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Unity in Diversity: The Way Ahead for Humanity concerns the future of every man, woman and child. It is about the future of the Earth itself. Humanity, Creme says, is at a crossroads and has a major decision to make: to go onwards and create a brilliant new civilisation in which all are free and social justice reigns, or continue as we are, divided and competing, and see the end of life on planet Earth.

Benjamin Creme, artist and author, has been lecturing worldwide for almost 40 years on the emergence into the everyday world of Maitreya, the World Teacher, and His group, the Masters of Wisdom. Creme's books have been translated into many languages, transforming the lives of millions.

Available from Amazon.ca
(Creme's books also available as e-books)

Unity in Diversity

The Way Ahead for Humanity



Benjamin Creme

I SEE a new world happening that WE are creating!

by Erin Parsley

A world where we are ALL needed to share our gifts, love and creativity and be honored for exactly who we are.

A world we CO-CREATE where mutual cooperation and respect for the divinity in every brilliant living expression of God/Source/Creation/Love/Universe/Light is celebrated, whether human, animal, plant or element of nature.

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A world in which our beloved planet Earth is cared for and loved with the intimate tenderness of a beloved family member, so that she (Mother Nature) and we may THRIVE in our intricate dance of mutual connectivity.

I SEE each and every individual coming into the full awareness of the beauty, power and light that they are, while falling into deep and blissful communion with the truth of their real nature, which is perfect at its core.

Letting go of all the old stories keeping us down... making us believe that we are powerless, that we are victims to circumstance, our history, our stories, others' or our own limiting ideas about what is possible for ourselves and our world.

Letting go of all that entraps our vision of possibility, seeing only what is and has been, rather than what can be and what we desire to bring into being.

I see a JOYFUL explosion of divinely inspired creative expression creating a tsunami of positive change for our world, sweeping away old structures that have held all of life back and kept us demoralized.

I SEE an opening in the awareness of HUMANITY unwilling to play small any longer, but realizing NOW is the TIME to step out into their biggest, boldest visions of what they wish to CREATE.

I see EACH PERSON following their inner guidance and coming into their own true KNOWING as to how they may be their greatest CONTRIBUTION to the world.

This is what I SEE for 2013 and beyond...





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And now I ask:

What are your visions for our world?

www.erinparsley.com

Erin is a performing dance artist and committed consciousness raiser.




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Address: RR 1, Site 4, C 31
Kaslo, BC, V0G 1M0

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Proof reader • Christina Drummond

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Musing

with *Angèle*, the publisher



The front cover is a photo of the Fry Creek Canyon in the West Kootenays. This photo shows the water level at its lowest, before the spring run-off covers much of the rocks you now see. Water always finds the lowest point to flow back to source. Slowly it erodes everything in its way, but it can also move tons of soil in a few minutes, as the Johnson's Landing landslide proved last July. After one of the wettest springs ever, the land could no longer hold the extra water and let go. Even if there are more mud slides this spring, the path to the lake is so cleaned out that it should not overflow its banks again. The road crew put in huge culverts where the creek crosses the road, allowing for the spring run-off and extra mud to keep moving down the mountain to the lake.

The bridge in the photo allows people to walk to Birchdale, which is the mound in the middle of our logo-photograph. Several families access Birchdale by boat, but once upon a time, sternwheelers stopped there, then Johnson's Landing and at Argenta. These thriving communities had lots of children and a musical program that is still reflected in the entertainment occasionally offered for a night out. The trail to Fry Creek was originally carved out by miners seeking gold in the late 1920s. The bridge was helicoptered into place as part of the upgrade when the Fry Creek Canyon got included in the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy provincial park. The bridge is less than an hour's hike from the Retreat Center, where you can hike for days up into mountains.

If you look closely at the photo, you will see a few trees growing in the cracks of the rock, where water and dirt collect. Trees grow in places that amaze me. If there is not enough soil to support the tree, a wind storm will blow it over and the cycle starts again, building humus for the next growth. Nature is constantly rebuilding and now that 2012 is complete, another cycle is beginning for humans. The vested interests of the old, unsustainable corporations that want control and use manipulation for their gain are crumbling. Large groups of people are realizing that the chemical companies control much of our government and this is not a sustainable system. The power needs to go back to the people and there are many internet sites that support the idea, including the *Idle No More* movement and www.WiserEarth.com. The natives have stood on firm ground for over 200 years, asking that the people and government co-operate with nature.

Did you know that we just completed the 333rd consecutive month of above-average temperatures and that half the Arctic ice has now disappeared into the ocean? It seems we are past the point of no return. More earthquakes and natural disasters, as well as man-made calamities, will continue to occur. The environment reflects the internal struggle that is occurring as we, the human race, distance ourselves from nature and try to dominate her. As below, so above.

In Jungian dream work, water represents emotions and these days, even talk show hosts talk about feelings, but as a human race, people generally do not understand why they or other people do certain things. *The Art of Intimacy* is a book that I value as it has the best understanding of emotions I have read. It speaks of the nature within ourselves and the nature of families and why it is so difficult to understand ourselves unless we learn the difference between closeness and intimacy. True freedom lies in the ability to be our self, to understand our self, but from a very early age we are programmed by society to accept rules that we do not always understand. Obedience does not assure humanness. If I have to negotiate my behavior to be accepted by another person, that is called closeness. Closeness allows for socialization and civilization. To feel intimate, I must be naturally myself.

continues on page 7

STEPS ALONG THE PATH

The Ceiling is on Fire!

Yep, it is time for one of those mid-Winter funny stories...well, at least I thought it was funny. It was early January, just after the winter holidays at the dormitory where I was staying. You could see snow covering the landscape at the small, wind swept mid-western college I was attending. When you're twenty-one and stuck in a dorm waiting for the next semester to start, you can become really creative finding ways to entertain yourself.

My room mate, Billy, and I were hanging out with some of the other guys in the dorm listening to music, telling stories and getting stoned. The dormitory had a big common room in the centre of the complex, with four wings of individual dorm rooms radiating out from it. From the air it would have looked like an X shape with a centre hub. The bunch of us decided that it would be good to burn the discarded Christmas trees that were piled up in the corner of the room.

In the centre of the common room was an open pit fire about six feet by six feet, with a huge fan hood perched over it to take the smoke out of the building. This seemed like the perfect place, so we dragged the trees over and put them into the fire box. It was quite a large pile, it reached half way up to the fan hood. The next logical step was to light the fire, so we crumpled up paper and stuffed it under some of the trees and proceeded to light it with matches. The paper would burn but the trees were too green to catch on fire. We tried more paper and still it did not light. This went on for over fifteen minutes, then Billy came in with a can of white gas that he used in his camp stove. We all liked that idea! So Billy ran around the fire box sprinkling all the trees with white gas. No way this could not light now!

We elected the youngest member of our team to carry the flame over to the fire pit. Everyone clapped, as a show of brotherly support, as he headed towards the pit with a lit match extended out before him. About three feet from the fire pit, the gas fumes ignited. You should have seen the flames! A giant ball of fire burst out of the fire pit singeing our brave companion's eyebrows. All the trees ignited at once, it was spectacular! Flames roared out of every edge of the fire pit and, to our total amazement, none of them were going up into the fan hood. It did not take our group of Sherlock Holmes long to figure out that the damper on the fan hood was probably closed. It was too late to do anything about the damper control as it was shrouded in flames. We were having a very entertaining time figuring out Plan 'B' when we noticed that the ceiling was starting to catch on fire... Oh sh_t!

Of course, we would have to figure out a solution, and find it rather quickly! The fire department was NOT at the top of our list as none of us were interested in getting suspended. Fires do not like water, so we went to the janitor's closet and got some buckets and a ladder. Some of the guys were filling them at the utility sink while I set up the ladder below the burning ceiling. Billies Dad had been a real fireman and had given Billy a real fire coat. Realizing a limited opportunity when he saw one, Billy ran down to our dorm room and came back wearing his official fireman's coat. Yep, there was no doubt as to who should be on the ladder, so Billy climbed up, and we did a bucket brigade from the sink to the ladder. Billy threw buckets of water, splashing the ceiling, and covering the concrete floor with water and ashes. YES, we managed to put the fire out!

Well I am still here and so is the dorm, the youngest guy in our team managed to re-grow his eyebrows and we did the best we could with the janitor's mops and buckets to clean up the mess. The ceiling was left with lots of suspicious-looking 'burn marks' around the outside of the fan hood. I think I'm that much smarter now that I know dampers exist. And so it became another footstep along the path.

Namaste Richard

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Musings continued

Self-discipline is based on a genuine love of your person. Learning to be yourself with others is the primary experience you get to have living in a family as well as developing an internal knowingness of what is truth. Primary feelings are natural – you feel them immediately. When we become aware of our natural self, we realize only we can change ourselves.

When I am natural, I am more child-like in my willingness to risk. I feel more connected and will learn more easily from others. Intimacy also allows others to be themselves in our presence. The intimate self is adaptive, is not afraid of change and allows it to happen. Consequently, it has no need to be right, it is content just to be, such that intimate people, never feel alone. By contrast, when we have closeness, it represents a belief in a system that gives us security, and that can also lead us to become fearful of change.

To become aware means to become the observer of our relationships, of ourselves, which includes noticing our conditioning, our patterns that are predictable. To lack awareness is to not really know the self. The Eastern philosophers encouraged meditation as a practice to align with nature and the self. Like the water table, our emotions will continue to rise until humans understand why they do what they do and take time to just be. Our evolutionary process is to live comfortably within nature and, if development is balanced with closeness, it assures survival and growth as a species. Believing in the security of a system – whether law, politics or money – assures neither: it is an instilled behaviour, a way to control people.

If you want to practice becoming more aware, please join us at the Spring Festival of Awareness, where 33 instructors will share their techniques. Or sign up for a longer workshop at the Johnson's Landing Retreat Center, giving yourself time to be in nature and be part of a group of people who embrace wholesomeness and sustainability in all its forms.

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The Path of Prana

by Michael Hollihn

I am going to review the classic work of Eckhart Tolle's spiritual awakening in a moment. First my reasoning. When my life challenges me at its core I focus more on daily meditation, qi gong and yoga. This past week I was faced with a challenge that had me unable to even meditate. My mind was so agitated I found it impossible to sit and simply observe my mind. The chatter and noise was intense. Thankfully, my practice is strong enough that plan B worked and allowed me to regain the balance of my mind and my awareness could return to the depths of peace and harmony.

