

Serving your personal journey toward enlightenment...

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.

In this e-Newsletter...

SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE OFFERINGS:	3
1. Personal Story of Spiritual Lessons	3
2. Contemplative Thoughts*	4
3. Poem	6
4. Quote or Question	7
5. This Month's Heart and Soul Picks	7
CONTRIBUTING SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND TEACHERS:	9
6. Richard Harvey – Happy New Year!	9
7. Doug Henderson, Ph.D – The Caterpillar—Butterfly Metaphor	10
8. Geoff Straw – Let Peace Begin with Me	11
9. Kathryn Kimmins – Peace Out: Turn 2013's Daily Routines Into Stress-Burning Rituals	11
10. Regiena Heringa – Notes from the Light – January 2013	12
OTHER GIFTS AND E-NEWSWORTHY ITEMS:	14
11. Good News Of The Day	14
12. The Artist's Way	17
13. The Power of Myth	18
14. Always Had It, Always Will	18
15. Kindness—Just Do It!	19
16. The Gift of Acceptance	20
17. Best Servers	21
18. You Would Hug Me?	22
19. A Story of True Love and Acceptance	23
20. The Little Lost Lady	23
21. Full Circle	24
22. Katie's Crops Feed the Homeless	25
23. Incredible Edible!	25
24. Landfill Harmonic	25
25. Rocky "Anna": Love Is The Only Currency	25
26. A Story for Tomorrow	26
27. Bring me Love!	26
HEART AND SOUL ADVERTISEMENTS:	27
28. Spiritual Resources	27
29. Spiritual Exploration and Soul Coaching	27
30. Spirituality Workshops	28
31. Spirituality Discussion Groups	29
32. A Course in Miracles Study Groups	29
33. Interfaith Conversation Series	30
34. Serving Your Loved-Ones	31
35. Supporting Spiritual Guidance	31

Serving your personal journey toward enlightenment...

36.	Together, Sharing the Journey Retreat – Group Spiritual Direction Training	32
37.	Hebrew Multifaith Golden Rule Poster Now Available Free Online	33
38.	Seeking your Truth through God’s Forgotten Language	33
39.	The Sashti Poorthi Lecture-Seminars	34
40.	Women’s Getaway Retreat	36
41.	Heart to Heart: Observing Our Hidden Barriers in Relationships	36
42.	Wisdom of the Season	36
43.	January Preached Retreat	37
44.	Two On-line Psycho-Spiritual Courses	37

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

SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE OFFERINGS:

1. Personal Story of Spiritual Lessons



Welcome to the New World!

“As the sun is not sullied by the defects of external objects, so the inner soul of all beings is not sullied by the misery of the world”.

The Upanishads

Well...here we are! December 21, 2012, has come and gone and we are still here...right here! What happened? According to Hollywood and some scientific communities' portrayal of the Mayan prophecies, weren't we all supposed to have exploded or morphed into some new enlightened being? Weren't the chosen ones supposed to have ascended to a new state or level of consciousness while those souls who were asleep were destined to eternal misery and damnation? I sort of feel jipped! NOT!!!

I have never felt so positive, uplifted and optimistic about our future as right now!

Without anyone really knowing what cosmic or energetic portal we just passed through from mid-late December, it is undeniable for many that 'something' did take place throughout 2012 that has forever changed the consciousness—and evolutionary trajectory—of humankind. And I believe, as a human race, we have passed through a sort of gate to a new world order.

My optimism is rooted in the very reality that may appear, to some, to be death, destruction, misery, war and strife. Indeed, one doesn't need to look very far to see unprecedented upheaval and unrest on our planet. All of our major worldly systems appear to be teetering on the brink of collapse—environmental systems; economic and financial systems; geo-political relationships; religious and faith institutions; education systems; and medical / health-care systems. All of these pillars of our world appear to be in some form of decay. Or is this decay really something else? It is in looking this potpourri of chaos straight in the eye, that I have started to see reason for great hope, joy, and optimism.

A dear soul friend, Rev. Dr. Doug Henderson, writes in this newsletter about “The Caterpillar—Butterfly Metaphor”. In his thought-provoking article, he writes about the transformation of the caterpillar into the butterfly as an evolutionary process. The caterpillar greedily gorges itself until it becomes so grotesquely overweight it cannot move anymore. The caterpillar goes into a sort of hibernation and, through a process of disintegration, a new, beautiful creature emerges—a butterfly. I believe that at this time in human evolution and transformation, we are experiencing what the caterpillar—butterfly metaphor offers us—transformation to a new, beautiful existence and world order. All of our systems mentioned previously are in a state of transformation. The way we have operated through these systems will no longer work. A new way of 'being' is emerging. And it is the emergence of this new world order that I intend and trust will offer us ever-lasting peace, joy and love.

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As a human race we have learned our lessons well. We are coming to know the old ways of greed, competition, self-preservation at all cost, and capitalism will no longer sustain our planet and humankind. Through these lessons we have emerged, like the butterfly, from hibernation and are opening ourselves to new and unlimited possibilities as we take flight. Fasten your seat-belts! While it's going to be a bit of a bumpy ride, it's going to be the ride of your life! All aboard! Welcome to the new world!

Shanti, Namaste, Agapé,

In love, gratitude, compassion and forgiveness...

Rev. Robert Meagher

2. Contemplative Thoughts*

Ancient roots hold modern relevance. There are stories and myths that depict universal truths in each culture. These truths transcend the immediate and connect us to our original state of being. When I stop to remember the old stories that inspire me I can reconnect with my original truth. Today let me remember ancient wisdom in my modern context.

Where does my time go? Am I using my time well or is it being used by old habits, compulsion and waste? When I use time well it serves me well and I have the feeling I am riding the wave of life. When I waste time I feel like the wave is crashing on my head. Today let me use time well.

By appreciating the part I am playing in life, I protect myself from allowing the past to take over and use me. The past will rush in and define who I am in this moment unless I pay attention to the ways I am changing and growing in life. Today let me realize who I am in this moment and free myself from past definitions.

There is a difference between playing my role and "role playing". When I am role playing I am pretending to be something I am not. However when I play my role I am expressing who I truly am. Today let me play my role fully.

See the beauty inside rather than trying to cut weaknesses on the outside. If I try to cut away my Weaknesses they will grow as fast as they are cut. An easier and more enjoyable way to transform the self is to see the beauty and the wisdom at the core of my being, to feed it with a vision of love and to watch it blossom. Where flowers grow weeds cannot. Today let me see my inner beauty.

Just as a bird cannot fly until it lets go of the branch I can only be free when I let go of limitations. Most of the limitations I live with come from my own thinking. When I think I am not able to do something, not able to leave something, not able to create the life I want, I am keeping myself stuck on the branch. Letting go of limited thoughts about the self is the first step to flying. Today let me be free.

The habit of doubting the self is so great that we would almost immediately do that rather than doubt our doubt. It is useful to reflect on one's assumptions so as not to become arrogant and close-minded. However, to doubt myself rather than trust in myself will only result in pain. Today let me give up doubting myself.

A busy person does not have time to sit in silence and discover the true self. If you are busy you live an ordinary life, a life dedicated to satisfying others; to pleasing kids, parents, work place and friends. When I take time alone to reconnect with my inner core I replenish myself and my capacity to give to others. Only by replenishing myself will I be able to satisfy those in my life. Today let me take a few precious moments alone to be silent.

Be where you are and be there well. Sometimes we resist being in our current situation, thinking there is somewhere else for me to be or something else for me to do. However, each of us is in a place that is perfect for our development. Today let me appreciate the perfect nature of my situation.

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You get tired when your thinking is not essence-full. When I think too much or my thoughts are expansive, taking small situations and making them bigger, then I become exhausted. It is possible to go through a whole day with very little physical exertion yet be exhausted by night time. This is because of the quality of my thinking. Today let me be essence-full in my thinking.

When I bring the energy of lightness to life, all tasks and relationships become light. Lightness is a combination of a light heart and a light mind. A heart is light when it is free from the weight of resentment, guilt or anger. The mind is light when it has clarity, seeing beneath the surface noise and confusion to a deeper understanding. Today let me keep my own nature light and see how life becomes easy.

To maintain enthusiasm on my spiritual journey I must maintain a close connection with my deepest motivation and specialty. Why am I here? What do I want to become? What do I want to express? When I remember this deep motivation and aim, I tap into an intrinsic source of energy to support me on my journey. Today let me clarify and remember my deepest motivation in life.

Go beyond limitations. As I walk and move, I can look beyond differences of culture, religion, and gender and remember that we are peaceful, spiritual beings having unique human experiences. By doing this, I dissolve the power of little frustrations and annoyances through pure vision. Today let me use the power of self-control to still my mind in an accepting vision of all.

Truth cannot be hidden. It is like a diamond that shines wherever it is. When you are true to yourself you become like an alchemist's stone, transforming any gathering by bringing truth and honesty into the atmosphere. Today let me be true to myself.

Decisions are best made in silence. When the atmosphere in which we are thinking becomes quiet, we are able to cross over the web of thoughts in the mind. The mind creates puzzles and doubts and when we cross that and go into the self, we find that the way forward is very clear. When we work on this inner level, we experience power to discern and we do not feel guilty about our decisions. Today let me make decisions from a space of silence.

Overcoming expectation is the key to freedom. One of the ways we attempt to fulfill our basic needs for love, happiness or peace is through expectation. By expecting others to fulfill my needs, I have slowly lost my own mastery and become dependent. True freedom is to have no dependencies and a lot of kind connections. Today let me be truly free by letting go of expectations.

