated, is to maintain my seat of self-respect. Today let me maintain self-respect.

Good wishes and untainted intentions for others act like sunlight, filtering into the dark corners of their mind and lightening their burden. The atmosphere can easily become heavy as people share negative stories or hurts. When I carry an attitude of good intentions with me, it spreads in the atmosphere and creates harmony and light. Today let me create an atmosphere of lightness through my attitude.

A teacher may be technically efficient, but a true teacher is one who reaches hearts. The behaviour of those who touch hearts is full of love, respect, creativity and inclusion. To be around someone like this is to feel my heart opening to allow new learning in. Only when newness is invited in will I change, only then will there be real learning.

Determination brings the strength to continue, the steadiness to succeed, and the wisdom to slip past difficulties undisturbed. I find determination in the quiet depths of the soul. Here is a reservoir of power available at all times. Today let me bring determination to everything I do.

To be content is to be beyond the shadow of desire. When I am free from desire I am truly free. Today let me examine my desires and realize that the love, happiness and peace I desire from the external world are already inside of me.

Create light to dispel darkness. Symbolically our weaknesses are just the dark shadows that come from the lack of inner light. I will see my weaknesses when I forget my strengths, like turning away from the light to look at the shadows. Today let me light a fire of constant awareness shining a light on my strengths and original unique qualities.

What I think I am, will affect my thoughts, my attitudes, my actions and my vision. When I think of myself as a powerfully contented spiritual being I begin to feel contentment deep within me. A simple shift in identity begins to shift my experience of myself and of my world. Today let me experiment with a new identity and observe the impact it has on my experience.

Things happen suddenly in the world. Without warning there is a major natural disaster, an economic collapse, a health pandemic. A consistent spiritual practice can prepare me to be stable enough to be ready to respond with peace and calm in all these situations, without panic or fear. Suddenly can also mean that opportunities arise in an instant. Am I ready to recognize an opportunity when it emerges and am I ready to act on it? Today let me be ever-ready for anything.

With ego, you lash out when someone insults, disagrees or criticizes you. Without ego, you are able to accept your flaws without compromising your self-worth. When I honor myself and know who I am I can be free from the sensitivities and defensiveness that is ego's world. Today let me respond with self-respect not ego.

Inner cleanliness creates royalty. When my thoughts are of high quality and powerful I rise above mundane, ordinary actions and bring royalty to all that I do. When my thoughts are wasteful they become weak leading to negativity. Taking

the time throughout the day to check on my mind and clean out the waste and negative thoughts gives me a chance to regain my own dignified approach to life. Today let me check and clean my mind.

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

3. POEM

When I see the light

When I see the light, I feel you in my heart.
On golden-clad wings, your kindness soars through the dark.
The meaning of your life, bubbling through our sorrow,
Showing us which sparkling qualities of yours to follow.

May we realize that for life,
Death need be in sight.
May we celebrate you
With love, pure and bright.
May we feel your guidance,
As we too for others care.
May we keep in our hearts
The memories of you most fair.
May we know we need not look for you,
For you are always here,
The tinkling of your laugh, always near,
Your constant smile, always clear.

When we look at your life, we celebrate much.
For each one of our hearts, you were able to touch.

Xanthe Harvey

4. QUOTE or QUESTION

“Lasting change happens when people see for themselves that a different way of life is more fulfilling than their present one.” (Eknath Easwaran)

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).

5. RICHARD HARVEY – SPIRITUAL INNER WORK PRACTICE

These are my suggestions for a spiritual inner work practice.

First, set apart a space, a room or at least a part of a room for your inner work. As you enter it, you should feel that this is the place where you engage with yourself deeply. Do not do anything else here: no other activities at all and in time it will become a sacred area that reflects honor and a sense of belonging into your inner world.

Second, in this sacred work space you have created gather the materials you need for inner work. Paper, notebooks, a drawing pad, pencils and pens, wax coloring crayons, musical instruments, sacred objects and meditation aids such as a cushion, bell, incense, an altar, a sound system if you like to listen to inspirational music, meditation audio or inspired talks. The space should be furnished comfortably, free from interruptions and roomy enough to allow sitting, standing, moving and dancing.

Third, you need a variety of different methods. Among them, active imagination (dialoging between different inner parts of you), drawing, writing, keeping a notebook for recording insights, making associations, noting dreams and synchronous events, and as an aid to memory, jotting down life statements (unconscious life guidance derived from early life experience) and awareness of your emotional-behavioral patterns through body work and breathing. Some formal meditation practice is desirable, as is a sense of discipline. Notebook keeping is particularly good for those times of dejection and despair when faith in ourselves wanes and we begin to discredit inner work which is often unquantifiable. Taking a look at your notebook at this time will reinforce your will and, by reminding you of all the work you have done, assuage the doubter in you.

Fourth, fix a daily time for your inner exploration. This is important because it gives your ego something to kick against, which in turn gives you material to work on, plus it ensures that you are consistent and taking your inner work seriously. There is no substitute for a dedicated daily practice, the rewards of inner work are so precious and the transformation they augur for your life so wonderful that a few minutes to an hour a day is time well spent.

Fifth, at times working with others is crucial. You may choose to work with a friend or a group. We all have blind spots that are easily brought to light through interaction with others. A group of like-minded souls challenges, supports and strengthens you in your practice. Be sure that this is what your friend or group provides; it should not primarily be a forum for intellectual discussion, for "acting out" emotions (as distinct from releasing and integrating emotions) and it is not a negative environment for argument or reinforcing ego positions. You may choose a leaderless group or take turns in taking the leader position. You can ask outside facilitators to visit your group as guest leaders. There are many books of exercises, games and group processes. In my book, *The Flight of Consciousness*, there is an extensive exercise section which would keep you going by yourself, with a friend or in a group for several months.

Sixth, at some point you will need help and direction from a competent, skilled and experienced guide, therapist or spiritual teacher (the title is less important than the healing quality of the relationship). Often such a person simply appears when you're least expecting it and, if you can, accept it and remember that life really is helping you to grow psychologically and spiritually. The spiritual guide helps you to cross thresholds you cannot possibly cross on your own and provides a transforming relationship which bridges your inner and outer realities.

Finally, no precedent has been set for how your inner work will unfold and therefore you are your own best teacher and expert on yourself. By all means look to wise elders and gifted teachers for encouragement, guidance and advice, but remember that ultimately you are your own guide, you know yourself better than anybody else and your inner journey is your own. So... do it your way!

Bring to your inner work practice an attitude of respect, honor and reverence. You are a sacred life form, a shard of the divine. No one like you has ever been or ever will be again; you are both appearance and profound depth. Your inner work practice is devoted to eroding the ego until all that is left is the divine radiating, shining and splendid, through all arising forms. Your life journey is a sacred task, a unique opportunity and a blessing. So, when you begin a period of inner spiritual work, start with a ritual which reflects the sanctity of this. Chanting, ritualized movement, conscious breathing, lighting a candle or incense, bowing are all appropriate ritualistic activities through which you can express your recognition and gratitude at having the sacred opportunity of a human life in which to grow and awaken. Let your heart lead your soul, let your soul lead your spirit and trust that all will be revealed to you.

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.

6. DOUG HENDERSON, Ph.D – WE USE THEM UNTIL WE NO LONGER NEED THEM – PART 5 OF 10

This is part 5 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.

We know that the body is a mobile multi-media centre that is constantly taking in information or vibration from the eyes, ears, nose, skin etc but also, subtle energy is converted by the chakras to a form that this denser vibrational field we call a body, can utilize. But are you aware that this body is also broadcasting subtle energy out to the universe? The ears, heart

and brain and thymus are specifically doing this. The heart has an electromagnetic field that some say is 50 times greater than the brain and others are now saying is 5,000 times greater than the brain. But this last figure depends upon what state we are in when we do the broadcasting.

We know that while standing or seated with your eyes closed in meditation the body will often sway either back and forth or front to back much like a pendulum. The pendulum with its swing from extreme position to extreme position seems to represent the dualistic nature of our life experience. As Humans we seem to have to experience extreme situations before we find moderation or relief from stress. We also know, that we project onto the world what we deny most about our self. These are the lower attractors at work employed by an egoic response designed to make the world appear frightening. So, that is one extreme. Love or a state of Peace would be another extreme.

According to The Law of Attraction, we tend to attract to us others and circumstance of a similar vibrational state. So, what ever pre-dominant emotional state we hold in mind, we tend to draw or attract to us electro-magnetically. This is what is meant by like attracts like.

The good news is, If we don't like our present circumstance we can change it. We change it by changing our Thoughts and intention. Being unaware of our Thoughts is possibly one of the greatest tragedies of mankind. However, there may have been a time when we were very aware of our thoughts and power and some cataclysmic event relating to them may have scared us from realizing our full potential. As a coping mechanism, we may have suppressed our thoughts to the point of unimportance. We can't see our thoughts, so we have convinced our self that they have no power. Despite the suppression of our thoughts many of us feel that we seem to have brought our world to the edge once again.

To paraphrase Hawkins, "What we hold in mind we manifest."

So we create from our common thought. What we hold in mind we create and according to the Heart Math Institute we spend 96.6% of our time mis-creating and only a maximum of 3.4% creating and yet we have this absurd idea that we are civilized. We may be domesticated but we certainly are not civilized nor are we awakened! From a biblical point of view it is said that Adam and Eve who are a metaphor for mankind, went to sleep but at no time does it say that they awakened.

Part of the challenge we have is our Innocence. Particularly, from age 0-7, we are just like sponges that accept whatever mis-information any authoritarian figure or loved one might have declared. For Example: If your Dad said, My Dad and his dad and his dad before him all had cancer or heart disease or asthma or allergies or died at 75 - then this child – this little pitcher with big ears; - is going to interpret that the same is true for him or her.- make it a belief and manifest exactly what they believe in, and we create these beliefs in 1/10,000th of a second. The speed of Thought is faster than the speed of Light. However, there may be times when it does not seem that obvious. lol

This is how we perpetuate the nonsense and the superstition and we have little awareness of it because we are so self-absorbed in our littleness.

