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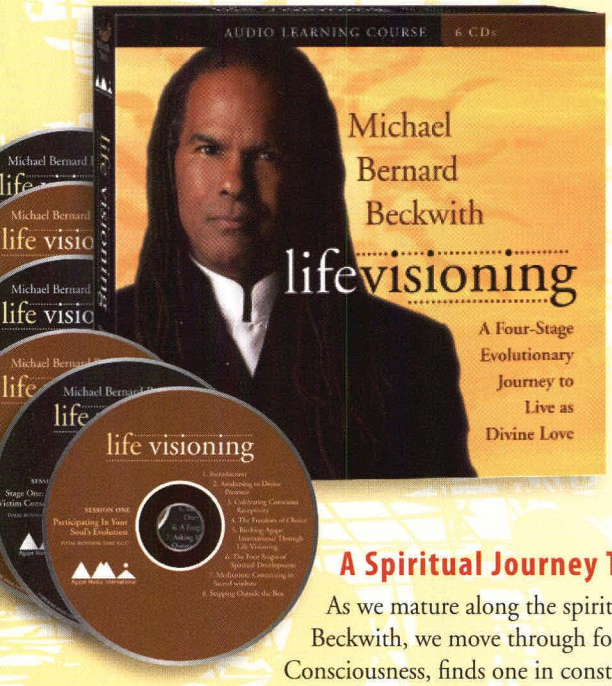
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MICHAEL BERNARD BECKWITH is a featured teacher in the film *The Secret,* and has appeared on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and *Larry King Live.* He is the founder and spiritual director of the Agape International Spiritual Center, a transdenominational community in Los Angeles. He is the founder of the University of Transformational Studies and Leadership, and an international speaker and teacher of meditation. His books include *Inspirations of the Heart, 40 Day Mind Fast Soul Feast,* and *A Manifesto of Peace.*

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Unleash Your Highest Potential–Today!

—Reprinted from the 2008 Spring Sounds True Catalog. Interview by Joe Ditta—

Perhaps you've felt it before: the unmistakable sense of a power larger than yourself working through you. According to Michael Bernard Beckwith, this is no less than the evolutionary impulse of the universe, awaiting your realization of its expression as your life. To help us on the journey, Beckwith created the transformational inner technology he calls the Life Visioning Process. We talked to this featured teacher from *The Secret* about the new audio-learning course in which he shares this breakthrough practice.

Sounds True: Many people are fascinated with the idea of using the power of our consciousness to get what we want. But on Life Visioning, you say that life is more about "letting than getting." Can you explain?

Michael Bernard Beckwith: I teach that 100 percent of spiritual growth is about letting go of the limiting thought forms that inhibit the flow of life from expressing through us. We've been enculturated into acquiring and hoarding, rather than letting go. When individuals begin to let go of the false beliefs that don't serve them, paradoxically, their powers to manifest increase.

For instance, we live in a world of plentitude. Scarcity is just a belief—not reality. People experience their belief about reality. Let go of that belief, and you're available to experience and reveal more in your life. Now there's nothing wrong with manifestation; we just have to understand it in its proper context. If a person makes their entire life about manifesting and getting, it can become addictive because there's never enough of "more." A person can become lost in the cycle of acquisition, and never discover the gifts of the soul that are to be delivered before we leave this incarnation.

ST: Okay, so let's say you follow the steps of the Life Visioning Process—and you think you receive a vision. How do you know if it's actually coming from what you call the "Love-Beauty-Intelligence" governing the universe—and not from our social conditioning or the ego?

MBB: This is exactly where the rubber meets the road. Most people really don't know what they want. But with the Visioning process, you're able to discern between the ego's desires and a higher vision. At first you get little feeling tones and openings. Certain images you had as a child may come back to you, but now in the awareness of a more mature being. As this vision emerges, it carries with it an activation of your potential, of the gifts, talents, and skills you are on the planet to deliver.

In the Life Visioning Process, whether for a business or an individual, a vision that comes from the intuitive dimension of the Higher Self (whatever you wish to call it) serves the best interest of all concerned. The key point is that you only become sensitive to this realm through practice.

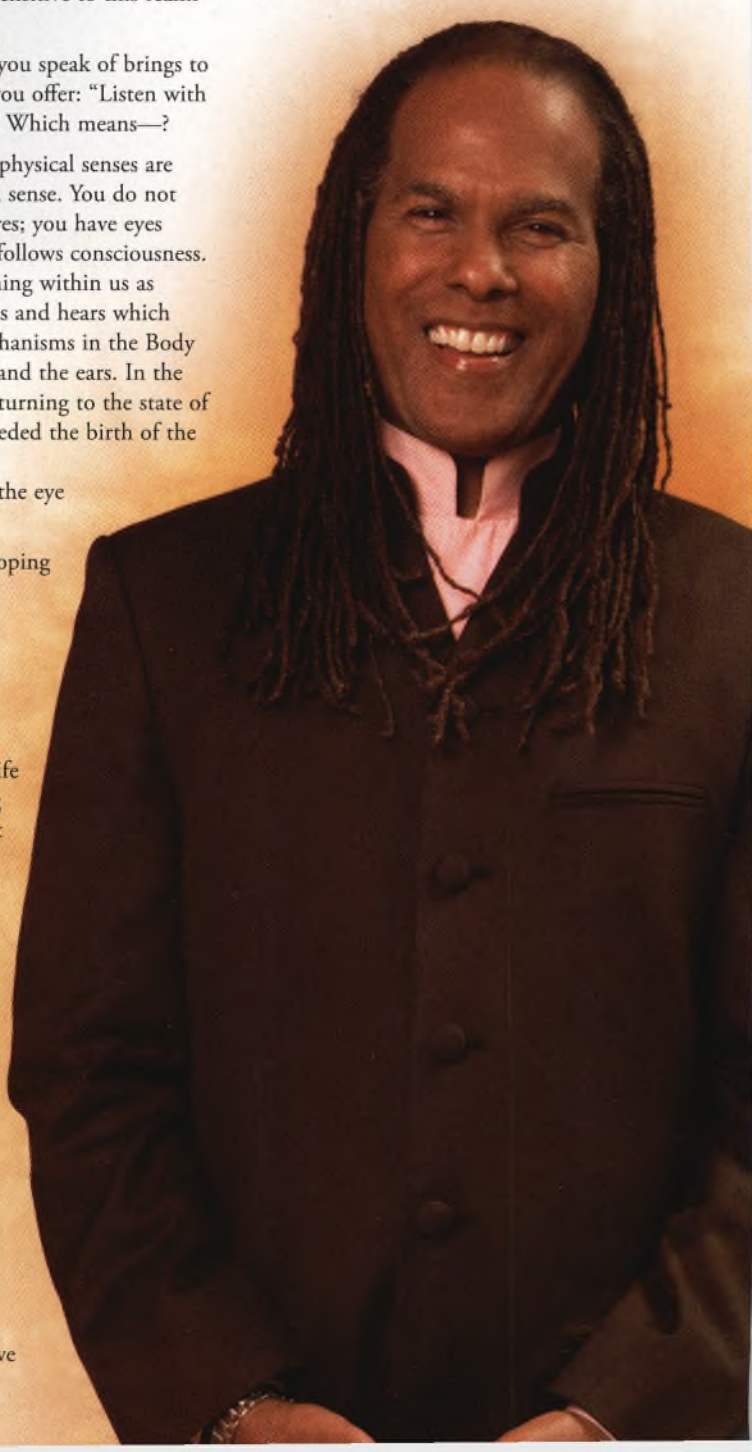
ST: The sensitivity that you speak of brings to mind another pointer you offer: "Listen with the ear behind the ear." Which means—?

MBB: It means that the physical senses are extensions of a spiritual sense. You do not see because you have eyes; you have eyes because you see. Form follows consciousness. There had to be something within us as spiritual beings that sees and hears which then produced the mechanisms in the Body Temple called the eyes and the ears. In the Vision process, we're returning to the state of consciousness that preceded the birth of the physical senses. That's the ear behind the ear, the eye behind the eye.

Ultimately you're developing the faculties to see the invisible, to hear the inaudible, to know the inconceivable, to enter the realm of the indescribable—the spiritual realm. With Life Visioning, you're seeing in that dimension—not with your eyesight, but with your insight—and working at a much more substantial, more powerful level.

ST: You say that practice is the bridge from theoretical insights about truth to a life based on truth. What kind of practice?

MBB: First let me caution against getting caught up in "futurizing" our good. We're not anticipants; we are participants. We're not anticipating good that's going to happen; we are participating in the good that is eternally happening. So you begin with the premise "I am and I have," and the universe responds more quickly and boldly. Wrap your attention around something that's working in your life right now; become grateful; take a deep breath and give a sigh of relief that you've already arrived; and from there, proceed with whatever spiritual practice you're involved in. ■



Spirituality & Health
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Why Americans Suffer More Pain

Our experience of pain is influenced by our cultural beliefs. Here's a guide to easing chronic pain by changing what you believe.

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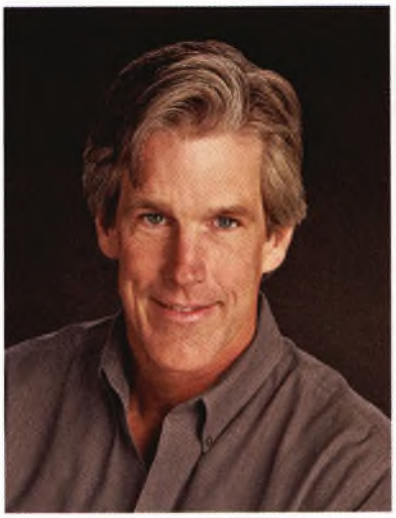
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The Hard Work of Effortless Moments

While we were putting this issue together, I spent a week in Princeton, New Jersey, rowing at the National Selection Regatta for the 2008 U.S. Olympic team. The races were as glorious as races can be when one has no real chance of winning. (My partner and I got our photo in the *New York Times* for being the oldest, not the fastest, competitors.) We had trained for 14 months, and what surprised me is that my most memorable moment came the day before the races — while I was standing motionless on a dock.

I had come to Princeton to battle my own aging: I was trained. I was rested. I spoke with not-completely-feigned bravado as gold medalists from the 2004 Olympic Games rowed by. But after their boats were out of sight, I was left with the water glistening in the spring sun. In that moment, I felt one with the air and water and sun and life itself, and it struck me that I had worked through all those millions of strokes to experience what was right in front of me, all the time.

In "Getting to Aha!" (page 42), Trebbe Johnson beautifully describes a gentler path to this place of magical insight that she calls the "Maginal Zone." The Maginal Zone often allows us to see that the battles we perceive are not battles at all, but merely unrealized vision. Johnson leads vision quests, solo sojourns in nature that allow our vision to clear, exposing our own deep wisdom through nature's wisdom.

In "Vengeance 101," (page 58), psychologist Michael McCullough gives us another look at the deep wisdom of nature. Vengeance, he writes, is not a "disease" to be "cured" by forgiveness. Instead, both vengeance and forgiveness are natural instincts necessary for the survival of a cooperative species. Rather than work for a change in consciousness to create a more peaceful world, McCullough argues for a change of conditions.

As we gradually accept nature, we can marvel at its intricate design. On page 25, Betsy Robinson describes a fascinating study of one of the world's most primordial symbols — the snake. Apparently, our recognition of this icon is part of our birthright, perhaps written into our DNA. And whether we are terrified or empowered by snakes is up to us. Do we want to know our nature? Shall we bite the apple?

STEPHEN KIESLING
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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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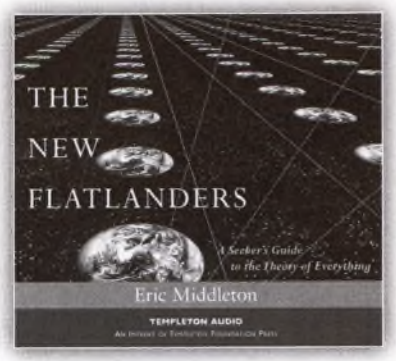
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Contributors



Michael E. McCullough, Ph.D. is one of the top researchers on the healing power of forgiveness and gratitude. (You can take the gratitude self-test we helped him develop at SpiritualityHealth.com.) Now a professor in the Departments of Psychology and Religious Studies at the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida, McCullough directs the Laboratory for Social and Clinical Psychology. His specialty is the psychology and evolution of moral sentiments, and he has recently turned his attention to revenge, a useful instinct woven into our DNA. On page 58, he charts a clear course for a less vengeful, more forgiving world.



Trebbe Johnson can almost guarantee that you will experience one of life's great Aha! moments during one of her "Vision Arrow" vision quests that she leads worldwide. A lifelong adventurer in inner and outer worlds, Johnson has camped alone in the Arctic; studied classical Indian dance; worked as a life-drawing model, street sweeper, and award-winning multimedia producer. Johnson lives with her husband in rural northeastern Pennsylvania. Try her simple path to Aha! moments on page 42.



BK Loren has come to love the odd-shaped tomatoes that arrive in the back of a pickup from her local cooperative farm (page 54). She's also the recipient of a truckload of writing awards: the Roberts-Rinehart National Literary Fellowship, the D.H. Lawrence Fiction Award, a Colorado Council on the Arts Fellowship, a Ucross Fellowship, and the Dana Award for the Novel. She has just completed a new novel called *Thieves* and is sinking her teeth into the delicious job of writing a book about celebrity chef Susan Feniger. She regularly publishes in *Orion* magazine, as well as in numerous periodicals and anthologies.



Rami Shapiro is *S&H*'s resident roadside assistant (see his column on page 16). An itinerant rabbi with a global congregation and an interspiritual message, he's been called a "holy rascal" by Sister Jose Hobday and a "prophetic voice of the new age" by Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi. He is an award-winning poet, essayist, and educator whose poems have been anthologized in over a dozen volumes and whose prayers are used in prayer books around the world. Shapiro teaches Religious Studies at Middle Tennessee State University and directs One River (one-river.org), a not-for-profit educational foundation devoted to building community.

Coming Soon

Showing Up / At 49, Stephen Kiesling raced the best of the 2008 U.S. Olympic rowing team as an experiment in aging.

Three Paths to Aging & Saging / Wisdom from Thich Nhat Hanh, Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, and Huston Smith.

When Western Women Become Eastern Nuns / What motivates a woman with a full life to leave everything and get ordained in India? Does it work?

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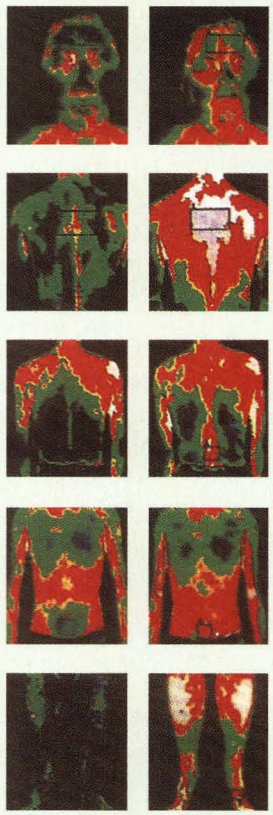
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DYNAMIC DANCE

In Body Practices (page 72), which presented contact improvisation (CI) as a mind–body practice, the accompanying photograph was of a pair doing partner yoga, not CI. CI is a dynamic dance form involving a shared point of contact, listening to impulses, weight shifts, balance, and creative inspiration. It is typically practiced barefoot on a wood dance floor (not on a yoga mat or carpet). To see photographs of CI, check contactimprovisation.com, Tumblebones.com, and moabjam.com. I love and respect the dynamic practice of contact improvisation, and want it to be portrayed accurately in photographs. It is a form that is accessible to people of every size, shape, and ability!

GRETCHEN SPIRO
Boulder, Colorado

STOPPING THE FLOW

On receiving a reminder that my subscription was due for renewal, I almost decided to cancel. Reason? I was annoyed at the excess of advertising in the May/June issue. What made me decide to renew were "Opening: Restoring Spirit to Business Spaces" (page 19) — I love totem poles; and "Restoring Natural Flow" and "The Ceremony at the Heart of Salmon Nation" (page 62). No other publication gives me the inspiration such as these articles can provide. They were outstanding.

D. IRIS THOR
Vestal, New York

For our first eight years, we were a nonprofit magazine and many readers got used to a journal virtually free of advertising. However, now, to become a sustainable business, we must improve our revenue stream; hence the increase in advertising.

THE EDITORS

HEALING PRAYER

My sermon last Sunday was based, as usual, on scripture, but the driving narrative was Allan Hamilton, M.D.'s article on healing prayer ("Healing Prayers that Work," March/April, page 48). I shared the disturbing findings of the STEP project as reported by Dr. Hamilton and then moved to scripture where Peter tells us to keep on doing good even when the world judges what we do as no good. I then shared the Arizona study, which found more positive healing results in the "prayed-for group" when aspects of health beyond surgical outcomes were considered. This echoed Peter's sentiment that God gives rewards the world cannot fathom. Lastly, I talked about how people who know they are being prayed for can experience our prayers most powerfully. I encouraged our congregation to take a step beyond just praying and let people know they are prayed for. I also asked them to take some very concrete action in the following way: We want people like Dr. Hamilton and many others who read your magazine to know that WE ARE PRAYING FOR YOU! We are praying for everyone who fears the STEP report may have a negative effect on funding for, and other kinds of support to, prayer studies and programs in hospitals and other parts of the medical community. Some of our congregants will send Dr. Hamilton personal notes affirming this. We want you to know that. Now the prayers are in the air and spiritual connection is affirmed. Let's see what happens.

REG RICE
Emmitsburg, Maryland

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All letters will be considered for publication and may be edited for length and clarity. No snail mail, please.

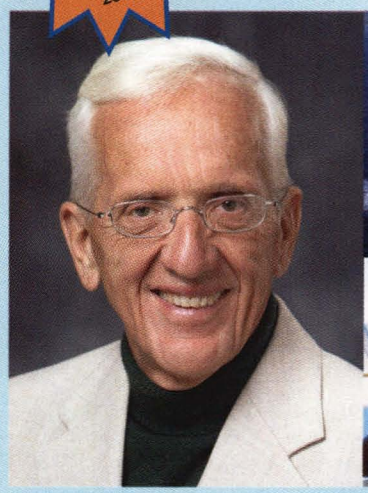
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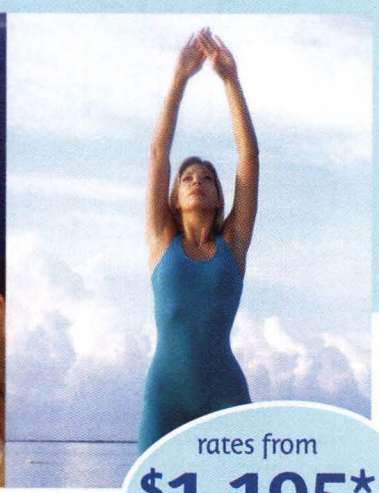
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Sherry Rogers, M.D., treats emotional illness and chronic disease with diet, nutritional biochemistry, detoxification, and other lifestyle changes. One of this country's prominent environmental medicine practitioners, she has published 16 books, including *Detoxify or Die*.





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Yogi Amrit Desai
Renowned Yoga master and authority on holistic living. One of the earliest pioneers to bring Yoga to the West. Founder of the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health.

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Dirk is the author of *Confessions of a Kamikaze Cowboy*, which documents his life's journey towards holistic health and recovery from prostrate cancer. He is a world-renown actor (The A Team, Battlestar Galactica, etc.). Benedict made his directing debut with his original screenplay CAHOOTS, starring Keith Carradine. He has great stories to tell.



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Is That Your Complex Speaking?

Psychology doesn't have to be as complicated as it is often presented, but it does often work by a subtle and inverted logic that is well worth understanding and learning to deal with. Of particular importance is the logic behind what Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung popularized with the term "complex."

A complex is a bundle of ideas, memories, attitudes, emotions, passions, and habits focused on a theme — for example, the "inferiority complex." This theme can take over a person and affect how he feels and understands his situation. Talk to a person with an inferiority complex, and no matter how much you praise his talents and accomplishments, he will still feel inadequate. A complex is not reasonable and is not susceptible to reasonable argument.

One aspect of a complex is that a person makes reasonable-sounding statements that actually are the complex speaking. A person with an inferiority complex, for example, may convince you that he needs another year of study or another set of credentials in order to be prepared for his vocation. Unless you listen closely and sense the neurotic jitters in his tone, you may not notice the complex hiding behind his reasonable deductions.

Someone with a mother complex may tell you very kindly and helpfully how to do something, and only later will you realize that this pleasant person would like to control your whole life. Another person may have a Narcissus complex. He can't stop talking about himself and interprets everything in terms of his own situation.

A complex is mostly unconscious, so the person talking has no idea that he or she is being controlled like a puppet by a deep-seated emotional obsession. Friends and lovers of such a person may know too well that something is wrong, but they have no idea what to do about it.

Psychologists often advise to "go with the symptom." Don't try to get rid of it or urge its opposite. It's better to take the symptom as given, and try to deepen it. Therefore, to a friend with an inferiority complex, you could say, "It's extraordinary how much I don't know about my field, and yet I get along pretty well." A person caught in an inferiority complex may need to discover that we all are ignorant of many things, all incapable and prone to error. Inferior means lower, and the inferiority complex may signal that a person has to join the human race.

It's interesting how often the complex hides its polar opposite. The inferior person doesn't let on how superior he feels deep down. The paranoid person doesn't show how gullible he can be.

In knowing these few simple rules about a complex, when you sense one in the otherwise reasonable statements of a friend or spouse, child or parent, you can glimpse the deeper, hidden issue with which you're really dealing. And that is a step forward. Jung referred to a complex as a sub-personality. You may assume that you're talking to your friend, when actually it's Mr. Inferiority or Miss Paranoid at the other end of the conversation.

There is a temptation in the unaware listener to identify with the opposite of the position taken by the person caught in the complex. You listen to someone putting himself down, and you try to build him up. You hear someone warn about conspiracies, and you try to show that no such conspiracies exist. Your words, however, will be vacuumed into the vortex of the complex and interpreted accordingly. The inferior person will say, "It's easy for you to talk about success; you have talent and ability. I have none." The paranoid person will say, "You're out to get me, like everyone else."

One thing you can do, although it may seem as crazy as the complex, is to agree with the person, but speak more realistically and deeply. I knew a doctor who could never be convinced that he knew enough about medicine to practice comfortably. I tried to get him to tell me precisely where he was deficient. I got him to describe to me in detail how much he would never know and then to feel relatively comfortable with his ignorance.

We could all deal with the highly neurotic human condition by thinking more subtly about what is being said in all of our interactions. That unkind word you just heard may not be coming from the well-intentioned person in front of you but from a complex that speaks from a cave deep in the person's psyche.

