

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.

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*If you have a newsworthy item that you would like added to the e-newsletter, please forward your submission to [newsletter@servinyourjourney.com](mailto:newsletter@servinyourjourney.com).*

## SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE OFFERINGS:

### 1. Personal Story of Spiritual Lessons



#### What Goes Around Really Does Come Around

*“Constantly a man should reflect and ask himself, ‘What good thing have I done this day? The setting sun will carry with it a portion of my life.’”*

*Sarngadhara Paddhati*

My partner and I moved into our new home a little more than one year ago, December 2011 to be exact. Since then, we have developed and nurtured some wonderful relationships with our neighbors. Sherwin, my partner, has led the way in this neighborhood relationship building. He has consistently reached out and done things for our neighbors, often without them even asking: everything from putting out their garbage, shoveling their driveway when it snows, to landscaping their property. Sherwin’s kindness has been extraordinary. Last month gifted us with an opportunity for all that kindness and love to be returned to us, tenfold!

The month of January saw multiple heavy snowfalls descend on Ottawa. The accumulation of snow was unlike we had seen in many winters. Then, as can happen in Ottawa in January, we received a ‘January thaw’, a climatological condition where we experience unseasonably warm temperatures. The snow started melting and the light rains accelerated the process.

Because the temperatures, while warm for that time of year, hovered around the freezing mark, the conditions created a perfect storm for ice to start forming at the ends of the roof. The steeply peaked roof funneled the melting snow and light rain down toward the ends of the roof where large, solid blocks of ice started to form along the entire length of the roof. This solid bank of ice became larger and larger as the days stretched on. The ice became a horizontal column of ice more than 30cm (an imperial foot) thick. The ever-growing ice column became heavier and heavier.

We live in the downtown core of Ottawa. The houses are built very close to one another. Our house is less than 1.5 meters (5 feet) from our next door neighbor’s house.

On a Sunday afternoon, with the temperatures still above freezing, and the horizontal column of ice continuing to grow in size and weight, the law of gravity engaged to bring the column of ice down from our roof onto our next door neighbor’s house. The first section of ice that descended tore the electrical wiring, panel and other related infrastructure off the house, along with its siding and plywood. Our neighbors were without power. The second section of ice that came down snapped the natural gas pipe and meter; this resulted in creating a dangerous gas leak and rendering our neighbors house without any ability to heat itself. The final section of ice that came down ripped a gash in the side of the house, removing more siding and plywood. The damage was extensive.

Sherwin was upset. The ice had formed on our roof and fallen off onto our neighbor’s house causing significant damage. To make matters worse, our neighbors were not at home (it was not uncommon for them to get out of town on the weekends). Sherwin called the necessary authorities and managed the situation as best he could. The natural gas company came by to stop the gas leak (which was of primary concern to the entire neighborhood). The hydro company came by to clean up the mess of electrical wires and equipment that was smashed on the ground and to repair and restore power to our neighbor’s house. It would be weeks before the siding and other framing damage would be fully repaired.

Early Sunday evening our neighbors finally returned home. Sherwin was keeping an eye out for their return and stepped out on the front porch to greet them when they stepped out of their car. They had already noticed the damage to their house and Sherwin asked them to come into our home so he could explain what happened. With tears in his eyes, Sherwin recounted the day's events, all the while apologizing for the extensive damage caused to their house from the ice falling off our roof.

I closely watched our neighbor's reaction to Sherwin's news. After Sherwin finished his monologue, as if a divine light shone down from the heavens, our neighbors smiled and hugged Sherwin. They thanked him for all he had done and reassured him that everything would be okay. They reminded him that the important thing was that no one was hurt and that the house was easily repaired. In the days and weeks that followed, Sherwin and our neighbors worked in cooperation to repair all the damage to the house. There was no anger; no resentment; no bitterness; nothing other than kindness, love, cooperation and unity.

I marveled at the events. What goes around truly does come around. Sherwin extended so many acts and gestures of kindness, love, cooperation and unity to our neighbors since we have moved into the neighborhood. And during January, Sherwin's kindness, love, cooperation and unity were returned to him, to us, tenfold! I saw the event as a true sign of our shifting awareness and consciousness that I believe is taking hold in our world today. There is much hope for the future. And just as the sage Sarngadhara Paddhati offers us, *"Constantly a man should reflect and ask himself, 'What good thing have I done this day? The setting sun will carry with it a portion of my life'."*

Indeed, what good have we done this day?

Shanti, Namaste, Agapé,

In love, gratitude, compassion and forgiveness...

Rev. Robert Meagher

## 2. Contemplative Thoughts\*

A free mind is a mind that is open to everything and attached to nothing. An open mind is never offended because it is free of any attachments. If I feel offended I can look closely within myself and see that it was only an image of myself that I had become attached to that had been attacked or belittled. Today let me free myself from attachment to false or limited images of myself and be beyond offense, making me free.

Make each second new. Is it possible for something that had not happened a moment ago to happen in this second? Between one second and another anything can happen, an earthquake, a volcano eruption or a new attitude. Today let me check myself and suddenly change my attitude, experiencing the power of newness.

Know the difference between what drains you and what breathes life into you. When I decide I want to be happy I begin to pay close attention to what makes me happy. Each choice of thought and action has an effect on my state of happiness. Although I may still choose to indulge in bad habits I am honest with myself knowing they are a temporary distraction and will not make me truly happy. Today let me choose what truly makes me happy.

The power of determination melts even a harsh nature. In order to change the negative or weak habits of character I must be very determined. With determination I will catch an old habit quickly before it finds expression in words or actions. Only when I am determined to watch with such vigilance will old habits change. Today let me be determined to melt old habits.

Don't create thoughts you don't want to see in your mind. To want a clean, fresh, bright mind means I must be careful what thoughts I put in there. When I decorate a room I carefully choose items that will be functional and pleasing. In the same way to make my mind beautiful I must put thoughts in it that are inspiring and uplifting. Today let me create beautiful thoughts for my mind.

Let the switch of awareness remain constantly on. Inner happiness is like a light switch to be turned on at will. However, the light dims slightly when I indulge in old habits of greed, attachment, anger or ego. Sometimes I do not notice my happiness fading until it is gone. Then I can simply turn on the switch again. Today let me sit quietly with myself and rediscover the core happiness that is always inside me.

Ego strengthens its hold on me by making me think my value is dependent on how useful I am or how much I have achieved. When I remember I am innately valuable, I strengthen my true self. When I forget this, ego takes over. Today let me remember my innate value.

A mirror reveals the spots or dirt on my face. When I see a mark I clean it up. In the same way I can look into the mirror of my heart to see if there is anything that needs to be cleaned. Perhaps I see a heavy conscience that needs to be cleaned by making amends or a weakness I must face and transform. Today let me clean the mirror of my heart.

When I contemplate and experience the wonder of 'being' my mind and intellect become quiet and restlessness ends. When my mind is absorbed in a positive experience it becomes satisfied and I feel content. Then I don't need to look for mental distractions, I can just quietly 'Be'. Today let me be.

Contentment finishes all limited desires. A person who is content feels they have everything, even when they only have a little. A person who is discontent can have everything and still feel something is missing. A discontented soul is always chasing desires. When one desire is fulfilled, ten other desires arise. Today let me cultivate the inner quality of contentment and free myself from chasing desires.

Silence gives rest to the mind - and this gives rest to the body. So often I think that my tiredness is of the body, but typically it is the mind that is tired, making the body feel heavy. When I give my mind a little silence I find that my body can rest. Today let me give my mind the gift of silence and see how my body revives.

When pure intentions do not bear fruit it is a lack of determination that is the cause. Why do the seeds of my pure intentions sometimes not bear fruit? Pure intentions are like seeds, if I have tilled the land with the power of my determination and I have taken the precaution of attention, they will grow and bear fruit. Without paying constant attention to my pure intention and keeping my determination strong, there will be no fruit. Today let me pay attention with determination to the pure seeds of my intentions.

Healing is a power that is needed now in the world. This power takes me inwards to completion, to discover that folded in my soul are all the accomplishments I will ever need. A very subtle love is needed to draw me inwards to myself. Inside, alone, I can go further into who I am which is what healing is all about. Today let me go inwards which gives me the space to heal.

Forget mistakes. Forget failures. Forget everything except what you are going to do now and do it. When I focus on mistakes and failures I lose the precious moment in front of me. Today let me free myself from the shadow of past mistakes and failures.

Ego finds twisted ways for me to feel valuable. One of the most common is to make me dependent on the admiration, approval or praise of others. When I accept this praise as proof of my value I feed ego and it grows, seeking more praise. Today let me starve ego by remaining quietly aware of my value without seeking external proof.

In meditation I validate the wonder of my own existence. Sitting quietly with myself I realize that my value is not dependent on any person or action. My value is in the wonder of 'being'. Today let me recognize the wonder of the soul.

Natural concentration is when the mind can hold a thought for a long time, when thoughts are under control. Without concentration the mind goes here and there and everywhere, jumping like a monkey from branch to branch, idea to idea. When there is a natural concentration, we master our mind and there is peace. This one-pointed concentration on a thought, holding it as long as we like, gradually accumulates strength in the mind and in the self. Today let me learn to concentrate.

There is a voice within which occasionally gets our attention and tries to remind us of how good and beautiful we are. It calls us from a time long ago when we first arrived for our journey through time and space. Those first moments were

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filled with pure joy, pure play and pure adventure. Today let me meet everyone with a pure, innocent and trusting heart and let them remind me of myself during those first early years.

Would I be content if the conditions in my life suddenly changed? Is my contentment dependent on specific conditions? We do our best to create lives customized to make us happy yet it is worth reflecting on how much happiness I take from these external conditions. If I am relying on them for my happiness then I am building a life of insecurity. Today let me be content independent of my conditions.

There is no need to prove the truth. Truth is such a sun that it cannot remain hidden. No matter how many walls come in front of it, the light of the truth cannot remain hidden. When I have conviction in this simple truth I am free from struggling to prove truth. Today let me rest assured that truth will reveal itself in all situations.