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.

7. GEOFF STRAW – TAKE THE HAND OF SPIRIT

Take the hand of Spirit as your dance partner and let Spirit lead you.

"Today I take the hand of Spirit and am led." And we gladly lead you and point you in the right direction to meet your needs. Ask and you shall receive. How will you know when you have made the link to Spirit? You will know because you feel it. It is an abiding Peace which seems to fill you up from the inside. It is indwelling, and you are not as affected by the outer circumstances in your physical world.

Your task is to reach Spirit - us - more completely, more directly. We are always there, but you are not yet fully aware of this. There is a need to become aware of what already exists - simply to know it more fully - to be acutely aware. Awareness is the key. You are teaching others (and yourself!) how to be more aware. This is the key. The link to us grows stronger each time you meditate and go within and write.

"Today, I seek to be aware of Spirit." With renewed confidence and interest you move forward now and understand an enthusiasm that slowly begins to come into your energy and being. You understand that there is nowhere else to be but here, in this place right now. There is no longing for something else, something better. You are grounded in "now". This is where Spirit connects with you, for you are Spirit, formless and beautiful. You come to know this more fully in the now. You remember this Truth - once forgotten, now realized again. Human life is a process of endless forgetting of the Truth; and eventually remembering it. You are beginning to remember! This is a cause of great joy and celebration!! This is a homecoming of sorts, to remember and know your true identity.

"Today, I remember the Truth of who I am." This simple statement comes with a sense of peacefulness, because nothing can harm you when you remember and know the Truth.

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.

8. KATHRYN KIMMINS – HOW TO HAVE A STRESS-FREE WINTER

"Remember laughing? Laughter enhances the blood flow to the body's extremities and improves cardiovascular function. Laughter releases endorphins and other natural mood elevating and pain-killing chemicals, improves the transfer of oxygen and nutrients to internal organs. Laughter boosts the immune system and helps the body fight off disease, cancer cells as well as viral, bacterial and other infections. Being happy is the best cure of all diseases!"

—Hunter Doherty "[Patch](#)" Adams M.D.

(born May 28, 1945 in Washington, D.C.) is an American physician, social activist, citizen diplomat and author. Patch Adams, MD, is known for dressing up as a clown and entertaining, seriously ill patients. He founded the "Gesundheit! Institute in Arlington, Va". as a free clinic incorporating humour therapy with traditional health care.

LAUGH LINES

Bring more laughter into your life with these suggestions:

1. Believe there's an upside to everything — look for the funny things all around you. People who laugh have a more positive outlook on the world and are generally in a better mood.
2. Fake the laughter until you feel like laughing.
3. Engage with others in activities that generate laughter – go to funny movies, tell each other harmless jokes, share funny stories. Remember to be kind, though. Laughing at someone's expense is not mirthful laughter, just cruel.
4. Make eye contact with others – start smiling and then create a gentle laugh. Turn up the volume of your laughter until you are laughing out loud. Everyone around you will join in. Eye contact is important to connect you to other people.
5. If you just can't get started smiling, hold a pencil between your lips, with the tip of the pencil pointing to your left. This forces your mouth into a smile. If you sit like that for a few minutes and don't feel like laughing, go look at yourself in the mirror. If you still don't feel like laughing just fake it!
6. Keep happy company. If there are people in your life who bring you down, avoid them if at all possible. Dr. Gene Landrum, genelandrum.com talks about studies that put optimists and pessimists together. After a short period of time, the optimists were less optimistic and the pessimists more positive in their outlook. The lesson is that if you want to feel better, get with happy people; if you stick with morose, depressed people, you are going to feel worse.
7. Be brave. Take the risk to be silly from time to time. Wear a crazy hat or shirt, and don't worry about what other people think. If you're a habitual laugher, you'll probably outlive them!

ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE AND TEACHER: An enthusiastic and infectious 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/>.

9. REGIENA HERINGA – NOTES FROM THE LIGHT – MARCH 2012

Which is the way the world shall go?

Which is the way you will sculpt and understand this time of transitioning?

It may seem paradoxical to you, dear peoples of this revolving globe, but you *are* your destiny. You are presently shaping the elegant life path from thoughts and emotions that emanate so sweetly from Spirit. *You are creating the path and yet you are already Home.*

Let us illustrate this through the following example.

Imagine that you are sitting in the middle of a store which is filled with wondrous treasures that both uplift your spirit and open your heart. This store requests no financial payment for any object you may want to possess. Rather, it asks that you simply increase the intensity of your loving posture and radiate it throughout the room and into the world beyond. You perceive that each object in this store is magnificent and you wish to own them all. Yet, in this upliftment of spirit, it also occurs to you that you are already a part of this collection of refined creations, understanding that all in this room wishes to have you as part of *its* creation.

It is through your heightened awareness that you establish adherence to a greater family.

Look with kindness within yourselves and understand that such introspection urges you to accept that you are already Home, surrounded by the refined expression of your spiritual nature. Each moment you cultivate good intention, each moment you send out your love and appreciation for all life, each moment you express your clear gratitude to the Creator, you are speaking from Home.

As this realization is anchored within you, a greater personal and spiritual responsibility emerges for your family, community and planet.

Hence, we ask you to reflect upon the following: move away from the continual questioning of who you are and why you are here at this momentous time upon your earth and instead contemplate, accept, live and act from Home. From here—the very core of your divine goodness—questions dissipate and your path is revealed.

All individuals in your emerging new world are being asked to go Home and, as treasured beings, they are invited to live from this Home to help the world

Gentle inhabitants of this fine planet, you are transforming from self-questioning beings to crystal-clear sacred beings vibrating in a world which is righting itself within the revered Whole.

If you so wish it, that is the way the world shall go.

ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE AND TEACHER: Regiena Heringa is a spiritual teacher, counselor and messenger and co-founder of the Institute for Spiritual Unfoldment and Interworld Studies (ISUIS). Through her writings, meditations groups, teaching, music and painting, and in concert with those beings of higher vibrational dimensions, Regiena facilitates the expansion of mind and heart in all who wish to participate in the creation of the sacred new world. For more information, kindly visit ISUIS at www.nextagemission.com or write Regiena at heringa@bell.net.

10. BORIS GLIKMAN – THE (VIRTUALLY) REAL LIFE

I recall that day well. My friends and I were checking out an abandoned, run-down mansion on the outskirts of town and that's when we noticed that strange, inexplicable things were beginning to happen...

Every time we open a door to some room, the room and the things in it have changed. The more adventurous amongst us explore the building more thoroughly, only to discover that it has an impossibly paradoxical structure. One girl gets spooked out and in her hurry to get out of the house jumps through the ground floor window. A moment later we hear a shriek of horror and bewilderment coming from the top floor - her senses refuse to accept that she ended up there and not on the overgrown lawn in the front yard.

Then someone screams out: "Don't you see what is happening! None of this is real! This is all Virtual Reality! Someone is running this game and we are all its involuntary, unwitting participants. So we can do anything, break all of society's taboos, take any risks, shoot one another, because it is all a fake game."

At once I devise a way of putting this remarkable claim to the test. I speed off in my car and start driving along train tracks that ascend to a great height before they end abruptly in mid-air. My car goes for a graceful flight through the air, spinning and turning, soaring up on the warm air currents, then gradually descending, rising again higher and higher, then stopping and hovering in midair.

Finally, I get tired of flying and crash land on top of a high-rise building. I wonder if I have sustained any injuries, I think to myself. If this really is a virtual world then I should be just fine!

It then occurs to me that the fact that my life has been virtual reality all along would certainly explain a lot of things. I always thought that this world and my life in it never made any sense – things were just too absurd and incoherent. Horrible, unthinkable terrifying events like massacres, famine, persecutions, injustices that would never happen in the real world kept occurring, time after time after time.

Now I could see why certain things kept getting lost and disappearing in my life, why my life never worked out right, why something always got in its way and ruined its forward progress.

Now I could comprehend why I could never fit in anywhere and always felt at odds with the whole world, for this wasn't an authentic environment, but an artifice of someone else's mind, a degenerate, corrupt copy of the real reality.

No, this wasn't the universe that the Absolute Being created, according to His flawlessly sublime and ideal specifications, but rather a creation of some devious, impious, immoral human being. And so it contained within its make-up all the faults, deficiencies and imperfections that every human construction possesses, as well as being coloured by the particularly nasty character of the cad running this Virtual Reality game.

It was also obvious that this contemptible creature held, for some reason or another, an intensely bitter grudge against me in particular. He obviously meted out the worst of his cruel tricks on me, judging by how my life has been just one senseless absurdity after another.

What kind of person am I really like outside of this game, I wonder to myself. What is my life really like in the real world? Who is the wise guy that created this diabolically evil game? What's he got against me? Wait till I find my way out of this virtual world and get my hands on him! I'll make him pay for all that he has done to my life!

And just then, an even more devastating thought strikes me: What if I am the evil genius who created and is operating this game? What if it is I who inflicted all this misery, pain, suffering onto myself and the whole world? But why would I do that? Why would I torment myself so?

ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE AND TEACHER: Boris Glikman is a writer, poet and philosopher from Melbourne, Australia. He says: "Writing for me is a spiritual activity of the highest degree. Writing gives me the conduit to a world that is unreachable by any other means, a world that is populated by Eternal Truths, Ineffable Questions and Infinite Beauty. It is my hope that these stories of mine will allow the reader to also catch a glimpse of this universe." Boris welcomes your feedback on his contributions and can be contacted by email at bozlich@yahoo.com.au.