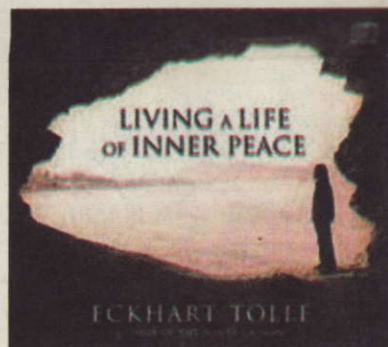
What was this plan B? When all else fails I cling to my breath. Not just any breath, but my abdominal breath. A deep, calm and focussed breath that consciously expands my diaphragm, which shifts my nervous system from adrenal based fight/flight to choline-based rest/repair, and also pumps my lymphatic system to help move along the toxins that stress has my body starting to accumulate. The abdominal breathing returned me to a state of peace where I could relax with my body as my chattering mind continued to flail on the surface. At the same time, since my chattering mind would not yet allow me to observe silence, I went into my audiobook/podcast collection of spiritual writings and played Eckhart Tolle's *Living a Life of Inner Peace*.

I am going to summarize the beginning of this book, which, to my mind, encapsulates the rest of the book. If you find any of this summary engaging then I highly recommend it becomes one of your text books for deprogramming your conditioned/intellectual mind and reprogramming your unconditioned/experiential mind. The words in our intellect become less and more pointed as we evolve and awaken into this new consciousness of experiential mind. Eckhart Tolle is a master of these clear words of enlightenment. In one hundred years, if the species allows its survival, his books will be seen as classics along the path of our enlightenment here on earth.

Summary: (when you see words in brackets they are my own understanding of the passage, not the words of Eckhart Tolle). We are all trapped in conditioned mind structures that are future projections (the mind is projecting the self into the future and attaching some level of importance to it (usually of craving or aversion, want or fear)). We are lost in past, future and time. These are thought forms/memories. Humans live as if these thought forms were more important than the present moment.

The present moment is the only moment that exists. All other moments referred to by the mind as past, future, and time do not exist in reality. They are illusions. (They can only be given life in the present moment and are therefore redundant, abstract, unnecessary (once removed from reality).) Therefore, we are lost in thought. Past and future are thought forms. We don't need any more knowledge or information on this. What we now need is to access within ourselves a deeper level/dimension of consciousness that is available to every human in the present moment NO MATTER HOW LOST THEY ARE IN THOUGHT. (This is what I call experiential thinking (as taught in Vipassana meditation) where we are shifting collectively as a consciousness where we experience a level of consciousness deeper/other than/as well as intellectual thought.)

There is nothing wrong with thought (if and only if) that is not all one is identified with (that is not all one is experiencing). 98% of thought is repetitive. One identifies with this repetitive thought and this is the historic/collective conditioning of the mind (this is Ego). This conditioning is what one refers to as "me" or "I".




This is why most people are not satisfied with their lives.

This sense of self is based on thought (the 98% of thought which is repetitive and what I call intellectual or egoic thought) and IS the illusion/delusion which causes all suffering in the world. (There is no suffering without this conditioned thought process! Not possible!) Therefore, if this person is not satisfied with this thought process, then this person attempts to remedy the situation by looking outwards to add more to his/her self/life (this is Ego). It leads one to a continuous sense of insufficiency, of not enough. Therefore, the self needs the FUTURE, the next moment (not this present moment), which it desperately needs to complete itself/add to itself. (This is the wheel of suffering referred to by all the Buddhas (enlightened ones).)

Humans are condemned to live this way but this is not the only way. The egoic mind continuously compares itself to others (consciously and unconsciously). The egoic mind: 'He/She has more, therefore I need more.' 'Is this person more than me?' (more important, more strong, more knowledgeable, more wealthy etc.).

This is the egoic mind's need to be superior, the best. (This is the root of competition. This is to say that not all thought or competition is bad/destructive/leads to suffering, but 98% (or 99% or 97%) is not sustainable to the human race any longer (given the population of all these egos competing on the planet). If the mind is solely identified with this egoic thought process, then, yes, thought and competition are not sustainable any longer. (You can still live this life of enjoyment, pleasure, and fun BUT there needs to be also (at the same time) a deeper sense of self to temper/control/discipline this need structure of the mind. This is true sustainability).

Michael has an ad on page 2 and will be presenting at the Spring Festival of Awareness


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Hot Flashes

by Delphine Saxinger

Some say hot flashes are hormone imbalances but I discovered when I talk to your body and it answers me back, through muscle testing or intuition, that some of these women just do not have enough blood circulating.

You know you are having a hot flash when all of a sudden you feel like a heat wave hit your space, and you open a door or window to cool off. If you are sleeping you wake up to find a cool spot to rest, but sleep becomes more difficult and you get more fatigued as the months go on.

Hot flashes are most common among women who are in their menopause years. This generation of women are also called the 'Sandwich Generation.' Why? These women often have elderly parents who need attention, work outside their home and could still have children at home requiring care, so they are sandwiched between many responsibilities.

I have found consistently over the years that women, and sometimes men, who complain of hot flashes do not have enough blood. I am talking about the quantity of blood that your body needs to keep circulation happening with ease. I test over 100 reflexes, asking the body about the quality of the blood, if it is clean, moving fast enough and if the kidneys have enough blood circulating to avoid hot flashes.

Sometimes people are just too busy and their body doesn't have the opportunity to make enough blood. How do you make more blood is the 'obvious question?' By resting! Taking a rest after dinner for 20 to 30 minutes is a good start. Tidy up the kitchen but don't watch TV during this rest time. Reading is okay, but listening to music, meditating or praying is what the body likes the best. You can also learn to listen to your body. If the hot flashes are returning, this is a sign that you need to be kind to yourself and rest more.

Some people who get hot flashes do have a hormone imbalance, and herbs and creams will help the symptom, but taking chemicals to balance the imbalance will not help in the long term. Wouldn't you rather lie down for a rest and see if this helps remove the hot flashes? This method may seem too easy to believe. There is no special posture or medicine to use, just stress-free rest to heal yourself. *see ad below*



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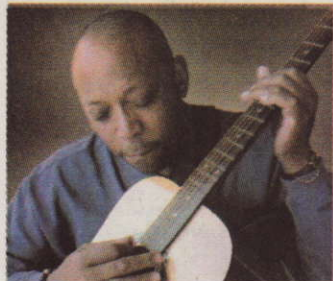
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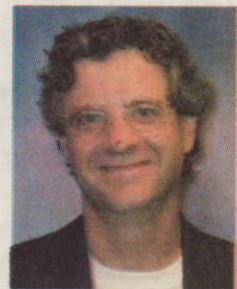
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Life is a Kosmic Kaleidoscope

by Rev. Pat Zogar

Spiritual Director at the Centre for Spiritual Living, Kamloops

Like a kaleidoscope, life is eternally unfolding, rearranging itself and presenting a vast array of different ways to see the same pieces. I notice that when I twirl a kaleidoscope, I seldom just look and appreciate. Usually I am judging and evaluating each pattern: this one more beautiful than that, these colours better arranged, that one is too dark. As with life, I often find what I'm looking for.

I started my spiritual journey in 1979 out of a sense of desperate need. I had abandoned my husband and children, because of a physically and emotionally abusive relationship. I too was abusing alcohol and blamed the various men in my life for my failures. The first step in my journey was a very large one, a workshop that challenged me to consider that the responsibility for my life was mine and that the only common denominator in each and every one of my failed relationships was me. Thank God I was ready to hear that – a difficult lesson to embrace but, indeed, the Truth that set me free. I am responsible for my own experience of life and I always have choice!

Thirty-three years later, I continue taking steps along the path, large ones and small ones. Much of my journeying I do alone with reading and thinking. Ultimately, each of us are responsible for discovering our own Truth, our own values, our own purpose. But it's the coming together, not to be told what ideas or beliefs to hold, but to share ideas with others who dare to think for themselves that helps get me through those dark nights of the soul, those times when it sometimes feels like my steps are going backwards. That's the reason I belong to a spiritual community that comes together each week. It's here that I am reminded who I am and why I am, and that is the reason The Centre for Spiritual Living in Kamloops is gathering together for the Kosmic Kaleidoscope weekend. A time to connect with others on a similar path, to contribute to a better world and to celebrate our choices. Please feel free to join us!

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2013 and Beyond

by Kerry Palframan

Many people have been asking me to use my visionary skills to predict what 2013 and beyond hold for humanity. This is because I am able to see, sense and experience energy, which is in essence a code. You could call it the language of the Universe. All humans and all life – on this planet and in the unseen realms – are constantly transmitting energy and receiving energy. Think of yourself as an ectoplasmic blob that is constantly shape-shifting and you may begin to understand the infinite possibilities that are available for creating, changing and recreating your future.

My ability to interpret energy allows me to see the patterns that individuals are creating in their lives and where they are headed, based on those patterns. It is very similar to what a weather forecaster does when tracking the path of a storm. Similarly, I can see the patterns we as a collective human consciousness are creating on this planet and where we are likely to head. As an individual, you send out a continuous stream of energy into the cosmos with every thought, word, emotion and action you have, and this creates your future. As a collective of humans, we send out a group energy or vibration that shapes the path our planet is heading.

Now, the press would have you believe there is more evil than good in the world. This simply is not true: I can tell you that the forecast for 2013 and beyond is looking quite favourable. Yes, we will be continuing to see more destruction of the old paradigms in the near future, but that is simply in order to make way for the new. Tearing down the old is a necessary part of creating our future. Destruction is required, so the proverbial phoenix can rise from the ashes.

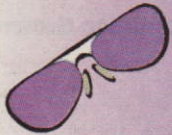
The collective vibration emitted by our planet is in a constant state of flux based on every person residing here. Together, we are creating a collective pattern of energy and charting our own future, consciously or not. We are all contributing to what our future holds. So what vision do YOU hold for our planet for 2013 and beyond? Be aware of your thoughts, your words and your actions, for they add to the collective vibration. Mindfulness is perhaps the most important contribution you can offer for the future of our planet.

From my reading, the collective Earth cry and vibration being sent to the Universe is a plea for peace and reconciliation. This too is part of the vision you can hold. See the good in yourself and others and send that signal out into the Universe. The next twenty to thirty year period will be our transition time and it holds many opportunities for us as individuals and for the planet as a whole.

In many spiritual traditions, the next aeon has been deemed *The Thousand Years of Peace*. That is the vision I would encourage you to hold to and embrace. Together, we create Peace on Earth. Let us begin now, each in our own way, in our own life. Becoming mindful as we project our vibrations into the cosmos and they get reflected back as experiences.

see ad to left

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Up your Mystical Moments with one Tool – Education

by Karen Wilson

In many communities there exists at least one metaphysical bookstore, and it is typically frequented by those who want to learn as much as they can about spirituality. While this kind of solitary seeking can be fulfilling, over time some seekers find that their growth has stagnated – the 'ah-ha' moments become rare. This appearance of lack is not a spiritual experience, it is a human experience, according to Dr. Kenn Gordon, a spiritual leader based in Kelowna.