Sourcing ourselves from a higher place is the only way to remain beyond the push and pull of this world. We are all caught in the drama of everyday living, sometimes experiencing highs and at other times lows. When I source myself from a higher source, my consciousness is lifted out of the mundane and I have more to give to others who are caught in the tumult of the drama. Today let me uplift my consciousness.

We see things not as they are, but as we are. When I see things through the superficial aspects of my own personality I will see with judgment and criticism the imperfection that exists in others. Today let me perceive through the inner eye and I will naturally see beauty in my world.

A spider's web is beautiful, as long as you're not caught in it. We weave webs of attachment as we move through life, and then discover we are trapped in intense feelings of loss and sadness when these are removed from us. When I enjoy the web of creation from a slightly detached perspective, then I am free from entanglement whilst still enjoying involvement. Today let me balance involvement without entanglement.

Only in relationships can you know yourself, not in abstraction and certainly not in isolation. Witnessing my behavior is a sure guide to myself. As I reflect on my actions and interactions with people throughout the day I can look into the mirror of myself. This mirror reveals the quality and contents of my consciousness; the attachments, the fears, the joy and the sorrow. Today let me enjoy the richness of knowing myself by reflecting on my actions.

Knowledge is like the sun, wherever it is shining, power is felt. I may have a lot of knowledge even about spiritual matters, but unless I apply it in my actions I will not feel its power. Today let me apply the spiritual knowledge I have acquired and experience its power.

In meditation I validate the wonder of my own existence. Sitting quietly with myself I realize that my value is not dependent on any person or circumstance. My value is in the wonder of 'being'. Today let me recognize the wonder of the soul.

There is a belief that, to be happy, I must buy something, have something or be with someone. However my happiness is always there. These things and experiences can remind me of my happiness, but only when I realize my happiness is within, will I be free from thinking it can be taken away from me.

Every scene of life's drama reveals the best in me. With this awareness I can appreciate everything that happens. Even scenes that seem to bring out my worst can reveal a deep desire to change. Most of us experience distaste or discomfort when we see our "worst". Ironically this is an affirmation that my worst is not natural, because it is uncomfortable. Today let me understand what each scene of life reveals about my "best".

Do not try to maintain relationships in your life, maintain life in your relationships. Sustaining newness and respect in my relationships requires me to be free of familiarity that causes expectations and disappointments. To keep my relationships alive is an art and a lifetime commitment. Today let me breathe life into my relationships.

Don't change the old habits, create new ones. It is very difficult to deconstruct and eliminate old habits. It is much easier to invest in creating new habits. When I identify what I want to change, I need to identify what I want to create instead. This replacement strategy is more effective and efficient. Today let me create new habits.

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Spirituality is relocating my experience of myself beyond the physical. Rather than trying to fit spirituality into a human box – reducing its power to the physical only, I can expand my consciousness beyond the physical. Today let me explore who I am beyond the physical sensations and limitations of my body.

Expectations create pressure. When I hold an expectation of someone it creates a subtle pressure they experience as force. Feeling forced to do something usually makes people resist or rebel in some way. To create cooperation in my relationships I must let go of expectations. Today let me free myself and others from the pressure of expectations.

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

## 3. Poem

### The Place of Rest

Unto the deep the deep heart goes,  
It lays its sadness nigh the breast:  
Only the Mighty Mother knows  
The wounds that quiver unconfessed.

It seeks a deeper silence still;  
It folds itself around with peace,  
Where thoughts alike of good or ill  
In quietness unfostered cease.

It feels in the unwinding vast  
For comfort for its hopes and fears:  
The Mighty Mother bows at last;  
She listens to her children's tears.

Where the last anguish deepens -- there  
The fire of beauty smites through pain:  
A glory moves amid despair,  
The Mother takes her child again.

A.E. George William Russell

## 4. Quote or Question

“Just as treasures are uncovered from the earth, so virtue appears from good deeds, and wisdom appears from a pure and peaceful mind. To walk safely through the maze of human life, one needs the light of wisdom and the guidance of virtue.” (Buddha)

## 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'.

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

"True freedom lies in choice -- this is one of the core insights in the writings of Viktor Frankl, a psychiatrist who was imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp. In the best-selling book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, Frankl described his profound experiences: 'We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms -- to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.' In any challenging circumstance, Frankl's testimonial gives a starting point: in order to have the freedom to choose, we first need to be aware that we even have a choice." [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** As you go about playing, working, and living today, make an effort to stay connected to "the last of the human freedoms."

A 51-year-old man is moving back in with his parents so a homeless family can live in his house instead. Tony Tolbert's offer is good for one full year. According to CBS, the spare bedroom in his childhood home in Los Angeles frequently went to people in need, which inspired his own version of the act. "You don't have to be Bill Gates or Warren Buffet or Oprah," Tolbert, a Harvard-educated attorney said, "We can do it wherever we are, with whatever we have, and for me, I have a home that I can make available." Tolbert had never met the recipients. He found them through Alexandria House, a shelter for women and children. Felicia Dukes, a mother of four, couldn't believe the deal when she heard it. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** "Give more than you can spare" today, whether that is in time, energy, space, or benefit of doubt.

Finding a letter of encouragement in the mail or tucked unexpectedly in the unlikeliest of places is sometimes all we need when in doubt or feeling down on our luck. And imagine receiving this note anonymously, as if some magical force out there knew just what you needed to hear and wanted you to know that you haven't been forgotten. In the fall of 2010, in the midst of her own depression and loneliness, Hannah Brencher was inspired to become this magical force. A single letter scribbled on board a subway train would ripple out into what is now a global movement called The World Needs More Love Letters. Read more about Hannah's inspired journey. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Write an affirming note today and tuck it into a corner for a stranger to find.

Generosity is paradoxical. Those who give, receive back in turn. By spending ourselves for others' well-being, we enhance our own. In letting go of some of what we own, we better secure our own lives. By giving ourselves away, we ourselves move toward greater flourishing. This is not only a philosophical or religious teaching, it is a sociological fact. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Create a weekly "generosity practice" of your own.

"What are you going to be remembered for? Will people talk about the relationships you had with friends and family? The once-a-year dish everyone looked forward to? The impact you made on a company and its employees? How is a legacy created and cultivated, and what can you do to build your own legacy? These are all huge questions with small and critical answers. Here's the story of my legacy, and a few pointers on how to build yours." A research assistant-turned-science teacher shares her insights here. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Reflect on your own legacy and how you are building it.

When neurosurgeon Allan Hamilton was diagnosed with cancer, the "c-word" that he had used so often in his practice suddenly became personal and life-changing. Like many other cancer patients, his treatment



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journey was a mix of emotions. "Each time, the battery of tests would roll around again, I would find myself transported. I would want to hold on to the magic of that moment but, hard as I might try, I could not grasp it for long. So I asked myself: Was I the only person? Was I some hopeless dunce who could not hold on to 'the feeling' of being happy, of being elated for the sake of being?" Here, Hamilton offers his insightful story of inner change and seven ways to make happiness last. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** A short passage from an anonymous author, on why happiness is a journey, not a destination. [{ more }](#)

We are so afraid to let go, to just be, to allow the unfolding of this marvelous life without getting in the way. This fear keeps us paralyzed and stuck. And longing for the peace that is possible -- if only we would put down all the efforts we make to know. There is no greater gift you can give yourself than the invitation to enter the world of not knowing. Why? If you are always going to know what you know now, things will always stay the same. How could they change? And by thinking you know what will happen, you are closing yourself off to the unimaginable -- endless peace, unspeakable joy, awe and wonder." Gail Brenner shares tips on how to "forget what you know". [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Dwell in your own places of not-knowing today.

- 18. Can You Love the One Who...
- 21. My Daughter's Noble Sacrifice
- 26. Gratitude, Gifting and Grandpa
- 27. Far From the Tree
- 28. From Homeless to Harvard
- 30. Lou, My Name is Lou

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).*

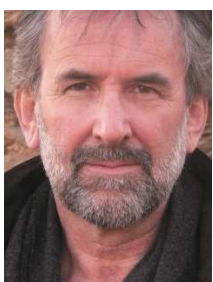
### 6. Richard Harvey – Stuck in the Dark Night of the Soul

Questioners: I've been firmly stuck in the dark night of the soul for twelve years. The traditional ways to enlightenment seem to have delivered nothing for me. I've simply run out of the ability to meditate or practice traditional exercises and I never will again. My spiritual practice has now been reduced to brief simple prayers. I've also run out of the ability to read any more complex spiritual literature, and I've lost faith in much of it anyway, as there seems to be a lot of contradiction even from the highest teachers.

Recently I've been reading a little about ascension symptoms. Although I can't say I'm experiencing many of the physical symptoms described, there are one or two things that resonate with me. I feel an overwhelming urge to escape my life and go in a new direction. Also, as I've been living like a monk for so long with little or no desires, I've found that this has changed. I now feel a desperate urge to form a romantic relationship, something which I've never had in all of my forty-nine years. I don't know if this is being caused by the dark night of the soul or if it's a midlife crisis, or even something to do with chakras and kundalini. Could you give me your opinion on this issue as well as your opinion on my spiritual stagnation?

Richard: You may have been stuck, but I am not sure that it is in the Dark Night of the Soul. Traditional or even contemporary ways to enlightenment do not "deliver" anything – on the contrary, they take away. This is because we are, as I am sure you have already heard, already present in the pristine state. So the way is pruning, letting go, relinquishing... everything, even perhaps your present state of disillusionment. Have you been doing to get? I sympathize in the sense that traditional ways are, in my understanding, essentially insufficient to deal adequately with the present sophisticated ego-processes. We are more individualistic, overall more distracted in ourselves than when traditional spiritual means were taught. Teachers' contradicting each other is less a flaw in the teachers themselves and rather more a function of the modern era, in which we suffer from an overabundance of teaching and so make comparisons. In any case the way is ultimately unique, i.e. your path is yours alone. So all "ways" must ultimately be let go of...

