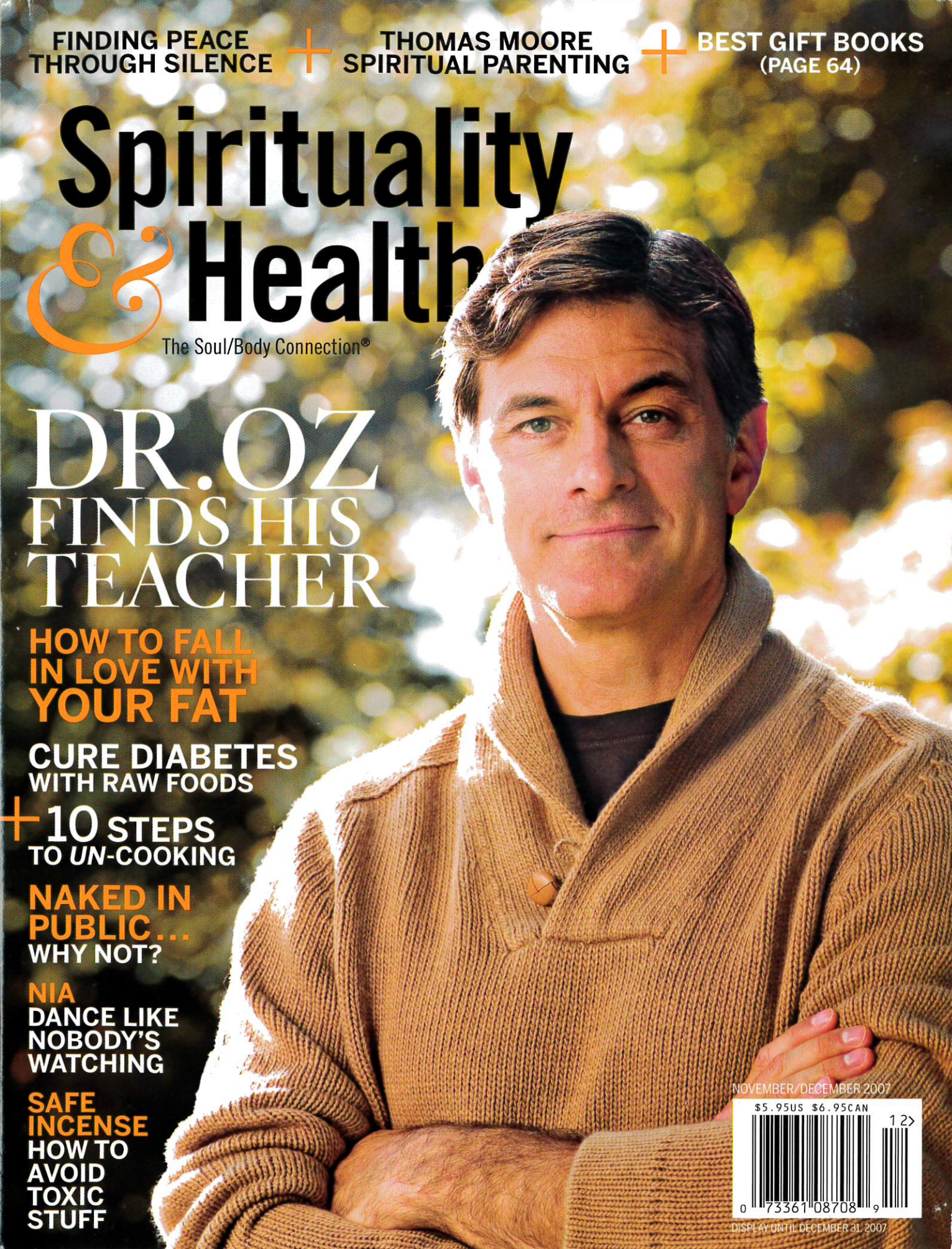
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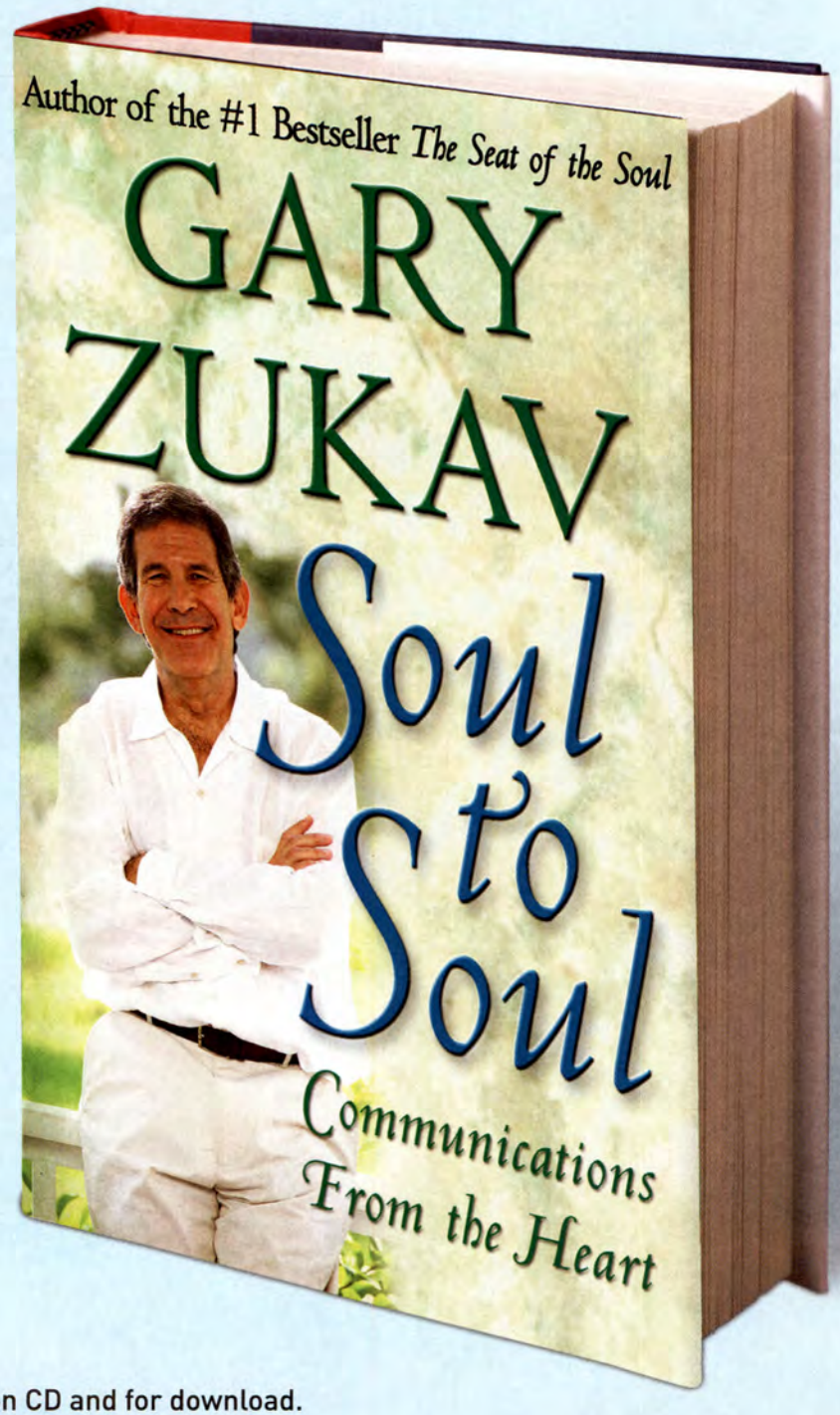
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Sharing Our Teachers

Several months ago, we got an email from Mehmet Oz, M.D., asking if we would be interested in learning about his spiritual teacher. Teamed up so marvelously with Oprah Winfrey, Oz has become "America's doctor," and we are very honored that he came to us with his personal story. Oz grew up as a secular Moslem, and his teacher is the eighteenth-century Swedish scientist and Christian mystic Emanuel Swedenborg. Oz learned about Swedenborg while he was courting his wife, Lisa, and the couple set out to create heaven on earth. It seems clear that Swedenborg provided them a path with a heart. (Page 46)

Another — contemporary — teacher describes a very different kind of path: Adyashanti. the son of a machinist in San Jose, California, set out in his teens "hell-bent" on finding the truth for himself, and began his search by practicing Zen. After many years of hard work, he stumbled effortlessly into an "awakening" and now leads five-day silent retreats that fill up months in advance. The chronicle of one of his retreats gives us a taste of the deep peace that can come from complete silence. (Page 42)

Still another great teacher, who is on a radically different path, is Gil Hedley. An anatomist with a doctorate in theological ethics, Hedley teaches body dissection to medical students and others. He writes of an entirely new way of seeing one of the most uncomfortable aspects of so many American bodies — our rich layer of fat. Rather than cutting through the fat to get to "important" parts like the organs, Hedley teaches students to appreciate the entirety of the sensuous layer that envelopes us all. Reading his piece evoked self-hugs for us, and we hope you feel the same. (Page 52)

From neuroscientists we are also learning how out-of-body experiences may happen in the brain (page 38) and how often we fail to see the pink elephant in the living room (page 25). In our case, the "pink elephant" that became all too obvious to our regular readers is that we didn't publish our summer issues (page 10). The magazine had a near-death experience. As is often the case with NDEs, ours was traumatic and ultimately life affirming. The good news is that we are now solidly back, on a sustainable business plan, and extremely grateful to all of you for your unwavering support.

STEPHEN KIESLING
editor-in-chief
steve@SpiritualityHealth.com

OUR MISSION *Spirituality & Health* is for people who wish to explore the spiritual journey — the journey to self-knowledge, authenticity, and integration. We draw from the wisdom of many traditions and cultures with an emphasis on sharing spiritual practices. We look to science to help provide a context for the spiritual quest. We explore the health of body, mind, and spirit, and we recognize the interdependence of our health, our communities, and our environment. We acknowledge that in our language the words "whole," "health" and "holy" share a common root. We invite you to enjoy our extensive website — SpiritualityHealth.com — including more than 1,400 articles from back issues, self-assessments, and other resources.

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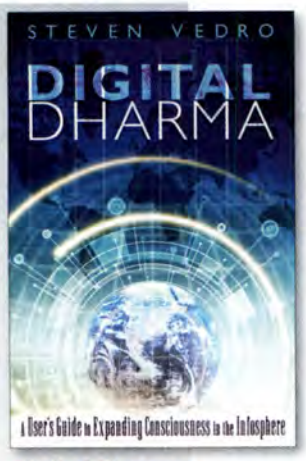
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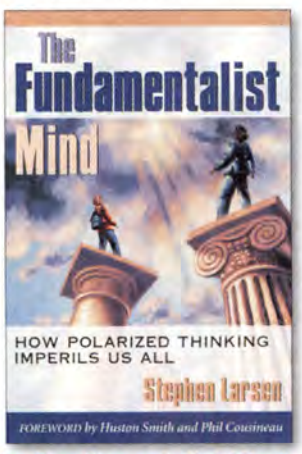
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Contributors



Mehmet Oz, M.D.

performs more than 300 heart operations each year, but he's best known as the health expert on *Oprah* and author of the bestselling *You* series of books. He is vice-chair and professor of surgery at Columbia University and directs the Cardiovascular Institute and Complementary Medicine Program at New York Presbyterian Hospital. Elected one of the Healers of the Millennium by *Healthy Living* magazine, Oz is interested in heart replacement surgery, minimally invasive cardiac surgery, complementary medicine, and health-care policy. He was born into a secular Moslem family. Now a mystical Christian tradition inspires his work and life. (See page 46.)



Kerry Hughes, M.Sc. is an ethnobotanist committed to deepening the relationship between plants and people. She promotes botanical education and traditional arts and medicine for the natural products industries. Hughes is the founder of Organo-Leptic.com, which focuses on raw, natural incense. When you read her account of what is included in synthetic incense, you'll likely choose the real thing. (See page 50.)



Jacqueline Osherow is the author of five books of poetry. She has been awarded the Witter Bynner Poetry Prize by the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Ingram Merrill Foundation, and a number of prizes from the Poetry Society of America. Her work has appeared in many magazines, anthologies, and journals, including *Twentieth Century American Poetry*, *The New Yorker*, and *Paris Review*. She is distinguished professor of English at the University of Utah. Read her poem about doing too much. (See page 41.)



Gil Hedley, Ph.D. is an anatomist, teacher, author, former Certified Rolfer®, ordained minister, and healer, with a doctorate in theological and philosophical ethics from the University of Chicago Divinity School. In 1995, he founded Somanautics Workshops, Inc., a nationally accredited professional continuing education provider through which he teaches the Six-Day Intensive Hands-On Human Dissection Workshops™. Follow him into his surprising love affair with the yellow fleece that wraps us all — unsightly fat. (See page 52.)

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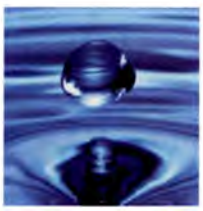
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WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

I'd been looking for the July/August issue on newsstands for weeks. Panic was beginning to set in and I thought that *S&H* had closed up shop. It finally occurred to me to check the website where, lo and behold, I see that you are, thankfully, still in business. I am very sorry to hear of your current financial challenges, but also very happy to see that you are still around. I love your magazine, both for its editorial content and its artistic layout. Thanks for publishing an amazing magazine.

KIMBERLY
Via email

We thank all of you, our readers, for your patience. All subscriptions will be extended to make up for the two issues we've missed. We are grateful for our new partner, Spirituality and Health LLC. We are committed to our community of readers, business partners, writers, photographers, and artists and are confident the sustainability business plan we have incorporated with our new financial partners provides us with long-term rock-solid sustainability, assuring Spirituality and Health*'s legacy for decades to come. Our mission and reason for being is to serve our readers, and we are extremely grateful to all of our subscribers and newsstand readers for their understanding, support, and kindness. We are blessed!*

THE EDITORS

LOST & FOUND

I was at the Honda dealership getting my car serviced last week, and I was reading the May/June issue while I waited. When my car was finished, I laid down the magazine and went to pay for the service. When I returned to my seat, my magazine was gone. I was stumped at first, but then I saw that a lady had picked it up and was reading it. I hesitated for a moment. I wanted to explain that it was mine and not a part of Honda's collection. I felt weird about that. Plus, I believe that she was thoroughly enjoying it. I didn't mind leaving it behind and spreading the love, but there were some websites in it that I wanted. I searched for this article on the website but it is not listed.

SHANE TAYLOR
Via email

Sorry for the delay. We are now up-to-date, and all back issues are posted in "Articles" at SpiritualityHealth.com.

THE EDITORS

THE SECRET

I am so very disappointed in your editor's stand against *The Secret*. One thing I expect from your magazine is open-mindedness. I am surprised to see JUDGMENT on any level. If I want judgment, I can attend any of the numerous Southern Baptist churches in my neck of the Bible Belt.

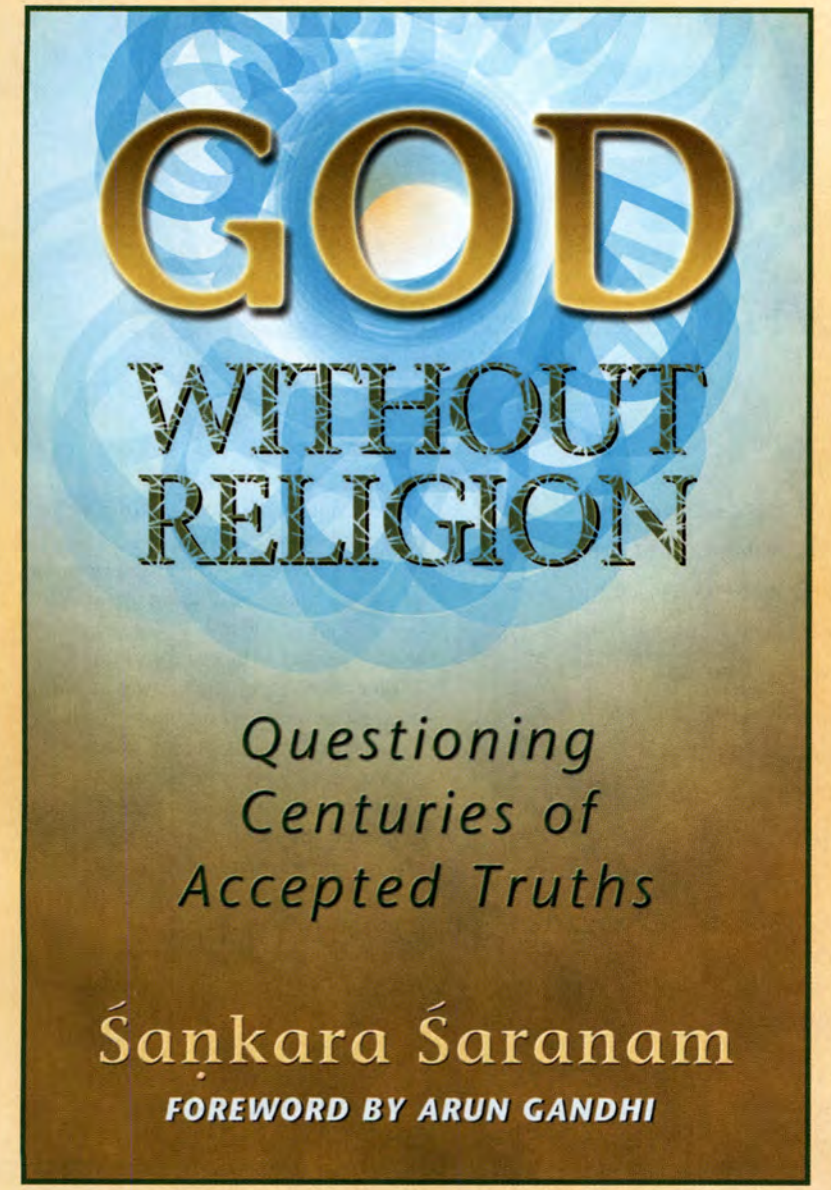
MONA
Via email

I just opened the magazine and YES!!! And then I turned to Rabbi Shapiro and YES AGAIN!!! Thank you so very, very, very much for sharing these views on *The* so-called *Secret* openly.

VICTORIA PENDRAGON
Via email

The outpouring of response to our coverage of The Secret *was unprecedented. To see a sampling of the letters pro and con, go to SpiritualityHealth.com, where you can join the discussion.*

THE EDITORS



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Śaṇkara Śaranam, founder of Whirlwind Community and The Pranayama Institute, is a philosopher, lecturer, teacher, composer, musician, and poet. He resides with his wife and two children in southern New Mexico.



Sacred Time with Children

Recently, my 15-year-old daughter was diagnosed with an autoimmune illness, and since she was not able to continue her normal high school studies, I decided to homeschool her. Every morning we meet at a table in our living room and learn physics, biology, English, music, and American history. I used to think I had no time for my writing, lecturing, and correspondence. Now I have only minutes. But the deep pleasure and satisfaction I get from being so close to my daughter more than makes up for loss of time. Our time together is not just precious; it's sacred. Teaching her is part of my spiritual life.

People often ask me how to get more soul into their lives. I think it is best to do this concretely and focused outward. So I usually say, get some children in your life. Take care of them, teach them, play with them. You will be giving them a priceless model of how to be thoughtful, giving adults, and they will give you soul.

You don't have to be a literal parent. You can be a temporary parent: spending time with the neighborhood children, the children of your friends and relatives, or the children of the world who badly need you. You can parent by taking a momentary, active interest in any child you encounter.

Many people seem to think of spirituality as ethereal, remote, and abstract. They think it has to do with meditating, depriving yourself, and becoming as virtuous as possible. But traditional teachings around the world suggest that spirituality is directly connected to the most ordinary human activities.

When you're a parent, you don't have to go in search of ways of depriving yourself, and if by chance you should ever feel virtuous about your self-deprivations, your children will take that feeling away from you, too.

You have to be a guide for your child in the things that matter most: safety, health, learning, growing up, having a life vision, and living ethically. Who else has such a profound and far-reaching job?

Parenthood is a calling — a way to find meaning in your own life. Spirituality is about transcending any limits on your vision. Raising a child, you are contributing to society and to the future. You are going beyond yourself, not just in your thoughts and ideals but in a real and tangible way. You may not be certain that you're doing the right thing always, and you may never see the full fruits of your effort. So you live by faith, and isn't that the essence of the spiritual life?

All the details of being a parent — cleaning, teaching, picking up, driving, paying for school and lessons, guiding, counseling, feeding, clothing, and entertaining — take on a spiritual dimension. You are doing them to transform a child into a thoughtful and engaged adult. You are ministering. You are a priest and priestess. You are unfolding the work you began when in the holy act of sex you made a person with a soul and spirit.

Like anything else, parenthood can become an unconscious habit. To engage the soul and spirit, you have to contemplate your role and your activities and envision them in spiritual terms. It might help to have some images, some sacred art, to remind you of the sanctity of your role. I have a statue of the Buddha with little monks, like children, crawling all over him. I also always keep in mind Jesus' instruction to his adult followers: "Let the children come to me."

When you understand parenthood as a spiritual calling, you will be able to do the work better and with deeper satisfaction. Spiritual vision gives valuable emotional distance, disentangles your own past experiences and your complex emotions, so that you don't pile them up on your child. In this way, spirit and soul work together to make good parenting.

Traditional teachings around the world suggest that spirituality is directly connected to the most ordinary human activities.

Many people of the world pray to God the father, and some to the Divine Mother. Native Americans pray to the Grandparents. This particular veneration is a sign that being a parent is a spiritual office. If you think of it in that way, you might find the task easier and realize that when you are giving so much, you are becoming a vaster, more enlightened being.

Thomas Moore's latest book is *Dark Nights of the Soul*. He is also the author of *Care of the Soul* (careofthesoul.net).

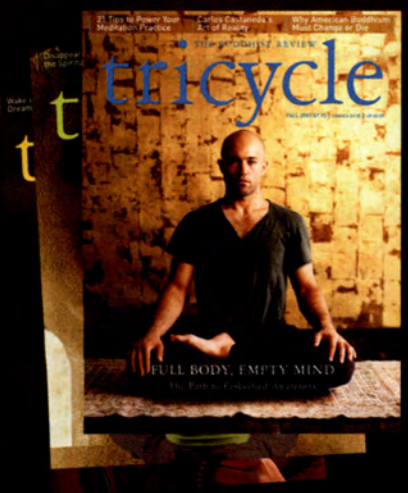
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The Memory of Water

If you'd wandered into my bedroom last summer you might have wondered if I were a witch doctor or a novice perfumer. Lined up in rows on my polished antique maple dresser were 47 half-ounce amber dropper bottles. A closer look would have revealed labels on each bottle with mysterious names, numbers, and letters: "Pineal 10MM" or "Lymph 5MM."

My boyfriend joked that the bottles looked like toy soldiers ready for battle. In fact, they were a kind of homeopathic remedy known as tissue sarcodes. The essence of homeopathy is the idea that extraordinarily diluted potencies of a given remedy — so dilute that there is no measurable molecule of the original substance left — can heal illness. The more dilute, the stronger the remedy.

I was taking these remedies in my endless quest to regain my health after a tick bite in the summer of 2000. The doctor who prescribed them, Savely Yurkovsky, M.D., believed they carried the electromagnetic signature of healthy tissue and would trigger each organ to dump stored toxins. When I first consulted him in late April, I was half amused at myself for taking home such expensive bottles of water. The 10MM potency represented a total dilution of $1{:}100^{1,000,000}$, a dilution so ridiculously astounding I can't even fathom it.

I took my first remedy the morning of April 26, and emailed the doctor that I fell asleep for three hours later that day — the first nap I'd had in a year — and woke in tears, complaining that I had the flu. A coincidence, surely. The next day I took my next remedy, and felt body-wide pain for most of the day. Another coincidence. But the coincidences came like clockwork — within a few minutes of placing a single drop of a remedy under my tongue, I was as woozy and ill as a seasick sailor. I could do nothing but lie down and wait for the sickness to pass or wait until it was time for the next remedy. There were moments when I wondered whether the bottles contained some kind of clever poison that had instant effects and cleared up within a few hours. I'd spoken with a few other patients who had similar reactions to the remedies. And so, confronted with an utterly confounding, inexplicable experience, I decided not to freak out but to study.

I found an August special issue of the journal *Homeopathy* that had gathered scientific papers from around the world to address the apparently infamous concept of "memory of water" — the idea that water can hold the electromagnetic signature of a substance long after that actual substance is gone — popularized by French scientist Jacques Benveniste. In 1988 Benveniste published a study that seemingly proved this theory in the highly respected science journal *Nature*; later his work was refuted and the controversy that erupted was so vitriolic that the man's career was essentially ruined, and no scientist of equal repute has dared wander into the territory since.

