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We-consciousness is knowing and feeling oneself intimately connected with and part of everything that is, and coming to act and relate out of that awareness. It is experiencing oneself not as I, but as WE. To carry this consciousness is to come to the bare mystery of it all, that we are all ONE in the universe.

The Dance of the Dissident Daughter
—Sue Monk Kidd

from The Publisher

Dear Conscious One,

For some of us, “embodying” the concept that we are all ONE is not so easy. Maybe we’ve been taught differently in childhood, or maybe we mistakenly feel this goes against our religious beliefs. This was true for me not so long ago. Grasping the understanding of ONE meant that I had to set aside all I had learned and be willing to go alone, and surrender into the darkness of my own heart, to find that once there, my heart beat as one with the Universal heart—there was no separation. Only the delicious connection to be found in the divine experience of my “unique” Oneness with ALL that is.

In this issue we dive deep into Conscious SPIRIT. It is in this stage of healing that we learn to FORGIVE. With the understanding that we are all ONE, we know, deep in our hearts, that our existence is a co-creation of incredible complexity woven through and around our human lifetimes. Forgiveness then becomes instantaneous for we understand that there is truly nothing to forgive.

Our interview this issue with **Robert Schwartz** is deeply comforting and illuminating. Our Souls are our guides, and our lives are designed to compel us to break open our fear-based thinking and stretch our ability to grow and evolve. His work is profound and we are deeply grateful to share his insights with you!

Our deepest gratitude also to the highly esteemed spiritual leaders such as **Michael Mirdad, David Ault, Richard Burdick, Glenn Pearson, and Gareth Young** who contributed their wisdom to this issue. And don’t miss our special series about TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE. We explore near-death experiences, life-changing dis-ease, the science of ascension, and so much more.

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A Conversation With

ROB SCHWARTZ



CLJ: How did you come to write your books?

RS: I was a marketing communications consultant, doing different forms of corporate writing that I found deeply unfulfilling, and I had the distinct sense that there was some particular purpose for my life. But I didn't know what it was and I wasn't even sure how to figure it out. So I did some career counseling. I took the Meyers-Briggs inventory. I went to family and friends and said, "I'm really very unhappy doing this corporate work. I feel like there's some other calling for me but I don't know what it is. What do you think I should do with my life?" Half the people I talked to just shrugged their shoulders and the other half advised me to do what they were doing. So I started to think outside the box and this idea came to me: go see a psychic medium. I had never done that before. I wasn't even sure if I believed in mediumship. But I went on May 7, 2003, and I remember that date because it was on that day that my life changed.

The medium introduced me to the concept of spirit guides—highly evolved nonphysical beings with whom we plan our lives before we come into body and who then guide us through our lives after we're here. Through this particular medium I was able to talk with my guides. They said a lot of amazing things to me in that session, one of which was that I planned my life, including my biggest challenges, before I was born. Without me telling them, they knew what my major life challenges had been and they were able to explain why I had planned those experiences before I was born. I thought about this perspective constantly in the weeks after the session. It allowed me to see, for the first time, the deeper purpose of my greatest challenges. And that was very healing. I realized I was onto a concept that would bring a similar kind of healing to other people, and that was the impetus for leaving the corporate sector and starting on the path of writing *Your Soul's Plan*.

CLJ: Why do we plan these life challenges?

RS: There are five main reasons. One is to release and balance karma. Balancing karma means you choose before you're born to have an experience that energetically completes or offsets a previous experience. Releasing karma means you heal the underlying tendency that created the karma in the first place.

The second reason is healing. In *Your Soul's Plan* a young African-American woman plans to be born completely deaf. In the lifetime previous to the current one she had the same mother she has in this lifetime, and when she was a little girl in that previous lifetime she heard her mother shot to death. She was so traumatized that she took her own life in that previous lifetime and returned to Spirit with an energy of unhealed trauma which needed to be healed. In her pre-birth planning session her spirit guide said, "My dear, would you prefer to be born deaf so that no similar trauma happens to you again and so that you

can complete your healing from the previous lifetime?" And she responded, "Yes, that is what I wish to do."

The third reason, which is true in every pre-birth plan I've looked at, is service to others.

The fourth reason for planning life challenges is to contrast. The nonphysical realm that we come from is the realm of great love and light and peace and joy. The soul is made from the energy of unconditional love. So if we're in this realm of unconditional love, and we are made of unconditional love, that means that the soul experiences no contrast to itself. The soul doesn't fully understand or appreciate who or what it is. So we come into body for the experience of what you could call the "not-love," so that when we go home at the end of the physical lifetime, we understand much more profoundly who we really are as beings made from the energy of unconditional love.

The fifth reason is healing or correcting false beliefs or false feelings. Almost all of us have had at least one past life, if not many, in which certain things cause us to pick up a false belief or a false feeling about ourselves. The two most common are feeling unworthy, or perhaps even worthless, and a feeling of powerlessness. The soul knows itself to be infinitely worthy and infinitely powerful. So if part of our personality picks up a false belief like that, to the soul it feels discordant and the soul wants to clear or heal it. Certain challenges will be planned to bring the false feeling or false belief to conscious awareness. Once it reaches the level of conscious awareness we can then set about healing it.

CLJ: How do all the details and planning happen?

RS: One of the mediums featured in my books reports that when she goes into a pre-birth planning session, Spirit shows her something that looks like an incredibly vast and elaborate

flowchart, a series of decision points. If you do A, then X happens. If you do B, then Y happens. The flowchart is so enormous it's beyond human comprehension, but it's not beyond the soul's comprehension. That flowchart is the soul taking into account the free will decisions that the personality may make. That's why you have an almost infinite number of decision points. That's how true learning and healing occur, and you have a lot of leeway to go down different paths within that broader outline.

Almost everyone who comes for a private session is interested in a Between Lives Soul Regression. During the session the person goes into a past life, usually one that had a big impact on the plan for the current life. They leave the body at the end of the past life and a portion of their consciousness crosses back over to our nonphysical home. They're usually greeted by a guide and they talk to the guide briefly about why they were shown that past life and how it affected the plan for their current lifetime. Then we ask the guide to escort them to the Council of Elders. The Council consists of very wise, loving, and highly evolved beings who oversee the incarnation on Earth. They know the client's life plan. They know how well the client is doing in terms of fulfilling their life plan. And they have suggestions as to how they can better fulfill the life plan.

We're learning how to give and receive love more unconditionally. And both of those are equally important. It's not just a matter of giving love. It's also a matter of receiving love from others.

CLJ: Are there some things that are specifically set? For example, do we choose our parents?

RS: Yes, parents are a very good example, and that includes adoptive

We're learning how to give and receive love more unconditionally. And both of those are equally important. It's not just a matter of giving love. It's also a matter of receiving love from others.

parents. Another thing would be a physical illness or handicap that you're born with that can't be treated by medical science. You would know that before you came to body. Most of the planning is flexible. It's not just the case that there's a Plan A. There's also a Plan B, C, D, E, F, G, and on and on.

CLJ: Are there common themes that we humans choose for our challenges, like disease and divorce and suicide?

RS: A typical pre-birth plan shows the level of consciousness increasing slowly over a number of years, then it suddenly spikes, and that inflection point where it spikes is the pre-birth planning of a life challenge. Given humanity's current state of evolution, some challenges are chosen much more frequently than others because they're effective at awakening the personality. One of them is physical illness, very often cancer. Another one is an accident which is not really an accident. The third one that's very common is the death of a loved one. Healing and awakening are very much a process, like peeling the layers of an onion. Something happens and people respond to it in what they believe is a conscious manner, and then life seems to get harder and that means they're going to a deeper layer of the onion.

Suicide is not planned as a certainty but as a possibility,

or sometimes a probability, or occasionally a probability so high as to be almost a certainty. You could say the same thing about all kinds of different life challenges. Planned does not mean it's set in stone; it means it's possible or probable or highly probable. Eventually, when humanity rises to a higher state of consciousness, those kinds of very harsh challenges won't be needed anymore, and then people will plan much less difficult challenges or perhaps even shift to learning more through love and joy rather than pain.

CLJ: Are we raising our consciousness collectively?

RS: That's my understanding, and I believe the Buddha said you can learn anything you want to learn through love and joy. It doesn't necessarily have to be done through pain and suffering, but pain and suffering is a very effective way to learn. It's very motivating, and I think that what's happening on the Earth plane is that people are having their hearts broken open in order to become more loving beings, to remember their true nature.

CLJ: Would you speak about the courage that it takes to be human?

RS: The Earth is not the most difficult place to have an incarnation, but it is one of the most difficult, so not all beings are willing to incarnate on Earth. Those who do come here are viewed throughout the universe as among the most courageous of all beings. After you've had an incarnation on Earth, it becomes part of your energy signature—your unique vibration that consists of a combination of color and sound. When you've incarnated on Earth, the color and sound change, the vibration changes. So after someone has been here and returns to the

Rob Schwartz is a hypnotist who offers Spiritual Guidance Sessions, Contact a Deceased Loved One regressions, Past Life Soul Regressions, and Between Lives Soul Regressions to help people heal and understand their life plan. His books *Your Soul's Plan* and *Your Soul's Gift* explore the pre-birth planning of many common life challenges such as physical and mental illness, difficult relationships, financial hardship, drug and alcohol addiction, and the death of a loved one. His books have been translated into 24 languages. He teaches internationally, including such venues as the United Nations. Visit Rob online at www.yoursoulsplan.com or write to him directly at robschwartz@yoursoulsplan.com.

continued on p8



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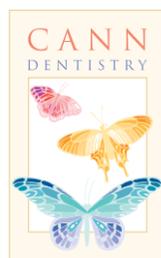
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nonphysical realm, other beings can see from their energy signature that they've had an incarnation on Earth, and their response is something like, "You had an incarnation on Earth? Oh!" They're tremendously impressed and respectful because it's understood how difficult it is to be here and only the most courageous of beings will choose to incarnate here.

CLJ: Can you tell us how the chapter on pets came about?

RS: It came simply out of my own desire to know if pets were part of the pre-birth planning process. I felt intuitively that they probably were, but when I actually researched it and received confirmation from Spirit, that was a very powerful moment. There's a touching story about a woman who planned to be a dwarf in this lifetime. She's told by her guides that this is going to be difficult for her and that when she's a young child she'll be ostracized and teased in school. She realizes she's going to need a lot of emotional support to get through that so she plans with a number of different pets—dogs, cats, horses, there's even a rooster named Crooked Beak—to come into her pre-birth planning session, and they talk to her about how they will supply her with the unconditional love that she's unable to get from other people.

I've seen this again and again in people's pre-birth planning sessions. Whatever challenges are set up, they also set up the support they're going to need in order to handle the challenges.

CLJ: Do you have a final message for our readers?

RS: Remember who you really are. I often recommend to go to a mirror, look into your own eyes, and remind yourself who you really and truly are. Say to yourself, "I am a holy, eternal, courageous soul. I'm the brave soul who left a realm of love and light and peace and joy to come here to experience great challenges so that I could release and balance karma, heal, be of service to others, experience contrast, and correct false feelings about myself."

Every single person that's here is a vast, multidimensional, eternal soul, very courageous for coming into body, and very courageous for executing the pre-birth plan after they're in body. And I would like everybody to treat themselves with the sort of respect they inherently deserve. Because that's who they really and truly are. 🙏

Compassion is a Beautiful Thing



My client had taken her little boy to the park. Sitting across the bench from her was a man who looked a mess. His clothes were unpressed, untidy, and dirty. He was talking on the phone, not even noticing his little boy who was playing nearby. "Such disregard for his child," my client said to herself as she watched him.

In a few moments, his child started playing with her child. They got along quite well and then she overheard the stranger's little boy say, "I don't have a mommy. She died last week. All I have is my daddy, my grandma, and my puppy."