11. DAVID PAUL – MUSIC THAT PROMOTES PHYSICAL HEALTH

by David Paul (Mr. Paul is the only musician performing in North America that has been trained as a Tai' Chi Gung adept in the original system.)

The Tai Chi Gung masters of Tibet understand a simple principle about health that makes common sense, but is somewhat lost on most of the world. So much of the self-improvement world hinges on elaborate mental concepts with long, elaborate, in depth analysis. However, some simple ideas really do make a tremendous difference. The trick is to apply them long enough and consistently enough to get results.

According to the Tai' Chi Gung masters, the more that you bring the spirit, mind and body together in one place, the better your chances are for maintaining health, or restoring it. If you stop watering a fruit tree when it needs it, or reduce the water it receives for long periods of time, that tree will reduce the amount of fruit it bears, or perhaps even not produce fruit altogether. If you reduce the quantity and quality of breath that a person breathes, or reduce it for long periods of time, the body will begin to age more rapidly, or even begin to shut systems down.

It's nice that some things in life are still simple: Proper breathing is the single most powerful way to bring the spirit, mind and body together; and it will promote health faster and better than anything else known to mankind; and it's free, what a concept! (Details are in Rasaji's book, *The Circle of Chi*. It is available through his website: www.rasaji.com)

The Chinese have an old saying that goes... "A young child breathes from their belly. An adult breathes from their chest. A dying person breathes from their throat."

Most people are unaware that they breathe about 10-15% of their capacity, even in their prime years of life. A Tai' Chi Gung master has learned how to breathe Chi directly, which takes breathing way beyond just an exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide. (Chi being essentially, the other 90% that most people are unaware of.) And what you might ask does all that have to do with music?

Well, sometimes people are so stressed that it interferes with their natural breathing pattern. So listening to music that relaxes their mind can help them restore their breath. Beyond that, some music has the ability to literally promote proper breathing. The music that I write and record was done immediately after doing Tai' Chi Gung. In my own experience, when I go back to listen to this music, weeks and even years later, I find that some of them actually begin to alter my breathing pattern, just by listening to them.

The next time you listen to music you like, notice what it does to your breathing pattern. For those attuned to the energy centers, different styles of music affect some chakras more than others. While it is true that the tones themselves (C, D, E, F, etc) are aligned to the energy centers; it is also the case that music flows out of the different elements of nature connected to these centers (earth, water, fire, air, ether, etc.).

Depending on the time of day, the state of being of an individual, where their emotional body is at that time and especially how integrated their spirit, mind and body are at that time, hearing the same music can have a different impact on their soul each time they listen. So much for simple.

But there are guidelines to consider in the beginning that can be simple though, and can remain that way. Listen to what you like, and ask yourself why. (Hang around for the answer, it's coming.) Connect your music listening and observing your breath together. What you learn may surprise you. Some "healthy, healing" music actually takes you out of your body. (Makes you want to sleep.) That's ok, if you need the rest. But separating the spirit and mind from the body does not necessarily lead to long-term physical health. In many cases, it accomplishes just the opposite.

What kind of breathing is good? Well, any breathing is better than none at all. In general though, if you want the maximum benefit with the most safety, your breathing should be: inhale through the nose, and exhale out the mouth. Have the goal to discover a flow of breathing that feels "effortless". You're trying to avoid restricting either the inhale or the exhale in any way. For regeneration, breathing in the lower abdomen is very good. We tend to stay (keep our conscious mind) in the upper body much more than we should for proper health and balance.

If you would like to pursue your breathing more, I'd highly recommend tuning into Rasaji's live class on Sunday nights. It broadcasts from the web. Yep, live on the web, every week, a Master Lama from Tibet. I've had many, many breathing breakthroughs over the 26 years I've been studying with him. The simple breathing in that is done in the beginning class has brought most of them to me. (The entire system of Tai Chi Gung exercises is intended to promote better breathing.)

If you'd like to go for the other 90% and learn to breath Chi directly, Rasaji also shares a profound breathing exercise on his DVD and also in the audio version of his book, "the Circle of Chi" called the Lama's Lotus. This breathing exercise

was shared with Rasaji after he had completed 45 days of complete solitude on a mountain top in Tibet while he lived and trained there. I hope this will help a little. I know it's made a tremendous difference for me.

ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE AND TEACHER: David Paul is a Tai' Chi Gung adept and current student of Master Lama Rasaji (www.rasaji.com), studying for more than 26 years. Mr. Paul is a music graduate of St. Olaf College, earned a Master's Degree at Rice University, played in a symphony full time for seven years, and now performs concerts of original music for healing, inspired by Tai' Chi Gung. David can be reached by phone at 904-294-7219, by email at davidpaul888690@gmail.com, or through his website at www.musicbydavidpaul.com.

12. JULEK MEISSNER, N.D. – PISSED OFF – THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE BLADDER

Jane (for the sake of anonymity her name is fictitious) is a 33 year old woman who sought my help a year ago concerning recurring bladder infections, during which time she suffered from pain and urinary frequency. At its worst, there were sharp excruciating pains in the urethra, like a pinching, accompanied by a dull ache in her back, exhaustion, and chills. She felt constant pressure in her bladder, and at least every ¼ hour she needed to relieve herself, with a need to void even just after voiding.

"It pisses me off. I am constantly on antibiotics, yet the problem keeps getting worse. I can't go anywhere or do anything without first knowing where the bathroom is. It's unnerving; I can't get much accomplished, and there's a lot of anxiety about having an accident, that I won't be able to reach the bathroom in time."

Her problems began some years ago while working as a caterer for the film industry, what she describes as an over-demanding, exhausting, draining job. During this time, she would often work non-stop for 37-40 hrs, and had difficulty taking care of her own physical needs, not taking any breaks to rest or to go to the bathroom, doing whatever it took to get the job done at her body's expense. Working 40 hours non-stop was nerve-wracking, which lead to difficulties falling asleep, always feeling on edge while wondering whether she could cater to all the demands from her clients. This lead to sleep problems which, which lead to fatigue, which she feels contributes to her tendency toward bladder infections. When asked to elaborate on "pissed off", she describes feeling grumpy and joyless, but keeps it inside. "No one knows that I'm not feeling well. When people are rude or selfish or irritated, I may feel like yelling, but that's not nice, it's rude, and I don't want to piss anyone off."

"I know I'm too accommodating, but I'm afraid of putting anyone out, and go out of my way to cater to everyone's demands, no matter at what cost. I can't stand conflict. It's like my body is on high alert, over-anticipating the next irritation while stuffing down my emotions. I'm afraid of letting my anger out, that if I did I'd end up crying and feeling embarrassed. When asked to elaborate, she says it has to do with her upbringing and that despite years of psychotherapy she still struggles with it. "There was a lot of fighting in the family, between my parents who were loud and strong personalities. My way of coping was to accommodate everyone, protecting my brother or my mother when they were fighting with my father. I just wanted peace at all cost, and that's become my coping style. "Nice is what worked well growing up, and nice is all I know how to be."

Listening to our body

When a baby cries, do we ignore it? Our body is our baby, to be approached with love and curiosity. What is it trying to tell us? Our approach to symptoms can be either loving or fearful. When ruled by fear, we tend to do everything to get rid of the symptoms, even if the side-effects are more harmful than the actual condition!

Nurturing our life force

Our being is a sophisticated, integrated and dynamic psychosomatic energy organized to manifest itself through the qualities of either health and ease, or dis-ease. In the holistic tradition of Chinese Medicine, this mysterious power that runs us is called *Qui*, while in Ayurvedic Medicine they call it *Prana*. In the homeopathic tradition, we call it *Vital Force*. As a holistic practitioner, I am trained to interpret the meaning of the message when this life force manifests itself as dis-ease, recognizing and honoring the gist of the message as motivator, prompting us to pay attention and restore balance. The psychology of Jane's bladder infections is that when she's "pissed off", her obsolete coping style prevents her from feeling empowered. In order to help her shift, I offered a homeopathic approach that would facilitate a more harmonious relationship with conflict.

Plant, animal, or mineral

Because she was so sensitive, I chose something from the plant kingdom (mineral remedies are more about structure and a feeling of deficiency in oneself. Remedies made of an animal substance are more about competition and survival). Jane's homeopathic ally proved to be *Staphysagria* (delphinium, a lovely flower in many a Canadian garden), whose signature is suitable to those of us who are hyper-sensitive to rudeness, priding ourselves on our gentleness at the risk of suppressing anger. Bladder problems are commonly seen in this personality type.

Over the following year, Jane needed to take *Staphysagria* only a few times. She almost immediately noticed an inner strength and calmness, and as her courage increased her ability to deal with conflict in a more empowered way improved. The bladder infections became less frequent and less painful, and then subsided entirely, and she required no more antibiotics. Her sleep improved, as did her overall energy. Her new found positivity about herself helped her recognize that she was unhappy in her work space and with her life partner. Her ability to stand up for herself helped her find a more appealing work space, and she became clearer in communicating what she wanted from her partner, which dramatically enhanced the quality of her life experience.

Conclusion

Our body has the ability to heal itself. In the holistic approach, there is no separation between body, mind, and spirit. When health is lost what is needed is a keen interest in and analysis of what our body is trying to say.

ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE AND TEACHER: Dr. Julek Meissner has been practicing naturopathic and homeopathic medicine for 25 years, having graduated from the National College of Naturopathic Medicine in Portland Oregon in 1983. Obsessed with improving his homeopathic skills, he has continued his education, studying with many of the greats in the recent homeopathic revival, including Vithoukias, Sankaran, Sherr, and Timmerman. Julek can be reached by phone at 613-234-5151, by email at julek.meissner@gmail.com or julek@homeopathyrocks.com, or through his website at <http://www.homeopathyrocks.com>.