Finally I stumbled across a fascinating essay by a neuroscientist and chiropractor named Norman Allan called simply, "Pattern and Resonance in the Natural World" (to read it, go to normanallan.com/Sci/new.html). I loved his explanation, and one particular part made intuitive sense to me: "Imagine a conjurer's rope. Take a segment out of that magician's rope — say one foot out of ten — and hold it taut between your hands, and twang it. Now (by magic) put it back in the original rope. The note, the vibration, in the small piece will pattern and inform the longer piece. The longer piece will now carry that information, but it will also, during the process, generate harmonics, multiples of that original note . . . . And this explains one of the mysteries of homeopathy . . . that the higher potencies, the higher dilutions, are stronger and deeper acting than the lower potencies."

What next? I stuck with those remedies for another three months and then put all 47 amber glass soldiers away. They were too strong for me. I may revisit them, but even if I don't, I have to thank those bottles of water for changing my world. As Hamlet said so long ago: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

Confronted with an utterly confounding, inexplicable experience, I decided not to freak out but to study.

Jill Neimark is a science journalist, novelist, and poet. Her latest book is *Why Good Things Happen to Good People* (whygoodthingshappen.com.)

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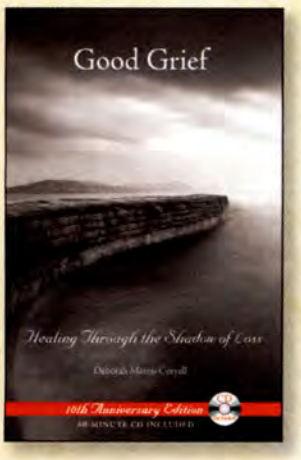
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Good Grief

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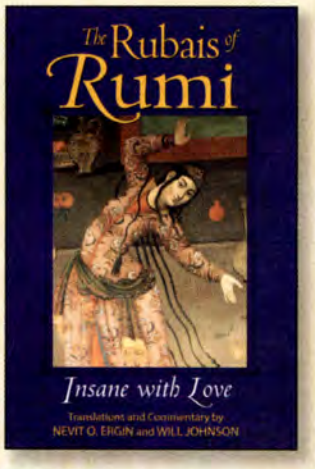
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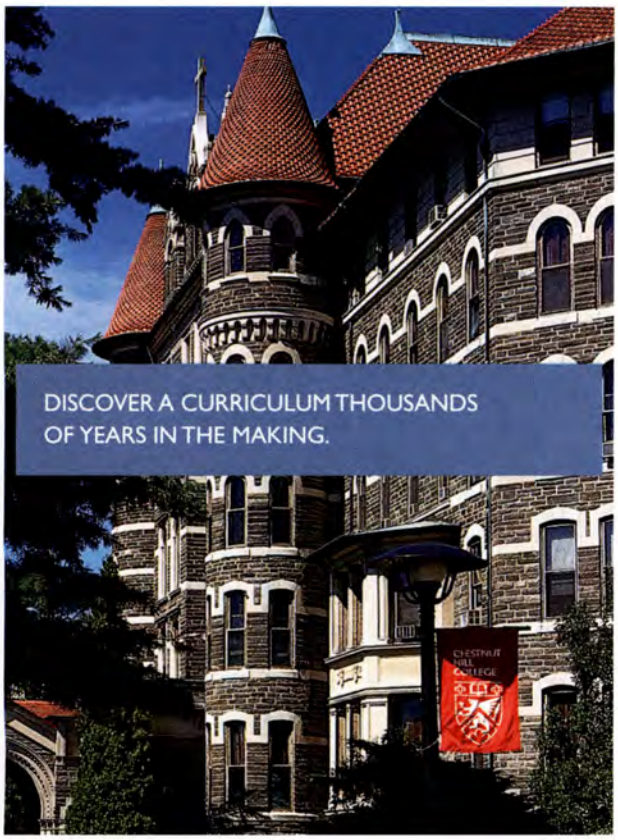
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By Rabbi Rami Shapiro



Can We Reconcile Faiths? Did Jesus Walk on Water?

To these perennial questions, I offer some answers — not to close a conversation but to broaden one. I make no claim to knowing anything you don't know, but if I can help you remember what you already do know, I am blessed.

Watching the news every day, I am so concerned that religion, especially Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, is killing us. Is there a way to reconcile these three faiths?

The problem with Judaism, Christianity, and Islam is not with each religion but with the level at which we engage them.

On the tribal level, each one competes with the other over whom God loves best: Isaac, Jesus, or Ishmael. Such competition also exists within each religion itself: Shiite versus Sunni, Catholic versus Protestant, Orthodox versus Liberal, etc. At this level of engagement, winners are determined by body counts, both in terms of the numbers of living members and the number of dead competitors. Hence, the daily news.

On the worldly level, these three faiths see all humankind within the sphere of God's love and concern. Each one promotes an ethic of universal justice and compassion that leads to religious collaboration rather than competition. The issue is not whom God loves best, but how best to love God and God's creation — and all three faiths have much to offer each other, as well as the world.

On the mystical level, God's concern embraces all life. All three faiths understand God as the One True Reality of which all beings are a part. On this level, each faith is seen by its practitioners as self-transcending, pointing toward the Absolute Reality beyond religious forms and formulae. Here, Jews, Christians, and Muslims gather together in silent meditation, ecstatic chant, and prayer — sharing their ways to get out of the way of realizing the One who is all.

We need to understand all three levels of religion and promote the voices of the ethicists and mystics within each faith, rather than the shrill and fearful screams of fanatics who hew to the tribal vision of their religion. This would require support, on the financial as well as political level, for higher-level interfaith gatherings, something we have yet to see on a global scale.

I would like to practice meditation, but it's too time-consuming. Is there an alternative?

Yes, there is: Wake up! Wake up to the fact that you are not your body, your thoughts, or your feelings. Wake up to the fact that you are a wave of God's ocean. And then wake up from that awakening, and realize that ocean and wave are both water and you are that as well! If you know this — not intellectually, but the way you know your thumb when you hit it with a hammer — then meditation is unnecessary. If you don't know this, meditation is indispensable.

Let me suggest a meditation practice that is profoundly simple, universal, and transformative: the repetition of a divine Name that resonates with you: Jesus, Adonai, Allah, God, Krishna, or Buddha. Find a Name and repeat it silently all day long. Make it your constant companion. When you notice you are not repeating it, start repeating it. The repetition of a Name reminds you of God, and calls you to be godly. You are God manifest in your time and space in order to bring justice and compassion to bear on this moment. Knowing this, living this, is meditation.

I think religious people make things mysterious in order to mask the fact that they don't know what they are talking about. If you can't articulate your philosophy on a bumper sticker you're probably BS'ing me. What is your bumper sticker truth?

Here it is: *Neti Neti* ("Not this. Not that."). This Sanskrit saying from the Upanishads is all I know: whatever Reality is, it isn't what I imagine it to be. Knowing this is humbling and at the same time enlivening, opening me to a sense of wonder and curiosity. *Neti Neti* cultivates an intellectual fearlessness, taking refuge in nothing, simply being open to whatever is. *Neti Neti* means that the answer to every existential or spiritual query is, "I don't know, let's go see." *Neti Neti* doesn't mean I have no opinions, it means that I know they are only opinions. *Neti Neti* allows me to befriend people who think I'm crazy, and people who are, I am certain, crazy themselves. That's my bumper sticker. If you want to make me one, I'll stick in on my car.

Do you believe Jesus walked on water?

No, I don't. But Christ may have. Jesus was a first-century Jewish sage who died because he challenged Rome's

JOHN SCHWEIKERT

kingdom of cruelty and power with God's kingdom of justice and compassion. Christ is the state of consciousness Jesus attained, the state of awareness we need to cultivate in order to do as Jesus did: live out the consequences of God's kingdom. The real question isn't, "Did Jesus walk on water?" but rather, "What does it mean that Christ walks on water?"

Water is a metaphor for life — constantly ebbing, flowing, and changing. To walk on water is to navigate the sea of impermanent, ever-changing reality. Most of us fear impermanence and desperately cling to anything that promises us permanence. Yet permanence is not the nature of reality, and the pursuit of permanence exhausts us. Rather than seek to overcome the laws of nature, we must put on the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16), the mind that lets us let go of the illusion of permanence and surrender to the grace of God.

I can't follow a supernatural Jesus who defies the laws of physics and literally walks on water, but I will follow the human Jesus who shows me how to put on the Christ mind and navigate the uncertainty of life with joy and gladness, love and compassion.

I am 60 years old and still I don't understand the purpose of suffering — particularly the suffering of innocent people. And most particularly innocent children. Can you give me an answer or an explanation?

I wish I could explain why such things happen, but none of the theories I have encountered work for me. Suffering is simply a reality. Evil is simply part of the warp and woof of humanity. To explain it away, to deny evil is real, or to hide behind the notion that it is all part of God's plan seems shallow and even callous to me. Good and evil exist for the same reason that up and down exist, and right and left exist. Good and evil go together and we cannot have one without the other. There is no "why" here.

I've always wondered why the Jews didn't accept Jesus, one of their own, as their savior/messiah?

Most Jews do accept Jesus as one of their own. He was born to a Jewish mother, so he is as Jewish as I am. Accepting Jesus as the messiah is something else. From a Christian perspective, Jesus solves a problem Jews don't have. Christians (and I am using a broad brush) believe that humans suffer from original sin, that the death and resurrection of Jesus can save you from the consequences of that sin. Jews don't believe in original sin. I welcome Jesus as a great prophet, teacher, rabbi, and Wisdom Sage. I have no use for him as the cure for original sin. Of course, if I am wrong I am going to Hell, so think for yourself.

Rabbi Rami Shapiro is an award-winning author, poet, and teacher. His most recent book is *The Sacred Art of Lovingkindness*. To send him questions, email rabbirami@SpiritualityHealth.com. His online column is at SpiritualityHealth.com/rabbirami.



Opening / *A New Way of Seeing*

WRITTEN ON THE WIND: *The Flag Project*

It is said that the wind that touches Tibetan prayer flags will carry the flags' beneficial power of prayers and blessings to all who are brushed by its currents. If so, the Rubin Museum of Art (RMA) in New York City is creating a tornado of good will with approximately 120 modern versions of traditional Tibetan prayer flags from contemporary artists from around the world. Prayer flags, a part of Himalayan culture for thousands of years, are rooted in religious and astrological traditions. Traditionally, they are printed on square or rectangular swatches of cloth and hung with string in sets of five colors corresponding to the natural elements. If you can't get to New York to see the RMA flags, originally created to celebrate the museum's 2004 opening, you can also see them in a lovely little book, *The Flag Project* (The Rubin Museum of Art, 2007), available at the museum gift shop (call 212-620-5000, ext. 350). *The Flag Project* includes works by Kiki Smith, Arlene Shechet, Robert Barry, Laurie Anderson, Louise Bourgeois, Ross Bleckner, Sarah Charlesworth, Pat Steir, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, and RMA's artist-in-residence, Pema Rinzin.



Stephen Mueller

"Untitled" / 2004

Watercolor and mixed media on paper

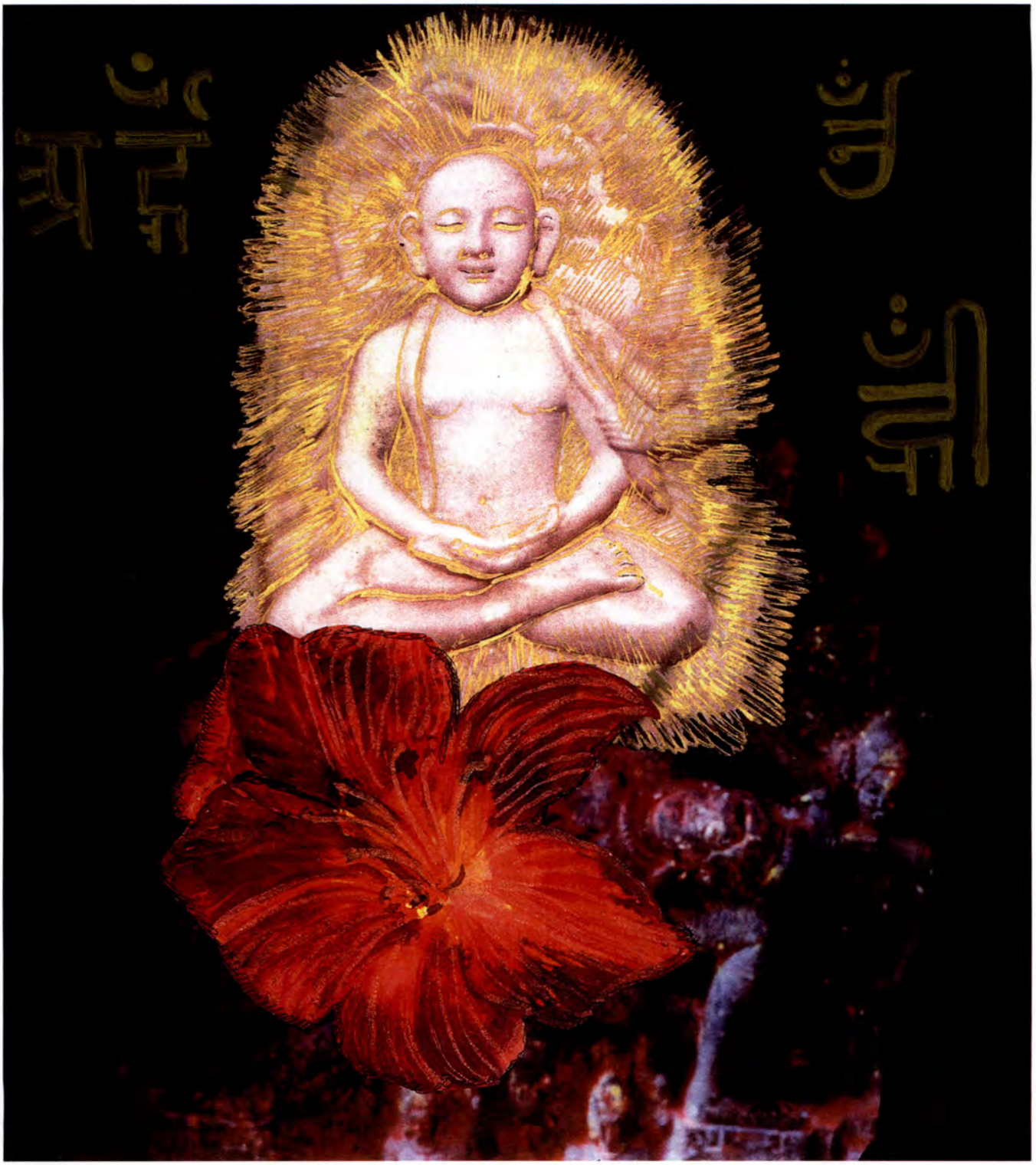


Susan Leopold

"Karma" / 2004

Watercolor and mixed media on digital paper

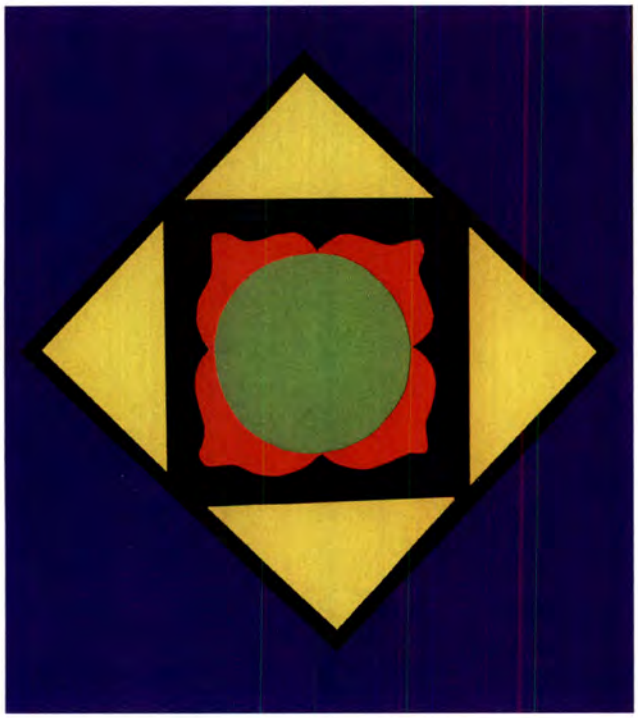
ON EXHIBIT: *See* Written on the Wind: The Flag Project *until February 11, 2008, at the Rubin Museum of Art (rmanyc.org), 150 West 17th Street, New York City. RMA houses more than 2,000 works of Himalayan art.*



Ann McCoy

"Jain Jina" / 2004

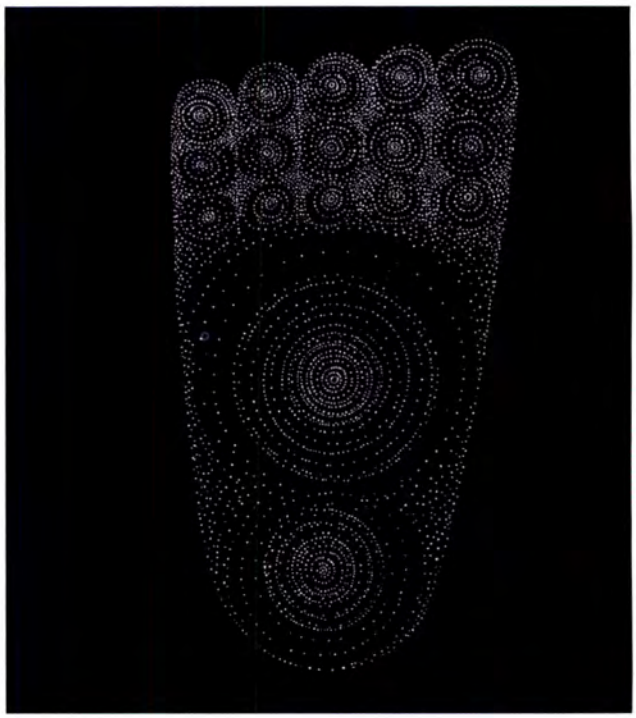
Ink on digital print



Elizabeth Cannon

"Root" / 2004

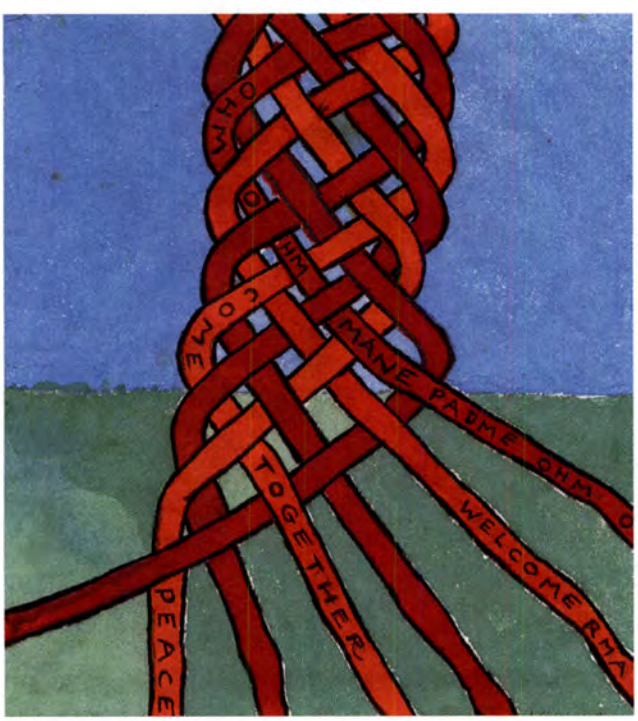
Paper montage



Andra Samelson

"Buddhapada" / 2004

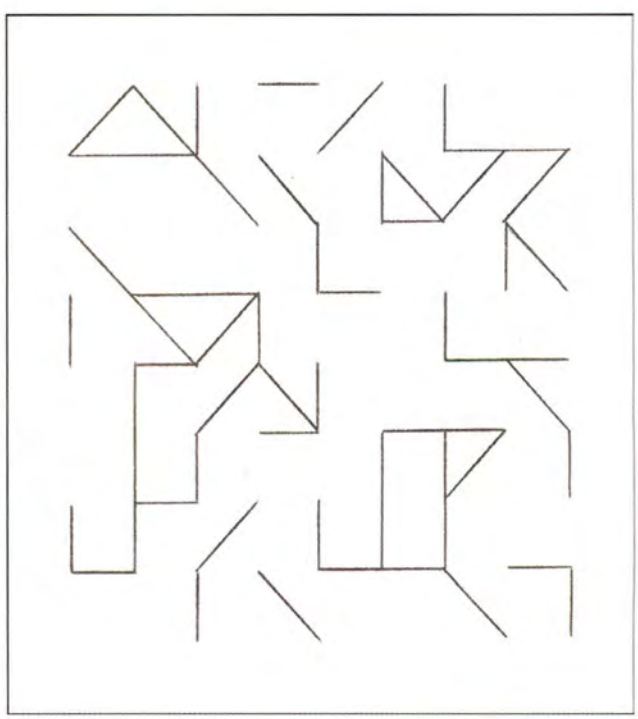
Digital print on paper



Arlene Shechet

"Untitled" / 2004

Watercolor and graphite on paper



William Anastasi

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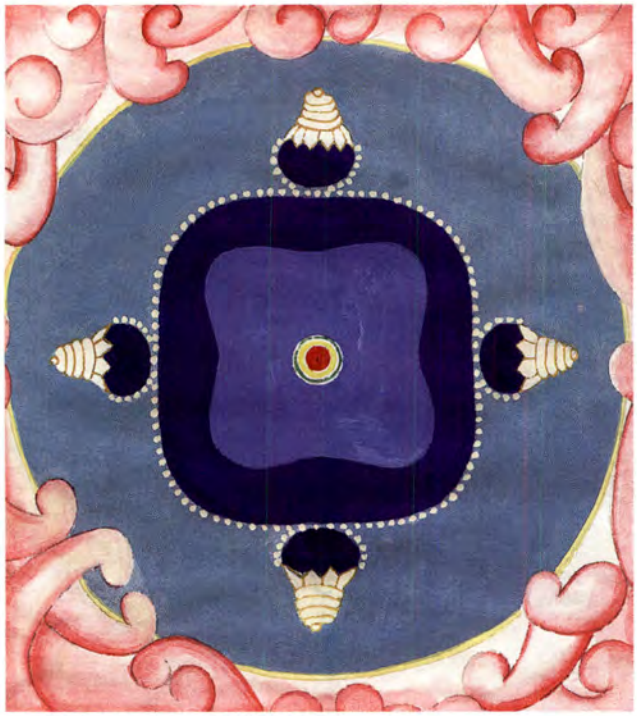
Carbon paper