Ascension symptoms are really a way of repackaging feeling and experience. I do not pay much attention to this, neither do I to the shift and, in brief, the reason I don't is because the soul has become confused with the spirit. They are different; the soul is our roots and ground: the spirit is our transcendence, our Divinity. Feeling and experience belong to the soul. Liberation and realization are matters for the spirit. Desires will last as long as ego does, so they will be with you, even in ever subtler forms, for a good long while. At age forty-nine you are in a time of great power. Your choice at this point in your life will affect the rest of your earthly time profoundly. If I were you, I would persist with a spiritual teacher you respect to steer you. Personally I don't feel there is anything of more importance except than Reality or God, Love and Wisdom. But I am not you and if you choose the earthly route, whether by chakras or kundalini, may your crisis deliver you into Joy and lasting Freedom.



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

## 7. Doug Henderson, Ph.D – A Thought-Creating Universe

When I say I love you  
I am sending a prayer to all that is  
Ever was or ever will be from the past  
An offering to the Mind of God in the present  
The awakening of the holographic image  
Within the Mind of God to its True Source  
To all that is, is all that is a luminous reflector of the One  
We pay lip service to but can not comprehend  
Love is what our fractal being re-members  
When I say I love you I am saying that I love the ethereal image  
It's "Oneness" is creating in the Image of the One  
The I am is as God is creating, eternal and free  
Holy Continuity is breathing upon the hologram  
And as the hologram awakens the realization  
Reverberates and entrains to all it penetrates  
Love is what I am and always have been  
Spirit without limitation where a single thought  
Ascends twenty billion light years and  
Love corrects all past perversions

When I say I am sorry  
I am sending a prayer to all that is  
Ever was or ever will be from the past  
An offering to the Mind of God in the present  
The awakening of the holographic image  
Within the Mind of God to its True Source  
All that is, is all that is a luminous reflector of the One  
We pay lip service to but can not comprehend  
Sorrow is what our fractal being experiences  
Sorrow for having forgotten the meaning of Love  
Sorrow for creating the ego figment of imagination  
Sorrow for attempting to substitute our plan for God's  
A nanosecond of lunacy created this perceived insanity  
A meaningless whirlwind of timelessness that perpetuates  
Reverberates and entrains to all it penetrates within  
The confines of this form of thick muck my Spirit slept  
It seems sorrow is what I am and always have been  
Inebriated with the lust of self-made mis-creation  
Dumbed to the true function of this holographic game.

When I say please forgive me  
I am sending a prayer to all that is  
Ever was or ever will be from the past  
An offering to the Mind of God in the present  
The awakening of the holographic image  
Within the Mind of God to its True Source  
All that is, is all that is a luminous reflector of the One  
We pay lip service to but can not comprehend  
Forgiveness is the function our fractal being yearns for  
Forgiveness for the attack thoughts we inflict upon our Holy Field

Forgiveness for all grievances of lack and idols that never were  
Forgiveness for consciousness with which we conquer all life-kind  
Forgiveness for the thought, we could be undone from your vibrant presence  
These are mistakes of mis-creation and we believed them because we created them  
Authorship is its' own meaningless vanity  
Within the timeless vortex that was then and this is Now!  
Now Oneness trickles upon the awakening hologram the realization  
Of the Light of the world ascending beyond all time and dimension  
All is light and God is light and the light of God out shines all thought of separation

When I say Thank You!  
I am sending a prayer to all that is  
Ever was or ever will be from the past  
An offering to the Mind of God in the present  
The awakening of the holographic image  
Within the Mind of God to its True Source  
To all that is, is all that is a luminous reflector of the One  
We pay lip service to but can not comprehend  
Thank You is the glue our fractal being connects to  
When I say Thank You I am saying Thank You for all that is  
It's "Oneness" is creating in the Image of the One  
The I am is as God is creating forever eternal and free  
This is the Holy continuity the One is breathing upon the hologram  
Its' willingness reverberates and entrains to all it penetrates  
Love is what I am now and forever, Eternal Spirit without limitation  
Basking in the Love and light of Glorious Present Source  
Content to Dream, without desire to ever leave this blissful state of Oneness  
Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

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](http://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](mailto:drdoug88@rogers.com), or via his website at [www.quantumru.com](http://www.quantumru.com).

## 8. Geoff Straw – Not Feeding Worry and Fear

Worry and fear are the Dark side, for truly they try to convince you that you are unsafe in the world, that something bad will happen to you or someone you love.

HEED THEM NOT! They are not real; therefore, do not give in to their pull, for they will drag you down. Instead, affirm that all goes according to the Plan that is Divine in nature.

"May GOD's plan unfold perfectly." Let this be your affirmation when fear crowds in. Things are unfolding perfectly for you. It is unnecessary to try to control the outcome or the process. Instead, sit back and observe all with a curious interest, wondering how it will unfold for you.

There is nothing else you need do. Simply BE each day and enjoy your "well being". He is in control; therefore, give over your will to GOD. He knows what path is best for your learning and for your contribution to others. You need do nothing

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except to accept his Will.

In this manner, you do not need to worry about which choice to make nor to bother about the outcome, for you understand that it is perfect in Him. Always trust in the Spirit, not in the things of this world, which are fleeting and temporary.

Spirit seeks to join with you to accomplish healing. This is a beautiful union - of Spirit with humanness. Welcome it then! And watch what miracles happen when the two are joined.



**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](mailto:gwstraw@sympatico.ca).

## 9. Kathryn Kimmins – Laughter Yoga with Seniors

With a distinct rise in life expectancy due to advances in medical science, the population of senior citizens is likely to triple by the year 2020.

As the joint family structure crumbles and youngsters steer away from parents, the seniors, find themselves alone either in aged care facilities or old-age homes. They are prone to frequent bouts of depression that often leads to a debilitating condition.

### Laughter Yoga – the Best Medicine

Laughter Yoga is indeed the best medicine to be prescribed for seniors to keep them in good cheer. A good Hearty Laughter gets rid of stress, worry and depression. It touches the emotional core and alleviates feelings of loneliness and isolation. Besides being the panacea for good health, laughter generates positive thoughts and reduces the negative strains.

Hundreds and thousands have benefited by Laughter Yoga, a great therapeutic alternative that combines Laughter Exercises with Yogic Deep Breathing, for a complete workout of wellness. Elderly people suffer from a variety of diseases due to their reduced immunity, and a lifelong of possible unhealthy habits. Although not all diseases can be cured, laughter brings several positive changes. It is an instant stress buster, which helps to reduce the risk factors for cardiac diseases arising due to stress. Laughter helps to reduce blood pressure and lowers cholesterol levels.

### Factors Affecting Seniors and How Laughter Yoga Can Help

**Retirement:** The biggest stressor for seniors is a feeling of being 'useless' after retirement. It leads to major depression and mental agony. Lack of importance creates frustration and many a times proves extremely detrimental to physical and mental health.

Extended Hearty Laughter helps to reduce stress and generate a positive attitude. Laughing together in a group helps to boost self-esteem and overcome feelings of insecurity.

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**Lack of Bonding:** Laughter Yoga is especially beneficial for older people. Seniors are always in need of human contact. While most of them are surrounded by like-minded peers, they still miss the bonding of a family. They need someone close with whom they can share their emotions.

Laughter Yoga sessions have the power to reach beyond the healing of laughter. The effective network of caring-sharing relationships is the key to a happy and healthy life. Relationships with people become very strong and the feeling of loneliness dissipates. Seniors enjoy the daily meetings as it generates a sense of belonging. Laughter Yoga can give seniors that much needed feeling of closeness and fraternity.

**Physical immobility:** Sedentary lifestyle, illness and lack of physical exercise cause stiffness of limbs and muscles, leads to immobility and pain and aches.

Laughter Exercises coupled with deep diaphragmatic breathing are simple, structured and a lot of fun. They are easy, safe, and economical and provide a genuine form of physical exercise. Regardless of any limitations – cognitive or physical, they are appropriate for all. Extended Hearty Laughter is known to increase muscle movement, mobility and boost the immune system. It increases disease fighting cells and proteins, and triggers release of endorphins (body's natural painkillers)

**Decline of cognitive faculties:** Faced with age and age-related troubles, seniors find that their physical and mental faculties decrease. With the beginning of certain diseases like Alzheimer's and Senile Dementia, the capacity to comprehend humor declines. The degeneration of the brain cells makes it difficult for many seniors to understand and organize facts, let alone humor. Simple tasks become difficult, frustration levels rise making it harder for them to laugh. Under such conditions Laughter Yoga is ideal for seniors to reap the scientifically proved benefits of laughter to improve their health and well-being. It helps to provide an emotional bonding and is one of the most powerful tools against depression.

Since humor is an intellectual phenomenon, seniors find it difficult to laugh without a reason. This is where Laughter Yoga helps them to be able to laugh and start living a life full of joy once again. Being a physical process, it does not require any mental abilities thus helping the older people to understand humor without using their cognitive faculties. A few hours of laughter every day will increase your memory, thinking ability and intellectual capacity.

**Physical illness:** Scientific studies have proven that the reason of frequent sickness is because there is a lack of oxygen in the body cells.

Laughter Exercises and Deep Breathing help to attain good health by increasing the supply of oxygen. People in the Laughter Clubs with chronic pain, migraines, headaches and asthma have found attacks to become less frequent, and in some cases, to disappear completely. Many members with high blood pressure, severe spinal, neck or shoulder problems and even diabetes have found their life normalizing eventually requiring no medication. Many members with depression, anxiety and chronic stress related diseases have reported moving from debilitating fear and anxiety to a more positive state of mind, transforming their quality of life.

## **Social Laughter Clubs – A Boon for the Elderly**

The simple fact is that, for humans to be happy, we need a network of healthy emotional relationships with a group of people who care about us and about whom we care. Social Laughter Clubs have the power to reach beyond the healing of laughter. The effective network of caring-sharing relationships is the key to a happy and healthy life. Relationships with people with whom one laughs with regularly becomes very strong.

## **Happiness through Emotional Networking**

Sadly, for many elderly people, modern life does not include a network of caring and sharing relationships --- The lack of two-way emotional dialogue and relationship leaves them without emotional grounding, often resulting in feelings of isolation and loneliness.