OTHER GIFTS AND E-NEWSWORTHY ITEMS:

13. GOOD NEWS OF THE DAY

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

Recent scientific research reveals that great creativity almost always springs from collaboration, conversation, and social networks -- challenging our mythical image of the isolated genius. Keith Sawyer has been studying the phenomenon known as "flow," where we get so absorbed in a task that we lose track of time; it's what some people refer to as being "in the zone." Research shows that when a group is in flow, it's more likely to resolve problems with surprising and creative solutions. Given how much of our personal and professional time is spent collectively, how can business managers, coaches, and the rest of us foster group flow? From studying improv groups, jazz musicians, and business teams, Sawyer shares that group flow tends to emerge when 10 key conditions are in place. This essay published by Greater Good shares more. Read more at

<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A4CC1:12445D4F40F5539FE0B5A3D53AF1EC30B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Get your group flow on: use some of Sawyer's tips in your next group meeting.

One bitter night, in the rough end of New Haven, fifteen-year-old Vinny Ferraro and his gang were hanging out as usual by the projects when a chance encounter with a homeless man (who they were assaulting) changed the course of the rest of his life. "I didn't know what compassion meant when I was fifteen. But I knew that that homeless guy had seen my heart. And that was scary. I had done my best to hide this heart, because it wasn't safe in my world to be soft or show feelings. And he had seen right through me." It is now Ferraro who looks into angry young eyes and finds a glimpse of compassion. In this candid piece, he shares his remarkable journey from violence and despair to mindfulness and freedom, inspiring thousands of underserved youth to similarly transform their lives. Read more at

<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A4E34:12445D4F40F5539FC4AAEDE426EA0845B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: When you next experience any traces of anger or despair, reflect on Ferraro's thought: "Do your conditions lead inevitably to suffering? No, they don't. Only a being's perspective leads to suffering."

"At first, I sat on a couch cushion in the middle of my living room, and meditated for 5 minutes using my kitchen timer. At the beginning, I experienced what the book referred to as a 'waterfall' of thoughts. Having never tried to focus my mind on

something so simple as respiration, so many thoughts poured down on me: 'What am I going to have for lunch?' 'What if this doesn't work?' 'I should do a load of laundry.' In these instances, the wild horse takes off. Then you have to grab the reins, and lead the horse back to the path: your breath. The important thing is to commit to doing this, and not leave your seat until the timer goes off, otherwise the horse is in control instead of the rider." Joanna Holsten writes eloquently about her early exploration of training the mind for happiness. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A4F48:12445D4F40F5539F678709E2F126F46CB4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Run your own experiment of mental training for 5 minutes today.

"Following your passion can be a tough thing. But figuring out what that passion is can be even more elusive. I'm lucky -- I've found my passion, and I'm living it. I can testify that it's the most wonderful thing, to be able to make a living doing what you love. And so, in this little guide, I'd like to help you get started figuring out what you'd love doing. This will be the thing that will get you motivated to get out of bed in the morning, to cry out, 'I'm alive! I'm feeling this, baby!'. This guide won't be comprehensive, and it won't find your passion for you. But it will help you in your journey to find it." Leo Babauta shares his personal story about finding his passion, and shares ten tips that helped him get there. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A5453:12445D4F40F5539F4BC2B2DAB53C3F24B4B847859706E37D&>.

No two sunrises are ever the same. Debbie Wagner knows this better than almost anyone else. With earnest devotion, she has risen in the darkness more than 2,200 times so she could observe and paint the sunrise. She's rarely missed a morning since December 2005; for Wagner, the daily ritual is sustaining. "As a brain-tumor survivor, I lost so many of the loves I had, like reading and writing and mathematics," said Wagner. And increasingly, Wagner's artwork is taking on personal significance for others as well. Three weeks ago, the family of Justin Tyler Berry reached out to Wagner: "My 24-year-old nephew was killed in a car accident December 12th, 2011 -- the day of his last sunrise here with us," Cox wrote. "I would like to purchase that day's painting, if it is available, and also December 13th, 2011. Both unframed please." A touching story of beauty and connection. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A54CA:12445D4F40F5539F9DCFB03645747BFBB4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Renew your perception of beauty within the familiar -- and share what you discover with someone today.

"Money helps you do what you want to do. And what you want to do is something that will bring your life meaning. It helps to accomplish those things. On the other hand, the struggle wakes you up. That's what it's really all about: waking up. The money question: If it serves to wake me up to what I want, what I wish for, what I'm willing to sacrifice for, what I'm not going to compromise for, then I feel alive. I feel meaningful. That brings life. I don't think it's naive to say you can't really fail, going in that direction. You might lose the deal here or there, but something in you has been nourished that's truly human." Noted philosopher Jacob Needleman explores how we come to a greater understanding of ourselves by understanding the true meaning of money. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A582C:12445D4F40F5539F03FC1EFD8CCA0B50B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Prof. Barry Schwartz shares an intriguing reflection on how a societal over-reliance on incentives can undermine virtues. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A582D:12445D4F40F5539F03FC1EFD8CCA0B50B4B847859706E37D&>.

Every moment is extra precious for 4-yr-old Lucas Hembree. Suffering from Sanfilippo syndrome, he isn't expected to live past 15. As the disease started to take a toll on Lucas' joints, his father Chester looked into getting a service dog to keep Lucas steady when he walked. A combination of prayer and persistence led Chester to Juno. "I had the feeling in my gut that I had to go see this dog," said Chester. But Juno herself was in bad shape: "She was emaciated, and was days away from being euthanized," said Chester. Right away, there was something instinctive about the relationship between Lucas and Juno. One day, Chester noticed Juno circling Lucas while he was in his wheelchair. "She was whining and nudging him with her nose," Chester says. "I checked his oxygen levels and they were very low." After giving him oxygen, Lucas returned to normal and Juno greeted him with licks and affection. The full, heart-melting story: <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A5974:12445D4F40F5539FBB2C21CCA04210BFB4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Today, approach the day with a resolve to give out love, and let it in.

The future of travel, I'm reliably told, lies in "black-hole resorts", which charge high prices precisely because you can't get online in their rooms. Has it really come to this? We have more and more ways to communicate, as Thoreau noted, but less and less to say. Partly because we're so busy communicating. And -- as he might also have said -- we're rushing to meet so many deadlines that we hardly register that what we need most are lifelines. So what to do? The central paradox of the machines that have made our lives so much brighter, quicker, longer and healthier is that they cannot teach us how to make the best use of them; the information revolution came without an instruction manual. Celebrated author Pico Iyer explores the Joy of Quiet. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A5AC8:12445D4F40F5539F8A91FBACCCD4D8A7B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: In the midst of activity, or otherwise, consciously practice some moments of silence.

"As we all grow in our lives and careers, it's normal to expect a raise every year. Why? Because it's a signal of growth. Growing is good -- not growing is downright un-American. You didn't get a raise? You're not growing? Well then you must

be no good. But why only 1 way to measure growth? If I get a 10 percent raise next year but eat less healthy food, spend less time with close and extended community, or do more self-serving work, did I really grow? Just because the number is easy to measure, is that all that matters? What about growing in generosity, compassion, physical health, mental health, family/community, balance/wisdom, and in fun! What if, at the end of every year, we took stock of ALL of these measures, along with financial? Would that change behavior?" Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A5E0E:12445D4F40F5539FC34C706B5BDFDB7AB4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Examine and expand the measures you use for determining growth in your life.

"You know we really don't have any other choice but to be present to the life we have. We think we do, you know, we dream of everything from constructing pyramids, to conquering Mount Everest, to making millions -- to all kinds of things -- but the truth is that other than being fully present and caring and giving our best, we don't have a lot of control. So I found myself back in life, where I had been in my mid thirties, and I was trying to contribute and help change the world and all of a sudden the world was changing me, the world was opening me. And through that opening I have been able, paradoxically, to make a greater contribution for having been opened. And I think the things, among many, that came out of my cancer journey was that through no wisdom of mine, I woke up." Gifted writer Mark Nepo, featured on Oprah's Ultimate Favorite Things show, shares his poetic journey. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A60F2:12445D4F40F5539F204AD1F365351825B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: A short passage by Mark Nepo, that starts with: "I tried so hard to please that I never realized no one is watching." Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A60F3:12445D4F40F5539F204AD1F365351825B4B847859706E37D&>.

Raghu Makwana lost his legs to polio as a child. But his heart was intact and growing bigger by the day. When a few students found him arranging people's footwear outside a local temple, they were struck by his sparkling intelligence and genuine warmth. They arranged to have him join a non-profit at the Gandhi Ashram in India. The move would bring Raghu's latent capacity for servant-leadership to life, and he would soon immerse himself in a series of poignant projects. Projects that include making peace in distressed households, inspiring slum children to reach new heights, and hand-delivering meals twice a day to people who might otherwise go without. Raghu's unflagging commitment and luminous spirit have touched people from all walks of life -- including the former President of India. This article shares more about his phenomenal journey in generosity. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A61DE:12445D4F40F5539FCBE8CD9DE48F9425B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Write Raghu a note of support and/or appreciation. Follow this link... <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A61DF:12445D4F40F5539FCBE8CD9DE48F9425B4B847859706E37D&>.

"We've heard it said that this day -- which once belonged to a legendary saint in whose wake loving deeds flowed like a river -- was hijacked so many years ago by corporations looking to cash in on a beautiful state-of-the-heart technology. They who strode in preaching a catchy new religion: I love therefore I buy. And maybe we bought it. At any rate we've been blaming them ever since. Why give them so much attention? This time around why not make this day about something more than either cliched consumerism or ritual ranting ... why not attempt a daring coup? Maybe all it requires is for you and me to listen deeply -- to ourselves. Because sometimes just listening to your heart can be a revolutionary act. What if we all started? Now. Perhaps we might start a trickle of loving deeds that grows into a river ... and somewhere an old saint will smile." Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A6546:12445D4F40F5539F254726CD073F4F18B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Do something that opens your heart today. For inspiration, a beautiful poem on inter-connection called "I Double Dare You:" Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A6547:12445D4F40F5539F254726CD073F4F18B4B847859706E37D&>.