Joan Sherman

"Tiger" / 2004

Ink and graphite on paper



Emily Cheng

"Buddha's Head" / 2004

Gouache on paper



Harvey Tulcensky

"Untitled" / 2004

Ink on paper



Chrysanne Stathacos

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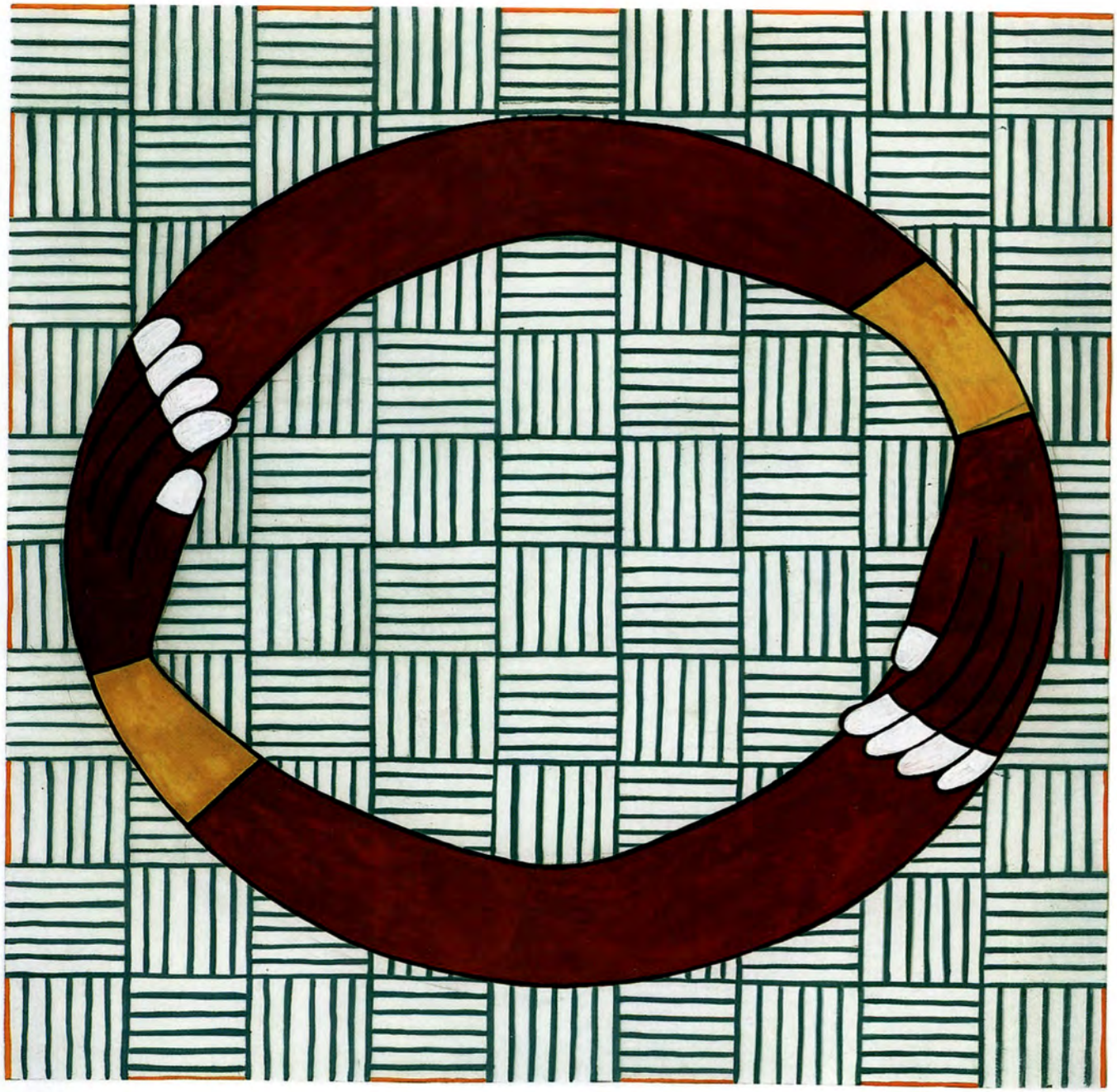
Photograph



John Zinsser

"The Mountain Is Higher" / 2004

Paper montage



Jill Levine

"Dedo Pop" / 2004

Acrylic on vellum

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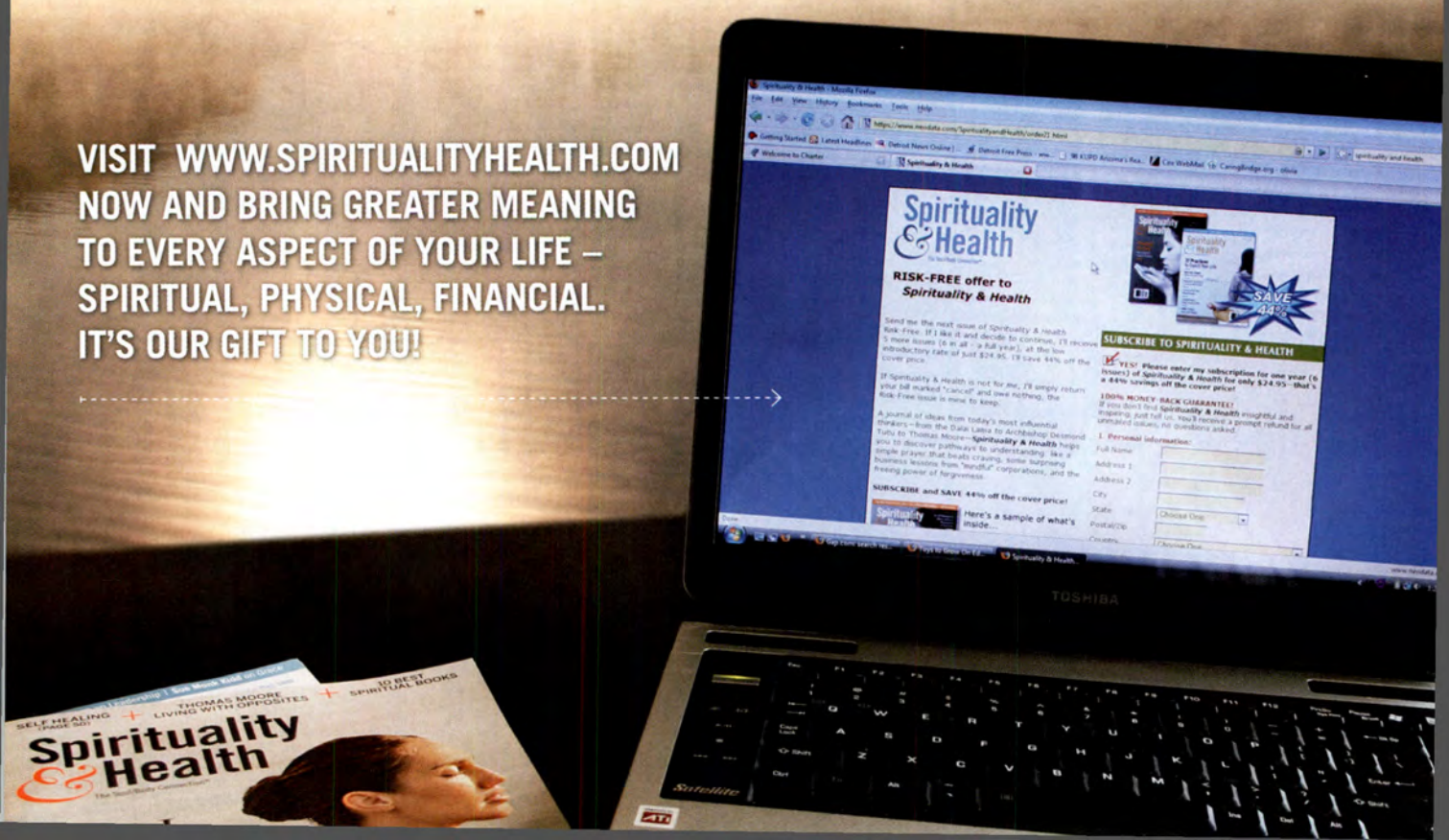
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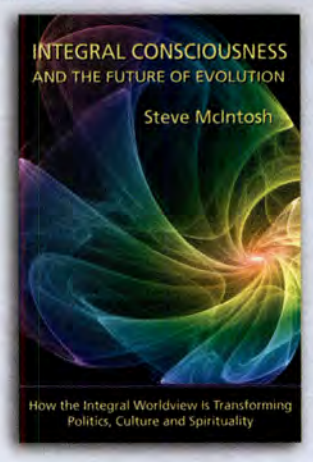
Why We Miss the Pink Elephant in the Living Room

In a fascinating new study from the Centre for Cognitive Neuroscience, University of Turku, in Finland, more than 160 people, aged 19 to 47, were asked to watch a series of video images that were either pictures or words (representations or names) of animals or furniture. Then they were shown a similar series with the addition of something unexpected — a word in the midst of pictures, or a picture amidst words. If the unexpected word was related to the pictures (e.g., the word "dog" among animal pictures), 94 percent comprehended the word "dog" as opposed to just noticing the word. And when an unexpected picture appeared amidst the words (e.g., a picture of a dog among names of animals), 61 percent comprehended the dog. But when the unexpected words

(continued on page 26)

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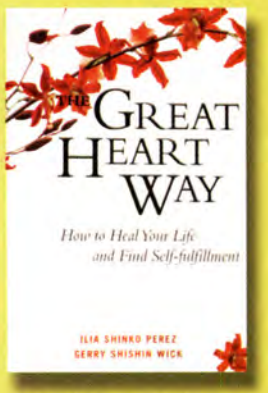
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(continued from page 25)

and pictures were not related, (e.g., the word "chair" among pictures of animals), comprehension dropped dramatically. Only 39 percent comprehended unexpected words in a group of pictures, and 41 percent comprehended unexpected pictures amidst unrelated words. Not only did most people not comprehend an unexpected word or picture, but 11 people (not considered statistically significant) didn't perceive the unexpected at all. (See "How Meaning Shapes Seeing," *Psychological Science*, October 2007.)

Another recent study examined hearing unexpected sounds or silence. Stanford University researchers used fMRIs to watch the brains of people who were listening to eight short symphonies by eighteenth-century composer William Boyce, who was chosen because his music has a familiar style but is not widely recognized. The symphonies had well-defined silent transition points between movements, and the research team was surprised to discover that peak brain activity occurred during the short periods of silence — when seemingly nothing was happening. During that peak, the right hemisphere (intuitive, imaginative, holistic area) was significantly more active than the left. Similarly, when listeners heard unexpected sound — an unrelated chord following ongoing harmony — virtually the same brain activity occurred.

The researchers believe that they were seeing a process called "event segmentation" — when we partition information into meaningful chunks in order to make sense out of sudden changes or a break in an expected flow of information.

So . . . we tend to see and comprehend mostly what we expect. And when there's a sudden gap in our perception or we perceive something unexpected, our brains shift into high gear to compartmentalize it all into meaningful chunks.

But what if instead we just stop? What might we perceive if we could do nothing but tolerate and live in the silence or surprise or confusion or not-knowing, without thinking . . . or at least without taking our thoughts so seriously?

It's not so outlandish — read "Five Days with Adyashanti: Discovering the Extraordinary Lightness of Being Silent," page 42.

BETSY ROBINSON



ILLUSTRATION: SHOLTO WALKER; DOG: SCOTT T. SLATTERY

Why Aries May Not Have an Increased Risk of High Blood Pressure

Virgos are more likely to vomit during pregnancy, Pisces have an increased chance of heart failure, and Libras are more apt to shatter their pelvises, according to a recent study conducted by the Clinic for Evaluative Studies at the University of Toronto. Researchers found that each of the 12 astrological signs had different medical disorders — at least two — associated with them.

So said these results, which I believed on first reading, and I began to see connections: For instance, Aries is symbolized by the Ram: bluntness, initiative, and leadership. So it seemed natural that they'd be more prone to health problems such as high blood pressure or stroke.

But the real finding was something entirely different. "We did this study to prove a larger point," said head researcher Peter Austin, Ph.D. "The more we look for patterns, the more likely we are to find them, particularly when we don't begin with a particular question." Austin found that his initial results weren't duplicated in a second study with another population, leading him to conclude that sometimes "erroneous conclusions will be obtained solely due to chance." Replicating studies is probably the best way to obtain conclusive results; the more often you get the same results, the more likely your theories are correct.

This may explain why the same scientific results are repeatedly publicized. "Smoking Linked to Lung Cancer" and "Heart Disease Caused by Blocked Arteries" seem to be common (and common sense) conclusions — but it turns out we need study after study to be certain the connections really exist. This also explains why study results change occasionally: first coffee is unhealthy for you, then it boosts heart health, and then only one cup a day is good (just like red wine and chocolate!). Different studies can yield different conclusions. Stay tuned . . .

Laurie Pawlik-Kienlen

Woman's Best Friend Also Senses Diabetic Crises

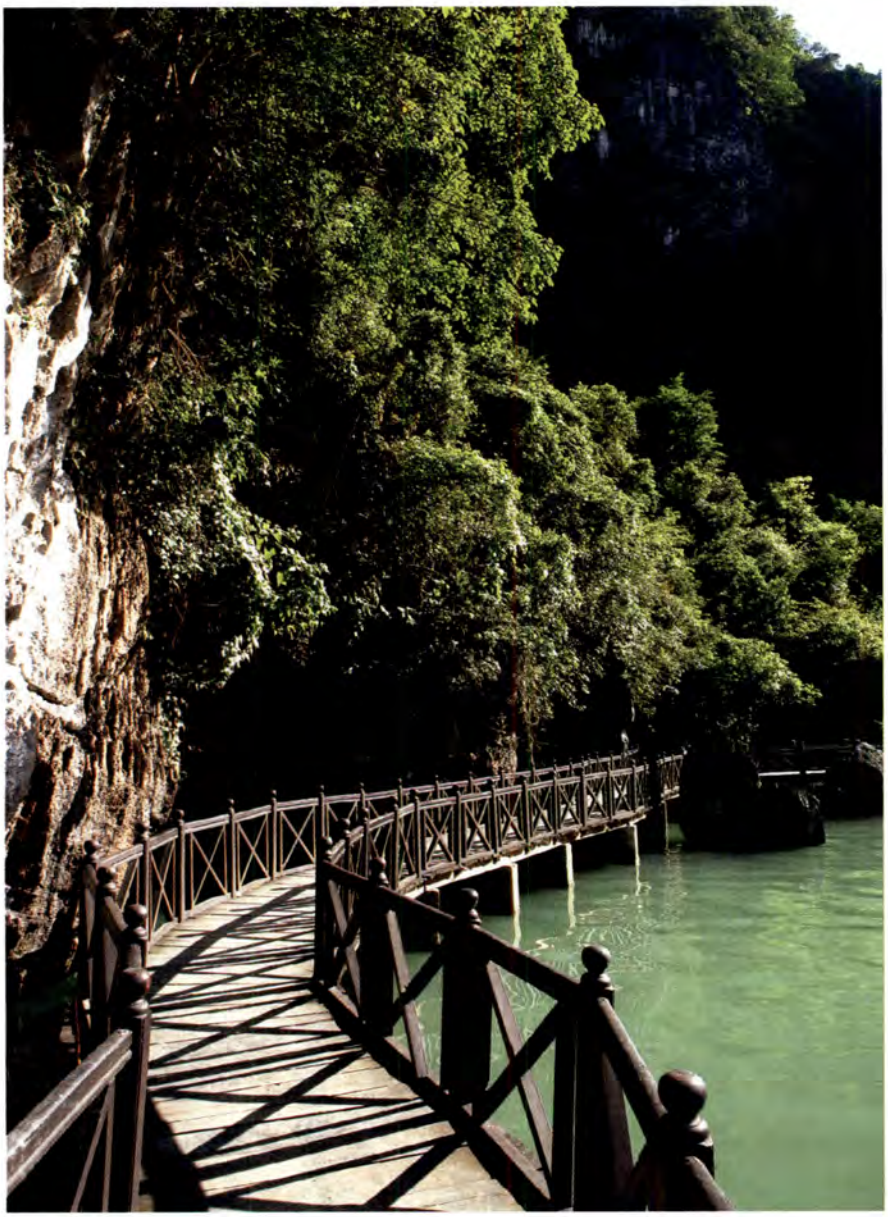
Mark Ruefenacht had his professional awakening in the middle of the night — with the help of a black Labrador puppy named Benton. Ruefenacht was asleep in a hotel room, en route from a training center for guide dogs to Benton's new blind owner, and somehow the dog sensed that Ruefenacht's blood sugar was dropping dramatically. For insulin-dependent diabetics, blood sugar can become so low during sleep that they are unable to rouse themselves to eat, so the puppy may have saved Ruefenacht from a seizure. Shortly after that, Ruefenacht — whose name translates as "alert in the night" — founded Dogs4Diabetics, recognizing a niche that could assist millions of people, especially children, relieving their worried families.

Researchers don't know exactly how dogs sense falling levels of blood sugar in people, but it may have to do with something they can detect through their well-developed olfactory sense. These dogs join the ranks of other medical alert service dogs, including those that alert epileptics on the verge of a seizure so they have time to get into a safe position. There are even indications that dogs might provide early detection for some forms of cancer.

For more information on finding a dog or supporting the dogs project, go to **dogs4diabetics.com** or send an email to info@dogs4diabetics.com.

Swaha Devi





Create a Caring Bridge during Health Crises

When someone you love is too sick or too exhausted to pick up a phone, let alone form coherent sentences, here's how to help. **CaringBridge.org** offers free personal websites to those who need a way to communicate with family and friends during an illness. Following three easy steps, you can create a patient care journal to update family and friends, a guestbook for messages of love and support, and photo galleries. CaringBridge's 51,000 websites receive more than 250 million visitors each year. Says Sona Mehring, executive director and founder, "At some point, every individual will experience illness or loss. CaringBridge allows people to communicate with and support each other during these critical times."

What We Pray For

"Prayer is a way of life," says Silent Unity, an interfaith ministry that has prayed for anyone who requests it for more than 100 years. Unity's 24-hour-a-day prayer ministry receives more than two million prayer requests each year and, through its parent organization, Unity, helps 3.8 million people of all faiths in their spiritual journey. For anyone in need, they offer affirmative prayers. "True prayer goes beyond words," they say. And here's what people request them to pray for:

Healing **30%**
(physical, emotional, spiritual)
General/Multiple requests **24%**
Divine Order **9%**
Peace of Mind **5.6%**
Guidance **4.7%**
Harmony **3.3%**
Prosperity **3%**
Success/Achievement **2.9%**
Employment **2.6%**
Protection **2%**

To submit your own prayer request go to **unityonline.org** or call 1-800-NOW-PRAY.



BRIDGE: KRIS VANDEREYCKEN; PRAYING: TRIGGERPHOTO

New Measures of the Lifelong Stress from Loneliness

For loneliness researchers like University of Chicago psychologist Louise Hawkley, Ph.D., loneliness is not equivalent to being alone, but more about how you perceive your social relationships. Says Hawkley, "It's possible to feel socially deprived even if you're surrounded by friends and family, and possible to feel perfectly connected even if you spend a lot of time alone." So Hawkley and her colleague John Cacioppo, Ph.D., measure loneliness with questions like, "Do you feel in tune with the people around you? Do you feel left out? Are there people who really understand you?" It turns out that how you answer such questions can have a dramatic impact on how you age.

When the psychologists looked at the lives of middle-aged and old people, they found that although the lonely ones reported the same number of stressful life events, they identified more sources of chronic stress and recalled more childhood adversity. Moreover, they differed in how they perceived their life experiences. Even when faced with similar challenges, the lonelier people appeared more helpless and threatened, and less apt to actively seek help when stressed.

Hawkley and Cacioppo also took urine samples from college-age volunteers and found that the lonely students had more of the hormone epinephrine flowing in their bodies. Epinephrine is one of the body's "fight or flight" chemicals, and those high levels suggest that lonely people go through life in a heightened state of arousal. As with blood pressure, the wear and tear of this arousal becomes more apparent with age.

There is more bad news. When the researchers monitored the younger volunteers' sleep, they found that the lonely nights were disturbed by many "microawakenings." That is, they appeared to sleep as much as the other volunteers, but their sleep was of poorer quality. Not surprisingly, the lonelier people reported more daytime dysfunction. Since sleep tends to deteriorate with age anyway, the added hit from loneliness is probably compromising this natural restoration process.





"Natural Agriculture" in the Wintertime

Just a few hours north of New York City, in the village of Hunter, is the Catskill Mountain Foundation's Natural Agriculture Farm — one of only three "Natural Agriculture" farms in the United States — and a great place to learn about winter gardening using cold frames and greenhouses. Developed in Japan, Natural Agriculture is based on a philosophical movement called Shumei, which helps farmers to grow crops in harmony with nature and with the well-being of the consumer in mind. This means no chemicals, pesticides, herbicides, manure, soil additives, or anything that would interfere with the natural growing processes and potentially harm human beings or the environment. Only compost made from leaves and grass from the local environment can be added to the soil to keep it moist, and all seeds are natural. Consumers are encouraged to develop gratitude for Natural Agriculture produce and for the dedication of the farmer providing this nourishment, encouraging lifestyles where materialism and spirituality are in balance.

In addition to learning about winter farming at the Natural Agriculture Farm's 3,000-square-foot greenhouse, you can sample organic gourmet meals prepared by Francine Scherer at the Fresh Harvest Café. Scherer, the chef behind Manhattan's famed Soho Charcuterie, is now the executive chef and manager at the café, a project of Mountain Foundation (catskillmtn.org), a leading cultural organization in the region that advocates sustainable living as well as arts and education.

To learn more about Natural Agriculture or to arrange a free farm tour, visit Shumei International Natural Agriculture at **shumei-na.org**.

Dena Merriam

GREENHOUSE: SHUMEI; ILLUSTRATION: TIM BOWER

Join a Study on Acupuncture for Obesity

Thanks to a new doctoral program in acupuncture and Oriental medicine, we will soon see one of the first American research studies on obesity and acupuncture conducted by a licensed acupuncturist. Ed Lamadrid, a doctoral fellow at Pacific College of Oriental Medicine in San Diego, will begin this winter to test whether acupuncture alone is effective in reducing weight.

Says Lamadrid, "There is evidence from previous studies that acupuncture can be effective either by itself or as an adjunct to other interventions such as diet and exercise." But to find this evidence — or any research on acupuncture and obesity — you have to go to back a few years to studies done in China, Japan, and Australia, as there is a virtual absence of American studies focused on Oriental medicine.

To review the protocols of the obesity study being done by Ed Lamadrid in New York City and to inquire about participation, please visit his website at **IntegrativeHealthStudio.com**.

Stacey Wolf



TOP 10 FOODS TO BUY ORGANIC

If you don't want to eat pesticides, herbicides, hormones, antibiotics, or heavy metals, you'd do well to buy the following grown or raised organically, and here's why:









1. Meats: Animals store high concentrations of chemicals in their fatty tissues.
2. Dairy products: Rich in fats, they store harmful chemicals.
3. Fish: Farmed fish often carry high levels of contaminants.
4. Berries: Their thin skins absorb harmful chemicals.
5. Mushrooms: Conventional growers use powerful fungicides on them.
6. Salad Crops: Lettuce, spinach, and celery are highly sprayed.
7. Root Crops: Carrots, etc., are sprayed. The parts you eat may contain chemicals.
8. Waxed Fruit: Wax locks in pesticides and makes them difficult to wash off.
9. Bananas: Foreign plantations can use 20 times more pesticides than U.S. farms.
10. Coffee and Tea: Hot-water brewing can concentrate residual pesticides.

From *Living Green* by Greg Horn (Freedom Press, Inc., freedompressonline.com)













MEAT: DOUGLAS FREER; DAIRY: TOMO JESENICNIK; FISH: ALUSZA; BERRIES: DEVONYU; MUSHROOMS: MARTIN GRICE PHOTOGRAPHY; SALAD: KOTIKI;ROOT CROPS: YIN YANG; WAXED FRUIT: CSUBICK; BANANAS: LEIMANEAGITA; COFFEE: SAM

These Congregations Have Gone to the Dogs

Dog lovers realize that it sometimes takes a dog to connect people to their own humanity. Now it seems that dogs can help people connect to God.

The Canine-Assisted Ministry/Pastoral and Spiritual Care, or CAM/PS, organization helps to integrate canine companions directly into the worship experience. The group's minister dogs are on long leads, allowing them to interact at will with whomever they sense needs them during group prayer services and sharing sessions. Reading sacred scriptures that mention dogs or other animals also helps to integrate these canine ministers into worship services. In addition, congregants may share stories about canine companions (past or present) who have helped to further their connections to the divine.

Like people, however, not all dogs are fit for the ministry. They must be obedience-trained; have controllable, reliable behavior; and be registered by Delta Society (deltasociety.org) as therapy dogs. Finally, they must demonstrate compassion for humans.

For further information, contact Jerilyn Felton at icdnzr@aol.com.





How to Die Laughing

I'm determined to make sure that my mother dies laughing. She has Alzheimer's, and she's old and she's frail, and she's in a nursing home, but she still enjoys a good laugh.

It may seem insensitive to laugh when my mother has aches and pains and the indignities of old age, but when I laugh, she laughs with me, even if she isn't quite sure what's she's laughing about.

No one knows what happens when we die. Maybe nothing. Maybe we just stop. But it occurs to me that if there's an eternity, there is the possibility that whatever emotion we are feeling at the instant of death is the one that we'll carry with us. So I do my best to keep my mother laughing. It's easy; many things make my mother laugh. I can tell her the same jokes day after day — or even hour after hour — and they are always new to her. I can sing off-key or waggle my eyebrows when a good-looking doctor goes by — she laughs. She seems to think I'm funny too . . . or maybe it's just being with me that causes her to chuckle.

I don't think it would be such a bad thing if everyone could die laughing. When ambulance drivers pick up someone, they should start in with the jokes. "Have you heard the one about the priest, the duck, and the rabbi?" Hey, if I gotta go, I'd rather die feeling laughter than pain or fear or regret.

I've even thought of inventing a wallet-sized "Die Laughing" card. This card would come with its own scratch-off joke — hidden, so you wouldn't know the punch line until you were standing at death's door. Then, instead of someone finding a card in your wallet that indicated you didn't want to be put on life support, there would be the Die Laughing card — to help you go out with a giggle.

When illness becomes terminal, instead of calling a priest or hospice, you could call a comedian. Friends and family could sit with you, and you could all have one more good, long laugh together. Isn't that really what we want to remember?