The more rooted I become in myself, the deeper and stronger the roots of my self respect will become and the stronger and taller I can grow. Rather than attempting to water every leaf of the tree of my life, I can water the roots of my inner self. Then the leaves automatically receive this nourishment. Today let me dedicate my energy towards appreciating and nurturing the depth of my roots.

When you are in the dark you cannot see your shadow. When I am caught in dark or negative thinking I am completely unable to see the light. This is spiritual darkness. It is only when I have stepped out of the dark into the light of a new perspective about myself that I am able to see the shadow side of my own thinking. Today let me focus on the light so I will be able to detect the shadow if it emerges.

Imagine your inner world being so still and stable that it does not shake. It is possible for me to cultivate the practice of remaining still inside. When I practice this in quiet moments I can draw on this stability in times of stress. Today let me cultivate inner stillness and stability so it will be there when needed.

Don't ask why it happened; ask how you handled it when it happened. Rather than wasting energy asking why something is happening, or how it could have happened, I can choose to focus my energy on my response; ensuring I respond with stability and dignity. Today let me shift focus to maintaining stability in the face of obstacles.

Whatever is in your heart that is not clean, not true, will ultimately begin to act like a wall, obstructing the natural flow of love. If I feel that there is no love in my life, I am being blocked by this wall. Ego limits the flow of love by placing conditions on the love I give and receive. Ego uses love to satisfy its own needs and desires. It produces a love which is deceptive, one which brings only temporary satisfaction. Ego does not allow me to experience eternal love or share it. Let me knock down ego's walls and experience true and authentic love.

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Real unity comes when we appreciate the differences of each person in the gathering. Attempts to build unity that is based on having everyone in a group be alike only creates more disharmony. True unity comes when I am able to see the unique qualities of each person and when each person is free to express these specialties. Today let me build unity.

All accounts from the past must be settled. The extent to which I have given peace and happiness to others is the extent I will be experiencing peace and happiness at this time. If I have caused subtle division, competition or judgment I will also experience this now. Today let me face anything that comes back to me to be settled with tolerance and dignity.

Sometimes the drama of life supports me in unusual ways. Although I want to be healthy I still participate in unhealthy habits. If I have lost balance and become unhealthy, the drama of life will force me to choose health, often through sickness. Today let me accept life's support and understand sickness as a reminder to choose health.

To worry about the future is to lose power in the present moment. Each moment spent worrying about something that has not happened drains me of the energy I might need, to face the situation if it does occur. Today let me imagine positive outcomes and strengthen my ability to respond if needed.

In a material minded world, matters of spirit are often lost. Although the spirit is invisible, its impact is felt in my world. As the spirit becomes tainted with selfishness and strong materialistic desires, it loses its ability to shine brightly. When I pay attention to my inner spiritual experiences, with a deeper meaning, these experiences grow and act as a buffer between I and materialism. Today let me value the subtlety of my own spiritual experience.

Self-control means I am able to master my thoughts, feelings and emotions like an expert driver who is in control of the vehicle. To have self-control is to have the ability to channel thoughts in the right direction. Masterfully I keep my thoughts on a positive track no matter how big the challenges are. I never go off-track so I that I don't experience the difficulty of going back on track. Today let me practice staying on-track.

Every thought creates vibrations. Vibrations are like sound waves or radiations. No obstacles, no hurdles can top them. Today let me be aware of this fact and think before I think, making sure my thoughts are of the highest quality.

Where there is stillness there is depth. The top of the water is where most of the turbulence is felt. To go deep is to find stillness. Today let me go deep within myself to find a place of stillness and bring this calm into my outer world and interactions.

The greatest gift we can give another human being is to see the soul in each human body with soul conscious love. Today let me see the beautiful qualities of each person I meet rather than noticing their physical form.

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

3. Poem

A Spiritual Journey

And the world cannot be discovered by a journey of miles,
no matter how long,
but only by a spiritual journey,
a journey of one inch,
very arduous and humbling and joyful,
by which we arrive at the ground at our feet,
and learn to be at home.

-- Wendell Berry

4. Quote or Question

As human beings, our greatness lies not so much in being able to remake the world as in being able to remake ourselves.
(Mahatma Gandhi)

5. This Month's Heart and Soul Picks

Each month I am blessed and honored to co-create this spirit-filled e-newsletter for a growing community of heart-centred people around the world. I am grateful to receive a cornucopia of content for this e-newsletter, and I read all of it. Sometimes, there are a few e-newsletter items that, on any given month, speak to me more than others and that I invite you to take a moment to explore for yourself. Below are this month's 'Heart and Soul Picks'.

11. The following 'Good News Of The Day' stories...

"Always plugged in and constantly juggling tasks at work and at home, many of us feel like there aren't enough hours in the day to do all the things we need to do. But wouldn't it be awesome to feel like you had more time? In fact, a new study suggests that experiencing awe -- which psychologists define as the feeling we get when we come across something so strikingly vast in number, scope, or complexity that it alters the way we understand the world -- could help us do just that. What's more, awe might make us more generous with how we spend our time and improve our overall well-being." [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Invoke awe in your day.

"Azim Khamisa smiles when he spots a round-faced man with spectacles striding into a sun-dappled courtyard on the campus of San Diego State University. The two embrace. They're here to deliver an unusual talk, one that, over the years, they have presented to millions of students across the country. Minutes later, inside a warmly lit amphitheater, Khamisa takes the stage. "I'd like to introduce to you a very special man in my life," he says. "My brother, Ples Felix." When introducing Felix, he always uses that word: brother...They met 17 years ago after Felix's only grandson murdered Khamisa's only son." What follows is a powerful story of forgiveness and healing. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Reflect on a grievance you've been holding on to. Try and release it in forgiveness today.

When one woman found herself struggling to make ends meet after being out of work for well over a year, she began an unusual practice to bolster her spirits through a difficult period: she began seeking out opportunities to perform small acts of kindness for strangers. This past November the ripple that ensued from one of her compassionate gestures, circled around to touch her life in an utterly unexpected way. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Bring a spark of unexpected kindness into someone's life today.

In 1989, eighteen-year-old Shaheen Mistry arrived in Mumbai for a visit from the United States. After a poignant encounter with the city's street children she called her parents in the US and announced her decision to stay in India for good. Shaheen went on to found the inspiring non-profit Akanksha, dedicated to educating and empowering children from underprivileged backgrounds. Today she heads Teach for India and continues to light the future for thousands of children across the country. In this heartfelt piece she draws attention to the beautiful lessons she's learned from these young lives. Lessons for all of humanity. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Make an effort this week to brighten a child's world.

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"What exactly is forgiveness? When we are in the state of unforgiving, we are holding on to a grudge. A grudge is a story of hurt and resentment that we believe to be true and repeat over and over in our thoughts. It lodges in our body and mind like a freeloading visitor who won't leave. It keeps our hearts clamped shut, depletes our energy, and hijacks our creativity. The story of the grudge involves blaming someone else for what happened, which turns us into a victim. And as a victim, we are powerless, bitter, and stuck. If you are clinging to an old painful story, check in right now to see if this is true in your own experience." The following article offers suggestions for how to practice forgiveness in daily life. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** "Forgiveness & Your Life's Unfinished Business" is a short, insightful passage by Stephen Levine. [{ more }](#)

- 16. The Gift of Acceptance
- 19. A Story of True Love and Acceptance
- 23. Incredible Edible!
- 24. Landfill Harmonic
- 26. A Story for Tomorrow
- 27. Bring me Love!

In love, gratitude, compassion and forgiveness...

Rev. Robert Meagher

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).

6. Richard Harvey – Happy New Year!

There are two worlds. This one that we know well and love: the relative world of time and space. The other is the Absolute world where there is neither time or space, neither timelessness nor not timelessnessness, neither spacelessness nor not spacelessness. In Reality these two worlds are one. The relative world is the reflection of the Absolute: infinity expressed in the field of space and time. Another way of putting it is that it is the play of the Absolute. Yet another way of putting it is to say that God plays hide-and-seek with existence in this relative world.

In *Turiya*, from the Hindu religion, we learn that there are three states in the relative world: waking, dreaming and sleeping. A human being occupies one or other of these states throughout their lifetime. Turiya is the fourth state, the divine condition that permeates through all three changing states. However, *Turyatita* is the culmination of the four states in which all is finally understood to be Divine.

Come what may, we approach or are presently in a new year. New Year signifies the divine opportunity of renewal, of trying again to be all that we can be, to achieve all we wish for and to potentially surpass the previous year. Or if we are feeling negative, it is a year to persist in our failure and limitations and remain in the doldrums.

As you get older one year looks like another and you grow ever closer to the humanly-daunting vision that all will be taken away from you. Everything you have identified with, every kind of relationship to people, objects and events comes to an end – inevitably.

If this is the case, what could possibly be the importance of beginning again, making a fresh start, entering a new year?

There is and there only ever has been one good reason for doing anything and it is Consciousness, the Divine, *satchitanada*, God or Reality. As your real nature in Truth and the one you share with all other apparent beings – human, animal and all forms of arising Life – Reality is the only omniscience, the only omnipotence and the only savior from the apparently endless ordeal of suffering in all its multi-faceted expressions.

Begin now. Don't forget this may not be the last year, but it is the eternal moment, a window into eternity and the life with no boundaries. You can devote yourself to self or you can devote yourself to the Divine. Whichever you do, do it with your whole heart. The difficulty inherent in self-devotion is that it is nothing at all, merely narcissistic concern. But don't worry; the world is a great teacher and through practicing self-devotion we come to learn this eventually.