"Our founder Ernest Holmes, who wrote the *Science of Mind* text, said that he would think he had a mystical experience until he had his next mystical experience, at which point he would realize that what came before was an 'ah-ha' in comparison," Gordon said. The key to the deeper journey lies in that one valuable tool called education – and in order for it to be fully effective it cannot be achieved in isolation, but rather in community. Some of the deepest thinkers in human history knew this to be true. Socrates' power lay in part through his ability to gather around him students who would both hear and discuss his ideas, which were later disseminated by Plato and through to Aristotle. And even before that, Confucius in 551 B.C. had something to say about the transformation of knowledge into experience: "I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand."

This is one of the key reasons why classes have always played a central role at the *Centre for Spiritual Living*. Gordon said. "It's through class where people experience profound change," Gordon said. "The regular practice of attending class with the same group of people and over an extended period of time allows students to develop a discipline of practice. But it also allows them to see the progress in their classmates, and that helps deepen their understanding of spiritual principles."

Leigha Beltrame, who just completed the ten-week Foundations class this past fall, said her appreciation for the creative power of spirituality in her life has expanded beyond what she would have expected. "What I learned was how to change our way of thinking so that we can make the things we truly need to be happy come into our life," she said. "It's like having the keys to the

greatest treasure known to all of mankind." The Centre's philosophy that taking classes changes lives is backed up by experts in the field of post-secondary education as well. In their paper *Adding Value: Learning Communities and Student Engagement*, which was published in 2004 in the journal *Higher Education*, authors Chun-Mei Zhao and George D. Kuh wrote that "student engagement in educationally purposeful activities inside and outside of the classroom is a precursor to high levels of student learning and personal development. It's very typical in our classes for people at the end of a year to have done such things as find new work that fulfills them, give up some long-held habits and beliefs that have held them back, and embark on new adventures and new relationships that are more in alignment with who they really are. These are the foundations of a successful life, and they don't happen by accident. They happen through experiencing the power of spiritual thinking."

Each semester the Centre's Transformative Education Institute offers one-day workshops to ten-week classes, and even a six-year study program to become a licensed minister. Courses include *The Essential Ernest Holmes*, *The Five Gifts for an Abundant Life*, yoga classes, and workshops on public speaking. In the twenty years since the Centre opened, we've seen thousands of students transform their lives in positive and meaningful ways. They've been able to expand their ability to contribute to society in a greater way, increased their understanding of themselves, and deepened their relationship with others. Even through my own experience I can say that education is what truly shapes us. It has certainly shaped me.

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Grief and Loss

by Deb Bennett

Many times I have questioned our understandings of grief. For some time now, I have believed that significant relationships continue to endure after death. This perspective has a strong influence on the way I live and understand my life. It has also had a positive impact professionally, as this awareness influences how I support the bereaved and teach. Attig's (2000) statement reflects my worldview: "My instinct has always told me that wanting to continue loving after death is fully natural and appropriate".

We have an awareness of grief and bereavement in our lives and talk about these experiences in particular ways that have an impact on our grieving. I asked myself why it is expected that we must resolve our grief. I also asked if "resolution" is a process that can possibly exist. I questioned how medically-based perspectives have contributed to the diagnosing of individuals, rather than viewing grief as a normal part of our living experience. I have wondered what the "letting go" and "getting over" process consisted of and wondered if they could really occur. Would terms such as "unresolved", "abnormal" and "complicated" be used if we were viewing grief over time?

My desire to know grief beyond the dominant discourses on grief and loss embedded in the literature grew over time. When I became a bereaved parent, I sensed something was missing in my readings about grief. This feeling remained. The voices of the bereaved that I heard during counseling and teaching taught me more about grief. Their stories of loss and transformation resonated with me and my sense that we have more to learn about grief continued to grow. I began my research hoping to deepen my understanding and honor the many ways of knowing grief and loss.

I learned about the timeless nature of grief with its enduring relationships and meaning-making that remains over time. Within the literature I encountered the concepts of continuing connections, bonds and meaning-making. The dominant discourses on loss and grief are being challenged by clinicians and researchers. The stories shared with me by the bereaved have taught me that time can look after the bereaved and honor relationships through continued connections and meaning.

There are many ways of knowing and experiencing grief. These ways of knowing can be conceptualized as numerous threads, each representing an element of the experience. Each thread is a distinctive way of knowing that is spun together uniquely by each individual, creative weaves that reflect cherished relationships. Our woven tapestries are treasured despite changes to their feel and appearance the passage of time may create.

I was called to my research and work with my son Ryan as my companion. He remains with me despite his death. My child in the past is also my child who is in the present and will be present in the future. The present has become both the now and the then. It is also the missing future. Ryan is present as I reflect on the journeys of the bereaved and on the many ways that I have come to know bereavement over time. He resides within me as my grief always will. Living with and without Ryan has become the same thing. His life and death have transformed me. I have come upon gifts that he has hidden for me over time. They allow me to be a companion to others in their grief. They enable me to challenge the common understandings of bereavement over time. *see ad to left*

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by Kathrine Lucier, author of *Living In Two Worlds*

Since I chose a journey directed by Intuitive Guidance, as opposed to my old 'fear-motivated-survival manual' that I was trained in and used for forty years, I've had an acute awareness of an inner saboteur. That cunning trickster that seeks proof and control of the plan, and its outcome.

I viewed this shadow side of me as a worthy adversary, and allowed Insight to establish some ground rules like: know thy enemy; love thy enemy; the only way to release anything is with Love. In times of uncertainty, I would repeat...Know, Love, Release. My mind reacted with, "This certainly isn't the way to proceed into battle," but, smiling, I recognized the saboteur speaking. I began to 'know my enemy.' Loving my enemy challenged me, until I recognized it as the Knight in Shining Armor to the distressed damsel. So, on a quarter moon, I filled out a pink slip, relieving the Knight of his duties. I was no longer distressed, services no longer required.

Feeling confident and empowered, the struggle over, I stepped off the battlefield, remembering Rumi's wisdom: "Out beyond ideas of right-doing and wrong-doing, there is a field. I'll meet you there." I set out to find that field, my new Place of Residence, my new home. But, the saboteur wasn't gone, it had developed a chameleon personality, still convinced that I needed protection and control. I began to see its true nature, its fear-based reactions, my language of denial, the people-pleasing-side of me and my indispensability.

It took longer to identify the most obstructive role it played in my life; the pseudo-spiritual guide, noisy and boastful, disguised with 'new age' terminology and 'language of enlightenment', that feed on external validation. Henceforth, I asked Spirit to honour my intentions and teach me the language of Quiet Wisdom and, soon, I discerned the difference between emotional reaction and Intuitive Insight.

Fear initiates emotional reactions, so that one leaves a situation and then gets into another with a similar pattern. If I am uncertain, I need only ask myself, what is the Loving Response and await direction by my Intuitive Guidance. I now easily recognize my reactive, fear-based gut responses and await the gentle, butterfly-wing sensation in my upper chest, once interpreted as anxiety. It is the whisper I wait for, and if not received, I don't respond. If my mind responds with, "Who do think you are?" I remind myself that my outdated self is ready to be replaced by something more worthy.

This is a New Time, a New Era, a Time of Integrating Intuitive Aspects into our Journeys. IT cares not what I call it - Hunch, Gut, Divine Spark, Intuitive Insight, God Self, Higher Self, or Inner Self. When situations arise and the question is posed, "What's the Loving Response?" IT engages and directs me into new adventures. If you want to walk an exciting journey, walk the journey you walked yesterday, with your wisdom of today. *Namaste.*

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ENZYMES Are Our LIFE FORCE...

by Louis Hoolaeff, HR, HC, ACS

The only solution to our present health crisis is food enzymes. The study of food enzymes in nutrition and human health has been a 'sore spot' to both scientists and nutritionists alike. Much study was done in the early years but for some reason was not brought to light. Only now we see some glimpses of the need of food enzymes for maintaining and regaining our health. We will attempt to bring out the importance of enzymes as they are the life force of our body. Without the life energy of enzymes we would be nothing more than a pile of lifeless chemical substances—protein, minerals, vitamins and water. In maintaining health, only enzymes can do the actual work. They are what we call in metabolism, the body's labor force.

We Age and Get Sick Because We Run Out of Enzymes

Each one of us is given a limited supply of enzyme energy at birth. This supply, like the energy supply in a new battery, has to last a lifetime. The faster we use up our enzyme supply, the shorter our life. A great deal of our enzyme energy is wasted by cooking our food several degrees higher than our body temperature, which destroys the enzymes that are needed to digest food. Eating food that has been processed weakens our life force as does the use of alcohol, drugs, medicines and vaccinations. Frequent colds, fevers and exposure to extreme temperatures further weaken the supply. Even thinking requires enzyme activity. A body in such a weakened, enzyme-deficient state is a prime target for cancer, obesity, heart disease and practically all other degenerative problems. Even young children suffer from many diseases because they lack enzymes.

People could live much healthier lives as demonstrated by wild animals in nature, who statistically outlive people and die from only a handful of natural causes. Enzyme depletion and aging go hand-in-hand in laboratory animals and humans.

So what can we do? Stop cooking with high heat, as it destroys the enzymes, and add extra enzymes by eating raw foods. Make sure it is grown on fertile soil, as raw foods can also be low in enzymes, especially if it has been raised on depleted soils, harvested unripened and transported over long distances such as with imported food.

Supplementation of plant enzymes is essential to maintain our health. Larger quantities of enzyme supplementation has been proven to eradicate many health challenges such as cancer, arthritis, obesity, and colitis. When supplementing, care has to be taken that enzyme supplements be plant based, of the highest quality, contain no fillers and not destroyed by the high acid of the stomach.

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LUBRICATION

by Wayne Still

I grew up on a grain and cattle farm in Saskatchewan at the time when the huge shift from the use of horses for farming to the use of tractors and larger, more complex machines was taking place. One of the things we learned very quickly was how important it was to keep these machines well lubricated. My dad used to impress on me that grease and oil were cheap compared to the cost of replacement parts or, heaven forbid, a whole motor that had seized up because it had run out of oil. So, machines, how they are made and work have always held a fascination for me. Maintaining them, the most basic aspect of which is still to make sure the moving parts are well lubricated, has always been something I have taken seriously especially during my career as an organic orchardist. Now as a body worker I have living tissue to maintain. While I no longer use a grease gun or oil can to do the necessary lubricating, the same principles of ensuring that the moving parts can do so freely still apply.