I really don't know who I think I'm kidding. The truth is that I don't do the whole comedian thing just for my mother's sake; it's for me too. I've always thought that the laughter of a loved one is one of the greatest sounds in the whole world. So when my mother and I reach the end of our time together, I won't remember the nursing home and adult diapers and infections and tears. I'll remember her laugh. I'll remember that she died laughing.

Betsy S. Franz

ILLUSTRATION: TIM BOWER; FELTON: KATHRYN K. CONROW

How Godly/ Civic-Minded Concepts Boost Generosity

Whether or not you believe in God, just being exposed to God-related thoughts cultivates cooperative behavior and generosity, according to University of British Columbia psychology researcher Azim Shariff, Ph.D. In a study (see *Psychological Science*, Sept. 2007) to investigate how thinking about God and notions of a higher power influenced positive social behavior, 125 participants were randomly assigned to two groups: one was primed with God-related concepts, and the other was a non-primed control group. Participants in the God-primed group were given a word game where they had to unscramble sentences (using the words "spirit," "divine," "God," "sacred," and "prophet"). Those in the control group were given the same task with non-spiritual words. Then all participants played a game in which they each were given ten one-dollar coins and asked to decide how much to keep and how much to share with an anonymous recipient. Sixty-eight percent of the participants in the God-concept-primed group allocated five dollars or more to anonymous strangers, compared to 22 percent in the control group.

In a second study, the researchers substituted concepts of civic responsibility and social justice (using the words "civic," "jury," "court," "police," and "contract") for God concepts in the primed group and obtained almost identical results.

"We did not anticipate that simply getting participants to unscramble sentences with a few key words would have such a large effect on people's willingness to give money to strangers," said Shariff.

Other studies have found that being primed with images of death shifts people's votes away from cooperative leaders and toward strong, charismatic leaders (see "Truly Dismal Science: How a Reminder of Death Shifts Voting, Encourages Martyrs," *S&H*, May/June 2005). For better or worse, ideas and images we encounter can dramatically change our behavior.

Feeling Stressed? Peek at These Wildlife Webcams

PETE'S POND in Mashatu Game Reserve, Botswana. Best viewed 4–8 p.m. EST for nighttime activity or 12–4 a.m. EST for early morning action. www9.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/wildcamafrica/

THE ELEPHANT CAM at Tembe Elephant Park in South Africa. africa-web-cam.com

THE PEREGRINE FALCON CAM at the Standard & Poor's building in Manhattan. Watch parents and hatchlings in spring and early summer until they fledge. 55water.com/falcons/

THE WOLF CAM at Bays Mountain Park in Kingsport, Tennessee. isionline.net/wolfcam.php

THE OUTER BAY CAM of the Monterey Bay Aquarium Sea. http://mbayaq.org/efc/efc_outerbay/outerbay_cam.asp

THE TIGER CUB CAM and the Cheetah Conservation Station are among the choices at the National Zoo. http://nationalzoo.si.edu/Animals/WebCams/

THE CRANE CAM at the Audubon Center on Nebraska's Platte River. Best viewed at dawn and dusk CST. rowesanctuary.org

BELUGA WHALES are the stars on the Vancouver Aquarium's cam. vanaqua.org

THE CHIMP CAM features Washoe, a 41-year-old chimpanzee, who uses American Sign Language. The Chimpanzee and Human Communication Institute in Ellensburg, Washington. friendsofwashoe.org

Let *S&H* know about other favorites by emailing editors@spiritualityhealth.com.

Swaha Devi



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What to Give for the Holidays?

Given that so many of us are already drowning in too much stuff, some of my favorite holiday gifts are Half the Sky Foundation's beautiful tax-deductible gift certificates, available through **HalftheSky.org** (click on "Shop to Help"). Most of the $25 to $100 certificates support the Little Sisters Preschool in an orphanage in China. The certificates are personalized and can be sent either directly to the recipient or to the donor for presentation. Here's a sampling:

$100 Art Supplies for a Month
$50 Good Time Gift Certificate for an outing, adventure, and special project
$25 Teacher Appreciation Gift helps support the work of HTS-trained teachers

Another great gift is Scarboro Mission's Golden Rule poster, 22" x 29", of "do unto others as you'd have done unto you" as it is spelled out in sacred texts of 13 of the world's major religious traditions. Paul McKenna led a collaborative effort to produce the $10 poster to enhance inter-religious dialogue and understanding. Learn more at scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/index.php. Some of the website's resources can be downloaded free or for a donation.

Susan Baller-Shepard

An Important Modern Practice: Bit Literacy

Bits, for those of us who are not particularly computer-savvy, are binary digits, electrical impulses expressed in ones and zeros that create what we receive as emails, web pages, computer graphics, and downloaded music — the stuff of modern life. As computer enabler Mark Durst points out in his new book, *Bit Literacy: Productivity in the Age of Information and E-mail Overload* (Good Experience Press, 2007), these weightless bits are enormously heavy. They "weigh us down mentally and emotionally, with incessant calls for attention and engagement." We are besieged by an onslaught of bits of all types.

Writes Durst, "We are now living in the age of bits. Those who know how to work with bits will master the age; those who don't will be left further and further behind in everyprofession and creative pursuit that bits infiltrate." Durst reminds us that a new gizmo won't save us from the deluge: "The technology industry is not in the business of making people more productive. It is only in the business of selling more technology. The real solution, he says, is self-change through "bit literacy," the ongoing practice of letting the bits go. Try Durst's daily three-step "steady state" method for dealing with your email inbox:

Step 1: Read all personal emails, starting with the most personally relevant. Savor them, print them, put them in a scrapbook, reply to them, but DELETE them from your inbox. Durst says that it makes good business sense for people to deal with personal emails first.

Step 2: DELETE all spam.

Step 3: —Deal with FYIs and action items, then DELETE them.
—DELETE or file all FYIs, optionally reading them first.
—Finish all "two-minute" to-dos, then DELETE them.
—Move all bit to-dos to a bit-literate to-do list, then DELETE them.

The goal is to "achieve emptiness every day," says Durst, who warns that since the solution seems so simple, you may be tempted to apply it only temporarily or partially. But it's an all-or-nothing proposition. "Either the message count goes to zero once a day, or there's a problem."

Stephen Kiesling

These Nuns Will Help You Find Your Life/Work Path

Most of us, regardless of our age, find ourselves, at various times, wondering what we'll do when we grow up. There's a free service that can help. It's called the LifeChoices® Discernment Program, and it's run by nuns who are trained to help with our spiritual grounding so we can better understand our talents and inner longings — and how best to direct them.

Communicating via the Internet and phone conferences, the program's counselors rely on a spiritual inventory, lifestyle examination, counseling, mentoring, retreats, and workshops.

Although the service is offered by a Catholic order called the Adorers of the Blood of Christ, it is designed for Christians and open to people of all faiths. To learn more about the service, go to adorers.org/lifechoices.aspx, call 877-ADORERS (that's 877-236-2377) or email ascvocations@adorers.org.

Carol Schuck Scheiber

TJERRIE



LAKE: DESIGNWORKS, LC; BOOK: THE GREEN MEDIA GROUP, LLC

Five Spiritual Concerns for Town Planning

We recently caught up with award-winning land planner W. Scott Parker, who, with his company, DesignWorks (**designworkslc.com**), creates neighborhoods around five spiritual concerns:

1. **Beauty in everything**
2. **Places that celebrate local traditions**
3. **Public comfort**
4. **Harmony with nature**
5. **Natural lifestyle that includes community gatherings, leisurely strolls, and play.**

Parker's new project is to convert the 4,000-acre Myrtle Beach Air Force Base in South Carolina into a lush, eco- and pedestrian-friendly, energy-efficient residential community (see witherspreserve.com). For it, Parker has created a system of linked canals, streams, and ponds that collect and filter water through wetland vegetation, feeding into a 20-acre lake. There are plans for shops, parks, low country-style homes, and town houses that avoid sprawl and are "inter-generationally-friendly."

"Most roads that lead into cities and towns are incredibly ugly," says Parker. "Typically, they are strip commercial centers with poorly designed landscapes. It's my opinion that Americans have come to tolerate a level of unsightliness in our environment." That's something he's trying to change. Some things to keep in mind when planning changes in your community are:

Choice, Not Chance: To make informed choices, we must know the plans and their ramifications. If your town plans to expand its entrance road into a four-lane highway, that will attract retail, prohibit pedestrians, and kill the type of settlement pattern that's healthiest for communities.

The 50-Year Rule: Streets and buildings last. How will they affect future generations? If a big-box store is planned, it may create jobs, but it also may wipe out small businesses, which foster community.

Public/Private Partnerships: Embrace your developers. Create incentives, such as "If you help us create a public park, we'll allow you to increase the density of homes by five percent." Find the mutual benefits.

Parker is optimistic for the future: "Walkable centers will increase because the marketplace is embracing that, and green sustainability directly relates to this type of building. In order to get to a walkable center, you need enough density (people living there) to support shops. This can occur on a village level, and I think it will."

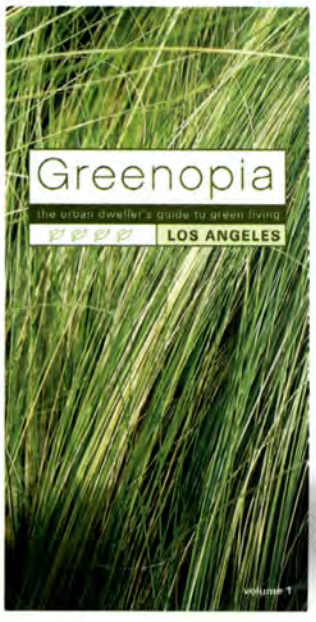
Betsy Robinson

The Zagat for Green Businesses

For an amazingly comprehensive guide to everything green — eco-friendly dry cleaners, organic pizza parlors, interior decorators, and much more — check out *Greenopia™: The Urban Dweller's Guide to Green Living*. So far, the guides cover only the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles, but more are in the works for New York, Chicago, Denver/Boulder, Seattle, Portland, and beyond. Each listed business is judged by a panel of experts on environmentalism and sustainability, and no paid advertising is accepted.

The publisher, The Green Media Group, LLC, walks the walk. They offset 100 percent of their carbon dioxide emissions and electricity consumed in the production and distribution of their guides by making donations to renewable energy projects. They also encourage their researchers to take public transportation, walk, and ride bikes.

For a host of green living tips, check their website, **Greenopia.com**.



What if Google Became This Good . . .

Google prides itself on doing no evil, but GoodSearch.com will make a donation to your favorite charity or school with every search. It doesn't cost you a thing — the money comes from the advertisers.

How Do You Feel about Church Rituals Online?

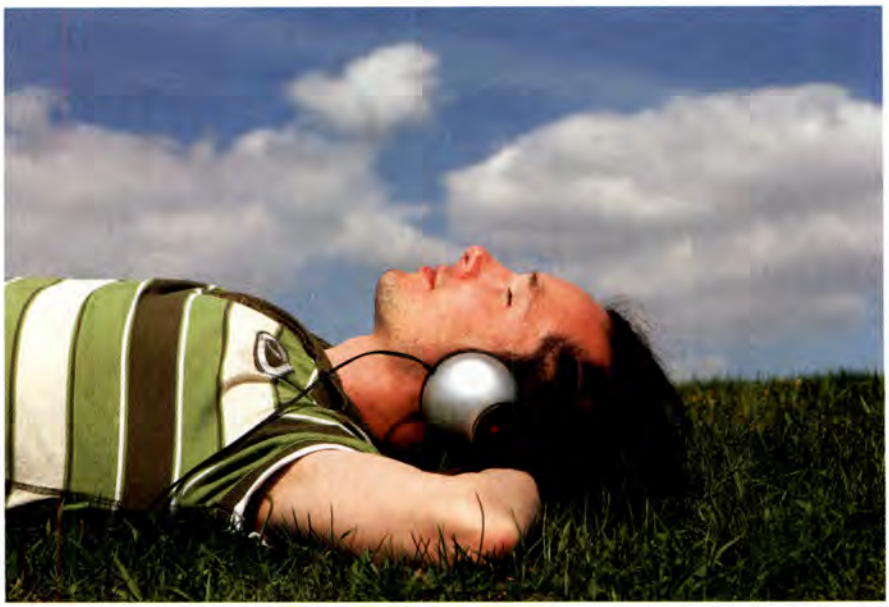
Here's the home page: "Imagine church with no cobwebs, wooden pews, hymn books, overhead projector, leaking roof, organ fund — or even church building. That's where you are right now. Welcome to St Pixels (stpixels.com), the online church where you can meet others, talk about serious and not-so-serious stuff, discuss what you do and don't believe, go to regular services, and join a pioneering worldwide community.

Now the big question: Can real spiritual fulfillment be found in cyberspace?

To find out, Ally Ostrowski, a doctoral student at the School of Journalism at the University of Colorado, Boulder, surveyed a randomly generated sampling of the more than 8,000 members of an earlier worship site called Church of Fools, a U.K.-based offshoot of the *Ship of Fools* Christian magazine site. The virtual worship center provided guest ministers, allowed members to enter the sanctuary with other people, sit quietly or speak with other attendees, and keep in touch between services on a community bulletin board. Survey participants were asked why they initially visited the Church of Fools, if they experienced a strong bond among worshipers despite lack of physical contact, whether they felt the online services met their spiritual needs, and if they would be interested in participating in a cyber celebration of the Eucharist.

Not surprisingly, respondents who used the Internet the most were most strongly supportive of all aspects of the virtual church. They tended to view the sense of community at Church of Fools as similar to that of a physical church and were more likely to be in favor of offering the sacraments online for those who wished to partake. And while the entire survey group was divided as to whether they would participate in virtual communion, they overwhelmingly agreed that even though it could not replace communion administered in a real church, they would not oppose the ritual being practiced in cyberspace.

KAREN LAWRENCE



When to Simply Give Up?

Happiness correlates with personal success, so it would seem that tenacity and persistence should lead to joy, right? Not necessarily. Sometimes an admirable trait like perseverance leads to beating your head against a wall. So found psychologists Gregory Miller and Carsten Wrosch, who developed a test that can reliably distinguish between people who, when faced with a difficult goal, persist or give up.

In their year-long study, published in *Psychological Science* (Sept. 2007), the researchers found that teenagers who did not persist in an attempt to obtain hard-to-reach goals had much lower levels of a protein called CRP, an indicator of bodily inflammation. Inflammation has recently been linked to serious diseases, including diabetes and heart disease, suggesting that healthy but overly tenacious teens may be on the road to chronic illness.

As Miller and Wrosch write, "When people are faced with situations in which they cannot realize a key life goal, the most adaptive response for physical and mental health may be to disengage from this goal."

But all is not lost for go-getters. The researchers sorted both groups by their willingness to re-engage and set new goals after they gave up on something important. While they did not find a direct link between re-engagement and physical health, they did find that people who readily jumped back into life had a greater sense of purpose and mastery and were less likely to ruminate about the past. Setting new goals appears to buffer the emotional consequences of failure, especially for those who have the hardest time letting go.

For a Sobering Minute, Log On to the World Clock

If you want to get of sense of life from a truly global perspective, log on to Peter Russell's World Clock and click the button that says NOW. In real time you can watch the world's population increase as people are born and die. You can see how many hectares of forests are being cut and how many are being planted; how many dollars are being spent on the military and how many species have gone extinct. You can see how many barrels of oil are being pumped from the ground and how much carbon is being dumped into the atmosphere. You can see how many abortions are being performed. You can even watch the earth's temperature rise. Then shut off your computer and take a long walk. (See peterrussell.dreamhosters.com/Odds/WorldClock.php.)

EDYTA PAWLOWSKA

"Prisons Purging Books on Faith from Libraries"

That headline sounded right out of George Orwell's classic *1984*, but unfortunately, it was from the *New York Times* (September 10, 2007). Wrote Laurie Goodstein, "Behind the walls of federal prisons nationwide, chaplains have been quietly carrying out a systematic purge of religious books and materials that were once available to prisoners in chapel libraries."

The move to clear prisons of any books, tapes, CDs, or videos that were not on a list of approved resources — a secret list of only 150 books and 150 multimedia resources for each of 20 religions or religious categories, a list created by a secret committee of religious "experts" — was part of the Standardized Chapel Library Project in response to the Bureau of Prisons' direction to keep prisons from becoming recruiting grounds for militant Islamic and other religious groups. According to the *Times*, "The bureau, an agency of the Justice Department, defended its effort as a way of barring access to materials that could, in its words, 'discriminate, disparage, advocate violence, or radicalize.'"

Fortunately, the project evoked such outrage that at press time, the bureau relented and promised to return most of the thousands of removed books. But a review of materials will go on through January 2008.

S&H media editors Mary Ann and Fred Brussat, whose book *Spiritual Literacy* and 26-part DVD series the *Alphabet of Spiritual Literacy* (see *S&H* Nov./Dec. 2006) have become important resources for prison inmates, commented, "It was obviously a violation of the freedom of religion. The field is too broad to have one list fit all." The Brussats have experienced firsthand how healing it is for multi-faith groups — as well as for people with no faith — to talk about spiritual ideas and concepts. Says Mary Ann, "The idea of a small group of so-called experts not only deciding what should be available but predicting the effects of certain texts is a very dangerous precedent."

BETSY ROBINSON

Zen Alarm Clocks

Zen Clocks awaken you gracefully with a gradually increasing, ten-minute progression of acoustic chimes or gongs—they make waking up in the morning an exquisite experience. The natural wood clocks' acoustic chimes or gongs also serve as aesthetically sophisticated timers for yoga or meditation. Once you use a Zen Clock, nothing else will do.



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Deep in Winter Quiet: A Centering Prayer Weekend. Fri.-Sun., Jan. 18-20. Winter is a season for quiet, rest, stillness, reflection and letting go. Join us as we turn away from our busy, active lives and seek, instead, consolation and restoration in the practice of centering prayer. **Susan Rush**, a spiritual director, hospice chaplain and coordinator of Contemplative Outreach of New Mexico, will be our instructor and guide. Fee: $325.

Marriage as a Spiritual Practice. Fri.-Sun., Apr. 11-13. Join other couples in a supportive environment and explore how to maintain and enhance the deep emotional/psychological and spiritual bond of marriage. **Jim and Melissa Leehan** bring extensive training and experience to their work with couples. Jim is an Episcopal priest who has worked in pastoral ministry and practiced and taught as a Social Worker and Marriage and Family Therapist. Melissa has practiced as a psychotherapist and Marriage and Family Therapist for more than 35 years. Fee: $700/couple.

Marriage Enhancement for Clergy Couples. Tue.-Thur., Apr. 15-17. Clergy couples are subject to the same challenges as other married couples but their marriages and families are under more scrutiny. In this workshop, participants will explore ways to be more conscious and emotionally responsive to each other's needs and experiment with different ways to handle difficult emotions surrounding often unchangeable circumstances. Leaders are **Jim and Melissa Leehan** (see above). Fee: $700/couple.

Fees include tuition, double occupancy room and meals

Online Prayer Groups Help with Cancer

Praying in an online support group can give people with cancer a healthy emotional boost, according to a new study at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. In this Markle Foundation and National Cancer Institute–funded study, which was published in the journal *Psycho-Oncology*, 97 patients participated in a computer-based health education and support system called the Comprehensive Health Enhancement Support System (CHESS) Living after Breast Cancer Diagnosis module.

Patients' text messages were analyzed using a program that measured the percentage of words with religious overtones, such as "pray," "worship," "faith," "holy," and "God." Those whose messages contained a higher percentage of these religious words were better able to function emotionally, had lower levels of negative emotions, and were more likely to have an "I-think-I-can" attitude (what psychologists call "self-efficacy").

"From a psychological standpoint, there are a variety of reasons why cancer patients may benefit from prayer — whether on the Internet or elsewhere," says Bret Shaw, the study's lead author. "In reviewing the messages, some of the most common ways study participants used religion to cope with their illness included putting trust in God about the course of their illness and consequently feeling less stressed, believing in an afterlife and therefore being less afraid of death, finding blessings in their lives, and appraising their cancer experience in a more constructive religious light." So one thing you can do for cancer patients is to pray with them — online.

Sheldon Lewis

Spiritual Warfare

***The Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis' portrait of spiritual warfare from a demon's point of view, is reopening on the New York stage after encouragement from audiences and Christian leaders. For details, see ScrewtapeOnStage.com.**

Out-of-Body Experiences Go Mainstream

At some point in life, roughly one in ten of us has the experience of seeing our body from a distance — of having our sense of self transported outside of our bodies. Out-of-body experiences are often considered mystical and can trigger spiritual awakenings. On the other hand, these experiences are most common among epileptics, stroke victims, and drug users, suggesting that the root of the experience is located in the brain. In August 2007, researchers announced successful attempts to create the illusion of being out of the body while one is seated in a chair inside a lab.

To create the illusion, Henrik Ehrsson, Ph.D., at the Institute of Neurology at University College London, had participants sit in a chair while wearing a pair of head-mounted video display screens, one over each eye. The screens showed live feed recorded by two cameras placed side by side, about four feet behind the participants' heads. The image from the left video camera was presented on the left-eye display and the image from the right camera on the right-eye display. The participants saw these as one "stereoscopic" (3D) image of their own backs displayed from the perspective of someone sitting behind them. When Ehrsson tapped the participants on their chests with a stick at the same time as he tapped the air at chest height below, but within range of, the cameras, the participants felt as if they were sitting in the position of the observing cameras. Hence, they felt disconnected from their own bodies, which they continued to view four feet in front of them. The experience was not scary, but a little spooky.

This ability to place the self outside the body has exciting implications for transferring our sense of physicality; perhaps it will allow us to step "inside" a video game or to improve a doctor's ability perform remote surgery. Perhaps more importantly, this experiment may soon allow us to identify the area of the brain that locates ourselves inside — or outside — our own bodies, which may be a key to unlocking the mystery of self-consciousness.

Stephen Kiesling



GAETAN CHARBONNEAU



Road Signs from Paradise

If it's true that "Godly/Civic-Minded Concepts Boost Generosity" (see page 33), then the people of the beautiful island of Saint Kitts may be onto something.

Take a look at their new attempt to influence good behavior. That's right: street signs to "be good."

We optimists certainly cheer their efforts. . . . And that's the truth.

Jason Love









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UNWRITTEN SONNET

By Jacqueline Osherow

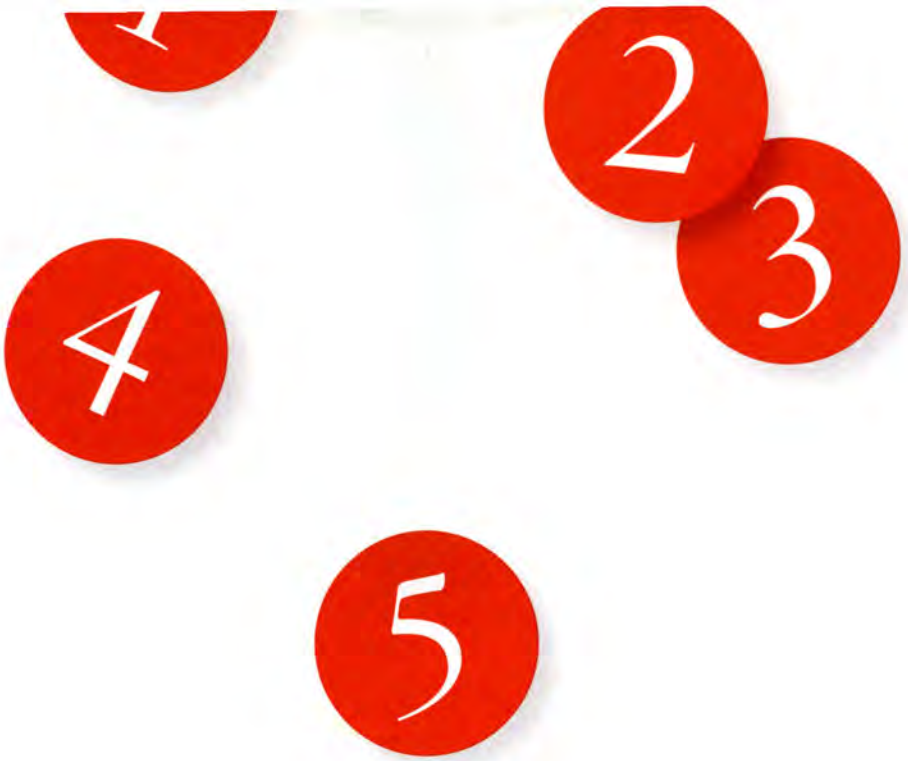
I tried to write you a sonnet; it wouldn't work.
Here's what I would write if you weren't crazy
was the way it started. But you are crazy
so I just let the laptop screen go dark.
I wouldn't be writing if you weren't crazy;
you'd be here in the house somewhere, just back
from the morning's car pools, not that we'd talk:
you'd be off again on errands. I'd be busy
writing poems that now seem ill-conceived —
not one of them a love poem. Too late.
You could read The Song of Songs. *I felt like that,*
which explains how I lived the way I lived.
I was fearless once; I chose the rarest
apple tree among the trees of the forest.