The amount of time spent with others is not what matters; it is the quality of interaction that is important. If there is lack of warmth and friendliness, it leads to anxiety and stress among the elderly. To facilitate better physical and mental health, Laughter Clubs provide a rich social network of people who care about one another, and perhaps even more importantly, a way of getting to know new people who we care about. This provides a sense of emotional security which resists stress and depression – the number one sickness in seniors.

The session with seniors is not just about laughter. It entails creating a connection with them, building a rapport by talking, listening and physical touch.

A smile goes a long way to establish a bond with seniors who are in need of care and empathy. It creates an ambience of belonging and generates the much needed feeling of closeness and fraternity. Laughter sessions help them to share similar interests and instill familiarity and intimacy.

It gives them the opportunity to confide their emotions and express themselves freely.

Laughter Yoga exercises are simple, structured and entertaining. They are easy and safe, and provide a genuine form of physical exercise. They are appropriate for all, regardless of their cognitive, sensorial or motor abilities/limitations. People's participation is invited and not imposed.

Laughter Yoga appears to lift depression and replace it with a positive outlook. Health improves, many chronic ailments disappear, the exercise improves mobility, communication and relations also improve.

The next time you walk by a senior give them a toothy smile and a giggle and I guarantee it will brighten their day. One day, that will be you.



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

## 10. Regiena Heringa – Notes from the Light – February 2013

Hold very steady. As the structures of your world transform and seemingly collapse, hold fast. Even if your eye and mind do not always perceive this truth, it has been observed that no thing is truly disintegrating. All is being reshaped.

We ask that you view your changing world through a magic lens. Imagine for a moment that, through different eyes and thought patterns, you observe the inner structure of all creation. Let us give you this example.

Observe a tree and, through your heart language and mind expansion, voyage into and deep beyond its physical form. In such sensing you will experience and know that the inner configuration of this tree is perfect, as true existence dictates, and that it holds a structure identical to all other objects, conditions and bodies, human and non-human. *The inner structures of all creation, no matter the dimension or sphere of existence, are identical.*

How is this possible?

It is the mind which differentiates, categorizes and separates when it speaks from its linear position. In your present world, there is an important transitioning from linear, separating thought to unity of thought. You are now witnessing upon your planet a greater opening of transformational thinking which includes the expansion of ideas and creations in Light. This illustrates your gradual and, at times, rapid movement into a more inclusive mind. *Kindly remember that the more comprehensive the mind, the more permanent its bonding to a heart of fraternal love.*

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If you examine the common denominator of your good thoughts and actions, you will realize that this common ground is Love. It is Love which holds the inner, universal structure, births and supports all creation, no matter its density or transparency. Love creates all physical matter through its very core, the God-Presence, and It is experienced by the emanation of its God-energy through lives built on goodness.

If you wish to ponder this presentation, we request that you precipitate a personal journey to explore these universal truths.

Hence, in a time of chaos and turbulence, hold steady to this great inner structure called Love. It has been and continues to be, the salvation of your world. Sharpen your awareness and observe how all life around and within you adjusts and bows to the harmony and power pouring from this profound, divine Love as it radiates from within your physical bodies, hearts and minds.

All inner structure, even that of shadow, is Love. It is to be remembered that the realm of darkness will be incited at some phase of its existence by its own free will, to surrender to its innermost structure of Love. This is the dictate of divine order.

The continued future of all existence everywhere is to unfold and celebrate its innermost sacred construct, living and evolving in gladness, gratitude and service. This is the assured path of your world and planet.

It is, indeed, the destiny of your lives and ours.



**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](http://www.nextagemission.com) or write Regiena at [rheringa@bell.net](mailto:rheringa@bell.net).

## 11. Dr. Nancy Cleaves – Mystical Love

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy”.

Seek your inner Sabbath with utmost diligence for there is the place of all remembrance.

We looked at Belief and Betray as two sides to the same coin, and that there was the archetype of two who stood at the foot of the cross and didn't betray – the archetype of the Divine Feminine as in Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus, and John the Beloved. John is the embodiment of mystical love for the Beloved. In our present age, many are waking up to the path of the mystic – a profound spirituality that extends deeper and higher than any religious claim. In the Kabbalah, it is the centre column on the Tree of Life, from Malkuth (Kingdom/Queendom of Heaven in and on Earth), Yesod (Foundation) and Tiphareth (Beauty), centred in the heart signifying Love and balance, through the abyss, where a soul waits and yearns for union with the Beloved (Kether – Crown of Life) to descend. One cannot venture beyond the abyss. Beloved will reveal Herself in her way, in her time.

All of the mystics from every path talk about union with the Beloved. This is our highest calling. Whether it is St. Francis spending hours all night calling out, “Who are you? Who am I?”, or St John of the Cross' Ascent of Mount Carmel, or Rumi's love poems, the search for the Beloved in experience, rather than just faith, is a very deep journey, and one needs to travel light/Light – pun intended!

The age old oracle at Delphi, “Know thyself” is still the key to it all. If one wants to know the Beloved who is Love, one has to be transformed into love – and love communes with Love. ‘Be still and know that I AM.” This path of mystical love is



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ongoing; it is a journey protected by the intentions of one's heart. As we purpose to follow unconditional love to the best of our ability, we are entering into that very Love, although unconsciously. It is so important to have regular moments of cultivating our inner Silence – the Source of Life.

John didn't run away. He had no fear of what authorities would do to him. He remained steadfast. Why? He had conformed to sweet divine love and that love is NOT afraid. There is no fear in unconditional love; it is a complete abandonment, a soul in surrender to the Divine.

From my experience, it takes a lot of determination, soul work and courage to go deep into our souls. We have a million voices from self-doubt, judgement to ego that block out the Voice of Love within. Lots of time in Silence is needed, and it is worth it – to enter into that rest, remembering who we really are – one in love with Beloved©



**ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE AND TEACHER:** Dr. Nancy Farishta Nuri Cleaves: Through storytelling, poetry, workshops, retreats and spiritual teaching, Nancy invites others to awaken more fully to their true essence as divine cosmic beings of compassion, beauty and wisdom. Participants have been filled with awe and wonder. Through her healing work, many have been released from long standing fears. Her book 'A Story to Live By' is our story of 14 billion years of adventure from the Tear to creativity. Nancy is a woman of great depth and passion, and she has a sincere longing to bring forth Malkutah - Heaven Here and Now for all of Earth and all inhabitants. Nancy can be reached through her website ([www.malkutah-heaven.com](http://www.malkutah-heaven.com)) or via email at [malkutah.heaven@hotmail.com](mailto:malkutah.heaven@hotmail.com).

## 12. Robyn Lebron – Traditional African Religion

*This is the first in a long series of contributions by Robyn from her book "Searching for Spiritual Unity... Can There Be Common Ground?"*

We start our tour of World Religions and Faith Practices with the oldest. Traditional African Religion has been around since 50,000 BC, so one might say it could be the birth of all religions, and therefore an appropriate place for us to begin.

One of the major difficulties in studying the Traditional African Religion is that there are no written texts or Holy Scriptures. The world's oldest religious tradition has been handed down orally. People simply assimilate whatever religious ideas and practices are held or observed by their families and communities for generations. There is no proselytizing because the African people believe that central religious issues are so self-evident that no normal human being would need persuasion by another person to accept them.

There has been controversy over the years as to whether the African Religion should be plural or singular due the huge size of the geographic area in question, coupled with the vast number of tribes and cultures within the region. But modern scholars today have favored the use of Traditional African Religion (TAR) *in the singular*, as there is a common vein that runs through all groups that include a common world-view, similarities in belief-systems, ritual forms, and values across the various regions of the continent. It is not uncommon for a religion to branch out in several "variations", exactly as occurred with Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

TAR is centered on the existence of one Supreme High God. He is omnipotent and He is behind all achievements. The African therefore does not need to prove the existence of God to anyone. God is self-existing and needs no proof. Each local community has its name for God, but the people believe that it is *the one and same God* who is given different names and who is the ultimate source of all the other spiritual beings, the universe and all that it contains. Next to God are the divinities. These are spiritual beings that owe their origin to and are dependent on God. The divinities are messengers or ministers of God. Perhaps the most dearly loved spiritual beings in TAR are the ancestors, who are effectively members of the family and clan; now living in a state that permits them to enjoy some special relationship with God, the divinities and the good spirits. They are also believed to have some power over the evil spirits and are therefore able to

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protect the living members of their respective families from harm. To qualify to be an ancestor, it is not enough just to be dead. An ancestor is one who died after having lived a life judged to be fully realized and morally upright. The ancestors are so dear to the heart of Africans and so central in their traditional religious practices, that some outsiders have mistakenly described TAR simply as "ancestor-worship."

Traditional Africans perceive life as an integral whole with the sacred flowing into all facets, underpinning and investing every worthwhile event with meaning and significance. The practical aspect of belief in TAR is not only worship but also human conduct. In order to aid man in ethical living, God has put in him the "oracle of the heart". This "oracle of the heart" is a person's conscience, the law of God written in him. A person is at peace when he obeys his conscience.

They believe that all men have souls, and the departure of the soul from the body is death. Most Africans carry with them the idea that the soul lives forever. Often it is born back into life after spending a period in the realm of the dead.

The religion of Africa may be different than our own faith in many ways. The most important thing for us today, is that it has been recognised that Africans have a true religion. As with any other religions, this should be defined by man's capacity to believe in a power greater than he, and that man's desire to live in such a way that he meets the single God in his afterlife. By these definitions the Traditional African Religion fits the bill perfectly!

To read more get your copy of *"Searching for Spiritual Unity...Can There Be Common Ground"*



**ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE AND TEACHER:** Robyn Lebron was baptized as an infant in the Lutheran Church, but her individual walk with God didn't happen until many years later. After experiencing many different churches and attending an off-campus four year seminary, her spiritual journey with God grew deeper and richer. Her desire to share the concept that we are called to love everyone, regardless of faith, motivated her to write *"Searching for Spiritual Unity...Can There Be Common Ground?"* She and her husband, Rev. Bob Lebron, live in Wisconsin with their dogs and cats. Robyn can be reached by phone at 608-354-5566, by email at [rockin-robyn@msn.com](mailto:rockin-robyn@msn.com) or through her website at <http://www.aninterfaithsearchforunity.com/>.