The human body has much in common with machines in that it has evolved to perform a wide variety of tasks which require it to stretch and bend. Watch an excavator or back hoe working sometime and you will get an appreciation for how our arms work. Except that rather than the brute force of hydraulics, our limbs use a more refined energy source where the energy is created within the muscle of the limb itself to perform the work. What the limb has in common with the machine is that the most vulnerable parts are the joints. You will see on the machine dark patches around the joints; this is grease, the material which lubricates the joint allowing it to continue moving freely with minimal wear. Similarly the joints in the human body need to be lubricated for them to move freely throughout their normal range of motion.

Some of the lubrication is found within the joints themselves. The ends of bones where they articulate with each other is covered with a tough teflon-like material which slides very easily. The material is called synovial tissue, it does a fine job of maintaining our mobility. But, like the moving parts of a machine, it has to be kept lubricated so it doesn't wear out. That lubrication comes from a material which is ubiquitous in the tissues of the body called 'ground substance'. Ground substance is one of the main components of the extra cellular matrix. As the name implies, this is the structure which supports the cells which do the work of energizing and maintaining the body. With its dual function of nourishing and lubricating the body tissues, ground substance serves a vital function. Without it the synovial tissue would soon dry up and wear away, leaving the bones to grind on one another.

Not a pretty picture. Ground substance can be manipulated and encouraged to do its work. That is where I come in with my bodywork skills. When adhesions in the connective tissue are released, ground substance can flow freely in the area again providing the nourishment and lubrication the tissue needs for optimum functioning.



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Food for Thought

by Marion Desborough



A healer who has made a huge impact on my health is Wayne Still of *Structural Integration Bodywork*. Wayne did his original training in Structural Integration at the *Guild for Structural Integration*, a school dedicated to the teaching of Dr. Ida P. Rolf. Since graduating he has added other modalities to his practice including Visceral Manipulation, Neural Manipulation and Cranio Sacral Therapy.

I was fortunate enough to book a session with Wayne at a Spring Festival of Awareness a few years ago and I have not looked back since. During that first session, Wayne loosened something in my back that had been stuck for years. I hadn't realized how tight and uncomfortable it had been until he loosened its grip. Since then, I have had a series of ten sessions, and will continue to see Wayne on a semi-regular basis to help keep me in balance and release the pinched nerves to which I am prone.

I refer to Wayne as the practitioner with the 'magic hands' because when I have an injury his sessions keep me limber and out of pain. He is the best, as I continue towards optimum health. I can't say enough good things about Wayne and have recommended him to many friends and colleagues.

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You Just Might Get It

by Janet Pearson

As I focus on honing my ability to manifest, I've learned that being careful for what I wish is really important. When I was beginning to dip my feet into the waters of conscious creation, I purposefully chose to put my focus on little things. Little did I know how quickly momentum would build.

Last spring I felt ready to change. I'd been living in the same place, doing the same thing, for over seven years. Then my eleven year old daughter, who has been homeschooled, told me she wanted to try out public school. She asked me what I'd like to be beyond mother, and after considering carefully I said, "I think I'd like to be a writer."

I found myself thinking what I'd do with my extra time. Soon an email caught my eye announcing a non-fiction writing contest. Submissions had to be 50,000 words and completed in five weeks. My first thought was, "I can do that." My second thought was, "What could I possibly write about for that many words?" Before doubt even had a chance to get a hold of me, the answer came. I would follow the tarot as an outline, not writing specifically about the tarot, but about how we can use the wisdom inherent in it to bring about real change in our lives. I wrote every morning. It felt so fantastic combining a cup of tea with the ideas that they flowed freely. It was no problem writing a few thousand words at a time. Soon I was half-way there and no longer doubting that I could do it. I chose the title *Legend That You Are: Recreate the Story of Your Life*.

Then a strange thing happened. One morning I wrote about the tarot concept of the tower falling and how sometimes the structure of our lives needs to completely fall to pieces in order for a new life to emerge. I wrote inspiring words about being courageous and trusting that it's all good. I wrote about coming up with a new set of beliefs to support a new vision for life. That very night, I learned that my living situation was about to change. The excitement of exploring new options was suddenly my new reality. I let the shock move through me. I started to feel panic rising and thought "Oh man, what am I going to do? How am I going to handle all of this?" I told myself to remember that the universe

is magical when I reside in my heart. I filled my days with appreciation and when I lay down at night I wrapped myself in gratitude.

Even in the midst of packing up and moving, I was able to finish my manuscript—51,000 words submitted six hours before the deadline. As soon as it was done, while my head was still swimming with all of those words and ideas, I promised myself that I wouldn't even look at it until the contest results were announced five weeks later.

What an amazing five weeks it was as I worked through my doubts and fears. I started thinking about meeting interesting people and having fantastic, wisdom-filled conversations. A whole new vision of my life began to emerge that had never occurred to me two months earlier. I had little choice but to follow the advice I'd written and took action toward my new dream. I kept looking around myself and thinking, "Wow. How did I get here? Is this really happening to me?" Then life would offer yet another gift to convince me that I really do play a co-creative role in how it unfolds.

On the day the contest results were announced, I saw that I didn't win and was overjoyed. I was confident deep in my core that it was never about winning a contest, it was about writing a book and creating my own vision of what to do with it. It was about gaining confidence in my creative abilities and power as a human being. It was about me giving myself the ultimate pep-talk—fifty thousand words worth.

So now I am living in a house that I adore, right next to the lake with a most stunning view of the mountains. Every day is filled with exciting decisions as my manuscript becomes an actual book. Meeting people that are inspiring and guiding me on my way, I am writing something new every day.

I've accepted that everything can change in a moment. One little piece of information had the power to turn my world upside down, shake it every which way, and bring it back to standing with a whole new look. I just have to keep taking chances and, it seems, keep being careful what I wish for.

**Janet will be presenting at the
Spring Festival of Awareness April 26-28**



In the fall of 2004, thirteen indigenous grandmothers from the around the world gathered and agreed to form an alliance for the good of all beings. They represent a global alliance of those concerned with the destruction of Earth.

www.grandmotherscouncil.org

BREAST IMPLANTS + MAMMOGRAMS = DANGER!

by Dr. Ursula

Every woman out there with saline or silicone breast implants should be aware that there is a danger of rupture when too much pressure is applied to the breasts. If they only a small leak it is even more dangerous as bacteria and fungus can grow rapidly and make you very, very sick.

Dr. Susan Kolb M.D., the founder of Plastikos Surgery Centre in Atlanta, Georgia, writes about this danger based on her experience as well as those of her patients. She explains that breast implants only last about 8-10 years, after which time they need to be replaced. Hers started to leak after 8 years. She does emphasize that any trauma to the chest wall, such as having a mammogram or a car accident, damages the implant even sooner. When implants start to leak, chemicals which are neurotoxins and carcinogens (causing cancer) enter the surrounding tissues and create a variety of symptoms. It matters not whether it is silicone or saline implants. According to Dr. Kolb, if the valve is damaged it allows bacteria, mold and fungus to grow inside the implant. If the implant bursts when having a mammogram, immediate surgery can be undertaken. However, if the implant doesn't burst but develops a slow leak, the situation is much more dangerous as the leakage may go undetected for a long time.

Dr. Kolb has seen women exhibit symptoms like sinus problems, allergies, dizziness, M.S., and lupus. Many may become deathly ill or suffer from some type of brain fog. After the surgical removal of the leaky implants, some of them are out of their wheelchairs within a week! However, restoring brain clarity by detoxing from the biotoxins takes a longer time. Dr. Kolb found that those women with ruptured saline implants responded better and heal faster than those with ruptured silicone implants.

In my practice with Regulation Thermography, I have had several patients with breast implants who were referred to me by their M.D. because their breast implants burst while having a mammogram. After having suffered from any leakage, there are certain protocols in homeopathic toxicology that will help to remove the imprint of the biotoxins which are produced by the mold. Dr Kolb actually promotes homeopathic remedies as well as safe, non-invasive screening of Regulation Thermography. Experience is our greatest teacher. Fortunately, Dr. Kolb is using her past experience to warn others of this danger of chest wall compression through mammograms. *see ad to right*

Stress is nothing more than a socially acceptable form of mental illness.

- Richard Carlson

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The Cook's Corner

Vegetarian Recipes from the Johnson's Landing Retreat Center

Winter is a good time for a nourishing and satisfying bowl of hot soup. Most soups are easy to digest and low in calories. The Pinto bean soup also has lots of protein and a great flavour. In order to avoid the notorious gas-forming qualities of eating beans, I suggest soaking the beans overnight, draining them, and, if time permits, letting them sprout for a day or two while the starch turns to a more easily-digested sugar. Adding a bit of seaweed reduces the gas as well.

If you want to make a simple soup, try Miso. Miso is a fermented soybean paste.. yep, that sounds scary, but it is actually more digestible because of the enzymes it contains. Be sure not to 'cook' the miso, as cooking will kill the good enzymes.

Enjoy! *Richard*



Pinto Bean Soup serves 10



Ingredients:

- 2 cups dry Pinto Beans
- 6 cups Water or Soup Stock
- 1/4 cup Olive Oil (preferably cold pressed)
- 2 large Onions (chopped)
- 4 Garlic cloves (crushed)
- 1 tsp Salt
- 1/4 tsp Pepper, just grind some in fresh
- 6 more cups Soup Stock or Water
- 2 - 3 Tbs Tamari or Braggs Liquid
- 2 Tbs Butter

OPTIONAL ADDITIONS

- 4 inch strip Seaweed
- Hot Sauce - Sour Cream - Salsa

Directions:

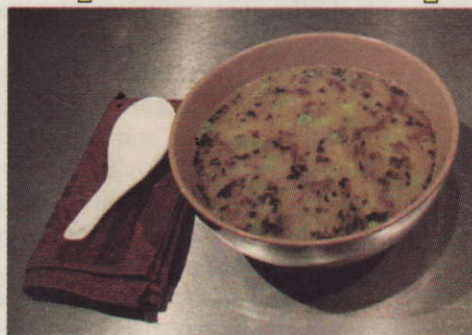
- Cook 2 cups of pinto beans in 6 cups of water for 1-1/2 hours (until soft).
- Mash most of the beans with a stick blender or potato masher
- In a saucepan saute chopped onions in olive oil for 10 min.
- Add crushed garlic, salt and pepper; cook another five minutes.
- Add onion/garlic mix to the mashed beans.
- Add soup stock or water to reach your preferred consistency.
- Add tamari and butter (optional hot sauce to taste).
- Simmer 20 minutes to melt butter and blend flavours, stirring frequently or it will stick!

This soup is very Mexican so serve with salsa and sour cream...