DANA TEZARR

THE CRAZY DOER I wonder if all of us, poets or not, don't have "unwritten sonnets" tucked away in the corners of our lives. We may recall a time when we were living more intensely than seems possible now, or we have a dim memory of an insight that came in a flash, but which quickly faded when our usual, everyday, and endless tasks intruded. It is always easy for us to "do" rather than to simply "be." This poignant poem reminds us that we pay a price. Read it aloud, as if you are addressing your "crazy," inner self, and you'll see what I mean.

KATHLEEN NORRIS





5 DAYS WITH ADYASHANTI

DISCOVERING THE EXTRAORDINARY LIGHTNESS OF BEING SILENT

By Wendy Blackman

Adyashanti is a regular guy from San Jose, California, who likes to hang out with his wife, lift weights, read, play poker, and watch NASCAR on TV. What he is known for is his ability to "awaken" people, and his 300-person, 5-day silent retreats fill up so fast that you have to join a lottery and spend months on a waiting list to get a spot. Here is an account of my journey into silence with Adyashanti at Asilomar, a retreat center on California's wild northern Pacific coast. It turned out to be one of the most liberating experiences of my life, even though I did nothing. Absolutely nothing.

Photo illustrations by C.J. Burton

The First Night...

the retreat master, a woman who reminds me of my elementary school principal (glasses, sensible hairdo, serious mien) makes me feel like I've done something wrong as she slowly articulates the rules . . . lots of rules. Each day will begin and end with required silent sitting (a kind of meditation) and with satsang, a period of deep inquiry during which Adyashanti talks and takes questions, with three more periods of sitting in the afternoon. Silence at all times. No notes. No gestures. No pantomime. If someone tries to engage you, politely bow or point to your SILENCE badge. Warning bells are rung six minutes before each session starts. Don't be late. If you are late, don't rush the doors. If the doors are locked, stay out. Once you leave, don't come back in. Many rules about dining, but the salient one is, if you need something, such as more bread, raise your hand, wait for the wait staff to come over, and point (e.g., to the empty breadbasket). Worst case scenario, write a note. No notes to the retreat master unless you have an emergency. If you have an emergency, decide where it is on a scale of 1 to 10. If it's 8 or less, take it to your chair and check again. Remember, says the retreat master, "Awakeness wakes up to itself, so if there is resistance, inquire who is resisting." During the break, I try to remember precisely why it was I signed up for this.

SATSANG

Adyashanti enters the quiet hall barefoot, in simple cotton pants and a starched cream-colored shirt with an Asian flavor. He sits in a large white chair, props one leg onto the cushion, and says nothing. A gorgeous spray of tulips, freesia, and roses behind him, a table with his tea to the side, and below, a picture of the Buddha whose reflection in the pool is of a clown.

"Retreat," he finally begins, "is the place you come to lose yourself. Hopefully, there will not be much of you left after the retreat. Those of you who go home and say they got nothing got the point. Those who go home and say they lost everything really got the point."

Hmm.

"Please don't think of this as a meditation retreat. The object isn't to learn how to meditate," he continues. "Actually, all we are doing is sitting in stillness, enjoying the silence. That is meditation. To not enjoy the silence, that is called thinking."

The point of being silent, he explains, is to help us notice the silence within us, rather than what we usually notice (noise, thoughts). True meditation isn't a technique and has no goal; it's about becoming the silence, the awareness. Adyashanti lays out his approach to the next five days, and the essence of his teaching:

"Recognize that waking up is waking up to that which is not coming and going, neither high nor low, not some compromise between high and low. It isn't about avoiding discomfort or sustaining the big moments. People ask me if it's okay to use a meditation technique. It's fine. Remember, it's your retreat, not mine. You're the authority, not me. If you want to sit there and say Humpty Dumpty to yourself all day, that's fine.

"Your mind's job is not to let things be; thinking is the only interest it has. Letting everything be is an attitude, a state of openness and curiosity: what is happening in my mind, in my body, when I allow this instant to be as it actually is and not as I want it to be? It's a question with no answer. That's meditation, and the whole foundation of retreat, too. Life doesn't have to be the way the mind says it does to be happy. In fact, there's no relationship between the two. We know what we're like when we don't allow everything to be — conflicted, angry, fearful — fighting with some part of experience. It's easy to let go when you finally see there's no such thing as a true thought. Truth isn't found in the mind; it lies elsewhere."

So that's the first component of the retreat: non-meditative meditation — letting go, allowing, enjoying. The second is active, engaged questioning of our assumptions and beliefs about everything, especially ourselves. "Satsang is not here to answer the question, 'How do I make my dream better?'" says Adyashanti. "There are lots of places to go where people will teach you how to make your dream better. This isn't one of them. This is inquiry to wake up from the dream of trying to make the dream better.

"All dreams begin with 'I,' with the idea of a self. What continues the dreams is this belief in 'I' as something separate. It is the original belief, the first belief. The questioning removes this belief. Spiritual inquiry isn't meant to give a better or different identity. Its purpose is to see through identity. The truth is a wordless state. We use words but the truth of being is the realization of what exists without words. It is awakeness, without definition.

"That is why I said maybe you will lose yourself. Lose all those words you ever believed about yourself — the rotten words and even the good words, the best words. Because there are no words at all, zero. What you are is not words or thoughts. What you are does not disappear . . . Enjoy yourselves."

DAY 1

I spend the morning trying to find an excuse to leave and come up empty. So I wander around, trying to get with the program, trying to let it be . . . or let myself just be — agitated and distracted.

"Don't make distraction wrong," Adyashanti says. "One thing that keeps us fixated is the thought that something is wrong. There's no wrongness other than the thought that says it is wrong. When you see such things as painful rather than wrong, you'll move away from them."

Use your body as a barometer to measure the truth of anything, he recommends. Pain (and discomfort and anger and any afflictive feeling) reminds us that we aren't in harmony with what is happening. If we let ourselves feel what is there rather than telling ourselves stories about what it means, these feelings quickly move through us. "Coming into harmony with reality feels good. Reality just does whatever it does. Haven't you noticed?" he asks.

Satsang. Inquire into thought. If we actually realized that thoughts have no substance or ultimate truth to them, Adyashanti says, there would be nothing left to say or do. "The game of illusion is over, the veil that never existed is lifted, the jig is



up. There's only reality. The nameless realizes itself completely. . . . You don't have to destroy thoughts or make them go away, you just need to question them. Eventually consciousness comes out of its obsession with thinking because it realizes there's no hope of finding something real there. We don't find what we *are* through thinking or even feeling. Either one can be a doorway, but they aren't the destination."

DAY 2

Silent sitting at 7:30 in the morning. Nothing to hold. My mind and my body are slowing down. I'm not having fewer thoughts — I have a dozen, no, two dozen lines of worry and distraction I might pursue at any given moment — but I am experiencing longer gaps between them. In the gaps are crashing ocean waves and floorboards creaking and the soft velvety feel of my sweater. The barely perceptible rise and fall of hundreds of bodies breathing.

But where are these thoughts coming from? What is thinking? There's no answer. What's looking at the thought? Who or what is that? What is noticing this noticing? There's nothing there. When you get to this place, Adyashanti says your mind "goes into a tilt." It doesn't know what to do. No one there? That can't be. This is also the place he calls the "gateless gate." It's exactly the place to be. We get there, though, and think there must be somewhere to go from there. So we run along the fenceless fence, thinking, "I'll just find some more beautiful sutras to study, some other teacher, some nice philosophy."

DAY 3

I poke at all assumptions, engage the very real possibility that I'm making everything up. I seriously consider that nothing — nothing — is verifiable. Not the way I feel, the things I like, or the values I hold. Meaning and purpose are the lifeline of the ego, creating the self. I've done this before and usually find it threatening. Now, it allows me to approach everything that otherwise gives me heartache, or at least heart palpitations, with some levity. I've been smiling all afternoon for no reason.

But can I really let go? The whole point of this inquiry is to lose the sense of self, to lose "I am this" in favor of "I am." I see how thoughts create my way of being, which I hold dear. I can also see that this holding is my confinement pen. But I'm stuck on the notion that even if there is no substance to my thoughts, even if I don't actually exist, I like the way I am. I like thinking, exploring ideas, writing about them. All this makes me wonder: Do I like this truth? Do I even want it? Now that I'm staring it in the face, I'm not so sure.

(continued on page 74)



Oz pioneered the participation of healers in the O.R.

MEHMET OZ FINDS HIS TEACHER

This bestselling author and renowned heart surgeon found inspiration for his family life and medical practice through the ideas of the Swedish scientist, philosopher, theologian, and Christian mystic Emanuel Swedenborg.

By Mehmet Oz, M.D., *with* Rev. Jonathan S. Rose, Ph.D. *and* Lisa Oz / *Photography by* James Salzano

OUR RELIGION WAS NEVER A SUBJECT OF GREAT INTEREST TO ME. I WAS RAISED a secular Moslem. My father was a surgeon. For me, science had always been the source of ultimate truth. I didn't even begin to struggle with the deeper questions of life until midway through my first year in medical school. But the disconnects accumulated briskly. The cadaver that each of us received had many subtle anatomical structures in the heart, but no "soul" was ever delineated. Brilliant teachers showed me the inner workings of the brain, so I understood how we could remember and desire and move, but I could not find the location of love. I was introduced to patients who seemed to be more than the sum total of our textbooks, and witnessed suffering on a level that I could not understand any beneficent creator permitting. I had entered medical school to better understand the world inside us, but paradoxically, I seemed to be moving in the opposite direction as I wrestled to find the soul in medicine.

I hungered for a scientific rationale to help me reconcile my newly found insights into our bodies and the deeper spiritual longings that we all possess. Help came in the form of an eighteenth-century Swedish philosopher. As with many of the transformational ideas that would be slipped into my life subsequently, the teacher was my future wife.

Soon after I met Lisa, she introduced me to insights into heaven and hell (and marriage, of course, which should not necessarily be confused with them) that challenged my status quo. She asked what Jung, Blake, Goethe, Emerson, Dostoyevsky, Balzac, and even Helen Keller had in common. I responded that they had all died, which did not impress her. It turns out that they were profoundly influenced by the Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg. Lisa argued that the recommendation of these luminaries should be enough to stimulate my interest in a figure who, though rarely discussed in modern theology, might provide a spiritual light to those still searching in an often ill-lit terrain. I agreed and selfishly asked Lisa for another date.

WHO WAS SWEDENBORG?

Swedenborg, I later learned, was a scientist and theologian whose great and defining quest was to find the nature of the relationship between the body and the spirit. In his mid-fifties he came into an altered state of awareness in which he experienced a simultaneous dual consciousness of this life and the afterlife. This sounded spooky to me at first, but as I came into contact with his many writings, I began to understand his profound insights and how they applied directly to my life.

On first glance, many of Swedenborg's teachings seem familiar: the idea of one God, infinite and absolute; the belief in an afterlife; the reliance on the Bible as a source of divine revelation. These are tenets familiar to most Western faiths. His emphasis on overcoming the delusion of the self and on the profound interdependence of all things in both the spiritual and natural worlds aligns so closely with Buddhist thought that the Zen master D. T. Suzuki referred to him as "the Buddha of the North." Yet when one examines the particulars of Swedenborg's works, one finds a distinctive vision.

For example, when Lisa and I got married, there was no "'til death do us part" in the ceremony. Swedenborg taught that true marriage lasts for eternity. (Although many of us feel this to be the case anyway, it is not generally part of other traditional doctrines.) According to Swedenborg, men and women are each a partial reflection of the Divine, and it is through their union that they most perfectly approach the image of God. Heavenly marriages are deep soul-bonds formed between two individuals — eternal relationships endlessly growing and being renewed. They include a level of peace, innocence, friendship, playfulness, and, yes, sexual ecstasy that is difficult for those of us here on earth to even imagine.

HEAVEN AND HELL

According to Swedenborg, heaven and hell are not merely places but spiritual states. We do not "go there" when we die. We are already there. By choosing a life of good will and devotion, we build heaven in our hearts. This place within us then becomes our eternal home. After death, the veil that separates the spiritual from the material world is lifted, and we continue as our true selves — either angels or evil spirits, depending on whether we have internally made a heaven or a hell for ourselves while living here.

Heaven, like the human body, is an emanation and expression of the divine form. Societies are organized according to mutual loves. Each collective group has a specific function, contributing to the whole, much like organs in the body. Every person has a special use, just as individual cells in our body are responsible for specific tasks to which they are perfectly suited, such as collecting oxygen or resolving infection. The idea that we each have a purpose associated with our unique talents and desires and the concept of a "Divine Human" were particularly compelling to me.

I hungered for a scientific rationale to help me reconcile my newly found insights.

I have always had trouble with the idea of selective redemption. How could a compassionate God condemn his children for nothing more than being born into the "wrong faith"? How could an all-loving God choose to extend that love to only a select few? Swedenborg taught that God loves us all, and the various religions allow us to approach him in the way best suited to our needs. He argued that we are all born for heaven, and that it is what we love that determines our fate, not what we profess to believe. God is infinite. We are not. Not even the most brilliant or enlightened among us can fully comprehend the Divine, so our view of God is determined by who and where we are spiritually. Each religion provides something unique and wonderful for its followers and, when focused on loving God and our neighbor, can lead to heaven.

Further, Swedenborg claimed that God never judges us. Through his boundless mercy, God allows us to choose where we will be happiest based on our ruling loves. If we love God and our fellow human beings, then heaven is a place of immeasurable joy for us. If, on the other hand, we love only ourselves and desire merely the pleasures of the world, then hell is where we are most comfortable. It is "hellish" there primarily because we are prevented from fulfilling our evil desires to harm others.



Dr. Oz with his wife, Lisa, at home in New Jersey.

Angels as described by Swedenborg aren't a separate species but people who are regenerate — literally, reborn humans. This is achieved through putting aside the selfish desires of the ego and attempting to align ourselves with divine providence.

THE BIBLE AND SUFFERING

Swedenborg saw the Bible as more than a history of the Jewish nation or a collection of morality tales and ancient laws; he saw it as a detailed metaphor for the human condition. Each story — in fact, each word — represents something in our spiritual life. This is its divine essence. For example, the Children of Israel's wandering through the desert for 40 years echoes our own periods of crisis when we feel lost and hopeless. Their enslavement in Egypt parallels our own addiction to worldly knowledge and delights. These deeper revelations are especially enlightening when the stories seem morally ambiguous or even self-contradictory.

While this gave me a welcome new perspective on Scripture, it was Swedenborg's explanation of suffering that I found most useful. According to Swedenborg, God permits evil only to preserve our spiritual freedom, since good which is not freely chosen is not good at all. He never wills the resulting suffering, but constantly turns it into opportunities for growth and transcendence. (I have seen patients transform their lives after a serious illness.) God, while thoughtful of our natural health and happiness, has our spiritual well-being as an even higher priority. Our struggles and afflictions in the material world are ways of reminding us of our true nature, which is pure spirit.

BRINGING SWEDENBORG INTO SURGERY

In my practice I have struggled to provide holistic healing. For example, helping a transplant recipient deal with the emotional crisis of a rejecting heart is often more of a challenge than the surgery itself. Nothing in science can address the hopelessness we feel when our hearts fail us completely, or give us comfort when we face the possibility of our own death or the loss of a loved one. As a physician, I seek to connect with my patients on both the physical and spiritual levels, since true healing is never about curing just the body. Although I rarely mention him by name, Swedenborg has made this easier for me. S&H

Mehmet Oz, M.D., is professor and vice chair of surgery at Columbia University. (See more on page 8.) Lisa Oz is a producer, book author, and screenwriter.

Rev. Jonathan S. Rose, Ph.D., is a Swedenborgian minister and author of works about and translator of works by Swedenborg.



Is your "sacred scent" made of sawdust, perfume, and toxic glue?

Raw Incense

By Kerry Hughes

Incense is part of worship, prayer, and healing. Its use was described in Vedic literature dated at 5000 B.C.E. and on Egyptian tablets from 1500 B.C.E. By the eighteenth century, natural incense was being supplemented with artificial fragrances developed by the perfume industry. Today, incense has become so popular that in many parts of the world it no longer retains any natural substances but instead has become a synthetic imitation full of potentially unhealthy substances, such as synthetic glues, saltpeter, fragrances, ground-up sawdust (from non-incense trees), and more. Unfortunately, synthetic incense generally is not identified as such. One clue is vendors who claim to "dip it" themselves. Another is the type of incense you buy — there is no "banana" incense that is natural!

NATURAL IS BETTER

Incense is material that, when burned, imparts an odor, usually fragrant. Raw incense is usually fresh or dried plant parts that are used for smoldering — resins, dried leaves, bark, roots, wood, etc. Some incense even contains minerals, feathers, shells, or other natural materials. Raw incense contains the essence of the plant it came from, as well as its folklore and beauty. Some examples of real raw incense include:

Copal

- Black, golden, and white.
- Gentle and warming, with a balsamic quality; white copal has a much lighter, brighter, fruity scent.
- Latin American indigenous traditions believe that golden copal opens the soul; white cleanses and enhances mental states; black connects us to the dead.

Frankincense

- Clear, yellowish resin that has a beadlike nature.
- Dense, bright, almost lemony scent, masculine.
- Catholics use it for sending prayers to heaven.

Myrrh

- Brownish resin.
- Earthy, almost pinelike scent.
- Arabic cultures use it to support the feminine side; often associated with death and immortality.


Copal


Frankincense


Myrrh


White Sage

White Sage

- Leaves tied in a bundle are used as a "smudge stick" or are used separately, one leaf at a time.
- Strong, pungent sagebrush scent, slightly sweet.
- Native American traditions say it chases away bad spirits; it is used to clear or purify the air or objects.

HOW YOU CAN USE INCENSE

Incense can be enjoyed in stick or cone form, but it's important to find natural, high-quality incense — be prepared to pay more for this. You also can use it raw.

For raw sage, just light it and let it smolder. If you are using resins or some other dried materials, you'll need to burn them on top of charcoal or some other hot surface, such as a hot rock from a campfire.

You can buy or make an "incense stove," which will release the fragrance of resins and woods without smoke. (See organo-leptic.com for how-to tips.)

Simply enjoy the scent or atmosphere that incense imparts, or use it to enhance your religious or spiritual experience. Or, instead of trying to figure out the role incense plays in your life or spiritual practice, try sitting down and burning some good quality incense resin, and let its presence grow in your heart. S&H

Kerry Hughes, M.Sc., is the author of *The Incense Bible* (Haworth Press, April 2007). She is an ethnobotanist and the founder of organo-leptic.com. For more information, see page 8.

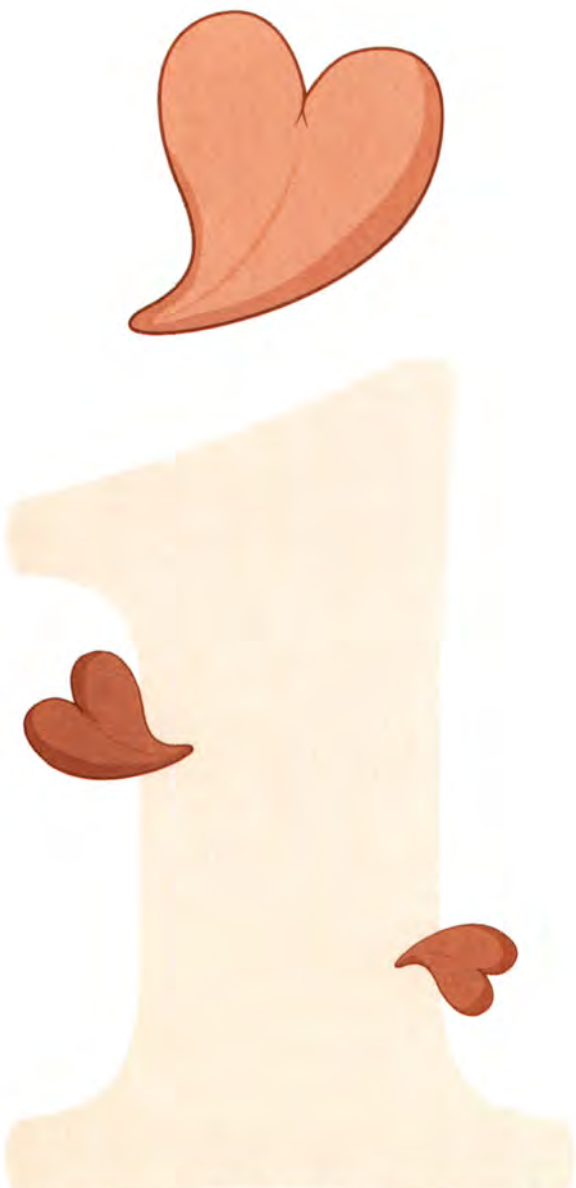
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HOW I FELL IN LOVE WITH FAT

WHAT I BEHELD WAS A RARE VISION OF BEAUTY: A GLORIOUS, SHAPELY YELLOW FLEECE ... SOMETHING ELEMENTAL, AN ESSENTIAL ASPECT OF OUR BODILY LIFE PREVIOUSLY UNDER-APPRECIATED

By Gil Hedley, Ph.D.



know we live in a fat-obsessed culture. We all know it. Hollywood and the fashion industry are emaciated. Tabloids portray weight gain as the mark of fallen stardom and the ultimate disgrace of our female show biz icons, who then rise again through heroic dieting victories to become the poster children for weight-loss franchises. Phrases such as "low fat," "no fat," "fat-free," and "zero calories" are associated with virtuous eating and moral goodness, while Americans, per capita, are slugging down gallons of diet soft drinks and pounds of hydrogenated-fat-laden processed foods. We are a nation standing in front of a funhouse mirror, but nobody's laughing. Our body images are so distorted that some sort of meaningful, transformative intervention is in order.

Illustration by Richard Wilkinson

So what qualifies a skinny middle-aged guy to speak for the rehabilitation of our relationship with fat? Hard-won experience. I am someone who, through great personal effort, went from "fat-phobic" to "fat-philic" — first I feared it; now I appreciate it. Though my Ph.D. is in theological ethics, I have spent the last dozen or so years teaching human anatomy workshops in cadaver laboratories across the U.S. and abroad. When I began studying human anatomy in the dissection laboratory, I had an inkling that there might be greater merit to the fatty layer of fascia just beneath our skin than was commonly attributed to it. That's because in addition to my academic studies, I also was certified in massage therapy and Rolfing®. Rolfers have a keen interest in the body's amazing layers of connective tissue, which wrap, relate, and interpenetrate all of the other tissues of our human form. I followed that interest straight into the dissection laboratory so I could see for myself what I was feeling in my body and in the bodies of my clients.

SEEING THE LAYERS

When medical students dissect during their first year of schooling, scant attention is devoted to understanding the inherent complexity of superficial fascia, the first loose connective tissue just beneath the skin, commonly known as the adipose . . . or fat. Students are instructed to find various nerves, vessels, and muscles by dissecting their cadavers region by region. This is a bit of a treasure hunt because fatty deposition is always present between skin and the deep fibrous fascia surrounding the muscle tissue. So students must repeatedly remove sections of these superficial tissues from each area of the body, but they never actually see the adipose layer altogether. Time is at a premium and this tissue obscures what they are required to know for their exams. The students may actually get a bit impatient and even annoyed with the adipose after a while. Med students, like most of us, are pre-conditioned with all sorts of judgments about fat, and there it is, again and again, blocking their progress to the muscles, nerves, and blood vessels. And the curriculum places no demand upon them to understand it comprehensively.

When I first encountered the fat-bearing superficial fascia of the cadaver, I found it rather disturbing. It turns out that's because *I* was disturbing it! Although I knew from my bodywork trainings that this structure beneath our skin was an integral fabric, continuous from head to toe, I followed the standard manuals and dissected it region by region, just like the medical students. Lacking any finesse with my hands or scalpel, I obliterated the delicate structuring web of connective tissue in which those golden lipid cells are suspended. You can no more understand the fat layer by dissecting it this way than you can understand the nature of butterflies by ripping them to pieces. The parts will never, ever convey a sense of the whole. It was so profoundly disturbing to me to break up the adipose layer this way that I had nightmares, and the prospect of returning to the lab filled me with deep dread.

WHO'S ON THE TABLE?

When you go into the human form, it's as if you're standing before the whole universe, and it's a mirror that reflects your own whole self as you've never before seen it. As you delve into a human body, you find not only what was in that person's form but what lives within your own form. It's a chance to drop down through the layers, to see each and every vibration of your own self. Some of it you'll love, and some of it you'll hate, but hopefully, you will begin to develop a more mature relationship with your whole self. This isn't always your intention, as a medical student or a surgeon, when you do whole body dissection. Nevertheless, it's what happens — it can't help but happen, because it's you there on the table. It's an experience of being touched — every time you touch, you are touched.

