

Serving your personal journey toward enlightenment...

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

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

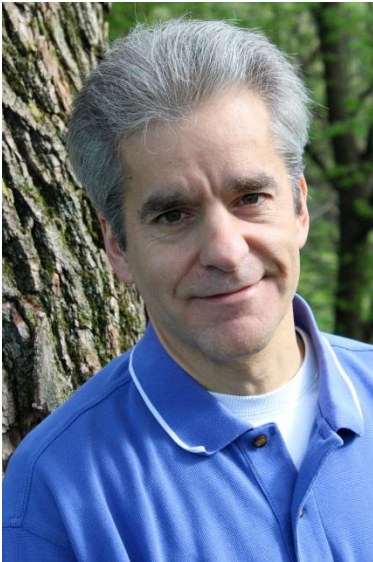
In this e-Newsletter...

SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE OFFERINGS:.....	2
1. Personal Story of Spiritual Lessons.....	2
2. Poem	3
3. Quote or Question.....	3
CONTRIBUTING SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND TEACHERS:.....	4
4. Regina Heringa – Notes From The Light – November 2016.....	4
5. Jeanne Jessica – When I Look At You.....	6
OTHER GIFTS AND E-NEWSWORTHY ITEMS:	8
6. Good News Of The Day	8
7. Destiny is Within Us	11
8. Becoming Free of Our Substitute Life	12
9. Reengineering our Patterns	13
10. Three Millimeters of the Universe	14
11. The Mosque Across the Street	15
12. This Van Delivers Human Kindness	15
13. 22 Random Acts of Kindness	15
14. Whistling in the Wind: Preserving A Language Without Words	15
15. Welcome to My House	16
HEART AND SOUL ADVERTISEMENTS:.....	17
16. Sacred Attention Therapy	17
17. A Course in Miracles Global Community Centre.....	17
18. OM Websites.....	18

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

SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE OFFERINGS:

1. Personal Story of Spiritual Lessons



A Lesson in Perception, Judgement, and Choices

“We see what we want to see and these perceptions are shaped by every life experience that preceded it. From our perception, we judge what we see. At this point our emotions enter the picture. And from our judgement we make choices.”

I am a heavy user of social media, and one of the social media channels I use extensively is [LinkedIn](#). One of the ways I use LinkedIn is to share my monthly newsletter with new connections. When I receive a new LinkedIn connection request, I send the person a thank you message to inform them that I gratefully accept their connection request as an interest on their part in staying connected and that one of the ways I will stay connected with them is through my monthly newsletter. I inform the new connection that I have added their name to my monthly email list and that they can unsubscribe to my monthly newsletter at any time (this practice is intended to respect anti-spamming legislation).

A few years ago I received a new connection request and, subsequently, sent my thank you message to this person with notification I would be adding the new connection to my email list. The response I received from this new connection informed me that my actions were unwelcomed. The new connection went on to criticize me for my practices and to share that my efforts with my monthly newsletter were a waste of time and that I was helping no one. This new connection informed me they had reached out because they wanted me to get involved with an initiative they were launching to save the lives of people but that they did not wish to associated with someone who sent out “meaningless messages” to people. Unbeknownst to the person who shared these thoughts with me...

A few months earlier I received an unexpected and unsolicited message from another LinkedIn connection to thank me for my monthly newsletter and to share with me that I had “saved their life.” They went on to explain that they reached out to me via LinkedIn at a very dark time in their life and, unexpectedly, found comfort and hope in my daily contemplative sharing on LinkedIn and my monthly newsletter. This was the third message of this type I had received in as many years.



The above two stories are interesting reactions to the very same practice and the very same newsletter. Both are extreme reactions, at the opposite end of the scales. One criticizes me for my practices, saying I am wasting my time, and that they don't wish to associated with someone who sends out “meaningless messages.” And the other reaction is from someone who feels my practices and newsletter saved their life. What gives? How is it possible to have such diametrically opposed views and reactions to the same thing?

The answer lies in our perception, judgements, and choices. We see what we want to see and these perceptions are shaped by every life experience that preceded it. From our perception, we judge what we see. At this point our emotions enter the picture. And from our judgement we make choices. And so it was for the two people mentioned above—they perceived something, made a judgement, and then acted (i.e., choice) based on their perception and judgement.

The lesson in all this is that we choose what we see. In the reenactment above, one person chose to see their experience one way, the other person chose to see their experience in another way. But the thing they were reacting to (i.e., the newsletter) was the same. The deeper lesson is that either person wasn't reacting to the newsletter, but to their chosen perception and judgement of the newsletter.

The gift is this lesson is that we can choose however we wish to see any situation. Even if we choose, initially, to see it one way, we can change the way we see the situation. The choice truly is ours to make.