## OTHER GIFTS AND E-NEWSWORTHY ITEMS:

### 13. Good News Of The Day

*The stories below are reprinted from [www.dailygood.org](http://www.dailygood.org).*

Mary Oliver is a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet whose body of work is largely filled with imagery of the natural world -- cats, opossums crossing the street, sunflowers and black oaks in the sunshine. Her most recent collection is entitled "A Thousand Mornings"...Mornings with the notebook are part of a regular ritual for Oliver, though. "Most mornings I'm up to see the sun, and that rising of the light moves me very much, and I'm used to thinking and feeling in words, so it sort of just happens." Oliver shares more reflections and a few of her latest poems in this NPR interview. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** This week take a few moments each day (with or without a notebook and pen) to witness the sunrise.

"True freedom lies in choice -- this is one of the core insights in the writings of Viktor Frankl, a psychiatrist who was imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp. In the best-selling book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, Frankl described his profound experiences: 'We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms -- to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.' In any challenging circumstance, Frankl's testimonial gives a starting point: in order to have the freedom to choose, we first need to be aware that we even have a choice." [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** As you go about playing, working, and living today, make an effort to stay connected to "the last of the human freedoms."

"I hate you, Aditi! I hate you!" my little brother screamed to me just minutes after my college graduation. As I pressed the outside corner of my eye to prevent a tear from escaping, I reminded him not to use hurtful words when he feels upset. Together we searched for the source of his frustration and then addressed it: we would get "New York" pizza once the crowds cleared. At the time, my little brother, Anand, was not so little -- he was thirteen. Anand was born with cataracts, faced some developmental delays while growing up, and at the age of twelve with the onset of severe seizures, was diagnosed with both autism and epilepsy. I coordinate Anand's care for my family, building relationships with his doctors and educators. I haven't yet missed an appointment or teacher conference, even if I can only call in on the phone." In this moving piece, a young student at Harvard describes how the process of supporting her brother's journey in small, constant ways that she dubbed "milk moments", taught her a profound life lesson about what we are here for. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Make a practice of looking for "milk moments" in your own life.

Every year we are amazed by everyday stories of compassion, warmth, and love that fill our world with with inspiration and hope. Collected here are 10 uplifting stories from 2012 about the kindness of ordinary people of all ages and from all walks of life. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Write a note of appreciation to someone whose genuine kindness has touched your life.

A 51-year-old man is moving back in with his parents so a homeless family can live in his house instead. Tony Tolbert's offer is good for one full year. According to CBS, the spare bedroom in his childhood home in Los Angeles frequently went to people in need, which inspired his own version of the act. "You don't have to be Bill Gates or Warren Buffet or Oprah," Tolbert, a Harvard-educated attorney said, "We can do it wherever we are, with whatever we have, and for me, I have a home that I can make available." Tolbert had never met the recipients. He found them through Alexandria House, a shelter for women and children. Felicia Dukes, a mother of four, couldn't believe the deal when she heard it. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** "Give more than you can spare" today, whether that is in time, energy, space, or benefit of doubt.

"Two days ago, I was in China, speaking to a bunch of influential business leaders. One of them posed a challenge: "You speak about Vinoba Bhave, the spiritual heir of Gandhi, and how he walked 80K kilometers across India and inspired people to donate 5 million acres to their neighbors. Yes, it might've been an unprecedented feat in the history of mankind, but really, how many people remember Vinoba today? Instead, think of how many people remember Steve Jobs and the

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legacy he left behind." From a short-term impact point of view, it's a thoughtful dilemma. In fact, Forbes magazine did a piece which reflected similarly, asking the question: "Who has changed the world more: Bill Gates or Mother Teresa?" And they concluded Bill Gates. My response to this industrialist, though, was a true story that happened a few weeks ago at a school near Pune." Nipun Mehta reflects further. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Infuse a simple act of giving today with a deep wish for well-being.

Public spaces serve multiple functions for society and, more and more, they are being utilized in ever-creative ways. In many of these cases, whimsy seems to be at the heart of the matter, even if it is not the main driver. For instance, in a bid to improve public health by encouraging more people to use the stairs instead of the escalator, The Fun Theory (a Volkswagen initiative) transformed a set of Stockholm subway stairs into piano keys -- each step a person took played a note. As a result, 66 percent more people took the stairs than the escalator. In another example, a Dutch railway company had a slide installed atop one of the stairways leading down to a station in Utrecht and dubbed it a 'transfer accelerator.' This delightful piece shares more. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Do something differently today that invites the power of whimsy into your life.

The poems of Naomi Shihab Nye have an uncanny way of showing up at exactly the right moment to summon you below the surface of your life. The child of a Palestinian father and an American mother, her poems speak a language deeper than culture, history or religion. Through the portal of the everyday -- a grocery store, an olive press, the headlines -- she draws us into the most profound questions and revelations of the soul. In addition to writing poetry, Nye writes fiction, essays and children's books, and has edited several anthologies. In this interview she shares more about her life and craft. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** What aspects of your own life carry qualities of devotion? How do you honor that each day?

Finding a letter of encouragement in the mail or tucked unexpectedly in the unlikeliest of places is sometimes all we need when in doubt or feeling down on our luck. And imagine receiving this note anonymously, as if some magical force out there knew just what you needed to hear and wanted you to know that you haven't been forgotten. In the fall of 2010, in the midst of her own depression and loneliness, Hannah Brencher was inspired to become this magical force. A single letter scribbled on board a subway train would ripple out into what is now a global movement called The World Needs More Love Letters. Read more about Hannah's inspired journey. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Write an affirming note today and tuck it into a corner for a stranger to find.

The founder of Curry Without Worry, Shrawan Nepali, has shoulder length salt and pepper hair, brown eyes that sparkle like he's about to break into a smile, and a lightness to him, as if he seems to defy gravity...They feed approximately 250 people in San Francisco, and 300 in Katmandu, Nepal every Tuesday night. Kerry Adams, a man waiting in line, told me, "Not only is the food here healthy and tasty, but Shrawan and everyone else working is so polite that you walk away with good manners. And if you want, you can volunteer." Shrawan's last name is Nepali, which is given to children who grow up in orphanages in Nepal." [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Cook and share a meal with a friend or new acquaintance this week.

Generosity is paradoxical. Those who give, receive back in turn. By spending ourselves for others' well-being, we enhance our own. In letting go of some of what we own, we better secure our own lives. By giving ourselves away, we ourselves move toward greater flourishing. This is not only a philosophical or religious teaching, it is a sociological fact. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Create a weekly "generosity practice" of your own.

Using games for purposes other than entertainment is nothing new. There are war games, educational games, throne games. But a new class of games has sprung up in recent years, designed to create awareness and raise support for a variety of global issues. Such serious games seek to harness the power of competition and/or novelty to attract players and get the word out for a good cause. Here are 15 games you can play and be a better person for it. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Check out one or more of the games in the article above.

"My wife called, "How long will you be with that newspaper? Will you come here and make your darling daughter eat her food?" I tossed the paper away and rushed to the scene. My only daughter Sindu looked frightened. Tears were welling up in her eyes. In front of her was a bowl filled to its brim with curd rice. Sindu is a nice child, quite intelligent for her age. She has just turned eight. She particularly detested curd rice...I cleared my throat, and picked up the bowl. "Sindu, darling, why don't you take a few mouthful of this curd rice? Just for Dad's sake, dear." Sindu softened a bit, and wiped her tears with the back of her hands. "Dad, if I eat this entire curd rice, will you give me whatever I ask for?" "Oh sure, darling," I

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replied. "Promise?" "Promise." What follows is a beautiful story of a child's compassion. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Go out of your way today to lighten someone's load.

"What are you going to be remembered for? Will people talk about the relationships you had with friends and family? The once-a-year dish everyone looked forward to? The impact you made on a company and its employees? How is a legacy created and cultivated, and what can you do to build your own legacy? These are all huge questions with small and critical answers. Here's the story of my legacy, and a few pointers on how to build yours." A research assistant-turned-science teacher shares her insights here. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Reflect on your own legacy and how you are building it.

"Dandelion, what an appropriate word to name a school that serves the children of migrant workers! The dandelion's seeds, feathery and light, drift with the wind to wherever they land. The tenacity of the plant helps it endure, put down roots, and live on. It is a perfect symbol of the situation tolerated by many migrant families, driven to wherever they can find jobs. Unassuming but tenacious, they endure, raise their young, and hope for a better future. They form the force that builds the enormous urban landscape in China; their labor brings the country its confidence and prosperity. Yet they live on the fringe of the cities they built and are often invisible to mainstream society." Lily Yeh is an artist and activist whose work spans dozens of traumatized zones of the world. In this article, she describes a moving experience with community healing at Dandelion School in Beijing, China. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Take a closer look at the people and environment around you, and see something that you have not seen before.

When neurosurgeon Allan Hamilton was diagnosed with cancer, the "c-word" that he had used so often in his practice suddenly became personal and life-changing. Like many other cancer patients, his treatment journey was a mix of emotions. "Each time, the battery of tests would roll around again, I would find myself transported. I would want to hold on to the magic of that moment but, hard as I might try, I could not grasp it for long. So I asked myself: Was I the only person? Was I some hopeless dunce who could not hold on to 'the feeling' of being happy, of being elated for the sake of being?" Here, Hamilton offers his insightful story of inner change and seven ways to make happiness last. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** A short passage from an anonymous author, on why happiness is a journey, not a destination. [{ more }](#)

"This place is about transformation. The students learn that if you can transform this environment, you can transform your life, yourself. We try to use the program at the gardens to help people build self-esteem," says James Jiler, who runs the GreenHouse program at Rikers Island in New York. Though a prison that holds nearly 16,000 short-term detainees is an unlikely site for a garden, the men and women on this island have been transforming it into an urban oasis. "Eight years ago only overgrown weeds covered the two acres that now make up the Rikers Island gardens. [Now,] herb gardens flourished behind a greenhouse where orchids grew. A gazebo sat in a grassy area, overlooking a small waterfall and pond." As the landscape changes, so too have the minds and hearts of the detainees. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Water a plant, watch a bird, and connect with the land today.