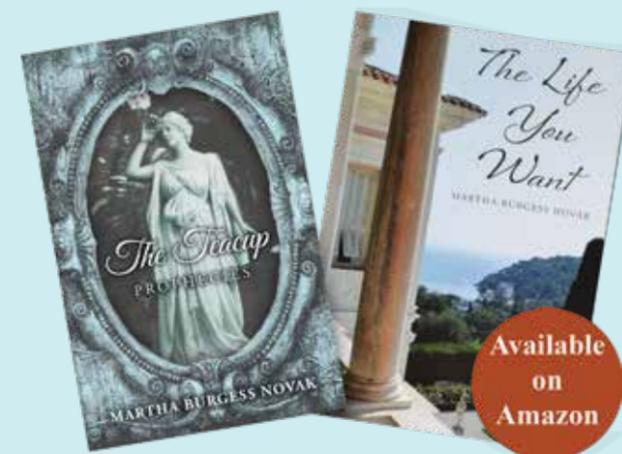
This brought my darling client up short. Her perspective completely altered; she asked herself where was the nice person she had thought herself to be? How could she just automatically judge another person like that? She was deeply ashamed.

Conscious people know that compassion is the ability to recognize that you are one with all life and because we are, we allow people and things to be as they are without judgment. Instead, she fell into an old habit she had learned from her father who was censorious and dictatorial.

It's easy to get confused. After all, the duality between the Highest Self, which is love-centered, and the egoic child's mind self, which is fear-based, gets muddled by people who are not being emotionally honest. However, true compassion—compassion that comes from the Highest Self without baser motivations—is a beautiful and loving thing. This is why human beings like being around people who have some degree of consciousness. Compassionate people aren't going to judge you. They don't have to be right. They don't have to control you. Instead they listen. They realize that you and they are one. They realize that there is a backstory to everything and everyone and they are content knowing this.

"But how am I going to remember this lesson next time?" my client asked. "Suppose I do it again and become like my father?" I smiled and said, "You won't forget this now, will you?" and she said, "No, I won't forget," and I reminded her that sometimes we do forget and that's all part of the journey.

Sometimes there's a long road to compassion. Indeed, for most of the journey, it isn't about remembering or forgetting but about being patient with ourselves and others, being patient with our process and that of others, and emotional honesty. In this, we at last become compassionate, for it has never been about arriving, but becoming. 🙏



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WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?

by Michael Mirdad

In its purest sense, forgiveness is synonymous with the word “restoration.” This is because forgiveness restores our soul to seeing the light and truth of whatever it was that became darkened by judgment or resentment.

People often assume that in order to be forgiving, we are supposed to love and forgive abusive behaviors. For example, it’s often asked, “How are we supposed to love people who abuse children or animals?” The answer is simple, yet profoundly important to understand: **we are not asked to love the abuse nor the abusive part of that person.** We are asked only to love the divinity within that person that they have long forgotten. In other words, to forgive someone means to see them as they truly are, as God created them to be, rather than the form in which they have temporarily shown up.

When we truly forgive, the brain cells that remember harmful things that seem to have been done to us get dismantled or unplugged. Then, new memory cells are created to remind us that beneath all the events in our lives, there was always love—even where we once could not see it.

Forgiveness is a process of restoration with enormous practical benefits. However, for us to experience the miraculous benefits

of forgiveness, **we have to be willing to see ourselves and others in a divine light**—or as we all were prior to our belief in separation. Any hesitation to witnessing the beauty within everyone’s spirit, by default, limits our ability to experience this beauty within ourselves.

One quality that helps us reach such profound expressions of forgiveness is that of gratitude. *A Course in Miracles* teaches that when we practice true forgiveness, we naturally begin to feel and express a sense of gratitude for even those who seemingly have done the most horrific things. It’s not that we are to feel grateful for people traumatizing us, but we can be grateful for what we choose to learn from the experience, which usually means we will not experience it again. For example, we can be grateful that we learned the power and value of forgiveness. We can also be grateful that our seeming “enemy” magnified and reflected to us some of our deepest core issues that were previously unseen. And now, by having these issues exposed and choosing forgiveness, we ourselves have reached a higher level of consciousness, meaning we are now much closer to returning Home. It is for this (not the actual painful human experience) that we are grateful.

One important thing to remember about *true* forgiveness is that just because we have chosen to work on forgiving an issue (such as an old wound), the full effect of that decision often is not experienced immediately. Instead, we usually experience such effects over a period of time—minutes, days, months, or even years. So it’s wise to know, in faith, that all is

“... to forgive someone means to see them as they truly are, as God created them to be, rather than the form in which they have temporarily shown up.”

well—even when we cannot yet see the manifested results. Otherwise, we may be tempted to doubt the efficacy of our forgiveness, merely because the past judgments and traumas still seem to cast a shadow into our lives.

There are several levels of forgiveness; but at whichever level we practice, the bottom line is that if we fail to completely forgive someone or something, we cannot experience the best life possible. Ultimately, all excuses for not having forgiven are merely subtle forms of unconsciously choosing to retain our belief in separation and therefore our belief that we are undeserving of a better life. 🌸



Michael Mirdad is a world-renowned spiritual teacher, healer, and best-selling author of *The Book of Love & Forgiveness* and *You’re Not Going Crazy...You’re Just Waking Up!* For thirty-five years, Michael has transformed the lives of thousands of students and clients and is noted as a “teacher’s teacher” and a “healer’s healer.” www.michaelmirdad.com



“You may never know what your purpose really is. When a bee flies toward his goal of the nectar, he just sees the nectar. But in the grand scheme of things, the bee’s true purpose is to cross pollinate the flowers.”



You Make A Difference The Precessional Effect

by Burge Smith-Lyons

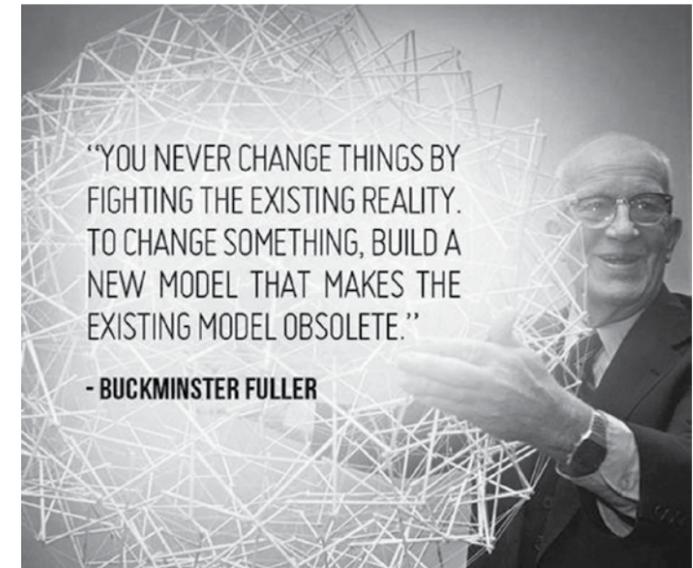
Have you ever wondered what your purpose is in life or on this planet? Have you ever thought you fell short of that purpose or did not yet get to do what you wanted? Many people just give up on their dreams and “settle” and say, “It wasn’t meant to be” or “Maybe next lifetime.” If you have felt this way before or feel you are playing small, pay attention to this concept of precession.

R. Buckminster Fuller explained, in the theory of “precession,” that any body in motion affects other bodies in motion. If we are moving toward a goal, we are creating an effect. The moon and the sun are two bodies in motion that affect each other. When you drop a stone in a pool of water, it creates a ripple effect. The effect we create depends on the intention we have while moving toward a goal. Once you achieve a goal, you may ask yourself, “Now what?” If the destination of completing a goal ends up with “Now what?” the question is why make goals in the first place? The answer is because you are moving toward something and creating an effect.

You may never know what your purpose really is. When a bee flies toward his goal of the nectar, he just sees the nectar. But in the grand scheme of things, the bee’s true purpose is to cross pollinate the flowers. However, the bee does not wake up every morning and say, “I am going to cross pollinate today!” All he does is move toward his goal. Like the bees, we have a goal and move toward it, and while we are moving we create an effect that in the grand scheme of things is the real purpose of our being. That is the root of the saying “It is the journey, not the destination.” That is why after reaching a goal we continue to keep moving.

One of my favorite demonstrations of the precessional effect is the movie *It’s a Wonderful Life*. James Stewart believed he had failed in life until an angel showed him what the world would be like without him. He realized the impact he had on the whole town and how much of a difference he had made. From that knowing of self-worth, he became the richest man in town. He realized his worth in the world and the world reciprocated.

No matter what you might think, you are important to others and you make a true difference in their lives. You may not be aware, but your kindness, personality, energy, or attitude may be the one thing that helps make somebody’s life brighter. As long as you are in motion, you are creating an effect, a ripple. As long as you are adding value along



the way, your effect will add value. Your ripple will make a difference. That is the real power that you hold, and a very good reason to always carry yourself in a positive light. With so many things being interrelated, the smallest positive thing you do could have a huge impact.

Remember, the value you add along the way is really what matters, not the goal. Keep moving forward and adding value and the impact you have on the world will matter and add value. That is your true purpose.

So many times, as we learn to embrace all aspects of our natural abundance (such as self-love, life passion, financial satisfaction, and our ability to grow healthy relationships), we help others and never even have to know it to feel the power of it. **You** make a difference—at home, in business, and within your community. You may never know what impact you make with someone just with a smile, a hug, or a kind word.

Keep moving toward the “nectar” and know that you are important, you matter, and without you, there is a hole in the Universe. 🌱

Burge Smith-Lyons is an international best-selling author; motivational speaker; intuitive healer; certified rebirther; hypnotherapist, channeler, minister; and founder and CEO of The Essence of Being, Inc. For thirty-six years she has helped thousands of graduates globally with emotional and spiritual healing, better communication techniques, relationships, prosperity consciousness, and enlightened leadership. Burgessmithlyons.com www.essenceofbeing.com



Transitional CHANGE

by Tamara H. Spirakis

“Do you see them? I mean, look at them; they’re huge!” said Cathy.

Even for her five foot frame she was underweight, frail, hadn't eaten in days. Her voice sounded as weak as her body felt. In her mid-fifties, she was exhausted from the cancer that ravaged her body. And she was weary. She began every visit not with the usual pleasantries but with, “I’m still here.”

“No, I don’t see them but tell me about them,” I said. With feeble wit she said, “I think He must have sent his biggest angels for me. I’m only eighty-five pounds. He didn’t need to send the big guns ‘cause I’m ready.” Cathy looked down at her small body. Her husband died a year earlier and she had a rough year of grief and battling her own cancer.

“Where is Steve? Is he here, too?” I asked. “Yes. He’s been here the whole time.” She gestured over her right shoulder.

Like so many I’ve had the privilege to serve at the end of their lives, Cathy was tired. REALLY tired. Mind, body, and spirit exhausted. And she was ready for this battle to be over. A few days later it was indeed over and she had won. Yes, won! She did NOT lose her battle to cancer but she became victorious as she transitioned from this life to the next. Her shell remained, beaten and battered from a war that raged inside her body. Oh, but her soul! Her soul was set free. Her peaceful passing, like so many, was proof enough of victory.

After watching so many move to the next plane, I know that death should not be feared, although fear is understandable because, well, we’ve not made this journey. It’s the great unknown. If you have the great honor to be with someone while they transition from this world to the next, it is important to show them

Forgive yourself, forgive others, apologize, and show love. You will get this love back in the end.

love, tell them everything you ever wanted them to know, bid them farewell until you meet again, and wish them well on their journey. Denying that the end is near brings anxiety and unrest. Acceptance, although difficult, brings much peace.

Understand that food will most likely be unwanted. Be with them, hold their hand, and even if words fail, your presence is felt. This time can be beautiful and precious.

As a hospice nurse I witness death, talk about impending death, or deal with it in one way or another on a daily basis. I am an ordinary woman—wife and mom of three boys. A saint, I assure you, I am not.

I’ve always felt a pull to assist people in their final months, weeks, moments of life. Some may say it’s a calling. Webster defines a calling as “A strong inner impulse towards a particular course of action especially when accompanied by conviction of divine influence.” I don’t think I could explain it any better than that. I often say it’s a career path that chose me. I am a conduit for a higher power.