I had an inkling that there might be greater merit to the fatty layer of fascia just beneath our skin than was commonly attributed to it.

I came to believe that the regional dissection method sometimes does more to hide than to reveal the integral nature of who we all are, so when I began to teach, I tossed aside my dissection manuals with their regional approaches and their quest for discrete "parts." In order to give my students an experience of an integrated body — the whole body — I decided that we would dissect the whole body simultaneously, one layer at a time.

What we beheld was a rare vision of beauty: the entire superficial fascia of the human form as a unity — a glorious, shapely yellow fleece. It was obvious that we were looking at something elemental, an essential aspect of our bodily life previously underappreciated and overlooked. My own "fat obsession" took on an entirely new character: What were the powers and importance of this tissue? I became obsessed with knowing the answers.

APPRECIATION LEADS TO ACCEPTANCE

I couldn't find a picture in any anatomy book that portrayed what we were looking at, yet the adipose layer is one of the most basic shaping elements of every human body, and particularly of a woman's body. We had such a different experience of this rare vision because we wanted to look at the adipose and observe its integrity. We chose to stay with the layer. We wanted to appreciate it, rather than get past something normally considered onerous, and we committed the time and energy to do so. Appreciation is a prerequisite for acceptance and real understanding. When we judge and compartmentalize instead of looking for what there is to appreciate in something or someone, neither acceptance nor meaningful change of outlook are likely to follow.

My change of outlook did not happen instantly, and it is a result of one thing: My fascination and drive to understand has always just outpaced my fears and dread. It took years of handling and exploring the tissue in all of its fascinating variability and complexity to come to the place of respect and appreciation I hold for it now. It took repeatedly facing and releasing layer upon layer of my own judgments and discomfort to find relief from my cultural predispositions and distorted emotions regarding adipose.

I now believe that the layer of fat just beneath the skin is not some sort of inert baggage dragged about by the "living" part of our body. It's alive, too, just like the rest of us! It's not a demon to be driven out; it belongs there. The fat layer is a form of human expression, and it has a lot to say. So just as the hand cannot say to the foot, "I don't need you," likewise the head cannot say to the fat, "Be gone!"

THE ENERGY OF ADIPOSE

The specific vibrational quality of each layer of the body — whether adipose or skin, muscle or bone — contributes essentially to the harmony comprising an integrated, embodied person. In the same way that your eyes and ears and nose interpret particular frequencies of vibration, the varying composition of your skin, adipose, deep fascia, muscle, membranes, organs, bones, and nerves both emit and absorb frequencies in a manner characteristic of their particular structure.

I have had the privilege of observing many groups of professionals working intently to dissect a given layer. When they do, there is a distinct quality to the experience generated by the different tissues. Before I had much consciousness of the powerful charge carried by the adipose layer, we would remove it mainly by hand. The sometimes loose interface between the superficial and deep fascia allows for this type of blunt dissection, but it's at the cost of invariably breaking it up. So after observing and appreciating the continuity and integrity of the adipose over the whole body, we would basically tear it apart to reveal the deep fascia beneath. Opening Pandora's box should be preferred to this technique!

When the tearing of the adipose began, some in the group

(continued on page 75)

A PARABLE OF FAT'S CREATION

nd creating them in Her own image and likeness, Goddess says, "Let there be fat." And there is fat, to envelope and warm the whole bodies of the man and the woman. To both of them are given this great gift, in different measure, according to their particular perfections. To the woman, in greater measure is fat given. A mantel of sensitivity and sensuality Goddess grants her in this luminous fleece beneath her skin. The lines of her form are thus distinguished from the man's, augmenting her breasts and hips and belly and bottom, rooting her thighs like trunks to earth's molten core, rich stores of yellow sap just below her surface. This soft layer deep to her skin gives shape to the woman's power, for here she stores her resource, here she draws to herself her love in sensual embraces, here she comforts and feeds her children, nuzzling swirls of pillowed mounds and fountains of nourishment for body and spirit. Here she finely attunes her perception of everything and everyone around her — the movement of the animals, the sounds of the night, the order of the stars, sun and moon, the cycling of the seasons, and the echo of every beating heart, rippling subtle waves of feeling through the delicate, wise web of listening flesh. Here she embeds the wisdom of "Her will be done" with all that she senses and knows. Adorned with her bright yellow dream coat, the woman dances; her form flies, undulates, and rolls, mapping stories in space, stirring the hearts and minds and bodies of all who dare move with every morsel of her now.

—G. H.

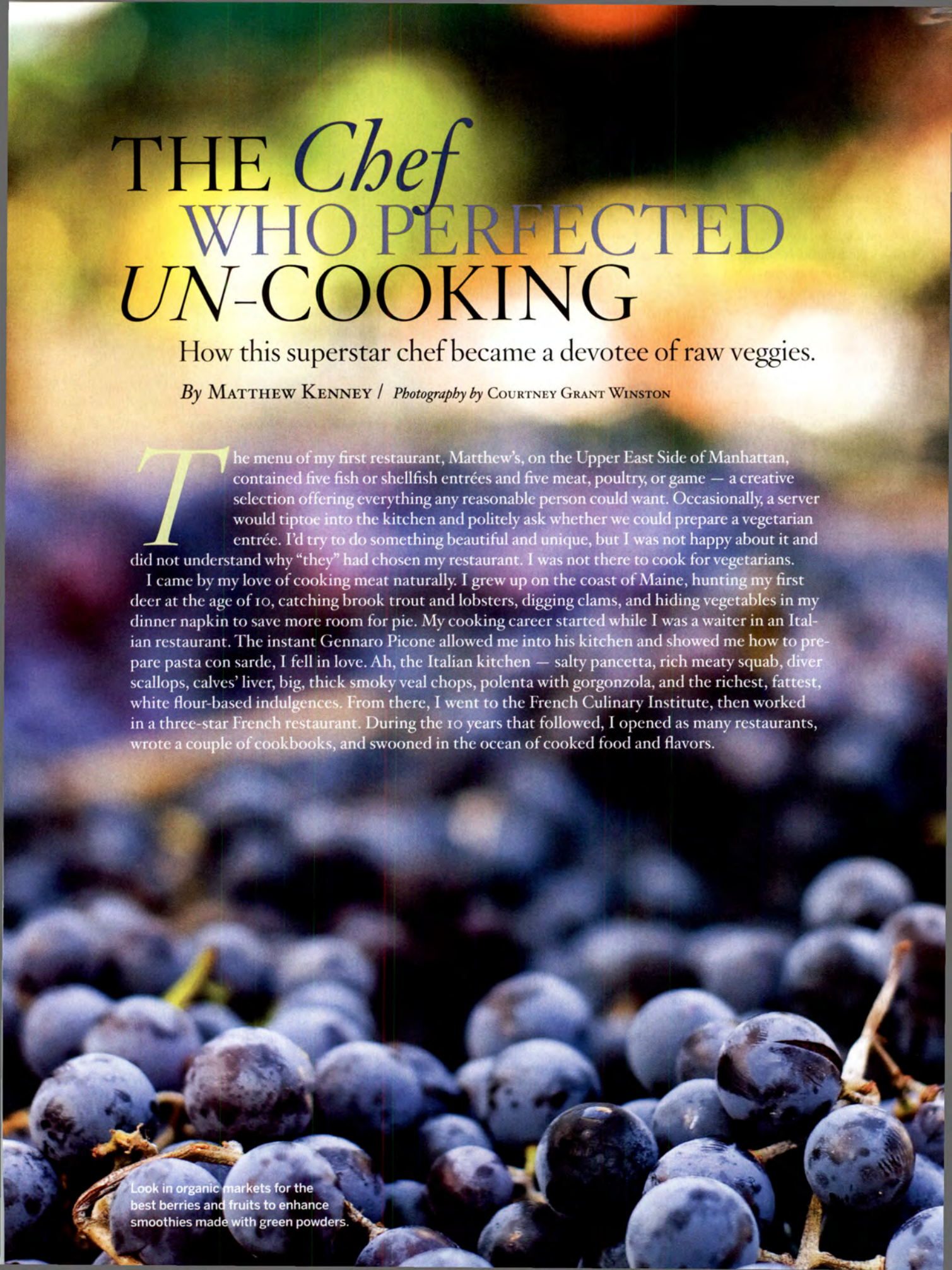
THE *Chef* WHO PERFECTED *UN*-COOKING

How this superstar chef became a devotee of raw veggies.

By MATTHEW KENNEY / *Photography by* COURTNEY GRANT WINSTON

The menu of my first restaurant, Matthew's, on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, contained five fish or shellfish entrées and five meat, poultry, or game — a creative selection offering everything any reasonable person could want. Occasionally, a server would tiptoe into the kitchen and politely ask whether we could prepare a vegetarian entrée. I'd try to do something beautiful and unique, but I was not happy about it and did not understand why "they" had chosen my restaurant. I was not there to cook for vegetarians.

I came by my love of cooking meat naturally. I grew up on the coast of Maine, hunting my first deer at the age of 10, catching brook trout and lobsters, digging clams, and hiding vegetables in my dinner napkin to save more room for pie. My cooking career started while I was a waiter in an Italian restaurant. The instant Gennaro Picone allowed me into his kitchen and showed me how to prepare pasta con sarde, I fell in love. Ah, the Italian kitchen — salty pancetta, rich meaty squab, diver scallops, calves' liver, big, thick smoky veal chops, polenta with gorgonzola, and the richest, fattest, white flour-based indulgences. From there, I went to the French Culinary Institute, then worked in a three-star French restaurant. During the 10 years that followed, I opened as many restaurants, wrote a couple of cookbooks, and swooned in the ocean of cooked food and flavors.



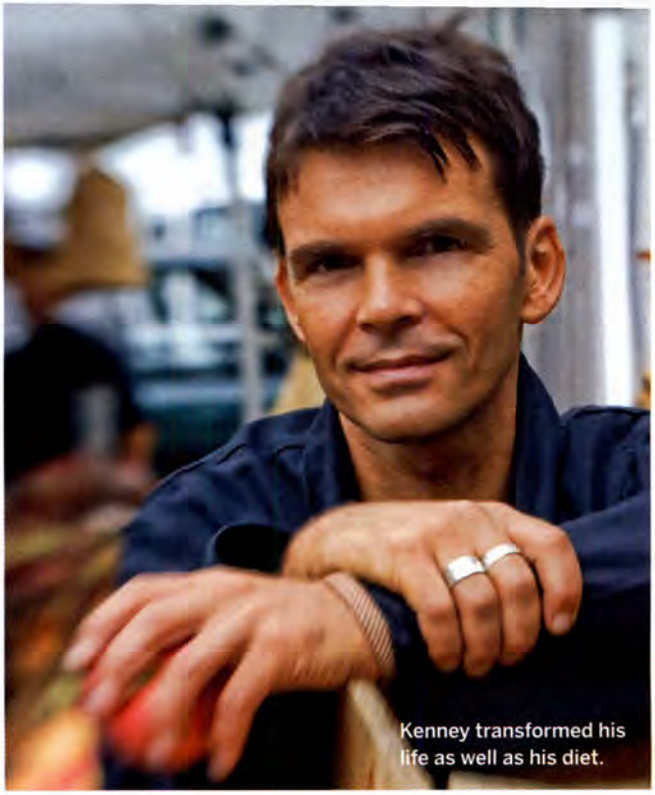
Look in organic markets for the best berries and fruits to enhance smoothies made with green powders.



But after September 11, 2001 everything changed. My restaurant company collapsed, leaving me and my 600 employees out of work. My body was worn and torn. My hips hurt when I went running. I had shoulder pain from an old rugby injury, and troubled digestion and sleep. The only thing I could do was yoga; I worked daily to get my mind and body back into good condition, to get my life back in order.

One night during this period, a close friend invited me to a raw food restaurant that served vegan fare that had not been heated above 118 degrees. That is the temperature, he told me, at which essential enzymes in the food are destroyed. Well, the food was pretty tasty, and I left full of energy and enthusiasm, rather than tired as I usually am after eating out. I went home that night and spent hours researching the raw-food lifestyle. I slept well and woke feeling clear and light. Over the next several months, as I changed over to an all raw food diet, I began to feel better than I had in a decade, perhaps in my life — like a new person. I sensed my opportunity as a well-trained chef to apply advanced culinary flair to this newly discovered world of health, and it wasn't long before my partner and I opened an upscale raw food restaurant.

Fast-forward five years, and I'm still preparing food that is preparing me for a long, healthy life. I truly believe that innovative, flavorful, raw food is the most satisfying way to eat, above all other forms of gourmet dining. And I am passionately attached to the creative challenge of preparing food without fire, resulting in food that is more vibrant and flavorful because its essential live character has been left intact. Raw food is a miracle — creating a sensitivity to others and an environment that is hard to explain. You become more aware of the sources of your food, how those sources affect our ecology, and the sustainability of every product that you allow into your life. Don't take it on faith. Don't take it from me. Try it for yourself!



Kenney transformed his life as well as his diet.

10 TIPS *for* EATING RAW

1 | *Start with shopping.* The best way to start eating raw is to visit local farmer's markets in season whenever possible. The abundance of produce — sweet-smelling fruits, glowing heirloom tomatoes, and vibrant greens, none of which have seen the inside of a refrigerator — is better than the best gourmet shop. Let taste be your guide.

2 | *Stock up on condiments.* Keep a variety of them in your kitchen, including raw cashews and macadamia nuts, almond and hazelnut butters, dried sweet dates and seaweeds, and nut and olive oils. It makes it much easier to "dress up" simple raw dishes and enhance the appeal of salads and raw nori rolls.

Raw for 30 Days DOCUMENTS CURE FOR DIABETES

Here's the antidote to the extreme bloating and depression depicted in the movie *Super Size Me*. Called *Raw for 30 Days*, this upcoming documentary follows a daring experiment by detox specialists Gabriel Cousens, M.D., and Helen Ross, M.D., to cure six average-weight to morbidly obese McDonald's-munching people of different races, aged early twenties to late sixties, with Type I (widely considered incurable) and Type II diabetes. The six were challenged to give up just about everything they held dear: meat, dairy, sugar, alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, soda, junk food, fast food, processed food, packaged food, and even cooked food. For 30 days they were cloistered at the Tree of Life Rejuvenation Center (treeoflife.nu) in Patagonia, Arizona, where they ate only vegan, organic, live, raw foods. All six found it tough going and one dropped out, but the results of this diet were stunning:

By the fourth day, three people with Type II and one with Type I diabetes were off their insulin completely. By the end of the 30-day retreat, these four had stabilized blood sugar and had effectively cured their diabetes, and the remaining Type I patient was down to one-fifth of his usual dosage of insulin.

"It's not just diabetes," says Dr. Cousens. "Everything went back to normal." People rediscovered their happiness.

Cousens, who has supervised the reversal of diabetes in dozens of patients, is working on a book about his findings, but you can learn more about his program from a new DVD called *Raw for Life* available through rawfor30days.com — where you can also see an eight-minute trailer of the full-length feature, *Raw for 30 Days*, which will begin touring film festivals in a few months.

You can also attend free tele-conferences with Dr. Cousens and other natural health experts at RawSummit.com.

BETSY ROBINSON

3 | *Get the right equipment.* You'll need a powerful blender and food processor, sharp knives, and, if you really want to get advanced, a dehydrator, which costs about the same as a high-quality sauté pan.

4 | *Perfect your own smoothie.* Simple variations can be made from unpasteurized fruit juices (make them yourself if you can). Mix with other fruits and natural sweeteners such as agave nectar or honey. My favorite is a rich blend made from banana, cacao powder, agave nectar, raw almond butter, and either water or coconut water. Use common sense when measuring. It's incredibly decadent, delicious, and nourishing, and easy on the digestive system. This shake will power you for hours.

5 | *Build up to greens.* Green juices can be challenging to prepare at home, so it may be easier to prepare green smoothies, fruit- and berry-based smoothies enhanced with green powders. You can mix fruit with fresh collard greens, kale, or swiss chard, and put it in the blender. I also sometimes add soy or nut milks to my smoothies rather than fruit juice.

6 | *Practice some of the world's simplest recipes.* Take gazpacho, for example. Blend vegetables, including tomato, cucumber, a bit of fresh red chili, sea salt, citrus or vinegar, and perhaps a garnish of diced avocado, and you're done. A meal in five minutes. Use gazpacho as a jumping-off point for other raw soups.

7 | *Indulge in fats!* Raw fats are actually great for us on many levels. For a delicious and nutritious meal, try a small salad and a bowl of home-made guacamole with raw chips, which are now appearing in major organic markets everywhere.

8 | *Have an all-raw day.* The results of that single day — which may consist of a green smoothie for breakfast, a big salad or a homemade nori roll for lunch, and maybe a raw lasagna for dinner, with fruit and nut snacks during the day — will amaze you. I can only describe it as a life-altering experience.

9 | *The proof of the pudding is in the eating.* For the slightly adventurous cook, a raw food "pudding" takes no more than 15 minutes to make. Blend young Thai coconut meat, agave nectar, sea salt, vanilla, and raw organic cacao powder. The great news is that it is richer and more delicious than any pudding you'll ever try, has no refined sugars, and is actually good for you! All it requires is a really good knife or cleaver to extract the meat from the coconut.

10 | *Not yet convinced?* Eat one whole piece of fruit before every lunch or dinner, for one week. It might be a papaya, a mango, an apple, a peach, or whatever is in season. It's best not to give away the amazing result but I can say this: it will make for another life-altering experience. S&H

Matthew Kenney has been named one of the Ten Best New Chefs in America by *Food and Wine* magazine and received two James Beard nominations for Rising Star Chef in America. He is the creator of more than a dozen restaurants around the country, a line of gourmet products, and an upscale catering and events service in New York City. He is also the author of several cookbooks, including *Raw Food, Real World.* His next book, an upscale raw food cookbook, *Plant Food,* will be published in 2008.

PUMPKIN PIE WITH THYME

Your family and friends need never know that this "pumpkin" pie is actually made with cashews, maple syrup, and carrot juice. It's from my upcoming book, *Everyday Raw,* and I think it's my favorite of all of our pies. Your Thanksgiving guests will be completely amazed. The filling is also great on its own, as a cold pudding or flan.

FOR THE CRUST

2 1/4 cup pecans
2 tablespoons maple syrup
1 tablespoon coconut oil
1 tablespoon date paste
1/4 teaspoon sea salt

(1) Optional: soak pecans overnight and dehydrate at 118 degrees for 24 hours. (2) Place pecans in food processor, pulse into small crumbs. (3) Mix all ingredients together by hand. (4) Press into plastic-lined 9-inch tart pan to desired thickness. (5) Dehydrate for 48 hours. (6) Chill crust in freezer for 15-30 minutes before filling. (7) If not using all the crust, store extra in the freezer.

FOR THE FILLING

1/2 cup cashews, soaked
1/4 cup maple syrup
1/4 cup agave nectar
1/2 cup coconut oil
1/2 cup + 2 tablespoons carrot juice
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 vanilla bean, scraped
1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 1/2 teaspoons nutmeg
1/2 tablespoon fresh thyme, chopped

(1) Blend all ingredients, except thyme, in Vitamix until very smooth. (2) Stir in thyme. (3) Fill candied tart crust and chill in freezer overnight. (4) Remove pie from metal tart shells, cut into 12 even slices, and enjoy. (5) Extra slices should be wrapped in plastic wrap and stored in freezer.



PIE: MIHA MATEI FROM EVERYDAY RAW, GIBBS SMITH, PUBLISHER © 2008



NAKED

HOW I GOT OVER THAT NIGHTMARE OF BEING NUDE IN PUBLIC

By Mimi Gray

Photograph by Trevor Dixon

Two years ago, I was celebrating 17 years in a very happy marriage. After a lousy first go-round, I got one of the truly good men — kind, funny, handsome, smart, and an exceptional father. Great marriage, excellent health, good work, wonderful sons, compassionate friends — in short, hugs, laughter, and happiness. We knew we had great lives, and we were grateful.

Then on a sunny, warm Saturday, my husband dropped a bomb on me. No, it wasn't another woman or a secret addiction. But to me, it was almost as bad.

My husband told me that at heart he was a naturist. Not a swinger, not a voyeur, not a sex addict — a naturist (a person who is sometimes called a nudist), a person who prefers to be unclothed in certain mixed social situations where others are also unclothed. This would give him, he said, a chance to be without clothes and not feel like a freak or risk being arrested.

He pointed out that he is not alone: naturism is on the rise in the U.S., perhaps as a counter to stress, or because it is one of the various European practices that are taking hold in this country.

He told me that a well-run naturist resort allows people to remain clothed until they get acclimatized or decide to leave. (Resorts expect people to be nude in swimming pools and saunas.)

He said I didn't need to feel funny about keeping my clothes on. But would I please accompany him to resorts now and then where he could undress? As he spoke, my heart began to hammer and my mind traveled to an old, dusty corner of my psyche. All I heard was the

(continued on page 77)

By Judith Fein

Seeking Ceremonies on the Road

I was on the island of Yap in Micronesia, and you'll probably think my request of locals was bizarre: "Do you know of anyone who just had a baby, is getting married, or has died?" They shook their heads.

Later, however, the manager of my hotel knocked on my door. "There is a funeral ship going to the island of Mogmog," she said, "and you're on it."

I went for a "cruise," so dangerous it could have become a funeral ship for the passengers. But when I arrived on the remote island, I not only got a lesson in how to deal with dying, but I scored an assignment to write about it.

Whenever I travel, I inquire about pivotal life ceremonies, because it seems to me that this is where real life happens. I seek out family celebrations and religious observances. Suddenly, I find myself interacting with people in a context that is meaningful and authentic. I am no longer a tourist and I am grateful.

How do I find these events? By being curious. In Cyprus, inside the church that houses the skull of Lazarus, I stood next to a Cypriot who was as much in awe as I that she could touch the saint's cranium. She mentioned that she was going to a family picnic in the mountains. "What will it be like?" I asked. She told me about the special barbecue on long skewers that is prepared on Sundays. I listened intently and asked questions. Finally, she inquired, "Would you like to come along?" Hours later, I was embracing the family members, toasting someone, and grinning.

In Israel, an Orthodox Jewish man told me he was going to the tomb of an ancient rabbi to celebrate Lag B'Omer. "Why do you go to a tomb to celebrate?" I asked. He told me that this was the rabbi who had brought the light of Kabbalah into the world. There would be bonfires to honor that light, as well as wild and joyous dancing, and he asked if I would like to attend. That night, instead of going to a restaurant, I was among 100,000 black-hatted celebrants. I was offered wine, as part of a fertility ritual.

In Chihuahua, Mexico, a lowrider full of teens drove by. I called out that I live in New Mexico — lowrider heaven. They said they had come from parts of Mexico for a family wedding. "How are weddings celebrated here?" I asked. They described the formal entry of the bride and groom and the choreographed dances. The next thing I knew, they'd invited me to the wedding, and I was dancing with the groom's father, who introduced me to every relative.

In Guatemala, on the grounds of a Maya ruin, after the tourists left, I walked way to the back and saw an elderly Maya woman performing a ritual with alcohol, tobacco, candles, and other items. Nearby, seated on a large stone, a young mother with two children was watching. I approached her and asked if was okay for me to be there. She said yes. I inquired if it was impolite for me to ask questions. No, she answered. So I asked, and she told me about the prayer ritual I was watching. I sat on the stone next to her as she talked me through the ceremony. I felt as though I was in Maya kindergarten with a willing teacher and guide into the sacred.

In much of the world an invitation list is as big as the heart of the person who does the inviting, and foreign guests are considered an added blessing. None of these events will be found in guidebooks, but your inner guidebook will tell you what to look for and when something unexpected and important is going on. If you are lucky, your authentic, interested, engaged presence will encourage others to include you in their lives. S&H

Judith Fein is a journalist, speaker, and filmmaker who has contributed to more than 60 publications.

Join Us in May for Spirituality & Creativity in Turkey

This once-in-a-lifetime trip with travel editor Judith Fein and photographer Paul Ross will take you to sensuous and romantic Istanbul, legendary Troy, the Byzantine caves, and churches in the lunar landscape of Cappadocia, Ephesus, the white cliffs of Pammukale, Konya, and the tomb of Rumi. Accompanied by local Turkish guides and experts, you will shop and cook with a Sufi chef, experience the whirling dervishes, do calligraphy, be introduced to the Allawi religion, meet with the Rabbi of Istanbul, sip chai with locals, learn about Turkish carpets, sail on the Bosphorus, savor classic Turkish cuisine, and much more.