That unkind word you just heard may not be coming from the well-intentioned person in front of you but from a complex that speaks from a cave deep in the person's psyche.

Thomas Moore's new book is *A Life's Work: The Joy of Discovering What You Were Born to Do* (Random House, February 2008). See careofthesoul.net.


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Do I Have Nature Deficit Disorder?

"I am not an atheist but an earthiest" wrote the naturalist Edward Abbey, park ranger and author of the classic *Desert Solitaire*. But if Abbey eloquently spat on civilization back in the 1960s, he might be too appalled for words today. Visits to national parks have decreased by over 20 percent since 1988, and most of the decline, according to a 2006 study in the *Journal of Environmental Management*, can be attributed to movies, the Internet, video games, and the soaring price of oil. In fact, in 2005, journalist Richard Louv coined the term "nature deficit disorder" to describe how modern life has literally "scared children straight out of the woods and fields."

I think I may suffer from that disorder myself. I live in New York City — the Internet is my gateway to infinity, and my recreation is an occasional foray to Central Park, where I can commune with trees and motorcycles in the same breath. It's been five years since I walked through a grove of wildflowers and aspens at 10,000 feet in the Jemez Mountains of New Mexico. Lately, I've felt as if I'm dying from lack of nature. I look at the spindly city trees and think, empathetically, "You're too well behaved. So am I. You don't risk enough. Neither do I. You dutifully breathe in smog, grow only to a certain city-ish height, and leave immensity and eternity to your redwood brethren in the Northwest. I guess you and I are both suffering, but hey, it's adapt or die, right?" Well, as an Australian friend who owned 30 acres of temperate rainforest outside Melbourne said once, "If I ever turn to you and call Central Park nature, take me outside and shoot me."

"I look at the spindly city trees and think, empathethically, "You're too well behaved. So am I. You don't risk enough. Neither do I . . . You leave eternity to your redwood brethren. . ."

Around the same time as my friend said that, my uncle Phil piped up at a Thanksgiving dinner with this pronouncement: "I don't think you can live a truly spiritual life apart from nature." My aunt Vassa and my uncle Phil (who practice and teach the African Ifa religion) own a 10-acre retreat in central Florida that, prior to tectonic shifts, was a part of Morocco, and on which, my aunt says, she can feel the ancestral African energies. In those days, I defended the glories and grandeur of New York City and quoted poet Hart Crane's rhapsodic lines about the Brooklyn Bridge: "O harp and altar, of the fury fused / How could mere toil align thy choiring strings?"

These days, I think Vassa and Phil have made an absolutely brilliant choice. I still cherish the city, but we have not evolved to live packed into concrete beehives, peeking out our portholes to the spikes of high-rises, thwarting circadian rhythms with incessantly buzzing fluorescent lights, waking to traffic instead of birdsong. We adapt, but do we thrive?

In 1989 Harvard University naturalist E.O. Wilson put forth his theory of biophilia, the human love of living things, and suggested: "To the extent that each person can feel like a naturalist, the old excitement of the untrammeled world will be regained . . . More complexity exists in a handful of soil than on the surfaces of all the other planets combined. Life around us exceeds in complexity and beauty anything else humanity is ever likely to encounter."

I suppose my own private epiphany came on the day, last March, when I pushed the button of my Sound Oasis machine to listen to a repeating loop of ocean surf, rather than the noxious city noise outside my window. And I noticed my entire body relaxing, as if my very stem cells were programmed from timeless time to know that sound, to love that sound, that primordial music of moving water.

So I called my friend Tyler Volk, an earth scientist at New York University (who, in the best of all possible worlds, has a high-rise apartment in Greenwich Village and a trailer in the Gila Wilderness) and said, "I need wild nature, but I can't and won't live too far from New York. Where can I go?" And we agreed that the border of wilderness starts at the ocean. Because there is quite a bit of ocean near me, I began to house hunt in charming, hilly beach towns about two hours from the city. And when I stood on a stretch of empty beach, in front of an expanse of endless water, and scooped up a smoothed ochre stone from the sand, I began to sense where my life might be headed.

Jill Neimark is a journalist, novelist, and poet.

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By Rabbi Rami Shapiro



Intelligent Design or Scientific Materialism? Jewish Catholics? Can I Be Celibate?

To these perennial questions, I offer some answers — not to close a conversation but to broaden one. I do not claim to know anything you don't know, but if I can help you remember what you already do know, I am blessed.

What do you think about teaching intelligent design as well as scientific materialism in high school biology?

I believe that the universe is God's body; that God is intelligent; and that on this planet, you and I are the way God gets to look at life and say, "Wow!" Therefore, I am unhappy with both intelligent design and scientific materialism — the first pushes God out of the universe, the second denies God altogether, and both assume that life is dumb. The fact that intelligent design isn't science — in that it rejects the scientific method by positing a Designer outside of creation that cannot be verified — is almost beside the point.

In my ideal high school, astronomy, cosmology, physics, and biology would be taught in the Department of Wow! Philosophy, art, music, dance, literature, mathematics, and comparative religion would be in the Department of Meaning. Students would walk out of class in states of wonder. They would understand that life is intrinsically meaningful and purposeful, that we humans are integral to the unfolding of consciousness (at least in our solar system), and that the unfolding of consciousness (nonpersonal, prepersonal, personal, transpersonal, and cosmic) is, from our perspective, what the universe is all about. Neither scientific materialism nor intelligent design speaks to this at all.

I'm Jewish and converted to Catholicism. My mom died and I lit a *yahrzeit* candle for her. Her death has left me confused about honoring my spiritual beliefs and respecting the traditions of my ancestors. I asked a rabbi, and he said I wasn't a Jew, and so he couldn't help. Help.

Of course you are a Jew. And of course you are Catholic. And of course you find this confusing. But here's the bottom line: We don't need more Jews and Catholics; we need more daughters grieving openly and honestly at the anniversary of their moms' deaths. We need more broken hearts and helping hands; we need more inquiring minds and enraptured souls. We need more people engaging life and death, rather than labels and dogma.

Follow your heart in matters of the spirit. Light yahrzeit candles for your mom at home — and maybe a memorial candle at church as well.

I left organized religion because of its intrinsic narcissism and fear, but I am not sure where to go next.

I believe your instinct is right, but your rejection of organized religion may not be. Narcissism and fear — the worship of self and the fear of the other (and the Other) — are often the true foundation of religion, regardless of theology or label. If your faith is all about you and your private salvation, that's narcissism. If your religion separates the world into those who have God's love and those who do not, then it is rooted in fear.

But you don't need religion to be trapped in narcissism and fear. Narcissism and fear are the staples of the egoic mind, and you are born with that. Religion, at its best, helps you overcome narcissism and fear. I'm not going to suggest a specific faith, but there are many healthy religious communities with deep contemplative practices that can help you live a rich, self-surrendered, and fearless life. Keep looking.

I am seriously considering entering the Catholic priesthood, but I am not sure I can be celibate. Do you have any suggestions?

I doubt anyone enters the priesthood sure of anything. Surety would eliminate the need for faith and the working of the Holy Spirit. All you can do is face the challenges placed before you with integrity, humor, compassion, and grace. Celibacy, in particular, can be a wondrous gift, freeing you from one of the most difficult aspects of the human condition so that you might serve God and humanity with selfless love. But celibacy isn't suppression. If you are denying your sexuality — brutalizing yourself emotionally or physically for being a sexual human being — or if you have

to hide who you are from your church and your God, then the priesthood may not be your way to serve.

I am an admirer of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, yet I read that he thinks children born with birth defects are being punished for karmic sins in a past life. Is this true?

As a Buddhist, His Holiness may believe in karma, but you are mistakenly mixing Eastern ideas of karma with Western ideas of sin and punishment. Karma says that the present moment arises from conditions set in motion in the past, recent or distant. Birth defects do not happen without cause, and hence are karmically conditioned. But the child isn't being punished, any more than you are being punished if you get burned after putting your hand on a hot stovetop. Thinking that the baby is being punished allows you to dismiss its plight. Realizing that we are all karmically conditioned gives rise to compassion — hence, the true religion of the Dalai Lama.

I have been on a spiritual quest since my early 20s and now I am 60. I would love to find a nondogmatic group of people who do not debate, but share their outlooks. Where can I find such fellow seekers?

You are not alone. What I and others did in my small town in Tennessee was simply announce a public conversation. (I held mine for years at the public library, and there is another group called Conversation Cafe at a local coffeehouse.) At the meeting, spend some time listening to one another's stories and searchings, and, if there is still time, read and explore personal reactions to a short text you find spiritually compelling. Meet regularly and in time you will find the community you desire.

How do you go back to God if you have sinned against Him?

In my experience, sinning against God is like trying to punch a wave: no matter how hard you strike, you can't do any damage. Think in terms of swimming in the ocean. If you swim with the current, the ocean works with you. If you swim against it, the ocean works against you. While this matters greatly to you, it matters not at all to the ocean. And, regardless of which way you choose to swim, you are always in the ocean. I believe God is like this as well. You can live godly or ungodly, but God is unchanged. If you are "swimming" in an ungodly manner, you aren't sinning against God or separate from God. You are simply working against your own best interest. All you have to do is "turn from evil and do good;" that is, stop the ungodly and do the godly. No separation is possible; no return is necessary.

Rami Shapiro's bio is on page 8. His most recent book is *The Sacred Art of Lovingkindness*. Email questions to rabbirami@SpiritualityHealth.com.

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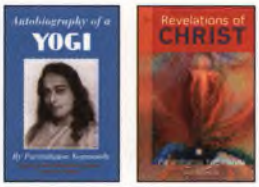
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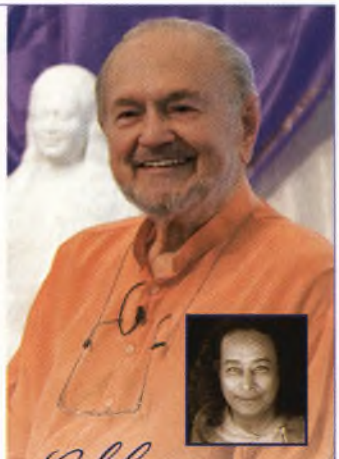
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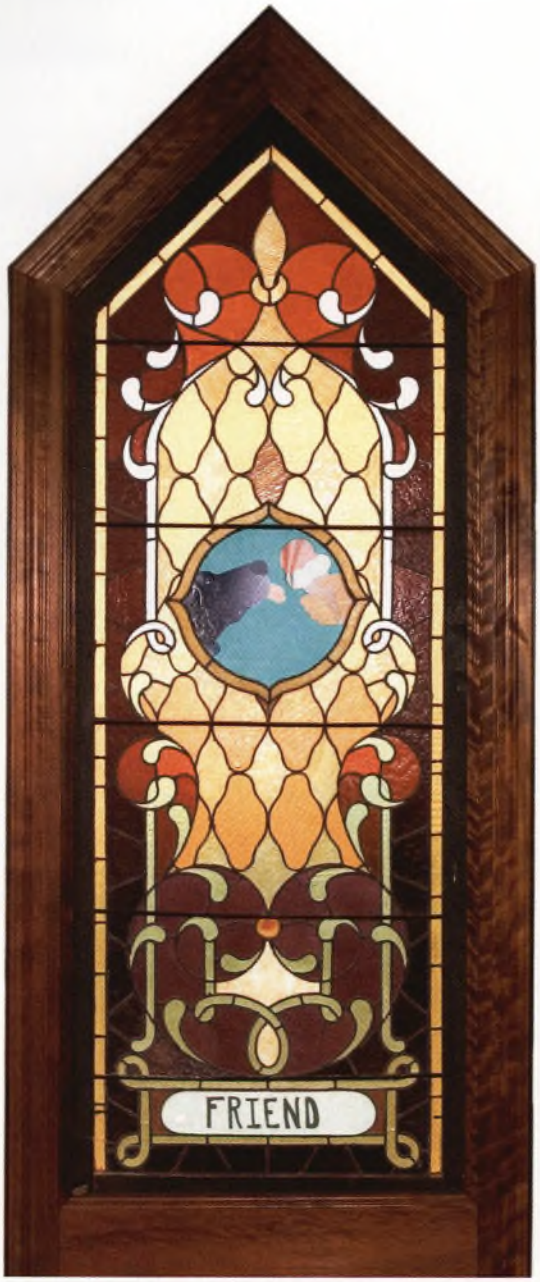
STEPHEN HUNECK
Loving with Abandon

"Welcome All Creeds, All Breeds. No Dogmas Allowed," announces the sign in front of artist Stephen Huneck's Dog Chapel in St. Johnsbury, Vermont. The 1820s-style chapel is part of Dog Mountain, a 150-acre mountaintop farm. It is a place that invites the thousands of pilgrims who visit to sit, walk, or roll in the grass — to love simply, openly, joyfully, like the dogs who romp freely everywhere. How did this place come to be?

In 1994, after being felled by adult respiratory distress syndrome, Huneck awoke from months in a coma, during which he says he communed with his Blackfoot Indian ancestors. Shortly thereafter, he heard a voice that said, simply, "Build a dog chapel."

An ardent dog lover, Huneck had grieved inconsolably each time one of his canine friends passed away. "When a person dies, we have rituals," he explains. "However, with a dog, you can grieve for years. I realized I could do myself and my fellow man a great favor by creating my own ritual. And it worked: People come here. They find peace."

BETSY ROBINSON

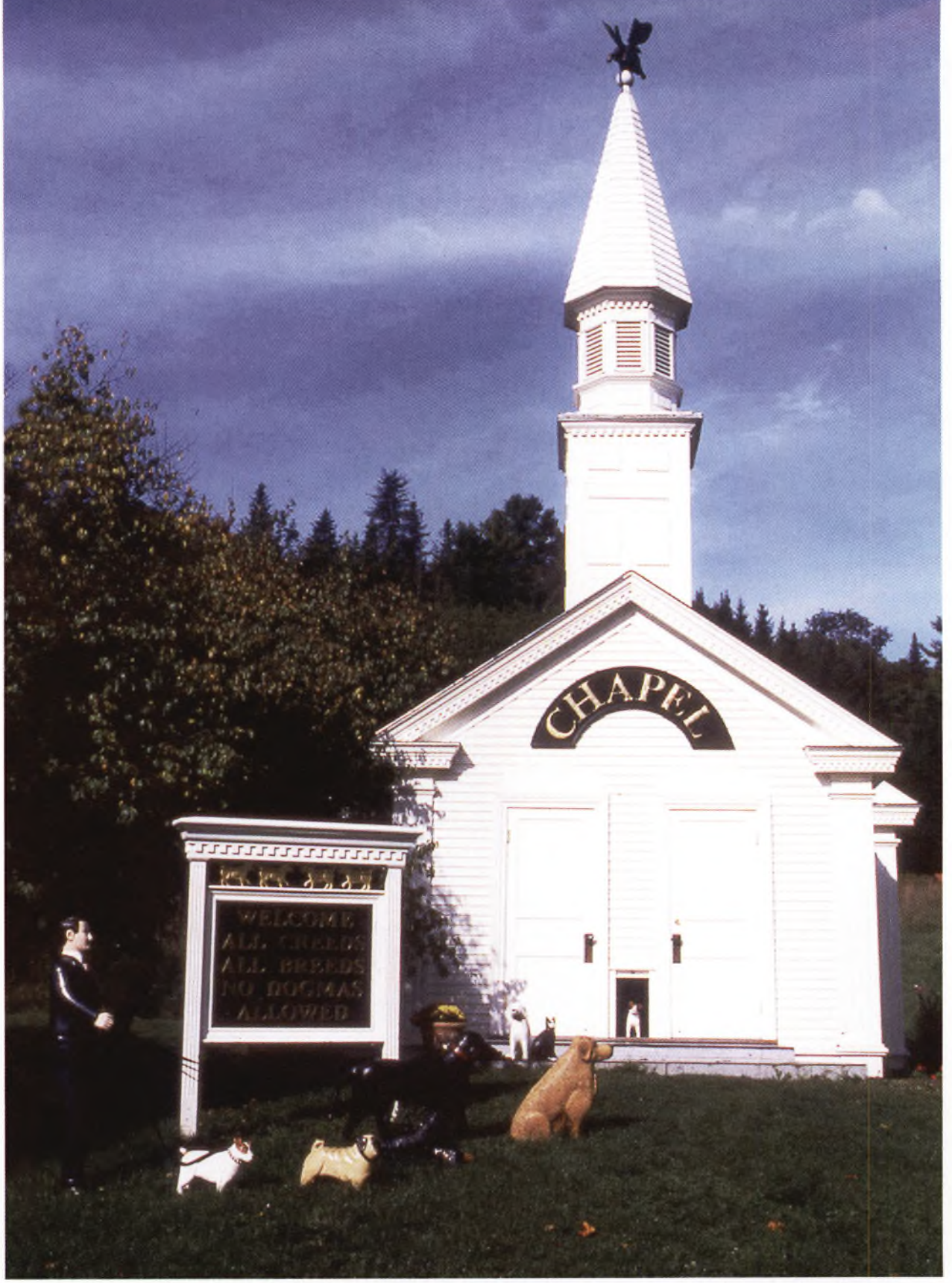


BECKY METCALF

Dog Mountain Chapel Window

As you walk inside the chapel, you are bathed in light from stained-glass windows. You are surrounded by dog carvings. Native American flute music plays in the background, punctuated by bird calls from the surrounding lands — all reaffirming the connection of art, nature, and spirituality. Huneck calls the chapel "the largest, most personal artwork of my life."

ANNUAL DOG PARTY *August 3, 2008, 1–4 p.m. Come to the Dog Mountain Gallery and Dog Chapel, 143 Parks Road, St. Johnsbury, Vermont 05819. For more information, see dogmt.com or call 800-449-2580.*



Wood Carvings Everywhere!

A peaceful stillness pervades this place, where people from all over the world have given thanks for their dogs or mourned their loss. Thousands have sent photos and remembrances, which paper the walls of the chapel. Even if you can't visit, Huneck invites you to send a paragraph about your dog (or any other companion animal) and a photo for the chapel wall. (See the address on page 19.)

KAREN PIKE





TOP: KAREN PIKE; BOTTOM: BECKY METCALF



Dog Mountain Art Gallery: Huneck's Desk

Huneck is the author of six children's books and two adult books, including *The Dog Chapel*. His hand-carved furniture, sculpture, and woodcut prints are in private and museum collections, including the Smithsonian Institution and the American Folk Art Museum, New York.

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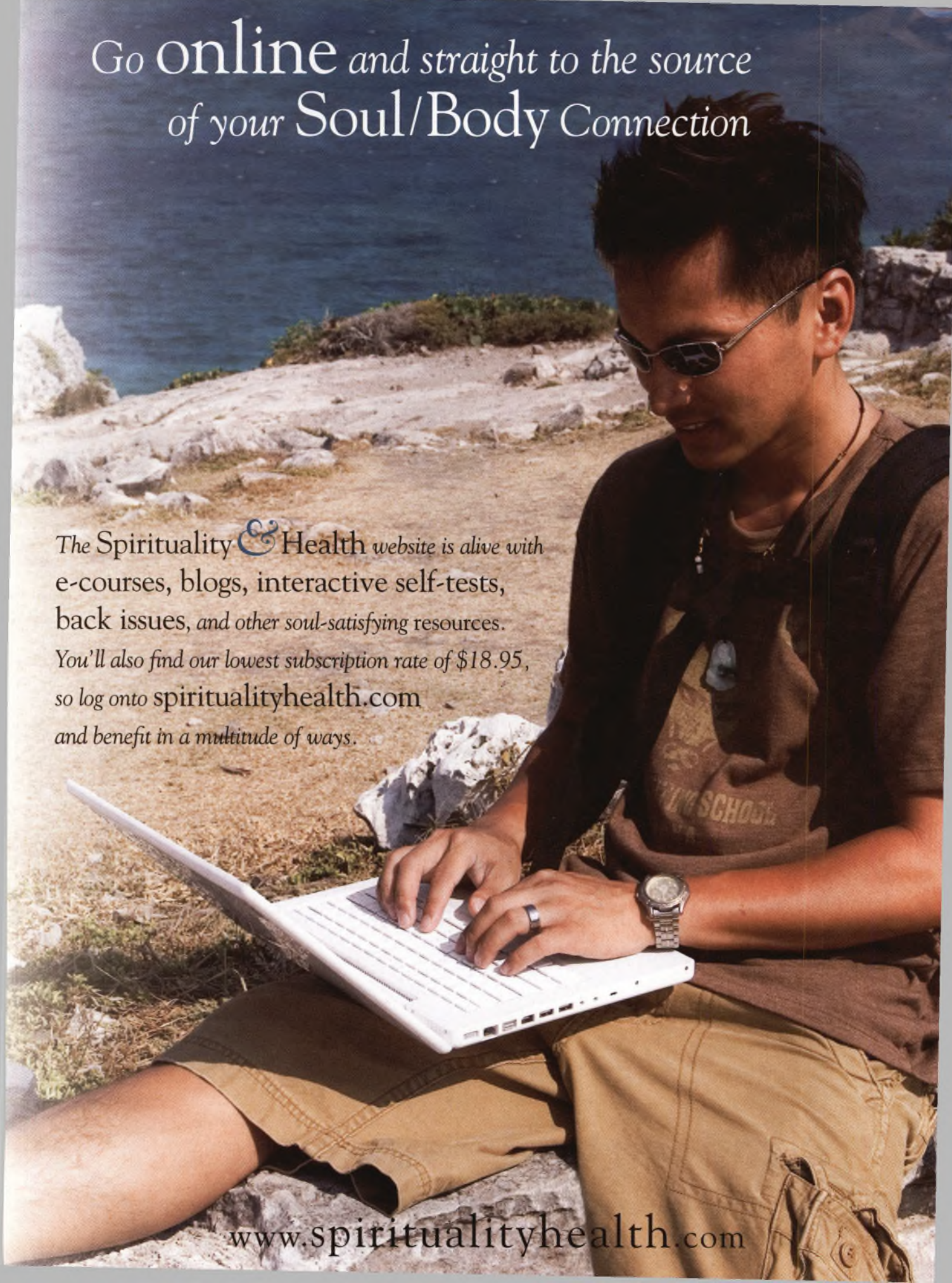
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Updates & Observations

Soul + Body / Enlightened Diet / Connections / Actions / Expanding Universe

Soul + Body

Is Fear of Snakes in Our DNA?