Yummmmm.

Utensils: One large (6 liter) pot with a lid • cutting board • a large sharp knife • a large saucepan • garlic press • wooden spoon • measuring cup and spoons • a stick blender or potato masher

Simple Miso Soup serves 6



Ingredients:

- 6 inch strip Seaweed (chopped)
- 6 cups Water or Soup Stock
- 3 Tbs Olive Oil (preferably cold pressed)
- 1 large Onion (chopped)
- 4 stalks Celery
- 1 cup Peas, fresh or frozen
- 1/2 tsp Salt
- 2 Tbs Tamari or Braggs Liquid
- 2 tsp Dried Parsley
- 1/3 cup Miso

Directions:

- In a large saucepan saute chopped onions in olive oil for 5 minutes.
- Add celery and cook for 5 more minutes.
- Pour in soup stock and bring just to a boil.
- Reduce to a simmer and add everything EXCEPT the Miso. Simmer for 30 minutes.
- 10 minutes before you wish to serve, remove the pot from the heat.
- Take out one cup of soup and blend the Miso into it with a fork.
- Stir the liquid Miso solution back into the soup.
- Cover and wait 5 minutes for flavours to mix before serving.

SERVING SUGGESTIONS:

Serve with Sushi rolls and/or brown rice

Sustainable Living: Why Permaculture Design?

by Verge Permaculture, with introduction from Antony Chauvet



Permaculture is the solution to many of our problems and can help us preserve an abundant and wholesome life. Since I am not an expert, I asked Verge to share.

Peak Oil, loss of diversity, species extinction, conspiracy, oil spills, food insecurity the problems that we face seem to increase both in size and complexity every day. However we can simplify all of these global issues and emphasize three primary concerns. In order of increasing priority, the three biggest issues are:

Pollution • Deforestation • Soil destruction and erosion

Biology is remarkable in its ability to break down and lock up pollutants. Mushrooms have been shown to be effective in breaking down hydrocarbons and even nuclear waste. However, without soil and without forests, we are unable to support the biology required to deal with pollution.

We continue deforestation at record rates, which further emphasizes soil loss. In addition, removal of our forests is removing the planet's most important energy transducer and climate stabilizer. Without forests, we will not have a stable climate. Last year, the world lost 83 billion tons of topsoil. Healthy topsoil is the most biodiverse ecosystem we know of. Without it, life could not be sustained on this planet.

Many other issues are only second generation problems to these primary factors. What this exposes is that recycling, biofuels, CO₂ sequestration, wind turbines and solar panels aren't going to cut it unless we deal with soil loss. The good news is that people around the world are spreading the word that all our problems: pollution, deforestation and soil loss, can be solved in a garden. This is such an empowering message, as we can soon forget if paralyzed by fear and focus on the negative issues we have no control over (i.e. peak oil, climate change, etc). We need to realize that each and every one of us has the opportunity to profoundly shift the course of humanity with the simple act of stewarding soil.

When applying permaculture design, our common ethic is: Care of Earth, Care of People and Return of Surplus. Our decisions are not based on frivolous beliefs, but rather on practical and natural constraints, ultimately allowing us to live in harmony with the ecology. We look to nature as our teacher - this is how we create sustainable and permanent cultures.

Here are some examples of applying permaculture principles and harmonizing our human design with nature's design. Currently, approximately 30-40% of the energy consumed by society is invested into the delivery of potable water and the removal of sewage. If cities adopted rain water catchment, greywater, composting toilets and landscape-water harvesting, we could stop this monumental misallocation of our finite energy resources.

If consumers started demanding that architects, engineers and city planners face homes to the sun, rather than to the direction of the best view, we could eliminate 30% of a household's heating energy. Add in super insulation and efficient design, and we further reduce heating and electrical needs by up to 90%. It has been estimated that ten units of hydrocarbon energy are used to produce one unit of food energy (i.e. calorie). This problem could largely be alleviated if we converted the most energy-wasteful icon on the planet (the lawn) into food production.

Over the past three years we have been transforming our urban home and lot in Calgary, Alberta, based on permaculture design principles. We have built a 200 square foot passive solar greenhouse, developed intensive food production including a food forest garden and veggie gardens, installed water collection and recycling, extensive composting, energy-efficient retrofits on our home and have even demonstrated some natural building techniques using earth and clay.

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Intuition in action

It can save the one you love!

by Hannelore

It was a remarkable week. The joy and transformations experienced by all was a huge confirmation we were on the right path. It was our last day of 'The Mastery' and Module three of 'The Power of Intuition' training. As I was packing for my trip home, my intuition nudged me to call and see if I could rebook my flight. It was late Saturday morning and my flight was booked for early Sunday morning. When I called the airline I found that it was going to cost an extra \$300 to re-book, so I decided against it. But I kept getting this voice inside my head and argued with the voice stating that one more day is not going to make a difference. But the voice became more urgent, so I stopped by the airport to check – which I would only consider if I did not have to pay the extra \$300.

When I arrived, the person at the counter confirmed it would cost the additional amount, but just then the computer went down. Her shift came to an end and a new person took over. After another ten minutes with the computers still down, he finally booked me on the next available flight...at no charge. When I arrived in Vancouver, I went to the carousel to pick up my luggage. Traditionally, once my bags arrive, I call my mother to let her know I have returned home safe and sound. Only, the computers malfunctioned once again and no one knew which carousel our luggage would be on. Another 15 minutes passed, the computers were up and the luggage came through. At that moment, I phoned my mother and she cheerfully said, "Oh how wonderful, you are home early". She then asked "howwwrrrr warrssshh yurrrrr ffffliggggg." "Sorry Mom, what did you say?" "Howwww waasshhh yuuuuuuur." I said "Are you okay Mom?"

To which she replied "noooooooooo." I realized at that moment that my Mother was having a stroke! "Mom, hang up, I am going to call for help." I phoned my brother who said he had just spoken with her and she was fine. "Well she is not fine right now, please get over there right away. Take her to the hospital and I will meet you there!"

By the time he arrived at her place, she seemed okay and did not want to go to the hospital, but he insisted that we were to meet her there. She had taken two aspirins which the doctor confirmed may have saved her life. Her blood pressure was extremely high. It was a Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA) which is an early warning. If not treated, it often reoccurs and becomes deadly within a week or month.

Synchronicities, and my voice of intuition, guided me to phone at that precise moment and I am grateful to God and the Universe. May you also trust your voice of intuition as it gently guides you on your path.

Hannelore will be presenting at the
Spring Festival of Awareness April 26-28





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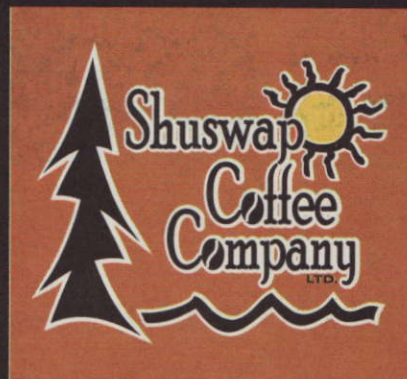
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Peter McAllister

May 31 - June 2

Reiki Gathering

Chelsea Van Koughnett

June 3 - 18

Permaculture Design

Sarah Orłowski

June 7 - 9

The Divine Child Within

Elisabeth Guentert

June 15 - 18 or 20

Creative Mandalas

Ted Wallace

June 21

SUMMER SOLSTICE

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June 21 - 29

Living on the Earth

JLRC Staff

June 28 - 30

Taking Control of your Health

Crystal Lee

June 30 - July 7

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Don Lee and crew

July 5 - 7

Self Hypnosis and EFT

Curtis Stevens

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Couples Path to Partnership

Jon Scott

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Satyama Lasby

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Nature beckons you to be on her side

Commencement Address for the Portland University by Paul Hawken

When I was invited to give this speech, I was asked if I could give a simple short talk that was "direct, naked, taut, honest, passionate, lean, shivering, startling, and graceful." No pressure there. Let's begin with the startling part. Class of 2009: you are going to have to figure out what it means to be a human being on earth at a time when every living system is declining, and the rate of decline is accelerating. Kind of a mind-boggling situation... but not one peer-reviewed paper published in the last thirty years can refute that statement. Basically, civilization needs a new operating system, you are the programmers, and we need it within a few decades.

This planet came with a set of instructions, but we seem to have misplaced them. Important rules have been broken, like: don't poison the water, soil, or air; don't let the earth get overcrowded; and don't touch the thermostat. Buckminster Fuller said that spaceship earth was so ingeniously designed that no one has a clue that we are on one, flying through the universe at a million miles per hour, with no need for seatbelts, lots of room in coach, and really good food—but all that is changing.

There is invisible writing on the back of the diploma you will receive, and in case you didn't bring lemon juice to decode it, I can tell you what it says: You are Brilliant, and the Earth is Hiring. The earth couldn't afford to send recruiters or limos to your school. It sent you rain, sunsets, ripe cherries, night blooming jasmine, and that unbelievably cute person you are dating. Take the hint. And here's the deal: Forget that this task of planet-saving is not possible in the time required. Don't be put off by people who know what is not possible. Do what needs to be done, and check to see if it was impossible only after you are done.

When asked if I am pessimistic or optimistic about the future, my answer is always the same: If you look at the science about what is happening on earth and aren't pessimistic, you don't understand the data. But if you meet the people who are working to restore this earth and the lives of the poor, and you aren't optimistic, you haven't got a pulse. What I see everywhere in the world are ordinary people willing to confront despair, power, and incalculable odds in order to restore some semblance of grace, justice, and beauty to this world. The poet Adrienne Rich wrote, "So much has been destroyed I have cast my lot with those who, age after age, perversely, with no extraordinary power, reconstitute the world." There could be no better description. Humanity is coalescing. It is reconstituting the world, and the action is taking place in schoolrooms, farms, jungles, villages, campuses, companies, refugee camps, deserts, fisheries, and slums.

You join a multitude of caring people. No one knows how many groups and organizations are working on the most salient issues of our day: climate change, poverty, deforestation, peace, water, hunger, conservation, human rights, and more. This is the largest movement the world has ever

seen. Rather than control, it seeks connection. Rather than dominance, it strives to disperse concentrations of power. Like Mercy Corps, it works behind the scenes and gets the job done. Large as it is, no one knows the true size of this movement. It provides hope, support, and meaning to billions of people in the world. Its clout resides in idea, not in force. It is made up of teachers, children, peasants, businesspeople, rappers, organic farmers, nuns, artists, government workers, fisherfolk, engineers, students, incorrigible writers, weeping Muslims, concerned mothers, poets, doctors without borders, grieving Christians, street musicians, the President of the United States of America, and, as the writer David James Duncan would say, the Creator, the One who loves us all in such a huge way.