So the question often arises: how does one prepare to die? Of course, we don’t know how death will occur. But one thing is certain and that is we are all terminal. Understanding that we are so much more than just this body is the path to peace during the transition. Know where you came from and where you’re going and remain prayerful. Engage in a daily spiritual practice. Forgive yourself, forgive others, apologize, and show love. You will get this love back in the end. I know; I’ve seen it happen.

Lastly, forget about dying and get busy living! 🌿

Tamara H. Spirakis, RN, CHPN, is a registered nurse working in the area of hospice after a decade of med-surge hospital nursing. She has a BS degree in biology from the University of South Carolina and later earned her nursing degree. She is certified in the area of hospice and palliative care.

The date was
05.17.1988

Lessons from a Near-Death Experience

by Anne Christine Tooley



One second I was driving home from work, the next I was in a ditch in a torrential thunderstorm with people holding umbrellas over me. A van had hit me head on and I crashed through my windshield directly onto my head. Not much face left. Scalp torn off. Blowout fracture of my left eye with glass embedded everywhere.

The first thing I remember was the faint sound of voices and fuzzy light. I was in the emergency room. Little skin covered my face, and with no eyelid the bright ceiling lights hurt like hell. When I woke up two days later, I was told I had two six-hour surgeries in the first twenty-four hours.

Months stretched into years of physical and emotional loss. Loss of my face and vision in my left eye, loss of my short-term memory (too bad they didn’t know about Traumatic Brain Injury [TBI] in those days), constant panic attacks, loss of my husband (yeah, he left), loss of my family (yeah, they didn’t come around), loss of my job, and a twenty-two acre farm that had only me for its care. Real hard to find the blessings in that, right? But when you’re brought to your knees, miracles begin to happen.

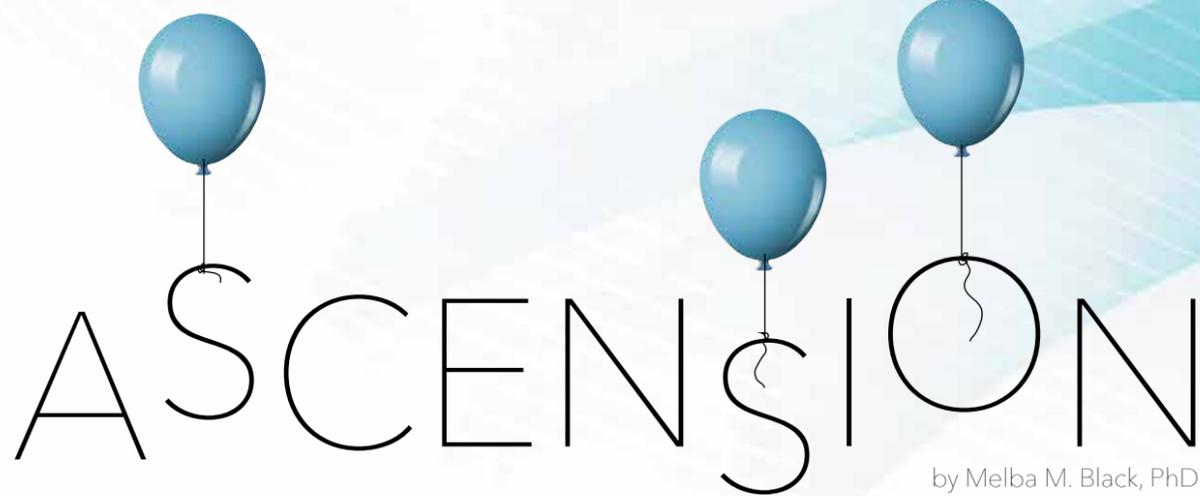
The emotional pain of so much loss left me pleading to God for answers. Why did this happen to me? Why do I have to suffer so? I was being stripped of my ego piece by piece. My tormented human self was ripped wide open allowing Grace to enter. I didn’t get what I wanted, but I got what I needed in spades.

experience of standing in a doorway threshold up in the sky. Behind me was total darkness and in front of me was blue sky with puffy white clouds. My grandmother appeared, floating and holding her hands out. I knew she wanted me to come with her, but I was frozen in place. She said, “Don’t be afraid, everything will all be alright.” I reached for her hands. As soon as our hands touched, I landed hard back into my body. It was extremely painful to suddenly be in a physical body after experiencing complete freedom from it.

The physical mind/body are dense and slow; being free of it allows Divine Intelligence/Love to flood your consciousness! The same out-of-body experiences can be reached through meditation, dreams, and with the guidance of a qualified practitioner.

I still feel my grandmother’s presence. And reflecting on what I experienced on the other side has been a great comfort to me. My rebirth into a new life of being wholly awake continues to unfold in ways that amaze me. It’s challenging sometimes, especially now with so much political and environmental polarization in the world. But to this day, I’m so grateful for what happened to me. If it hadn’t happened, I wouldn’t be sharing this with you. 🌿

Anne Christine Tooley has studied, researched, practiced, and taught Vibrational Energy Medicine since 1991. She resides in North Carolina and may be reached at www.energyandvibration.com and www.luminanti.com. Comments and questions are welcome!



ASCENSION

by Melba M. Black, PhD

Humanity is undergoing a consciousness shift and those awakening are being guided to integrate all aspects of one's self, including the Higher Self, lower self, ego, and shadow. These unusual consciousness experiences can result from the integration of our higher light-energy bodies that is happening during the Planetary Ascension cycle.

Ascension is a shift in energetic frequency patterns. Lisa Renee with Energetic Synthesis states that, "[. . .] what we are undertaking is, in essence, a complete dimensional shift. As the dimensional grids shift frequency and magnetic attributes change, all things existing within that 'broadband' reality will also shift and change."

We are an integral part of this shift and will experience physical, emotional, and mental symptoms and changes as our cells move into higher frequency patterns. We are energetically linked to the earth via electromagnetic frequency interactions, which interact with the global system via the Schumann Resonances, ranging from 7.83 Hz up to 39 Hz. The human body, particularly the heart and brain, resonate at the same frequency range, measured by an EKG and EEG.

Our earth has entered an ocean of photon light called the Photon Belt, which is capable of completely transforming all that is matter; it raises its vibratory level and dismantles lower vibrations which often results in chaos and destruction of old energetic patterns and structures. The light of this photon belt also has a very important action on the souls of human beings. The energy that each person can integrate will make him or her evolve depending on the work accomplished and depending on the maturity of his or her soul and of his or her level of consciousness. The photon belt has existed as long as our earth and solar system, but the earth is moving through it currently and will for some years to come. This passage through the belt will bring about an unequaled spiritual awakening along with an expansion into greater consciousness.

What does that mean for us? Our physical bodies are transitioning from dense cellular structures to our cells adapting to the higher frequencies of light and absorbing more light (photons). You may be experiencing depression, anxiety, lack of focus, disorientation, digestive disorders, random joint and muscle aches,

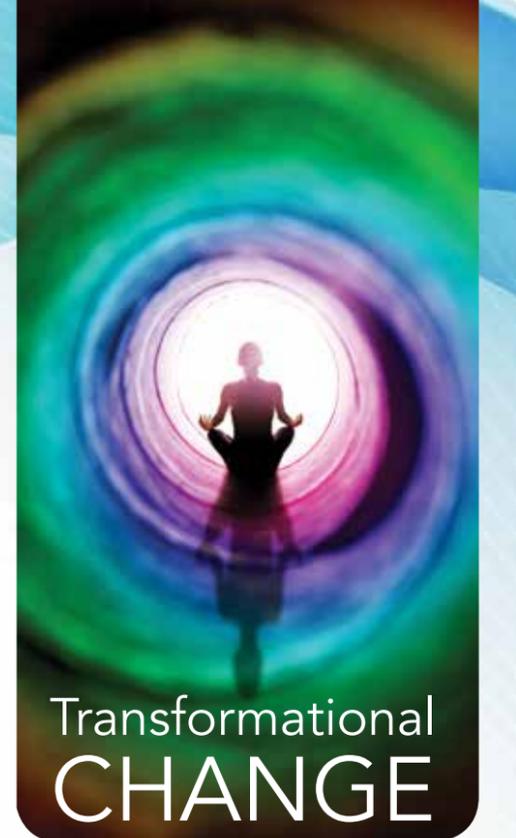
forgetfulness, lack of interest in things that you used to enjoy, feeling confused and frustrated because nothing is working, no matter how hard you try. Just know that old, limiting beliefs surface for releasing and letting go. I cannot say this strongly enough! Please know that these are not intellectual exercises!

So, what can you do about it? Here are a few suggestions:

- Be compassionate with yourself, honor yourself.
- Be kind to your body, get a massage, body/energy work, or R & R in a nature retreat; get plenty of sleep, meditate, and allow plenty of quiet time and alone time to get into your own vibrational field.
- Stay grounded with the earth.
- Remove yourself from as many electronic gadgets as possible. EMFs will hinder your energy integration process.
- Become aware of what you feel in the moment and act accordingly.
- Drink plenty of purified water, take baths, showers, and swim (especially in the ocean).
- Clearly communicate how you feel and what's going on, but only to people who understand sacred principles.
- Be grateful!

Spirit has given us many tools for our Ascension to assist and support our evolution in the easiest possible way. Ask for assistance with a pure heart and it will be given. Then enjoy the ride! 🌸

Melba M. Black, PhD, CLC, is a writer, mentor, innovator, and scholar. She has over thirty years of experience in holistic health, spirituality, and energy healing, including Life Coaching, Reiki, Intuitive Development, Meditation, Yoga, Qigong, and more. She currently teaches classes and conducts personal sessions at Sphere Innovation Group. www.sphereinnovationgroup.com



Transformational CHANGE through Illness

by Corinna Murray

Many wisdom teachers say that transformational change requires a sustained emotional crisis for a new level of awareness to awaken or manifest. The new awareness exposes the illusions of past conditioning, revealing truth, what simply IS, with no attachment or judgment to anything else . . . it just IS.

Many of us are Seekers—seeking things (relationships, accomplishments, possessions, approval, knowledge, wisdom, meaning) outside of ourselves in order to feel better, more complete, worthy, valued, and significant. We often struggle to fit in, to feel connected to what "matters" to others, and to be worthy based on the standards and beliefs of other people, needing their recognition. Moments of feeling successful are often fleeting but enough to keep us on that treadmill of "trying." The crisis may have many faces, such as illness or cancer, but the core emotion is fear. It takes real courage, but our fear is the catalyst for us to look at beliefs that no longer serve us and let them go, especially the belief that we need something or someone outside of ourselves to make us feel worthy, valued, and unconditionally loved.



Jay
Fenello
MEDITATION

The Harmony Point

Base Camp to Higher Consciousness

I recently wrote about transcending consciousness, and how the experience of its highest state is shared by many world traditions. I also described the techniques these traditions follow to prepare for transcendence, and how they align in their goal of a common receptive brain state.

One of the difficulties in writing about this topic is that we don't have a common language to describe many of these concepts. For example, the receptive brain state that these traditions target as a starting point doesn't have a common name. And until something has a name it is difficult to talk to about. So let's give it a name—The Harmony Point.

One of the results of floating is a state where you are completely passive, where every cell and muscle in your body is in balance with its surroundings, where every thought in your head is silent, or observed without reaction or judgment. In other words, you are one with the universe, completely passive to all the forces around you.

This is The Harmony Point—the launching pad to higher states of consciousness.

There are many ways to reach The Harmony Point. When you are not floating, The Harmony Point becomes that state where you counter the additional forces aligned against you with the minimal amount of effort required to maintain your stasis.

Adding this to our map of higher consciousness, The Harmony Point becomes an easy interim destination to reach. Getting to the mountain top, however, sometimes requires more than just a map.

Imagine if you wanted to climb Mount Everest. Not only would you need a map, you'd also need a guide, special equipment, and special training. And even that would not be enough—you'd also need to acclimate to your new environment before attempting to move up the mountain.

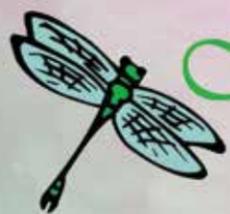
And so it is with meditation. Entering The Harmony Point is just a starting point. Every transcendent experience elevates you to a higher level of consciousness. And at each of these levels you'll need to acclimate to your new reality before you'll be ready for your next transcendent experience.