"Our world is pretty messed up. With all the violence, pollution and crazy things people do, it would be easy to turn into a grouchy old man without being either elderly or male. There's certainly no shortage of justification for disappointment and cynicism. But consider this: Negative attitudes are bad for you. And gratitude, it turns out, makes you happier and healthier (...) if you can find any authentic reason to give thanks, anything that is going right with the world or your life, and put your attention there, then statistics say you're going to be better off." Ocean Robbins shares further. [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** Take time to think of five things you are grateful for in this very moment.

"For years I worked with families who were very abusive to their children. Over time, I came to realize that all of the suffering that the children collected -- whether it was domestic violence or child abuse or neglect -- was a result of the absence of empathy in the parent. I saw that if you haven't experienced love, it's very difficult to know how to love. So what can we do to break this cycle of abuse and neglect?" Mary Gordon speaks about the makings of Roots of Empathy, a program that brings babies into classrooms to help teach emotional literacy -- and how it has positively transformed students and communities [{ read more }](#) **Be The Change:** When you next interact with a baby, reflect on what he or she teaches you.

"Dana Gioia (pronounced Joy-a) claims to be the only person in history who went to business school to be a poet. Having earned a degree from Stanford's graduate school of business, he worked 15 years in corporate life, eventually becoming vice president of General Foods. In 1991, Gioia wrote an influential collection of essays titled, "Can Poetry Matter?" in which he explored, among other themes, the nexus between business and poetry. Since 2002, he has been chairman of

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the National Endowment of the Arts where he has overseen programs aimed at making Shakespeare and poetry recitation more popular in the U.S." Gioia shares more in this interview with Knowledge@Wharton. [{read more}](#) **Be The Change:** Take a moment to revisit a poem you learned as a child today.

We are so afraid to let go, to just be, to allow the unfolding of this marvelous life without getting in the way. This fear keeps us paralyzed and stuck. And longing for the peace that is possible -- if only we would put down all the efforts we make to know. There is no greater gift you can give yourself than the invitation to enter the world of not knowing. Why? If you are always going to know what you know now, things will always stay the same. How could they change? And by thinking you know what will happen, you are closing yourself off to the unimaginable -- endless peace, unspeakable joy, awe and wonder." Gail Brenner shares tips on how to "forget what you know". [{read more}](#) **Be The Change:** Dwell in your own places of not-knowing today.

## 14. Social Intelligence

*Reprinted from InnerNet Weekly via [www.iJourney.org](http://www.iJourney.org).*

*by Daniel Goleman*

One day, late for a meeting in midtown Manhattan, I was looking for a shortcut. So I walked into an indoor atrium on the ground floor of a skyscraper, planning to use an exit door I had spotted on the other side that would give me a faster route through the block.

But as soon as I reached the building's lobby, with its banks of elevators, a uniformed guard stormed over to me, waving his arms and yelling, "You can't walk through here!"

"Why not?" I asked, puzzled.

"Private property! It's private property!" he shouted, visibly agitated.

I seemed to have inadvertently intruded into an unmarked security zone. "It would help," I suggested in a shaky attempt to infuse a bit of reasoning, "if there were a sign on the door saying 'Do Not Enter.' "

My remark made him even angrier. "Get out! Get out!" he screamed.

Unsettled, I hastily beat my retreat, his anger reverberating in my own gut for the next several blocks.

When someone dumps their toxic feelings on us – explodes in anger or threats, shows disgust or contempt—they activate in us circuitry for those very same distressing emotions. Their act has potent neurological consequences: emotions are contagious. We "catch" strong emotions much as we do a rhinovirus – and so can come down with the emotional equivalent of a cold.

Every interaction has an emotional subtext. Along with whatever else we are doing, we can make each other feel a little better, or even a lot better, or a little worse – or a lot worse, as happened to me. Beyond what transpires in the moment, we can retain a mood that stays with us long after the direct encounter ends – an emotional afterglow (or afterglower, in my case).

These tacit transactions drive what amounts to an emotional economy, the net inner gains and losses we experience with a given person, or in a given conversation, or on any given day. By evening the net balance of feelings we have exchanged largely determines what kind of day – "good" or "bad" – we feel we've had.

## 15. Gift from the Sea

*Reprinted from InnerNet Weekly via [www.iJourney.org](http://www.iJourney.org).*

The beach is not the place to work; to read, write, or think. I should have remembered that from other years. Too warm, too damp, too soft for any real mental discipline or sharp flights of spirit. One never learns. Hopefully, one carries down that faded straw bag, lumpy with books, clean paper, long over-due unanswered letters, freshly sharpened pencils, lists, and good intentions. The books remain unread, the pencils break their points, and the pads rest smooth and unblemished as the cloudless sky. No reading, no writing, no thoughts even – at least, not at first.

At first, the tired body takes over completely. As on shipboard, one descends into a deck-chair apathy. One is forced against one's mind, against all tidy resolutions, back into the primeval rhythms of the sea-shore. Rollers on the beach, wind in the pines, the slow flapping of herons across sand dunes, drown out the hectic rhythms of city and suburb, time tables and schedules. One falls under their spell, relaxes, stretches out prone. One becomes, in fact, like the element on which one lies, flattened by the sea; bare, open, empty as the beach, erased by today's tides of all yesterday's scribbles.

And then, some morning in the second week, the mind wakes, comes to life again. Not in a city sense – no—but beach-wise. It begins to drift, to play, to turn over in gentle careless rolls like those lazy waves on the beach. One never knows what chance treasures these easy unconscious rollers may toss up, on the smooth white sand of the conscious mind; what perfectly rounded stone, what rare shell from the ocean floor. Perhaps a channeled whelk, a moon shell, or even an argonaut.

But it must not be sought for or – heaven forbid! – dug for. No, no dredging of the sea-bottom here. That would defeat one's purpose. The sea does not reward those who are too anxious, too greedy, or too impatient. To dig for treasures shows not only impatience and greed, but lack of faith. Patience, patience, patience, is what the sea teaches. Patience and faith. One should lie empty, open, choiceless as a beach – waiting for a gift from the sea.

-- Anne Morrow Lindberg from "Gift from the Sea"

## 16. Using Attention in A New Way

*Reprinted from InnerNet Weekly via [www.iJourney.org](http://www.iJourney.org).*

One of the things we are trying to do here, is learn to pay attention to seeing what complicates our attention -- where we get caught, what makes it difficult. Because the place we get caught is also the place where we are going to feel stress.

The place we get hung up is often a very important window into understanding how we are most likely to suffer, or how we are more likely to cause problems in our life.

So we start by paying attention, which we all have the capacity to do. Yet when we get interested in this practice, how is it that our ability to stay calmly connected to the present moment gets somehow disrupted? People who meditate will sometimes think that the disruption is the problem. Disruption sounds like a bad word: "I got disrupted." I got caught. When we do this meditation practice, we try to not judge anything as being bad or inappropriate. Rather we try to fold everything back into the attention. In other words, to notice this. Pay attention. What's going on. Notice this, notice this. "Ah, I just got caught. I heard someone cough, and it reminded me that my friend was sick, and I wondered if I should visit my friend in the hospital, and I wonder how late Kaiser is open, and then I notice, "I'm teaching a class...oh!" So, it's an example of getting pulled in. It was an innocent example, but it could also not be so innocent. Rather than saying that I shouldn't have had that train of thought, what we try to do is fold everything back into the attention. "Oh, look at that, that's what a disruption is like. That's what it's like for the mind to get hooked, get carried away. That's what it's like. That's what it's like."

Do you understand that principle? It is a really important one. Sometimes, people who have been meditating for 10 years

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haven't learned this one yet. Haven't learned that there's nothing that doesn't need to happen. There's nothing that you should say "that shouldn't happen". Rather, it's one more thing to learn to pay attention to. And if you learn to pay attention well, there is freedom to be found in attention. In paying attention, there is a way of doing it where you are not caught, trapped, oppressed, influenced, or driven by what's going on, inside or outside yourself. And that gives you a tremendous power to go about your life. If you have the ability not to be pushed around by your inner compulsions or the pressures from the outside. We learn this by learning how to use the attention in a new way.

--Gill Fronsdal

## 17. Small Wonder

*Reprinted from InnerNet Weekly via [www.iJourney.org](http://www.iJourney.org).*

Barry Lopez writes that if we hope to succeed in the endeavor of protecting natures other than our own, "it will require that we reimagine our lives.... It will require of many of us a humanity we've not yet mustered, and a grace we were not aware we desired until we had tasted it."

And yet no endeavor could be more crucial at this moment. Protecting the land that once provided us with our genesis may turn out to be the only real story there is for us. The land still provides our genesis, however we might like to forget that our food comes from dank, muddy earth, that the oxygen in our lungs was recently inside a leaf, and that every newspaper or book we may pick up (including this one, ultimately, though recycled) is made from the hearts of trees that died for the sake of our imagined lives. What you hold in your hands right now, beneath these words, is consecrated air and time and sunlight and, first of all, a place. Whether we are leaving it or coming into it, it's here that matters, it is place. Whether we understand where we are or don't, that is the story: To be here or not to be. Storytelling is as old as our need to remember where the water is, where the best food grows, where we find our courage for the hunt. It's as persistent as our desire to teach our children how to live in this place that we have known longer than they have. Our greatest and smallest explanations for ourselves grow from place, as surely as carrots grow in the dirt. I'm presuming to tell you something that I could not prove rationally but instead feel as a religious faith. I can't believe otherwise. [...]

Oh, how can I say this: People need wild places. Whether or not we think we do, we do. We need to be able to taste grace and know once again that we desire it. We need to experience a landscape that is timeless, whose agenda moves at the pace of speciation and glaciers. To be surrounded by a singing, mating, howling commotion of other species, all of which love their lives as much as we do ours, and none of which could possibly care less about our economic status or our running day calendar. Wildness puts us in our place. It reminds us that our plans are small and somewhat absurd. It reminds us why, in those cases in which our plans might influence many future generations, we ought to choose carefully. Looking out on a clean plank of planet earth, we can get shaken right down to the bone by the bronze-eyed possibility of lives that are not our own.