In love, gratitude, compassion and forgiveness...

Rev. Robert Meagher

2. Poem

If You Want What Visible Reality...

If you want what visible reality
can give, you're an employee.

If you want the unseen world,
you're not living your truth.

Both wishes are foolish,
but you'll be forgiven for forgetting
that what you really want is
love's confusing joy.

Jelaluddin Rumi

3. Quote or Question

"It is better to see one time than to hear one hundred times." ~ *Mongolian Proverb*

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).

4. Regiena Heringa – Notes From The Light – November 2016

Streamlining Energy

Fine people of the Planet Earth, it gives us such great joy to see you moving upwardly and inwardly into spheres of loving kindness and sharing. Here you increasingly realize that you are voyaging towards your true home—this reunion within the very heart of the Divine One and hence with the numerous worlds and dimensions of refined consciousness which vibrant joyfully in this divine unity. For this dedication to sacredness we thank you.

Let us now continue with today's message.

It is to be remembered that what is essential in existence is not the content of action but the nature of how the action is performed. Let us explain. You may assist another in crossing the street and this compassionate action is of significance. But greater still is your internal way of being while performing the action. While you help another do you stay in joyful and loving Spirit?

Many upon your earth are understanding that all is energy and your citizens are beginning to comprehend that the greatest discovery for the advancement of any civilization is that of streamlining energy. What do we indicate by this?

The greatest force for good lies in harnessing the energy in your dimension to express this goodness. Let us illustrate. When goodness is expressed through awareness and thoughts of grace which kindle acts of compassion, the field of goodness is unified and hence strengthened. Thus, if you direct your awareness, feelings, thoughts and actions to one focal point such as goodness you are unified in the God-field of Light and you are transformed into a harmonious and whole being.

Let us now expand on this illustration by examining such various disciplines of your societies as science, education, economics, health and spirituality. In so doing, it is perceived that the energy flow of these social aspects are divergent causing planetary confusion and separation.

We ask you now to kindly contemplate the following. Imagine that there is a golden filament running through each discipline and aspect of your societies called *Selfless Love* which threads these disciplines together under the all-encompassing environment of planetary well-being. Here you observe a pattern of streamlined energy demonstrating that your entire planet is founded on a common ground which stimulates and supports each community and nation. This golden filament ensures the union between environment and action and encourages fragmented nations to move towards a unified and well-balanced world. We see this movement as a great destiny for your planet. We state this, for we observe that the coming together of loving thought, feeling, creativity and action are now moving to the forefront of your societies. Light emerges with victorious force.

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Within your own bodies and minds the environment of streamlined energy strengthens. Increasingly, you are advancing towards a strong and lasting inner unity as you guide yourselves into feelings and consequent actions of peace, Self-Love and appreciation for your existence, your gifts and your undertakings. We ask you to continue to explore this streamlining of energy. Observe that as you lovingly unify a thought with its underlying feeling and ensuing action, how strong the energy flow circulates within you. You become harmonized, unified and thus strengthened with a greater sense of purpose and fulfilment. This is so, for you have replaced scattered forces with the immense energy of unification. The greater the sense of purpose in Light, the stronger you become and the more you realize that all which you are presently accomplishing upon your fine earth is of paramount importance to your families, communities and planet and for the universe itself.

This we joyfully observe knowing that you, as a creation of the highest order, are advancing rapidly towards more expansive and magnificent worlds and dimensions wherein so many of us reside. We are meeting you.

Hence, kindly contemplate and cultivate your energy streams with love and comprehension. Observe where you dissipate your energy fields and with kind understanding, encourage their unification and harmony so that fragmentation is replaced by the celebration of oneness.



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

5. Jeanne Jessica – When I Look At You

When I look at You,
I see so much more than your outer appearance,
I see so much more than the roles you play in your daily life.

I look in your eyes and I see your eternal Self, your Divine Self.
I look in your eyes and I see the eternal One that you are - the One you forgot you are.

I feel your light but also your pains,
I feel your hopes but also your doubts.
I feel your courage but also your fears.

And I would like to tell you: dear One,
don't you remember who you truly are?
don't you remember where you came from?
don't you remember your true Divine Source?

And I would like to take your hand, hold your hand,
and help you to remember who you are.

You forgot that you carry a Light within you that can heal all your pains.
You forgot that you carry a Light with you that can change all your energies.
You forgot that you are this Light - it is the Divine Soul that you are,
it is your eternal Self - the Light of God.

And so I look at you, I hold your hand and I say to you:
You can right now chose to step into this awareness of your Divine Soul,
You can right now, here, today, shift your consciousness and BE the One you truly are.