That's why transcendent experiences are not available on demand, and may only occur a few times in a lifetime. It also confirms that there are many levels of consciousness between where we start and the ultimate destination of union that so many seek.

Best wishes on your continuing journey. 🌸

Jay Fenello is the creator of the MindVizor, a ganzfeld meditation aid that provides benefits similar to floating, without the mess or expense. Visit the www.MindVizor.com website for product details, and tips on meditation and mindfulness.





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The physical mind/body are dense and slow; being free of it allows Divine Intelligence/Love to flood your consciousness!

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Willingness to change comes from the extreme discomfort of not changing. It is like staying stuck in the drowning sensations and struggle of quicksand. But, like with quicksand, we must stop fighting and resisting so we can free ourselves from the sticky grip of our past conditioning.

By allowing ourselves to feel fear, victimization, and isolation, to feel paralyzed and wanting to be rescued, we are then able to recognize what is not in our best interest, keeping us stuck. Awareness of these feelings and allowing them in is crucial. Understanding how they can serve us is the first step to letting them be and diminishing their hold on us. From there we can then allow ourselves to get mad, frustrated, and impatient so we can take the next uncertain steps of change.

Transformation comes when we recognize that all we can control is how we choose to show up in each precious moment . . . and not wanting to waste a single second. This requires forgiveness (of ourselves, our cancer or illness, and all the things and people we blame for our circumstance). We must forgive what WAS in order to accept what IS, with presence, so we can work with our bodies to heal. We have to forgive ourselves in order to love ourselves and when we love ourselves we can show up authentically as our true selves.

Learning to unconditionally love the unlovable parts of ourselves is a process that requires continual remembering to forgive, reminding ourselves that we

are always doing our best with what we know. When cancer is viewed as an opportunity for healing, we stop and start to recognize what is not serving us (thoughts, environments, people) to finally love ourselves enough to take responsibility for our lives. We comprehend that regret might be worse than the inevitability of death, regret for not having lived a life that honored its miraculous existence and potential.



Over time, ongoing transformation and healing requires ongoing forgiveness, but in a softer, less urgent way. As the emotional grip of the crisis fades and our inevitable mortality feels less imminent, we can become much more content to simply BE. We may feel conflicted or even guilty for trading passion and intensity for contentment, but once again, we can allow forgiveness to move us past guilt to embrace our current selves. By continuing to forgive ourselves and others, our transformation and healing continues to evolve.

Corinna Murray, DVM, CPC is a veterinarian, certified professional coach, founder of Veterinary Care Navigation™ and EnHABIT™ Engaging-the-Human-Animal-Bond-in-Tandem, and a cancer survivor. Corinna brings years of experience to these unique services focused on enhancing quality of life (QOL) by teaching emotional awareness, stress management, and intention setting. www.drcorinnamurray.com

Fully Human Diane Glynn Fully Spiritual



For to the bee a flower is a fountain of life
And to the flower a bee is a messenger of love
And to both, bee and flower, the giving and the receiving of pleasure is a need and an ecstasy.

- Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet

The beauty of giving, of serving others, is very much a part of our lives. Many of us do it easily, with love, asking for nothing in return. But what happens when we find ourselves on the receiving end of those gifts?

Sonia Osio, my dear friend, is an artist known for her mesmerizing mandalas and the beautiful designs on the walls of Unity North Atlanta. A few years ago I was scheduled for heart surgery and doing my best to downplay it. I knew I would be fine and the idea of being bombarded by well wishes, advice, and offers of help was overwhelming to my introverted self. Inevitably, word got out and all the above started happening. I was truly overwhelmed and embarrassed by it. As Sonia listened to me lament about the love being sent my way, she spoke quietly to me. Two and a half years later these are among the most profound words I have ever heard.

How can you be so selfish not to receive the same gifts you so willingly give?

At that moment, my fully human self cried. I was emotionally flooded with complete understanding of those words and gratitude for the beautiful vessel in which they were delivered.

As Luke 6:38 so simply states, if you are willing to give, get ready! It will come back to you multiplied: A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

There is a necessary, universal need for a continuous flow of positive energy. You give from a place of love, and you must be willing to receive a gift of love in return. This is the way it is meant to be. To feel yourself unworthy is to break this dynamic universal law. Your unworthiness is, in reality, a disservice to humanity. It is a roadblock on your spiritual path and it creates a roadblock for the one offering the gift.

In those moments when you are vulnerable, open yourself to that vulnerability. Allow someone to hold your hand and comfort you. Accept the love that is offered to you.

Giving and receiving love . . . a sweet, gentle spiritual law that embraces our humanity.



Diane Glynn is the Executive Director of Unity North Atlanta, a Spiritual Community in Marietta, GA where she is also a Prayer Chaplain. Through her writing, Diane teaches others how to incorporate spiritual practices into everyday life. Follow her on Facebook at This Moment and at yesthismoment.com

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EXPLORING

the *afterlife*

by David Ault

Every thing is open for interpretation and no interpretation is right or wrong. The thing itself is neutral. It is our managed perceptions stemming from our individual belief systems that give anything meaning. That's both the beauty and seeming madness of choice. Choosing certainly gains a certain uptick of credibility for us with direct experience but how do you lock in a credible interpretation about something when there's no firsthand involvement? How do you write travel advice about Croatia when you've never left the confines of your southern American town or offer a review on the best wines to accompany Coq Au Vin when you have no knowledge of French cuisine? Unless you are someone who has traveled the energies of a near death experience and been revived, you can only align with the rest of us with what feels right regarding our beliefs about the afterlife.

Most interpretations around the afterlife are inherited. If I grew up Buddhist then the cycle of death and rebirth (samsara) is a natural acceptance. I'd be persuaded and taught that the pursuit of enlightenment might lead me to escape the cycle and eventually achieve nirvana. If I grew up Christian, I'd be spending my life in the quest for salvation of my sins so that my death would be followed by entrance into heaven. Or, if throughout my human journey I witnessed a great amount of death, then my beliefs could morph and change over the course of time.

My beginning quest for enlightenment began in the mid-1980s alongside teacher and writer Louise Hay. I was introduced to her through a mutual friend and her philosophical messages were my first introduction into ancient wisdom/New Thought principles. It was a vast departure from my Christian upbringing and even though I no longer subscribed to labeling myself as Christian, the indoctrination of a dualistic God and a geographical Heaven or Hell as the afterlife prize were still rooted within my subconscious.

I slowly began to chip away at that.

Once Louise's work became consumed with offering support to the increasing number of people affected by AIDS, I signed on to train and volunteer with home visits for those who were left alone to suffer because of ignorance and the proliferated stigma of the disease.

I'd start with a list of ten names, schedule my home visits, then offer to run errands, help with pets, clean. Mostly I would sit bedside and offer what Louise had strongly suggested—"rub their feet." It was in that intimate interaction, that many would cry, deep animalistic cries of shame, regret, and longing for another chance to create or shape a legacy. I'd hold a safe space of nonjudgment as had been our instruction.

My list of ten names recycled to another ten and another as death came swift and sudden.

In the midst of these visits was Michael—unconventional and seemingly absurd with his enthusiasm and curiosity for what was next in his self-

Most interpretations around the afterlife are inherited. If I grew up Buddhist then the cycle of death and rebirth (samsara) is a natural acceptance.

described "spiraling up" of the soul. Michael had traveled the world, spent a great deal of time in India with gurus, and seemed unafraid with the fate prescribed him. He genuinely believed that if his current life was complete then he wasn't interested in remaining attached to his current form.

I looked forward to my visits with Michael and selfishly prayed he would hang in there. His visits were comforting to me, his peace contagious, his message of nonattachment enlightening.

One of the last spoken offerings he gave me was that happiness is eternal. It is continuously around us to be received not pursued. It simply requires you to unpack your attachments.

I've never had a near death experience but I can tell you that I saw a pathway to the afterlife through Michael's transitioning eyes. His peace was enough to set me free to allow a new interpretation of life everlasting. 🙏

David Ault is a thought leader, global literacy advocate, and minister currently serving at Spiritual Living Center of Atlanta, an inclusive New Thought Center. He is the founder of Kaleidoscope Child Foundation, a nonprofit that advances the lives of vulnerable children and communities worldwide with sustainable education, life skills, and fresh water.

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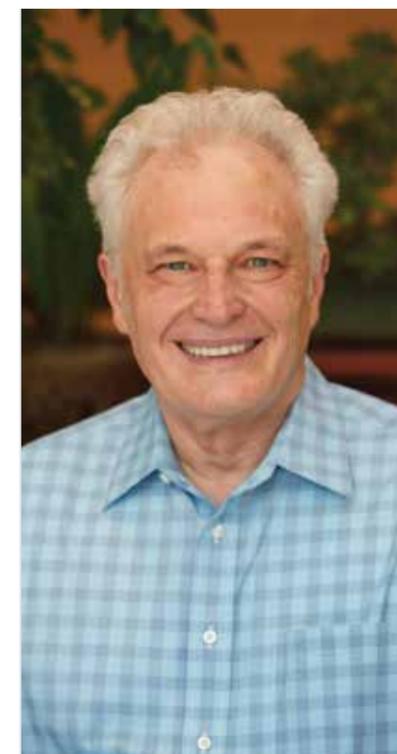
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How Do You Cope with Big Changes in Life?



“Change shatters our ideas about ourselves and about what we think we’re made of.”

by Diane Eaton

open to getting help and support from friends, family, and professionals, which in turn helps us lighten our mood, discover new glimmers of hope, and even heal attachment to what was, but is no more.

It helps us allow the change to happen. One of the most potent paths to transform crisis into opportunity and change into growth also has a distinctly feminine aura to it. *Surrender* is the art of letting go of our personal preferences and attachments and letting things “flow” with the wisdom of the universe. But it can also be a concept that trips us up. It’s not a big leap to confuse *surrender* with *submission*, after all. Eons of servitude—voluntary and involuntary—are in our DNA. At the same time, our modern culture pushes us to stand up for ourselves, proclaiming “No more.” No more will I be less than. No more will I forfeit personal choice. No more will I be violated. It’s a strong, beautiful, and necessary stance. And it’s an essential retrieval of our personal power from all the years of submission.

The surrender that can help us rise above the trauma of crisis is not submission. It’s surrender in a vertical direction—not a horizontal one, as submission is. Surrender is allowing the unfathomable Divine within us to run the show, choose what’s right, and put the pieces in their perfect places. And with surrender comes the relaxation of the ego, and from that follows peace, grace, and even gratitude—through the crisis, through the change—to discover the perfection of everything that befalls us. 🌸

Diane Eaton, The Writing Doctor, is a copywriter, editor, and ghostwriter for authors and entrepreneurs who love to heal, enlighten, and serve humanity. She has worked with distinguished spiritual teachers, including Colin Tipping and Dr. Robert Jaffe, and is the author of *Sedona Speaks* and *7 Simple Habits to Start Writing Like a Pro*. More at www.dianethewritingdoctor.com.

If the Buddha was right, change is as inevitable as the sun rising in the east every morning. In other words, to expect anything to stick around or stay the same forever just isn’t being realistic.

Yet surviving big change and momentous crisis can be terribly challenging. Change shatters our ideas about ourselves and about what we think we’re made of. Whether we’ve lost a home, a relationship, our health, or a job, change pushes us out of our comfort zones. It forces us to disconnect from things or people we cherish and depend on, and float for a while in an unfathomable sea of unknowns.

Still, as traumatic as they might be, crisis and change have their place, purpose, and perfection in our lives—whether we like it or not.

But are women better equipped to deal with crisis and change?

It would seem so. Generally speaking, we women are often more comfortable delving into our feelings and letting ourselves be vulnerable than men are. That helps us move on emotionally a bit more easily. We are also equipped with eons-old programming to “tend and befriend”—an alternative to flight or fight—in order to secure our survival. That means we’re more

How we handle change defines us more than anything else in life. It exposes the fiber of who we are when stripped of our comforts. The different ways the masculine and feminine handle change can be frustrating as well as enlightening. Many commercials on TV present men as change-challenged crybabies when it comes to handling new situations. Unfair, I say! Change is deeply personal and transcends class, age, race, and sex.