Devotion to the Divine, however, is truly self-devotion because it is your real nature. Your real self is Divine. So let this New Year be the year of individual divinity – yours and mine. Let all things come to you, let all relationships thrive, lead an abundant existence, let everything you have ever dreamed of come to fruition, let your smile and your gaze enlighten all around you, let the dreams of your youth mingle with the angst of your old age and somewhere in the middle now be free – free and utterly liberated of all fears, desires and suffering, since you have and are everything you ever wanted already. Happy New Year!

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

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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.

7. Doug Henderson, Ph.D – The Caterpillar—Butterfly Metaphor

Our struggle around money, and all the tension, fears, and excesses that go with it, has a parallel in nature. When a caterpillar nears its transformation time, it begins to eat ravenously, consuming everything in sight. (It is interesting to note that individuals are often called 'consumers'). At this point in its evolution it can eat hundreds of times its own weight, and the more it consumes the more fat and sluggish it gets.

Attaching to a branch, it forms a *chrysalis* -- an enclosing shell that limits the caterpillar's freedom for the duration of the transformation. Within the chrysalis a miracle of metamorphosis into a butterfly occurs. The caterpillar does not simply shrink a bit and sprout wings. Instead, it sort of disintegrates into a puddle of ooze within the chrysalis, and a new type of cells start appearing.

The caterpillar's new cells are called **imaginal cells**. They resonate at a different frequency. They are totally different from the caterpillar cells; so his immune system perceives these new cells as enemies, and attacks them (much as new ideas in science, medicine, politics, and social behavior are viciously denounced by the powers now considered mainstream). However, even though the imaginal cells are being killed off for not fitting in, they still keep showing up, more and more of them. Pretty soon, the caterpillar's immune system cannot destroy them fast enough. More and more of the imaginal cells survive. Eventually, the imaginal cells begin to find each other and cluster together. They all resonate together at the same frequency, passing information from one to another. Like attracts like, and the clusters begin to join up with other clusters. Eventually, they become a large community and they switch gears from simply being a group of 'like-minded' cells into the programming cells of the butterfly. They become the genetic directors of the metamorphosis of the caterpillar. The caterpillar body then becomes a 'nutritious soup' for the growth of the butterfly. Some imaginal cells start changing into wing cells, some start changing into antenna cells, some start changing into digestive tract cells, and so on. They are no longer imaginal cells but become butterfly anatomy cells. The butterfly eventually emerges as a completely new entity from the original caterpillar.

When the butterfly is ready to hatch, the chrysalis becomes transparent (much as the Internet is making many hidden actions transparent). The need for restriction has been outgrown. Yet the struggle toward freedom has an organic timing. Were the chrysalis opened too soon, the butterfly would die. As the butterfly emerges, it opens its right wing and its left wing, and then flies away to dance among the flowers.

This caterpillar-butterfly metaphor gives us a way to see the world the way it is, even its state of voracious greed, as a kind of evolutionary phase. It is such a fitting metaphor for our time. The fall of unsustainable structures in business, economics, politics, and government could be the beginning of the voracious caterpillar's becoming the 'nutritive soup' from which will grow the miracle of the butterfly. In this world of turmoil and conflict, violence and retribution, millions of people taking responsibility not just for change, but also for transformation, for creating the miracle of the butterfly. We may be in the minority, but we are everywhere and we are connecting with one another. We are the genetic directors of this living system. **If we continue to connect with each other, we can create out this gluttonous caterpillar the miracle of the butterfly.**

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.

8. Geoff Straw – Let Peace Begin with Me

A peacefulness emanates from within you. Others feel it, sense it, and it assists them in feeling it too. This deep Peace comes from the Spirit; it is not earthbound. It can influence what happens here on earth, however. But it is a gift from Spirit, where peacefulness is the natural state.

The more closely linked with Spirit that you are, the more peaceful you feel. The more Peace you sense and see in your world, the more you will seek Peace in each circumstance that you are in.

Peace comes through acceptance, through letting go - it is a natural by-product or result. Non-acceptance brings discord.

ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE AND TEACHER: Geoff Straw is a counsellor with private practice in St. Catharines, Ontario. Geoff can be reached at 289-241-4805 or by e mail at gwstraw@sympatico.ca.

9. Kathryn Kimmins – Peace Out: Turn 2013's Daily Routines Into Stress-Burning Rituals

It can be a challenge to reach a calm and relaxed mindset, especially in our modern world. But in *Shortcuts to Inner Peace*, Ashley Davis Bush helps readers learn how to hit the pause button amidst the chaos with a spirit of mindfulness-linking fast, easy, and restorative respites to ordinary everyday activities.

Once people begin to integrate these shortcuts into their daily lives, they begin to happen automatically. And when that happens, inner peace will no longer be a brief state of mind, but a way of life.

Here are a few of Ashley's suggestions for inner peace.

1. Taking a Shower

The shower is an ideal place to wash away concerns because you're in the water having a physical cleansing experience. In your head or out loud, list some of your worries, then imagine dropping them down the drain. I call it..... Catch the concern by bringing it to your consciousness, focus on it for a moment, then let it go. There's a huge advantage in identifying what's bothering you and then consciously releasing it. This is an easy exercise that allows you to start your day with a fresh perspective.

2. Writing a To-Do List.

You've got a pen and paper in front of you when you're making a list; why not also write a little note to someone in your life while you're at it? Thank someone or tell a friend that you're thinking about her/him. When you focus on positive emotion and generate love, you feel peaceful and happy. Write a note, drop it on someone's desk, on a pillow, or in a lunchbox. It can say 'I'm thinking of you,' 'I love you,' 'Thank you for helping me'. It doesn't have to say much to be effective.

3. Arriving at Home

Rather than slogging into your house or apartment at the end of each day, take a restorative pause by shaking out your body before you go inside. Shake your right leg, then your left, and then your arms. Roll your head, stretch, and let all the energy fall away. Exhale deeply while you're doing this and you'll actually activate the parasympathetic nervous system. Often referred to as the 'rest and digest' part, it's the opposite of the 'fight or flight' response that gears you up for alarm. Calming yourself in this way allows you to move into the rest of your evening with a clean slate.

4. Lying in Bed

As you lie in bed, mentally review three things that happened that day that you're grateful for. Recreate them in your mind and really absorb how they make you feel. The sensation of gratitude will spread over your entire body, relaxing you. Some people recommend writing down things you're grateful for at night. But at the end of the day, that can feel like too much work. This is something you can do anywhere. Gratitude opens your heart and creates an energy of goodwill and happiness that will ease you into slumber a lot better than focusing on all the things you have to do the next day.

5. Laughter Yoga

This idea is mine. A 10 minute daily dose of laughter yoga is an equivalent to a half hour of any cardio-vascular exercise, such as a rowing machine, tread mill, stationary bike and power walking. Not only are you giving yourself a full facial, you're increasing endorphins, reducing cortisol levels and stress, squirting dopamine throughout your brain, heightened memory function, (oh how I like that one), increased brain and body cells, activating your circulatory system, lowering blood pressure, handling life's adversities with flair and patience and last but not finished by a long shot, oxygenating your body and increasing blood flow to the brain.

You have to love the power of laughter. For your daily dose of laughter, google 'youtube laughter yoga exercises' and a zillion will pop up for you to tap into every single day for the rest of your life. You can also visit my website, www.laughyourselfhealthy.ca

Did I mention increased lifespan? Whoo-hoo! Very good, very good, YEAH. Have a funtastic 2013.

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/>.

10. Regiena Heringa – Notes from the Light – January 2013

It is in the surrendering of arms and of dark thought that your world will shine again as the sun in the intergalactic community. Your planet has been missed; a place has always been kept open for it, even as the darkness pulled your world away from the deep gravitational force of Love. Yet even as the darkness drew you away from the divine core, many, many of your citizens, recognizing the deceit, have begun to let go of this addiction to darkness and now celebrate the return to their "home nation"—the inner sphere of Love and loving Intelligence.

This inner sphere is the true place of existence, far surpassing any concept you may foster of time and dimension. In truth, this inner sphere has no location and yet is found in all vibrating matter. This may seem a paradox to your way of reasoning and perceiving. However, kindly be aware that not only is your physical world settling itself into a more transparent and vast dimension, ideas and concepts of your known world are also transforming and re-establishing themselves. All will become clearer to you both gradually and rapidly.

What then is our message to you?

We ask that you become unified inside of yourselves. Find the inner point of truth and graft all your thoughts, love and actions to it. In this manner, you cultivate unity and stability and become a strength and a light to your families, communities and world.

You may ask, "What is this point of truth?"

Smilingly, we say to you that the point of truth is found within the essence of the feeling of Love for the Creator and for all creation.

Your universal teacher has requested that you love all others as you love yourselves. Hence, take this opportunity in your shortening days, to truly love yourselves. In this manner, you will sense the world around you as love and joyfully realize that you, through your own free will, have chosen to return within the sphere of divine essence. It is here you will recognize the dance home into the gravitational pull of universal Love and loving Intelligence.

We would remind you that the destiny of your world, your planet, is to once again become the sun in the intergalactic community. This can also be your own personal destiny, if you so desire it.

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 rheringa@bell.net.

OTHER GIFTS AND E-NEWSWORTHY ITEMS:

11. Good News Of The Day

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

"The waiter was halfway through taking my family's order when his manager called him away." "Where did the waiter go?" Sophia, our seven-year-old, asked. Daniel, our five-year old, looked at me and then answered, "I think he had to take a conference call." Even before hearing Daniel's analysis of the waiter's momentary inattention, I knew I had a problem: I work all the time." What follows is the story of how one man managed to reclaim his life from the jaws of busy-ness. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Experiment with Bregman's idea. Initiate and try to sustain a small daily practice that separates your work and not-work time.