I see your tears... I feel your sadness... the world out there has confused you,
and told you who you are NOT. And as many of us you have lived lifes
and years in different roles that made you feel lost and hurt.

But today you can begin to remember your true Divine Self.
We are here to help you to remember your Light, your Power,
the Love that YOU ARE.

And as many saints and monks all around the world did remember before you,
You too can now start to remember your true Divine Source.
That place where we all came from... long time ago....

Because we are ALL from the same Divine Source of Light.
I look in your eyes and I see who you truly are, an eternal light.
I look in your eyes and I know that you begin to remember.
Yes, there is more than what the world told you, and you are more.....
allow yourself to remember... more and more....
GOD is.

Yes, you are an old Soul. You carry a big beautiful Light.

The essence of your Soul is Love.
You got wisdom from hundreds of incarnations on this planet.
Your Soul is eternal, and the more you connect with it, the more you will remember...

When you surrender all your emotions and thoughts to your Divine Self,
When you surrender and ask the God within you for guidance,
you will discover what others have discovered on this path before you.

Go in stillness.... and listen within.... within your heart.
Because the Truth is there, always, within your heart...

Thank You.

Blessings, Love and Light to you,

Jeanne Jessica



Jeanne Jessica is a spiritual teacher, coach and energy-healer. She is also the author of a blog website with different spiritual messages about the journey of the Soul. Through her coachings (online with skype), she facilitates the self-healing processes of the whole being, especially the healing of the heart and the Soul. Jeanne speaks English, French and German. For more information, kindly visit www.jeannejess.blogspot.ch

OTHER GIFTS AND E-NEWSWORTHY ITEMS:

6. Good News Of The Day

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

Leaders of a growing Muslim community in Memphis, Tennessee, wanted to build an Islamic center where they could gather not just to worship, but to host weddings and other parties; gather on weekends and holidays; house a day care for children; and have activities for the elderly. When they finally succeeded in purchasing a plot of land opposite a church, Dr. Bashir Shala, head of the board of trustees for the Memphis Islamic Center, expected hostility. "Memphis is the buckle of the Bible Belt," Shala says. Pastor Steve Stone of Heartsong Church, had something else in mind. <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=7266> **Be The Change:** The next time you see an incident of discrimination or bullying, be an ally. Read more about The Mosque Across the Street here. <http://www.dailygood.org/more.php?n=6912a>

For years, Jonathan Bergman was bothered by the sight of a neglected piece of property across the street from his office. It was a wasteland -- overgrown, ugly, trash-strewn, unloved. In the middle of it was a huge slab of cement covered in graffiti. He wondered to himself why no one had done anything about it. One day, he approached a man he saw looking at the land; they were both bothered by the sight. Then the man said, "How about getting it for the community?" And so the acquisition and transformation efforts began. But the path to what ended up as the "World Peace Garden" was far from straight. This is the story of Jonathan Bergman, who found for every setback an unexpected solution, who discovered peace while gardening, who created a space for his community with his neighbors, who became the change he wished to see, who brought to light that we all have wastelands we can transform. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1401/the-man-who-transformed-a-wasteland-margaret-o-keefe/> **Be The Change:** Consider nurturing something that you or society has neglected, whether it be a piece of land, a cause, or a relationship. Share your thoughts in the comments section.

Have you ever been in a situation where, morally, you know how you want to act or respond, but instead react differently due to outside pressures and influences? If yes, you are certainly not alone. This insightful article from the Greater Good Science Center, offers up three useful practices that can help you stay true to your core values. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1402/how-to-cultivate-ethical-courage-brooke-deterline/> **Be The Change:** The next time you are faced with a tough decision, make an effort to ask yourself, "What is the ethical thing to do here?"

This year, as he has done every year since September 15, 2002, Rana Sodhi hosted a memorial for his brother, Balbir Singh Sodhi who was shot while planting flowers in front of his store just four days after the 9/11 attacks. His murder turned a generation of young people, like family friend Valarie Kaur into activists, who began helping communities organize against racism and violence. But after this year's memorial, Kaur and Rana realized that despite the passage of 15 years of activism, their communities were still trapped in a cycle of violence and hate. So, they decided to do something radical -- use revolutionary love as an antidote to hate - they decided to call Frank Roque, the man who killed Balbir, and who is serving a prison life sentence. This article with an embedded audio clip, shares the powerful story of that telephone conversation. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1405/forgiving-my-brother-s-killer-valarie-kaur/> **Be The Change:** What is an act of revolutionary love that you can do today?