To be honest, women deal with certain types of changes more readily than men because change is something women are more used to. From an astrological point of view, feminine would be “mutable” and masculine would be “fixed.”

According to leadership experts, there are three different types of fundamental changes: 1) Developmental, that which is planned long-term; 2) Transitional, that which is either planned or unplanned due to circumstances; and 3) Transformational, that which is unplanned and both the outcome and the method of transformation are questionable.

Since change comes in different forms, change itself is usually multidimensional. Within transformational change are developmental and transitional change. In the latter two, the feminine would seem to have the edge and be bewildered at the opposition of the masculine; whereas in transformational change, the masculine may be more ready for bold moves and be disgruntled by the restraint of the feminine.

The general nature of the masculine is to deal with change, at least initially, as if it is not happening. Not to be in denial, but to feel resolute in the course of action once taken is still the best course of action. This is akin to doubling down in the face of adversity. Often only in a crisis does the masculine energy alter direction with sudden, bold moves. Then, when the new way is implemented, and a new path is taken, the old way is a distant memory.

In contrast, the feminine tends to know that change will be taking place and planning for that is part of the process. Thus, developmental change is natural

and well thought out. The masculine may know the destination, but the road to get there is often a mystery. The feminine deals with the mystery of subtle change more easily.

The saying *Women are evolutionary; Men are revolutionary* is a generality and somewhere in the middle is where we really are. In truth, we are all looking to learn how not to curse the rain but to dance between the raindrops. 🌿

Don Reed Simmons is a Visionary Consultant and the president of International Sound Therapy Association. His work spans three decades of conscious living as a crisis intervention counselor, filmmaker, writer, shamanic practitioner and meditation teacher. He speaks regularly on subjects of sound, compassion, and intentional leadership. www.DonReedSimmons.com



“The general nature of the masculine is to deal with change, at least initially, as if it is not happening.”

by Don Reed Simmons



CONSCIOUS BUSINESS

Big Business. Small Business.
Embracing Conscious Capitalism

by Sharron Ragan



her bestselling book *Selling with Noble Purpose*, says, “I named it ‘Noble Purpose’ rather than simply purpose, because the word noble makes it absolutely clear: You are in the service of something bigger than yourself.”

So how can we begin to reverse the corporate missteps of the past few decades and begin the journey for business’s higher purpose to serve society and create more aligned prosperity for all the stakeholders?

serve society and create more aligned prosperity for all the stakeholders?

1. First, we must support the rise of authentic future leaders who are dedicated to seeking ways to switch corporate mindsets away from short-term thinking and unleash a heroic spirit of business that results in doing “good” for the world.
2. Second, leaders must recognize and support all the synergistic interdependencies that exist in a business from employees, to stakeholders, to investors, to stockholders and consumers.
3. Third, leaders and industry influencers must encourage businesses to create environments of financial, intellectual, social, cultural, emotional, spiritual, physical, and ecological success and prosperity.
4. Fourth, company culture must demand and apply an environment of trust and authenticity while providing opportunities for personal growth and professional fulfillment.
5. Fifth, we must encourage our young and upcoming generation of CEOs, entrepreneurs, and leaders to embrace enlightened standards of performance, transparency, and accountability.

Free enterprise capitalism is the most powerful system for social cooperation and human progress ever conceived. Whether the focus is purpose or consciousness in business, I believe that we are on a path to change and improve the future of the way visionary CEOs and independent business owners grow worldwide business more consciously and purposefully for all involved. 🌱

Sharron Ragan is a brand creativity consultant and intuitive change agent. She’s a former corporate brand/marketing strategist having worked with many Fortune 500 companies including Coca-Cola and Wendy’s. As CEO of Visionary Business Worldwide, she applies her creative and intuitive spirit to inspire professionals to seek a purpose-driven life and career. www.SharronRagan.com

Conscious Capitalism is not just a theory. It’s a new and innovative model being applied more and more every day in businesses big and small. Many of these businesses are having a tremendous impact on the world. They are led by visionaries who, through their lifetime of work and success, are modeling what it means to be a Conscious Capitalist. It’s no longer about making choices only to please the shareholders at the expense of the stakeholders or the consumers. It’s about how to blend an effective way of bringing consciousness to business while still satisfying investors, shareholders, stakeholders, and consumers.

Regardless of any new way of creating and growing a company, the key to financial survival is profit. Yet when producing rapid profit becomes the only goal with respect to the investor or shareholder, in many situations that effort to please Wall Street is seriously harming the stakeholders, the economy, and the planet.

Is there a way to reinvent the model so that business leaders worldwide will embrace the power of creating conscious businesses that focus on embracing value and healing the planet, versus the push for shareholder short-term financial returns?

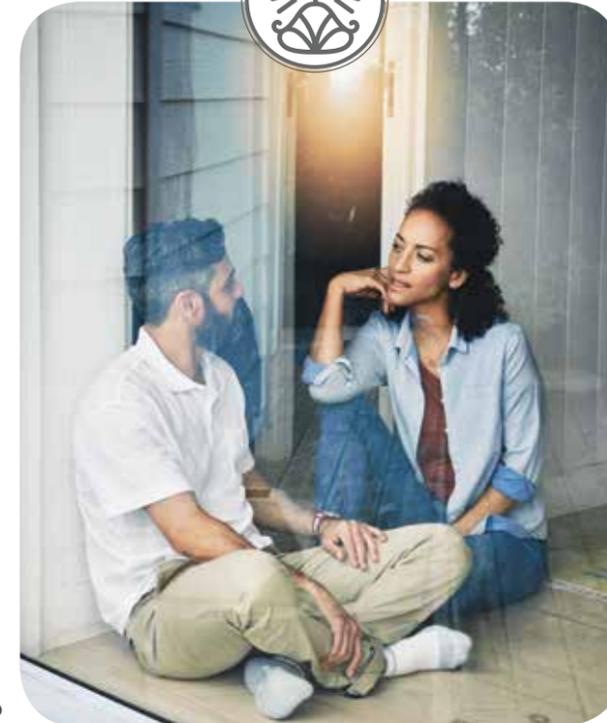
Punit Renjen, Chairman of industry advisor firm Deloitte, said, “A strong sense of purpose drives businesses to take the long view and invest for growth, and that manifests in multiple ways.” Deloitte’s latest workplace survey revealed the tight correlation between Purpose and Profit. The study summary, “Purpose Drives Profits and Confidence,” shows that purpose increases customer, employee, and shareholder engagement, plus confidence and trust in a company.

A Proctor and Gamble ten-year growth study of more than 50,000 company brands around the world shows that enlightened companies who put improving people’s lives at the center of all they do have a growth rate triple that of their competitors and they outperform the market by a huge margin. Ironic, isn’t it? Focusing on something other than money winds up making a business even more money. Companies like Tom’s Shoes, Ghia, and even Oprah (Harpo Studios) are examples of the rise of companies with consciousness values.

Lisa Earle McLeod, International Business Advisor and creator of the business concept “Noble Purpose” in

CONSCIOUS RELATIONSHIPS A NEW WAY TO LOVE

by Xiomara A. Sosa



The conscious spirit requires an awareness of the spiritual world around us which occurs as we become more awakened spiritually and less distracted by the physical world. Awakening implies that we are self-identified as a spiritual being and not just as a physical entity. The path towards awakening includes an understanding that as spiritual beings we have direct access to our own spirituality.

Healing and well-being require an integrative approach. Integration is at the root of all healing. Not only must we heal our body, we must also heal our mind and our spirit. Psychological health is at the core of this healing which must include our mental, emotional, and behavioral health. This integration of our psychological health towards complete healing is our new way to love ourselves and, as a result, a new way to love humanity as a whole or a significant other.

These days so many people feel unhappy in their relationships. When habitual norms break down we tend to try to quickly replace them with anything that might bring back that feeling of happiness. The current trend is to attempt to replace what breaks down in our lives with a pursuit of a “conscious relationship.” We are doing this in droves as a way to find elusive happiness and love.

That seems like an ambitious goal to achieve. I say this because achieving a genuine conscious relationship requires us to experience a spiritual and personal growth that fully engages our spirit as a powerful tool in our own personal and intimate awakening process. Awakening is a necessary ingredient to achieve and to sustain a true conscious relationship—a new love.

In traditional relationships we focus on changing something about our partner to appease ourselves and our personal fulfillment. This takes our focus away from

ourselves and puts it on someone else instead. Inevitably, we lose clarity on what we are as an individual in an effort to sustain the relationship.

In considering a new way to love, we must instead put the focus back on ourselves. We can do this by putting our energy on our own growth. This requires that we intently engage with our spirit and use it at this stage as a powerful tool in our own spiritual awakening process, however we choose to define it.

This new way to love requires that we focus on our personal growth by integrating our mental, physical, and spiritual health. This is at the core of a conscious relationship with ourselves and with another person. Our personal comfort zones must be let go.

Conscious relationships are not meant to be and will never be all sunbeams and sunshine. Most of us automatically presume that when something is wrong in the relationship, breaking it off and leaving is the appropriate response. While this may be true in some cases, that is not necessarily healthy and realistic.

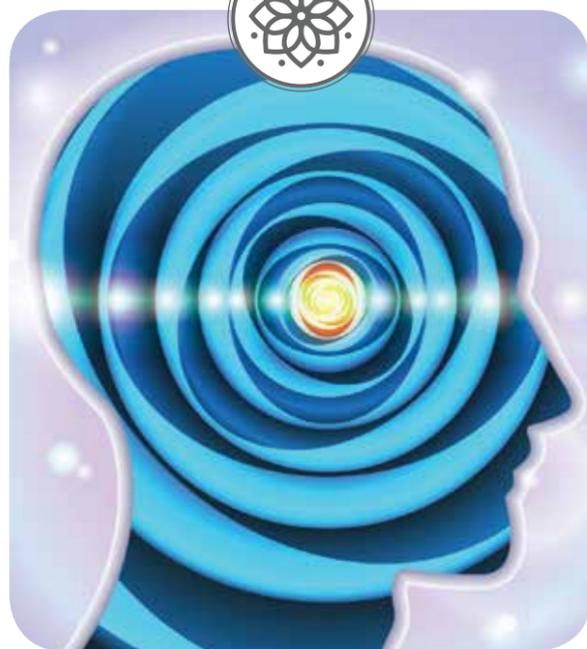
Loving in this new way requires patience and commitment to our personal spiritual growth process. When both partners are committed to that it becomes a mutual effort to grow instead of a struggle to figure out what is wrong, win or leave. Expressing who we genuinely are requires that both partners understand that the relationship is not in danger of judgment from either partner.

A conscious relationship is fueled by love; love is not just a destination. 🌱

Xiomara A. Sosa is the founder of XAS Consulting, LLC DBA. She is an accomplished Clinical Mental Health Counselor, Psychotherapist, and Positive Psychology Coach providing services in private consultation. As a multicultural and integrative counselor, she works with mixed ages and genders, couples, families, groups, and is bilingual (Spanish). www.XiomaraASosa.com

Conscious Technology THE PINEAL GLAND

by Melba M. Black, PhD



The pathway to this enhanced level of consciousness is available to all humans; it is hard-wired into our brain architecture, like a homing circuit, although it is rarely activated. Those of us who pursue creative/spiritual lifestyles may sometimes experience or temporarily access this enhanced perspective as a source of inner inspiration, creation, and illumination.

This dimension of illumination is accessed by special stimulation of the pineal gland, which then

formulates the secretion of metatonin, whose main active ingredient, DMT, allows a person to enter this additional dimension as an out-of-body consciousness.

Dr. Rick Straussman conducted DEA-approved clinical research monitoring the effects of DMT on human physiology. At the University of New Mexico, the study involved injecting 60 volunteers with DMT and recording its effects. The results were astounding. Many of the volunteers reported convincing encounters with intelligent nonhuman beings (aka aliens). Nearly all study participants said their experience with this psychedelic substance was one of the most profound of their lives.