Snake lover Vanessa LoBue, Ph.D., knows from common sense as well as a vast body of research that humans and other animals have a predisposition to quickly associate snakes with fear. But, she wondered, regardless of our feelings or experiences with snakes, do we have a predisposition to detect them particularly quickly, signaling "prepared learning" or knowledge programmed into our DNA? To find out, she and her partner, Judy S. DeLoache, Ph.D., conducted a University of Virginia study titled "Detecting the Snake in the Grass: Attention to Fear-Relevant Stimuli by Adults and Young Children."

In a series of three experiments, 120 three- to five-year-olds and 120 parents consistently quickly picked out the target picture of a "threat-relevant" snake from a group of nine pictures, eight of which were "non-threat-relevant" flowers, frogs, and caterpillars; and they did so significantly more rapidly than they could pick out non-threatening target pictures among similar groups.

Prior to the experiments, study participant parents were interviewed about their own and their children's real-life experience or fears of snakes, and statistics later

(continued on page 26)

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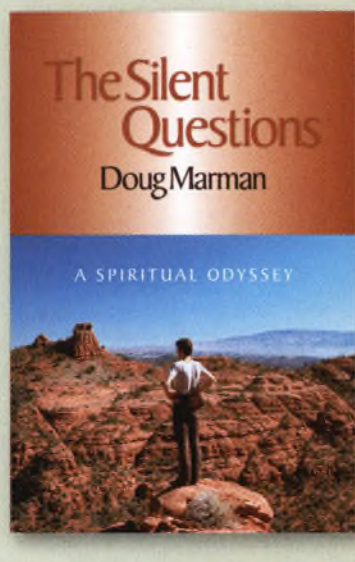
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(continued from page 25)

showed that the existence or nonexistence of fear or real-life experience had no bearing on recognition speed.

So the ability to quickly pick out snakes is hardwired, but what's interesting is what the researchers are *not* saying. Says LoBue, "I am *not* saying that humans have an innate or hardwired fear of snakes, but instead, that we may be predisposed to learn to fear snakes particularly fast because of the survival benefit such learning posed."

Cross-culturally, the snake or serpent is one of our most widespread and important mythological symbols, signifying everything from consort of the Goddess, power, sexuality, Divine knowledge, healing, and rebirth to deceitfulness, cunning, vengefulness, evil, and deadliness. Says LoBue, "I do think that the rich cultural meaning of snakes comes from this evolutionary root. Of course, there is no way to prove this."

With or without proof, it's fun to think about. Given that the snake image grabs so quickly at each and every one of us, what is it saying? Is the snake calling our attention to a fear of innate wisdom, power, or sexuality? Or the ability to deceive and kill? Are we going to bite the apple?

BETSY ROBINSON

For more on working with powerful symbols, see page 62 and the Imagery eCourse ad on page 39.

What to Give Your Friend in the Hospital

Don't know what to give someone who's in the hospital? How about a tool kit for coping? Created by cancer survivor and health-care provider Dale Weinert, P.T., through her company, Inner Vacations Tool Kits, each of three kits addresses a different need: coping with cancer, successful surgery, or relaxation and wellness. Each kit contains products to help relieve anxiety, such as essential oils, relaxation CDs and exercises, eye pillows, teas, and journals. For more information or to purchase a kit (about $70, with 10 percent going to a "pay it forward" fund to buy kits for those who cannot afford them), go to innervacationskits.com.



ERIC PALMA

Poor Sleep Takes a Higher Toll on Women

As a general rule, women are twice as likely as men to report sleep problems, and a new study from Duke University suggests why: Sleepless women suffer more than sleepless men.

"We found that for women, poor sleep is strongly associated with high levels of psychological distress and greater feelings of hostility, depression, and anger," says Edward Suarez, Ph.D., associate professor of psychiatry at Duke University and lead author of the study. "In contrast, these feelings were not associated with the same degree of sleep disruption in men."

The study participants — 210 healthy, middle-aged men and women who didn't smoke, struggle with insomnia, or take medications regularly — completed questionnaires, gave blood samples, and rated their sleep quality for one month. Although 40 percent of both men and women were classified as poor sleepers, they ended up with dramatically different health-risk profiles.

Falling asleep quickly is the key to a good night's sleep. These researchers found that the participants who slept poorly during the night didn't suffer as much as those who didn't fall asleep fast in the first place. Women who didn't fall asleep within the first half hour were most at risk for health problems.

Why are women more susceptible than men? It could be due to the activity of various hormones and neurotransmitters, such as tryptophan, serotonin, and melatonin. Each of these substances affects mood, sleep, inflammation, and insulin resistance in different ways for men and women. More sleep research is underway.

LAURIE PAWLIK-KIENLEN

Sad? Stay Out of the Mall

William James pointed out in 1890 that "misery is not miserly" and scam artists have always targeted the sad. Now scientists from Carnegie Mellon, Harvard, and Stanford are getting closer to understanding why sad people are so willing to part with their money.

In their experiment (see *Psychological Science*, June 2008), participants viewed either a sad video clip or one devoid of human emotion. Afterward, they could purchase a water bottle at various prices. Participants randomly assigned to the sad video clip were willing to spend three times as much money for the bottle as were "neutral" participants. Even more surprising, those in the sad group typically insisted, albeit incorrectly, that the emotional content of the film clip did not affect their spending.

The researchers also tested the level of self-focus in both groups. Among participants "primed" to feel sad, those who were highly self-focused paid more money than those low in self-focus. Why might a combination of sadness and self-focus lead people to spend more money? First, sadness and self-focus cause one to devalue both one's sense of self and one's current possessions. Second, this devaluation increases a person's willingness to pay more for new material goods, presumably to enhance the sense of self.

As James wrote, "a man's Self is the sum total of all that he CAN call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house . . ." When that self is shrunk by sadness, shopping therapy may feel good, but it'll likely be very expensive.

STEPHEN KIESLING

Tribal Living Risks

Many tribal lands have been polluted, and many Native Americans live close to the soil. Now researchers at Oregon State University, tribal scientists, and the EPA have assessed the special health risks. For a copy of their report, *Traditional Tribal Subsistence Exposure Scenario and Risk Assessment Guidance Manual*, email anna.harding@oregonstate.edu.

Three Graduate Programs in Spirituality and Health

SPIRITUALITY AND HEALTH CARE GRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

The George Washington Institute for Spirituality and Health (GWish) now has an online graduate certificate program that provides health-care professionals with the theoretical, ethical, empirical, and practical tools necessary to integrate spirituality into their clinical practices, foster leadership in spirituality and health, create lifelong support systems among colleagues, and affect the health-care environment to create more compassionate systems of care.

Online students share profound experiences and insights. One of the students, a chaplain, said that the program teaches the students how to be virtuous spiritual-care providers. For more information, see **gwish.org** or contact Christina Puchalski, M.D., at **hcscmp@gwumc.edu**.

HEALTH COACHING CERTIFICATE IN COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES & HEALING PRACTICES

For health-care professionals who want accredited training in the field of "health coaching" — educating clients about better choices and alternative treatments — the University of Minnesota's Center for Spirituality & Healing has launched a four-semester program. Students attend class for two four-day weekends each semester, plus a one-time, one-week intensive. Upon completion of this track, they receive a certificate in Complementary Therapies & Healing Practices: Health Coaching from the University of Minnesota.

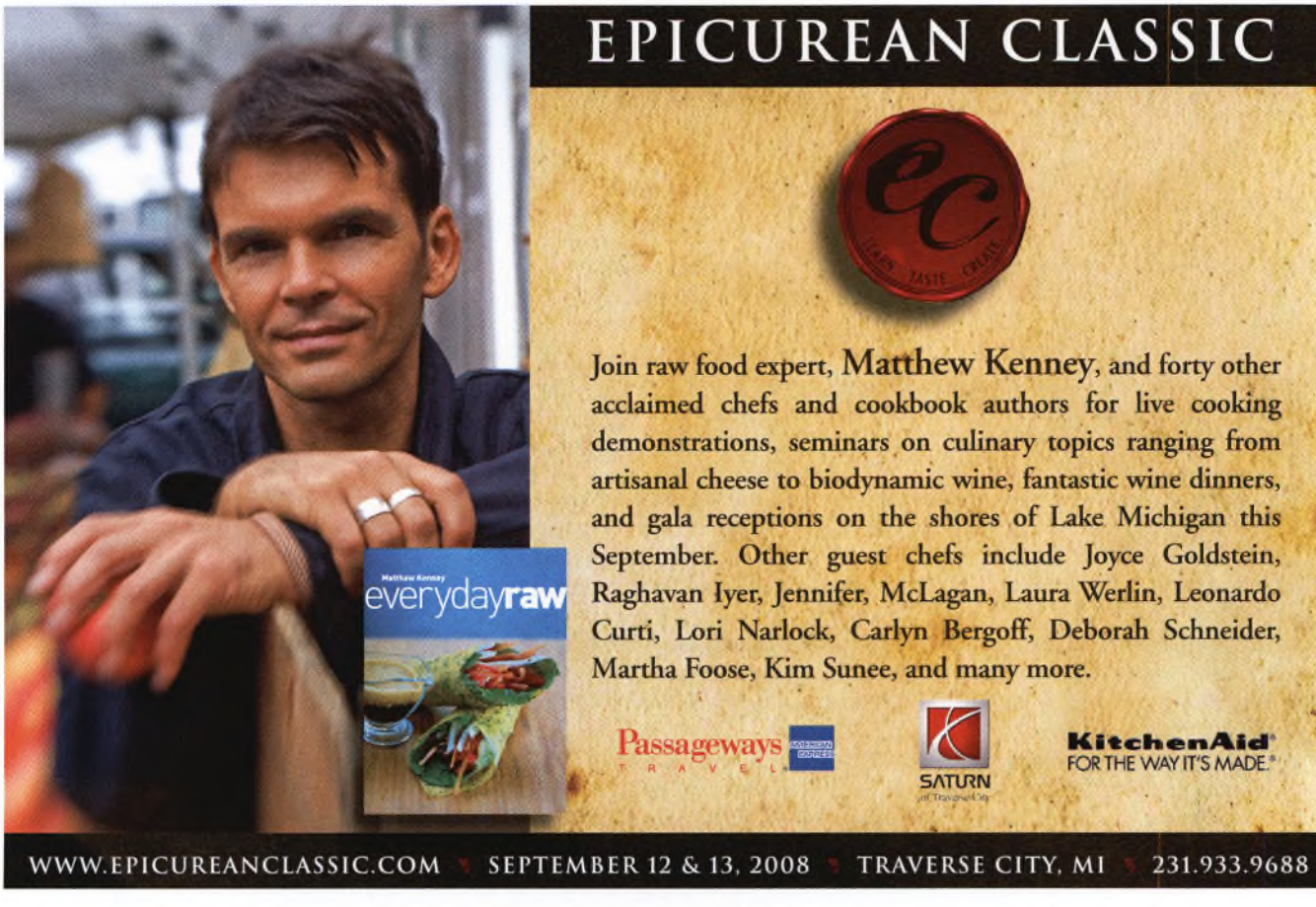
"Nurses, physicians, psychologists, and counselors are incorporating health coaching into their practices, and we can help," says director Mary Jo Kreitzer, R.N., Ph.D.

To learn more, go to **csh.umn.edu**, or call the Center for Spirituality & Healing at 612-624-5166.

CERTIFICATE & ADVANCED DEGREE IN INTERSPIRITUAL WISDOM

On September 14–19 at La Casa de Maria (**lcdm.org**) in Santa Barbara, California, the Spiritual Paths Institute will launch a two-year program developed by a team of exceptional teachers, including *S&H* contributors Rabbi Rami Shapiro and Shaikh Kabir Helminski. The program is based on a rigorous academic inquiry into the teachings of the world's sacred traditions, combined with guided spiritual practice.

The program will help professionals to apply interspiritual knowledge, principles, and practices to fields including education, health care, environmentalism, social work, psychology, consciousness studies, physics, cosmology, chaplaincy, media, the arts, and interspiritual counseling, mentoring, and ministry. For more information, see **spiritualpaths.net**, or call 805-695-0104.





Make Your Bedroom a Chemical-free Sanctuary

Last July, the Consumer Products Safety Commission mandated that new mattresses become dramatically more fire resistant: Since 1973, a mattress had only to resist a lit cigarette, but now it must withstand a blowtorch flame, two feet wide, for 70 seconds. The new rule makes us more fire-safe, but it also means that mattresses contain more neurotoxic flame retardants, along with heavy metals such as antimony, polyurethane foams made from petroleum, and other harmful chemicals, such as formaldehyde. These chemicals off-gas and may leech into our bodies as we sleep — a time when we need to heal and repair.

I'd always assumed I could purchase a high-quality used mattress and avoid the off-gassing, but I've since learned that as mattresses age, the foam breaks down and off-gasses other volatile chemicals. So I decided to "green" my bedroom, heeding the advice of environmental consultant Mary Cordaro, who received Bau-biologist certification from the International Institute for Bau-Biologie & Ecology. Here are some tips:

When you're ready to replace your mattress, go natural and organic. Your choices range from an organic cotton-and-wool mattress with innerspring to a natural latex mattress wrapped in cotton and wool, an all-wool mattress, an organic cotton futon, or several three-inch "toppers" of wool or cotton or both, layered one on top of the other. Wool is a natural fire-retardant that "wicks" away moisture rather than absorbing it. You'll need a doctor's prescription to buy the organic cotton futon in order to circumvent the flame-retardant law, but if you layer cotton toppers, a prescription is not required.

"I personally love natural latex," says Talia Rose, founder, with her husband, of Organic Grace, a California firm that offers everything from glass baby bottles to bamboo flooring. In the summer, Rose's family sleeps on a latex mattress in the garden, waking up "to see the egrets and herons flying over us and feeling connected to all of nature."

I'm a city dweller, so I decided on several wool toppers, which are more economical than an organic mattress — but they do have a light scent of sheep.

Choose organic bedding. Consider buying a mattress cover and pad, sheets, pillowcases, and comforter covers in organic cotton. Regular cotton often has pesticide residue (including ethylene glycol, or antifreeze, which kills bugs in cotton crops) and may be treated with anti-wrinkle formaldehyde. At the very least, run new cotton through the washer and dryer several times to help leech out chemicals. Green-advocate Deborah Lynn Dadd, author of *Home Safe Home*, recommends adding baking soda to the laundry detergent and then rinsing at the end with vinegar in water (this is said to remove odors and formaldehyde, though its use has not been formally studied). Use cotton or wool blankets or wool-filled comforters.

Choose a healthy pillow. Synthetic and feather pillows both tend to accumulate moisture from your sleeping head, growing dust mites and fungi that breed happily in their protected mini ecosystem. A 2005 study of pillows found up to 16 species of fungi in a single pillow. Go for latex, wool-fill, or "kapok" (a white, fluffy material that is eight times lighter than cotton and comes from the pods of a tree that grows in the tropical rain forests) — all of which resist mites and fungi. At the very least, run pillows through the washer and dryer monthly to keep them clean.

Air out your mattress. Don't make your bed when you first get up, suggests Talia Rose. "All night long you perspire, and you should let your mattress air out." Cotton futons and foam-filled mattresses both can grow mold in a moist environment. One partial solution: use a wool mattress pad, which will help keep your sweat from soaking into your mattress.

Be verdant. Plants remove toxins, so literally "green" your green bedroom with lush flora. Plants that clean the air include English ivy, philodendrons, peace lilies, and spider plants.

Use sound. If you can't sleep in a garden, purchase a sound machine that mimics a natural environment. I'm completely addicted to my portable Sound Oasis machine, which has various sound cards that play actual recordings of ocean surf, rain, chirping birds, thunderstorms, streams, and other nature sounds all night long, without any noticeable repeating loop. Sound Oasis also has a patented technology that slows the rhythm of the sound for 20 minutes, helping lull you to sleep.

JILL NEIMARK

Organic Grace's online store / **organicgrace.com**
Sound Oasis / **sound-oasis.com**
Mary Cordaro / **h3environmental.com**
Debra Lynn Dadd / **dld123.com/index.html**

ANDERSEN ROSS

FOOD NEWS FLASHES /

GOING VEGAN
May Have Fringe Benefits



Before starting any diet, consult your doctor or a nutritionist.

What's the best diet for preventing heart disease? Low fat, high carb? High fat, low carb? For years, champions of one diet or another have argued.

Now, scientists at Sweden's Karolinska Institute have joined the fray by suggesting that removing all animal products from your diet — including milk and eggs — may have unexpected health benefits for your heart.

In their study, which was published in the medical journal *Arthritis Research & Therapy*, 66 patients with rheumatoid arthritis (people with rheumatoid arthritis are at increased risk for heart disease) were randomly assigned to either a vegan, gluten-free diet or a well-balanced, non-vegan diet. Here's what they ate for three months:

The vegan diet consisted of 10 percent protein, 60 percent carbohydrates, and 30 percent fats (with no more than 10 percent in saturated fats). The vegans consumed vegetables, nuts, fruits, and sunflower seeds along with gluten-free grains and starches, such as buckwheat, millet, corn, and rice. They drank "sesame milk" made from unshelled sesame seeds to make sure they got enough daily calcium.

The non-vegan diet contained 10 to 15 percent protein, 55 to 60 percent carbohydrates, and the same fat intake as the vegan regimen. Non-vegans were encouraged to have five or more daily servings of fruits and vegetables and to increase their intake of starch and other complex carbs, including whole-grain products.

As it turned out, going vegan and gluten-free for at least three months lowered cardiovascular and atherosclerosis risk factors, including total cholesterol, LDL (low-density lipoprotein, often called "bad cholesterol"), the ratio of LDL to HDL (high-density lipoprotein, or "good cholesterol"), weight, and body mass index (BMI).

What's more, the vegan diet raised the level of natural antibodies that may keep disease processes from developing. "Our findings suggest a new mechanism by which the level of natural protective antibodies can be increased," says Karolinska professor Johan Frostegård, who led the study. "They also show that diet can have effects on the immune system, with implications for the incidence of disease."

SHELDON LEWIS

VEGETABLES: OG-VISION; FRUIT: ENE; BREAD: FLOORTJE;

Organic versus Mystical Winemaking



With modern machinery, irrigation, and nitrogen-rich fertilizers, the last 50 years have seen vineyards imposed on seemingly any available real estate, so it is not surprising that there is real contention between large, corporatized vineyards and vineyards that are carefully adapted to a suitable ecosystem, especially the organic vineyards that avoid synthetic fertilizers, herbicides, and insecticides.

One of the more surprising fault lines, however, is between organic practitioners and a more radical group — about 500 vineyards worldwide — that believes organic is not enough. These are the biodynamic winemakers, who trace their lineage to Rudolph Steiner, founder of anthroposophy and Waldorf education, who began biodynamics with his now famous Agriculture Course of 1924. Biodynamic winemakers believe that fine wine must be true to the land.

The biodynamic method is to improve the health of the ecosystem by nurturing a large array of native organisms — bacteria, worms, plants, insects, animals, etc. — to better deter the spread of disease. The vine is only one part. Biodynamics is about subtly manipulating all of these life forces to achieve synergy unique to that ecosystem. If the dirt is healthy and ripe with minerals, the vine will transfer that prosperity to the grape, assuring flavorful wines.

In practice, biodynamic winemakers make their own composts, strategically plant fruit and nut trees among the vines, spray chamomile and other natural teas following homeopathic principles, and utilize other ancient practices, all in accordance with lunar cycles. With such an abundance of grasses, flowers, and trees amongst the vines, biodynamic vineyards don't resemble the monotone, cropped look of their fertilizer-fed peers.

The vitality of biodynamic vines is displayed in a multitude of ways, from earlier harvest times to much deeper root systems enabling the vine to better handle drought, disease, and frost. And yes, in a great many cases the resulting wines are stunningly balanced, complex, and unique — so much so that more than a few of the world's most prestigious wineries have gone biodynamic, a lengthy, labor-intensive process.

Of course, there are problems. Foremost, no one can adequately explain why biodynamic methods work. And the first year after converting to biodynamic can be traumatic on land and winemaker alike, according to Mike Benziger, biodynamic winemaker at the Benziger winery in California's Sonoma County. He refers to this period — before the vineyard's natural defenses have matured — as the "yuck zone" because of the inevitable bouts with disease and damaged crops. Stick it out, he says, and the biodynamic way "will lead the spirit in man to the spirit in the universe."

To learn more, talk to your wine-shop owner or visit the following websites: **biodynamics.com**; **forkandbottle.com/wine/biodynamic_producers.htm**; **demeter-usa.org**; **benziger.com**.

MATT SUTHERLAND

If you sometimes feel intimated by wine talk, turn to page 64.



GRAPES: PXLAR8; TOMATO: CATCHA

Hats, Sunscreen, and Tomato Paste

According to a new study presented at the British Society for Investigative Dermatology in April, eating tomato paste could help protect against sunburn and sun-induced skin aging.

Researchers from the Universities of Newcastle and Manchester compared the skin of 20 people. Ten were given five tablespoons of standard tomato paste with 10 grams of olive oil every day, and 10 received only olive oil, over a period of 12 weeks. Their skin was exposed to ultraviolet light at the beginning and end of the trial. Compared to the control group, the group who had eaten the paste were found to have 33 percent more protection against sunburn (equivalent to a sunscreen with an SPF of 1.3), which can lead to skin cancer.

Meanwhile, collaborating researchers at Newcastle University found that the antioxidant lycopene found in the tomatoes had reduced damage to study participants' mitochondrial DNA. Professor Mark Birch-Machin, dermatology scientist from Newcastle University, suggests that, along with hats and lotion, tomatoes may be a useful addition to sun protection.

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Why Attractive Mates Seem So Scarce

Why is that special someone so elusive for so many people? Or that perfect job? Or that perfect community? Now, an international team of psychologists have found an answer: Our own longings seem to create an illusion of scarcity.

Researchers Xianchi Dai, Klaus Wertenbroch, and Miguel Brendl from INSEAD, the international business school with campuses in France and Singapore, have been studying cognitive shortcuts or "rules of thumb" we use when we are unable to make informed decisions about value. The connection between scarcity and value is something we readily accept; for example, gold is considered precious because it is rare. The psychologists theorized that we also accept the inverse: that what's valuable must be scarce.

To test their theory, the researchers had a group of young people view nearly 100 pictures, half of birds and half of flowers, in random order. The participants were told that they would get paid for each bird or flower picture they had seen — birds or flowers determined by a flip of a coin. Before being paid, all participants were asked to estimate the total number of bird pictures and the total number of flower pictures they had seen.

The results: People who were paid for spotting flower pictures thought there were fewer flowers than birds, and those who were made to value birds believed there were fewer birds than flowers. In truth, there were exactly the same number of flowers and birds.

In other experiments, participants of both sexes viewed portraits of men and women, some attractive and some not. When questioned later, both men and women believed that there were fewer attractive people of the opposite sex than there were of the same sex.