"If you want to know Must, get to know Should. This is hard work. Really hard work. We unconsciously imprison ourselves to avoid our most primal fears. We choose Should because choosing Must is terrifying, incomprehensible. Our prison is constructed from a lifetime of Shoulds, the world of choices we've unwittingly agreed to, the walls that alienate us from our truest, most authentic selves. Should is the doorkeeper to Must. And just as you create your prison, you can set yourself free." Artist and designer Elle Luna shares more in an essay that struck a deep chord for readers around the globe. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1406/the-crossroads-of-should-and-must-maria-popova/> **Be The Change:** Learn more about Elle Luna and her fascinating work and journey on this Saturday's Awakin Call. More details and RSVP info here. <http://www.awakin.org/calls/292/elle-luna/>

"If you want to experience real joy in your life, start giving away, start giving out..." Retired couple Peter Grazier and Nance Cheifetz decided that they wanted to become full-time Fairy Godparents, so in 2003, they sold their Lexus and bought Bodhi, their 1990 Volkswagon kindness van, and have been hitting the streets of the San Francisco Bay Area with lunch and hot chocolate. "Adults should have more fun than they do," says Cheifetz, who encourages everyone to join in the delight in giving. <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=6693> **Be The Change:** Nance Cheifetz performed 60 acts of kindness on her 60th birthday. Watch how this young student celebrated his 22nd birthday. <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=3526>

"It's harvest time. Plums are falling from the trees every day. Tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini and beans need daily picking along with the plums, or they become too ripe too quickly. Im making sauces, soups and stews to freeze, and blanching chard and the last broccoli. Sometimes it feels overwhelming. A friend phoned a couple of days ago and invited me out to Alberta for a few days. Sounds wonderful and impossible, I say. I explain about the garden and harvest, but can tell it doesn't make any sense to her. She mutters something, not for the first time, and not without kindness, that Im a slave to the garden. Its not meant to be like that, is it? she offers." A writer shares her gratitude at the bounty Nature gives at harvest time in her garden, and asks what are we all doing to work with Nature to provide the food we eat. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1411/lessons-from-the-garden-harvest-and-gratitude-alanda-greene/> **Be The Change:** Reflect on what you are planting and harvesting in the garden of your own life this fall.

"As I began to practice aikido, there were indeed moments when my own energies blended with those of another person and I had a taste of what I had hoped to find. But often I reacted unthinkingly when someone grabbed at my arm or struck toward my head. Id try to muscle through or, just as tensely, hold back from moving. As I witnessed these automatic outbreaks of fear and hostility, I began to recognize the truth of Morihei Ueshibas assertion that the mind of contention within myself was the real, or even the only, enemy." In her mid-fifties Mary Stein began practicing aikido. Now in her eighties she continues to be an inspiration to many. This excerpt from her book "The Gift of Danger" shares more about the profound principles behind aikido and their application to daily life. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1412/the-gift-of-danger-mary-stein/> **Be The Change:** Try and identify 'the mind of contention' within yourself as you go through the week. And the next time you're in a confrontational situation, try applying the aikido mindset to it and see what happens!

The last speakers of a language without words reside on La Gomera, one of the smallest islands in Spains Canary Islands. "El Silbo," a whistled communication used in rural and isolated areas, is dying out as islanders embrace digital communication and move to cities and the mainland. Even so, El Silbo has a firm place in the island's culture. Some of La Gomera's schools are teaching the language and in 2009, UNESCO declared it a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. This video shares more. <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=7302> **Be The Change:** Does your family have an intangible cultural heritage you'd like to preserve? Pass it on to the next generation.

"I was recently the recipient of an incredible act of anonymous kindness. It came from out of nowhere, at exactly the right time. The magnitude of the gift moved me to tears, and I was so grateful and profoundly moved by the generosity of my unknown benefactor. But I was also sure there had been a mistake. In the midst of this beautiful act, I am ashamed to admit that I was momentarily overcome by feelings of

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unworthiness. I simply couldn't believe I was deserving of such radical kindness." When an act of anonymous generosity spurs writer Jennifer Merlich to participate in 40 Days of Giving, she begins to dance that blurry line between giver and receiver, and discover profound insights. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1414/the-giving-season-jennifer-merlich/> **Be The Change:** Start your own experiments in giving this week! For inspiration, this site offers an abundance of stories and ideas. <http://www.dailygood.org/>

Andrew Hinton, Emmy award-winning filmmaker, embarked on a vision quest with the intention of becoming a "man of integrity, a bridge between two worlds." He notes, "how our culture lacks deep rituals that mark the transition to manhood, and how easy it is without them to get lost somewhere between boy and man. And of how, maybe twenty years late, I am here to finally step across." Alone in the Oregon mountains, completely removed from civilization, Hinton confronts the impediments standing in the way of his journey toward his authentic self, including, most importantly, himself: "My mind turns to fear. All the things that have held me back ultimately lead there. I suddenly decide to take off my shyness like an old coat I no longer need and leave it behind. I ceremoniously remove it, and set it down carefully before walking on."