"At 13 years old, Nickolaus Dent is his mother's primary caregiver. He's responsible for the grocery shopping and cooking. He cleans the house. He does all the laundry. His mother, Janine Helms, has been battling HIV for as long as Nickolaus can recall, and her health has deteriorated in the last couple of years. Nickolaus makes sure she takes her medication. He often helps her get dressed, and at times, he has helped her bathe. Nickolaus is just one of the estimated 10,000 youth caregivers living in Palm Beach County, Florida, according to the American Association of Caregiving Youth. The nonprofit, founded by county resident Connie Siskowski, was instrumental in bringing this previously unrecognized population to light..." [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Learn more about children who are caregivers and ways to support them here. [{ more }](#)

"Always plugged in and constantly juggling tasks at work and at home, many of us feel like there aren't enough hours in the day to do all the things we need to do. But wouldn't it be awesome to feel like you had more time? In fact, a new study suggests that experiencing awe -- which psychologists define as the feeling we get when we come across something so strikingly vast in number, scope, or complexity that it alters the way we understand the world -- could help us do just that. What's more, awe might make us more generous with how we spend our time and improve our overall well-being." [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Invoke awe in your day.

"Azim Khamisa smiles when he spots a round-faced man with spectacles striding into a sun-dappled courtyard on the campus of San Diego State University. The two embrace. They're here to deliver an unusual talk, one that, over the years, they have presented to millions of students across the country. Minutes later, inside a warmly lit amphitheater, Khamisa takes the stage. "I'd like to introduce to you a very special man in my life," he says. "My brother, Ples Felix." When introducing Felix, he always uses that word: brother...They met 17 years ago after Felix's only grandson murdered Khamisa's only son." What follows is a powerful story of forgiveness and healing. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Reflect on a grievance you've been holding on to. Try and release it in forgiveness today.

"From wartime child refugee to self-made multi-millionaire and philanthropist, Dame Stephanie Shirley's life has been more eventful than most. She arrived in London at the age of five, just weeks before the outbreak of World War II -- one of thousands of Jewish children fleeing the Nazis and coming to Britain as part of the Kindertransport --and was brought up by loving foster parents." "I know very clearly why I give. I've been given so much myself, what else can I do but give?" she says." This BBC article takes a closer look at the reasons that drive and inspire philanthropists. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Read this short passage by writer Isabel Allende, "In Giving I Connect With Others". [{ more }](#)

When one woman found herself struggling to make ends meet after being out of work for well over a year, she began an unusual practice to bolster her spirits through a difficult period: she began seeking out opportunities to perform small acts of kindness for strangers. This past November the ripple that ensued from one of her compassionate gestures, circled around to touch her life in an utterly unexpected way. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Bring a spark of unexpected kindness into someone's life today.

Serving your personal journey toward enlightenment...

Lawrence Anthony, the acclaimed South African conservationist passed away this March. His funeral turned out to be as extraordinary as his life. Two herds of wild elephants traveling single-file through the bush turned up at his home after he died. Elephants are known for mourning their dead. During his lifetime Anthony had managed to enlist Africans wanted as war criminals to protect northern white rhinoceroses; he taught African tribes how to set up game reserves; and entered fearlessly into war-torn Iraq at the beginning of an American invasion -- in order to save the animals abandoned in a Baghdad zoo. In this gripping excerpt from his book "The Elephant Whisperer", Anthony describes the extraordinary events that transpired when he tried to save a herd of rogue elephants from being shot. [{read more}](#) **Be The Change:** Learn about wildlife conservation efforts in your own region.

At 13 Trevor Schaefer was diagnosed with brain cancer and the world as he knew it changed overnight. Not only did Trevor end up beating the cancer -- he found a calling. Now 22, Schaefer is an inspiring advocate for children with cancer, and the driving force behind "Trevor's Law." This bill now pending in Congress would increase government authority to determine if environmental toxins are responsible for causing cancer in children living in particular regions. Read more about Trevor's journey in his own words. [{read more}](#) **Be The Change:** Take an step today, no matter how big or small, to "enable the future".

Six months out of grad school Jim Fruchterman found himself at a rocket launchpad for one of the very first private enterprise rocket companies. "Our business manager was doing the countdown. 5-4-3-2-1, oh, BLEEP. The rocket blew up!" It was a pivotal failure in his trajectory. Fruchterman moved to the Bay Area and started his own rocket company. It failed. He helped start seven other high tech companies. Five of them nosedived. Undeterred by these failures Jim Fruchterman launched Benetech -- a revolutionary non-profit tech company that seeks to benefit underserved communities. Earlier this year Fruchterman delivered an inspiring commencement speech offering up three key insights from his unusual journey. [{read more}](#) **Be The Change:** Learn more about Benetech's innovative programs. Begin Karma Banking in earnest today! [{more}](#)

"All over the world grandmothers are forming activist groups to tackle intractable issues: poverty, illiteracy, environmental degradation, disease, injustice and violence. Never before have grandmothers campaigned so vigorously or universally to make the world a better place." Paola Gianturco spent three years interviewing and photographing 120 activist grandmothers across 15 countries on 5 continents for her magnificent book: Grandmother Power, A Global Phenomenon. "I met them as my sisters -- I am a grandmother, too." she says. Together these women are changing our world. [{read more}](#) **Be The Change:** If you are a grandmother, know a grandmother, have a grandmother or are a GrandOther, learn more about the various activist grandmother groups out there and get involved! [{more}](#)

In 1989, eighteen-year-old Shaheen Mistry arrived in Mumbai for a visit from the United States. After a poignant encounter with the city's street children she called her parents in the US and announced her decision to stay in India for good. Shaheen went on to found the inspiring non-profit Akanksha, dedicated to educating and empowering children from underprivileged backgrounds. Today she heads Teach for India and continues to light the future for thousands of children across the country. In this heartfelt piece she draws attention to the beautiful lessons she's learned from these young lives. Lessons for all of humanity. [{read more}](#) **Be The Change:** Make an effort this week to brighten a child's world.

Rev. Charles Howard, chaplain at the University of Pennsylvania, offers a reflection on the recent tragedy in Connecticut. In his own search for how to respond, he comes to the intersection of inner transformation and social activism: "I am fasting for the next 27 days. One day for each life lost in Newtown -- including the gunman's. Fasting has been a part of my spiritual life for some time, but it was always impressed upon me to never tell others when I was fasting, as it is meant to be a private thing -- just between you and God. Not a show. Not a feat to bring attention to oneself. But this time, I thought that maybe by sharing what I'm doing, by fasting for peace, I (we) might be able to not only lean into this issue spiritually, but also move those around us to act as well." [{read more}](#) **Be The Change:** Do a meritorious deed and dedicate it to those who suffered from the recent tragedy.

"Erasing the awe-inspiring variety of sentient life impoverishes all our lives," historian Joanna Bourke wrote in her poignant meditation on what it means to be human. And yet our relationship with animals and our understanding of their inner lives remain inadequate at best. In 2010, photographer Tim Flach gave us his extraordinary dog portraits. This year, he's back with More Than Human -- a collection of striking, expressive portraits of our non-human fellow beings, captured with equal parts tenderness and aesthetic elegance." Maria Popova shares a collection of these portraits here. [{read more}](#) **Be The Change:** Pay special attention to all the different forms of life around you today.

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"Recently, I wrote that leaders should be readers. Reading has a host of benefits for those who wish to occupy positions of leadership and develop into more relaxed, empathetic, and well-rounded people. One of the most common follow-up questions was, "Ok, so what should I read?" That's a tough question. There are a number of wonderful reading lists out there... But if I had to focus on a short list for young business leaders, I'd choose the 11 below. I've only included books I've actually read, and I tried to compile a list that includes history, literature, psychology, and how-to. Variety is important..." Author John Coleman shares more. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Have you ever been deeply influenced by a book? If so, share it with someone you think might be similarly inspired.

She may not be a household name just yet, but when you refer to "the woman who talks about vulnerability," the seven million viewers of her TEDTalks videos know you mean Brené Brown. A research professor at the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work, Brown has been studying shame, fear, and vulnerability for 12 years. She has presented her findings in three books, on national television, and in lectures across the country. A mix of no-nonsense Texan and best-friend warmth, Brown shines a light into the inner chambers of our hearts -- and illuminates a reason to hope." In this interview with Spirituality & Health Brown also shares four traits of shame-resilient people. [{ read more }](#) **The Change:** Watch Brené Brown's powerful TED talk on vulnerability [{ more }](#)

"In Uganda, some 90% of the population lives without access to electricity, according to World Bank figures. Enter Solar Sister -- a group aiming to eradicate energy poverty while creating economic opportunities for women. Using an Avon-style women's distribution system, Solar Sister trains, recruits and supports female entrepreneurs in East Africa to sell affordable solar lighting and other green products such as solar lamps and mobile phone chargers." [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** "When we will all see our role in society as servants, we will all light up the sky together like countless stars on a dark night." Gandhi's successor Vinoba Bhave describes a 'servant leader' in this short passage. [{ more }](#)

"What exactly is forgiveness? When we are in the state of unforgiving, we are holding on to a grudge. A grudge is a story of hurt and resentment that we believe to be true and repeat over and over in our thoughts. It lodges in our body and mind like a freeloading visitor who won't leave. It keeps our hearts clamped shut, depletes our energy, and hijacks our creativity. The story of the grudge involves blaming someone else for what happened, which turns us into a victim. And as a victim, we are powerless, bitter, and stuck. If you are clinging to an old painful story, check in right now to see if this is true in your own experience." The following article offers suggestions for how to practice forgiveness in daily life. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** "Forgiveness & Your Life's Unfinished Business" is a short, insightful passage by Stephen Levine. [{ more }](#)

"How can adults nurture children's capacity to "connect the dots" through everyday conversations and activities? How can educators build an environment that leads children to see the patterns that make a difference? In this article, educator and writer Linda Booth Sweeney points out that thinking about systems means paying attention to the interrelationships, patterns, and dynamics that surround us -- and that children are naturally attuned to this. In cultivating systems literacy, you build upon this natural understanding to help promote this integrated way of thinking for the children in your life." [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Try tuning in more deeply to all the patterns and interconnections in our world -- and help a child in your life do the same!