In both experiments the participants appeared to be substituting their emotional desire entwined with a belief in scarcity for real calculation, suggesting that our cognitive shortcuts may have us assume (and perhaps live) more solitary lives than might be warranted by reality. (To read the study, see *Psychological Science*, January 2008.)

RYAN HESHKA

Your Next Great Gig as a Celebrant

My first experience with interfaith ministry was at my brother's wedding. My family spoke special vows to the bride and groom, chosen weeks earlier with their minister. The minister created a ceremony that was exactly as the couple wished: personal, beautiful — and nondenominational.

With interfaith unions estimated at as high as one-third of all marriages, it is no surprise that Americans are requiring ministers or celebrants capable of understanding and melding widely disparate traditions and needs. Fortunately, says Cynthia Reed, director of academics at the Celebrant Foundation, organizations such as hers teach individuals to create "a personalized ceremony, no matter what the client's beliefs or values."

And the list of possible rituals to perform keeps growing. Rev. Diane Berke, cofounder of the One Spirit Learning Alliance, prepares celebrants for services that include "baby blessings, funerals and memorial services, gatherings for worship, divorce rituals, rituals for a child going off to college, rituals to bless a new home or business space," and more.

Although graduates of institutes such as One Spirit Seminary find that becoming a minister is an enriching and life-changing experience, they agree that it is incredibly challenging. Programs last up to two years and typically involve a rigorous study of world religions and cultural rituals, as well as the practical aspects of performing ceremonies. But with the Internet offering quickie minister licenses for a fee, why bother with a course?

Says Rabbi Roger Ross of The New Seminary, "It's been my experience that those who simply purchase a piece of paper that says 'minister' have neither the inner resources, nor understanding, nor enough knowledge to truly minister to those who need their services."

For more information, see:

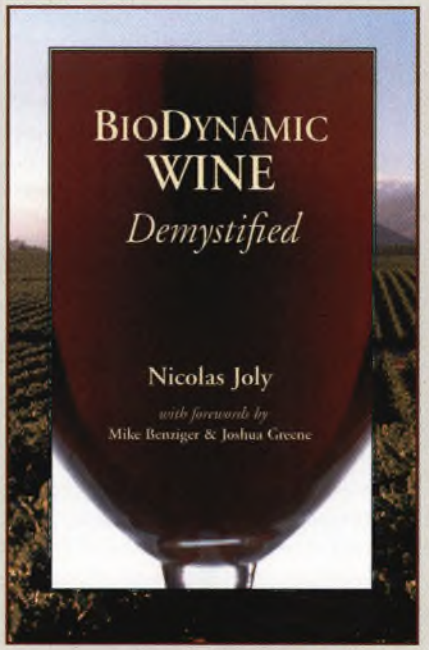
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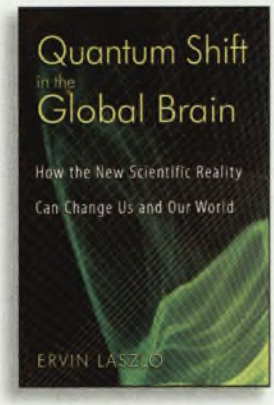


In this groundbreaking new book esteemed winemaker and Biodynamic pioneer Nicholas Joly shares the core philosophy behind Biodynamic agriculture and explains why such practices not only offer answers to our modern agricultural mess but also result in wines that express the deep character of the soil in which the vines were grown.

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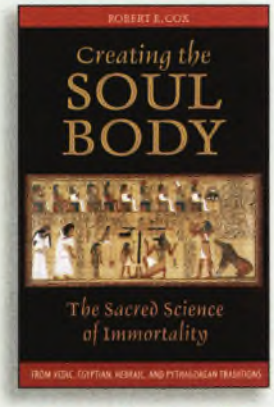
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MIKE GARIBALDI FRICK

Moving Quotes

Whether you're a quotations junkie who keeps notebooks of profound blurbs, or a "happenings" aficionado who loves spontaneous art, or a person who enjoys conversations with strangers, there is something for you in Mike Garibaldi Frick's traveling public art project, Dialogue. From July through December (and maybe beyond), Frick's nine 7x8-foot freestanding screens and several life-cast statues covered with thousands of inspiring quotations will be on view in California, Colorado, New Mexico, Ohio, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Washington, Idaho, Washington, D.C., New York, Illinois, Florida, and South Dakota.

Some of the themes addressed include character, community, creativity, life, love, strength, success, and wisdom, and the project seems to inspire a lot of contemplation and conversation. Maybe it's because it offers much more than an invitation to look; viewers are also invited to write their own insights in a book for others to read. Selected quotations have been published in the third edition of the *Dialogue Project* book and will be added to the screens as the project tours so viewers can read what people in previous cities have written. To find exhibition dates and more information, go to **DialogueProject.net**.

BETSY ROBINSON

A Mother's Gift of Light

Six months after my son was born, I resumed my meditation practice, with the addition, near the end of each practice, of the visualization of a golden light. The light reached from my heart to my son's heart so that he would know how much he was loved, and so he would be protected and soothed by this energy. When he was five, he turned to me one day and said, "Mom, do you know what is my favorite thing to pretend? That I am the Master of Light. And I have a golden power cell here" — he pointed to the center of his chest — "and it's so powerful that it has the power to turn people good!" In practicing my meditative *seva*, I inadvertently taught him to value the good in himself! What greater blessing could have been bestowed upon me?

KATIE TANDON

Going Home

More than two decades ago, I lived in Lausanne, Switzerland. I spent about nine years there, and when I left, I never returned.

But a few years ago, a bunch of "les amis" agreed to meet in a Vevey restaurant on a given day at 5 p.m. and wait for me.

At 5 p.m. on the appointed day, I was several hours from Vevey with a broken-down car. I had the address of the restaurant, but no phone number and no name. Worse, most of my friends didn't know each other. Some were actors in an experimental theatre troupe I ran. One taught English with me. There was an old boyfriend, and a woman with five kids who lived in my building. The only thing they had in common was me. I had set them up for disaster.

I paced, I fretted, I got the car fixed, and, feeling guilty and tardy and irresponsible, I raced for Vevey.

Meanwhile, the group had assembled in the restaurant and sat around a large wooden table. First, they looked at their precision watches and the cuckoo clock on the wall. They engaged in polite chitchat. When they had discussed the weather, movies and un peu de politics, they ordered fondue and white wine and started asking each other how they knew me. One told arty stories about theatre life. Another talked about unconventional ways I had of teaching English. A third told tales of romance in exotic climes. And on and on. They hardly looked up when I walked in at 10 p.m.

"Hello, les amis," I bellowed.

There was a long moment of silence, and then the questions came at me.

"You found a gas mask and a photo of a dead soldier dated 1917 and created a World War I theatre set in your apartment lobby?" one asked.

"You loaned your boyfriend $4,000 on your second date?" queried a second.

"You set your kitchen on fire?"

"You were acting when a critic threw up at a performance and you laughed so uncontrollably they had to stop the play?"

I tried to apologize for being late, but no one cared. They were merrily clinking glasses and sharing fondue. My arrival was, in a sense, anticlimactic. The best part of the evening had already transpired. They had told stories and found out a lot about me that they didn't know. Through them, I was able to recapture a life I had lived, and fill in many of the details I had forgotten. We howled as they told more tales and, when it was time to part, they all promised to keep in touch with each other. "Welcome home," one of them said to me. "It's been a great homecoming!"

What if you got everyone together, and shared the diverse pieces of your past? What if you assembled your assorted friends and relatives — even if they didn't know each other — for an unusual, unpredictable and, ultimately, enriching and meaningful homecoming? Here's wishing you bon courage and bonne chance.

JUDITH FEIN

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Build Organic Farms to Soak Up Carbon

Feeling guilty about your last high-flying trip? Thinking about reducing your greenhouse-guilt and offsetting your travel by planting a tree in a far-off forest? But do you wonder whether that tree will really be planted — or what difference it will make if it is? Me, too. That's why I have a whole new carbon-offset concept in mind: I'm investing in farmers — organic farmers, that is.

What does organic farming have to do with carbon sequestration? More than you might think.

Research from the Rodale Institute, which has been conducting decades-long research comparing organic and nonorganic production, has made a startling discovery: Thanks to cover crops, crop diversity, and composting to build healthy, fertile soil, organic farms are powerful carbon sponges, soaking up as much as 2,000 pounds of the stuff per acre per year. What's more, the researchers found that the carbon sequestered in the soils of these organic farms is stored as stable organic compounds, meaning it will stick around a long time in the soil, where we want it, rather than in the atmosphere.

The Rodale Institute also found that organic systems use about one-third less fossil-fuel energy than comparable crops on "conventional" farms. Conventional farms actually release carbon into the atmosphere because of their reliance on fossil-fuel–based agricultural chemicals and their destruction of soil quality in the process of growing crops.

These findings mean that organic farms give us a solution for storing carbon right now. Trees can take decades to mature and store comparable amounts of carbon. So, next time you're thinking about planting a tree as a carbon offset, think about supporting an organic farmer and bury your carbon in the dirt.

For more about carbon offsets and organic farming, check out the Rodale Institute at **newfarm.org** as well as Carbon Farmers of America at **carbonfarmersofamerica.com**.



Anna Lappé is at work on her third book, *Eat the Sky*, about climate change and the food system.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE RODALE INSTITUTE

Is Head Better than Heart in Negotiations?

A group of MBA students participating in three studies on negotiations were given a task: A gas station is for sale. The sellers and the buyers have compatible interests, but the sellers' minimum price is higher than the buyers' limit. MBA student "buyers" were to negotiate a creative solution to close the deal.

In the first study, buyers were given no instructions about negotiating tactics, but a week after their negotiation, they completed personality inventories to determine whether they were perspective-takers (who used their heads to figure out their seller's viewpoint) or empathizers (who connected emotionally). Results: Perspective-takers reached a deal more often and paid a lower price than empathizers.

In a second study, buyers were given one of three instructions prior to their negotiations: understand what sellers were thinking (perspective taking), understand what sellers felt (empathy), or focus on their own role (control group). Again, perspective-takers secured the most agreements and paid less for the gas station.

In the last study, participants negotiated a job hire, and once again the perspective-takers created more value and earned significantly more points for themselves than controls or the empathizers (who had the lowest score).

"Unfortunately in negotiations, empathizing makes you more concerned about making the other party happy, which can come at your own expense," concluded researcher Adam Galinsky, Ph.D., of the Kellogg School of Management.

And the moral of this story? If you're an *S&H* reader whose head is working *in conjunction* with your heart, and you're in negotiations with a head-centered MBA, your goal might be to understand — and even empathize with — this heart-less perspective and make your decisions accordingly. After all, at the end of their paper, Galinsky et al. did accede that although empathy was generally less useful than perspective-taking, its benefits could emerge over time.

BETSY ROBINSON



Finding Happiness on $5 a Day

The results of three simple studies from a team of researchers at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and Harvard Business School may add up to a simple key to happiness.

First, the researchers asked more than 630 Americans to report their annual income, rate their general happiness, and provide a breakdown of their monthly spending (including bills, gifts for themselves, gifts for others, and donations to charity). As reported in *ScienceDaily*, UBC psychologist Elizabeth Dunn said, "Regardless of how much income each person made, those who spent money on others reported greater happiness, while those who spent more on themselves did not."

The second study measured the happiness levels of employees at a firm in Boston before and after they received their $3,000 to $8,000 profit-sharing bonus. What affected the employees' happiness, says Dunn, was not so much the size of the bonus but how they spent it. The employees who devoted more of their bonus to gifts for others or toward charity consistently reported greater happiness than employees who simply spent money on their own needs.

In the third experiment, participants were given $5 or $20 and told to spend the money by 5 p.m. that day. Half the participants were instructed to spend the money on themselves; the other half had to spend the money on other people. Once again, the participants who spent the money on others reported feeling happier at the end of the day than those who spent the money on themselves.

Concludes Dunn, "These findings suggest that very minor alterations in spending allocations — as little as $5 a day — may be enough to produce real gains in happiness."

Laurie Pawlik-Kienlen

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Listening to the Voice Within: A Discernment Retreat for Clergy. Mon.-Thur., Sept. 29-Oct.2. Do you yearn for a renewed sense of direction or a fresh understanding of your call? Are you doing work that you are tired of or for which you have little energy? Examine personal and work needs, explore blocks to hearing Holy Invitation, and practice listening to the voice within with **Bob G. Stice**, LPCC, a clinical member of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy and faculty member of the CREDO Institute, a national clergy wellness program. Fee: $375.

A Weekend of Mindfulness. Fri.-Sun., Oct. 3-5. Mindfulness, an antidote to stress and ineffective behaviors, is the practice of paying attention to things as they are without judgment. This workshop introduces the practice of mindfulness and includes meditation, gentle yoga and discussion. Leader is **Brian Shelley MD**, assistant professor in the Section of Integrative Medicine at the University of New Mexico and founder of UNM's Integrative Medicine Clinic and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program. Fee: $400.

Dream Portrayal Workshop. Fri.-Sun., Oct. 17-19. Dream Portrayal combines discussion and theatrical techniques to allow participants to explore their dreams. Participants share and enact their dreams under the guidance of the workshop leaders and then debrief to gain further insight. Workshop leaders **Michael Tappan** and **Irene Clurman** have studied extensively with Dr. Jeremy Taylor and hold dream worker certification from his Marin Institute for Projective Dream Work. Fee: $375.

Fees include tuition, double occupancy room and meals

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Armchair Pilgrimages

It may seem like a contradiction, as the word "pilgrimage" derives from the Sanskrit word meaning "to travel" or "to go out," but sometimes we need to take baby steps first — such as taking a "virtual pilgrimage." Check out these sites:

German photographer Sven Nieder has photographed the Road to Santiago in Spain and the pilgrimage to Nidaros, known as St. Olav's Way, in Norway, from Oslo to Trondheim. You can see his photographs of these pilgrimages at **http://sven-nieder.de** or at **buen-camino.de**, or in his book *Santiago* (Schaden Press).

Walk in a Relaxed Manner, by renowned author Joyce Rupp, describes her journey on the Road to Santiago.

Austin Repath, a self-proclaimed "postmodern pilgrim," has a website that posts pilgrim cards for reflection and spiritual growth: **http://webhome.idirect.com/thepilgrim/reflections.htm**.

To go on a pilgrimage with Thich Nhat Hahn, see **plumvillage.org** for sites around the world. To trek to the first Tibetan monastery for Westerners, Gampo Abbey, see **gampoabbey.org/**.

Watch *The Pilgrimage Project*, a documentary about people from diverse Christian traditions going on pilgrimage together to Jerusalem, at **meriwetherproductions.com/the_pilgrimage_project.html**.

Susan Baller-Shepard

AUSTIN REPATH

Ancestry Offer for Black Churches

If you are a member of a Black church, African Ancestry, Inc., has a special offer for your congregation. As part of their new, nationwide church initiative, they will trace members' ancestry back to the specific, present-day African country of origin through specially priced DNA testing. In addition, they will facilitate free workshops at partner churches, and help participants understand their results and become part of a larger online community of participants. For more information, email Gina Paige at gpaige@africanancestry.com, or call 202-723-0900.

A Fool for Peace

Time was once taken away from Bassam Aramin — for raising a Palestinian flag in the '80s; for throwing a hand grenade at Israeli soldiers. Seven years of jail time led him to join Combatants for Peace, an action/dialogue group of Israeli/Palestinian former fighters.

I've come to talk to him because his story in the *New York Times* flew at me like shrapnel. His daughter Abir Aramin, age 10, had been killed in Anata by an Israeli rubber bullet aimed at rioters whose path she'd crossed. Bassam was quoted as saying, "I want my daughter to be the last victim. There are partners on the other side who believe what I believe."

That was in January 2006. Today, beneath a tired rawness, I sense something that resembles joy in Aramin. He is a holy fool for peace. Sitting for his interview at a hotel in East Jerusalem, cradling his cell phone the way a Tibetan Buddhist lama cradles his mala, he waits to be spoken to, and when he finally answers, his voice barely reaches across the table. He tells me that jail was a place of transition. It was in jail that he first began to question the wisdom of armed struggle. "I heard people on both sides saying the conflict can't be solved by military means. But still we saw the conflict going on, with the same bloodshed, the same killings. Everyone knows what the final solution will be: the '67 borders. Why does anyone have to die?"

With weary tenacity, he keeps coming back to the conflict's absurdity: "Israel has hundreds of checkpoints on the West Bank. Their purpose is to create more security, but all they do is create more enemies. The soldiers look at us as suspects. We look at them as victims. The Israelis, too, are being occupied — by the darkness of the occupation, by its immorality. We need their help. I believe in nonviolent change. But we Palestinians can't do it alone."

As we walk, I finally ask the question I came to ask: "After what happened to Abir, did you re-think, even for a moment, your decision to dialogue with Israelis?"

Aramin leans toward me. He looks the way I imagine a Palestinian militant would look when he is about to drum into a stranger's head the blunt logic of armed struggle. Instead, he says, "My determination to make peace with Israel became stronger *after* Abir was killed." He challenges me with his eyes to challenge him. "It would be easy for me to go out and take revenge. But I would be part of the same circle of violence I am against. Look," he says, pulling out a Raggedy Ann carrying bag. From it he removes a couple of cookies in cellophane, two and a half shekels in plastic, and a stick of Cadbury chocolate — reminders of his daughter's absent presence.

ROBERT HIRSCHFIELD

For more on the history of vengeance, see page 58.

"Imagery for Growth and Healing"

an eCourse with Jaqueline Lapa Sussman

Sussman will be leading an eight-week virtual imagery workshop at the *Spirituality & Health* website beginning September 5. Using simple exercises (like the one on page 62), she will help us unlock some of our most common blocks and enhance our understanding. Topics will include:

- *Self-empowering yourself in situations where you feel powerless*
- *Getting to know those you love ... and don't love*
- *Bringing out your best in work*
- *Using your heart for your physical well-being*

Participants will be invited to share their experiences doing the exercises and ask questions in a virtual community monitored by Sussman. Registration is $19.95. For more information and details on the eCourse, go to SpiritualityHealth.com/workshops.

www.spiritualityhealth.com



For more than 25 years, author Jaqueline Lapa Sussman has applied the techniques of eidetic imagery in her work as a counselor, speaker, and teacher. She has written two best-selling books on eidetic imagery: *Freedom from Failure*, a guide to discovering success in careers, love, parenting, and physical well-being; and *Images of Desire*, a self-help book on relationships, intimacy, and human sexuality. She maintains a private practice in Weston, Connecticut and New York City and conducts workshops internationally helping people discover their natural inner presence and their untapped abilities so that they can lead successful and empowered lives.

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— Sonia Choquette, Ph.D.



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MY MOTHER'S BODY TO WIRES, TO TUBES

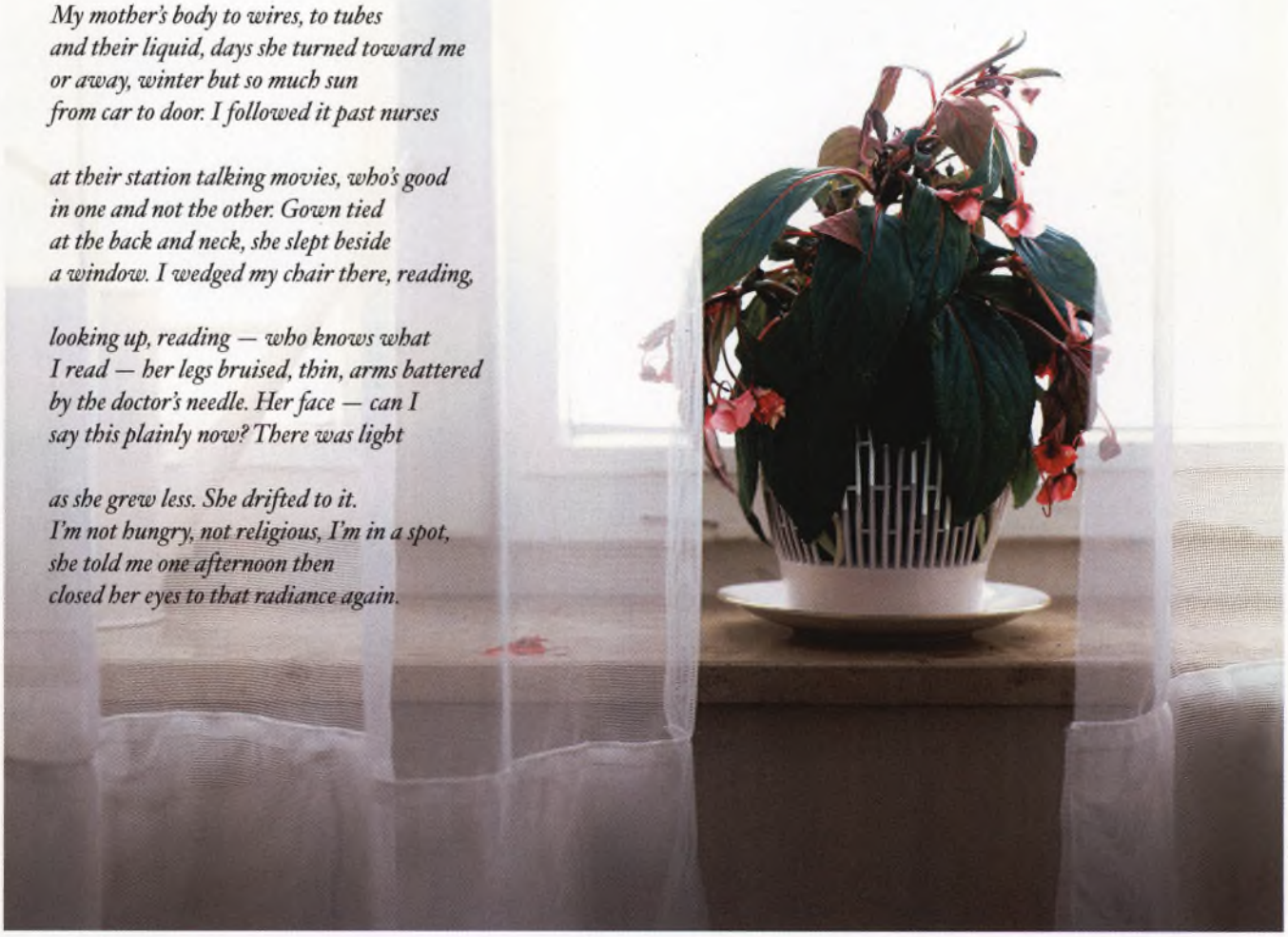
By Marianne Boruch

My mother's body to wires, to tubes
and their liquid, days she turned toward me
or away, winter but so much sun
from car to door. I followed it past nurses

at their station talking movies, who's good
in one and not the other. Gown tied
at the back and neck, she slept beside
a window. I wedged my chair there, reading,

looking up, reading — who knows what
I read — her legs bruised, thin, arms battered
by the doctor's needle. Her face — can I
say this plainly now? There was light

as she grew less. She drifted to it.
I'm not hungry, not religious, I'm in a spot,
she told me one afternoon then
closed her eyes to that radiance again.