<http://www.dailygood.org/story/1418/life-lessons-from-a-mountain-andrew-hinton/> **Be The Change:** Who are you? Consider how you answer this question. Today, spend some time pondering what your core essence is. For more inspiration read about Andrew Hinton's award-winning film, "Tashi & the Monk".

<http://www.dailygood.org/>

Why do we often see the world as "us" vs. "them"? And though it helps quiet our fears, what should we do about this unhelpful, often-damaging instinct? Harvard Psychiatrist and Zen priest Robert Waldinger, director of the longest study on health and happiness, explains why we are natural wall-builders, but actually less safe when we label people instead of relating to them. Read on for useful wall-breaking advice.

<http://www.dailygood.org/story/1419/why-we-shut-people-out-and-what-to-do-instead-robert-waldinger/> **Be The Change:** As you meet with friends or strangers today, note any tendency in yourself to create a barrier. Embrace your inner wall-builder, then find a way to get to know them better.

"As I walked into the parking lot, I spotted the woman returning her shopping cart, and I remembered something in my purse that could help her in a different but hopefully profound way. It wasn't a handful of cash or a lead on a job for her husband, but maybe -- just maybe -- it would make her life better. My heart pounded as I approached the woman. "Excuse me," I said, my voice trembling a bit. "I couldn't help overhearing what you said to the cashier. It sounds like you're going through a really hard time right now. I'm so sorry. I'd like to give you something." And I handed her a business-sized card. When the woman read the card's only two words, she began to cry. And through her tears, she said, "You have no idea how much this means to me." Cheryl Rice shares more in this piece about the two simple words that touched her life and then rippled out to touch many others. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1420/two-words-that-can-change-a-life-cheryl-rice/> **Be The Change:** Today, take time to share a few kind words with someone. You never know just how much they might need it.

"Mary Oliver sets out to excavate the building blocks of the self in order to understand its parallel capacities for focused creative flow and merciless interruption. She identifies three primary selves that she inhabits, and that inhabit her, as they do all of us: the childhood self, which we spend our lives trying to weave into the continuity of our personal identity; the social self, "fettered to a thousand notions of obligation"; and a third self, a sort of otherworldly awareness. The first two selves, she argues, inhabit the ordinary world and are present in all people; the third is of a different order and comes most easily alive in artists -- it is where the wellspring of creative energy resides." And it is to the third self that the artist must remain true: "My loyalty is to the inner vision, whenever and howsoever it may arrive." <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1423/mary-oliver-on-the-third-self-maria-popova/> **Be The Change:** Set aside some time, unplugged and uninterrupted, to nurture your third self and awaken your creativity.

October 24th is United Nations Day, which commemorates the anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Charter in 1945. For 71 years, the United Nations has been working to maintain international peace

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and security, promote sustainable development, protect human rights, uphold international law, and deliver humanitarian aid. Spiritual leaders can also be found on the front lines of peace, and they are naturally tied to the U.N. by their common goals. Brother David Steindl-Rast is a Benedictine monk and author known for his contributions to the interfaith dialogue and for being a proponent of the transformative power of gratefulness. From his archives comes this powerful, poetic meditation delivered at a previous U.N. anniversary gathering. It is an homage to all activists before us, an observance of our commonality, and a call to action to stand up for peace -- something the world still needs today. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1425/united-nations-a-meditation-for-peace-brother-david-steindl-rast/> **Be The Change:** Learn about a different culture through their food, art, or music. Visit a museum, try cuisine from a different country, or download different tunes.

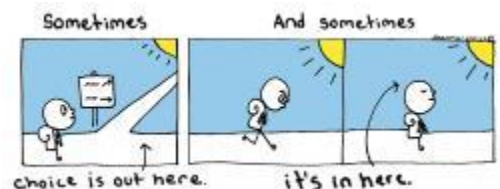
In October 2007, Ann Sieben, a native of Denver, Colorado and a nuclear engineer by profession, was waiting for a work permit in Spain that never came through. Instead of looking for other work, she decided to walk on foot along an ancient pilgrimage path known as the Camino de Santiago. Later, in December of that year, she walked over 2100 kilometers from Canterbury to Rome. The following winter, she did it again -- this time from Germany to Spain, and the year after, she walked over 4400 kilometers from Ukraine to Greece. Known as the "winter pilgrim," Sieben has journeyed on foot across 44 countries over 40,000 kilometers along paths walked by seekers and pilgrims from years ago -- and she doesn't carry any money, camera, or phone. In this inspiring conversation (transcribed and recorded) touching on multiple themes, Ann shares nuggets of deep wisdom and practical insights from her journey as a pilgrim, in which she evolved from being a touristic pilgrim to a spiritual pilgrim to a servant pilgrim. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1416/the-winter-pilgrim-an-interview-with-ann-sieben-awakin-call-transcript/> **Be The Change:** Take a moment today to bring the attitude of a pilgrim to something you would routinely do.