On Dec. 1, a neighbor of Melissa Bemis and her family stopped in to tell her a gaily-wrapped package sat on her doorstep. Her two sons, Max, 7 and Mace, 2, were eager to find out what was inside, as was she. The attached card read, "On the first day of Christmas, Secret Santa left for me, games to play instead of watching TV." The anonymous gifting continued through Dec. 12 as "neighborhood elves" conspired to reach out to the young family that lost its father to cancer last January. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Reach out with an anonymous act of kindness to someone who has experienced a hard loss this year.

Some time ago when bad weather forced a commercial flight to divert to Hartford, Connecticut, some 106 miles north of its destination, the plane sat on the runway there for four hours -- without air-conditioning, food or water -- as babies wailed and adults anguished in the darkened cabin. The next day, the airline, which explained that the Hartford airport lacked the customs personnel to process an international flight, offered this response: "We would like to thank passengers for their patience and apologize for any inconvenience caused." Beginning with this example Daniel Pink makes the case that companies are talking 'professionalese' to keep customers and colleagues at a distance, when what people crave is openness and honesty. Then he issues a special challenge to each one of us... [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Consider taking on Dan Pink's Challenge to "speak only human" at work!

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Lovely Avelus graduated from kindergarten this past June in Haiti... "It was a big day for little Lovely, now 5. Two years ago, she was buried in the rubble of the two-storey house her family rented a room in by the 7.0 Richter earthquake that smashed this already broken country into shards. Lovely was counted among the dead who, by the end of it all, measured some 300,000. She emerged unblemished from the rubble six days later, and was eventually reunited with her family. No one thought they'd ever see Lovely again, let alone watch her graduate from kindergarten." A reporter shares more about the lessons Lovely and her country have taught her. [{read more}](#) **Be The Change:** Affect the quality of your day by taking time to appreciate it.

"Seventeen years ago in the Boston Globe Magazine, a dying man issued a plea for greater compassion in medicine. He worried that medical professionals faced increasing work demands that prioritized efficiency over empathy. Kenneth Schwartz died of lung cancer two months later, but not before founding an organization that would bring increased attention to the importance of human interactions in medicine." [{read more}](#) **Be The Change:** This powerful passage by an extraordinary doctor and writer describes the differences between "Helping, Fixing and Serving." [{more}](#)

12. The Artist's Way

Reprinted from InnerNet Weekly via www.iJourney.org.

It is my experience both as an artist and as a teacher that when we move out on faith into the act of creation, the universe is able to advance. It is a little like opening the gate at the top of a field irrigation system. Once we remove the blocks, the flow moves in.

Again, I do not ask you to believe this. In order for this creative emergence to happen, you don't have to believe in God. I simply ask you to observe and note this process as it unfolds. In effect, you will be midwiving and witnessing your own creative progression.

Creativity is an experience -- to my eye, a spiritual experience. It does not matter which way you think of it: creativity leading into spirituality or spirituality leading to creativity. In fact, I do not make a distinction between the two. In the face of such experience, the whole question of belief is rendered obsolete. As Carl Jung answered the question of belief late in his life, "I don't believe; I know."

The following spiritual principles are the bedrock on which creative recovery and discovery can be built. Read them through once a day, and keep an inner ear cocked for any shifts in attitudes or beliefs.

Basic Principles:

1. Creativity is the natural order of life. Life is energy: pure creative energy.
2. There is an underlying, in-dwelling creative force infusing all of life -- including ourselves.
3. When we open ourselves to our creativity, we open ourselves to the creator's creativity within us and our lives.
4. We are, ourselves, creations. And we, in turn, are meant to continue creativity by being creative ourselves.
5. Creativity is God's gift to us. Using our creativity is our gift back to God.
6. The refusal to be creative is self-will and is counter to our true nature.
7. When we open ourselves to exploring our creativity, we open ourselves to God: good orderly direction.
8. As we open our creative channel to the creator, many gentle but powerful changes are to be expected.
9. It is safe to open ourselves up to greater and greater creativity.

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10. Our creative dreams and yearnings come from a divine source. As we move toward our dreams, we move toward our divinity.

13. The Power of Myth

Reprinted from InnerNet Weekly via www.iJourney.org.

by Joseph Campbell

MOYERS: Why myths? Why should we care about myths? What do they have to do with my life?

CAMPBELL: My first response would be, "Go on, live your life, it's a good life--you don't need mythology." I don't believe in being interested in a subject just because it's said to be important. I believe in being caught by it somehow or other. But you may find that, with a proper introduction, mythology will catch you. And so, what can it do for you if it does catch you?

One of our problems today is that we are not well acquainted with the literature of the spirit. We're interested in the news of the day and the problems of the hour. It used to be that the university campus was a kind of hermetically sealed-off area where the news of the day did not impinge upon your attention to the inner life and to the magnificent human heritage we have in our great tradition--Plato, Confucius, the Buddha, Goethe, and others who speak of the eternal values that have to do with the centering of our lives. When you get to be older, and the concerns of the day have all been attended to, and you turn to the inner life--well, if you don't know where it is or what it is, you'll be sorry.

Greek and Latin and biblical literature used to be part of everyone's education. Now, when these were dropped, a whole tradition of Occidental mythological information was lost. It used to be that these stories were in the minds of people. When the story is in your mind, then you see its relevance to something happening in your own life. It gives you perspective on what's happening to you. With the loss of that, we've really lost something because we don't have a comparable literature to take its place. These bits of information from ancient times, which have to do with the themes that have supported human life, built civilizations, and informed religions over the millennia, have to do with deep inner problems, inner mysteries, inner thresholds of passage, and if you don't know what the guide-signs are along the way, you have to work it out yourself. But once this subject catches you, there is such a feeling, from one or another of these traditions, of information of a deep, rich, life-vivifying sort that you don't want to give it up.

14. Always Had It, Always Will

Reprinted from InnerNet Weekly via www.iJourney.org.

by Alan Cohen

Not this crude leather; luminous beings are we!
- Yoda

What would you do if someone swore that you knew the secret of life and put you on a stage to tell it? The Totally Hidden Video television show set up a hysterical prank on precisely this theme. For the gag, a Federal Express driver was asked to deliver a package to a religious temple (fabricated by the television show). Unknown to the driver, the pranksters had taken a photo of him and replicated it as a painted portrait, depicting the young man dressed in the royal regalia of the fictitious sect.

When the delivery man arrived, the disciples (actors hired by the program) took one look at him and began buzzing excitedly.

They ushered him to the front of the sanctuary and invited him to sit on a plush cushion of honor. Then they revealed to him that he was the chosen one, the long-awaited prophet foretold in their scriptures. To allay any doubts, a servant parted the altar curtain where, lo and behold, hung the majestic portrait of the deliverer, "painted by a visionary centuries ago."

"Please," begged a disciple, "give us some words of wisdom."

The driver surveyed the portrait and looked over the throng of expectant devotees. A hush fell over the assembly. He sat down on the pillow, took a deep breath, and spoke: "Life," the sage explained, "is like a river."

The disciples "oohed" and "aahed" on the heels of his utterance, hanging fervently on every sacred word.

"Sometimes life flows easily, and sometimes you encounter rocks and rapids," the guru illustrated, "but if you hang in there and have faith, you will arrive at the ocean of your dreams."

Again the students swooned with ecstasy. More "oohs" and "aahs." This was indeed the day they had been waiting for!

"Well, that's about it," Swami Fedex curtly concluded, "I have to go now and make some more deliveries."

Reluctantly the devotees rose, bowed reverently, and sheepishly cleared the way for the anointed one. Amid profuse veneration he made his way to the door.

Now here is the amazing postscript to the story: the program played the same trick on several Fedex drivers, each of whom found profound words the moment he sat on the cushion. The invitation to wax profound brought forth the inner wisdom in these unassuming fellows. Deep within our heart, each of us knows the truth. The answers we seek, the power we strive for, and the acknowledgement we attempt to gain, abide inside us. Given the opportunity (being placed on the cushion) or the challenge (being pushed against a wall) we know what we need to know, to do what we need to do.

15. Kindness—Just Do It!

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

I drove into the supermarket parking lot and there were 2 homeless young people at the entrance with the standard "homeless and hungry" sign. I felt the usual hopeless feeling and irritation. I decided that I would drive out the other exit so I wouldn't have to see them when I left.

While shopping in the store I choose some really great cherries and proceeded to purchase freely. When I was leaving the store, heading to my car, I saw the young homeless woman going around the parking lot asking for help. No one seemed to be offering help and for a moment I could feel her hopelessness. I was still set on driving out the other entrance believing that I shouldn't help out and continue the homeless cycle.

As I was leaving the parking lot I thought of a talk I had listened to the night before - about kindness and how even a small ripple makes a difference. I noticed my internal battle and as I was driving away something shifted and I decided to go back and help out. I re-entered the parking lot going the wrong way and went up to the young homeless man and rolled down the window offering him \$5.00 and the bag of cherries.