OLAF HIRSCHBERG

LOVE So many of us face this situation: a loved one in a medical "spot," with a dire prognosis. It is good to be reminded that sunlight intruding into the fluorescent glare of a hospital room can be a blessing. It is good to witness the fact that even as people seem diminished by the medical array of machines and tubes, we find light in their voices and faces. It is love — unmentioned in this poem but undeniably present — that recalls us to hope, and reminds us that our lives have meaning.

KATHLEEN NORRIS



GETTING TO AHA!

BETWEEN WHERE YOU ARE AND WHO YOU ARE IS A MAGICAL PLACE CALLED THE MAGINAL ZONE. HERE'S HOW TO GET THERE.

By Trebbe Johnson • *Photography by* Chip Simons

For months Eva had looked forward to her three-day wilderness solo on the sacred mountain, Mullaghmore, in western Ireland. An ordained minister and psychotherapist, she planned to make altars to the earth, sky, and four directions and seek insight on how she could be of more service in the world. Circumstances, however, had other plans for her. On the first afternoon, fierce storm winds split one of her tent poles in half. Painstakingly, she tried to repair it by wrapping it with adhesive tape from her first-aid kit, but the pole, now fat and bulky, still bent.

The preparation practices for her solo vision quest had emphasized that all events, inner and outer, were like provisions for the journey, so Eva began to look at her own response to her predicament. She saw that the way she had bound the tent pole was exactly the way she often treated her clients, smothering them in compassion instead of offering them support to make their own decisions. She undid the swaddling and stabilized the pole with a piece of hazel wood that she cut from a small tree, and the tent stood much better.

Two nights later, as another storm raged and she sat inside her tent, bracing it with her body to keep it from collapsing further, she had another revelation: growing up, she had weathered the bad times in a dysfunctional family simply by her determination to protect her inner life, her own private shelter.

Attending simultaneously to what was happening around her and what was happening within, Eva was exploring the "Maginal Zone," a term I coined for a fertile state of meaning and transformation that stretches between the events that unfold around us and our own unique response to them. The Maginal Zone is a place of *imagin*ation — a borderland, a world in the margins. And it is magical. We enter it when we expand our awareness of our surroundings and let the surprises, coincidences, and insights we discover there touch our particular habits, longings, fears, and questions. Interacting with what happens on both inner and outer levels, we find that aspects of our past, present, and future come into a new focus. We see other people, places, and ideas with more insight and compassion, and we feel more connected to a higher sense of purpose.

A three-day wilderness solo is a ticket to the Maginal Zone, but such commitment isn't necessary. While hiking one afternoon in a nature preserve, Sam became fascinated with a formidable NO TRESPASSING sign that a neighbor had made by slathering each letter in red paint on a row of thick pylons. At first dismayed by the sign, he then walked through the pylons and stuck his tongue out at the sign like a defiant child. He practiced slipping between the forbidden zone and the permitted zone. He climbed up on the pylons and, balancing like an acrobat, made his way from one side to the other. And along the way he began to see how his interest in this borderland mirrored his own challenges as a gay, black, classical musician in the inner city, where hip-hop reigned. Playing with the boundary sign reminded him that his gift was, in fact, unifying two apparently alien worlds.

Sam has since founded an organization, Mssng Lnks, in Boston, dedicated to teaching inner-city youth to perform a variety of musical genres and helping them negotiate the ropes to a professional career in music.

Most of us go about our day as if we were on a track — we know what we need to accomplish and we set out for it, whether it's to finish a report, follow a diet, catch a train, or meditate. If we're not focused on something specific, our awareness tends to shrink. In either state, we ignore ideas and sights that beckon alluringly from other directions, urging us to pause and explore them. We tell ourselves that we're too busy or that these invitations are mere distractions. And yet, as the French poet and chronicler of the profound meanings of *Things*, Francis Ponge, wrote, we cannot truly see something until we approach it, not as a superior but as an equal that has the power to startle us with the marvel of its selfhood. "It is necessary for things to disarrange you," wrote Ponge. When we enter the interactive Maginal Zone, we deliberately let the world disarrange us, surprise and enlighten us. And, as Sam and Eve discovered, old inner conflicts are not only mirrored in what happens to us but resolved with fresh new insights.

We cannot truly see something until we approach it as an equal.

The attempt to define the intriguing yet elusive territory between the physical and metaphysical worlds is ancient and universal. In the fifth century B.C.E., the Greek philosopher Empedocles urged his student Pausanias not just to perceive but to perceive his own perceiving and so enter a state of alertness he called *metis*. Medieval alchemists sought to demonstrate the fertile interdependence between humanity and the wider universe. "There is nothing in man that is not marked in his exterior, so that by the exterior one may discover what is in the individual," wrote sixteenth-century Swiss physician and alchemist Paracelsus. Henri Corbin, the twentieth-century scholar of Sufism, used the Latin term *mundus imaginalis* to describe a visionary state somewhere between the senses and the spirit, in which mystics experienced a non-ordinary reality



that was imbued with images but that was far from being merely imaginary or fantastical.

A contemporary visionary, former magistrate, and teacher of the traditional ways of his Shoshone tribe in southeastern Idaho, Clyde Hall likens the Maginal Zone to the "shaman's night," a state of consciousness that's "between the reality of this world and the reality of the other world." In this state, which Hall says is best accessed after one has had the proper training, people may communicate with the spirits of the ancestors and nature beings, all of which are constantly present and ready to impart their wisdom to the human, who is, in fact, a reflection of them. "This is a place of great power," Hall says. "There's a sacred unity between the supernatural powers, the human being, and the environment."

Carl Jung was fascinated with synchronicity, an "acausal connecting principle," or timely occurrence of two things, inner and outer, coming together in a nonlinear yet meaningful way. In an example Jung himself gave, one of his patients was describing a dream she'd had of a golden scarab beetle when Jung heard a clicking noise behind him on the window. He turned to discover that the closest Swiss relative of that mythical insect was trying to fly into his office. Did the inner world invite the outer circumstance? Were the two events on a kind of parallel track through the universe, destined to meet in just this way? Jung did not have the answers, but he perceived synchronicity as neither entirely psychological nor entirely physical, yet occupying a real "psychoid" space in between. However, says Nancy Qualls-Corbett, Jungian analyst and author of *The Sacred Prostitute*, defining the boundaries of this mysterious territory is less important than asking the question: "What is it that the world is bringing us when we are in harmony, when we feel very connected to our sense of inner life? If we are willing to suspend our insistence that we are merely physical beings who must maintain a concrete hold on the world, then we can be part of the numinosity that surrounds these synchronistic events. And we can ask, 'I'm here. Where does the world want to put me?'"

Opening ourselves to where the world wants to put us also provides valuable insight on where we are right now. To access these clues, when we enter the Maginal Zone, we invite our rational, conscious mind to take a rest — except in matters of safety and health. We start listening to the body, the emotions, and to our innate sense of fascination that seems to spring to life as soon as we give it room. Fascination demands that we close the distance between ourselves and some beguiling other and explore a possible relationship between us. Suspending disbelief, we allow ourselves to be surprised and touched by events that sweep around us and seem to implicate us in their flow, sometimes in astonishing ways. A woman with a terminal illness was drawn to two Ponderosa pines in a city park — one dead and encrusted with fungus, the other green and vibrant. That dead tree, that's me, she thought. A magpie began circling above, and she was convinced it would land in the healthy tree. When it alit in the dead tree, she was deeply moved, as if she had been blessed by a spirit that accepted and valued her fully, despite her infirmity.

The easiest way to explore the Maginal Zone is through nature, says Meredith Little, who in 1972 introduced wilderness rites of passage into contemporary American culture. "We are nature," Little says. "The land is nonjudgmental enough to allow us to be our whole selves fully. Nature expresses its whole-

The wisdom we grasp is both surprising and a truth we have waited for.

ness not through words but through its being, and that allows us to remember our own nature and step into that expression of ourselves."

There is a fine distinction between the fascinations that beckon in nature and those we encounter in the commercial world. Boutique windows and advertisements kindle the urge to possess. They suggest that by acquiring something new, we can become a different and happier person. In the Maginal Zone, fascination gives us a deeper, more comprehensive sense of who we really are and shows us paths toward bringing more of that uniqueness forth. And if we're attentive, we can immerse ourselves at any time and in any place in this inviting playground of the soul.

Nell decided to explore the Maginal Zone in downtown Omaha. She was missing her son, whom she had just taken to the airport for a visit to his father in California. Wandering into a small ice-cream shop, she discovered that on each of the tables was a coloring book and crayons. The coloring book at her table depicted a family vacation, and one of the pictures was of a boy getting off a plane. Delighted, she colored the boy in the kinds of clothes her son had been wearing that morning, then drew a pink shield around him as a symbol of safety. When she left the café, her feeling of emptiness had been replaced by one of excitement and possibility for her time alone.



Clyde Hall believes that people once traveled more easily and frequently to the Maginal Zone. Traditional people had to be in close relationship to the animals and plants with whom they shared the land and on whom they depended for their survival. "Now there is no longer that need to be in sacred unity with Spirit," he says. Yet Brian Swimme, cosmologist and author of *The Universe Is a Green Dragon*, believes we may actually be moving closer to conscious participation in the rich possibilities of the moment. He likens the Maginal Zone to a decision-making process that is constantly unfolding on countless levels, from quantum to human.

At the quantum level, says Swimme, "each moment of existence seems to begin with the whole. All things are possible, vibrating. Then there is a kind of decision made about how things will evolve. The variety of possibilities evaporates, or collapses. Think of the quintillion interactions made at the neuropeptide level in the brain. We are reassembling all decisions from moment to moment, at the atomic level, the cellular level, and finally the conscious human level. We are moving from what [physicist] David Bohm called the 'implicate realm' to the explicate, from possibilities to 'explicate' form. We realize that the psyche is participating with something more intricate than we realized."

In the Maginal Zone we are in active play with aspects of ourselves that are often closed to us: intuition, the ability to relate intimately with nature, boldness arising from a sudden grasp of what must be done in the moment — and then doing it, greater awareness of our surroundings, a sense of the inherent worth of everything that makes up our reality on both the inner and outer levels, and, as Brian Swimme points out, a grasp of the possibilities of every moment.

The Maginal Zone is informative. Sometimes it reveals things about ourselves that we don't like. But because the revelation is so direct, so personal, so timely, we usually find we are grateful for the experience. For example, a man whose feet got tangled in a strand of barbed wire while on a walk in the mountains used the obstacle as a doorway to confront his pattern of isolating himself and wounding others with his love affairs. Often, too, the Maginal Zone tells us things about our deep, authentic self that have a validity and authority that we find we can accept more than the word of even our most trusted friends and mentors. The wisdom we grasp is both utterly surprising and a truth we seem to have waited all our lives to see brought to light.

Irish legend tells of a king, Sweeney, who stayed too long in the visionary world and ended up lost and addled, living in trees and talking to the birds, but useless to his community. Similarly, we cannot remain forever in the Maginal Zone, for we need to bring the treasures we find there back to our daily life. We must extend our expectation of coincidences and possibilities to all we do and apply the same kind of creative, playful response we find so natural while in the Maginal Zone to more mundane situations at home, in the office — and in a traffic jam. Perceiving life as an adventure full of meaning, we can deal more effectively and imaginatively with all kinds of situations, painful as well as joyous. We find we have more compassion for other people and situations, as well as for all aspects of ourselves, for we recognize that every part is necessary to a great whole. There are many ways to enter the Maginal Zone [see box, below]. The doorway opens whenever we recognize the world's abundant invitations to us and accept them as we, and only we, can do. S&H

Trebbe Johnson is the author of *The World Is a Waiting Lover: Desire and the Quest for the Beloved* and the director of Vision Arrow (visionarrow.com), leading journeys worldwide that combine adventure travel, mythic imagination, and the quest for meaning. See more on page 8.

HOW TO ENTER YOUR MAGINAL ZONE

You can easily explore the Maginal Zone on your own. All you need is some time alone for the journey and the willingness to accept all that happens as part of a great adventure story.

Give yourself at least 40 minutes — ideally, more — to be alone in nature. Go through a symbolic gateway (even something as simple as stepping over a stick) as a way of telling yourself that you're leaving behind your ordinary way of perceiving and entering the Maginal Zone. You might state aloud your hope or intention for the journey, for example: I ask to be shown something that has meaning for me, or I ask for insight on my problem with money.

Pay attention to where you go. Maybe you usually like wide-open places and today find yourself drawn to the woods. How will you respond to this prompting? Note feelings that arise, especially around the periphery of your consciousness. Note if any memories come up.

When something interests you, sit with it. It doesn't have to be something beautiful or even "natural." It could be a wildflower, dead tree, or an old tin can. Sit down with this momentary "host" and pay attention to it. Don't think too much. By all means, don't rely on symbolism you've learned elsewhere. If you see an owl, don't assume owl means wisdom or death or anything else. What is this particular owl conveying that strikes you?

Your rational mind will interrupt you and try to persuade you that this exercise isn't working, that you should get back to more important things. Thank it and dive again into the moment. Do this at least once, maybe more.

Do you feel that some action is required? Maybe you're moved to lie down on the ground, sing, do a simple ceremony, let your tears flow. Pay attention to your intuition and respond accordingly.

When you do get up, note if your feelings are different. At the end of your walk, write down your journey or tell your story to a friend who will be interested in it. You'll probably find that, in the telling, you will realize that more happened than you thought.

Try this exercise again in a few days at the same place. It will be completely different, because you are completely different. Moreover, you're likely to discover that each time you practice this way of being, your perceptions of the experience while it's occurring are more finely tuned than they were before.

Here are a few other ways to enter the Maginal Zone:

- Step off the familiar path and follow something that beckons.
- Make a decision to move through the day as if something wonderful is about to happen. (It will.)
- Dress up as the person you're scared to be.
- Have a conversation with someone who fascinates you.
- In a bookstore, pick up a book on a subject you know nothing about.
- Ask a tree what it has to tell you and agree with yourself not to question what you hear.


VICTOR

ON MY DESK IS A NOTEBOOK TITLED "1996: Rehab Clients and Neuromuscular Massage Treatment Plans." Scribbled in the margin of the last page is a one-word note to myself: "LISTEN!"

Science is now proving what 10 years of listening to my clients' pain stories has taught me: Personal beliefs affect pain outcomes. In addition, anthropologists have shown how culture influences personal beliefs. For an American this could mean that his or her belief about chronic pain is colored by a biomedical view, where pain is perceived and treated primarily as a function of tissue damage. Accepting the premise that most Americans and their doctors share this biomedical view, two critical questions emerge: (1) Are American chronic pain sufferers better or worse off than those in countries with alternative views? (2) If worse, what can American chronic pain sufferers learn from other cultures?

WHY AMERICANS SUFFER MORE PAIN

OUR EXPERIENCE OF PAIN MAY BE INFLUENCED BY OUR CULTURAL BELIEFS. HERE'S A WAY TO INTEGRATE THE BEST OF MANY WORLDS INTO A PAIN TREATMENT PLAN.

By Mark Liskey, B.S., C.N.M.T. / *Photo illustrations by* C.J. Burton



THE COST OF CATASTROPHIZING

Ask any health-care practitioner if belief affects pain outcome, and she will more than likely answer yes. A University of Michigan Health System study recently showed that just the promise of a placebo reduced pain (see "Tracking Placebos in the Brain," *S&H* March 2008, page 29). More dramatic was an experiment at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, in which study participants were told that they would be receiving an electrical shock. Despite the fact that the apparatus was not electrified, 50 percent of the participants reported pain.

Now consider how such belief about pain might play out over the long term. Might negative beliefs adversely affect the quality of life of chronic pain sufferers? A pain study (IE Lame et al., *European Journal of Pain*, 9(1):15–24, Feb. 2005) concluded that catastrophizing with beliefs such as "I will only get worse" is associated with a lower quality of life rating — *more so than the actual intensity of the pain*.

In my practice as a neuromuscular massage therapist, my chronic pain clients who are catastrophizers seem less happy with their lives and are, most often, the hardest to treat. At one time, I believed that catastrophizing was just a psychological phenomenon. But in that assumption, I neglected to take into account the health-care system in which the chronic pain sufferer was being treated . . . that is, until 2004.

THE THERAPIST BECOMES THE PATIENT

In 2004 I hurt my back and suddenly, I was a patient in the medical system that I promoted. My self-prescribed treatment of neuromuscular massage therapy was the first course of action to fail, followed by the M.D.'s meds and the chiropractor's adjustments. With the fervor of TV's Dr. House, I scrupulously recorded my daily pain symptoms — "Sharp pain, T12, bilateral, down to sacrum . . ." — to relay to the physical therapist in charge of my next course of treatment. As the pain got worse, I sleuthed harder for an answer. At the slightest twinge, I'd dutifully reach for the tape recorder on the nightstand and dictate into it: "T6, pain migrating around to front of ribs . . ." Then on one sleepless night I staggered into the kitchen and made a watershed pain-management move: I trashed the tape recorder. At least for that moment, I felt great.

Fortunately, time and patience cured my pain, but this experience proved to be as valuable as my neuromuscular training. It provided me with a primer of what it might be like to have recurrent pain in a biomedical setting. My conclusion: The "Dr. House" practice of viewing pain as simply a physical phenomenon that one needs to figure out didn't help me deal with my pain. And my opinion regarding clients who catastrophized needed to be revised.

Yes, negative beliefs play a part in making a chronic pain syndrome more problematic, but so does a medical system that treats pain as primarily a physical phenomenon. For instance, as one treatment after another failed, my doctors and I all neglected to consider my disappointment. Instead, we continued to look for the causes of the physical phenomenon of pain, while my disappointment fueled more fear and anxiety that left me feeling helpless. I had created my own culture of pain.

THE AMERICAN WAY OF PAIN

There is evidence that Americans are more adversely affected by chronic pain than people who live in other cultures. For example, in a cross-cultural study of American and Japanese chronic low-back pain patients (*Clinical Journal of Pain*, 6:118–124, 1990), Americans who suffered from lower-back pain had greater psychological, social, vocational, and avocational impairment than lower-back pain sufferers in Japan.

Two years after this study, another cross-cultural back-pain

NEGATIVE BELIEFS PLAY A PART IN MAKING A CHRONIC PAIN SYNDROME MORE PROBLEMATIC, BUT SO DOES A MEDICAL SYSTEM THAT TREATS PAIN AS PRIMARILY A PHYSICAL PHENOMENON.

study concluded that when compared to patients in five other nations, American patients' self-perceived level of dysfunction was the worst.

There is also evidence to suggest that an integrated mind–body approach may better serve chronic pain sufferers than our typical biomedical approach. In a 1997 study on the effects of the cultural context on chronic pain (*Social Science Medicine*, 45(9)), researchers found that New Englanders who used a biomedical system had more treatment-related stress than Puerto Ricans who used a mind–body system. In the Puerto Rican system, chronic pain is viewed as the result of biological, psychological, and social factors — a bio-psychosocial experience. The researchers concluded that "shared views and values contributed to more supportive patient/provider relationships, and patients thus experienced less treatment-related stress." The biomedical view supported by New England doctors and patients caused distress and alienation.

CREATING HEALTHY PAIN TREATMENT IN THE BIOMEDICAL SYSTEM

So what can a chronic pain sufferer in a biomedical health system do to help herself? One answer would be to do what outdoorsman Jayson Simon-Jones did. At the age of 30, this mountain guide in Crested Butte, Colorado, suffered a debilitating injury that was hard to explain to fellow guides because it was virtually invisible — he had no cast or crutches or other tactile signs of injury.

"The pain intensity often fluctuated for no rhyme or reason," Simon-Jones remarked, "and people became skeptical that I was actually injured." After treatments (from Rolfing to epidural injections) failed, he had back surgery. The operation eliminated the leg dragging but not all the pain. Nevertheless, Simon-Jones continues to mountain guide and rock climb today, in part due to the mind–body microcosm he created for himself. Here's what he did:

Interview surgeons / "The first surgeon I met with was like a mechanic and the second one didn't fill the criteria that I was told to look for," said Simon-Jones. "But the third answered all of my questions and didn't try to sell himself. He treated the

(continued on page 76)

IS AMERICAN PAIN FROM AMERICAN BRAINS?

DO PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT CULTURES FEEL PAIN differently because they use their brains differently? That's a question that has been raised by brain imaging work at MIT. Though the study (*Psychological Science*, 19:01) looked at visual perceptual tasks, it may give a new perspective on the cultural aspects of pain.

The study included 10 East Asians who had recently arrived in the United States and 10 native-born U.S. citizens. Study participants were asked to make quick perceptual judgments while in a functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) scanner — a technology that maps blood-flow changes in the brain, which correspond to mental operations. Subjects were shown a sequence of stimuli consisting of lines within squares and were asked to compare each stimulus with the previous one. In some trials, they judged whether the lines were the same length, regardless of the surrounding squares (an absolute judgment of individual objects independent of context). In other trials, they decided whether the lines were in the same proportion to the squares, regardless of absolute size (a relative judgment of interdependent objects).

In previous behavioral studies of similar tasks, Americans were more accurate on absolute judgments, East Asians on relative judgments. In the current study, the tasks were intentionally easy enough so that there were no differences in performance between the two groups. Nevertheless, the two groups showed different patterns of brain activation when performing these tasks.

Americans, when making relative judgments that typically were harder for them, activated brain regions involved in attention-demanding mental tasks. They showed much less activation of these regions when making the more culturally familiar absolute judgments. East Asians showed the opposite tendency, engaging the brain's attention system more for absolute judgments. Within both groups, stronger identification with their respective cultures was associated with a stronger culture-specific pattern of brain activation.

"Everyone uses the same attention machinery for more difficult cognitive tasks, but they are trained to use it in different ways, and it's the culture that does the training," explains lead researcher John Gabrieli.

It will be fascinating to discover whether our culture predisposes American brains for more pain.

THE RED BUMP

On her vacation, a true seeker reads the signs.

By Francesca Vanegas
Illustration by Marcos Chin

After years of single-handedly managing a yoga studio, I yearn for time off, so I pack my hiking boots and iPod — fully loaded with music and spiritual teachings, from Eckhart Tolle to *The Secret* — and head for a spa in the red mountains of St. George, Utah. Waiting for the plane to take off for Las Vegas, my gaze falls to the tiny red bump on my right shin. It has been there for weeks. Creepy thoughts come to mind each time I look.