What do Elizabeth Taylor, Roald Dahl, Marilyn Monroe, Neil Armstrong and Barack Obama have in common, besides being famous? Each of them wrote touching letters of gratitude, printed here in their original writing. For example, once upon a time (1989), a little girl named Amy sent a bottle of colored water, oil and glitter to Roald Dahl, who knew right away that this was a dream in a bottle inspired by his book, The BFG. In response, the author penned this short note to his 7-year-old fan: "I must write a special letter and thank you for the dream in the bottle. You are the first person in the world who has sent me one of these and it intrigued me very much. I also liked the dream..." Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A6843:12445D4F40F5539F7CB07DE171017A4EB4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Surprise someone with a thank you note of your own today.

"We have not yet learned to make use of our most civilizing capacities: the creativity and wisdom we all have as our birthright. When even one person comes into full possession of these capacities, our problems are shown in their true light: they are simply the results of avoidable -- though deadly -- errors of judgment. Gandhi formulated a series of diagnoses of the modern world's seemingly perpetual state of crisis, which he called 'the seven social sins.' I prefer to think of them as seven social ailments, since the problems they address are not crimes calling for punishment but crippling diseases that are punishment enough in themselves. The first -- and the one we will focus on here -- is knowledge without character. It traces all our difficulties to a simple lack of connection between what we know is good for

us and our ability to act on that knowledge." The late Gandhian scholar Eknath Easwaran shares further. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A692D:12445D4F40F5539F4EA4A50A7DC6D3CBB4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: "I believe that what self-centered men have torn down, men other-centered can build up. [...] I still believe that we shall overcome." An inspiring passage from MLK's Nobel acceptance speech. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A692E:12445D4F40F5539F4EA4A50A7DC6D3CBB4B847859706E37D&>.

"On any given Saturday, you'll find volunteer rescuer Tracie Mitchum sitting outside in front of the Whole Foods Market with an array of cats and dogs she's rescued. She brings the pets to the parking lot hoping to find applicants to adopt them and to raise funds to provide veterinary care. "I feel welcome at Whole Foods and it's refreshing," Tracie says during our recent chat on the campus of the College of Charleston where she works as an administrative professional. "I need to be there on weekends because if I can squeeze out another \$50, I can save another life." And saving lives she does. Last year, Tracie spent nearly \$15,000 caring for rescued animals. Her boyfriend helped with part of those costs and the rest has gone onto credit cards which she's trying to make a dent in each month." More on Tracie's touching dedication to animals. Read more at

<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A6C66:12445D4F40F5539F7DA7255190608936B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: In this short passage, "Liking is for Cowards, Go for What Hurts," author Jonathan Franzen talks about how his love for birds triggered more than what he expected. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A6C67:12445D4F40F5539F7DA7255190608936B4B847859706E37D&>.

"Any social-change hero succeeds in doing three fundamental things -- raising awareness, creating impact, and transforming the heart. Today's technologies, particular social media, can be significant tools. For awareness, the Internet has been an absolute amplifier. For impact, the Internet has been a mixed bag: remarkable potential in democracy movements, but significant problems ranging from cyber-bullying to "slacktivism." Where it has been downright lacking, though, is in transformation. If we consider the profound revolutionaries of our time, from Gandhi and Mother Teresa to Cesar Chavez and Aung San Suu Kyi, their own inner transformation is what empowered them to touch the hearts of their communities. This is the place of our greatest leverage, and this is where the designs of our technologies have to be rooted." An inspiring talk at the UN on social media for social change. Read more at

<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A6ECF:12445D4F40F5539FA540C617ED7D0FF8B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Today, make an effort to step outside the box of your own identity, form, or function -- to transform, even momentarily.

They may be the most amazing story at the Super Bowl, this immigrant father who sought the American dream and the son he can't see play in America's biggest game. That's a small joy most parents take for granted: seeing your child play a game. Watching him grow in sports over the years. Enjoying the best moments as much as he does. But Jean Pierre-Paul is led by the arm down a small hallway of his Fort Lauderdale home, then places his hand against the couch, to confirm he's reached it. "It's just my life, I'm blind," he says in Creole through a translator. "Some days are good days, some days are bad days. Sunday with our son will be a good day." The day of the Super Bowl was indeed a good day for him, as his son Jason Pierre-Paul helped lead his team to a win. Read more at

<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A6F46:12445D4F40F5539FCF234B2310505B58B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: As you interact with dear ones -- friends, family, maybe even strangers -- consider what your love allows you to see.

Author and songwriter Bronnie Ware shares: "For many years I worked in palliative care. My patients were those who had gone home to die. Some incredibly special times were shared. I was with them for the last three to twelve weeks of their lives. People grow a lot when they are faced with their own mortality. I learnt never to underestimate someone's capacity for growth. Some changes were phenomenal. Each experienced a variety of emotions, as expected, denial, fear, anger, remorse, more denial and eventually acceptance. Every single patient found their peace before they departed though, every one of them. When questioned about any regrets they had or anything they would do differently, common themes surfaced again and again. Here are the most common five:" Read more at

<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A702D:12445D4F40F5539FD309EDA311AF3FA3B4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: "If we could literally reach into you and remove all your fears -- every one of them -- how different would your life be?" begins this short passage. Read more at <http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A702E:12445D4F40F5539FD309EDA311AF3FA3B4B847859706E37D&>.

"A year ago, Rick Ruzzamenti decided in an instant to donate his left kidney to a stranger. In February 2011, the desk clerk at Ruzzamenti's yoga studio told him she had recently donated a kidney to an ailing friend. Ruzzamenti, 44, had never even donated blood, but the story so captivated him that two days later he placed a call to Riverside Community Hospital to ask how he might do the same thing." But that was just the beginning. As this NY Times article outlines, Ruzzamenti's selfless, pay-it-forward act rippled into the longest chain of kidney transplants ever constructed, linking 30 people who were willing to give up an organ with 30 who might have died without one. Read more at

<http://premiere.whatcounts.com/t?ctl=16A727B:12445D4F40F5539F79EC5A8CB5D3876FB4B847859706E37D&>. Be The Change: Start a kindness chain -- begin with an unexpected act of generosity.

14. THE POWER OF HERE

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

Wisdom traditions worldwide say there's no greater blessing than to live the life of your soul, the source of your deepest personal fulfillment and of your greatest service to others. It's what you were born for. It's the locus of authentic personal power – not power over people and things, but rather the power of partnership with others, the power to co-create life and to cooperate with an evolving universe.

Before you find your ultimate place, you are, in a sense, lost. You have a particular destiny but don't know what it is. It's like being lost in a forest...[...] You can begin or deepen your relationship to soul in the same way the poet advises you to commune with the forest. None of the nonhumans in the forest – or the world, more generally – are lost. Each one is precisely in its true place, and each one knows every place in the forest as a unique place. They are doing something you do not yet know how to do. You could apprentice yourself to them. The forest, the world, knows where you are and who you are. You must let it find you.

If you don't yet have conscious knowledge of your soul, you haven't yet learned the power of place – or the power of Here. To acquire this power, which is the goal in the first half of the Wheel of Life, you must first get to know more thoroughly the place in life you already inhabit. This place consists of your relationships and roles in both society and nature. This is the place in which you are lost, in which you find yourself to be, and from which you can, eventually, find your self. [...]

Your soul is your true home. In the moment you finally arrive in this psycho-ecological niche, you feel fully available and present to the world, unlost. This particular place is profoundly familiar to you, more so than any geographical location or any mere dwelling has ever been or could be. You know immediately that this is the source, the marrow, of your true belonging. This is the identity no one could ever take from you. Inhabiting this place does not depend on having anyone else's permission or approval or presence. It does not require having a particular job – or any at all. You can be neither hired for it nor fired from it. Acting from this place aligns you with your surest personal powers (your soul powers), your powers of nurturing, transforming, creating; your powers of presence and wonder.

The first time you consciously inhabit your ultimate place and act from your soul is the first time you can say, "Here" and really know what it means. You've arrived, at last, at your own center. As long as you stay Here, everywhere you go, geographically or socially, feels like home. Every place becomes Here.

This is the power of place, the power of Here.

Before soul initiation, wherever you go, there you are. After soul initiation, wherever you go, Here you are.

-- Bill Plotkin in *Nature and the Human Soul*

15. THE GREAT DICTATOR

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

I'm sorry but I don't want to be an Emperor. That's not my business. I don't want to rule or conquer anyone.

I should like to help everyone if possible. We all want to help one another -- human beings are like that. We all want to live by each other's happiness, not by each other's misery. We don't want to hate and despise one another. In this world there is room for everyone and the earth is rich and can provide for everyone.

The way of life can be free and beautiful. But we have lost the way.

Greed has poisoned men's souls, has barricaded the world with hate, has goose-stepped us into misery and bloodshed. We have developed speed but we have shut ourselves in: machinery that gives abundance has left us in want. Our knowledge has made us cynical, our cleverness hard and unkind. We think too much and feel too little: more than machinery we need humanity; more than cleverness we need kindness and gentleness. Without these qualities, life will be violent and all will be lost.

The airplane and the radio have brought us closer together. The very nature of these inventions cries out for the goodness in men, cries out for universal brotherhood for the unity of us all. Even now my voice is reaching millions throughout the world, millions of despairing men, women and little children, victims of a system that makes men torture and imprison innocent people. To those who can hear me I say, "Do not despair".

The misery that is now upon us is but the passing of greed, the bitterness of men who fear the way of human progress. The hate of men will pass and the power they took from the people will return to the people and liberty will never perish.

In the seventeenth chapter of Saint Luke it is written, "The kingdom of God is within man." Not one man, nor a group of men, but in all men -- in you, the people.