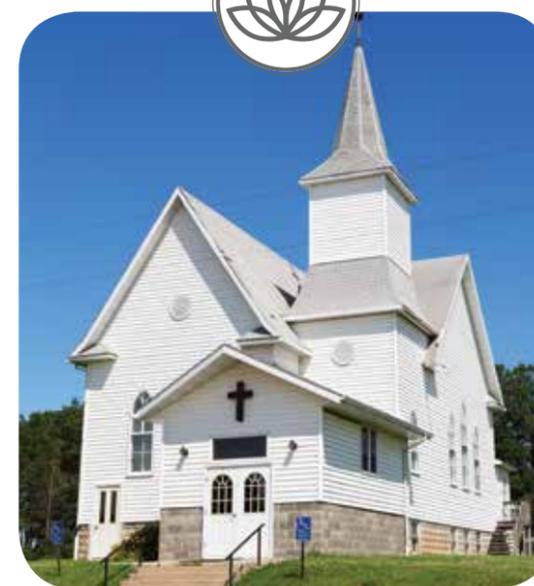
In Joe Rogan's book, *The Spirit Molecule*, he discusses how DMT facilitates the movement of the soul in and out of the body. He explains that it represents an integral part of birth and death experiences and higher states of meditation and sexual experiences.

As our science and technology become more advanced to perform less invasive procedures for more pineal discoveries, the studies will provide more information on this mysterious gland and its function with consciousness, near death, and out-of-body experiences. 🌸

Melba M. Black, PhD, CLC is a writer, mentor, innovator, and scholar. She has over thirty years of experience in holistic health, spirituality, and energy healing, including Life Coaching, Reiki, Intuitive Development, Meditation, Yoga, Qigong, and more. She currently teaches classes and conducts personal sessions at SphereInnovationGroup. www.sphereinnovationgroup.com

WORLD VIEW Religion is Dying, Right?

by Glenn Pearson



According to a recent Pew Research Institute study, mainline Protestants, Evangelicals, and Catholics all saw declines in their membership between 2007 and 2015 (-3.4, -0.9, and -3.1 percentage points, respectively). Although there was a modest bump in people joining non-Christian faiths (+1.2), the majority of “defectors” now identify as “nones,” having no formal affiliation (+6.7). Many “nones” seek authenticity, embracing spirituality while rejecting religious dogma and practice.

Why these shifts? There are many contributing factors, but at the risk of over-simplifying, I suggest we think of two broad buckets: 1) Christianity's mixed record, and 2) significant cultural shifts. Although Christianity has made enormous contributions to Western life—including the elevation of human rights, establishment of hospitals, creating exquisite art, prompting the abolition of slavery—the church's history is also littered with such atrocities as the Crusades, the Inquisition, the Salem Witch Trials, and pockets of anti-intellectualism.

The other major factor, though, has nothing to do with the church. Since the 1960s, skepticism about all institutions—government, big business, the military, and the church—has blossomed. Other societal changes include greater mobility and international interaction, resulting in broad exposure to foreign cultures and religions. In a global world, Christianity's claimed exclusivity seems bigoted. So these two factors—religion behaving badly and shifting cultural values—have fueled significant disillusionment with Christianity.

But I wonder, are these trends a convenient excuse to reinforce our innate drive to define our own destinies? Could it be the church's foibles linked with changing societal values have allowed people to throw off the constraints of organized religion, making it more acceptable to “chart my own course” spiritually?

The tension between self-determination and submitting to God is very, very old, appearing in the earliest chapters of

the book of Genesis, which report that Eve's sin was rejecting God's clear instructions not to eat certain fruit. She believed the tempter's assurance that if she ate the fruit, her eyes would be opened and she would become like God.

There's nothing wrong with working hard, taking charge of one's life, or striving to improve circumstances. That's highly “American.” However, at some point, extreme self-sufficiency clashes with the Judeo-Christian teaching

that, as both creator and lord of the universe, God can legitimately define acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

The desire to resist being told what to do makes it easier to create “do-it-yourself” religion. And this pull is turbo-charged when the church offers a wealth of ammunition by its failings, and society tells you not to trust “the establishment.”

Will organized Christianity in the West continue to dwindle? In the short term, probably yes. But the longer term answer is less clear. The pendulum swings of history can surprise. Medieval theistic excesses were brought into check by the Protestant Reformation. Eighteenth Century rationalism gave way to Romanticism, which was, in turn, followed by the Age of Science. Each was more a reaction to what preceded than a linear extension of the past.

The church can't control huge shifts in the culture. But we know that people distrust “the establishment” because of perceived greed, selfishness, and power plays. What if the church modeled just the opposite? And what if it maintained its clear teaching on Christianity's unique claims but focused on the message of greater grace and inclusion?

Would this work? It's a long slog, but it could be a starting point. To paraphrase Mark Twain, perhaps the report of the church's death is an exaggeration. 🌸

Glenn Pearson wears many hats. He is a long-time healthcare executive leader, a speaker on both healthcare and spiritual growth issues, the author of *That's a Great Question: What to Say When Your Faith Is Challenged*, a professional blues and bluegrass harmonica player, and a cycling and fitness enthusiast. www.glennpearson.com

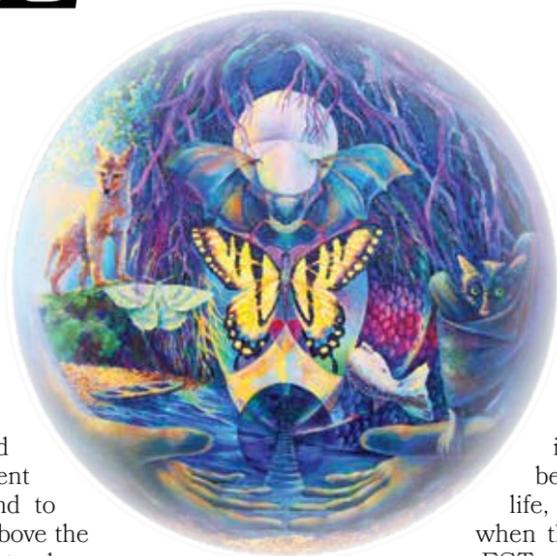
the Spring EQUINOX and the Resurrection of LIFE

by Michelle Gregg

The Wheel of Life continues its turning, and with this fleeting moment of equal day and night at the Spring Equinox, we are delivered into the freshness of being, the bursting forth of life, and resurrection from the darkness and cold of the Winter just past.

As the Sun continues his sacred, life-giving journey and enters the sign of Aries, he advances higher in the sky, increasing in heat and intensity. This annual enlightenment encourages the recently cold ground to warm, the plants to push their way above the newly verdant earth, to unfurl their tender, new leaves, soon to burst with flowers and seeds. Everything swells with life once more. In the Northern Hemisphere we're reminded each March that the battle between darkness and light, lost each Winter and won each Summer, stands at a truce, even if only briefly. This Spring Equinox détente delivers both relief and a promise—as the light strengthens and warmth returns to stir and embolden us, and the glistening hues and fragrances of nature astonish our senses, we know that the descent into darkness is always rewarded with the sojourn back up into the light, into life.

“Equinox” describes that moment of equality between the darkness on one side and the light on the other. This means that we must emerge from the darkness to go into the light—to be resurrected. This symbolism of the battle between dark and light is the source of stories passed down since the dawn of time. It is no coincidence that one of the most enduring religious stories, that of crucifixion, death, and resurrection (shared by numerous deities throughout religious history), is the one many embrace during Spring—



Easter (resurrection of Jesus), Ostara (return of life from death), Passover (resurrection from slavery), and Isra and Mi'raj (ascension of Muhammad). There is an inherent knowledge deep within us that the cycle of life and the ceaseless journey of the Sun will bring us back into life and light—eternally.

Each Spring Equinox offers its own unique energy to mark the beginning of the return of warmth, life, and light. The astrological chart when the Sun moves into Aries at 12:17 p.m. EST on March 20, 2018 ushers us into and provides the “background” influences for the duration of the Season. This year our first thrust into re-burgeoning life is one of mastering the challenge between impatience and passion, with the wisdom of the natural timing of belonging, acceptance, and healing. Mars challenges us to push forward with our desires, while Saturn and Chiron make sure we do so with pragmatism, and the experience of the time-tested. The Serenity Prayer comes to mind with this Spring energy—renew and reinvigorate your life with the serenity to accept the things you can't change, to have the courage to change the things you can, and to call on wisdom to know the difference. 🌱

Michelle Gregg is a professional Counseling Astrologer, writer, and personal catalyst. She has twenty-five years' experience working with clients from an astrological and Jungian model, helping them catalyze their lives into more joyous, more spiritually connected vibrancy. She currently has a thriving private practice, blogs, and teaches astrology at The Metropolitan Atlanta Astrological Society. www.michellegregg.com

There is an inherent knowledge deep within us that the cycle of life and the ceaseless journey of the Sun will bring us back into life and light—eternally.

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Healing With Essential Oils

by Angila Reid

One of the greatest benefits of essential oils is helping balance our emotions. These oils used together or alone can assist individuals to FORGIVE themselves and others. They steer us away from bitterness and hostility and direct us toward feelings of LIGHT, LOVE, FREEDOM and UNDERSTANDING.

ARBORVITAE is sourced from the Western Red Cedar tree, native to Canada and Northwestern U.S., and is a powerful cleansing agent. It promotes peace and joy, and unblocks our connection to the Divine.

BERGAMOT is the most delicate of the citrus oils. Sourced in Italy and cold pressed/expressed, BERGAMOT has cleansing effects on "stuck" emotions and "limiting beliefs." It promotes unconditional self-love, brings about a sense of hope, and allows self-judgment to fade.

JUNIPER BERRY is sourced from the Bulgarian coniferous tree and is steam distilled. It promotes healthy kidney and urinary tract functions. It encourages facing fears and recognizing life's lessons.

MYRRH a resin from the Ethiopia Myrrh tree, is steam distilled. It has powerful cleansing properties especially for the mouth and throat. It assists individuals to let go of fears and promotes feelings of safety and security. It helps the soul feel nurtured and loved.

All of these oils have extremely powerful and positive emotional benefits individually. dōTERRA has a blend of these oils called FORGIVE that you may want to consider as well. 🙏



Angila Reid is a Wellness Advocate and Educator with dōTERRA International, a Certified Reflexologist, and received her CNHP from Trinity School of Natural Health. Angi lives in Lawrenceville, GA with her

husband of over twenty-five years, and her fur babies Mork and Mindy. Angi's passion is helping others while educating them on alternative natural remedies.

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A Rabbi, a Priest, and an Imam Went into a Bar...



by Gareth J. Young

A rabbi, a priest, and an imam went into a bar. The bar was in Johannesburg, South Africa, and the rabbi, the priest, and the imam had just flown in from Atlanta. They brought with them thirty of their closest friends, ten Jews, ten Christians, and ten Muslims. Oh, and a Buddhist—that was me!

The group sat down in the bar, broke bread (challah, of course!), and prayed together. Then we went over the agenda for the ten day trip, which included a tour of Robben Island, visiting Nelson Mandela's Cape Town presidential residence, touring Soweto, and going on a safari. More importantly, it included attending a Friday evening Shabbat service at a historical synagogue; participating in a Sunday Christian service at the small, local church of our tour guide; and celebrating the Muslim Eid at a small masjid (mosque) in a town outside Johannesburg.

Each morning I woke up to engage in my morning reading and meditation, and each morning had the added joy and richness of observing the very different routine of my Muslim, Christian, or Jewish roommate, and then talking with them. By observing and understanding each other's faith and practice, we become stronger in our own, and more compassionate of others. After chatting, we walked down to breakfast where we each

paired up with our "dance partner" for the day; another person different than each of us with whom we sat on the couch, ate all of our meals, had wonderful conversations, and became fast friends.

These immersive, international, interfaith trips based out of Atlanta have happened several times each year from 2011 to the present, and have transformed the lives of hundreds of participants. Not only are the groups intentionally of mixed faith, they are also of mixed race—typically 50 percent black.

Of course we have wonderful experiences together, visiting historical and beautiful parts of the world, meeting wonderful local people, and eating amazing food. On this last South Africa trip, for example, we tracked the history of Nelson Mandela, were given a tour of the High Court by one of the Commissioners of Human Rights, and stopped off to see the penguins on the way down the Cape of Good Hope.