Three strong voices emerge: the calming "It's nothing"; the fearsome "You should have gotten it checked"; and the judgmental "Your fears are irrational." As the landing gear retreats into the belly of the plane, my fear gauge jumps to the red zone, and I observe a Hail Mary automatically reciting itself, courtesy of 20 years of Catholic upbringing.

What guidance would I offer someone with similar fears? Hands down, I'd point them to Eckhart Tolle. Taking my own advice, I find my iPod and begin to listen to Tolle's reading of *The Power of Now*. Floating above the clouds, Tolle reminds me that I am not my thoughts, that conditioning causes my habitual emotional reactions, and that only the present moment is real. Instant balm.

I touch the puffy little nodule that seems to change shape on my shin bone. I've read that skin cancer tends to change size and shape. The blood drains from my face and plummets to my feet.

Tolle says that I should accept the present moment. But what do I accept? My fear? If my fear is mind driven, and Tolle guides me to not identify with my mind, why accept this present moment's false alarm? And if this moment is manipulated by the mind, is it real?

The mental frenzy shifts me to take refuge in the training I got at Kripalu, the Massachusetts-based yoga center. Eight years ago I volunteered to clean toilets and four months later emerged squeaky-clean from the belief that I had to stay married to the corporation. Kripalu's five-point plan — breathe, relax, feel, watch, and allow — teaches us to ride the wave of emotions and embrace whatever comes up.

I decide to ride the wave and stay present to the fear, the anxiety, and the sadness that come up when I experience my fear of skin cancer. Breathing deeply, I feel everything. I even grieve the loss of hair that hasn't fallen out. The promise of this technique is that awareness dissolves the grip of fear.

Fear and Loathing

We land in Vegas. The scream of slot machines overwhelms me, but the luggage carousel isn't moving and I realize I forgot to pack my patience. All I want is a hot bath in my room that's still two hours away. I repeat my new Vegas mantra: Be out of here, now!

On I-15 North headed toward St. George, Utah, the heart of Mormon country, my mental Ferris wheel finally stops spinning. I listen to CDs. The popular Esther Hicks, featured in the original *The Secret* DVD, channels Abraham, a so-called group of entities. Initially, Abraham's voice comes on like a bottle of bleach, but under the influence of the Nevada desert, she/it gets inspirational. According to Abraham/Hicks, negative thoughts generate negative emotions that bring us exactly what we don't want. So "if you want health, visualize health, not sickness," say Abraham/Hicks. *The Secret*'s Rhonda Byrne chimes in, "If you want to be thin, stop saying 'I'm fat.'"

Yikes! Did I create skin cancer with my fears in the last few hours? Then again, I shouldn't have had that last thought.

I arrive at the resort, and titian-hued mountains form a necklace around the spa. My eyes absorb the red everywhere, and my nose is grateful for the lavender bushes. My room has a minimalist, Zen-like decor: subdued earth colors, slate floors, and a generously sized bathtub.

Abraham/Hicks urges me to raise my vibration through "virtual reality" — imagining what we want and feeling good draws to us the object of our desires.

How do I do this? Settling into the grand tub with my iPod, I

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Odd-Shaped Tomatoes

The food I get from the cooperative farm I belong to often looks sallow, splotchy, and ill-formed. That's what I love about it. My produce is renegade! It is so lusciously, succulently, and nutritiously ugly.

By BK Loren



rganic foods! My father, 82, is very against organic foods and all "that hippie shit they stand for." When he comes to my house, though, he absently reaches into the fruit basket on my kitchen table and bites into an organic tomato. Immediately, he gets a misty look. He tells me of summer days he spent on the Colorado high plains, working the fields. "I'd eat tomatoes like apples, straight off the vine, half the bushel gone by the time I got back inside. Oh, I caught hell for that!" he says, smiling, licking tomato juice from his lips.

He picks tomato after tomato from the basket, and this law-abiding military man becomes a young boy walking through fields, disobeying his parents because he just couldn't help himself — the tomatoes tasted that good.

I'm what he would call a hippie. I've protested every war he's fought in. We're often at odds, which is why I treasure these tomatoes; they are one of the few things keeping my father and me connected.

Photography by Courtney Grant Winston

The man who planted these magic tomatoes is Jerry Monroe, the third-generation owner of the oldest organic farm in Colorado, the farm to which I belong as a member of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). CSA is a concept founded in Japan by a group of women who shared concerns about increases in food imports, weakening of local economy, the health dangers of pesticides, and the loss of local, independent farmlands. Rather than butt heads with big business, they worked together to form a direct relationship between farmers and individual buyers who sought healthy, locally grown food. This relationship, called *teikei* in Japanese, translates as "putting the farmers' face on the food," an appropriate title for a process that celebrates an increasingly scarce natural resource, the independent farmer. By way of Europe, the concept of teikei migrated to the U.S., landing at Indian Line Farm, Massachusetts, where it was dubbed CSA in 1985.

Like my father, I'm a realistic sort. I don't think it would be fun to work on a farm; I think it would be hard work, too hard for my gym-developed muscles to handle. I am, however, a fierce advocate of CSAs and local produce. I don't know exactly how I got this way. When I joined my local CSA, my motives were not rooted in political ideology. I had no intention of changing the world, undercutting corporate power, "subverting the dominant paradigm," strengthening my local economy, or aiding the fight against hunger (all of which are direct benefits of CSAs and supporting local farmers). I was simply tired of grocery shopping. The whole scene got me down. I could go to a natural-foods store; I could go to Safeway; I could go to the local hippie co-op. It was all the same. Piles of food stared at me like bodies whose souls had vacated them. I was haunted by the way the red peppers curved at the waist, stretching toward one another longingly; by the way the bananas clung to each other and the Napa cabbage lay so quietly in its frilly bed, while its blue-collar cousin, the purple cabbage, sat boldly on the edge of the shelf, ready to topple and take off like a bowling ball if someone passed by too abruptly.

Okay, maybe there was some projection on my part, but the food looked empty to me. After all, most of it had traveled an average of 1,500 miles away from its home before reaching that shelf. I was a military brat; I empathized with the "fresh" corn and its lonesome, cross-country journey.

My grocery shopping woes were compounded by signs I saw plastered on telephone poles and streetlights in the parking lots: "Lose 40 pounds in 40 days. Guaranteed!" My father was active in three wars: WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. It bothered me that he had fought, as he says, "for the freedom of this country" and that this was part of what we were doing with that "freedom": creating and marketing food for its lack of content, while people in other nations starved. What else, I wondered, were we touting for its lack of content?

As I entered the door of the grocery store, I had only a vague idea of where my "fresh, organic" produce had been. An incomprehensible machine in — I don't know — Iowa, or maybe California, had methodically stabbed the seeds into the ground, and a computer-programmed pivot had watered the seeds until they began to grow. They grew very big, very fast, because they were designed by engineers to grow big and fast. Then whatever it was — let's say a red pepper — was plucked from the vine and put to its first major test: Was it big enough? Did it have the right red-pepper shape? Did it successfully hide all signs of ever being subjected to weather or greedy insects? Indeed, my shiny pepper passed the test! Proudly, my pepper was then herded into a truck with many others peppers that looked just like it. After that, a tarp was thrown over the whole crowd, and together they made the big trip across America (passing many local farms on the way), where they were unloaded into a distributing warehouse, then loaded into another truck and carried to another warehouse, and so on and so forth, until my "fresh, organic" red pepper arrived in the store in Colorado, where it sat in the stock room for days. After a while, it was slapped with a price tag, then displayed under bright interrogation lights. No wonder it looked naked and scared as I fingered through and plucked my prized capsicum from the bunch. By the time I purchased my succulent red pepper, I was at least the fourth person to pay for it. The number of times it had been fondled before it became mine is anyone's guess.

Since joining the CSA, however, my relationship with food has become more trusting, more intimate. On Thursday mornings, the Monroe farm truck backs into my suburban driveway. Jacquie Monroe — blonde hair, jeans, and T-shirt — hops out, followed by her two kids, Alana and Kyle. We chat (What's been going on in your life? Not much; how about yours? — things like that) and then we commence with the work at hand. Jacquie stands in the bed of the truck and peels back the canvas from the produce, and my nose — nay, my pores — are filled with the scent of fresh garlic and onions and broccoli and cauliflower and beans and lettuce, and oh, I swoon. I'm 10 feet from the truck when this culinary bouquet saturates me, and it occurs to me that I've never smelled anything like this in any grocery store. I don't have to press my nose to the cantaloupes in Jacquie's truck to see if they're fresh. I can smell them from 10 feet away, the sweet scent permeating the air like — like what? Like fresh, just-picked-this-morning, bright-orange-and-

Want to Join a CSA in Your Area?

The Internet is a great tool for this. Between the following two sites, you should be able to find a CSA near you and sign up today:

localharvest.org/Local Harvest searches nationwide and posts an abbreviated list of produce and meats offered by each CSA.

organicconsumers.org/purelink.html Organic Consumers searches by ZIP code, then connects you with your local CSA's webpage.

When your CSA basks in an overabundant harvest, so will you. Check out **uga.edu/nchfp/**, a helpful page on safe methods of home food preservation: canning, freezing, dehydrating, making jam — you name it. It's a great way to eat locally year-round.



meaty, extra-juicy, can't-help-but-eat-it-now cantaloupe.

By the time my produce makes it to my driveway, I know exactly where it has been. Jerry planted the seeds that were either handed down through three generations of farming on the same land in LaSalle, Colorado, or purchased new from catalogs, not Monsanto. Jerry, Jacquie, Alana, and Kyle watered the seeds. One of the CSA working-members picked the produce, divvied up the harvest into potato sacks, and loaded the sacks onto the truck.

By the time I haul the gunny sack into my kitchen, chunks of loamy earth fall on the floor, reminding me that what I eat depends on just that — large chunks of undeveloped earth. The onions and garlic I get from the farm are not round balls; they have long green tops, great for soup stock, and the garlic is waxy, the skin nothing like the dry parchment I once thought encased all garlic. When I pull the bulb apart to extract a clove, garlic juice drips out. I had to look at my members' newsletter to identify an oddly shaped golden mound as cauliflower. I learned later that commercial farmers hide the florets of their cauliflower from sunlight to assure a uniform color (white), and that the golden color of my cauliflower assures me of more nutrients absorbed from the sun.

Granted, the food I get from the farm often looks sallow, splotchy, and ill-formed. That's what I love about it. My produce is renegade! It is so lusciously, succulently, and nutritiously ugly. The beets are like a kid's rock collection, different sizes and shapes, some round and plump as a heart, others as long as carrots. Some potatoes are like skipping stones, others like large river rocks. Inconvenient for cooking? Maybe. But compare that to this inconvenience: Much of this food would have been tossed into the trash bin if Jerry and Jacquie had continued selling to the natural food stores in the area. Only certain sizes, shapes, and colors meet the "high standards" demanded by grocers. They do not test for nutrients (up to half of which are lost 72 hours after a piece of produce is picked, organic or not). They do not test for toxicity. They test for uniformity of size and color. Diversity does not make a beautiful display, and a beautiful display is what opens the floodgates of the insatiable urge to buy. Food in America is most often not about hunger.

Americans, by and large, select their food based on the unwieldy, abstract notion of physical beauty. It's as if we were scoping the produce for a one-night stand . . .

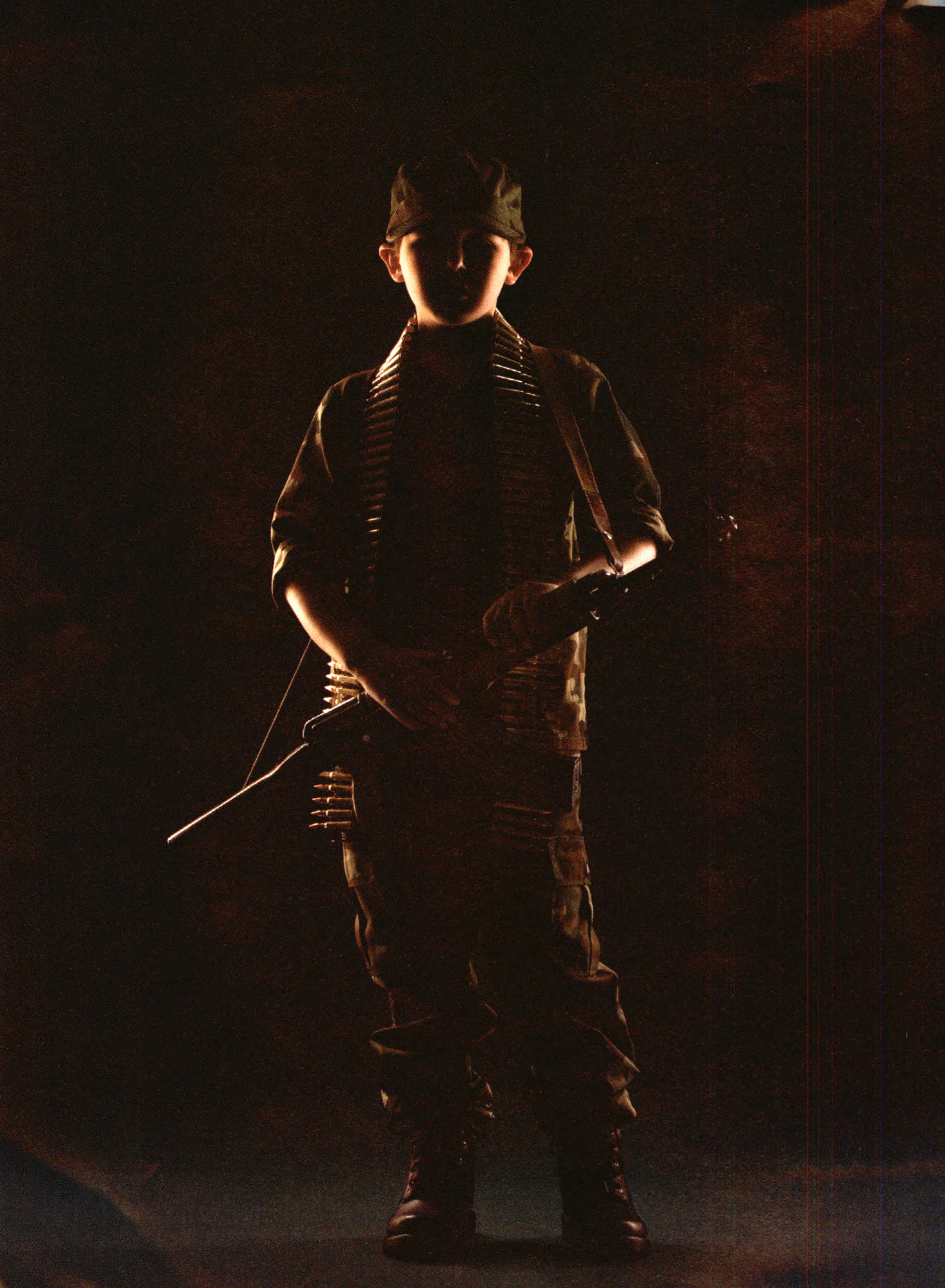
According to Jerry, about 25 percent of all commercial produce in America is thrown away in the field because it is blemished, scarred, crooked, or off-color. Another 25 percent is then tossed during the grading process, which bends to the whims of food fashion. For eons, Grade C and smaller potatoes were tossed into dumpsters due to their inadequate size. Recently, however, someone noticed that Grade C taters are downright delicious — more delicious even than expensive Grade A's. Thus, the birth of a trend; when you order "new potatoes" on the menu at your favorite gourmet restaurant, you are eating yesterday's trash — and paying more for it.

Americans, by and large, select their food based on the unwieldy, abstract notion of physical beauty. It's as if we were scoping the produce for a one-night stand, when what our bodies really need from food is a healthy, long-term relationship.

It may be true that you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone, but I think there's a more slippery version of the same truth: You don't know what you've lost 'til you find it.

My father picks up an organic tomato from my fruit basket, and the world returns to him. Through this food, we are connected. S&H

See BK Loren's biography on page 8.



To become more forgiving, we first need to accept why we crave revenge.

Vengeance 101

By Michael E. McCullough

Throughout history, we've had an insatiable fascination with stories of vengeance. From the earliest Greek tragedies, to the Bible, to Shakespeare, to recent movies like *Atonement*, *There Will Be Blood*, and *Sweeney Todd*, revenge fuels the stories that people find important, memorable, and entertaining.

But you don't have to crack open a novel or sit down to a movie to get an eyeful of revenge. The desire for revenge is the most powerful cause of violence that has been identified by social psychologists. About one in five violent assaults and murders is motivated by vengeance. Anthropologists tell us that the desire for revenge was one of the earliest motives for war. Today, terrorists recruit human bombs by taking advantage of that desire for revenge. Seeking revenge, people even conscript children.

Photography by Jim Graham

Vengeance,

then, is a very real problem — for individuals, for societies, and for the future of our little planet. The stakes are high; we should be doing all we can to understand the meaning and motivation of revenge — and what we might do to control it. I believe that part of our problem is that we view revenge through the wrong lens. Our distorted view makes the problem even more difficult to solve.

OUR MISDIAGNOSIS

Society's main metaphor for revenge is disease. By default, we tend to think of revenge as a sickness that invades a vulnerable host (perhaps one whose resistance to the infection has been weakened by a poor psychological constitution or a bad childhood), consumes the host (morally, physically, and psychologically), and then wreaks destructive effects on the avenger and the objects of his or her vengeance. Sometimes this disease spreads from one avenger-host to another until the outbreak reaches epidemic proportions. When you hear reporters describe "outbreaks of violence" that are fueled by the lust for vengeance, that's the disease metaphor at work.

This disease model of revenge received modern psychology's seal of approval in 1948, when an influential psychoanalyst named Karen Horney described how the desire for revenge could absorb people for a moment in time — or for life, becoming, effectively, a chronic illness: "This drive can be the governing passion of a life — time to which everything is subordinated, including self-interest. All intelligence, all energies, then, are dedicated to the one goal of vindictive triumph." Horney went on to argue that people prevented from exercising their vengeful impulses may exhibit symptoms such as headaches, stomachaches, fatigue, and insomnia. In short, the desire for revenge produces such a powerful psychological toxin that it literally makes you sick.



This notion that vindictiveness is a sign that something has gone awry in the sufferer, or perhaps is even a cause of mental illness, is now so well established that we rarely think about it. For example, a recent scholarly paper about the "psychiatric problems" of people whose loved ones had been murdered described "obsessive revenge seeking" as one of the common "symptoms" that people experience after the murder of a loved one. Not only has the person lost someone dear, he or she has contracted a mental illness.

OUR IMPERFECT CURE

If vengeance is a disease, then the cure must certainly be forgiveness. Right? One psychiatrist recently endorsed a colleague's work on forgiveness by saying that it "may be as important to the treatment of emotional and mental disorders as the discovery of sulfa drugs and penicillin were to the treatment of infectious diseases." Another recent book title dubs forgiveness "the greatest healer of all." Walk into any bookstore with a decent self-help section, and you'll find shelves sagging under the weight of instruction books that will show you how to forgive your grudges in a few steps. If the books don't help, you can now find a therapist trained in "forgiveness therapy."

Make no mistake — more than a dozen scientific studies show that therapeutic approaches to forgiveness really do help people, and that's good. But my problem with "disease" and "cure" metaphors for understanding revenge and forgiveness is that they cause us to overlook some golden opportunities to make the world a less vengeful, more forgiving place on a much larger scale than self-help books and psychotherapy could ever achieve.

DEEP ROOTS OF REVENGE

Evolutionary science has produced a very different understanding of both revenge and forgiveness. The desire for revenge is not a disease; instead, it is a universal trait of human nature that was crafted by natural selection because of the critical problems it solved as our species was evolving. Indeed, research from many corners of the scientific world has recently converged upon the three functions that revenge likely served during human evolution:

1. The threat of revenge was effective in deterring our ancestors' rivals from harming them.

2. Revenge helped to dissuade those individuals who were stupid

CHOOSE YOUR PROJECT FOR INTERNATIONAL FORGIVENESS DAY

ON INTERNATIONAL FORGIVENESS DAY (Sunday, August 3) you can help make the world a less vengeful, more forgiving place by choosing one of the projects below to implement in your community, congregation, or household:

1. **Identify three resources within the history, scriptures, or rituals of your religious tradition that can be used to promote forgiveness, and three that can be used to promote revenge.** Then, create an opportunity for people in your religious congregation to discuss these insights and what they ought to do with them.

2. **Organize a regular social event or community-service activity between your religious congregation and a local congregation from another faith (preferably one with whom your group has shared a history of misunderstanding, mistrust, or resentment).** Friendship and cooperation are two of the most reliable resources at our disposal for making the world a less vengeful, more forgiving place.

3. **Ensure that your workplace and the community organizations in which you are involved have fair, open, and efficient policies for addressing grievances and punishing people who violate the rules.** When people feel that they have been wronged or that someone has broken important rules of their groups, they feel vengeful in response. When justice is swiftly and fairly applied to rule-breakers, however, the desire for revenge dissipates, and people find it easier to forgive. On the other hand, when people feel that serious infractions have gone unpunished, they'll be tempted to take up the cause of justice by pursuing revenge on their own. A passion for fairness and justice is at the heart of leadership and good management.

4. **Promote a climate of apology and compensation in your family, neighborhood, congregation, or place of work.** Sincere apologies, displays of genuine remorse, and offers of compensation are the most reliable mechanisms at human beings' disposal for encouraging forgiveness. Parents have always taught their children to apologize; today, public officials and governments are discovering the power of apology, too. Australians have even begun to celebrate an unofficial "National Sorry Day" each year to acknowledge centuries of mistreatment of Australia's aboriginal peoples. Apologies and offers of compensation have helped to infuse forgiveness into some of the world's most severe and long-standing conflicts.

5. **Work with your local law enforcement agency to start a restorative justice program in your community.** Restorative justice programs create opportunities for contrite offenders and willing victims to meet face-to-face in order to facilitate apologies, to arrive at a better understanding of why the crime occurred, and to develop meaningful plans for reparations and integrating the offender back into the community. These victim/offender conferences decrease victims' desires for revenge, promote forgiveness, and make victims less angry and fearful of their offenders.

6. **Design some creative ways to encourage better relations between the people in your community and the police.** People find it easier to forgive the harms they have suffered when they trust that there is a system of law and order that will defend their interests when things get out of hand. Developing a pattern of courteous and respectful contact between your neighbors and your local police when times are good can provide a strong foundation when people need the police to help them after they've been victimized. This, in turn, can help to drive down revenge-motivated violence.