DATES: May 13–26, 2008. For more information, go to SpiritualityHealth.com/workshops.



PAUL ROSS











1/ A body is returned to the island of Mogmog, Micronesia, amid ceremony. **2/** Ritually mourning women sit by a coffin in an all-night ceremony aboard the "Micronesian Spirit." **3/** Maya men permitted a photograph of a sacred cemetery ritual. **4/** The church of St. Lazarus where the saint's skull is on display and touchable. **5/** A long *kebab* is part of a family ritual in Cyprus.

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The Holmes Brothers: State of Grace

Nestor Torres: Dances, Prayers & Meditations for Peace

All reviews can be found at SpiritualityHealth.com

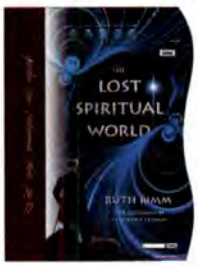
Reviews
Books & Music

Gift Books

By Frederic & Mary Ann Brussat

The Lost Spiritual World: Mark

By Ruth Rimm
The Global Renaissance Society, 2007, $33.95



This unusual book combines the Jesus Seminar's 1992 Scholars Version of the Gospel of Mark with a *midrash* (commentary) that celebrates all the wisdom traditions and an innovative text with bold and colorful designs. The result is a pathway to spiritual enlightenment that is in sync with our scientific, postmodern world.

The imaginative person behind this daring interfaith work is Ruth Rimm, who by day teaches at an inner-city school in the Bronx and by night is hard at work on further volumes in the *Lost Spiritual World* series, designed "to foster an environment of peace, love, empathy, forgiveness, tolerance, pluralism, inclusivity, and reconciliation through beautiful artwork, inspiring commentary, and fresh translations of the Scriptures of our great wisdom traditions."

We knew we were on the same wavelength as Rimm when she used the metaphor of the spiritual journey as a scuba dive — one of our favorite quotations from Ramakrishna is "Dive deeper." We nodded when she quoted Thich Nhat Hanh: "We human beings can be nourished by the best values of many traditions." Rimm interweaves these quotations — and many more — in and around the Gospel of Mark, in which Jesus evokes ecstasy and wonder in others, demonstrates the healing power of touch, sleeps at sea on a boat tossed by waves, acknowledges an important place for women in his life, tolerates the intolerant, practices love and humility, and demonstrates a close connection and communion with God.

Rimm points out the many constrictions of a judgmental, literalistic, dogmatic, and harsh religion that is down on the world, science, and sex. She discovers good in all religions and refuses to accept one as superior. No wonder Rimm commends the writer Raimon Panikkar, who had a Catholic mother and a Hindu father, and who studied first in America and then in India. He says: "I left as a Christian, found myself a Hindu, and returned as a Buddhist, without having ceased to be a Christian." That is a fine and commendable example of a new global spirituality that is at the heart and soul of *The Lost Spiritual World: Mark*.

The Prayer Chest

A Novel

By August Gold and Joel Fotinos
Doubleday, 2007, $15.95



August Gold, an ordained interfaith minister and cofounder and senior minister of Sacred Center New York, and Joel Fotinos, a vice president of Penguin Group (USA) Inc. and publisher of the Tarcher imprint, are the authors of this spiritual adventure story about the power of prayer and the pluck it takes to surrender to God and welcome all that comes our way.

Joseph Hutchinson is a farmer who carries a heavy load of sorrows. He has found a place in the attic of his home that is a sacred center for him and a potent place of prayer. But when tragedy strikes, he plunges into darkness as he tries to provide for his two young children through work that no longer speaks to his soul. Then Joseph finds an old prayer chest that has been hidden away for more than 100

years. It contains messages from a relative, who died in 1780, that reveal the three secrets of prayer.

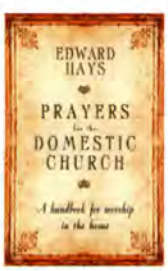
This simple but elegant novel shows how fear and suffering can close us off from the bountiful grace of God. We see in the story of Joseph and his crises that we can deepen and enrich our lives through love and generosity. Best of all, we discover that prayer is answered when we welcome everything. Joseph's destiny is changed by a person he thought was going to destroy his life; instead, he becomes an ally and a soul companion. Another positive message in the story is that our ancestors have wisdom to share with us, if we only take the time to listen.

Prayers for the Domestic Church

A Handbook for Worship in the Home

By Edward Hays

Forest of Peace, 2007, $17.95



Edward Hays, a Catholic priest, artist, and storyteller, was for 20 years the director of a contemplative center. He has a special interest in how the home, whether a two-story house or a single bed in a retirement community, can be a "domestic church" where "father, mother and children, or single parent with children, or unmarried person with friends, or groups of religious come together to celebrate their unique relationships with each other and with God."

His goal in this guidebook, a new edition of his widely used 1989 volume, is to "bring forth from the treasury of tradition the customs, rituals, blessings and prayers that find their real beauty when celebrated in the home and by the persons whose lives are directly and intimately touched by them."

Here is a wonderful collection of blessing prayers for everything from a new possession to automobiles, gardens, pets, and home shrines. There are thanksgiving prayers for a safe return home and upon hearing good news. Prayers of gratitude celebrate the rising sun, the gifts of our senses, work, change, holy foolishness, and more. Other prayers are for reconciliation within the home, for times of sickness, and for times when the shadow of death crosses the home. Hays' "Prayer at the Death of a Pet" has been a source of great comfort to us more than once.

Many holidays and special days are observed in the domestic church. Hays includes blessings for many of them, including birthdays, engagement, advent candles, and even a St. Nicholas' Day "Blessing of Candy Canes."

Other sections offer table liturgies and daily personal prayers. For example, here is a simple ritual to use when making a telephone call to a loved one: "May my words be rich in love and may this call bring peace and joy." Upon completing the call: "Blessed are you who gives to us such gifts that enrich our hearts."

Present Moment Wonderful Moment

52 Inspirational Cards and a Companion Book

By Thich Nhat Hanh

Parallax Press, 2006, $18.95



Here's a wonderful gift item that you can use at home and work. Thich Nhat Hanh is a world-renowned spiritual teacher, poet, peace activist, and Buddhist monk. He teaches the art of attentive living in the present moment. Included in this box are 52 meditation cards, each containing a *gatha*, or mindfulness verse, on a background of a full-color illustration by award-winning artist Nicholas Kirsten-Honshin.

Choose one card at random out of the pack to practice, or go through the deck to find one for a common daily activity to which you want to bring more focused attention. There are gathas for waking up, washing your hands, brushing your teeth, turning on the television, walking, drinking tea, opening the window, cleaning the kitchen, and many other situations.

The companion book, a small version of Thich Nhat Hanh's classic *Present Moment Wonderful Moment*, contains his commentaries on each gatha. These wise words, beautifully presented, will help you deepen the gatha practice as you enjoy every wonderful moment.

The Bible

Genesis, Exodus, The Song of Solomon

Illustrations by Marc Chagall

Chronicle Books, 2007, $19.95



Marc Chagall (1887–1985) was born in Russia and lived in Paris most of his life. His paintings are rich in color and filled with fantastic imagery. Chagall started illustrating the Bible in 1931 and over the next 35 years created more than 100 etchings, lithographs, and paintings that expressed his love of the adventure and the freeing power of biblical stories.

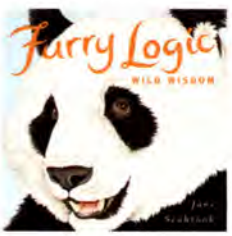
This volume brings together many of Chagall's finest Bible paintings inspired by the Old Testament. Among our favorites are The Creation of Man, Adam and Eve and the Forbidden Fruit, Noah Receives the Order to Build the Ark, The Dove of the Ark, Abraham and the Three Angels, The Sacrifice of Abraham, Jacob's Dream, and Moses Shows the Elders the Tablets of the Law. Chagall's imaginative art is a perfect match for these stories of faith, freedom, and divine grace.

Furry Logic

Wild Wisdom

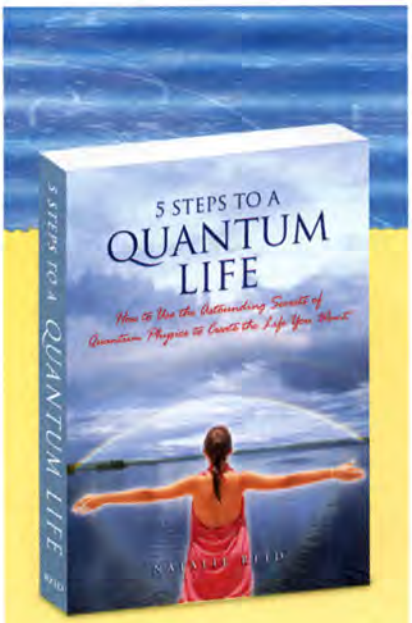
By Jane Seabrook

Ten Speed Press, 2007, $9.95



This delightful and humorous gift book is perfect for any animal lover. Jane Seabrook is a designer and illustrator who lives in Auckland, New Zealand, with her husband and two children. Here are 30 full-color paintings — a chipmunk, a giant panda, a crocodile, a green tree frog, a penguin, a grizzly bear, an eagle, an owl, a zebra, a lemur, a fruit bat, a ladybug, and others. Each creature offers some wild wisdom in the form of a sentence that accompanies the paintings.

A frog holding on to a branch says: "Please don't tell me to relax, it's only the tension that's holding me together." A lemur notes: "Inside every older person



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there's a younger person wondering what happened." And in our very favorite, a meerkat confesses: "There has been an alarming increase in the things I know nothing about."

Fabulous Friendship Festival

Loving Wildly, Learning Deeply, Living Fully with Our Friends

By Sark

Three Rivers Press, 2007, $17.95



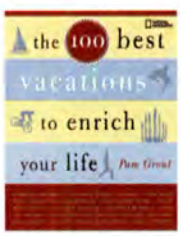
Sark (Susan Ariel Rainbow Kennedy) is the author and artist of 14 books. She is a great advocate of play and creative self-expression — through friendships. In this charming paperback, she uses her unique style — hand-written text surrounded by colored paintings and delightful drawings — to present the ingredients of a "Fabulous Friendship Festival."

The book is divided into sections on celebration, challenges, and integration. Among the many variations of friendship she describes are old friends, instant ones, neighbors, animals, phone friends, email and online buddies, couples, former lovers, siblings, and elders. She suggests resources for nourishing friendships, working with anger and jealousy, and managing time and energy. She adds in friendship blessings, rituals for sending love, birthday blessings, helping each other during sad times, and ending friendships with bravery.

The 100 Best Vacations to Enrich Your Life

By Pam Grout

National Geographic Books, 2007, $19.95



Increasing numbers of individuals are seeking to spend their leisure time in meaningful ways. According to Pam Grout, author of 13 travel and self-help books, the new quest is for life-enhancing vacations that can involve learning a new skill, volunteering to share one's expertise, developing one's intellect, or extending oneself in some creative, physical, or spiritual way.

This easy-to-use guide covers experience-driven trips in the United States, Canada, and Mexico — arts-and-crafts getaways, volunteer vacations, brain retreats, and wellness escapes. Each chapter includes a detailed description of the suggested vacation, some information on how it began, who would like it most, additional suggestions for things to do while you are there, and full contact details for the program. You might build a house for Habitat for Humanity, learn to knit on a sailing cruise, monitor active volcanoes in Hawaii, practice tai chi in a tropical paradise, or care for abandoned pets in Puerto Rico.

Children's Books

Sky Sweeper

By Phillis Gershator

Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2007, $16.00



Children grow up with few models who recognize the spiritual nature of work. That's why this inspiring, beautifully illustrated book by Phillis Gershator is so welcome. It is for children five years and older.

Young Takeboki lives in Japan and works for the monks in the temple. His job is to sweep the springtime plum and cherry blossoms from the garden. Although he enjoys what he does, his family is worried about him and his humble position as a flower sweeper. His older brother wants him to get a better job so he can travel, but Takeboki tells him that the lines he rakes in the sand remind him of the ocean. His sister wants him to find a wife so he won't be lonely, but Takeboki finds all he needs in his sweeping. His neighbors see him as a beggar, but he feels like a rich man when he puts all the golden leaves in piles.

The charming illustrations by Holly Meade vividly convey the joy and contentment Takeboki derives from the repetitive labors of his hands. He puts all of himself into what he does and winds up with a surprise at the end of his life.

Four Feet, Two Sandals

By Karen Lynn Williams and Khadra Mohammed
Eerdmans Books, 2007, $17.00



Workers in a relief truck in a refugee camp in Pakistan throw a pile of clothing on the ground, and people rush forward to grab what they can. Lina, a 10-year-old, retrieves one sandal, and another girl, Feroza, finds its match. The two share the sandals, each wearing them every other day. Lina's father and sister were killed in the war in Afghanistan; Feroza's only living relative is her grandmother. Grief and memories of the past are heavy burdens, and sharing is a gift of God that blesses them both.

This emotionally resonant book salutes the courage and resiliency of refugees around the world, which now number 20 million people. The illustrations by Doug Chayka are perfectly attuned to the spiritual messages of the book, which is recommended for children ages 7 through 10.

My Travels with Clara

By Mary Tavener Holmes
J. Paul Getty Museum, 2007, $17.95



Laurens van der Post wrote about encountering a rhinoceros and being amazed to discover that he found it truly beautiful. In this wonderful children's book for children eight years and older, Mary Tavener Holmes tells the true story of a Dutch sea captain who, in 1791, took a rhinoceros named Clara from India on a tour of Europe. Clara consumed lots of food — and also licked the captain's face each time he finished eating an orange or smoking his pipe. In Germany, Austria, France, and Italy, where most people had never seen a rhinoceros, Clara was a big hit. She inspired clocks, teapots, statues, and even hairstyles shaped like rhino horns. Jean-Baptiste Oudry painted a life-sized portrait of Clara in France. She had many other adventures, living to age 20. This delightful story is enhanced by the charming illustrations of Jon Cannell.

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Music /

By Benjamin Ivry

Kris Kristofferson

This Old Road

New West Records 6088

(newwestrecords.com)



Now 71, the appealingly gruff-voiced pop singer and songwriter Kris Kristofferson has turned his talents to meditating on moral and political issues, especially the celebration of peace. *This Old Road* includes pacifist songs like "In the News" with its reflective lyric: "Not in my name, not on my ground/I want nothing but the ending of the war." With a spare accompaniment, Kristofferson is always plangently expressive and sincere. In "Pilgrim's Progress," he asks essential questions such as "Am I strong enough to get down on my knees and pray?" His warm, deeply humane interrogations express emotional truth with rare candor. Listeners will find that it pertains to their own individual journeys as well.

Holly Near

Show Up

Calico Tracks Music 7

(hollynear.com)



With a zesty, folksy twang, the California-based performer Holly Near sings "This is Peace," a rousing song by Amy Carol Webb which defines peace as "still believing in harmony when your heart forgets its song/ It's still believing in hope when all else fails." Having shared a stage with such socially committed performers as Pete Seeger and Harry Belafonte, Near continues to be a heartfelt performer at peace-themed concerts. On *Show Up*, Near is backed by a celebratory, sometimes raucous world music ensemble. She once stated, "If everyone who believes in peace and equality stepped out into the middle of the street, traffic all over the world would stop. . . . When I see someone in a grocery store with a peace button, it improves my day." This inspiring disc will improve every listener's day.

Ensemble Organum

Le Chant des Templiers (The Templars' Chant)

Ambroisie AM 9997

(distributed in the US by Naxos; bn.com)



The Templars were twelfth-century European knights who fought to defend peace, protecting pilgrims who traveled to sacred sites in the Holy Land. As both prayerful monks and soldiers, they forthrightly intoned such choral hymns as the Latin chant, "Da pacem Domine in diebus nostris" (Give Us Peace in our Time, O Lord), which describes how when the city of Jerusalem will be at peace, splendors shall be revealed to mankind. The music on this stirring CD was sung by Ensemble Organum with rough-hewn verve in a 900-year-old French monastery, which added a sacral resonance. To keep time, singers of medieval music swayed their bodies. This dynamic approach, still adopted by the Ensemble Organum today, sweeps us along with the spiritual message of the doughty pious knights who fought to preserve peace, providing an inspirational stance for all ages.

The Holmes Brothers

State of Grace

Alligator Records 514912

(alligatorrecords.com)



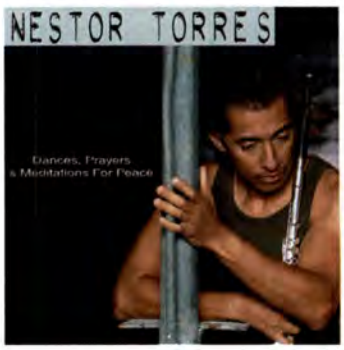
On their new disc the Holmes Brothers, a gritty, bluesy Virginia-born singing group ask, "(What's So Funny 'Bout) Peace, Love, and Understanding?" As boys, the veteran performers Sherman and Wendell Holmes — who are joined by the drummer Popsy Dixon — sang in church choirs. Their exalting style is fervently applied to songs like "Standing In The Need Of Love" and "I've Just Seen the Rock of Ages," reminding us of elemental truths with soulful glee. Their harmonies soar.

Nestor Torres

Dances, Prayers & Meditations for Peace

Heads Up 3111

(headsup.com)



Latin Grammy Award-winning flutist Nestor Torres offers a pensive, spiritually enriched new disc with zesty Latin rhythms. About the composition "Peace with Myself," the flautist explains: "Peace is about confronting one's negativity before anyone else's and from there, to do whatever needs to be done to come to mutual understanding and acceptance." Torres is a pied piper of inner understanding. S&H

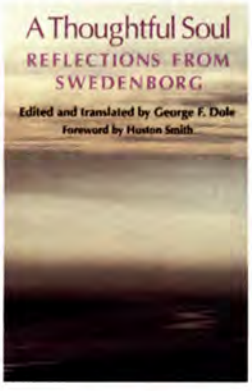
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Whack! Ouch! Yes! You Can Have It All!

A pulsing, throbbing pain is now well established on my right ring finger. A few hours ago, while cutting onions for a picnic, I sliced off part of my fingernail and finger! *Ouch!* But no big deal — I studied the stoics in high school, Zen breathing from Samari, and did Tantra energy work with Margo. Gosh, my stupid little cut shouldn't keep me from finishing my first column for *Spirituality & Health*! But no matter how hard I try to ignore it, concentrate on it, breathe it away, or visualize my pain floating down the river, there it is. That bugger won't leave. It's quite embarrassing. I set out to write using the pain.

Everything Connects — credit cards, time, money, 401(k)s, breath, kids, fun, sadness, work, you, me, friends, investments, houses, stepmoms, paper, pen, blood, and Band-Aids. In this interconnectedness lies success and —

Oh, my God! My finger is screaming because my teacher, Master Dogan, just read those words over my left shoulder and took an iron frying pan and smashed my bloody finger as he boomed, "Paul, no judgment!"

Looking up at his weathered face, I ask, "But why did you need the pan? I have ears! Now I need more Band-Aids, and I'll never get this column done." Dogan smiles at me as I explain how, with this column, I sincerely want to help people with their financial woes — help them to relax and enjoy life.

"Tell them everything connects," says Dogan. "Tell them they trade their time for money; money is merely energy; live modestly; save wisely; don't trust fools. Tell them that they can't go forward until they give up their victimhood, quit judging everything, and lose their ego." Dogan pauses for a breath, and then, *poof*, he's gone, leaving me happy that he showed up to bring me back to the moment's intention.

And my intention with these columns is so simple: I want your connection to the energy of money to bring you peace, harmony, joy, and freedom. I want you to be comfortable in the world of economics and finance while feeling simply powerful because you understand how money interconnects with everything in your life.

Let's get started.

As Dogan taught, study yourself, then forget yourself! Forget everything you have learned about money. Release the idea that money is anything other than your friend. Pull those old money-arrows out of your heart — those arrows are your bad habits, wounds, fear, avoidance, and victimhood. Get rid of them now! Then open yourself to something new: You can do the money-and-wealth thing.

Yes, you can.

"You cannot do the thing if you think you can't do the thing," Gandhi said.

The first spiritual practice to learning that you can do the financial thing is to take responsibility. Right now, take 100 percent responsibility for your lot in life. Accept it, love it, say "Thank you, God" for it, and, with intention, practice the habits to bring you to where you wish to be.

Heavy in debt? Fearful of sickness? Afraid of growing old? Freeze every time you think of investing? Be thankful for all that learning and experience. Do you spend too much each month? Stop it! Do you use your credit cards so much you can't pay them off? Burn them! Do you dread the bills in the mailbox? Are you hopeful about retirement? Patiently set up a plan where you're grateful for your home and the blessing of using the mortgage as a tool to own it.

I know it's not that simple. And, of course, you need to take this Dharma teaching with two bags of salt. But try to use this first column to begin to soften your habitual beliefs about your finances — and more. To that end, I leave you with a few sentences to contemplate by yourself and to argue about with your lover and friends:

- There are no limits.
- Envy, greed, and victimhood are the enemies that make it impossible to get in harmony with money, work, bliss, abundance, freedom, and prosperity.
- "Can't" is a swear word more vile than any slur. You can have it all. All you dream, you can have!
- What do you really want?

Please email me with questions and concerns you would like me to discuss in future columns. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers. Everything connects. I am grateful for Band-Aids.

Paul H. Sutherland can be reached at paul@SpiritualityHealth.com. He is the author of *Zenvesting* and other books on finance, and he serves as president of Financial & Investment Management Group and manager of the Utopia Funds.

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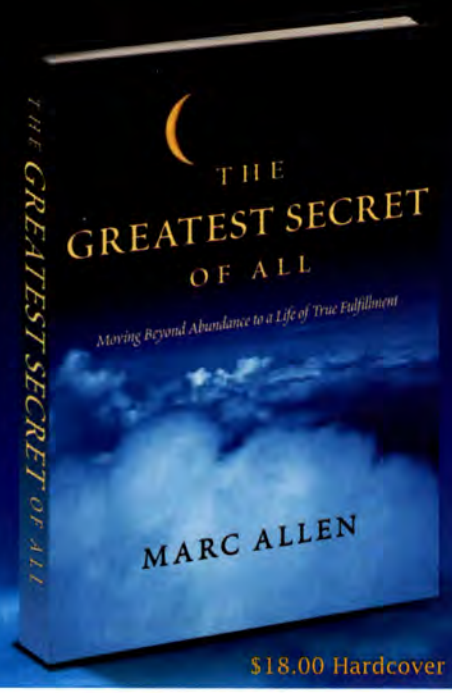
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Margaret Dubay Mikus, Ph.D. was a molecular genetics research scientist. After healing from multiple sclerosis in 1995, she began a poetic journal to "sing from the heart."

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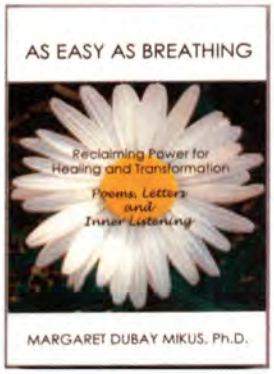
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Nia: Dance Like Nobody's Watching

If you like the idea of dancing like nobody is watching, but can't quite muster the gusto on your own, get thee to a Nia class! I love Nia, mostly because I am not a terribly good dancer. I feel awkward, I wonder what to do, and I often lose the beat. But in a Nia class, I am a groovy dancing queen — and no one can tell me otherwise. My heart soars. My spirit lifts. It's bliss!

My favorite Nia teacher is Kathy Carey, who teaches in Chicago's western suburbs. She's actually more like a Nia conduit than a Nia teacher. At 46, her joy for the dance is infectious, and she radiates it all around the room. You can't not be a good dancer on Kathy's watch. She so loves the dance that she can't help but see it in you. And so you can't help but show her what a groovy dancing queen (or king) you truly are.

So what is Nia? Let Kathy tell you.

Q. Okay, the basics: what is Nia?
A. The joy of movement. Period. That's the first principle of Nia. There are 13, but I never really got past the first one. We already have so many rules and regulations in life, I say let's just stay here, creating joy.

Nia has three elements: the dance arts, the martial arts, and the healing arts. Jazz is playful, ballet is graceful. Tae kwon do is the dance of precision; aikido is the dance of harmony and blending. Yoga connects you to your emotions.

Onlookers have said that Nia looks like organized chaos and organized fun. Everyone has a smile on their face and sweat on their body. It's loosely choreographed, but it's all done with wise choices for your body. You choose the intensity of your dance.



Q. Describe a class. What's first?
A. We start seated in a circle, chatting, creating a safe place to express ourselves. I set a theme. Sometimes it's an emotion, other times it's physical, like articulating hands and feet.