There is a rabbinical teaching that says if the world is ending and the Messiah arrives, first plant a tree, and then see if the story is true. Inspiration is not garnered from the litanies of what may befall us; it resides in humanity's willingness to restore, redress, reform, rebuild, recover, reimagine, and reconsider. "One day you finally knew what you had to do, and began, though the voices around you kept shouting their bad advice," is Mary Oliver's description of moving away from the profane toward a deep sense of connectedness to the living world.

Millions of people are working on behalf of strangers, even if the evening news is usually about the death of strangers. This kindness of strangers has religious, even mythic origins, and very specific eighteenth-century roots. Abolitionists were the first people to create a national and global movement to defend the rights of those they did not know. Until that time, no group had filed a grievance except on behalf of itself. The founders of this movement were largely unknown — Granville Clark, Thomas Clarkson, Josiah Wedgwood — and their goal was ridiculous on the face of it: at that time three out of four people in the world were enslaved. Enslaving each other was what human beings had done for ages. And the abolitionist movement was greeted with incredulity. Conservative spokesmen ridiculed the abolitionists as liberals, progressives, do-gooders, meddlers, and activists. They were told they would ruin the economy and drive England into poverty. But for the first time in history a group of people organized themselves to help people they would never know, from whom they would never receive direct or indirect benefit. And today tens of millions of people do this every day. It is called the world of non-profits, civil society, schools, social entrepreneurship, non-governmental organizations, and companies who place social and environmental justice at the top of their strategic goals. The scope and scale of this effort is unparalleled in history.

The living world is not "out there" somewhere, but in your heart. What do we know about life? In the words of biologist Janine Benyus,

continues next page

Spiritual Intensive

If you are committed to turning your life in a new direction that is closer to your heart's truth and your soul's path, then this is the class for you. This is more than just an instructional course, it becomes a place in time where the world stops, and the miracle of you emerges. We start with the basic tools of meditation, parapsychology, metaphysics and healing designed to improve your personal and professional lives. You learn to apply your paranormal abilities through regressions, criminal investigations, psi-scans, automatic and inspirational writing, healing and much more.

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WHEN: June 21, 22, 23

Contribution: \$275

life creates the conditions that are conducive to life. I can think of no better motto for a future economy. We have tens of thousands of abandoned homes without people and tens of thousands of abandoned people without homes. We have failed bankers advising failed regulators on how to save failed assets. We are the only species on the planet without full employment. Brilliant. We have an economy that tells us that it is cheaper to destroy earth in real time rather than renew, restore, and sustain it. You can print money to bail out a bank but you can't print life to bail out a planet. At present we are stealing the future, selling it in the present, and calling it gross domestic product. We can just as easily have an economy that is based on healing the future instead of stealing it. We can either create assets for the future or take the assets of the future. One is called restoration and the other exploitation. And whenever we exploit the earth we exploit people and cause untold suffering. Working for the earth is not a way to get rich, it is a way to be rich.

The first living cell came into being nearly 40 million centuries ago, and its direct descendants are in all of our bloodstreams. Literally you are breathing molecules this very second that were inhaled by Moses, Mother Teresa, and Bono. We are vastly interconnected. Our fates are inseparable. We are here because the dream of every cell is to become two cells. And dreams come true. In each of you are one quadrillion cells, 90 percent of which are not human cells. Your body is a community, and without those other microorganisms you would perish in hours. Each human cell has 400 billion molecules conducting millions of processes between trillions of atoms. The total cellular activity in one human body is staggering: one septillion actions at any one moment, a one with twenty-four zeros after it. In a millisecond, our body has undergone ten times more processes than there are stars in the universe, which is exactly what Charles Darwin foretold when he said science would discover that each living creature was a "little universe, formed of a host of self-propagating organisms, inconceivably minute and as

numerous as the stars of heaven."

So I have two questions for you all: First, can you feel your body? Stop for a moment. Feel your body. One septillion activities going on simultaneously, and your body does this so well you are free to ignore it, and wonder instead when this speech will end. You can feel it. It is called life. This is who you are. Second question: who is in charge of your body? Who is managing those molecules? Hopefully not a political party. Life is creating the conditions that are conducive to life inside you, just as in all of nature. Our innate nature is to create the conditions that are conducive to life. What I want you to imagine is that collectively humanity is evincing a deep innate wisdom in coming together to heal the wounds and insults of the past.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once asked what we would do if the stars only came out once every thousand years. No one would sleep that night, of course. The world would create new religions overnight. We would be ecstatic, delirious, made rapturous by the glory of God. Instead, the stars come out every night and we watch television.

This extraordinary time when we are globally aware of each other and the multiple dangers that threaten civilization has never happened, not in a thousand years, not in ten thousand years. Each of us is as complex and beautiful as all the stars in the universe. We have done great things and we have gone way off course in terms of honoring creation. You are graduating to the most amazing, stupefying challenge ever bequeathed to any generation. The generations before you failed. They didn't stay up all night. They got distracted and lost sight of the fact that life is a miracle every moment of your existence. Nature beckons you to be on her side. You couldn't ask for a better boss. The most unrealistic person in the world is the cynic, not the dreamer. Hope only makes sense when it doesn't make sense to be hopeful. This is your century. Take it and run as if your life depends on it.



Paul Hawken's Bioneers Conference Speech of October 21, 2012 has gone viral
www.conference.bioneersgroup.com/paul-hawken

The article above is an earlier speech - I really enjoy his candid nature and reality of life.

Paul Hawken is an environmentalist and entrepreneur and writes about the impact of commerce on living systems. His seven books including four national bestsellers *The Next Economy*, *Growing a Business*, and *The Ecology of Commerce* and *Blessed Unrest*. *The Ecology of Commerce* was voted in 1998 as the #1 college text on business and the environment by professors. *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution* co-authored with Amory Lovins, has been read and referred to by several heads of state including President Bill Clinton who called it one of the five most important books in the world today. *Growing a Business* became the basis of a 17-part PBS series, which Mr. Hawken hosted and produced. The program, which explored the challenges and pitfalls of starting and operating socially responsive companies and was watched by over 100 million people. Paul also founded several companies including the first natural food company in the U.S. that relied solely on sustainable agricultural methods. He presently heads OneSun, LLC, an energy company focused on ultra low-cost solar based on green chemistry and biomimicry, and Highwater Global, a social impact fund that employs the highest standards of corporate social, ethical and environmental behavior.

Paul founded the Natural Capital Institute www.naturalcapital.org, a research organization located in California. Then Natural Capital Institute created Wiser Earth www.WiserEarth.org, an open source networking platform that links NGOs, foundations, business, government, social entrepreneurs, students, organizers, academics, activists, scientists, and citizens concerned about the environment and social justice. *Want to know more... www.PaulHawken.com*

Born to Perform

by Edward MacLeod

I was born and raised in Cape Breton and attended university in Halifax, working towards a major in Biology. In my third year, I enrolled in advanced English composition, and that became the most important course I ever studied.

Upon graduation, I moved to Vancouver and signed up for acting classes, which was soon followed by speaking classes as I was told to "Get rid of that accent!" Operatic singing, ballet, jazz, and theatre sports flowed as I took on my first major show as a chorus member in *Kiss Me Kate*.

Less than two years later, a photo of Robert Redford in the Vancouver Sun caught my eye, an ad from the *American Academy of Dramatic Arts* in Pasadena, California, announcing auditions for enrolment at the school. At the audition, I sang *Farewell to Nova Scotia*, then a short prepared monologue. Two weeks later, I received an acceptance letter.

Upon completion, I headed back to Nova Scotia and began practicing my craft. My first professional acting role was directed by John Dunsworth, the manager in *Trailer Park Boys*. Since then, I have produced several full-length videos, appeared in a number of TV commercials, and went on to write, direct and narrate the same. I first won 1st Place, in the Education Category, and 2nd Place in Photography from the *TV Bureau of Canada*. I served as Publicist for the 'Standin' the Gaff' International Popular Theatre Festival, and initiated two community-based dinner theatre companies, both of which still continue. Since moving back to BC, I have introduced dinner theatre to the West Boundary and directed three major children's musicals at the local elementary school.

I continue to initiate projects and perform whenever possible as both an actor and singer. I have begun planning for the production of a recently completed full-length script. This summer, I will be at the Johnson's Landing Retreat Center, helping out and teaching summer classes.

THEATRE CAMP

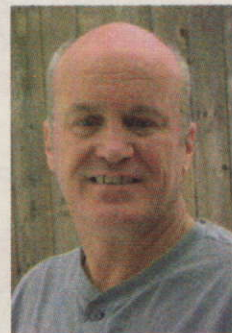
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Book Reviews

You Are NOT What You Eat

Better Digestive Health In 7 Simple Steps

by Van Clayton Powell

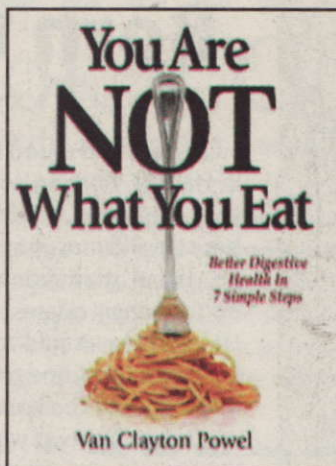
An owner's manual in case your parents did not teach you to slow down and chew while enjoying the taste of food. Were you ever told not to drink fluids for at least thirty minutes before a meal, only about a half-cup with the meal, and no fluids for about one hour afterwards?

Van wrote the book because at one point in his life, he couldn't eat wheat, dairy, soy, chocolate, and a host of other foods without having a reaction, so he worked with an East Indian doctor who practiced Ayurvedic medicine, got much better, and wanted to share some basic information about the foundation of good health.

It is good to know how digestion works, and the symptoms when it is struggling to do this. Van likens digestion to a fire - too much smoke and gas means the fire is not burning well. If your body can't absorb the food it will do its best to tell you. Van will help you figure out what the body is telling you. This 150-page book has lots of good tidbits to think about and discover for yourself and how your system works. I to believe our body is a reflection of our thoughts, and the time we devote to our health is reflected in how we age. Some people are gifted with hereditary strength but that can wear out with time. Processed food now have so many chemicals that the organs can no longer keep up with detoxifying. Repair and maintenance needs rest time or a more simple diet, especially as we age and enzymes are no longer abundant.

I started Issues when I realized our government had sold us to the chemical companies, and that, out of convenience and ignorance, many people accepted their advertising as their source of knowledge. Van has my vote for figuring it out, compiling his data into a book and networking the ideas so that you can heal yourself.