7. Destiny is Within Us

Reprinted from www.awakin.org.

--by **Hawah Kasat** (Oct 17, 2016)

I remember walking to the bus stop one day. Sweat was dripping down my chin, while I gazed upon the faded metal bus-stop sign a block away. I saw an unorganized huddle of bodies. A few sat on the wooden bench, staring through the hazy Plexiglas of the awning. I checked my watch and noticed that I was running ahead of schedule. The bus wouldn't be coming for at least five more minutes.



In that instant, I heard big tires rolling up behind me, the punched-in sound of a clutch cranking into the floor, the shaking of windows as the tires dipped into a small pothole. I quickly turned my head and saw the bus. There was no traffic to slow it down. I was about a block away and stuck between two fateful options.

The first option was to stand there and surrender my fate to the universe. I could repeat to myself, "Oh, well. I guess the universe didn't want me to catch the bus today," and regurgitate that famous cliché, "I guess it just wasn't meant to happen."

The second option before me was to take my bag, hold on to it a bit tighter, and start running up the block. This option didn't guarantee that I would catch the bus, but it engaged my free will so that it did not have to breathe in the exhaust of resignation.

Contemplation on choice is sometimes the toughest part of any day. The universe definitely provided some context that made it a bit harder for me to catch the bus, yet still, I could act to change the situation. Sure, that bus came ahead of schedule, but my reaction was what was in my control and what my yoga practice has taught me. My reaction could have been to blame it on the universe, to fall into the trap of "I guess it wasn't meant to happen." Or to pick up my heels and start running.

Each moment of life, we set into motion a series of succeeding moments that will ultimately shape our future. It is my choice to either leave my destiny up to the universe or choose to shift my awareness and embrace the knowledge that *I am the universe*. When this happens, what we previously blame on an outside entity, or "destiny," is actually something we understand as within us. The choice is mine. The choice is yours. The choice is ours.

8. Becoming Free of Our Substitute Life

Reprinted from www.awakin.org.

--by ***Ezra Bayda*** (Oct 03, 2016)

A Zen student walked in to see the master. Sitting down, he blurted out, "There's something terribly wrong with me!" The master looked at him and asked, "What's so wrong?" The student, after a moment's hesitation, responded, "I think I'm a dog." To that the master responded, "And how long have you thought that?" The student replied, "Ever since I was a puppy."

What does this story have to do with spiritual practice? Everything. It puts the basic human problem in a nutshell. Next time you find yourself immersed in the drama of a strong emotional reaction, awash with deeply believed thoughts, ask yourself how long you've taken these thoughts to be the truth. Especially notice the ones you believe the most: "Life is too hard," "No one will ever be there for me," "I'm worthless," "I'm hopeless." How long have you believed these thoughts? Ever since you were a puppy!

These deeply held beliefs may not be visible on the surface of our minds; we're often not even aware of them. Yet we cling to such deep-seated beliefs, these basic identities, because they've become rooted in our very cells—in our cellular memory. And their imprint on our lives is unmistakable. But in order to avoid experiencing the painful quality of these beliefs and identities, we continually engage in various strategies of behavior—habitual coping patterns that buffer us from the anxious quiver of insecurity. These strategies are our attempt to establish some sense of safety, security, and familiarity. They might include seeking achievements, becoming a helper, trying to control our world or withdrawing toward safety. But do they ever give us a sense of genuine satisfaction? No. All too often they keep us stuck in dissatisfaction, not knowing where to turn. I call this place "the substitute life."

If we're fortunate enough to aspire to become free of our substitute or artificial life, we may start questioning our most basic assumptions, including our very mode of living. Although such questioning can be painful, it's something we all need to do periodically in order to move toward a genuine life. The one question that goes directly to the heart of the matter is: "What is my life really about?" The degree to which we can be honest in answering this question will determine our clarity in understanding the basic human dilemma—that we are cut off from awareness of our true nature.



...where all the masks come off.

Do you try to maintain a sense of order and control, to avoid feeling the fear of chaos, of things falling apart? Do you try to gain acceptance and approval, to avoid the fear of rejection, of not fitting in? Do you try to excel and attain success, to avoid the fear of feeling unworthy? Or do you seek busyness in adventure or pleasure, to avoid the deep holes of longing and loneliness? All of these strategies have one thing in common: they keep us encased in our artificial or substitute life.