But what we all really take away from these trips are the friendships we forge.

These deepen over time, even after the trips, and become unbreakable bonds of support and advocacy. We are "there" for each other in the deepest ways at times of greatest need. And the trips do much more than build personal relationships; they change the worldviews of the participants,

open us up to strangers, and spill over into our lives in ripples to change the world.

Atlanta is the home of the Civil Rights movement, and it is therefore fitting that it should be home of World Pilgrims, the group that organizes and manages these trips. This is a group founded and led by Reverend Dr. Gerald L. Durley, Senior Pastor Emeritus of Providence Missionary Baptist Church; Plemon T. El-Amin, Imam Emeritus of the Atlanta Masjid of Al-Islam; and Jan Swanson. These three remarkable people have been leaders of interfaith and social justice in Atlanta for several decades.

World Pilgrims is, at its root, a movement of social change. Like all such movements, it is slow, founded on relationships and grass roots. But it is enormously powerful and enormously beautiful. And it could change your life too!

During their ten days in South Africa the rabbi, the priest, and the imam went up Table Mountain together, and the traveling group became such good friends that we all cried when it was time to say farewell. 🙏

Gareth J. Young, formerly an ordained Zen Buddhist priest, is a co-founder and leader of Red Clay Sangha, a secular Atlanta Buddhist community. He is also an author, podcast host, speaker, and businessman, and is active in interfaith and social justice. www.garethjyoung.com



Today we are exposed to chemicals in much greater concentrations than in previous generations. Additives, colors, chemicals, and dyes found in processed foods and heavy metals like lead, mercury, and aluminum pose serious health threats.

The current level of chemicals in food, water, and the environment has lowered our threshold of resistance to disease and altered the body's metabolism, causing nutritional deficiencies and hormonal imbalances.

Toxins store in cells, tissues, and fat, and cleaning them out is important to maintain good health. There are many vegetables and fruits that can aid in this process.

Celery is a diuretic that contains compounds known as coumarins, which are useful in cancer prevention. These compounds also tone the vascular system, lower blood pressure, and are useful in eliminating migraines. Celery is strongly alkaline, counteracts acidosis, halts digestive fermentation of foods, purifies the bloodstream, aids digestion, and helps clear up skin problems. If there is stiffness, creaking, or cracking in the joints, the body is lacking organic sodium, the "youth" element that helps keep muscles limber and pliable, and has also built up inorganic calcium deposits. Celery's rich organic sodium content dislodges these deposits from joints so they can be eliminated through the kidneys.

Kale is a valuable internal body cleanser and powerful cancer preventative food with antioxidants that protect against breast and colon cancer. The sulphur in kale has antibiotic and antiviral characteristics, which are able to stimulate the liver and other tissues out of stagnancy.

Cilantro helps purify the blood and strengthen the heart. Cucumbers contain an anti-inflammatory flavonol called fisetin that plays an important role in brain health and preventing progressive memory and learning impairments.

Apples are rich in pectin, the soluble fiber that helps remove toxins and bad cholesterol from the blood. They are also rich in malic acid, a naturally cleansing nutrient that removes carcinogens from the blood. Parsley and cilantro work together to help detox heavy metals like aluminum, mercury, and lead out of the blood and organs.

Toxins tend to stick to the colon and intestines and the buildup of these toxins can have many negative health effects. Colonics are very important to help move out these toxins.

Blending vegetables and fruits in a high-speed blender is a great way to make a juice that is full of fiber and helps move toxic waste safely out of the body. 🙏



CLEANSE GREEN JUICE

- 1 cup kale, leaves cut into pieces with stems left in
- 1 cup cilantro, coarsely cut
- 1 cup cucumber, peeled and cut into small pieces
- 1 cup celery, cut into small pieces
- 1 cup apple, cored and cut into small pieces
- 1 - 2 cups filtered water

Blend all ingredients together until smooth and drink this cleansing beverage.

Brenda Cobb, founder of Living Foods Institute, author of *The Living Foods Lifestyle*®, and featured on documentaries "Healing Cancer Inside Out" and "Eating," has an Honorary Cultural Doctorate in Therapeutic Philosophy and the Phoenix Award honoring her work. She personally healed breast and cervical cancer without surgery, chemo, or radiation. <http://livingfoodsinstitute.com>



Hope Merrill | Founder, Conscious 360°



CONSCIOUS 360°

Q: Dear Hope, I want a deeper connection to Spirit, and to myself and in my relationships, but I just don't know how. How do I really forgive when it feels like I have to forgive and grieve for everything that has happened in my whole life! —John



A: Dear John, I get it! Sometimes when we are in this stage of healing, we find it challenging to move through the overwhelming feelings of grief. Wisdom Teachings tell us that we must feel all of our emotions and honor each one. Don't be afraid to cry, and grieve, and surrender. It is all necessary, for if we recognize that we are moving from Stage 2—Body, where we have accepted that things are just as they are, and into Stage 3—Spirit, we can relax enough to breathe into the understanding that all is a part of our evolving consciousness. Our life is the result of an intricate weaving of choices, circumstances, and responses, all of which are ultimately guided by our Soul for the purpose of our growth and evolution. Eventually we come to understand that there is nothing to forgive, only gratitude for the dance of life. This understanding comes with such peace!

It is most helpful in this stage to work with a counselor or a healer. A trusted guide is sometimes necessary to navigate these deep waters of the soul. Also, treat yourself to the conscious development of a spiritual practice. Whatever your beliefs, seek a deeper connection by consistently taking the time to “be in relationship” with yourself and the God of your understanding. Pray, Meditate, Sing, Dance, Love! Learn to forgive as easily as you once judged. Practice compassion and tolerance and you will move into Stage 4—Integration where you make different choices and begin to see real positive change in your life.

The Conscious 360° model is used as our foundation to organize the wisdom and guidance in the Conscious Life Journal. Following the 5 stages of healing—Mind, Body, Spirit, Integration and Balance—our goal is to provide you with rich information about your journey to a higher state of consciousness.

What does Conscious 360° really mean? Simply put, it is a way to understand your healing and a process that helps you know where you are on your path to a higher consciousness.

STAGE 1 | MIND—Discover Who You Are

STAGE 2 | BODY—Accept Who You Are

STAGE 3 | SPIRIT—Connect to Who You Are

STAGE 4 | INTEGRATION—Practice Who You Are

STAGE 5 | BALANCE—Actively BE Who You Are

Since we heal in spirals, you can't really apply a time line to Conscious 360. You will move through each stage in order, several times, both in your life and within each situation in your life.

What is important, and why Conscious 360° works, is it aids us in knowing the stage we are in, what we need to do in that stage, and how to move to the next stage. A touchstone or, if you will, a guide map for when we get in the “soup” of personal transformation and are overwhelmed or stuck.

With Conscious 360°, you just find the stage you are in, do the work inside that stage, and you WILL move to the next stage and ultimately to peace and balance.

As you use Conscious 360°, you will find your transformational healing easier to understand, quicker to move through, and feel more supported in your growth.

This section of the Journal explores each stage, with articles and guidance that are helpful inside each stage. Learn from these articles, apply them to your daily life, study the stages of Conscious 360°, and TRANSFORM!

Need help using Conscious 360°? Contact Hope for a private session. Or submit your question for a future issue of the Journal.

hope@myconsciouslifejournal.com



AWAKENING

by Rev. Richard Burdick

For centuries, humans have inadvertently treated the idea of awakening as if it was a destination at the end of an arduous journey. Many yearn for the great epiphany or revelation to complete them, as if there is a stopping point to spiritual growth. This misguided human view is indicative of an externally focused quest for the mythical pot of gold or magic pill that erases all our earthly tribulations. True awakening is much more a process than an event.

Life, by design, is a constantly stretching, widening, growing, and deepening phenomenon. So are we, as its offspring. In this awareness, awakening is no longer viewed as a one-time affair, but as a perpetual state of cooperation with our fundamental state of being. It becomes a self-created condition of conscious evolution that is infinite in its scope and reach. It is a diligent commitment to discovering new and more expansive landscapes with every breath, thought, and sunrise. Zen masters might call

Continued on page 34



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"how do I stay present to the ever-expanding miracle of life?"

Continued from page 33

this beginners mind. Rather than asking the question "when will I be enlightened?" we should ask "how do I stay present to the ever-expanding miracle of life?" With this perspective, each moment becomes an opportunity to witness life and ourselves as more and more beautiful.

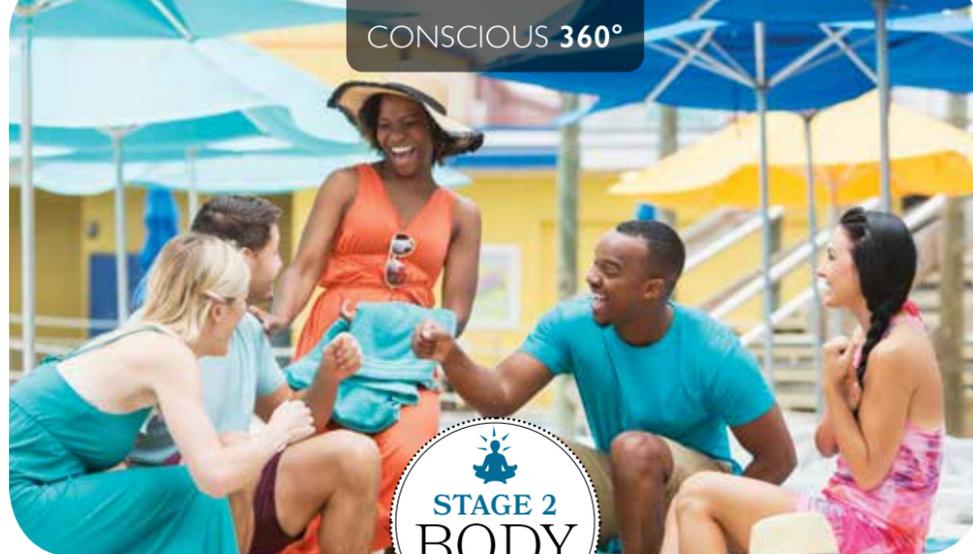
Beginners mind naturally has roots in the practice of gratitude. Staying awake demands a deep sense of awe for each new day. Jesus said we must become like children to enter the kingdom of heaven. He clearly understood that viewing the ever-changing seasons of our lives must be met with child-like wonder or we will inevitably fall asleep.

A Jewish proverb says that every blade of grass has an angel hovering over it whispering, "Grow." I believe there's a quiet voice within all of us, eternally whispering, "Stay awake and you will grow." Our ability to remain present to life and its call for expansiveness will be in direct proportion to how well we regularly listen to that voice in silent meditation.

Proverbs 13 says, "Become wise by walking with the wise." We become like those with whom we are hanging out. Are we living among sleep walkers or people full of burgeoning life? If we want to stay awake, we must surround ourselves with others who are awake! Let's make the appropriate adjustments.

Let's remain open, conscious, and grateful. Let's keep listening, remembering, and cooperating with the ever-evolving universe. Let's flow with the process of life and know that each morning brings opportunities to know more, see more, and be more! This will be our greatest awakening. 🌸

Rev. Richard Burdick is the Senior Minister at Unity North Atlanta. As a minister, teacher, and musician he is passionate about community building, interfaith cooperation, and trans-denominational spirituality. More info about Richard and Unity North at www.unitynorth.org



ACCEPTANCE Can Heal the Body

by J. Alison Hilber

There is an inextricable connection between the body, the mind, and Spirit. When the body is disrupted, there is disconnection in the mind. When the mind is chaotic or stressed, it can cause disruption in the body. When we can accept, rather than resist, the disruption as a call from Spirit, we engage our innate healing process.

We can all fall prey to external forces and stresses that demand we be a certain way in order to be "acceptable." Being larger than society's acceptable norm, I spent all my time trying to look and act like others said I should. The more I listened to those outside voices, the more I stuffed my feelings of sadness, anger, confusion, and fear, deeply embedding them in the very cells of my body temple as I strived to conform and belong.