You the people have the power, the power to create machines, the power to create happiness. You the people have the power to make life free and beautiful, to make this life a wonderful adventure. Then in the name of democracy let's use that power. Let us all unite. Let us fight for a new world, a decent world that will give men a chance to work, that will give you the future and old age and security. Let us fight to free the world, to do away with national barriers, do away with greed, with hate and intolerance. Let us fight for a world of reason, a world where science and progress will lead to all men's happiness. Let us all unite!

Look up. The clouds are lifting, the sun is breaking through. We are coming out of the darkness into the light. The soul of man has been given wings, and at last he is beginning to fly. He is flying into the rainbow - into the light of hope - into the future, that glorious future that belongs to you, to me and to all of us. Look up. Look up!

--Charlie Chaplin, excerpted from [The Great Dictator](#) (1940)

16. WHAT I LEARNED IN AFRICA

Reprinted from InnerNet Weekly via www.iJourney.org.

I ended up in Africa because the plane ticket there was cheapest. I came and I stayed. For nearly 25 years I've lived off and on in Mozambique. Time has passed, and I'm no longer young; in fact, I'm approaching old age. But my motive for living this straddled existence, with one foot in African sand and the other in European snow, in the melancholy region of Norrland in Sweden where I grew up, has to do with wanting to see clearly, to understand.

The simplest way to explain what I've learned from my life in Africa is through a parable about why human beings have two ears but only one tongue. Why is this? Probably so that we have to listen twice as much as we speak.

In Africa listening is a guiding principle. It's a principle that's been lost in the constant chatter of the Western world, where no one seems to have the time or even the desire to listen to anyone else. From my own experience, I've noticed how much faster I have to answer a question during a TV interview than I did 10, maybe even 5, years ago. It's as if we have completely lost the ability to listen. We talk and talk, and we end up frightened by silence, the refuge of those who are at a loss for an answer. [...]

A number of years ago I sat down on a stone bench outside the Teatro Avenida in Maputo, Mozambique, where I work as an artistic consultant. It was a hot day, and we were taking a break from rehearsals so we fled outside, hoping that a cool breeze would drift past. The theater's air-conditioning system had long since stopped functioning. It must have been over 100 degrees inside while we were working.

Two old African men were sitting on that bench, but there was room for me, too. In Africa people share more than just water in a brotherly or sisterly fashion. Even when it comes to shade, people are generous.

I heard the two men talking about a third old man who had recently died. One of them said, "I was visiting him at his home. He started to tell me an amazing story about something that had happened to him when he was young. But it was a long story. Night came, and we decided that I should come back the next day to hear the rest. But when I arrived, he was dead."

The man fell silent. I decided not to leave that bench until I heard how the other man would respond to what he'd heard. I had an instinctive feeling that it would prove to be important.

Finally he, too, spoke.

"That's not a good way to die — before you've told the end of your story."

It struck me as I listened to those two men that a truer nomination for our species than Homo sapiens might be Homo narrans, the storytelling person. What differentiates us from animals is the fact that we can listen to other people's dreams, fears, joys, sorrows, desires and defeats — and they in turn can listen to ours.

--Henning Mankell, translated from Swedish by Tiina Nunnally

17. BE OPEN. BE READY. LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO BE KIND

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

Today I prayed for ideas on ways to be kind.

My first opportunity came at a restaurant. A little girl dropped a dollar and walked off. I picked up the dollar and ran after her, giving it to her mother. "She dropped this," I said.

Then at the store, there was an elderly man looking at firewood. He had a cane, and I couldn't see him carrying the firewood by himself, so I approached him and asked if he needed help. He said that he was just looking, but he seemed grateful that I asked.

Inside the store, I found a bouquet of beautiful flowers. Uncertain who to give them to, I got into the check-out line. I only had two items, but a man came behind me with one, so I let him go first.

I bought my mother her favorite candy bar, and I had the flowers but no one to give them to. Before I could reach my car, I spied a woman maybe in her mid-thirties coming in my direction. With a big smile on my face, I skipped up to her and said "Ma'am, these are for you!"

She looked around and back at me and said, "Me?"

I said, "Yes, they're for you. God bless you, and have a wonderful day!"

I then turned and walked away. My mom, who was waiting in the car, said the lady had a big smile on her face... and she (Mom) enjoyed her chocolate bar.

Be open. Be ready. Look for opportunities.

18. A TAIL WAGGIN' WAY OF A BLESSING

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

Last week, I was out getting the mail and noticed a dog crossing the street that looked oddly familiar. I went near the dog to see if it had a tag or if I recognized it to see if I could find the owner.

When I got close to the dog, I realized that it was the same dog that my neighbors had lost 4 years ago. A few months ago, these neighbors moved out of my neighborhood, but that was not going to stop me finding them!

I remembered they moved to Minnesota. I spent the rest of the day searching all of the people with their last name in the Minnesota area. Finally when I was starting to give up hope, I called the last number. I couldn't believe it, it was them! I told them of how I found their dog that went missing 4 years ago. They thought it was too good to come true. They immediately flew down to Florida to re-unite with their dog, and were absolutely shocked.

They told me God has answered their prayers and offered me a fairly large reward. Even though I really needed the money, I said no.

Seeing the happy faces of them with their dog was as rewarding as it could get!

19. LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

Do you remember the name of your kindergarten teacher? I remember mine. Her name was Mrs. White. And I remember thinking she must be some older relation of Walt Disney's Snow White, because she had the same bright blue eyes, short dark hair, red lips and fair skin.

I don't remember much about what we learned in her class, but my mother once told me that we used to write a lot. And I would bring back what I wrote and she would look at it and see there were so many mistakes; but no red corrections, and always a star. Sometimes even a 'Good!' scrawled in that would make my heart soar with happiness. But it worried my mother, so one day when she went in to meet Mrs. White for one of those Parent-Teacher meetings, she asked her why she never corrected my mistakes; why she never red-pencilled in the right spellings of words or pointed out grammatical errors.

And my mother says Mrs. White said "The children are just beginning to get excited about using words, about forming sentences. I don't want to dampen that enthusiasm with red ink. Spelling and grammar can wait. The wonder of words won't" Maybe she didn't say it 'exactly' like that. It was a long time ago. What my mother gave me was the gist of what she could remember. The rest I added in. Because I grew up learning to use words with loving confidence like that.

And it occurs to me that if Mrs. White had used her red pen more precisely I probably wouldn't be telling you about this now. Which is kind of obvious but also kind of not. I look back now and think she must have been a rather extraordinary teacher—to exercise such red-pen-restraint. To allow the joy, wonder and excitement of expression flower—however faultily—like that. Because to bloom is better than not to bloom. And a bud once nipped never opens. May we all be so kind...

I used to misspell beautiful a lot. Never could quite remember that the e went before the a. It exasperated my teacher in high school no end. If I was going to employ the word with such lavishness she figured the least I could do was spell it right. Eventually the e's and a's settled into their right places of their own accord. Am glad I didn't wait on them though. Pretty is easier to spell but it doesn't hold as much as you mean sometimes.

And thanks to Mrs. White I had no qualms about writing what I meant even if couldn't quite spell it out. Because Life isn't Pretty. It's Beautiful.

20. THE GOLD WRAPPED GIFT

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

Some time ago, a man punished his 5 year old daughter for wasting a roll of expensive gold wrapping paper.

Money was tight and he became more upset when the child pasted the gold paper so as to decorate a box to put under a Christmas tree.

Nevertheless, the little girl brought the gift box to her father next morning and said " This is for you daddy. "

The father was embarrassed by his earlier overreaction , but his anger flared again when he found the box empty . He spoke to her in a harsh manner , " Don't you know young lady , when you give someone a present there's supposed to be something inside the package ?

The little girl looked up at him with tears in her eyes and said " Oh Daddy , it is not empty . I blew kisses into it until it was full." The father was crushed . He fell on his knees and put his arms around his little girl and he begged her to forgive his unnecessary anger.

An accident took the life of the child only a short time later and it is told that the father kept the gold box by his bed for all the years of his life and whenever he was discouraged or faced difficult problems, he would open the box and take out an imaginary kiss and remember the love of the child who had put it there.

In a very real sense, each of us as human beings have been given a golden box filled with unconditional love and kisses from our children , family friends and God . There is no more precious possession anyone can hold .

21. A PARALYZED BODY BUT A POWERFUL HEART

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

Last weekend, I was traveling home from Bangalore. There was a distinct lack of buses, so I thought I would escape the crowd and go for a refreshment. I decided to go to a hotel near the bus stand.

I met a man there who was paralyzed and I thought to offer him some food. He spoke to me in English and started explaining his past life when he was healthy.

He had worked in Dubai for five years. Then an accident left him paralyzed. Now his family was taken care of by his sister.

While listening to his past I realized that he had experienced much in his life and learnt many lessons.

Eventually I told him that he may have been physically paralyzed but his heart and spirit were wonderful and he could always depend on them.

His eyes filled in with tears, I offered him some money and then I took him to his home. Our meeting and our goodbye seemed to have a great effect on him.

I have learnt that if you speak few good words and offer a little help will not only bring happiness but will remain in people's hearts for ever!

22. KINDNESS RETURNED AFTER 35 YEARS

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

My grandfather was the head of his village for nearly 20 years until we moved to a different city.

About a month back, my grandfather was out for his usual evening walk to a nearby garden and didn't return. We were worried and searched for him everywhere but we could not find him. Later in the morning, we got a call from a hospital from an unknown person who had remembered my grandfather. All he remembered was his childhood nickname.

We rushed to hospital to find that my grandfather had been hit by a vehicle and it was this person from 35 years ago who helped my grandfather reach the hospital. This good samaritan had stayed with him the whole night and paid for all his hospital bills (you can't get treatment unless you pay the bills first). All this, and he only knew my grandfather with his childhood nickname. My grandfather was not even able to recognize that person.