None of us are beyond this. We all follow some strategy to escape feeling the fears that silently run our life. Yet even when we know all about these fears, most of the time we don't want to have anything to do with them. Perhaps this sounds pessimistic and discouraging, but it doesn't have to be. In fact, it's only by realizing the extent to which we are asleep—the extent to which we are driven by the vanity of our endeavors, the smallness of our attachments, or the urgency of avoiding our fears—that we can wake up, out of our state of sleep, out of our substitute way of living.

9. Reengineering our Patterns

Reprinted from www.awakin.org.

—by **Ekknath Easwaran** (Oct 10, 2016)

When I recommend to someone that they slow down, they often raise a legitimate question: “There is so much that I have to do; how can I go through it slowly and get it all done?” I usually answer by referring to my own experience as a teacher in India. As chairman of the Department of English at a large university I had heavy responsibilities. But I wanted very much to train myself to do things slowly and without tension because I knew it would be a help on the spiritual path.

I began by making a list of all the activities I engaged in on the campus, the things I was expected to do and the things I liked doing. It turned out to be a long list. I said at the time what people tell me today: I simply cannot go slowly and take care of all these vital matters.

Then I remembered my spiritual teacher, my Grand-mother, who had great responsibilities in our extended family of over a hundred people and in our village. She always fulfilled those responsibilities splendidly, and I recalled that she had an unerring sense of what was central and what was peripheral. So using her example, I started striking from my list activities not absolutely essential.

I was amazed at the number that could go. I began to avoid those functions that I could not justify to myself. Putting aside my likes and dislikes, keeping an eye on what was necessary, using as much detachment as I could, I struck more and more from the list. Soon half of it was gone, and I found I had more time to give to what seemed likely to be of permanent value.

Re-engineering our patterns in the way I have mentioned will not be easy or painless. It will require persistent efforts for a long time. But the benefits are magnificent and we begin to receive them from the very first day we try to make a change.



10. Three Millimeters of the Universe

Reprinted from www.awakin.org.

—by **Daniel Gottlieb** (Oct 24, 2016)

Dear Sam,

One night in the hospital, a friend came to visit me. I told her I didn't think I could go on anymore. What I was feeling went beyond despair. It was a loss of hope — of everything I valued, trusted, and loved. The pain had become simply unbearable.

My friend held my hand and said, 'Dan, what you are about is more important than who you are.'

That night, I had a dream. I dreamed that God came to me. This was not the God I believe in, the one you read about in the Bible. It was some other God, and when He spoke, he said, 'I'm going to give you a piece of the universe. Your job is to take care of it. Not make it bigger or better — just take care of it. And when I'm ready, I'll take it back, and your life will be over.'

I looked at the piece of the universe that God was showing me, and I saw that it was just three millimeters! Was that all? I could feel my ego begin to rail against this indignity. I'm a psychologist! I am an author! I have a radio show! Aren't these things important?

Of course, no matter how much I protested, it wouldn't make any difference. My allotment was still — and would always be — just three millimeters of the entire universe. That was it!

But in this dream I also saw that caring for three millimeters of the universe was an awesome responsibility. A God-given responsibility. Though I had felt I couldn't go on, finally I had to acknowledge that I would have to give back my three millimeters before I was ready. And because, at the time of the dream, I had a wound that was healing in millimeters, I knew that my job was to help heal my three millimeters of the universe.

Sam, part of the reason I'm at peace with my life is that I take care of the part of the universe I'm responsible for. I haven't made it bigger or better. I haven't changed it. But I have cared for it. Writing these letters to you is just one of many ways of tending my three millimeters.

What I wish for you, Sam, is what I wish for everybody — to get as clear a sense of what your life is about as I got in that dream. Your three millimeters is not much in terms of area. But I hope you will feel the gratitude and joy that I feel, having been given that much to tend.