He seemed genuinely startled and very thankful. I told him to be well and as he thanked me I thanked him. This rush of emotion swept over me and I started to cry. Why was I so worried about how they were going to spend the \$5.00? The ridiculousness of my earlier thoughts surfaced and I realized that it just didn't matter what they did with the money or the food. I knew that the exchange was about one person caring for another. That was all that truly mattered.

My new motto, when I am in doubt about an act of kindness is it to...Just Do It!!

16. The Gift of Acceptance

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

As she was waiting for her clothes to dry, an elderly woman sat silently on the bench and mumbled to herself. At first I thought that she may have a mental illness as she was shabbily dressed and simply sat mumbling. Her soft yet repetitive words seemed to have annoyed everyone and people sitting nearby moved away from her as many do homeless people. Some had even asked the woman on duty if she could be removed.

I sat on the bench beside her and glanced over, prepared to smile...but she did not look my way. So we sat together waiting for clothes to dry and we said not a word to each other. Yet she continued her "mumbling" that actually seemed to lull me into a quiet and peaceful place.

When her clothes stopped she simply remained seated, in no rush to get them folded before they wrinkled like so many of us do. I started to wonder who she was, what was her "story" and even if the clothes were hers or she simply came inside to sit down.

As my dryer came to a stop, I got up and started folding things and she remained seated. When I was nearly done, she rose from the bench and came towards me. Her eyes were a cloudy blue but seemed to look straight through me...for a moment I felt I must know her, but could not recall her in any way.

I smiled and this woman very graciously handed me a small card. Inside was written, "I am a simple woman and many find me odd. I have not spoken to others since my son died in the war. Thank you for sitting beside me as I prayed for him." As I read the card, tears welled in my eyes and this fragile woman reached out her hand and placed it on mine. I realized that her "mumbblings" were prayers and her lack of contact with even a smile was due to her sense of hopelessness. How sad she must be to live in a world where she was shunned because she seemed "different". I returned to the laundry many more times and we sat together as she prayed. One sunny day, I came in and there sat a lovely woman, dressed neatly and appearing somewhat uncomfortable in this setting. I said hello and she nodded. Then I sat down on "my bench" and waited for my friend to come so we would pray together. But this day, when I sat, she did not come.

After waiting for a bit, I began to whisper the prayers that I had been able to make out from the weeks of being seated beside "my unknown friend". The woman who I had encountered upon arrival came closer to me and cleared her throat. She asked if she might sit. A bit on edge as I was awaiting my "friend" I said "Of course" and as she sat, she looked at me with the most pure blue eyes I had ever seen.

Within a few moments, she introduced herself as "Alice". We exchanged friendly greetings and sat in silence for what seemed like hours. Finally, "Alice" asked me if I came here often to do my laundry. Funny question I thought but it was better than talking about the weather! I noted that I usually came and sat "with a friend" but she seemed to not be coming this day. Alice reached out her hand and I could see she was not one to frequent a laundromat...exquisitely done nails, beautiful rings and maybe a sense of uneasiness.

Alice began in a gentle tone to speak to me about a woman she called "Mother". She spoke of their "status in the community" and the outreach work that her Mother had prided herself on teaching her children. She remarked that each week, her Mother would come to this place, put coins in the dryers when clothing stopped and needed more time, and sit silently. The family thought she had dementia, but she was not a "problem" and had lost her son in Vietnam..never really recovering from his loss. This had been his place to come and do his laundry when he was home from college many years before he went to Vietnam. She continued on and I listened carefully to her story.

It all started to make sense to me...this young woman must be the daughter of "my friend" and this "place" was where her Mother felt close to her son. But her daughter never knew she did not sit "silently" as suspected. She prayed for her lost son and the courage and grace to continue to be of service.

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When Alice finished her story, she asked "Did you ever meet my Mother?" Without hesitation, I proudly said that I knew her Mother and that each day we met here, we sat on this bench, and prayed for her loved ones. Alice stood and prepared to leave, but before she did, she handed me a fine linen envelope: "I believe this is for you". Without another word, she gracefully walked away.

I sat back on my bench and looked at the envelope, so simple and addressed only to "A dear friend". Taking in a deep breath, I opened the envelope and took out the linen stationery inside and began to read:

My Dear Companion and Friend,

In the beginning when I came to this place, I came in sorrow. I sat and remembered my boy, and prayed. People cast glances my way and acted as if I was somehow a bit crazy. I sat in the same place and talked with my son and prayed that he would know I loved him still and was so proud to be his "mum". Then one day, you walked in and sat beside me. As time went by, you continued to come and my prayers became your prayers. I wondered how you could understand an old fool like me let alone decipher what I was saying. Somehow, you understood... In this life, I tried to do good. To be someone who others could look up to and feel that my intentions were always to assist, never judge or do harm. I raised my son that way. He was such a good man and my children so thoughtful and kind. If you are reading this now, you must have met my daughter, Alice. She is a grand lady but thinks I am losing my mind. At one point, I also believed that...and then I met you. You asked me for nothing and gave me something that I will carry with me until I leave this earth. You gave me acceptance, respect and treated me with a gentle regard for the person I was. What you may not have realized was that coming here became a time I truly looked forward to. I looked forward to meeting you, dear lady, and never even knew your name. I am going to meet my Son very soon and I wanted to write this while my mind was clear and make sure that Alice would carry out my wishes. Your presence and acceptance of what seemed like oddities meant so much to me. No-one has ever been so kind without expecting something in return. I was always happy to give, but you gave me a gift that is priceless: the gift of acceptance and time spent with an old lady that everyone decided was "sick". I will forever be in your debt and you will forever be in my heart.

My Precious Friend: I love you and have left something for you and those who may come to this place to remember me by. Bless you always!



Tears fell from my eyes as I realized how my friend would no longer come and sit with me. Just as she had come to look forward to our time together, so had I. I was filled with joy to know that she understood her prayers made perfect sense to me and her presence filled my day with a sense of peace and love.

Sometimes, without any idea, we do something simple and it becomes something wonderful in another's life. The "something" special she left was a wonderful new bench that had a small plaque on the top. In clear and sincere writing, it said: Heaven on Earth: Friend to Friend.

I was and remain blessed to have followed my heart that very first day we met and believed that I was meant to share my time sitting on a bench and praying in a most unlikely place. Sometimes I still go back and simply sit and say a brief prayer for my friend....I always leave with a smile!

17. Best Servers

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

Recently I was on a retreat in a foreign country with some friends, some strangers, and many strangers who became friends!

Serving your personal journey toward enlightenment...

We were all given duties to perform, such as cleaning and cooking. I was in the team serving meals.

On the first day I tried hard to please everyone, but it was hard to know how. Some people liked it when you were fast and just gave them their food, some people preferred it slow and steady so that they could choose exactly how much they wanted, some wanted, for example, stew without the carrots in it, some didn't know what I was serving and didn't speak English. If they weren't served in the way they wanted some grew irritable. As you can imagine, after an hour of this it started to get old.

So the next day, we tried a different tactic.

I learnt how to say "Would you like ..." in several languages and tried to see everyone's name badges (which also indicated where they were from) to make sure that they understood what I was saying to them.



I was serving beans so when people came up to me I beamed at them and said "Would you like beans?" If they said no I acted mock offended and some of them smiled and reconsidered. If they said they did I smiled more and said, "Yayy, you want some beans!" And I said something personal to them, like, "Good choice, they're delicious!" or I complimented them on something they were wearing. My friends and I also started singing when we weren't serving to keep our spirits up.

I was so enthusiastic that we actually ran out of beans before everyone got served! To be honest, I wasn't sure if I was making them smile, or annoying them, or freaking them out!

After a few days of this though, whenever I saw people I had served they smiled and thanked me, saying how it had brightened up their day that we hadn't just put food on their plates. We even got an award for the best servers at the end!

We did other things that weren't our duty too, like cleaning up, or washing dishes for people when everyone was supposed to do their own. At first people were confused when we did this, then they said, "Are you sure?", then they realized they were getting a favor without giving anything in return and they would be thankful.

So, this is really a long story to reiterate a short point which I've seen made countless times on this site before - sometimes a smile or a positive attitude makes all the difference!

18. You Would Hug Me?

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

I had just finished my monthly Free Hugs session in Union Square, NYC, and was walking back to Harlem where I lived.



I save subway fare by walking as often as possible. Being a storyteller I don't have much money.

That's when I saw a woman sitting on the pavement. The shopping cart to her was side piled high with her possessions. Her shoes were worn to nearly nothing. I got out my Free Hugs sign and approached her.

I smiled gently and asked if she would like a hug. She looked at me with disbelief and asked, "You would hug me?"

I opened my arms and walked closer to her. "If you want a hug," I said. "Absolutely." She reached out for the hug and then told me she had not been touched in almost 20 years.

I hugged her tighter. I apologized to her that I had no money to give her that day and she responded that the hug I'd just given was worth more than any amount of money.

Next time you see someone who is homeless, smile at them, say, "Hello," and if it feels right to your heart offer a hug or even the touch of your hand on their arm.

19. A Story of True Love and Acceptance

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

This is what True Love is all about:

It was a busy morning, approximately 8:30 a.m., when an elderly gentleman in his 80's arrived to have stitches removed from his thumb. He stated that he was in a hurry as he had an appointment at 9:00 am.

I took his vital signs and had him take a seat, knowing it would be over an hour before someone would be able to see him. I saw him look at his watch and decided, since I was not busy with another patient, I would evaluate his wound. On exam, it was well healed, so I talked to one of the doctors, got the needed supplies to remove his sutures and redress his wound.