7. **Encourage the people in your community to read a great work of fiction or to watch a foreign film about a group of people for whom animosity is high.** Novels allow us to see the world through the eyes of others and empathize with the human traits we share. When we feel empathy for a group with whom we've been locked in conflict, it's easier to surrender our desire for revenge, and it's easier to forgive.

or gutsy enough to actually harm our ancestors from doing so a second time.

3. Revenge was useful for punishing (and reforming) "free riders," people who enjoy the benefits of a group's efforts without contributing to those efforts. Our ancestors had to make sure that when free riders failed to contribute to the common good, they suffered consequences.

The desire for revenge after being mistreated has been identified in virtually every human society that anthropologists have studied. What's more, chimpanzees, monkeys, birds, and even a couple of species of fish have been shown to use revenge to solve problems related to aggression and cooperation. And rather than residing in some dark part of the brains of psychopaths, neuroscientists have discovered that the desire for revenge activates the same parts of our brains that are activated when we're pursuing goals we really care about, or when we're enthusiastically sitting down to enjoy a good meal. Feeling vengeful when you've been wronged isn't evidence that you're mentally ill or morally defective. Modern evolutionary science says it's proof that you're human.

THE FORGIVENESS INSTINCT

Evolutionary science has produced a new understanding of forgiveness, too: forgiveness not as "cure" but as instinct — a built-in feature of human nature that has evolved because of its effectiveness in helping our evolutionary ancestors salvage valuable relationships, following the betrayals and rifts that inevitably arise in friendships and family relations. Theoretical biologists have come to the surprising conclusion that without the ability to forgive spats like these, social organisms just can't maintain cooperative relationships. No forgiveness, no

(continued on page 74)


Mom
Dad

WHO HELPS *You* CROSS THE ROAD?

HERE'S A SIMPLE EXERCISE TO TAP INTO YOUR DEEP SUPPORT SYSTEM.

For this exercise to be helpful, you must have the time and be in a frame of mind to read the directions below and follow the sequence. If you don't have five minutes now, stop and come back when you do. Ready? With your eyes open or closed, allow the following images to form in your mind's eye. As you see each image, take a few moments to let the information unfold and become clear to you.

1. See yourself crossing a road to get to a shop that you often frequent on the other side of the road.
2. Notice how you cross the road. Are you hurried, careful, joyful, or at ease?
3. Now, keeping your mother in mind, see yourself crossing the road to reach the shop on the other side. Your mother should not appear in the image; just think of her as you see yourself crossing the road. Let the image unfold.
4. Did you cross the road differently with your mother in mind than when you crossed by yourself? What was that difference?
5. Now, keeping your father in mind, see yourself cross the road to reach the shop on the other side. Your father should not appear in the image; just think of him as you see yourself crossing the road. Let the image unfold in its own manner.
6. Was there a difference in how you crossed the road with your father in mind than with your mother in mind? What was the difference?
7. Did one parent give you more energy crossing the road? Was one parent more obstructive?

THE RESULTS AND HOW TO USE THEM

You may find that one parent is negative and the other positive. Or, both may be negative or both positive. If you find that one parent affects you negatively and the other positively while you're crossing the road, you can consciously alter your automatic responses by keeping the "positive" parent in mind as you do things in life. For example, the next time you are dealing with a difficult person, visualize an image of this person and keep the positive parent in mind. You will immediately notice your natural constructive abilities emerge in dealing with the difficult person.

If both parents are positive, you can use the positive quality offered by each parent for different tasks. For example, one of my clients found that keeping her mother in mind gave her focusing ability, while keeping her father in mind made her feel full of love. Each time she had to focus on work, she kept her mother in mind to help her think clearly. When she found herself getting into a power struggle with her children to clean up their rooms, keeping her father in mind allowed her to feel more love and to better communicate with her children.

If both parents are negative, it is useful to see how your parents affected you so that you can become conscious of habitual negative or self-defeating behaviors. In this situation, keep in mind a significant person in your life who positively affects you — a mentor, therapist, teacher, or a religious figure who deeply moves you. The image will bring out your best abilities.

WHY THIS WORKS

In clinical research with thousands of subjects, psychologist Akhter Ahsen, Ph.D., discovered that images, such as those of our mothers and fathers, are neurologically encoded in specific locations in the brain. When these images are evoked — consciously or unconsciously — they can affect our physiology and our mental and emotional states in powerful ways. Ahsen's findings were first published in 1965 in the book *Eidetic Psychotherapy,* and imagery research has been studied at universities worldwide. Ahsen's goal is to teach people to consciously use these high-intensity images, known as eidetic images, for self-awareness.

If you are interested in learning more about how mental imagery works and how to use it to clear blocks in your own life, I will be teaching a special *S&H* online Imagery Workshop at SpiritualityHealth.com. Learn more on page 39. S&H

Jaqueline Lapa Sussman is a counselor and teacher. See jaquelinesussman.com.

By Jaqueline Lapa Sussman / *Photograph by* Jim Graham

By Judith Fein

The Simple Truth in Australian Wine

What travel journalist in her right mind would say no to a luxury trip — on helicopters, in private planes and limos — to the lush vineyards and wineries of Australia? Not me, and soon I was among a small group of writers being welcomed at Wyndham Estate's winery, among the rolling hills of Hunter Valley, where Australia's renowned shiraz was first produced. We chatted and laughed as we sampled figs bursting with goat-cheese stuffing, a trio of chocolate mousse, local olives, and skewers of lamb and beef. Then there was the wine. Seated at long tables covered by starched white tablecloths, we were faced with dozens of empty wine glasses. The conversation swirled around the table — "I love the mid-palate sweetness"; "This is big, bold, licoricey." Glass after glass was poured, swirled, tasted, spit out. Meanwhile, I began to feel rising panic. I had no idea what I was tasting. I couldn't tell woody from vanilla or plum from cherry. Why were they all talking about "Band-Aid"? Why couldn't I smell it? When I spit out the wine, it dribbled down onto my white shirt.

"I began to feel rising panic. I had no idea what I was tasting. I couldn't tell woody from vanilla or plum from cherry. Why were they all talking about Band-Aid?"

More wine glasses were set out for a vertical tasting — comparing the same wine from different vintages. What was I doing on the trip? I hadn't drunk wine for 10 years because it gave me migraines. And I learned, to my horror, that everyone else on the trip was a wine critic, wine writer, wine expert. I was up half the night, wondering if I should quietly leave or risk the humiliation of exposure.

We were flown on a small charter plane to the Barossa Valley and welcomed by the growers and winemaker of Jacob's Creek wines. We sat at a table, and 23 glasses were set out in front of each of us. The tasting began. The other journalists concentrated on the distinct finishes, textures, subtleties, and approachability of the wine. I took a deep breath . . . and blew my cover. I announced to all my colleagues that I was the black sheep among the chardonnays, sauvignon blancs, and pinot grigios. I didn't even know how to spit. There was a long silence.

"I can show you how to spit," said a journalist from Canada. "It's easy," added a wine expert from San Francisco. "You just have to commit. Commit and spit." "I'll show you," said a woman from Texas. No judgment, no snooty disdain, nothing. Suddenly I was getting a spewing lesson from the masters. At first I drooled. Next I emitted piteous little squirts from my pursed lips, and then I decided to commit. I took a deep breath, and out it came: the perfect spit. The other journalists grinned and gave me the thumbs-up, and one even applauded.

Next on the agenda was a session on sensory evaluation. A Jacob's Creek sensory analyst put us through the paces. We drank from opaque black glasses and tried to guess if the wine inside was red or white. Next, we were given two jellies to sample; one was red and one green. The red one tasted of raspberry, and the green one had a minty, citrus-like flavor. "They are the same jellies," the analyst explained. "Only the color is different." She offered us sugary, gummy candy and told us to hold our noses and place it on our tongue. It had no taste. When we stopped holding our noses, the taste was minty. "The color of wine, the way it looks in a glass, what happens when you inhale it . . . they greatly influence your experience. That's why the wineries pay such attention to color and smell and why we discuss it so much," a journalist whispered to me.

Over the next few days, I learned never to wear a white shirt to a tasting, and how to swirl, inhale, and distinguish between different wines from the same vintage. The journalists loved sharing their knowledge, being experts, initiating a virgin into the club.

On the last night, awards were given out, and I garnered a pricey bottle of Johann Shiraz Cabernet. It's the jewel in the crown of Jacob's Creek, which just launched in the U.S. I carefully nestled it among the clothes in my suitcase, and brought it back with me as a trophy. As it ages and ripens in my cupboard, it reminds me that when you don't know something but pretend you do, you will either be busted or implode from the effort. When you ask for help and information, people love to give it. **S&H**

Judith Fein is an author, filmmaker, and public speaker. See globaladventure.us.

PAUL ROSS



Reviews / Books & Music

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All reviews can be found at SpiritualityHealth.com

Books /

By Kristine Morris & Erica Lee

Being in Love

How to Love with Awareness and Relate without Fear

By Osho

Harmony Books, 2008, $22.00



There is much truth and beauty in the words of Osho; there is also much that readers may find disturbing. The legacy of this teacher, professor, and philosopher, also known as Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (1931–1990), is continued by the Osho International Foundation and the Osho Meditation Resort in India.

Osho aspired "to create every possibility for the emergence of a new kind of human being who is not contaminated by the past. . ." To this end he advocated forgetting everything we've learned from our parents and society, encouraged sex play and nudity for young children, and spoke of open relationships rather than committed ones.

The controversy over Osho's teachings may have sullied his image, but those who can overlook this may learn that it is possible to have love relationships that are free, unconditional, and — whether or not they last — much less painful.

The Spirit of Tea

By Frank Hadley Murphy

Sherman Asher Publishing, 2008, $21.95



"Science may be able to quantify tea's effects on our bodies, but it cannot quantify its effect on our souls, and that's where tea shares with us her deepest mysteries." Tea aficionados will understand what author Frank Hadley Murphy means when he says that tea "calls us to our deepest selves and invites us to celebrate with it." His book is a love song to the fragrant-leaved plant.

Murphy, a graduate of the American Tea Masters Association, studied at the Tea Research Institute in China and is a senior student of Taoist priest and tea master Roy Fong. He lectures nationwide and is the owner of the Jade Mountain Tea Company in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

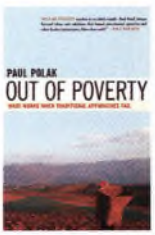
Tea is a "sacrament," says Murphy, for its ability to open our souls to their own beauty and thus act as a mediator of divine grace. Tea calls us to be still, to listen to our unique inner voice, and to create sacred space for ourselves in our hectic day. The author shares the tea ritual he uses to stop the rush of time, while affirming that "there is no way to do it wrong."

Out of Poverty

What Works When Traditional Approaches Fail

By Paul Polak

Berrett-Koehler, 2008, $27.95



Paul Polak's passion is to put an end to global poverty, and he has a unique and highly effective means for doing so: he goes to the poor and asks what they most need. Polak brings 25 years of experience with him to the task; he is the founder of International Development Enterprises, which was granted $13.4 million by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 2007 for helping farmers in Asia and Africa.

Polak asserts that "people are capable of moving out of poverty in a few months," but this cannot happen by throwing money at them from a distance. He stresses the importance of first understanding the cultural context of the problem; improve-

ments — such as boiling water — that may seem insignificant to those who run the world's major poverty eradication programs can be the simple key to transforming the life of a poor small-scale farmer and his family for generations.

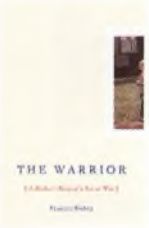
To effect change while respecting the knowledge and dignity of those being helped is true success, and Polak's "trickle-up" method empowers the poor to create hope for themselves and their children; hope that leads to flourishing and stable social structures.

The Warrior

A Mother's Story of a Son at War

By Frances Richey

Viking, 2008, $21.95



Before he was a warrior; he was a boy; / Before he drank blood, he drank milk. . . . writes poet Frances Richey of her son. In 2004 when she visited an exhibition of Aztec sculpture at the Guggenheim Museum, she found herself face-to-face with the "destroyer," *the dark body / of the snake* that was her son, Ben's, mysterious ambition. Graduating from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1998, then going on to become a captain in the Special Forces, Ben spent two tours of duty in Iraq and often was out of touch for months. Richey asks how this could happen: *Where had it come from, / his certainty of purpose?*

Richey's first book, *The Burning Point*, was published in 2004, and *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof selected one of her poems as a winner in a 2007 Iraq War poetry contest. Richey is opposed to the war, which makes her reflections more moving: *The day he graduated from West Point, / the sun was so bright I couldn't see / the secretary of defense, a dark speck / under the white awning*. Later, she finds herself searching for her son's face in the perfectly aligned rows of warriors.

Richey is a yoga teacher, and she wonders if she has the will to make a spear of her arms and expose her heart.

In 28 intense and personal poems, she explores the universal paths of regret, tenderness, loss, and alienation that connect and distance mothers and sons.

Human Goodness

By Yi-Fu Tuan

University of Wisconsin Press, 2008, $24.95



Yi-Fu Tuan is known for his ability to make big issues accessible, a skill that has served him well. The author of more than two dozen books on philosophical and metaphysical subjects, Tuan is also the much-honored J. K. Wright and Vilas Professor of Geography at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

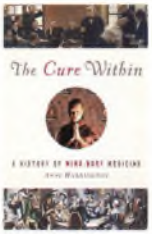
Focusing on the nature and meaning of human goodness, Tuan examines the lives of people who were considered to have been "good" people by those who knew them well. In short biographies of gifted and complex people such as Confucius, Mozart, Albert Schweitzer, and Simone Weil, Tuan shows that in spite of differences in time, place, profession, and culture, all "good" people share identifiable traits, including the ability to go against a "customary good" for a higher purpose, even in the face of death. By naming the traits associated with goodness, Tuan gives us the tools to call them forth in ourselves and live in such a way that we, too, will be remembered as having been "good."

The Cure Within

A History of Mind–Body Medicine

By Anne Harrington

W. W. Norton & Company, 2008, $25.95



When we fall ill and find that physical methods of treatment can no longer help, we ask, "Why is this happening?" and "Why is it happening to me?" Those who treat only physical symptoms may attribute the illness to bad genes, bad living, or even to bad luck. Throughout history, people have tried to make sense of illness through religious, moral, or social stories, and the need we feel for narratives that provide meaning and context for our experiences is as great now as it ever was. But the old stories of sin and redemption have lost much of their credibility and no longer seem adequate to explain the complexities of twenty-first-century life.

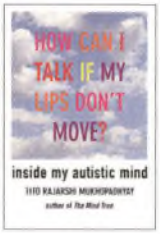
Anne Harrington, chair of the History of Science Department at Harvard University and author of *Medicine, Mind, and the Double Brain* and *Reenchanted Science*, believes that beyond the physical understanding of illness there is a different kind of wisdom. Current beliefs surrounding our experience of illness evolved out of ancient religious beliefs, she says, and for that deep-seated reason, mind–body approaches can have success both in promoting physical healing and helping us deal with our "cultural anxieties."

How Can I Talk If My Lips Don't Move?

Inside My Autistic Mind

By Tito Rajarshi Mukhopadhyay

Arcade, $25.00, 2008



This is truly an extraordinary and revelatory book, written by the 19-year-old author of two previous books, *The Mind Tree* and *The Gold of the Sunbeams*. The short chapters describe through prose and poetry the interior world of autism and the arrival of self-awareness. The explanations for hand flapping, tantrums, and refusal to make eye contact are fascinating, revealing as much about the peculiarities of the syndrome as about human nature itself:

My hands had made a connection with my shadow. They would begin to flap excitedly at the sight of my shadow, while my eyes would fixate on the effect of their melting shapes, as they moved faster and faster, along with their shadows on the wall, on the floor, everywhere. I would charm my eyes as I would see my hands becoming transparent as they moved faster and faster, ready to become so transparent as if to challenge their shadows, "How would you shape me now?"

Equally as interesting is the role Mukhopadhyay's mother played in his ability to step out of his isolation. Her unflagging efforts to communicate, the conviction that her explanations of the world were reaching her son, even if he could not speak, are heroic. The result — this young man, so literate and considerate, is an ultimate reflection of one person's selfless generosity being returned for the benefit of all.

Music /

By Benjamin Ivry

Habib Koité & Bamada

Afriki

Cumbancha CMB-CD-5
(cumbancha.com)

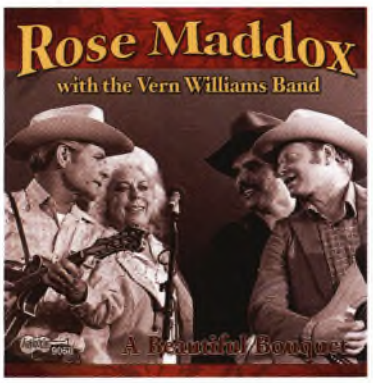


A beloved pop star in Mali, West Africa, the guitarist and singer Habib Koité offers inspirational, soothing melodies of reconciliation. In the title song, "Afriki" (Africa), Habib gently calls upon the United Nations to help his homeland "reduce its poverty, reduce its AIDS pandemic, reduce the death of its children." In another song, "Barra" (Work), he asserts the necessity for independent effort in nation-building. Habib comes from a family of griots — traditional storytellers who communicate social wisdom across the generations. His compassionate voice is backed by a warmhearted instrumental ensemble, including a wooden xylophone used for sacred rituals and a Malian lute. We feel encouraged and heartened by these soulful melodies.

Rose Maddox with the Vern Williams Band

Beautiful Bouquet

Arhoolie CD 9058
(arhoolie.com)



Known as the "Original Hillbilly Filly" and the "Grandmother of Rockabilly," Alabama-born country singer Rose Maddox (1925–1998) lived for four decades on a farm in Ashland, Oregon. *Beautiful Bouquet*, newly available on CD, was recorded in 1982 in tribute to her son Donnie, who died earlier that same year. It includes some of his favorite gospel numbers, such as "We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder" and "In the Sweet By and By." Accompanying Maddox is the exultant Vern Williams Band, featuring bluegrass musicians on banjo, mandolin, and fiddle. Maddox's assertive energy and zesty twang, whether in sacred or secular repertoire, helped "get the public's mind off their problems and worries," she once claimed. Johnny Cash declared: "There'll never be a woman who could outperform Rose Maddox. She's an American classic." Her heartily confident and eupeptically healing songs will make every listener feel inspired and invigorated. Maddox's charismatic presence will be recalled from her acting role as Woody Harrelson's grandmother in the 1998 film *The Hi-Lo Country*, but her heart-stirringly clarion voice is also indelibly etched on our memories.

Baiba & Lauma Skride

Duo Sessions

Sony BMG Europe 688872
(amazon.com)



The violinist Baiba Skride (born 1981) and her pianist sister, Lauma (born 1982), are from Riga, Latvia. Their *Duo Sessions* offers tender, preternaturally sensitive versions of visionary works by Schubert, Beethoven, and Ravel. As interpreted by these performers, Schubert's "Sonata for Violin and Piano in D" has a consoling, flexible spirit, while Beethoven's "Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 3 in E-flat Major" is pensively humane. With Ravel's dashingly vibrant "Tzigane" and radiant "Violin Sonata" as complements, the Skride sisters have created a delectably enlivening program which — as Schubert defined as the essential goal of music — brings us to a better world. Only the finest musicians can achieve this level of collaborative harmony, which is the ultimate goal of chamber music.

Bayard Rustin

The Singer

Bayard Rustin Fund BRF 1
(rustin.org)



Celebrated recently in the PBS documentary *Brother Outsider* and the biography *Lost Prophet* by John D'Emilio (University of Chicago Press), Bayard Rustin (1912–1987) was long overlooked as an architect of the peace and African-American civil rights movements in the 1950s and 1960s. Born into a Quaker community in Pennsylvania, Rustin was openly gay. Historians suggest that this is why he remained behind the scenes, despite key roles as adviser to Martin Luther King, Jr., and organizer of the famed 1963 March on Washington, which culminated in Dr. King's historic "I Have a Dream" speech. A convinced pacifist and disciple of Gandhi, Rustin was also a gifted singer, having performed with legendary folk musicians like Josh White and Leadbelly. *The Singer* makes available 1952 recordings of Elizabethan songs and Negro spirituals, which reflect, according to his friend Walter Naegle, Rustin's "philosophical and spiritual roots" as well as the "impact of his religious training in both the Quaker and African Methodist Episcopalian faiths." Accompanied by lute and harpsichord, his persuasive tenor voice expresses comfort in "There Is a Balm in Gilead," and there's defiantly sassy courage in "You Don't Have to Ride Jim Crow," which advocates social disobedience

in segregated buses in the South: "Someday we'll all be free / when black and white sit side by side." Shining with refined intelligence and spiritual strength, Rustin's voice continues to inspire, as do his heroic deeds.

Sinikka Langeland
Starflowers
ECM 1996
(ecmrecords.com or sinikka.no)



New Age fans will be exalted by the lulling, worshipful songs of Norwegian folksinger Sinikka Langeland. Accompanied by discreetly jazzy players on the saxophone, trumpet, and double bass, Sinikka's musical incantations, recalling the pure sounds of singers such as Enya and Deva Premal, are set to poems by her compatriot, the woodcutter and writer Hans Børli (1918–1989). Unlike other nature-inspired writers such as Whitman and Thoreau, to whom he is often compared, Børli actually spent his entire life in woodlands. Sinikka's songs are imbued with a shamanistic view of nature and inspired by runes, the magical signs used for divination in the Middle Ages. Sinikka elicits inspiration from the eastern Norway area of Finnskogen, a densely forested region that is rich in myths and wildlife. There, she is drawn to music with a "sense of space and nature and timelessness," as she told one journalist. She strums on the kantele, a Baltic zither that, according to legend, charmed forest animals with its beautiful sound. "Whispers in the Cotton Grass" reminds us that "life isn't just ten thousand plodding steps toward petty goals," despite all the "busy people with pay packets and wristwatches [who] are so stingy with the minutes." A spiritual solution is found in "Deep in the Forest," where even the "deepest riddles surely will be solved." S&H

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The Practice of Saving

We know from surveys that *S&H* readers are altruistic people; you want to give, to make the world a better place. We also know that many of you are in service professions — clergy, health-care workers, yoga teachers, massage therapists, and the like. As many of you already know, it is a fact of life that we cannot help anybody else if we have not first helped ourselves. This is why nursing mothers are advised to feed themselves first, and why flight attendants tell us to secure our own life jackets before those of our children in the event of trouble.