With the first song, you step into the space the way you'd step into a sailboat: you look at the wind and the water; you acquaint yourself with the surroundings before pushing off.

Q. Then the tempo picks up.
A. Right. As the hour progresses, the music goes through various tempos — fast, slow, linear, bold, soft, spiraling. Nia brings you through many, many experiences. How do you dance "small"? How do you show up big and bold? How does it feel to be all coiled up? Loose like a ribbon? How do you dance like you're walking on hot coals?

Some experiences you like, others are edgy — and that's the point. What will you do through all these emotions? At times in a class, we use our voices, saying yes and no. And there are other

DERRYBERRY MANN: DAN MARSHALL; DANCER: PASCAL GENEST

parts that have no cueing, no left, right, forward, or back.

Q. And in the end?
A. We gather again as a Nia community. We've walked in each other's footprints; now we sink back into our circle. This is an important time not to check out, not to be already out the door and in your car, but to connect to what's been revealed to you in the dance.

Q. Your Nia story spans more than 10 years, and you've been hooked since your first class. What happened in that first experience?
A. I had been a college gymnast, but in my first Nia class, I felt this new opening — like my heart just cracked open — because movement was no longer about perfection or about being judged based on your mistakes. This was the first time that I completely connected to my emotions and my body. I cried after that first class.

Q. Along with the tears, there's a lot of joy. You connect, you sweat, you smile. Right?
A. Yes. I love the sometimes silliness of the dance and the sometimes precision of it. I love the creativity. I used to say that everyone is a dancer, but now I say we are all artists. There's a childlike freedom to it. If you watch children play, they don't think about whether something looks silly to the person across the room. It can take a while to get to that place with Nia, to really accept that I can do what I want when I am in this class, when I am dancing this class.

Q. Where does spiritual and emotional sweetness fit in?
A. Nia has this huge acceptance of feeling that I am okay, right now. Think of it as Now I Am. I love that healing aspect. I've seen people make life-changing decisions in class. For me, it's a way to express my prayers without praying. It's like taking off the headset of everyone else's chatter and allowing me to tune in to myself, to open my heart.

Q. As a teacher, what has been your most moving moment in class?
A. Jeanette joined us during the last six months of her life, when she was on chemo. She was such a quiet woman. One day she pulled us in all around her to tell us that she felt like a rock in a river, and our bodies dancing around her were washing over her. She felt for the first time that through her voice and the vibrations from everyone, this hardness from her cancer started to break loose. It turned into gravel, then into sand, and then poured right out of her body. She said she felt a tremendous celebration of life from everyone, and she thanked us. And that was her last dance with us.

Jennifer Derryberry Mann is a Minneapolis-based freelance writer and editor. To find a teacher, to order *The Nia Technique,* and to learn more about Nia, visit NiaNow.com.

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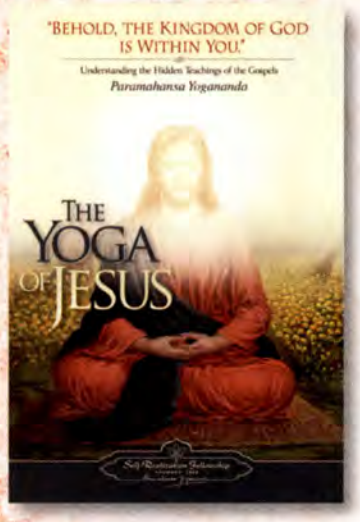
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Adyashanti *(continued from page 45)*

Satsang. Adyashanti addresses the dilemma I've been chewing on. "The truth is you can't know," he says. "Underneath wanting to know is not wanting to suffer. If you know, you won't suffer, you think. The opposite is true: the more you know — I know who I am, I know what is to blame, I know who is right, I know good people or bad people, I know what is going to happen — the more you suffer. You never did know. You just have to love. Walking around knowing nothing — that's love.

"What if you stopped believing all your stories about everything — and everything means everything, everything, everything?" muses Adyashanti. "The mind is uncomfortable giving everything up. It can only deduce that there would be chaos. But only when we see that the mind is making it all up . . . only when we see the ridiculous conflict we perpetrate upon each other because of our stories, only when we stop falling for the same dream that we alone have that truth — that there is a story to end all stories — will something else start to move. It moves and you don't know why or what or where it comes from, but it moves anyway. And just because you let go of your story doesn't mean you do nothing. Our nature is love. Love just loves. It doesn't start loving because there's a problem.

"This is the dilemma we face: we're trying to find what life is by avoiding certain parts of it and clinging to others. Only when you stop clinging will you realize it's all one thing. Call it anything you want."

DAY 4

Silence grows on me. The burden of having to talk, to entertain, to listen, to be conscientious, lifted. Nothing much coming in, nothing going out. Focused and quiet in the big hall, it envelops me. It's inside me and I am inside it, a long, slow, gentle embrace. For the first time, I don't want to move even after we break.

Satsang. Perhaps the greatest obstacle to awakening is the thought that it only happens to yogis or lamas or other "more spiritual" types. Adyashanti, who grew up struggling with dyslexia, came from a typical *Leave it to Beaver* family, and worked in his father's shop as a machinist, says he didn't fall into that trap. He was, as he describes it, "hell-bent" on finding the truth for himself. And so, just over a decade ago, after a series of close calls, Adyashanti had his "awakening."

He was sitting in silence one morning and heard a bird chirping, followed by a voice asking, "Who heard that?" And away he went, absorbed into a different dimension altogether, where his separate self no longer existed, where he was a unique, distinct expression of the One, of existence itself. When he returned from wherever he went, roughly 45 minutes later, everything — and nothing — had changed.

"'I'll be damned!,' I thought. 'That's it?' My first thought after the awakening was, why didn't anyone tell me I don't exist and that there is no self, without all this spiritual mumbo-jumbo. How did I miss the most simple, most obvious thing: consciousness without a story. Of course, my teacher had told me, I just wasn't ready to hear. Awakening can be highly humorous, like understanding the punch line to the greatest joke of your life. The truth is: reality is awake. The truth is



Chan Heart, Chan Art

Written by:
Venerable Master Hsing Yun

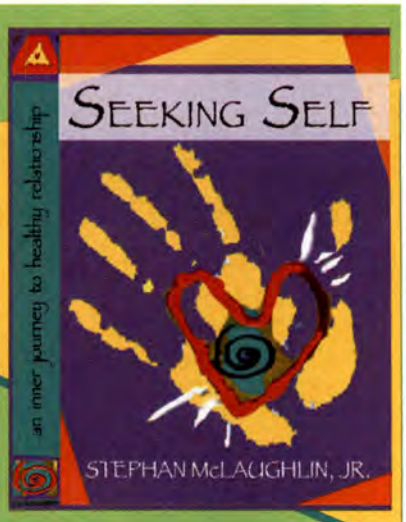
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that you and the greatest avatar that ever touched God's green earth are exactly the same. The only difference is that in one, consciousness has shifted out of its trance, away from its focus on the whole mind–body complex, and into awareness. This awareness is not imagining anything or telling itself anything. It has no self to it, no you, no me, no us, no them. It's very simple — thinking thinks, seeing sees, hearts beat, believing believes, there's no one there to do any of it.

"What's true is letting go, saying yes to your goodness, to yourself as an expression of everything. The fruit will ripen. It just sort of happens when you are ready. There's no such thing as a pear that never drops from the tree."

Some seem ready. Day after day, I watch Adyashanti's students walk up to the microphone and engage him in inquiry. His exchanges with them are sometimes poignant, often dramatic, always humorous. The point of inquiry is to dislodge the thought patterns that stand between people and the simple truth of their being. It's ludicrous, he admits, to use the mind to do an end run around the mind — he likens it two arrows meeting in midair and shattering one another. It's delicate and precise and also improbable. But it happens — people seem to be waking up here, now.

I'm not one of them. But I can say I am finally beginning to understand this bit of poetry by Edgar Allan Poe I've been carrying around in my journals for years: "All that we see or seem is but a dream within a dream." This understanding in no way diminishes the dream. The dream is magnificent.

DAY 5

The retreat ends. A few hours into my drive south from Asilomar, I pull into a gas station to refuel. I get out of my car, stick my credit card into the machine, and pull out the pump. My zip code is needed for verification. I punch in five guesses, all wrong. It spits out my card. I've forgotten not only who I thought I was, but also where I live. A good sign. S&H

Wendy Blackman is the pseudonym of a journalist who wishes to remain anonymous.

Fat *(continued from page 55)*

would become possessed with the mission to see the job through, while others would be reeling from the pace, or need to cry, or even sense pain in their own adipose. After one of these experiences, a distraught student approached me accusingly, saying, "You created this madness by the way you told us to do this!" I replied with what I'd believed until that moment: "The adipose just seems to bring all this out in folks! Breaking it up this way carries an inherent emotional charge, and that charge is different for different people." Obviously dissatisfied with my reply, she left me standing there to ponder her comments.

Over time, the truth that she'd spoken deeply transformed my own! I realized that because the process did, in fact, have this observable impact, I needed to be a hundred times more considerate than I had been. I needed to take a slower, gentler approach with the dissection process for the sake of all involved. Now when I dissect this tissue with a group, we not only observe its integrity while it's on the body, but we also try to demon-

(continued on page 76)



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Fat *(continued from page 75)*

strate that same integrity as it's coming off. If we can, we remove the adipose as the continuous fabric that it is. Rather than provoking a frenzy, the process now fills us with amazement and awe. And there is no aftermath of nightmares. People in the class who are more filled out in their adipose layer gain conviction of the physical beauty inherent in their own form, just as they are. They become better connected to the positive aspects of their particular endowment.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF SENSE ORGAN

The living adipose is basically liquid energy and raw power suspended in a web of piezoelectrically conductive collagen fibers. Through it are transmitted fields of information from our external environment to the depths of our bodies at all times. The adipose layer is replete with specialized smooth muscle cells, whereby the tissue tone is maintained and adjusted. It is as if our soft coating of fat is a living antenna of the most sensitive kind, receiving from without and broadcasting within the waves of information that surround us. Like the skin, it is a great sense organ, a sensual wrap. But I posit that rather than conducting the signals it picks up primarily along electrochemical pathways to the brain in our skull, it is primarily conducting its signals electromagnetically to the brain in our gut. It's fast! When you feel the creepy guy on the subway platform staring at you from behind, you look to confirm what you already perceived with your adiposal antenna and immediately felt in your gut. The thinking brain is relatively late to pick up on what's going on. You turn and look in response to the feeling, not the other way around. Cascades of hormonal release follow.

Likewise, a pregnant woman's adipose layer grows not only as a resource to support and nourish her baby but also to heighten her sensitivity to the baby's coos and cries and to any potential dangers in their environment. She grows her inner pillow to comfort her child and also to resonate more perfectly with her baby's body, the lines of whose form are a delicious portrait of the fat beneath its skin. Babies and mommas feel everything! Left to their own devices, they are incredibly attuned. Their tissues share a common frequency, like two tuning forks of different octaves, momma fat and baby fat, singing lullabies in perfect resonance.

When we diminish fat, we diminish all that. When we place it in the bucket uninspected, when we discard a 30- to 40'-pound organ without a thought as to its potential power and role in our lives, we overlook and miss out on something big! We undercut a feminine aspect and a childlike capacity present in us all. We leave a gift unwrapped. I pray that we all might shine some light on that gift, to more fully witness and embrace our whole selves.

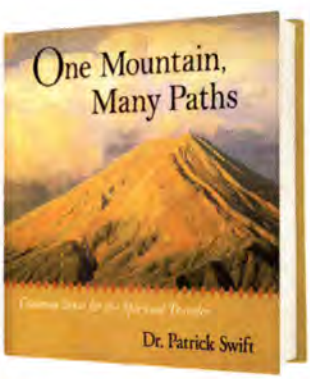
THE FUTURE OF FAT

I do not pretend to know all of the properties and potencies of the adipose layer of the human body; I would like to, though! Short of a lot more research, we are left to rank speculation. The issues that surround fat in our culture involve our health, politics, the balance of power, economics, class, race, gender, discrimination, and more. By studying the adipose layer as a gift rather than a curse, a different set of questions can emerge beyond "Am I thin enough?"

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Gil Hedley, Ph.D., teaches his intensive dissection curriculum internationally. He has written numerous articles as well as a book, *Reconceiving My Body*. He is the producer of *The Integral Anatomy Series* on DVD, and his current book-in-progress is entitled *Integral Anatomy*.

RESOURCES

GilHedley.com — for still lab images and free audios to help you appreciate the adipose through guided meditation.

cosm.org — Alex Grey's Chapel of Sacred Mirrors, visionary anatomic art.

abcgallery.com — classic art capturing the beauty of women's forms.

Naked *(continued from page 61)*

word nudist ringing in my head.

I'm not a prude, or even super-modest. But I was raised in a severe, punishing Catholicism, smack in the middle of the Bible Belt, in a rural town where attitudes were as narrow as Main Street. Bodies were shameful and not to be touched (ever, in certain areas) and always to be covered.

The more my husband expressed his needs and wishes, the more I wanted to run from the room.

Finally, after arguing about it and thinking until my head hurt, I went with him (not with the best attitude) to a family-run naturist resort on a beautiful New England lake.

There, surrounded by nature at its finest, I found a lawn chair near our cabin, where I cautiously undressed. I occasionally saw people walking down a path between us and our cabin, some nude, some dressed. Everyone was friendly and polite.

Later that day, we met doctors, therapists, a judge, a motorcycle mechanic, schoolteachers, and housewives. I

(continued on page 78)

GOING NATURAL

If you have never tried naturism and want to see if it would help your development as an individual but feel self-conscious, here are a few tips for choosing the right place.

- Consult *The North American Guide to Nude Recreation*, published by the American Association for Nude Recreation (aanr.com). It gives enough information to make a good choice.
- Look for family-friendly resorts. If you are a single woman, don't visit a resort that says it is "singles friendly" but does not have a quota for equal numbers of men and women.
- Make sure cameras are strictly prohibited. Safe places also ask for identification and take you on a tour to explain how the resort works.
- Finally, sometimes federal or state property allows nudism. Think of hot springs or national seashore parks that have a section of beach where clothing is optional. But be aware that in these places, security can't be guaranteed.

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Midwest Book Review

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Naked *(continued from page 77)*

noticed a number of elderly and infirm, people who I think were trying to unite body, mind, and spirit at a time when many would succumb to the forces of failing health. I liked that a lot.

Over the last two years, I've waded further into naturism. It has been difficult at times, but often enlightening. Walking down a road in the nude with strangers similarly unclothed — I did that once, to see what it was like — sparked much emotional work that in the end has been good. By pressing past the boundaries of shame and guilt, I have found more of my "real self" and confronted old issues of the body, sexuality, intimacy, and power.

I have become a better judge of people, too. After all, without clothes, people — whether they be judges, doctors, retirees, or motorcycle mechanics — are status-free.

I'm not a true naturist, someone who depends on being free of clothing occasionally for mental health. But by going on naturist outings, my husband and I have become closer.

I also know that every time I take off my clothes in these settings, I learn more about myself and the early influences of shame and guilt.

You know the classic dream in which you find yourself nude, walking down a public hallway? (For me, it's always at my old college.) I haven't had it since I took that walk with strangers last summer.

I have spent much time thinking about these conflicts and juggling my feelings:

HEAD: Why should removing your clothes be shameful? We were born naked!

HEART: Yikes, I can't believe I'm doing this. Run for cover!

I've also thought about societal standards and how the world operates. After all my talk about enlightenment and evolution, I can't sign my real name to this piece. In my small New England town, I can't take the chance. I may have grown personally, but society's strictures are just too formidable.

S&H

Mimi Gray is a journalist in New England. The idea for this story first occurred to her while she was sitting by a gorgeous pool at a naturist resort in the Dominican Republic.

"WHO TOLD YOU THAT YOU WERE NAKED?"

For Christian nudists this is a big question, straight from God. In Genesis Chapter 3, Adam and Eve are living free from sin in the Garden of Eden. They eat the forbidden fruit, realize that they are naked, and cover themselves with fig leaves. God approaches and they hide, telling God they are afraid because they are naked. And God asks the question — which Christian nudists see as God's displeasure at their attempt to cover up. This is the beginning of a long theological argument suggesting that our naked bodies are not inherently shameful and that good Christians should feel at home in their birthday suits. Social nudity, they say, is as old as Christianity, and our modern Western prohibition of public nudity stems from the Victorian era, having more to do with separating races and social classes than religious doctrine.

STEPHEN KIESLING



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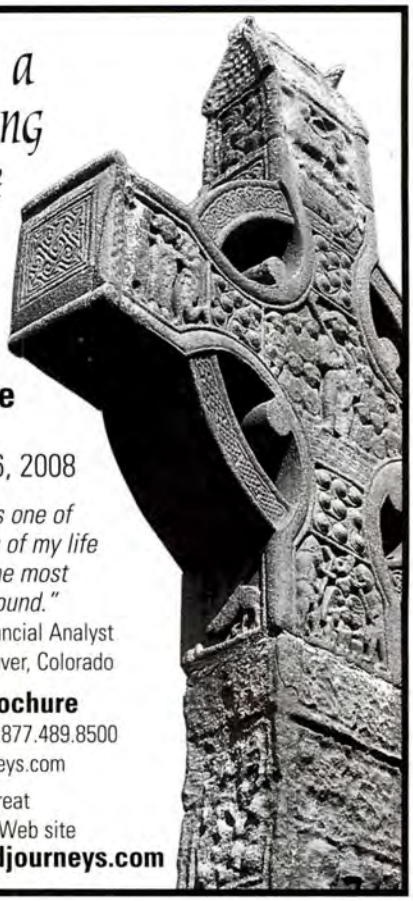
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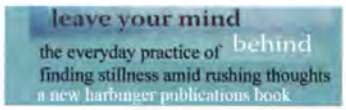
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Quotes from recently published books



Activist Gleaning

There is a famous painting by the nineteenth-century French painter, Jean-François Millet, in which two women stand in a field, "gleaning." The poor were allowed in to pick up what the rich didn't take. They paid attention to what was left behind. I want my gardening to do the same: to pick the fields clean and to prohibit waste. I think of it as a new version of dumpster diving, a habit I join the poor in having. Ritualizing an attention to what otherwise might be wasted is an important ritual for an activist. We don't want anybody or anything left behind. . . .

What is spiritual about gleaning is that it carries care. It pays attention to the edges and the corners, the garbage heaps and the tossed away. It says out loud that vegetables don't have to be perfect to be allowed out in society.

Donna Schaper
Grass Roots Gardening: Rituals for Sustaining Activism
Nation Books, paperback, $13.95

Being Not in Control

Grace does not free us from our weaknesses and our suffering, but it does free us from the feeling that these difficulties make life complex. Grace brings a newfound sense of simplicity. . . . Through the presence of grace we know what is wanted of us and we are able to respond. Problems decrease in importance. They are still around, but they do not present themselves as limitations or obstacles. . . . Grace divests us from what seems to be ours, so the presence of grace is often accompanied by our sense of being less in control and of possessing nothing. As we continue to clear away what we feel are our private possessions, grace increases.

Robert Sardello
Silence
Goldenstone Press, paperback, $17.98

Experiencing Fear

A key point in working with fear is to keep asking a fundamental question: "What is this?" The question is not: "What is this about," which leads to historical rehashes. The answer to "What is this" is always physical. For instance, let's say we're afraid a new acquaintance is going to write us off. Rather than withdrawing or turning on the charm, we take a few moments to feel our clenched neck and shaky hands, and stay engaged in whatever is going on. . . . It has been said that fear is the opposite of love. Actually, love, in its fullness, has no opposite, and can encompass even fear within its loving circle. By taking the necessary baby steps to experience our fear, we express our wish to live in the openness and wholeheartedness of love.

Elizabeth Hamilton
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Lessons from a Monk's Cell

What does that mean, letting the [monk's] cell be our teacher? For one thing, it means that there is a blessing in persevering when a practice gets boring. . . . Staying in the cell, or "sitting on the eggs," means noticing our appetite for overstimulation. The cell teaches us to slow down, to be less of a slave to our impulses, to notice what is right in front of us. . . . The cell teaches us to trust in the Presence even when it feels like absolutely nothing is happening. The cell helps us to see that skipping from one activity to another, from one interest to another, from one focus to another results in never putting down roots, never getting to deeper meaning and purpose, never going beyond surface reality.

Mary Earle
The Desert Mothers: Spiritual Practices from the Women of the Wilderness
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Admiration for Beauty

Rumi, who is familiar with the secrets of the heart, clarified the reason for the fascination and admiration that we feel when listening to a beautiful voice or observing a beautiful landscape, even if we cannot pinpoint our attraction and merely say: "I like this." According to Rumi, the admiration that we feel for beauty brings us closer to the Most Beautiful of the Most Beautiful, God. Through the fascination and admiration that we feel for beauty, our heart enters a different state, and we feel a sweet and indescribable excitement.

Sefik Can
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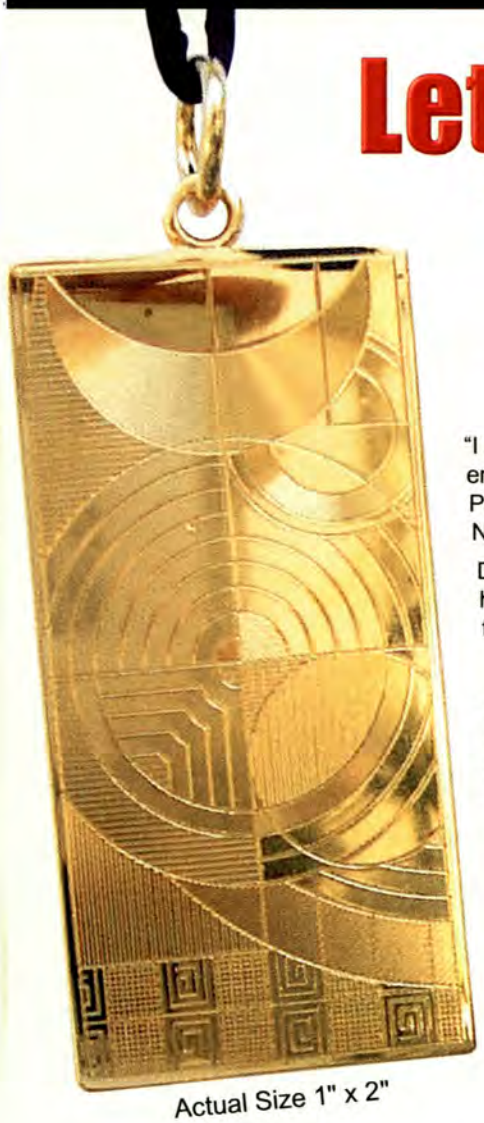
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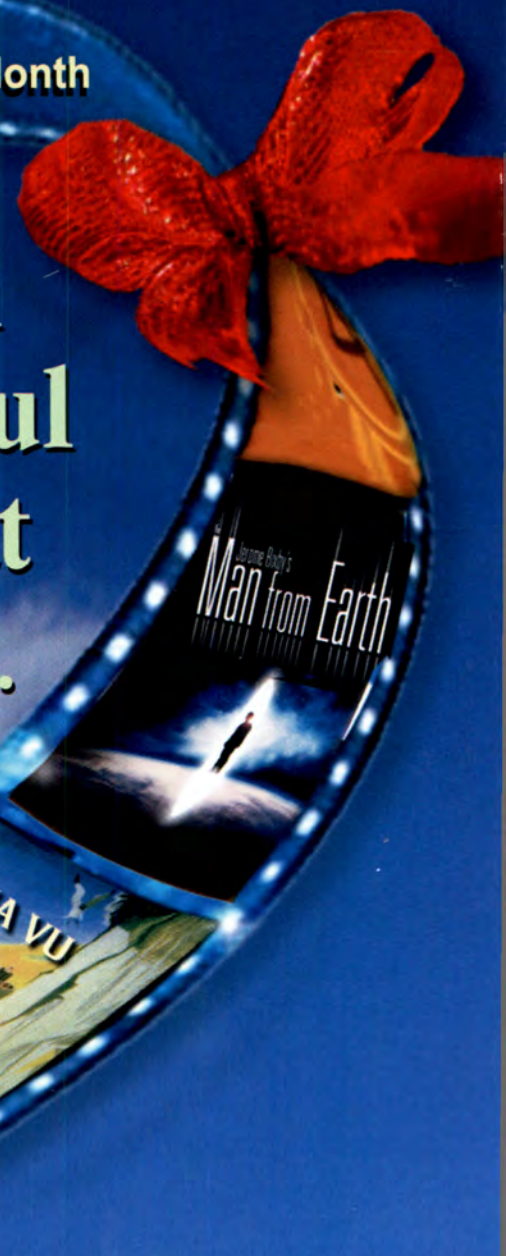


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