We thanked him deeply, and offered him the money he had paid for the hospital bills, he didn't accept. He simply said: "He was a good father to me when I needed him, today I was able to play the role of a good son to him."

I am in awe that a stranger could do such a kind act, but also that my grandfather's kindness could have stayed with someone for 35 years like that!

23. CAN I BORROW YOUR KIDS?

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

Years ago, after a rough divorce, we were invited to live with my aunt who lived in a rural area. We packed up our stuff and moved across the country to settle into our new "home".

Once there I was worried about the lack of extended family and thought I would miss the convenience of having relatives nearby. My aunt explained to my children (and myself) that there are many different kinds of family and not all of them have two parents in the home. I didn't think too much of this speech, being rather shell-shocked after the divorce, but her words stuck with me.

It wasn't too long after we settled in that friends and neighbors began to come over to meet us and extend invitations for outings. Many single ladies lived in this particular locale and were very loving and affectionate with my school-aged children.

After they got to know the kids better we began to get calls: "Can I borrow your kids? I want to go to the circus and want to take them!" "I am going fossil hunting with my geology group: would your son like to come along?" "I am going hiking. Can I take your kids?" "How would your kids like to learn how to drive a mule?" And, on and on it went like that.

Not only did my children benefit from the outings by learning new things, they learned manners, geology, ecology, respect for animals and too many good things to mention. Our neighbors enjoyed the contact with the young folks, too.

My daughter, now grown and with a child of her own, mentioned to me a few days ago how much she enjoyed the outings with our extended "family" while growing up. My son still recalls going fossil hunting years ago and still talks about it! We are still friends with all these neighbors although we are all older.

Now that my own kids are grown up I find myself looking around the neighborhood myself for families with young children. I might want to go looking for frogs and turtles by the creek ... or maybe the circus ... and, I might just say: "Can I borrow your kids?"

24. STARTING A NEW LIFE WITH A SMILE CARD

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

I have been trying recently to help a young girl who begs on the street.

Well, a few days ago she shared some good news with me. She has been offered a job in another town! It's about 150 km away and she will be moving there in a week or so.

Realizing that moving and starting a new job would require several things she couldn't afford I picked up a \$50 Walmart gift card and gave it to her along with ten Smile cards.

I explained that this was actually two gifts. The Walmart card was one gift but the smile cards were her way to pay it forward in thanks for all who had helped her. I explained that the best gift of all would be the joy she would find in using those cards.

Her smile, the heart felt thank you, and the sincere look of gratitude on her face were all the thanks I needed.

I will probably never see her again but the warmth I felt knowing she now has the opportunity to start a new life made it all worthwhile.

25. ONE LAST TRIP TO THE BEACH, ON HER DOORSTEP

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

I need to share a powerful and strangely wonderful event in my life that involves death and cancer. I am certain you are struggling with the fact that I am using the words wonderful, cancer and death in the same sentence. I think that after you hear this story you will agree that in this case it is an appropriate combination of words.

A dear friend of mine was dying of cancer. Shortly before she died she shared with me that she was very sad that she would never get to go to the beach again. She grew up near the ocean and it was a special place for her. The cancer had made her too weak to travel the 4-5 hours from her home to the ocean. I shared this with several of her friends and we decided we had to do something about it.

On a Saturday afternoon in June, while her family kept her distracted and away from the windows, the plan unfolded. We dumped three tons of white beach sand in her driveway. After the sand was spread about, out came the two cabanas, beach balls, pails, shovels, boogie boards, beach chairs, a variety of decorations and a fire pit for the bonfire on the beach at night. We even rented a sno-cone machine since it had gotten to the point where flavored ice was about all she was able to eat. There were two CDs playing. One was the sounds of waves breaking on the beach and the other alternated between The Beach Boys and Jimmy Buffett.

When all was in place, her daughter brought her out to her private beach where she was greeted by a few dozen friends dressed in flowered shirts. She came out of the house with some new flip-flops and a beach bag (where else would a beach going cancer patient keep her morphine drip). We shed a tear or two that day, but it was mostly filled with laughs, grins and most of all love. The guest of honor was given a squirt gun and allowed to squirt anyone at will. The day ended with a fire on her beach and s'mores for everyone.

She died two weeks later but made it out to her beach four or five more times before she left us. I guess the message of this story is that when someone is in need, we need to think out of the proverbial box for ways to help. And the next time someone tries to sell you some oceanfront land in Kansas, you might just want to check it out.

26. A TRAIN DELAYED AND A LIFE SAVED

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

I had been spending some time in my home town and was about to return to my workplace. Arriving at the railway station I found my train was two hours late thanks to monsoon weather.

I had arrived half an hour early, which meant I now had two and a half hours to wait in the bus station. I was more than a little worried about that! I took my luggage to a bench where only one other lady was sitting.

Even sitting at the opposite end of the bench I couldn't help but notice how sad she looked. Her pretty face seemed very worried. Rather than sit in silence I asked her if she was waiting for the next train. She didn't respond. I asked her again. She replied, "Uhuh. Yes." Then she wiped her eyes.

I moved closer and said, "Hey dear, what is wrong with you? Why are you weeping? " She responded that it was nothing and I should mind my own business. I realized something wrong had happened. I gave her a Smile card and moved back along the bench.

She looked at the card for a moment. Then she turned to me and said, "I'm sorry for being so rude. Would you mind if I talked to you like a sister for a little while?" I smiled and nodded.

She told she is from a family of four. Her father died last year and she has a elder brother and mother. She used to have a job but after her dad died she stopped working so she could help her mother.

She told that her mum and brother were trying to arrange a marriage for her and she was forced to stand, all dressed up, for each potential husband to inspect whether she liked him or not. She once asked if this was fair and her mother shouted that it didn't matter what she felt, she would marry who her mother chose for her.

One of these suitors, a much older guy, asked her to go to bed with him. She told her mother and the unsympathetic response left this lovely young lady in tears.

By now I was really feeling sorry for her. Then she said she had planned to kill herself in the train station. I was shocked!

She sat with me for another half an hour while I tried to convince her life was worth living. I told her to e mail me her resume and I would try to get her good job. Then I gave her some money to help her get where she needed to go. I told her to forget her suicidal thoughts and to believe she could have a better life.

I gave her my phone number and asked her to ring me if I could help. She smiled and hugged me tightly and told me, "Thanks for your time and I promise I won't think any more suicidal thoughts. Hopefully I will get a good job and my wedding, when it comes, will be a happy affair I can invite you to!"

Please join me in praying that her dreams come true and her future is a bright and happy one.

27. A SPIRIT GUIDE TO LEAN ON

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

A few months ago an elderly lady from our meditation group dropped and broke her favorite cane. She was quite upset because it was her favorite cane and she could not afford to buy a new one. Being a wood carver I decided I would make her one.

This lady is from a Native American background and I asked her what her spirit animal was. Some Native Americans believe they are guided on their journey through life by the spirit of an animal. Her spirit animal was a crow.

This week I presented her with the finished cane. The top of the cane has a hand carved, highly detailed, painted and realistic looking crow head, actual size with glass eyes. Below that is a black suede braid around the shaft of the cane tied in a fancy knot called a Turk's Head knot; from the knot hung two black feathers with wooden beads. Below this, carved onto the face of the cane was a medicine wheel.

A medicine wheel is a circle with four spokes, and the four spokes divide the wheel into four colours, red, white, black, and yellow. The colours represented the four races of man, and the medicine wheel represented healing of the four races. Also on the face of the cane were her initials.

Because she was worried about dropping and breaking another cane, I also included a strap that she could put her hand through so that even if she dropped the cane it would not fall to the ground.

The look on her face when I presented the cane to her and her reaction was worth more than any amount of money. It was a great feeling to do something nice for someone who otherwise could not afford to do for herself.

28. EVERYBODY CAN BE GREAT, MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

"Everybody can be great because everybody can serve... You only need a heart full of grace." On 4 February 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. preached "The Drum Major Instinct" (adapted from the 1952 homily of the same name by well-known, liberal, white Methodist preacher J. Wallace Hamilton) from the pulpit of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. This short video excerpts the portion of the speech where King urges his congregation to greatness through service and love. Follow this link to the video... <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=2959>.

29. BUILDING A GREEN FUTURE

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

John Hardy's dream of building a green school comes alive in Bali. With bamboo architecture, no walls and a diverse range of teachers, this school not only teaches reading writing and arithmetic but also teaches how to reconnect to nature thus building future green leaders. Follow this link to the video... <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=2188>.

30. ME TO WE: GENEROSITY EVERYDAY

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

David and Hi-Jin Hodge wanted to inspire generosity on Valentine's Day. So they asked a diverse group of friends: what does generosity mean to you? And what have you learned from practicing acts of everyday kindness? People shared some beautiful responses that will inspire you to go out and be generous, not just on Valentine's Day but everyday! Follow this link to the video... <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=3013>.

31. DAN'S COFFEE RUN

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

Every Thursday morning, Dan Dewey orders 12 to 24 coffee items from the Starbucks in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. He then delivers the coffee to patients and staff at the Michigan Cancer Institute (MCI). The tradition started when he took his own father to MCI for treatment. His father has since passed away, but Dan keeps the coffee, and the smiles, flowing. Follow this link to the video... <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=3007>.

32. SEVEN HABITS OF MINDFUL EATING

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

"The rhythm of life is becoming faster and faster, so we really don't have the same awareness and the same ability to check into ourselves." These words are from an unexpected source: a Harvard nutritionist. Dr. Lilian Cheung, with Nobel

Peace Prize nominee Thich Nhat Hanh, co-wrote 'Savor: Mindful Eating, Mindful Life.' "That's why mindful eating is becoming more important. We need to be coming back to ourselves and saying: 'Does my body need this? Why am I eating this? Is it just because I'm so sad and stressed out?'" In this 3-minute video, Dr. Cheung explains how honoring and being mindful of the food we eat makes us healthier. She offers seven practices for mindful eating -- simple steps that we can take to maintain a healthier weight and live a happier life. We are what we eat -- and how we eat it. Follow this link to the video... <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=3026>.