What does all this have to do with money? It's about creating a reserve. As I write, I'm vacationing in Maui — a very beautiful, laid-back place, where driving with other tourists and hippies weaving all over the road can be an "I-breathe-in; I-calm-my-body; I-breathe-out; I-smile" experience. A single woman who lives here said, "You know why single men on Maui don't use their blinkers?" "No," I replied. "Too big a commitment," she answered.

Why don't people save? "Too big a commitment" is a common answer. But a life without commitments can actually be more constricting than the delusion that free-spirit driving with no regard for the guy behind you is a great way to travel. Responsible commitments can help you and everybody around you live longer, not to mention more comfortably. (Without committing to save, I would not have the financial reserves to take two weeks off to hang out with my family in Maui!)

Another excuse for not saving is "I'm already strapped and have no money left to save." And the last big excuse is "I don't know where to cut my expenses." All these reasons would disappear if motivation and desire manifested in an intention-driven action — simply to save.

Tens of thousands of people go bankrupt, many more lose their homes, and even more find themselves unable to retire. Why? Maybe they lost their job, became disabled, or suffered divorce — all legitimate reasons. But often the real reason is that they never made a commitment to save and thus were not prepared. Simply put, money helps in times of trauma. How do you have money? Save!

HOW AND HOW MUCH TO SAVE

It's best to save 10 percent long term and 10 percent short term: Long term is for retirement, sickness, or a big, fat, financial trauma. Short term might be for a down payment on a home, or for a car, or a retreat. The long-term savings should be deposits to a 401(k), IRA, or other tax-favored qualified retirement plan and invested long term in a no-load, economically responsible, globally managed mutual fund. Your short-term savings should be readily available and invested for preservation of capital and some income, depending upon when you think you'll need it.

MAKE IT A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

This moment that we are living — right now — has all the moments of our lives embedded in it. The future exists in this moment, and realizing this can cause a light to go on in our consciousness that allows us to commit to saving. This moment contains sickness, health, death, retirement, kids, grandchildren, friends needing our help, hospice, health care, and every dollar we will receive, need, spend, and save, along with every breath we will ever take. Our future security comes from right actions, actions that have their foundation in the self-evident spiritual truth that through sowing today, we can have security in the future.

Like yoga, meditation, eating healthfully, and gratitude, saving is a choice. Done with the right intention, it can even be a spiritual practice. If you choose to be self-reliant, responsible, and generous, you will feel at ease in the world. If you are at ease in the world, you will be available to those who are not. Whether or not you think it is fair, money is important in our culture; it can be the difference between life and death.

If you choose to be self-reliant, responsible, and generous, you will feel at ease in the world. If you are at ease in the world, you will be available to those who are not.

Paul H. Sutherland is president of Financial & Investment Management Group and manager of the Utopia Funds. Get tips on saving from his book *Zenvesting* at SpiritualityHealth.com/zenvesting. E-mail questions to paul@spiritualityhealth.com.

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Happy Practitioners Call It "Big Ass Yoga!"

As I finished up a yoga class at the Yoga Center of Minneapolis, I heard a happy ruckus outside the studio door. Making my way through the dozen or so people congregated there, I couldn't help but feel the vibe of connection and camaraderie, that bond of shared experience. I also couldn't help but notice that this wasn't your typical bunch of young, female, relatively slender, fairly flexible yogis who are often seen frequenting urban studios. Rather, these were "Big A#%!™" students — round, robust, and eager to make their way into the studio for a plus-size yoga class specifically sequenced to accommodate their larger bodies.

FEELING FREE TO LOOK AROUND

In Minneapolis, yoga for bigger bodies comes courtesy of Jennifer Gray, founder and owner of the Yoga Center. Before Gray opened her studio in 2000, she frequented a yoga class at a fitness center. She did so in an oversized white T-shirt and black workout pants, and she kept her eyes on her own mat — it was the only way she could psyche herself up to bring her then-bigger body to a class full of slender students.



"I walked in, 200 pounds and atrophied," recalls Gray, now 40 and a mother of three. "I just thought, 'Don't look around; it doesn't matter, it doesn't matter about anyone else.' I was the only person there who looked like me, the only person who wasn't there working out all day, wearing a teeny-tiny outfit. I just came in and kept my eyes on the mat."

That experience shaped Gray's intention for her studio. She wanted to create a space where anyone could practice yoga in comfort, without having to steel herself just to walk through the door. Gray knew, from her experience of losing 55 pounds and 36 inches through yoga, that learning to trust your body and feel comfortable in your own skin offers benefits far beyond the physical.

"After losing the weight, I wasn't as reactive. I didn't look for the negative as much as I had. I was freed from anxiety, which I'd suffered before," Gray says.

Despite the intent to welcome every possible body to her studio, Gray realized that plus-sized people just weren't there. In 2006, she began to cater specifically to the plus-size set. "What are we going to call this? Big ass yoga?" she recalls quipping to her staff at the time. "Everyone looked around at each other, and said, 'Yeah, that's a great name.' The Yoga Center now offers seven weekly Big A#%! classes at two studios.

Gray notes that despite the sassy moniker, the class is incredibly compassionate and focused on helping students feel comfortable in their own bodies. They learn to have fun in their own skin and to trust themselves. "A big part of the class is spending time, for example, working on the pose downward-facing dog," she explains. "Bringing your weight into your hands and your arms — there's a huge fear factor there."

YOGA: IMAGE SOURCE; DERRYBERRY MANN: DAN MARSHALL

Instructors, all who've struggled with weight at some point in their lives, help students build the strength and trust they need to realize that their arms will hold them up. Soon, students advance to lifting one leg in the pose, and some even build their way into a handstand. "It's fun and really moving for people, because they're doing something for their body that is really positive. They find they can do something new just about every time they show up. They take that new outlook off their mat and into their life," Gray says.

A FLUFFY OMELET OF LUST

Meera Patricia Kerr has been big since childhood. Even during a short run of relatively skinny — but still amply curvy — days around her college years, an admirer called her his "fluffy omelet of lust." Kerr has always been comfortable with her body.

She's also long been comfortable with yoga. She spent her formative yoga years at Yogaville, the ashram of Swami Satchidananda in Virginia, studying integral yoga. The practice encourages spiritual unity, "an easeful body, a peaceful mind, and a useful life."

While Kerr loved the all-encompassing philosophy of the practice — from the selfless service of karma yoga to the devotion of bhakti yoga — her songwriter's ear struggled with the name. While meditating on the clunky "integral" title, she heard the practice called in a new, rumbling way: b-i-g yoga. And that, to her, suggested the complete philosophy of the practice, as well as an opportunity for overweight bodies to claim a full yogic experience of pranayama, meditation, and asana.

More than a decade later, in 2002, Kerr released the *Big Yoga* DVD, and her book, tentatively titled *Big Yoga Hatha*, will be published in fall 2008 by Square One Publishers. In the DVD, she offers an adaptation of the sun salutes that has been popular among larger yogis (you can see photographic illustrations at BigYogaOnline.com on the FAQ page).

Kerr, now 61 and pushing 200 pounds at five foot three, continues to teach private lessons, along with mainstream and plus-size yoga classes seasonally, when summer residents return to her hometown, Saugatuck, along the shores of Lake Michigan.

Her primary practice these days is pranayama and meditation, but when she does her hatha practice, she says, "I feel so blessed, so elevated, like I'm in another realm of grace. The more I do, the better quality of life I have overall, and I can be of better service to my students, to my mother, to my children — whomever I come in contact with."

Drawing on the wisdom of Eckhart Tolle, Kerr says her practice makes her feel that she is more of a blessing than a burden on the earth. Sage advice, to be sure — no matter what you weigh.

Jennifer Derryberry Mann is a Minneapolis-based freelance writer and editor.

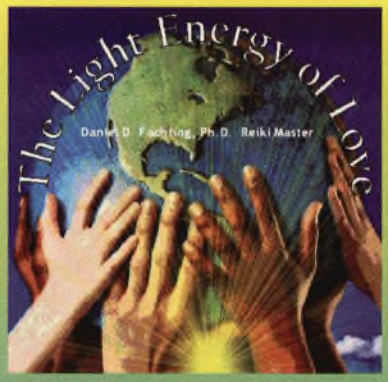
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Vengeance *(continued from page 61)*

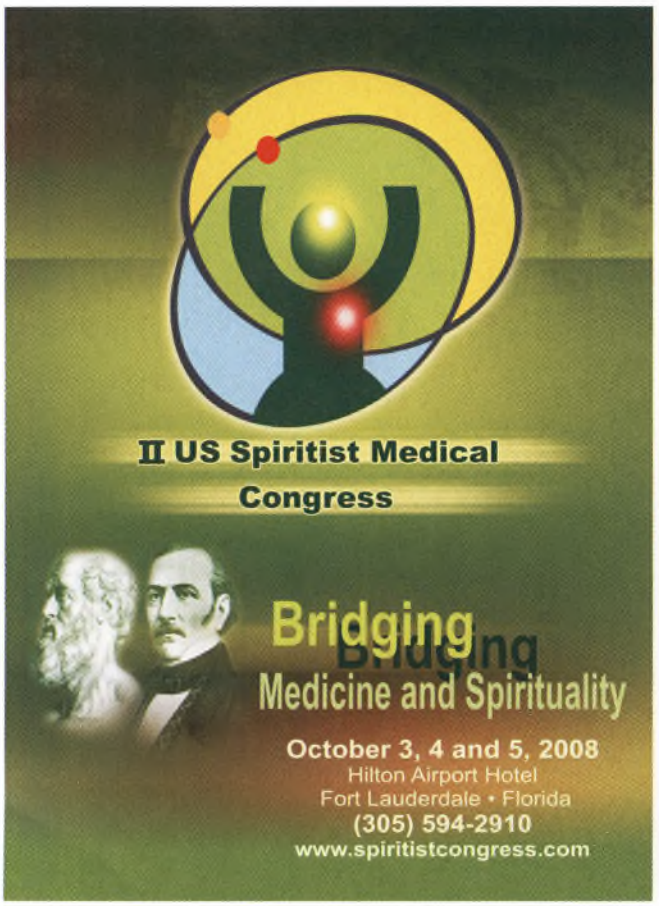
cooperation. And without our prodigious abilities to establish cooperative relationships with each other, we wouldn't be "us."

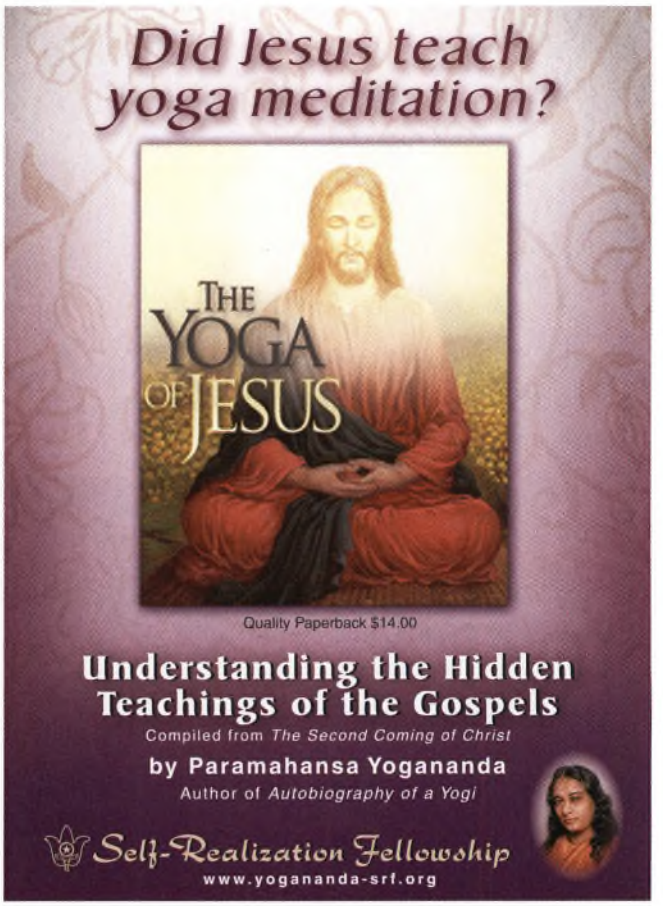
Theory aside, there's also quite a bit of hard evidence for the notion that forgiveness is instinctual: In the last three decades, animal researchers have found about 30 different species of group-living mammals that patch up their valuable relationships after conflict by using physical gestures scientists call "reconciliation." These gestures bear an uncanny resemblance to the hugs, backslaps, handshakes, and other physical rituals that people around the world also use to forgive and ask for forgiveness. Also, in a recent research project, I scoured the available anthropological materials for a random sample of 60 world societies. I found that in 56 of those societies, or 93 percent, anthropologists had documented the existence of the concepts of forgiveness or reconciliation, or both. For behaviors as subtle and often quiet as forgiveness and reconciliation often are, a .930 batting average comes tantalizingly close to making forgiveness look as intrinsic to humans' moral sensibilities as the desire for revenge is.

Evolutionary thinking about revenge and forgiveness encourages us to substitute our metaphors of disease and cure for the language of adaptation and instinct. But so what? What can this change of metaphors really buy us? Maybe quite a lot. Rather than thinking of forgiveness as a cure for revenge that people have to learn to use through self-help books, educational interventions, or therapy, thinking of revenge and forgiveness as instincts can help us see that our hunger for vengeance and our desire to forgive are both turned on and off by real social conditions. This implies that if we want more forgiveness in the world, what we really ought to do is figure out how to make the world more plentiful in the characteristics that promote forgiveness and less plentiful in the characteristics that promote revenge.

We already know a lot about what those characteristics are. When people live in places where crime and disorder are high, where policing is poor, where governments are weak, and where life is dangerous, they'll tend to use revenge as a problem-solving strategy, because its ability to punish aggressors, deter would-be aggressors, and discourage cheaters made it adaptive in our ancestral environment. Likewise, we'll see higher rates of forgiveness under conditions that made forgiveness adaptive in our ancestral environments. This means we'll see more forgiveness in places where people are highly dependent on complex networks of cooperative relationships, where policing is reliable, where the systems of justice are fair and trustworthy, and where social institutions are up to the task of helping offenders depict themselves as valuable and nonthreatening to the people whom they've harmed. If you understand how to influence your household, your place of business, your neighborhood, or your government to create changes like these, then you're in a position to make the world a more forgiving place, and you don't need to recommend any self-help books to anyone or put any psychotherapists on retainer. **S&H**

Michael E. McCullough, Ph.D., is a professor of psychology and religious studies at the University of Miami. His latest book is *Beyond Revenge: The Evolution of the Forgiveness Instinct* (Jossey Bass, 2008). For more information about *Beyond Revenge*, see beyondrevengebook.com.





Red Bump *(continued from page 52)*

search for "Cumbia Sobre el Rio" from the Babel soundtrack and instantly become a dancing fool, splashing with my feet and soaking in joy. In my new virtual reality, the bump on the shin is gone; I've written a book that is selling like garlic naan; I'm even getting married to Daniel Craig (the new James Bond) at Windsor Castle. Then a menopausal hot flash interrupts our honeymoon and our Ferrari comes to a screeching halt along the Mediterranean coast.

I wonder what to do with feelings that aren't joy and ecstasy. The prophets of the law of attraction are no help. They don't court the dualistic yin-and-yang understanding of our world. Predictably, their prescription is to always change our vibration. It strikes me that while their "virtual reality" — whether landing a job, getting a book published, or finding a lifetime companion — feels inspiring, it's also full of craving. And craving, according to the Buddha, causes suffering.

Needing more guidance, I vow to meditate before dinner. I improvise an altar with my traveling companion, a small Buddha statue, and ask myself: If I crave that the lump will be gone by sunrise, am I causing myself more suffering? What do I do with my desire to not have a desire? Is all this generating a habitual pattern of bad karma?

Enlightenment!

The next morning I sign up for an intermediate hike in Snow Canyon. John, our guide, explains the geophysics of sandstone. I am inspired by the red Navajo terrain without fully comprehending the complex history of where I stand. And suddenly I get it: I can be inspired without having all the answers — that is the acorn amid the many contradictory branches of the tree of spiritual guidance — I can compare, contrast, and interpret divergent teachings. I can seek knowledge, even wisdom, from various teachers. Or, I can just stop at being inspired . . . which, in my present situation, somehow translates to: I can be paralyzed by my fear or take action and visit a dermatologist.

The doctor's office is across from the imposing linen-white Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Dr. Major looks at my shin for a few minutes and then unceremoniously says, "It doesn't look serious." He dispenses free samples of a steroid cream and an oral anti-inflammatory. "This should take care of it. Enjoy your vacation."

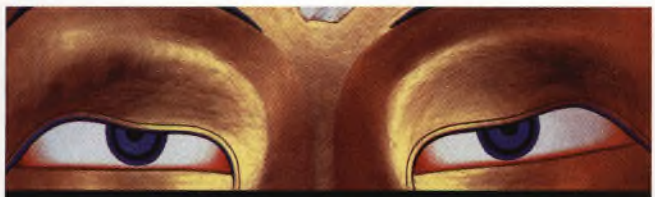
The news thrills me. I'm happier than I've been in the last 24 hours. But my joy is tempered by my desire to access it from within 24/7. Why is joy so seemingly elusive?

It's all maya, or illusion, say the Buddhists. So, are our searches for joy or enlightenment an illusion? If so, does it matter that we are or aren't enlightened? Then, even the so-called perpetual wondering and the urge to merge with the Creator is an illusion, as we are the omnipresence we seek. Maybe it's time to fire our spiritual teachers.

A few weeks after my vacation, the lump on my shin is gone. Did the medication help it disappear? Or are my creative visualization powers stronger than my worst nightmares?

Hm-m-m . . . too much thinking. S&H

Francesca Vanegas is a freelance writer and the director of the Florida Yoga Institute's interdisciplinary yoga teacher training in Estero, Florida. (flayogainstitute.com). She may be reached at director@flayogainstitute.com.



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person, not just the symptoms." Simon-Jones chose this doctor for his personal team.

Pay out-of-pocket / Because insurance would not cover his initial consultation with his choice of doctor, Simon-Jones paid for it himself. Choice took priority over concerns about reimbursement.

Handpick post-surgery rehab team / Simon-Jones' team included a physical therapist and yoga and Pilates instructors. All were experts in their respective fields — and all listened to his concerns. As in the Puerto Rican mind–body model, he surrounded himself with a support system that would help minimize treatment-related stress.

Commit to returning to normal activities / Arguably, the American injury compensatory system exacerbates the already isolating experience of being injured. According to one study ("Effect of Compensation on Emotional State and Disability in Chronic Back Pain," *Pain*, 48(2):125–30, Feb. 1992), "The promise of a financial windfall on settlement of a claim could discourage workers from resuming employment after injury. Unfortunately, this course of action increases the risk of pain becoming chronic and of employment and financial hardship continuing after settlement." Simon-Jones' overwhelming desire to return to work served as motivation to evolve his own back-to-work plan — or rather, back-to-the-mountain plan.

BECOME AN AUTHORITY ON YOUR PAIN — MINDFULNESS ALLOWS YOU TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS BEST FOR YOUR BODY.

Become an authority on your pain / Mindfulness allowed Simon-Jones to understand what was best for his body. He found that Pilates was safe for strengthening his abdominal muscles, while yoga provided the best stretch for his legs, hips, and back. When he felt ready, he returned to mountain guiding and rock climbing — but he carefully, slowly built his stamina on back-friendly climbs.

LOSING ONESELF AND ONE'S PAIN IN THE MOMENT

Of course, the danger of becoming an expert about one's condition can result in overly focusing on pain, as demonstrated by my own tape-recording obsession. An antidote for this hyperfocus is to work to create lost-in-the-moment experiences.

Using MRI imaging, researchers conducting a "Lost in the Moment" study found that the regions of the brain that are activated when a person self-monitors are primarily suppressed in lost-in-the-moment experiences — e.g., watching a beautiful sunset or a great movie. These states of "self-lessness" reflect a theme in Zen teachings, add the authors of the study.

Simon-Jones' lost-in-the-moment experiences primarily happened outdoors. This meant that his not-always-reliable back was involved. How did he keep

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PRESCRIPTION FOR AMERICAN CHRONIC PAIN SUFFERERS

ADOPT A MIND–BODY PERspective such as the Puerto Rican model, where chronic pain is viewed as the result of biological, psychological, and social factors.

Select health practitioners who will provide positive emotional support, especially during times when the pain intensifies or when a potential treatment proves ineffective.

Work to get "back to the mountain." In Victoria, Australia, the state government understands the health risks of not resuming employment after injury: If an employee misses work for more than 20 consecutive days, the employer is required to provide a coordinator who devises a return-to-work plan.

Dance the therapeutic dance of back-to-the-mountain experiences and self-monitoring mindsets.

from obsessing about reinjury — a sure way to kill "oneness"? Oddly enough, he did it by knowing his back condition intimately. For example, after the surgery, he discovered that climbing the overhangs tweaked his back. So he avoided them. He also learned that an easy climb served as a good warm-up for a more challenging one. Through garnering information like this, he learned how to climb without reinjuring himself. Once he had confidence that he wasn't going to hurt himself, his mind was again free to get lost in the moment.

But how did Simon-Jones turn off self-monitoring when he couldn't be outside? Recently, he experienced a recurrence of back pain of preoperation intensity. Interestingly enough, not being able to climb or mountain guide for a month forced him to turn his attention from his body to his psyche. There, he discovered emotional pain: grief (his father was diagnosed with cancer), hurt (a serious relationship ended), and fear (agonizing back pain returned, even though it was supposed to be gone forever). When he heard himself say that he would rather deal with another surgery than with his emotional pain, he realized that the mountain had sometimes been an unhealthy escape.

A student of Buddhist meditation, Simon-Jones journeyed inward and found calmness in accepting the moment for what it was. "I didn't need to get back to climbing," he said, "and I wasn't wasting energy, longing to be outside anymore." By paying attention and accepting his physical and emotional states, he no longer feared pain. In turn, his self-monitoring to avoid pain was not in overdrive. This opened him up for lost-in-the-moment experiences throughout his daily life.

But as wonderful as all this sounds, it is important to remember that there is no magic pill. The last time I spoke with Simon-Jones, he was somber, having just come off a six-Vicodin-a-day pain episode. How did he cope? "I look inward," he said in his mountain guide's voice, "and I remember the pain isn't going to be forever. It's not going to be bad every day." S&H

Mark E. Liskey, B.S., C.N.M.T., is a freelance writer and owner of the Massage Institute in Berwyn, Pennsylvania. View his other articles, or e-mail questions and comments to him at markliskey.com.





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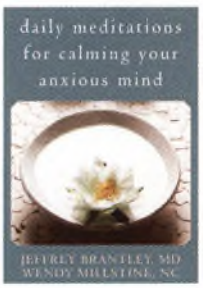
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