-- Barbara Kingsolver, in "Small Wonder"

## 18. Can You Love the One Who...

*Reprinted from InnerNet Weekly via [www.iJourney.org](http://www.iJourney.org).*

There's one in you who's sweet.  
There's one in you who's mean.  
Can you love them both?  
Can you let them both be seen?



# Spiritual Guidance

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Can you love the one who tries?  
And love her when she fails?  
Can you love the one who lies?  
And love the one who wails?

Can you love your tears?  
Can you love your worry?  
Can you love your darkest fears?  
Can you love your fury?

Can you love indifference?  
Love the one who clings?  
Can you love the vibrant one?  
Love the one who sings?

Can you love your addict?  
Can you love your thief?  
Can you love your vanity?  
Can you love your grief?

Can you love your inner child?  
And your body as you age?  
Can you love your wild side?  
Release her from her cage?  
Can you love the one fulfilled?  
And the one who's not?

Can you love the one who's chilled?  
And whose temper's hot?  
Can you love the weakling?  
The one who's sometimes sick?

Can you love the warrior?  
Who fights through thin and thick?

Can you love your crazy?  
Can you love your sane?  
Can you love your foolish heart?  
Love your scattered brain?

There's one in you who's bored.  
And one who's often stressed  
Can you love them both at once?  
And she who tries her best?

If the answer's "no."  
To some of the above  
Then can you love the one in you  
Who's learning how to love?

--Leah Pearlman

## 19. A Man Without Shoes

Reprinted from [www.HelpOthers.org](http://www.HelpOthers.org).



Today, as I was riding a transit bus from Unicity to downtown, I did not realize that I would be a witness to something amazing.

The ride was, as usual, long and uneventful, until we reached the corner of Portage and Main Street. That's when the driver pulled over. This, of course, surprised all of the passengers on the bus. But, what happened next still brings tears to my eyes.

The bus driver jumped off the bus to chat with a man that looked to be down on his luck; by all accounts, a homeless man. I first thought the driver was going to offer the man a ride until our driver took off his own shoes and gave them to the man on the sidewalk.

That is when I realized that the man the driver was chatting with was barefoot. The bus was dead silent. I think we were all stunned and speechless. As we proceeded to our next stop, one of the passengers got up to speak to the driver.

"That was the most amazing thing she had ever seen. Why did you do that?"

"I just couldn't stand the thought of that poor man walking without shoes," the bus driver answered.

Wow. No judgment. It was just, "Here buddy, you need these more than I do."

There wasn't a dry eye on the bus. All the passengers were moved by this bold and selfless gesture. Now, a homeless man will have shoes for his feet because of a bus driver's random act of kindness.

Not bad for a Tuesday morning in downtown Winnipeg.

## 20. A "Food for Thought" Jar

Reprinted from [www.HelpOthers.org](http://www.HelpOthers.org).

When I worked in a busy office, most of my co-workers kept jars of candy on their desks to enjoy and share with others. Constantly battling the "bulge," I hated these temptations, but nevertheless often gave in to them. I decided to put out a jar of my own "feel good" stuff, with no calories.

I bought a beautiful jar and spent one whole weekend at home cutting up colorful strips of paper and writing down inspiring quotes. I filled up the jar with the inspiring quotes and placed it on my desk for people to help themselves to.

It took a while to catch on, but soon, everyone was stopping by my "food for thought" jar daily to fill up on something much better than empty calories.

They would take one out, read it, smile knowingly, and then fold it up and replace it for the next co-worker. It's something that never needed to be replenished unless, I saw a new quote I liked and wanted to add.

If you work in an office environment, try this out and see how much everyone loves it.

## 21. My Daughter's Noble Sacrifice

Reprinted from [www.HelpOthers.org](http://www.HelpOthers.org).

My wife called, "How long will you be with that newspaper? Will you come here and make your darling daughter eat her food?"

I tossed the paper away and rushed to the scene. My only daughter Sindu looked frightened. Tears were welling up in her eyes. In front of her was a bowl filled to its brim with curd rice. Sindu is a nice child, quite intelligent for her age. She has just turned eight. She particularly detested curd rice. My mother and my wife are orthodox, and believe firmly in the 'cooling effects' of curd rice!

I cleared my throat, and picked up the bowl. "Sindu, darling, why don't you take a few mouthful of this curd rice? Just for Dad's sake, dear." Sindu softened a bit, and wiped her tears with the back of her hands. "OK, Dad. I will eat - not just a few mouthfuls, but the whole lot of this. But, you should..."

Sindu hesitated. "Dad, if I eat this entire curd rice, will you give me whatever I ask for?" "Oh sure, darling," I replied. "Promise?" "Promise."

I covered the pink soft hand extended by my daughter with mine, and clinched the deal. "Ask Mom also to give a similar promise," my daughter insisted. My wife put her hand on Sindu's, muttering "Promise."

Now I became a bit anxious. "Sindu dear, you shouldn't insist on getting a computer or any such expensive items. Dad does not have that kind of money right now. OK?"

"No, Dad. I do not want anything expensive." Slowly and painfully, she finished eating the whole quantity. I was silently angry with my wife and my mother for forcing my child eat something that she detested.

After the ordeal was through, Sindu came to me with her eyes wide with expectation. All our attention was on her. "Dad, I want to have my head shaved off, this Sunday!" was her demand.

"Atrocious!" shouted my wife, "A girl child having her head shaved off? Impossible!" "Never in our family!" my mother rasped. "She has been watching too much of television. Our culture is getting totally spoiled with these TV programs!"

"Sindu darling, why don't you ask for something else? We will be sad seeing you with a clean-shaven head."

"No, Dad. I do not want anything else," Sindu said with finality.

"Please, Sindu, why don't you try to understand our feelings?" I tried to plead with her.

"Dad, you saw how difficult it was for me to eat that Curd Rice." Sindu was in tears. "And you promised to grant me whatever I ask for. Now, you are going back on your words. Was it not you who told me the story of King Harishchandra, and its moral that we should honor our promises no matter what?"

It was time for me to call the shots. "Our promise must be kept."

"Are you out your mind?" chorused my mother and wife. "No. If we go back on our promises, she will never learn to honor her own. Sindu, your wish will be fulfilled."

With her head clean-shaven, Sindu had a round-face, and her eyes looked big and beautiful. On Monday morning, I dropped her at her school. It was a sight to watch my hairless Sindu walking towards her classroom. She turned around and waved. I waved back with a smile. Just then, a boy alighted from a car, and shouted, "Sinduja, please wait for me!"

What struck me was the hairless head of that boy. "Maybe, that is the in-stuff," I thought.

"Sir, your daughter Sinduja is great indeed!" Without introducing herself, a lady got out of the car, and continued, "That boy who is walking along with your daughter is my son Harish. He is suffering from... leukemia." She paused to muffle her sobs. "Harish could not attend the school for the whole of the last month. He lost all his hair due to the side effects of the

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chemotherapy. He refused to come back to school fearing the unintentional but cruel teasing of the schoolmates. Sinduja visited him last week and promised him that she will take care of the teasing issue. But, I never imagined she would sacrifice her lovely hair for the sake of my son!"

"Sir, you and your wife are blessed to have such a noble soul as your daughter."

I stood transfixed. And then, I wept. "My little Angel, you are teaching me how selfless real love is!"

## 22. A Powerful Tool

Reprinted from [www.HelpOthers.org](http://www.HelpOthers.org).

One of my next-door neighbors is a sweet and frail-looking grandmotherly 92-year-old Polish lady who lives with three cats. She is a Holocaust survivor (and with due respect does not talk about that traumatic time), and has a daughter and grand-daughter who visit her every week. She oftentimes brings us cherry tomatoes, comes over for chai, loves mangoes, and is in general a very sweet person.

A few months ago, my friend and I drove down to LA to attend a dear friend's wedding, and came back home to the Bay Area the next evening. As I was unpacking my clothes in my room, I heard a persistent, frantic knock on the door. It was 10:30pm, and I wasn't sure who it could be. I went downstairs and looked through the peephole, and saw that it was our sweet next-door neighbor.

I quickly opened the door, and she seemed really distressed and kept repeating, "Please help me, I need your help. The fire alarm won't go off. It's frightening me. Please help me." I immediately told her that everything would be okay, and accompanied her to her house to see what was going on with the fire alarm.

She mentioned that the alarm had been going on and off inconsistently for the past two hours (with no noticeable reason/fire/smoke), and that her attempts to call her son-in-law to come and fix it were fruitless. So I took a chair from her dining room table, climbed it, looked at the fire alarm, and she somehow produced and handed over a screwdriver. It was at that time that I saw her numerical tattoo that ran across her exposed right wrist -- a feeling of dread overcame me, but I soon composed myself to get the fire alarm off.

After twisting the fire alarm off, I blew into it (sometimes dust accumulation or low battery causes it to make strange noises). She seemed relieved but was literally shaking out of fear. I asked her if she was okay, and she said she was afraid, so I gave her a hug. I felt her shaking in my embrace, and held her tight for a few minutes until she stopped shaking and sighed a breath of relief.

It was a very intense experience, and something that I felt very privileged and humbled to witness -- the vulnerability of someone who was indeed very scared. Although I couldn't even imagine what it must have been like to be in a concentration camp (and what I feel must have been a trigger with the fire alarm), the experience allowed me to use a simple hug as a good and powerful way to hold someone going through a difficult period. We then sat down and talked for ten minutes, until I felt that she was okay, and safe to sleep. She was so generous with her gratitude for being with her, but I thank her for reminding me that hugs are indeed powerful tools!

## 23. Wandering Around an Albuquerque Airport Terminal

Reprinted from [www.HelpOthers.org](http://www.HelpOthers.org).

After learning my flight was detained 4 hours, I heard the announcement: "If anyone in the vicinity of gate 4-A understands any Arabic, please come to the gate immediately."