33. ROAD TO HAPPINESS

Sometimes we are so focused on what we think we want, that we forget one important truth—if you can't find happiness inside yourself, you will NEVER find it in the outside world—no matter how “successful” you become. But what if we can connect to a source of happiness that is independent of conditions? Follow this link to the video... <http://www.flickspire.com/m/MBT/RoadToHappiness?lsid=8319931d9f49825be07b5c2dbac90fd4>.

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 newsletter@servingyourjourney.com 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).

34. SPIRITUAL RESOURCES

Check out the resources on the Spiritual Guidance website's resources page (www.servingyourjourney.com). There is a plethora of articles, poems and meditations, books, organizations, practitioners and videos to browse.

In addition, the resources page contains a listing of almost 400 spiritual centres and retreats throughout North America (some international centres and retreats are represented). In parallel with the master list of spiritual centres and retreats, Spiritual Guidance maintains two other indexes. The first is an index by region, state or province throughout North America. The second index is by faith tradition, denomination or community including, but not limited to:

- Buddhist centres, temples, priories, and monasteries
- Christian retreat centres, abbeys and monasteries; including monastic communities such as the Jesuit, Oblate and Benedictine communities (includes denominations such as Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, Baptist, Protestant, Pentecostal, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, etc.)
- Eco-wellness and nature-oriented-and-focused centres and retreats
- Hindu and other ashrams
- Jewish retreat centres
- Shaman centres
- Sufi retreat centres
- Taoist retreat centres
- Theosophical retreat centres
- Non-sectarian, non-denominational, inter-faith community centres and retreats (e.g., Brahma Kumaris, Sri Chinmoy, etc.)

If there is a specific spiritual centre or retreat you have in mind and/or are looking for, or you would appreciate some assistance in narrowing your search or exploring options (based on faith tradition, denomination, community, region, state, province or city), please contact Spiritual Guidance. We will be honored to assist you. Our contact information is at the very bottom of this e-newsletter.

35. SPIRITUAL EXPLORATION AND SOUL COACHING

Spiritual Guidance can work with you to serve your individual needs, whether to receive spiritual guidance, engage in dialogue about your life, or explore and develop your spiritual practice. Spiritual Guidance works collaboratively with aspirants to guide them through an exploration of their life to realize inner peace, joy, love, gratitude, compassion and forgiveness.

Guided sessions are typically held one-on-one at a location comfortable for the individual requesting guidance. Your guide may encourage a first meeting in a neutral, public setting to explore whether *Spiritual Guidance* can assist you at this time in your spiritual journey. Spiritual Guidance also offers spiritual exploration and life coaching services via an **international Skype practice**.

Each guided session may include a variety of activities—not limited to talking, walking, hiking, meditation, guided imagery and/or readings—that the individual requests and feels comfortable with. The purpose of these activities is to create a comfortable atmosphere for the individual to listen to their soul and explore their spiritual existence.

Hourly and daily rates, dependent on the nature of the guidance or coaching requested, can be discussed with Spiritual Guidance.

Please contact Spiritual Guidance if we can be of service. Our contact information is at the very bottom of this e-newsletter.

36. SPIRITUALITY 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@servingyourjourney.com.

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.

37. SPIRITUALITY 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 us at rmeagher@servingyourjourney.com 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>).

38. 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 us at rmeagher@servingyourjourney.com 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>).

39. 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 go to the home page of our website (www.servingyourjourney.com) and click on



the  button toward the bottom left of the home page.

OR

2. 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

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

679 Cooper Street
Ottawa, ON K1R 5J3
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.

40. 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

41. CENTERING PRAYER 6-DAY INTENSIVE RETREAT

“Embodying the Silence – A Deeper Surrender”

Monday, March 12 at 5:30 p.m. (eat before you come) to Sunday, March 18, 2012 at 2 p.m.

Scarboro Mission, 2685 Kingston Rd, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Facilitated by Susan Rush, Coordinator, Contemplative Outreach New Mexico

Eligibility: at least one year's regular practice of Centering Prayer

Cost: overnight resident: \$625; commuter \$445 (includes non-refundable fee of \$50)

Register: send contact info & full payment to Elyse Strathy, 91 Glenview Ave, Toronto, ON, N4R 1P9, CANADA

Further information: contact Elyse Strathy at 416-482-1619 or strathy@sympatico.ca

42. ENNEAGRAM AND SPIRITUALITY II—BECOMING OUR TRUE SELVES

by Dr Miriam Frey

The second of two workshops for those interested in becoming more fully alive to whom they are meant to be; exploring the summons of our soul.

Saturday, March 24, 2012 (9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, 100 Benjamin Road, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.

Cost: \$90 includes materials. \$80 each if you register with a friend.

Registration Deadline: March 10, 2012

Register: contact Miriam at 519-880-9684 or email: mfrey@sentex.ca

43. WOMEN'S GATEWAY RETREAT

Queen of Apostles Retreat Centre, 1617 Blythe Road, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada.

Friday, March 2 (7 p.m.) to Sunday, March 4, 2012 (2 p.m.)

Retreat Facilitators: The Rev. Carol Langley and Wendy Passmore

Cost: \$225.00 includes: 2 nights accommodation (private room), 5 meals, and materials.

To register: send \$40.00 non-refundable deposit to: The Rev. Carol Langley, 100 River Rock Cres., Brampton, Ontario, Canada, L7A 2W5.

Further information and/or brochure, call 905-846-2952 or e-mail: cclangley@sympatico.ca.

44. SUPPORTING THOSE WHO SUPPORT: PRACTICAL WISDOM AND GUIDANCE FOR ALL CAREGIVERS

by Dr Anne Simmonds

Saturday, March 3, 2012 (9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.) at St Peter's United Church, Sudbury, Ontario, Canada.

This is an *Emmanuel at a Distance* program – contact Gillian Schell at gschell@laurentian.ca.

Cost: \$50 (half price for students)

Registration: Betsy Anderson at 416-813-4096 or betsy.anderson@utoronto.ca.

Additional information: www.emmanuel.utoronto.ca.

45. HOLY GROUND: PASTORAL CARE OF THE DYING AND BEREAVED

with Dr Anne Simmonds

Friday, March 23 to Sat March 24, 2012 (10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily) at Emmanuel College, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

This two-day workshop provides participants with an opportunity for reflection on their professional and personal concerns and experiences regarding death and grief and an opportunity to enhance their ability to provide pastoral care to the dying and bereaved.

Cost: \$175 includes lunch and coffee breaks. Deadline: March 15, 2012.

Registration: Betsy Anderson at 416-813-4096 or betsy.anderson@utoronto.ca.

Additional information: www.emmanuel.utoronto.ca

46. HONOURING DREAMS: MESSAGES OF HEALING AND HOPE

at Five Oaks Centre, Paris

Friday, March 16 at 5:30 p.m. (begins with supper) to *Sun Mar 18* at 12:30 (ends with lunch)

Facilitated by Miriam Frey

Together we will explore the symbolism, levels of meaning and types of dreams that aid in spiritual awareness. There will be opportunity for personal rest and reflection as well as interactions with others. Bring your dreams and active imagination.

Cost: \$295.00 includes tuition, meals and accommodation.

Register online at www.fiveoaks.on.ca or email: registrar@fiveoaks.on.ca or call 519-442-3212.

47. 1-DAY LOVING-KINDNESS (METTA) MEDITATION RETREAT

When: Saturday, March 10th, 2012

Where: Society of Friends (Quakers) House, 60 Lowther Ave. (2 blocks north of Bloor St. West off Bedford Rd.), Toronto , ON



Time: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm (please arrive before 9:00 am to sign in)

Sponsored by Spring Rain Sangha

Facilitators: Jim Bedard and Randy Baker

Cost: \$30 (No one will be turned away due to lack of funds. Please contact us if cost is a problem.)

Registration: Pre-registration is necessary. Application forms can be found in the "Retreats" section of www.SpringRainSangha.com

Contact: For more information, please contact us at one-dayretreats@springrainsangha.com

“This 1-Day Loving-Kindness (Metta) Meditation Retreat introduces practices that help us become more loving individuals. By gently re-orienting the heart and mind to focus on the positive energies of loving-kindness and well-being, the practice of metta helps to gradually open our hearts to unconditional love for all beings, including ourselves. People of all faiths are welcome to attend this unique event.”

48. TRULY MADLY DEEPLY: A ONE-DAY WORKSHOP ON WRITING DESIRE

Writing a good love poem can be as difficult as getting a handle on love – although this has never stopped anyone from loving, or trying to express their feelings in words.

This one-day workshop is for anyone interested in exploring the meaning and mystery of love through the practice of writing poetry.

Just bring your pen, your heart(ache), and your creative imagination!

Saturday, March 3, 2012

10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Location: Paterson Hall Room 236, Carleton University

Cost: \$20.00*

Seats are limited. Please register in advance at info@inscapecentre.ca or 613-230-4839 (fee is payable at the door).

Workshop co-facilitators **Jane Dawson** and **Jessica Schafer** are both experienced writers who are passionate about poetry as a tool for exploring and articulating the mysteries of the heart.

This workshop is an initiative of Faith and Arts Ottawa and is sponsored by the Carleton University Ecumenical Chaplaincy.

(*if cost is an issue some sponsorships are available through the Chaplaincy Office – phone 613-520-4449)

In love, gratitude, compassion and forgiveness...

Rev. Robert Meagher

Spiritual Guidance

Serving your personal journey toward enlightenment...

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