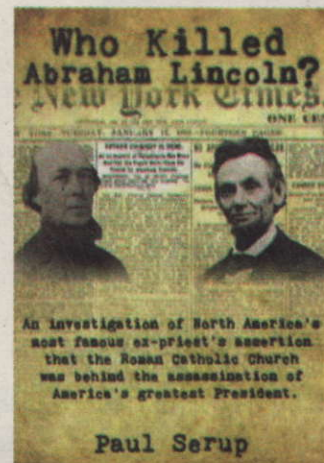
Do yourself a favour and check his site: www.healingsearch.com then buy this book at your favorite bookstore.



Who Killed Abraham Lincoln?

by Paul Serup

I reviewed this book because it was written by a man in Prince George, BC, who got intrigued by a passing comment. As he dug deeper and deeper, he realized he had spent thirty years figuring out what happened. His research was then compiled into this book and probably helped to make the movie.



The book starts with us getting to know Charles Chiniquy of Quebec, Canada, a crusading priest for temperance who established French-Canadian communities in Illinois. It was there that the priest met Abraham Lincoln, his lawyer. Not long after his trial, and because of the shortcomings he saw in the Catholic Church, Charles became a Protestant. In his popular autobiography, *Fifty Years in The Church of Rome*, Chiniquy reported that after the murder of his close friend, the President, he travelled to Washington to conduct his own inquiry. He met with high-ranking government officials who told him that they had no doubt that the Jesuits were behind Lincoln's slaying, but they wanted to keep this from the public to avoid giving new life to the broken rebellion, and to avert possible bloodshed between Catholics and Protestants.

Eight people were put on trial before a military commission and the evidence clearly points to Roman Catholic complicity in the murder of the President as well as general hostility to America.

Inside the back cover of the book is a CD with over 3,300 pages of supporting documentation, which include the court records of those put on trial for conspiring to assassinate Lincoln and other officials. Mary Surratt, a devout Roman Catholic, and the first woman to ever be executed by the American government, is named in many of the documents because her boarding-house was used as the headquarters for the conspiracy.

In short, it was concluded that there was strong evidence that the plot to destroy many political officials of America, including Abraham Lincoln, as well as a nation and the ideals it stood for, was led by Catholics, aided and abetted by officials of the Church of Rome.

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A Short Walk on an Ancient Path

– A Buddhist Exploration of Meditation, Karma and Rebirth

by Brian Ruhe

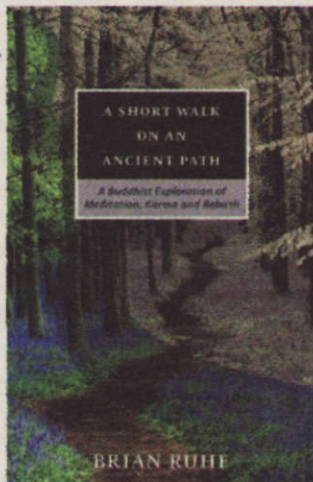
He also wrote *Freeing the Buddha*.

A meditation teacher is like a Spiritual Coach who encourages you, and convinces you that you can succeed. Brian Ruhe is a writer who delves deeper into past lives than most books on Buddhism. First, he explains the 'eight fold path' and the 'four noble truths' in a way that I had not understood before. He reminds us that we all need help with discipline to bring us to letting be, to stop our thoughts, and experience moments of tranquility. It is tricky, he says, to think of the road to Nirvana like a highway where you can set cruise control, and sit back and enjoy the ride. Even when we have a teacher to guide us, it is easy to get side-tracked. The eight paths are to be practiced as a way of life; they are not so much steps as components of a whole, like strands of a cable.

The first step along the path is **Right View**, and the seven other points pivot around the first one. Right view is like a detailed map that clearly explains the way. As always, experience is better than a book. Once you understand the nature of your mind, then you will have a clearer view of the eightfold path. **Right Intention** implies the choice to follow the path of awakening. It is about renunciation, good will, and harmlessness. **Right Speech** uses the direct approach with as few words as possible. Speech should be truthful and beneficial. **Right Discipline** includes morality or conduct and within that are the five precepts: Do not kill, Do not take what is not offered, Do not engage in sexual misconduct, Do not speak falsehoods, and Do not take alcohol because it clouds the mind and leads to moral carelessness.

The fifth lesson on the path is a three-fold teaching of **Right Livelihood, Right Effort and Right Mindfulness**, which encourages us to earn a living honestly. You can earn riches, Brian says, so let's let go of the 'poor' monk thing and figure out what our purpose is. Manual labour gives lots of opportunity to practice meditation in action. There is no room in Buddhism to avoid getting a job because you are 'too spiritual'. All the monks and nuns practice mindfulness while working as a process of building concentration, which leads to wisdom and insight. The last stage is **Right Absorption** a time to get into deep meditation to the point that you no longer feel your body. This is the toughest one and only a few graduate at this level. These truths were taught by the Buddha and are repeated to help one understand suffering, the cause of suffering and the way to end suffering.

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Brian has been teaching thousands of people at colleges and adult education courses for over 15 years around the Vancouver area. He was a Buddhist monk in Thailand in 1996, and since returning to Canada, has authored two books and created many YouTube videos. He has travelled to the Birken Forest Monastery near Kamloops, recording many of Ajahn Sona's *Dharma Talks* that are available on the web.



Brian's students say this about him

•• Brian's openness and respect is disarming, he takes every question seriously, while presenting fresh information and insights into the tenets of Buddhism. His lectures are filled with humour, anecdotes, and everyday examples of some rather heavy material. He is the perfect instructor for both neophytes and experienced practitioners.

•• Brian Ruhe starts where all good Buddhists should- with silence and breath. He explains why paying attention to your breath and to the inner thoughts process leads to awareness and right action. Brian presents his case, very clearly, as to why Buddhism is so different from other religions as it is based on the knowledge of mental states that can only be discovered through personal introspection.

•• Brian is a long-time teacher of authentic Buddhism, not the sugar-coated sentimental kind often marketed in North America. He is clear and engaging.

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Government Protects Drugs While It Seizes Natural Health Products

by Dr. Zoltan P. Rona, MD, M.Sc. Reprinted from Vitality Magazine

How many of you trust that Health Canada is currently protecting you from dangerous drugs and chemicals? Is the Canadian Health Protection Branch protecting your health or that of the drug companies? Is it on the lookout for toxic drug reactions or just there to keep the competitors away from sales of blockbuster drugs? Why is it that Health Canada has recently been raiding health food stores, terrorizing store proprietors, and confiscating natural food supplements? The answers to these questions are now becoming clear.

THE PRADAXA SCANDAL

Medical doctors in North America are legally allowed to prescribe Pradaxa (dabigatran), a blood thinning drug that the New York Times recently reported was the FDA's primary suspect in 542 patient deaths in 2011. In fact, Pradaxa has been linked to more reports of side effects or death than 800 other drugs that were regularly monitored for drug safety by the Institute for Safe Medication Practices, a nonprofit Pennsylvania organization that monitors medicine safety. Some authors have equated Pradaxa to nothing less than legalized mass murder. Yet Health Canada has, to date, done nothing about removing it from the market. Health Canada has, however, been active raiding health food stores and removing natural competitors to Pradaxa from the market. A case in point is nattokinase, a safe and effective natural blood thinner that has yet to harm a soul anywhere. Health Canada has disallowed its sales in health food stores and in fact, has raided some stores and ordered its removal from the shelves.

Many natural compounds like omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin E, and proteolytic enzymes like serrapeptase and bromelain do thin the blood naturally, but the single best natural agent that accomplishes this is the soy-derived enzyme nattokinase. Many alternative health care practitioners around the world recommend nattokinase as a safe and effective alternative to Warfarin. According to well-known author, Dr. Jonathan Wright, at least 15 studies have shown that nattokinase prevents and helps dissolve blood clots responsible for heart attacks and strokes. What's more, it has been used without incident as a natural remedy for centuries in Japan.

Given Health Canada's current modus operandi, the next natural supplements to be removed from health food store shelves will likely be the proteolytic enzymes. These have been around for over 50 years without the report of a single death as a result of their use. Already, Health Canada has refused to grant an NPN (Natural Health Product Number) to serrapeptase despite safety and toxicology studies that fail to indicate any problems with the product whatsoever. Yet, Pradaxa remains on the market along with numerous other poisons. Unlike Warfarin, the most common drug prescribed by doctors to thin the blood in cases of heart arrhythmias (e.g. atrial fibrillation), Pradaxa has no antidote. With Warfarin, excessive bleeding can be reversed

to a large degree by taking vitamin K. There is no such luck with Pradaxa. When a patient develops excessive bleeding from Pradaxa, doctors cannot give anything to prevent death from blood loss. Manufactured by German drug company Boehringer Ingelheim, Pradaxa has earned well over \$1 billion dollars in sales to date. If it's any consolation, Boehringer Ingelheim is said to be working on an antidote for preventing patients from bleeding to death. Despite this, hundreds of lawsuits have already been filed in the U.S. against the drug company and doctors who have prescribed Pradaxa.

Why do we need Pradaxa anyway? Is it really any better than Warfarin? One recent study from the Archives of Internal Medicine concluded that patients on Pradaxa died roughly at the same rate as those who were on Warfarin (a less expensive and safer drug).

OTHER DRUG SCANDALS

Canadians spend just under \$27 million on prescription drugs each year. An estimated 10,000 people in Canada die each year from prescription drugs taken exactly as they are prescribed. More Canadians are harmed or killed by drugs taken exactly as prescribed than they are by handguns, tainted meat, and tainted water combined. In the U.S., the fourth leading cause of death is from prescription drug use. A 2001 Health Council of Canada study cites an additional 150,000 serious adverse drug reactions. Something is very wrong here with the people who are entrusted with ensuring our safety when taking drugs as prescribed.

In one of my previous articles in Vitality on the subject of antacid drugs known as proton pump inhibitors, I detailed the numerous side effects associated with this class of drugs when used for extended periods of time. One of these was Prepulsid (cisapride) which has been linked to 80 deaths due to heart attacks and 341 adverse reactions in Canada and the U.S. It was finally taken off the market in August 2000. In 2001, a Canadian Medical Association Journal article was very critical of Health Canada's role in the deaths of those who had the misfortune of taking Prepulsid. Unfortunately, numerous drugs in the same class remain on the market and are liberally prescribed for heartburn despite a growing number of studies reporting that the risks far outweigh any of the benefits, especially for long-term use.