While taking care of his wound, we began to engage in conversation. I asked him if he had another doctor's appointment this morning, as he was in such a hurry. The gentleman told me no, that he needed to go to the nursing home to eat breakfast with his wife. I then inquired as to her health. He told me that she had been there for a while and that she was a victim of Alzheimer's Disease.

As we talked, I asked if she would be upset if he was a bit late. He replied that she no longer knew who he was, that she had not recognized him in five years now. I was surprised, and asked him, "And you still go every morning, even though she doesn't know who you are?"

He smiled as he patted my hand and said, "She doesn't know me, but I still know who she is." I had to hold back tears as he left, I had goose bumps on my arm, and thought, "That is the kind of love I want in my life."

True love is neither physical, nor romantic. True love is an acceptance of all that is, has been, will be, and will not be.

20. The Little Lost Lady

Reprinted from www.HelpOthers.org.

I seem to attract elderly women, well actually my husband says I will help anyone who I think is in trouble even a person looking lost in the street with a map.

I was heading home after a long day at work. I'd just started part time work after being away on maternity leave for a year, so I was tired and looking forward to getting home to my toddler and my husband. Coming down the stairs into the station, I happened upon an elderly lady at the base of the stairs. She was trying to talk to people who were all heading home. As she was speaking another language, and it was evening rush hour, no one stopped for her. I could see she was near to tears.

I approached and said "Can I help you".

She turned to me, looking rather frantic, and started speaking. Besides English, all I really know is "Do you speak French," "Do you speak German," and a few other words in both languages. She stopped speaking for a moment trying to comprehend, and then shaking her head she continued a little slower, realizing I was trying to identify her language.

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She kept saying what I think was her only heavily-accented English word: "home". She also kept pointing at the monitors and wringing her hands.

I finally caught a phrase which I only recognized, thanks to Hollywood movies. She was Russian. I named a few cities St Petersburg, Moscow, and she nodded looking like she was about to cry.

Indicating for her to follow me I went up to the station staff office and asked the platform attendant if they had anyone on staff who could speak the language. The station attendant checked, even put over an announcement asking for help but no one knew the language or anyone who did was too busy to come to the office.

I called my husband to let him know I'd be running a little late and tried with the railway staff to try to solve the mystery of home. As she'd come to a platform with 5 different train lines running off it, I took her to the map and started going through stations. Luckily for both of us, I started with my own line. I went through the stations slowly, came to mine and she started nodding eagerly and repeating a very mangled version of the station name. It wasn't until I'd said the word in English and then she'd repeated it that I realized what she had been saying earlier. I tried to explain the best I could that it was my station too, with the station attendant nodding and assisting her to the train, she realized we were trying to help her and agreed to go on the next train with me.

On the train ride home she went to get up at every stop, first repeating her version of the suburb name. I would shake my head, hold up my hand and name each suburb to show her how many stops we had to go. It was only a 20 minute ride. I thought it would all be over quickly once we got to the station, but when we got off the train, it was dark. She gazed around, clearly confused and not sure where to go.

I have to admit, at this point, I about to call the police, because I was running so late. But before I did, I tried going through major street names to see if it would help like it did with the station names. She recognized the name of a major street which was a 10 minutes walk from mine. It was a street with a bus service to the city so I wondered if her confusion was from taking a bus to the city and then not being able to find the stop to return home. I pointed up to the street, named it, named cross streets and walked her home. As she got closer to her street, she got excited, recognizing the neighborhood.

When we got to the house, she was very excited and indicated that she wanted me to come in for a drink. With some hand gestures, I tried to explain that I had to get home to my baby and indicated rocking a child. Then, I showed her the photo of my husband and child on my phone. She indicated for me to wait, let herself into her house with her keys and then came out again with a teddy bear. She spoke and mimed rocking a baby, indicating that it was for my baby, and then pointed at my phone.

I thanked her, got a great big hug, and was waved off to go home to my own family.

21. Full Circle

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

Take a few minutes to enjoy this visual journey of beauty and serenity through cycles of light, water, wind and earth. Consider your relationship to these elements; consider the oneness of all life. Follow this link to the video...

<http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=3213>.

22. Katie's Crops Feed the Homeless

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

It started with a tiny cabbage seedling that Katie Stagliano, a third grader in South Carolina, took home and tended until it grew to an amazing 40 pounds! Katie donated that cabbage to a local soup kitchen. Now 11, Katie has several gardens and has donated 2 tons of fresh produce to organizations that serve people in need! Follow this link to the video... <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=2896>.

23. Incredible Edible!

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

Pam Warhurst had an idea to make a kinder, more aware, stronger community: plant every available meter of public land with fruits and vegetables. Food, she explains in this TED talk, is a "unifying language that cuts across age and income and culture." Using locally produced food as the tool, the Incredible Edible program has radically transformed her English town -- and later, many towns around the world. "This is a revolution," she explains. "It is an experiment and we are volunteers." Follow this link to the video... <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=3441>.

24. Landfill Harmonic

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

A cello made from an oil can and pieces of wood thrown in the garbage; a saxophone made of spoons and buttons. These are the instruments crafted by Nicolas, a recycler with no previous experience making musical instruments, living hand-to-mouth by the garbage dump in Catuera, Paraguay. Inspired by this initiative and creativity, Maestro Luis Szaran, director of "Sounds of the Earth," formed a "recycled orchestra" with children living at the dump. "Our main goal isn't to form good musicians, but to form good citizens." Now 30 members strong, listen to the sweet sounds of these recycled instruments and the hopes and dreams of the children who play them. Follow this link to the video... <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=3704>.

25. Rocky "Anna": Love Is The Only Currency

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

Rocky Braat is no one special. He'd tell you that himself. His emails are full of misspellings and typos. But he has given his life to the love of others. The guy didn't even particularly like kids to begin with. But then he had his heart broken -- open. Today the 30-something-year-old from Pittsburgh lives in a cement hut and has dedicated the rest of his life to a community of AIDS orphans in Chennai, South India. "Blood Brother" is a new documentary made by a 100% volunteer crew that opens a window on "Rocky Anna's" journey. A journey of raw, ragged edges that reaches beyond the harsh veil of suffering for our transformative capacity to love. Follow this link to the video trailer... <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=3715>.

26. A Story for Tomorrow

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

A visually beautiful and inspiring video of a "journey" ending with two poignant questions: "Is it possible to be happy with this life?" and "Did you enjoy your story?" (Did you?). Follow this link to the video...

<http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=3423>.

27. Bring me Love!

If you thought for a minute that light, joy and love cannot exist in the deepest, darkest times and places, copy and paste this link into your web browser and ENJOY! Oh...one more thing...turn up the volume on your speakers!

http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=oXvJ8UquYoo&vq=large

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.

28. 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.

29. 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.

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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.

30. 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.

31. 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>). One of these discussion groups is a [Youth Spirituality Discussion Group](#) for spiritually-oriented youth aged 15-25.

32. A Course in Miracles Study Groups

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>). One of the A Course in Miracles study groups is tailored to the needs of those persons working through the [12-Step Program](#) as part of their recovery from alcohol, narcotics, gambling, overeating, or any other form of substance abuse.

33. Interfaith Conversation Series



Spiritual Guidance
and
St. Paul's Eastern United Church
Presents

“Interfaith Conversation”

Every 2nd Wednesday, 5:30 – 8:30pm

New Edinburgh Square Retirement Residence
420 MacKay Street, Ottawa

Interfaith ministry seeks the common ground among the faith traditions as a seed for love, inner peace and world peace. We celebrate all the great faith traditions including, but not limited to: the Baha'i Faith; Buddhism; Christianity; Hinduism; Islam; Judaism; and Taoism. We believe that celebrating all faith traditions can facilitate and promote wholeness, integration and interconnectedness.

This Interfaith Conversation will celebrate the diversity and common ground among the faith traditions through a facilitated workshop style conversation series. Participants can look forward to a conversation based upon rich, exploratory questions using the World Café facilitation methodology. Bring your curiosity for discovery and dialogue about the interfaith issues that matter to you.

These Interfaith Conversations also offer participants the opportunity to participate in communal meals that are offered in a potluck setting. Contact Rev. Robert Meagher for more details.

Registration: Please contact Rev. Robert Meagher at 613-204-0299 or meagher@servinyourjourney.com.

Your in-kind donation and/or free will offerings are accepted for participating.

Visit www.servinyourjourney.com for more information.

34. Serving Your Loved-Ones

Do you have a loved-one who is seriously ill, dying or who has recently died? If so, Spiritual Guidance extends a heart-felt offer to serve your loved ones. Many believe they are helpless in assisting their loved-ones during times of terminal illness and/or when they are dying. Many believe there is nothing that can be done to bring their loved-ones peace or to ease their suffering. Furthermore, many believe that after their loved-ones have died, there is nothing that can be done to continue guiding them to a peaceful passing and rebirth. This is not the case.

Spiritual Guidance is offering to extend the ancient Buddhist practice of 'Phowa' for your loved-ones to guide them to a peaceful passing and rebirth. If you are asking yourself, "If I or my loved-one is not Buddhist and/or does not believe in Buddhism or any form of God, is there any conflict?" The simple answer is 'no'. The Phowa practice invokes the 'truth' of compassion and love that crosses faith / spiritual traditions and beliefs.

If Spiritual Guidance can be of service to you in this way, please:

1. Email us a picture of your loved one (in a standard graphical format; for example: .jpeg, .gif, .pdf, etc.) to rmeagher@servinyourjourney.com.
2. Provide your loved-one's name (first name is all that is necessary) and their date of death (if they have died).