Well -- one pauses these days. Gate 4-A was my own gate. I went there.

An older woman in full traditional Palestinian dress, just like my grandma wore, was crumpled to the floor, wailing loudly. "Help," said the flight service person. "Talk to her. What is her problem? We told her the flight was going to be four hours late and she did this."

I put my arm around her and spoke to her haltingly. "Shu dow-a, shu- biduck habibti, stani stani schway, min fadlick, Sho bit se-wee?"

The minute she heard any words she knew -- however poorly used -- she stopped crying.

She thought our flight had been cancelled entirely. She needed to be in El Paso for some major medical treatment the following day. I said "No, no, we're fine, you'll get there, just late. Who is picking you up? Let's call him and tell him."

We called her son and I spoke with him in English. I told him I would stay with his mother till we got on the plane and would ride next to her -- SouthWest.

She talked to him. Then we called her other sons just for the fun of it.

Then we called my dad and he and she spoke for a while in Arabic and found out, of course, that they had ten shared friends!

Then I thought just for the heck of it why not call some Palestinian Poets I know and let them chat with her. This all took up about 2 hours.

She was laughing a lot by then. Telling about her life. Answering questions.

Soon after, she pulled a sack of homemade mamool cookies -- little powdered sugar crumbly mounds stuffed with dates and nuts -- out of her bag and was offering them to all the women at the gate.

To my amazement, not a single woman declined one. It was like a sacrament. The traveler from Argentina, the traveler from California, the lovely woman from Laredo -- we were all covered with the same powdered sugar. And smiling. There are no better cookies.

And then the airline broke out the free (non-alcoholic) beverages from huge coolers and the two little girls for our flight -- one African American, one Mexican American -- ran around serving us all Apple Juice and Lemonade. And they were covered with powdered sugar too.

I noticed that my new best friend -- by now we were holding hands -- had a potted plant poking out of her bag, some medicinal thing, with green furry leaves. Ah, an old country traveling tradition: always carry a plant. Always stay rooted to somewhere.

And I looked around that gate of late and weary ones and thought, "This is the world I want to live in. The shared world."

Not a single person in this gate -- once the cries of confusion stopped -- was apprehensive about any other person.

They took to the cookies. All I felt like hugging everyone else.

## 24. The Wayside Chapel

Reprinted from [www.HelpOthers.org](http://www.HelpOthers.org).

It was a hot afternoon and I was waiting for a bus. The bus stop was unusually quiet that day. There was an elderly man, a middle aged lady and, of course, me.

The mongrels that are usually seen lazing on the footpath were also missing. I noticed they had taken refuge from the heat under nearby parked cars. A lone mynah bird hopped on the road.

I saw an old lady approaching the bus stop. It was a day of superlatives. First, the sultry afternoon (the hottest in a long time), then the eerie silence (the quietest silence ever), and now this old lady (the oldest I have probably ever seen).

Bent and slouched she walked with the aid of a stick. As she approached the bus stop I took a closer look. Her face was all wrinkles. But one could tell that she'd had chubby cheeks long ago. She was tired, no doubt, but her eyes carried a twinkle that was hard to miss. Her clothes had long since seen their best days and I knew she must be struggling to make ends meet.

I was busy studying her face, which must have been beautiful once upon a time, when she stopped in front of me and stretched out her hand. I was quite taken aback at this. I knew she was poor but she didn't look like a beggar. Her face had a dignity that demanded respect. A beggar was the last thing I expected her to be.

I had no coins so she moved on to the middle aged lady next to me. That lady took a coin from her bag and placed it on the old woman's palm. She smiled with gratitude and turned to cross the road.

The middle aged lady, the elderly man and I watched with interest as she walked to the wayside chapel on the other side of the road. She said a prayer and dropped the coin she had just received into the donation box. And she walked back the way she had come.

The middle aged lady's face burst into a huge smile. I was still gaping after the dear old lady who had literally begged for God's sake when my bus finally arrived.

But right then I only wanted to stand there and stare at the bent, old, lady as she walked away, leaving behind the smiles on our faces because of her simple, beautiful gesture.

## 25. Instant Grants in the Park

Reprinted from [www.KarmaTube.org](http://www.KarmaTube.org).

A group calling itself the Federation of Students and Nominally Employed or Unemployed Artists spent four hours giving away "instant grants" in a park in New York City. Photographers, knitters for the homeless and artists of all types lined up for small grants. The funds were raised or donated by the federation and the exercise went deeper than just dollars for some. As one recipient noted: "It's not the money here. Something else is going on." Follow this link to the video...

<http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=1343>.

## 26. Gratitude, Gifting and Grandpa

Reprinted from [www.KarmaTube.org](http://www.KarmaTube.org).

A picture of John Styn's grandfather, Rev. Caleb Elroy Shikles, with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., had a huge impact on John Styn's life growing up. It made him realize that great people are not "them" - they are "us." In this funny, emotional TEDx talk, Styn shares his grandpa's lessons of living life in intense gratitude and the joy that comes from gifting. We all have a choice every moment of our lives. Are we going to focus on the (ice cream) cone or the (dog) crap? Follow this link to the video... <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=3561>.

## 27. Far From the Tree

Reprinted from [www.KarmaTube.org](http://www.KarmaTube.org).

How do you find meaning in difficulty? This video trailer for the book, "Far From the Tree: Parents, Children, and the Search for Identity," by Andrew Solomon, shows some poignant vignettes of interviews with parents and children who were born "different." Solomon learns that although individual differences can be isolating, the fact of difference is universal. His other great discovery is joy - most of the families ended up being grateful for experiences they would have done anything to avoid. Follow this link to the video... <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=3645>.

## 28. From Homeless to Harvard

Reprinted from [www.KarmaTube.org](http://www.KarmaTube.org).

Dawn Loggins grew up in a home with no electricity or running water. And before the start of her senior year at Burns High School, where she also works as a janitor, she was abandoned by her parents. Rather than turning her over to the Department of Social Service, school staff and the community of Lawndale, North Carolina decided to become Dawn's family. Dawn is not angry with her parents - she just knows that she wants to make different decisions in her life. Follow this link to the video... <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=3684>.

## 29. Flipped Learning

Reprinted from [www.KarmaTube.org](http://www.KarmaTube.org).

In "flipped learning," students watch podcasts of their teacher's lectures on their own time and spend their time in the classroom applying what they've learned at home. This allows students to learn at their own pace by watching the lecture as many times as they need. Schools that have applied this method of teaching in all their classrooms have seen their failure rates drop dramatically. Follow this link to the video... <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=3652>.

## 30. **Lou, My Name is Lou**

This is a heart-warming video about an autistic and blind child who brings his talents and gifts to the world through music. Follow this link to the video... [http://www.youtube.com/watch\\_popup?v=VumaWumENEk](http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=VumaWumENEk).



## 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](mailto:newsletter@servingyourjourney.com) by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month, for distribution in the following month's e-newsletter.*

### 31. Spiritual Resources

Check out the resources on the Spiritual Guidance website's resources page ([www.servingyourjourney.com](http://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.

### 32. 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.

## 33. 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](mailto: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.

### 34. 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](mailto: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.

### 35. 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](mailto: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.

## 36. 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](mailto: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

## 37. 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](http://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

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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](http://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](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.

## 38. 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](mailto:steppingstoneministries@rogers.com)

## 39. 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.

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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](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](http://www.scarboromissions.ca)

## 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 which 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](mailto: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](mailto:admin@enneagramnorth.com) or call her at 647-208-8754 or go online: [www.enneagramnorth.com](http://www.enneagramnorth.com).

## 42. Butterfly Retreat: Creating in the Stillness

Mon March 4, 2013 (9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.) at Cambridge Butterfly Conservatory, 25 Kossuth Rd, Cambridge

Cost \$75 by Jan 31; \$90 after Jan 31; includes admission, free parking, lunch and 2 snacks plus a presentation on the Monarch butterfly migration.

Like a beautiful butterfly created in the still quiet of the cocoon, we receive new life when we rest and reflect. Experience a spacious day of rejuvenation and inspiration in a lush tropical garden filled with butterflies. Wear comfortable clothes and footwear. Bring favourite art supplies for individual creations (drawing pencils, journal, camera, etc.)

Pre-register by contacting Catherine Maine at 519-742-2478 or [info@stillpointdancing.com](mailto:info@stillpointdancing.com) . [www.stillpointdancing.com](http://www.stillpointdancing.com).

## 43. Caring for the Dying: Making Meaning at the End of Life

Wed Mar 20 (7 p.m.) and Thurs Mar 21, 2013 (beginning at 9:30 a.m.) at Hospice Kingston, Kingston, Ont.

Hospice Kingston will be presenting the film "Griefwalker", a National Film Board of Canada documentary on Wed Mar 20 at 7 p.m. This is followed by a one day workshop "Care of the Dying - Making Meaning at the End of Life" with Stephen Jenkinson. This opportunity will address the need of living and dying well, and encourage a cultural shift of how we as a community can approach and understand death and dying as part of living. Hospice Kingston believes very strongly that this opportunity will improve quality of life by offering a philosophy of living and dying well, with an understanding that death feeds life and life feeds death. For additional details see: [www.hospicekingston.ca](http://www.hospicekingston.ca) or [www.orphanwisdom.com](http://www.orphanwisdom.com).

## 44. The Journey of Grief

facilitated by Marilyn Gostlin and team at Loyola House at the Jesuit Centre of Spirituality, 5420 Highway 6 N., Guelph, Ont April 19-21, 2013.

For those who are grieving the loss of one they love. This retreat will include prayer, guided imagery, scripture, small group sharing, spiritual direction and grief counseling, DVD's, and art (clay, painting, crayons, no talent required). All those who are experiencing the pain of grief are welcome. For more information contact the registrar @ 519-824-1250 or [registration@ignatuisguelph.ca](mailto:registration@ignatuisguelph.ca).

# Spiritual Guidance

Serving your personal journey toward enlightenment...

In love, gratitude, compassion and forgiveness...

Rev. Robert Meagher

## **Spiritual Guidance**

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