Love,
Pop



"Your body is
the piece of the universe
you've been given"

—Geneen Roth

11. The Mosque Across the Street

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

Leaders of a growing Muslim community in Memphis, Tennessee, wanted to build an Islamic center where they could gather not just to worship, but to host weddings and other parties; gather on weekends and holidays; house a day care for children; and have activities for the elderly. When they finally succeeded in purchasing a plot of land opposite a church, Dr. Bashir Shala, head of the board of trustees for the Memphis Islamic Center, expected hostility. "Memphis is the buckle of the Bible Belt," Shala says. Pastor Steve Stone of Heartsong Church, had something else in mind. <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=7266>

12. This Van Delivers Human Kindness

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

"If you want to experience real joy in your life, start giving away, start giving out..." Retired couple Peter Grazier and Nance Cheifetz decided that they wanted to become full-time Fairy Godparents, so in 2003, they sold their Lexus and bought Bodhi, their 1990 Volkswagon kindness van, and have been hitting the streets of the San Francisco Bay Area with lunch and hot chocolate. "Adults should have more fun than they do," says Cheifetz, who encourages everyone to join in the delight in giving. <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=6693>

13. 22 Random Acts of Kindness

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

How I spent my 22nd birthday: 1. Wrote personalized letters to policemen appreciating all they do for us; 2. Bought ice cream for all the guards sitting in the heat; 3. Got water bottles for CDA gardeners and traffic policemen... Watch the rest of this video to find out how else Syed Muzamil Hasan Zaidi spent his big day. <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=3526>

14. Whistling in the Wind: Preserving A Language Without Words

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

The last speakers of a language without words reside on La Gomera, one of the smallest islands in Spain's Canary Islands. "El Silbo," a whistled communication used in rural and isolated areas, is dying out as islanders embrace digital communication and move to cities and the mainland. Even so, El Silbo has a firm place in the island's culture. Some of La Gomera's schools are teaching the language and in 2009, UNESCO declared it a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=7302>

15. Welcome to My House

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

“Welcome to My House”, a collaboration between non profit Voices of the Children and band Luc and the Lovingtons, features American teens and Syrian refugee youth singing a cross-cultural message of joy, love and peace. The video was filmed on site at the Za’atari Refugee Camp and Wadi Rum in Jordan as well as in the Skagit Valley of Washington State, USA. Most of the youth, participants and locations featured in the video were a part of a greater on-going program created by Voices of the Children which provides free arts classes and cross cultural collaborations between Syrian and American teens.

<http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=7320>

HEART AND SOUL ADVERTISEMENTS:

Consistent with Spiritual Guidance's philosophy, mission and vision (refer to <http://www.servingyourjourney.com/about.html> for more details) Spiritual Guidance offers free advertising in this e-newsletter to those persons and organizations interested in promoting their spiritual-related products, services or events. If you do choose to advertise in this e-newsletter, Spiritual Guidance requests you submit your text ad (no graphics please) to newsletter@servingyourjourney.com by the 25th of the month, for distribution in the following month's e-newsletter.

16. Sacred Attention Therapy

Sacred Attention Therapy (SAT) references the etymological meaning of therapy: "attending to soul". SAT is a new paradigm of psychological and spiritual growth and development and is based on Richard Harvey's ground-breaking approach to depth psychotherapy, and on his 3-stage model of human awakening (<http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/>). This new paradigm of psychotherapy / counselling is an approach that takes into account the ego-based individual and the desire of the individual to grow spiritually. SAT recognizes the fundamental, true, spiritual nature of humanity and the intense longing for the truth about our real, divine state. SAT involves listening with the whole self to the soul of the other. This is what therapy should always be, or at least always aim at, because this is the profound depth of healing and reverence which two gathered together in search of truth can bring about. For more information about SAT, visit these websites:

<http://www.sacredattentiontherapy.com/index.html>

<http://www.servingyourjourney.com/Sacred-Attention-Therapy.html>

Sessions can be offered in person, by phone, or via Skype. For more information about booking appointments, please visit <http://www.servingyourjourney.com/Booking-Appointments.html>. To schedule an appointment, please contact me by phone (613-204-0299) or email (rmeagher@servingyourjourney.com).

17. A Course in Miracles Global Community Centre

Spiritual Guidance is honored to host the 'A Course in Miracles (ACIM) Global Community Centre.' This Centre is a meeting place for ACIM students and teachers from around the world to access coaching counselling, therapy, study and discussion groups, courses, a community café for you to communicate with other students and teachers, and helpful resources and links. Visit the ACIM Global Community Centre at <http://www.servingyourjourney.com/ACIM.html>.

Serving your personal journey toward enlightenment...

18. OM Websites

OM Websites is an extension of the Spiritual Guidance ministry and serves the entrepreneur and business owner by developing, enhancing and maintaining your website and social media marketing presence. OM Websites offers a full range of services to help you build your website and social media marketing presence, with a focus on giving you the tools and ability to maintain your own website and social media marketing initiatives. Visit the [Services](http://www.omwebsites.com/Services.html) page (<http://www.omwebsites.com/Services.html>) for more details. OM Websites specializes in building websites and social media marketing profiles and presences for those businesses and people who offer products and services that are spiritually-oriented.

In love, gratitude, compassion and forgiveness...

Rev. Robert Meagher

Spiritual Guidance

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