These repressed feelings eventually express through our body in the form of pain and/or illness. Our first inclination is to find a way to make it go away as quickly as possible. We rarely embrace pain or illness as a positive event. However, it is usually Spirit calling for a deeper, internal healing, and is often the only way to get our attention.

Everything we have experienced in life is held somewhere in the body. Although relief may be assisted by external therapies, it will be a temporary fix if not accompanied by a shift in consciousness. We need to acknowledge the rising shadows and embrace them when they manifest as pain or illness.

Even as we look for external causes and cures, the truth is this: healing is an inside job. Belief systems and patterns of behavior must evolve into a new paradigm of acceptance and self-love in order for true healing to occur. We must yield to Spirit for the cleansing and realignment of the body and the mind. With consistent spiritual practice, we can become more aware, awake, and alive to our true essence and begin to shift out of the self-recriminations that cause our bodies to demonstrate pain and dysfunction.

Understanding how the body/mind/spirit connection works, we can undertake the necessary process of transforming and transcending our false beliefs. The dis-ease in the body begins to fall away and our innate well-being is revealed. We feel lighter, clearer, more in touch with our wholeness, and exponentially awake to the powerful and necessary collaboration of "acceptance" and "healing."

We can then take this shift in consciousness into our daily living, keeping the channels clear and available to the freedom, courage, love, playfulness, and joy for which there is now space to thrive. 🌸

J. Alison Hilber began her journey of spiritual awakening over thirty years ago. She is an author, speaker, and a Licensed Spiritual Practitioner with Centers for Spiritual Living. Her most recent book is *I Am Who I Am: Sacredly Accepting My Body Temple*. Enjoy her blog at www.sacrediamwhoiam.com

CONSCIOUS 360°



"Fear binds the world. Forgiveness sets it free."

— A Course in Miracles



TRUE FORGIVENESS IS A GIFT

— A Course in Miracles —

by Laina Orlando

One of the most startling aspects of awakening is coming to terms with the disempowering conditioning that has been individually, then eventually, ingrained in our collective consciousness. One such belief is that forgiveness is something we do, to or for, another person. It's a pardon bestowed upon the "mean bully," by the "poor victim" as an act of moral superiority.

A Course in Miracles (ACIM) is a spiritual classic from Jesus, channeled through Helen Schucman in the 1960s, that offers guidance and detailed exercises that highlight the importance of recognizing that metaphysics and the study of human psychology must go hand in hand. According to ACIM, true forgiveness is actually something we do for ourselves. It is a courageous and, therefore, empowering act of Self-Love. It declares that we can't possibly be a victim, because God, The Source, created us eternally invulnerable and, therefore, unchangeable. For this reason, forgiveness is the gift that returns our mind to right-thinking, as we recognize that what others said or did cannot possibly supersede what God decreed as our true identity. This fact, however, must be firmly established within our awareness in order for the collective consciousness to shift.

When something undesirable happens to us, and we establish that situation, or person, as having the power to alter who we are, we are bound to "them" forever by establishing them as the one who "took" our power. This sense that we've been diminished erodes our inner peace and makes us vigilant, and fearful, victims for the rest of our lives. Clearly, this way of perceiving a situation will cause us to suffer, for deep within the core of our being—our Spirit/Soul—is quite aware of our perfect wholeness. Accepting a victim

designation confuses our minds, leaving us anxious, fearful, and powerless.

True forgiveness does not condone any act of violence; it simply acknowledges the truth of each person, as established by the Creator. This restores their power and confidence to deal with the situation appropriately, trusting they are not alone.

Acknowledging our truth keeps us from separating people into victims and bullies, in essence, granting power to one group at the detriment of the other. When we consciously

recognize our inherent equality, we can access the inner wisdom necessary to appropriately deal with every situation as a call for the healing power of true forgiveness, which restores the compassion that will bridge humanity from powerlessness to peace. 🌸

Inspired by her own awakening, **Laina Orlando** simplifies spirituality so it's easy to understand and practical to apply in everyday life. Her mantra is: "Life is fun and easy!" Laina is an author, speaker, Awareness Coach, and creator of The Power of Awareness program and The Awareness Academy. www.LainaOrlando.com



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WHAT'S IN YOUR SPIRITUAL PRACTICE?

by Jeanie Ward



Do you have a regular spiritual practice or are you a newbie?

Wherever you are on that spectrum is absolutely perfect. A regular inventory of our practice is essential to see if it remains in alignment with our purpose and intention. Ideally, a spiritual practice assists us in navigating life's journey with more ease, joy, awareness, and gratitude. No matter your faith, philosophy, beliefs, or religion, anyone can cultivate a practice. If you're ready to create a greater expression of you and

enjoy a magnificent and meaningful life, a consciously created spiritual practice can transform your life, the world, and beyond.

As we exercise the privilege and power of choice in the creation of our spiritual practice, we have a responsibility to ourselves and others to make conscious choices, aware that our spiritual practice can have a profound and transformative effect on our personal lives and that our energy

signature is broadcasting throughout the cosmos.

As we connect more fully with Presence through our regular spiritual practice, we begin to become (embody) the elevated Energy, the essence that we have awakened to within the practice itself. We become the practice. This is what spiritual practice is all about—transcendence and transformation. To be in the world but not of the world, seeing through the illusion of separation,

As you closely examine your practice or begin to create your first one, here are some important questions to consider:

- What is the purpose of my practice?
- Why is it important to me?
- Is my practice aligned with my beliefs, my truth?
- Am I committed to my practice?
- Am I willing to be uncomfortable?
- Am I open to change/growth?
- How is my practice making a difference in my life?

One With Life. We become an opening for love, life, all that is, to flow through us, as us. Rising above thought and things we become pure consciousness. Practice possibilities are endless. Meditating on a beach, listening to Andrea Bocelli, enjoying a cup of tea, or walking your dog, the choice is yours. Devoting a sacred space in your home, attending a church, communing with nature, or other regular activities will inspire



IF I CAN'T, I MUST! Commitment to Change

by Burge Smith-Lyons

To change intentionally, many people need the courage to face the unknown. Courage comes from the French word "le coeur" or heart. Courage has many components such as commitment + doubt + action. These three components equal courage. Even though you commit to doing something new and different, you may have doubts that it can be achieved or you're not sure you can do it. But you take action anyway and face the fear of the unknown. If you are truly committed to make a change, you will not let fear stop you from taking action.

What I have found through teaching this for thirty-six years is that people get tripped up with the feeling or word *commitment*. Here is a definition of commitment that might work for you: "A desire so intense you are willing to do anything for the outcome as long as it does not hurt you or anyone else." If you feel stuck sometimes, a great

mantra could be "If I can't, I must!" Change the word "can't" to "must" and see the difference this makes in your energy and mind.

Until one is committed, there is always a chance to draw back, to be hesitant, to be ineffective. Many people commit only if they get assurances that it will work, or the other person will be a certain way, or the outcome is guaranteed.

Sometimes, you must push through the fear and be willing to make mistakes, which are learning experiences, along the way.

A brilliant example of this is Chuck Yeager. He was the air force pilot that broke the sound barrier. However, he was the third person who tried. The other two pilots felt a shaking in the airplane and decided to pull back on the throttle and each plane blew up. Chuck felt the same shaking and vibration in his plane but said to himself, "Screw

it." He pushed the throttle forward instead of pulling back and there was a moment of silence where he thought he was dead. Then he heard the commander at the station on the radio saying, "Chuck, you did it!" He had broken the sound barrier because, even though he was in fear or doubt, he pushed the throttle forward.

Notice where you pull back, play it safe, give in to doubt, and do not push the throttle forward in your life. Committing to change 100 percent is the key to not letting your fears stop you. 🌸

Burge Smith-Lyons is an international best-selling author, motivational speaker, intuitive healer, certified rebirther, hypnoterapist, channeler, minister, and founder and CEO of The Essence of Being, Inc. For thirty-six years she has helped thousands of graduates globally with emotional and spiritual healing, better communication techniques, relationships, prosperity consciousness, and enlightened leadership. Burgessmithlyons.com www.essenceofbeing.com

and encourage you to maintain consistency. Patience, perseverance, and commitment go a long way in cultivating your optimal practice. Remember that progress is more important than perfection. When you tune in to the activity that you are engaged in, you learn more about yourself and discern more easily what practices are aligned with the authentic expression of your highest self. These questions will offer you clarity, insight, and guidance as you cultivate a spiritual practice that resonates with every cell and fiber of your being. Most of all, have fun, and celebrate every conscious moment of creation, one breath at a time! 🌸

For over thirty years, **Jeanie Ward** has been inspiring and challenging people to awaken to their authentic Self, love themselves unconditionally, and shine. Her wisdom, insight, and compassion empower people to transform their lives. She is an inspirational speaker, author, meditation teacher, weight mastery coach, energy medicine practitioner, and canine bodyworker. www.jeanieward.com



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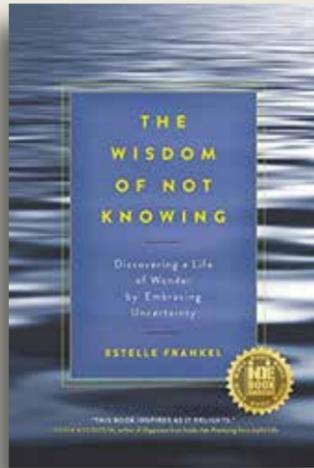
The Wisdom of Not Knowing

by Estelle Frankel

Do you fly through life on the wings of openness and adventure? Or have your fears gotten the best of you, restricting your choices and limiting your options?

When Estelle Frankel, confessed Olympic Gold Medalist in the art of worrying, asked me to review *The Wisdom of Not Knowing*, I agreed without hesitation. Over the years my worries have shut me down and closed me off until I'm just a shell of what I was. And that's not how I want to live.

The Wisdom of Not Knowing takes us on a journey into the unknown, that place where fear resides. Fear is a necessary device meant to protect us from harm. But it gets in the way when we become overprotective and too restrictive. When we're young we tend to be curious, wondering how and why the world operates as it does. We yearn to explore, to investigate, to seek and discover. It doesn't matter if we have to climb through muck or get wet and cold or examine strange surroundings and people. Mystery is exciting! But as we age, we often become less resilient and more comfort prone. We're more apt to relish the soft bed at home, the familiar route to work, the favorite meal at the local restaurant than trying something new, because, well, it may not work out. And



the more we exercise that caution, the more we stop ourselves from really living.

To free ourselves we have to break the bonds of security and certainty and dive into that which we ultimately resist—uncertainty.

“Freedom requires an ability to bear uncertainty, to not know what is going to happen next, and to trust in an unfolding journey.” That trust, that being able to plunge into the darkness and not know, is the key to a deeper, more meaningful life. Complete with wonderful allegories and great insight into Judaic studies (including the Torah and Kabbalah), *The Wisdom of Not Knowing* serves as our teacher and guide.

In the end, think of the Cowardly Lion and his famous “c-c-courage.” Taking those small steps. Standing strong in the face of adversity, maybe with aggression, maybe with quiet determination. Facing the unknown IS scary. But with mindfulness and openness and the exercises after each chapter, Frankel gives us numerous ways to confront our fears and embrace our uncertainties with heart and fortitude. 🙌

Nanette Littlestone is a best-selling author, editor, writing coach, and publisher with Words of Passion, helping new and award-winning authors to write with passion and inspire others. Her published works include *FAI.T.H. – Finding Answers in the Heart, Vols. I and II* and *The Sacred Flame*. www.wordsofpassion.com

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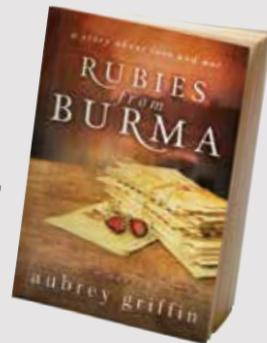
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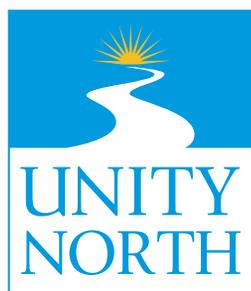
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