We will add your loved-one's picture to our 'Phowa' practice wall and pray for them daily.

If you have any questions, you are invited to follow up with us. Our contact information is at the very bottom of this e-newsletter.

Shanti, Namaste, Agape,

Rev. Robert Meagher
Spiritual Guidance

35. 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.servinyourjourney.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.

36. Together, Sharing the Journey Retreat – Group Spiritual Direction Training

Feb 28 to March 2, 2013

Save the date! Location and other details to follow.

For those new to, currently engaged in or offering group spiritual direction and want to enhance their practice as facilitators or participants. This retreat gives participants the opportunity to explore the theory and practice of Group Spiritual Direction through experiential learning, reflection, presentations, small group gatherings and prayerful silence. Facilitated by Maureen McDonnell, Professor at Regis College, Toronto in conjunction with Stepping Stones Ministries. For further inquiries, contact: steppingstoneministries@rogers.com

37. Hebrew Multifaith Golden Rule Poster Now Available Free Online

Dear interfaith colleagues around the world:

[The Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel](#) and [The Scarborough Missions Interfaith Department](#) (Toronto, Canada) are pleased to announce the publication of a Hebrew-language poster featuring texts of the Golden Rule in 13 religions.

This striking multifaith poster has been produced in a number of languages around the world and has made a profound impact as an educational and interfaith resource.

Individuals and organizations are permitted and encouraged to reproduce the poster in print and electronic form for educational purposes. Please feel free to post the poster on your website. To view or download free of charge, click link below.

Please feel free to forward this announcement and link through your communities and networks for use in newsletters, bulletin boards, websites, mailing lists, list-serves, blogs, Facebook pages, twitter, etc.

https://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/docs/hebrew_poster.pdf

Peace
Paul McKenna

Scarboro Missions Interfaith Dept.
2685 Kingston Rd.
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M1M 1M4
tel. 416-261-7135 ext. 296
www.scarboromissions.ca

38. Seeking your Truth through God's Forgotten Language

Led by Diana McKendree at Mt. Carmel Spiritual Centre in Niagara Falls.

Fri Jan 25 (7 pm) to Sun Jan 27, 2013 (after lunch)

Cost \$385 includes tuition, meals and accommodation; Haden graduates: \$325.

Learn how to work with your own and your directees dreams with this interactive workshop. For details and to register online visit www.carmelniagara.com.

39. The Sashti Poorthi Lecture-Seminars

The *Sashti Poorthi* Lecture-Seminars

<http://www.facebook.com/therapyandspirituality>

Over the next three months (Nov 2012-Jan 2013), Richard will present three courses online in gratitude for his 60th year (*Sashti Poorthi* in Hindi). Each course comprises two 1 ½ hour long lecture/seminars given in a Skype conference call and including new spiritual practices. Each course may be taken separately or as a part of a longer training.

The next course begins on Wed 14 Nov 2012. It is entitled

ABSOLUTE FREEDOM:

The Path of Love, Devotion and Surrender

Methods: Lecture-seminars, discussions and questions, psycho-spiritual practices and instruction.

Format: Two small group lecture-seminars over Skype as a conference call, lasting a total of 3 hours. Psycho-spiritual exercises for between sessions and to incorporate into your spiritual practice..

Dates: 14 and 21 Nov 2012

Times: 16.30-18.00 Central European Time (CET). Please check carefully for your time zone equivalent.

Price: 80 Euros. (A concessionary rate of 40 Euros is made available to students who are unable to afford the full fee.)

N.B. Both rates are half-price as part of the *Sashti Poorthi* “giving back,” as a gesture of gratitude and respect to mark Richard’s 60th year.

Booking: Send a message via <http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/contact-us.php> stating your wish to enroll on this course. On receipt of a confirmation email, please pay a non-refundable deposit of 50 % (40 Euros) at <http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/pay-online.php>. Please select “course”, the course title and 40 (for amount or 20 if you are paying the concessionary rate) and proceed making your payment online.

The second course in *The Sashti Poorthi Lecture-Seminars* series:

HONORING THE GATE:

Blessing, Gratitude and the Golden Opportunity

Dates: 12 and 19 Dec 2012

The third course in *The Sashti Poorthi Lecture-Seminars* series:

SACRED ATTENTION:

Awakening, Liberation and Spirituality in the World

Dates: 16 and 23 Jan 2013

SPECIAL OFFER: Book all three courses for 192 Euros (20% discount) and receive a free place on the following online course:

THE THREE STAGES OF AWAKENING: A Radical New Approach to the Human Predicament in the 21st Century

Why do we need a new, radical psycho-spiritual approach to the human predicament in the modern era?
What is so different and powerful about Richard's new paradigm for personal growth and spiritual development?
What essentially distinguishes it from current popular approaches?

Date: 9 Jan 2013



May you and I fully awaken.

May all beings fully awaken.

May all of existence fully awaken.



CONTACT DETAILS

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40. Women's Getaway Retreat

April 5-7, 2013 (Friday 7 pm to Sunday after lunch)
at Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre, 1617 Blythe Road, Mississauga, Ontario

Facilitated by: the Rev. Carol Langley and Wendy Passmore, Spiritual Director

Our Life is a Canvas through which the Creativity of God can be made manifest. In this retreat we will explore how when our lives are aligned with God the beauty and creativity of who we are called to be in the world can happen. Components will include healing prayer, exploring our gifts, unfulfilled dreams, and creative expression. Bring walking shoes, journal and an open heart.

Cost: \$250.00 includes 2 nights, 5 meals and coffee breaks. Private rooms with 2 piece ensuite.

To register: send \$50.00 non refundable deposit to: Wendy Passmore, 3089 Jaguar Valley Drive, Suite 105, Mississauga, Ont. L5A 2J1. Contact: 905-272-6796 or wendy.passmore@sympatico.ca

41. Heart to Heart: Observing Our Hidden Barriers in Relationships

with Helen Palmer and Terry Saracino

Sat Mar 2, 2013 (9:00 am to 5 pm) and Sun Mar 3, 2013 (9:30 am to 4:30 pm)

at Alumni Hall, 121 St Joseph St, St Michael's College, U of Toronto

Helen and Terry, two well-known teachers of the Enneagram Narrative Tradition, will lead this two-day workshop illustrating how we can build stronger relationships and identify ways in which we may unconsciously subvert them.

Cost: EN Members: \$249; non-members \$325; students: \$125

To register: e-mail Dara Church at admin@enneagramnorth.com or call her at 647-208-8754 or go online: www.enneagramnorth.com.

42. Wisdom of the Season

Wisdom of the Seasons monthly retreats with Catherine Maine in Kitchener. All women are welcome to attend Wisdom of the Seasons retreats and spend a contemplative morning with a focus on nature. We dance simple sacred circle dances, walk an indoor labyrinth, spend quiet time by the fire and have a time of conversation. Retreats are located in downtown Kitchener, and January's offerings will include:

- * Saturday, January 5th with a theme of "Fresh Snow"
- * Saturday, January 26th with a theme of "Crisp, Clear Air"

Time: 9:30 to noon- Cost \$20.00 -All women are welcome.

For more information or to pre-register, contact Catherine Maine at 519-742-2478 or at info@stillpointdancing.com
Website: www.stillpointdancing.com.

43. January Preached Retreat

Discovering a God Rich in Mercy In a World That Knows No Mercy with Fr. Dan Crosby, OFM Cap. at Providence Spirituality Centre, Kingston, Ontario

Mon Jan 21, 4PM- Sat Jan 26, 1 PM
Cost \$360

Scripture often tells us our "God is rich in mercy." The prayer, "Lord have mercy" is daily on our lips. But what is mercy? Apart from Church, when was the last time it even entered your mind, speech or life? When our world constantly cries out for justice, who cares about mercy - or thinks about mercy? We'll explore all these areas during our retreat to discover the meaning, power and challenge God's mercy offers to us (and asks of us) in our tension-filled 21st century. Dan Crosby is a member of the Capuchin Franciscan Province of St Joseph. Ordained in 1964, wherever he has ministered Dan has worked to integrate Scripture as well as the Franciscan vision into his life and preaching. He has been a spiritual director and well-received retreat master throughout the country for his entire priestly life.

Register by Mon Jan 26 at Providence Spirituality Centre: 613-542-8826 or info@psck.org

44. Two On-line Psycho-Spiritual Courses

With Richard Harvey

The Three Stages of Awakening:

A Radical New Approach to the Human Predicament in the 21st Century

9th January and 6th February 2013

This Course Explores:

- Why do we need a new, radical psycho-spiritual approach to the human predicament in the modern era?
- What is so different and powerful about Richard's new paradigm for personal growth and spiritual development?
- What essentially distinguishes it from current popular approaches?

Sacred Attention:

Awakening, Liberation and Spirituality in the World

16th and 23rd January 2013

This Course Explores:

- How to combine the two principle spiritual practices of awareness and devotion into a steady unwavering concentration on the divine reality
- What is the deeper spiritual teaching
- The hierarchy of concerns in the affairs of men and women?

Full details and booking at:

<http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/calendar-workshops-courses.html>



Richard Harvey/ Therapy & Spirituality Newsletter No 5 Dec 2012

Subscriptions: you can be subscribed to the newsletter as a member of the Richard Harvey/Therapy and Spirituality Group Emailing if you send your email address via <http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/contact-us.php>

Questions: you are invited to submit your spiritual and psychological questions to me at <http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/questions-answers.php#cont>

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Richard Harvey

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Rev. Robert Meagher

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