In my practice I often prescribe alternatives to these proton pump inhibitors. One brand I have used for many years is called Bio-HPF (Biotics Research). I found it very effective as a treatment for heartburn, gastric and duodenal ulcers, gastritis and H. Pylori infections. It contains deglycerized licorice, bentonite, slippery elm, bismuth, berberine and other very safe herbs which have been broadly used for hundreds of years. Health Canada has recently made it unavailable. Once again, no deaths or adverse side effects were ever reported and I have been recommending this product for over 15 years.

Health Canada appears to ignore deaths and serious adverse reactions to a whole class of drugs while making safe and effective alternatives unavailable to the public. Its reasons for doing so are dubious at best. In his most recent book *Pharmageddon*, Irish psychiatrist, Dr. David Healy, details how drug companies literally get away with murder, how they deceive doctors and patients into prescribing drugs that work no better than placebo, and how negative studies on drug safety and efficacy are hidden from view, prevented from becoming published. In this country, the drug companies also receive a helping hand from Health Canada in fast-tracked approval and the elimination of any perceived competition.

About a year ago I published an article on anti-depressants and how the preponderance of published data indicates that the most commonly prescribed ones, called SSRIs, work no better than placebo. In other words, they just create expensive urine. Unfortunately, these ineffective drugs have hideous side effects, including suicide and other forms of violent behavior. Yet they happily remain on the market. Another drug scandal in the making involves the smoking-cessation drug Champix that has been linked to suicides (33 to date), neuropsychiatric symptoms, heart attacks, and a life threatening form of edema. Yet Health Canada has done nothing to halt its sales.

About two years ago, I published an article in *Vitality* on the use of statin drugs (Lipitor, Crestor, Zocor) in which I discussed the large number of unwanted side effects (muscle damage, liver toxicity, memory loss, depression). One professor, Alan Cassels, from the University of Victoria wrote "Some day, I suspect, we will regard statins as an unmitigated scandal in medicine." Unfortunately, we shall not be seeing Health Canada doing anything about statins, primarily because they are a multi-billion dollar cash cow for the drug industry.

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

Health Canada is doing nothing to prevent the thousands of deaths each year from drugs it approves for sale. We continue to see reports of the harm they are doing in the headlines each day. In addition, Health Canada is systematically removing natural health products from the market at an alarming rate.

Aside from questioning your doctor and pharmacist about drug side effects and always looking for safer natural treatment alternatives, get politically active. This is actually easier to do than you might think. Politicians want your vote and those that do not want to do anything about the people who run Health Canada do not deserve your vote. For the most part, politicians respond to postcards and letters. If you really want to show them how serious you are, also send them a copy of this article. I would be pleased to meet with any politician to offer my views and share 35 years of experience prescribing natural alternatives to toxic drugs.

www.VitalityMagazine.com

The Three Hurdles

Fear of Nature, Fear of Groups and Fear of Self

by Heather M. Barnes reprinted from the latest Community magazine or online at ic.org

"I can't I can't I can't!" wails Marisa, tiny for her 12 years. She's seated in the center of our circle, face pressed into her knees and shaking visibly. Around her, 13 of her classmates ignore her, lying on their backs in silence, waiting it out.

It's a balmy Thursday night in October, the final evening of camp for these sixth graders from Los Angeles. They're about to do a solo night walk, the culmination of everything we've been working on all week: nature exploration, team-building, and personal growth. When Marisa first started quivering they fell effortlessly into the role of supportive team, offering advice and encouragement. But after 15 minutes with no improvement they gave up, reverting to the children that they are and leaving her for me to handle.

It's what I do. Since 1993, I've been facilitating outdoor programs for youth ranging from inner-city organizations, where the chaperones buy boots and jackets for the kids or nobody will, to exclusive private schools that request specific life experiences they want the kids to have, like a shopping list. That makes me chuckle. I can no more dictate which lessons each kid needs to learn than I can make the wildlife obey while they're here.

For 19 years I've watched kids transform from selfish, impatient, sometimes violent young people into thinkers, collaborators, and doers. In this I've noticed three hurdles each kid fights and then overcomes. Some may conquer only one or two, others succeed all three, but they're always in the same order: fear of nature, fear of the group, and fear of self. After a week of community-building, fresh air, and exercise, they're calm and cheerful, ready to move into the deeper, more profound realms of interpersonal exploration. Instead, camp comes cruelly to an end. The kids are stuffed back into the boxes they worked so hard to escape and return to the environments that put them there. With luck, they'll retain a few bright pearls of insight and follow them like beacons throughout life.

I'd like to give you a slice of life at sixth-grade camp. For this purpose I've created a fictional group of kids. While their names are made up, their characteristics and experiences are those of real people.

Fearing Nature

Call it West Middle School, your average public school in Los Angeles. Its student population is heavily diverse; family income levels cluster around lower-middle class. The school is situated at the end of one of LAX's runways; every day they squeegee jet fuel off the windows, and the students are never allowed free time outdoors.

For these kids—and millions like them, regular Americans growing up indoors—the idea of nature comes from books or movies, most of it neutral or disparaging, some good. Regardless, there's little positive interaction and no free exploration. Richard Louv, in his award-winning book *Last Child in the Woods*, addresses this very issue, discussing the cultural removal of children from nature to the detriment of the children, the adults they will become, and the nature they will be charged with protecting. Indeed, there is a powerful disconnect here, which becomes obvious the minute they exit the bus. Just before 11 on Monday morning, three buses pull up in front of the camp's dining hall, and we—the outdoor facilitators—greet them. One hundred sixth-graders, plus heaps of clean, shiny baggage, pile out. Some stop and gape silently. Others point and shriek, and the rest vent their nervousness on each other. They're a mere hour from their school, but if the buses dropped them off on Mars instead, they would hardly have been more shocked.

After lunch I meet my group for the week. There's Marisa, a born leader. Stan, shy and overweight, who dreams of seeing a deer. Shelby, the fast-talker who notices more than she lets on. Alejandro, the abused boy who loves lizards. The rest hang back like a Greek chorus, their personalities emerging gradually throughout the week.

Despite the fact that so many kids are experts on a single species, many are disgusted or terrified of nature as a whole. Therefore, my first request to them—please sit down on the ground—is met with horror and disbelief.

At first, nobody moves. Their eyes scour the ground for somewhere "clean" to sit, their skin practically crawling. Every zip in the air becomes a heat-seeking hornet, every smudge of dirt a stinking swamp. You'd think I'd asked them to lie down in the middle of a crime scene. I repeat the request three, four, seven times, earning some hard stares for it, but this is a necessary step. It's impossible to focus on consensus-building when the next passing ant could launch them into the Charleston.

By Monday night, however, each one is happily dusty and they've given up the fight to stay pure. When we reconvene Tuesday morning they flop down without a second thought. The rest of the week, they troop through high grass, play "camouflage" at the edges, hunt for fire-building supplies in the woods, and sit beneath trees during journal time. Each day, it gets harder for me to call them back from the sacred places they've found. The lure of the wild is now much stronger than their fear of it.

Fearing the Group

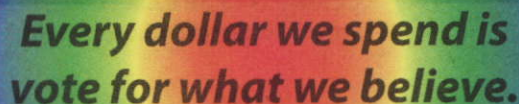
Teambuilding is the art of solving problems—physical, mental, spatial, linear, etc.—by collaborating with others. It's a study of process, not result. Learning to empathize and strategize with others is much harder for kids than it is for adults, and tempers flare quickly. By Wednesday afternoon, however, our mythical group is still acting like a Monday group: lack of focus, little investment, too many distractions. When they reach an impasse on a river-crossing challenge, discussion quickly dissolves into bickering.

"Hey, put this board on that one—" suggests Marisa, offering a one-by-eight to Eric, who's balanced in the middle of the "river." "No, that's stupid!" Eric snarls suddenly. Without warning, he stomps off. "None of this is real anyway. What's the point?" "Eric!" the others protest. "Get that board, it'll drift away!" "No, it won't," Eric yells over his shoulder. "It's not actually a river." I call a water break and we circle up. If they'd been giving it an honest go all this time I'd be sympathetic, but only a handful have been committed to the task. I inform them that they're not going anywhere until I get a little honesty.

Picking at the grass, the kids offer feeble distractions. They'd rather be hanging out in their bunks, playing games, eating at restaurants. They're hot, tired, and dehydrated. ("Yeah, we know, drink more water.") When this is met with silence from me, the deeper truths begin to emerge. They're afraid of getting lost, or hurt, or stuck someplace. Scared of looking silly or stupid in front of their peers. They don't know what they're doing, who they are, what they want from life. Everyone else has it easier, better, faster. Nobody feels like they belong.

Ninety astonishing minutes later (rather than the standard five-to-10), we emerge from the most intensive debrief session of my career. I feel as drained and reinvigorated as they do. Two miracles ensue. The kids get up and cross the river in 15 minutes flat, each one pitching in and offering eager ideas. Then, when they're almost done, a black-tailed doe ambles past, halting the process. Everyone except Stan sits down in place and watches. Stan tiptoes toward her, rolling his feet in the Native American style they learned earlier. He stops 10 feet away and they regard one another, boy and deer, for several minutes, until she moves off casually into the woods. Stan returns to us beaming, tears streaming down his face, but he doesn't seem to notice. The kids leap up and congratulate him on how awesome that was. It's a moment he'll never forget.

It's one thing for a group to solve a problem together, where the glory is shared equally, but quite another to step back and allow one person to shine. Many groups will reach this point by Wednesday afternoon; they just don't usually wait until Wednesday afternoon to do it. To me, it means they're ready for the high ropes course.



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Fearing the Self

A high ropes course is a series of physical obstacles such as swings, balance beam, cargo net, and cables to cross, things which would be easy if done on the ground but can seem impossible 40 feet in the air. The obstacles are fixed between trees, and participants are hooked into safety equipment to prevent them from falling.

The high course is safe, but its true value lies in its perceived danger: how do you react when faced with a challenge that scares the skin off you? Freeze up? Flee? Push on? It's here that many people discover what they're made of and what they do with that.

However, doing the course yourself is only half the challenge. The other—and, arguably, more important—part is offering support from the ground (being emotionally vested in someone else's success). Friends on the ground can call up advice and encouragement or stop you from doing something dangerous, like double-unclipping your safety lines. Remembering that this cheerleading squad is there can be a valuable resource for kids facing a Flea Jump, Giant's Ladder, or a zip line through thin air.

Call me old-school (and in the world of adventure facilitation, I am), but I believe no one should do the high course until they can play both giver and receiver, learning to connect with something outside of themselves. What kind of friend are you? Do you stay with the person up there the whole way or zone out when things get slow? How do you treat the climber who flies through the course as if on wings versus the one who fights back tears 10 feet up the ladder? This, too, is part of the self-awareness that comes into focus at the high course.

Back to Thursday night in the woods.

Fourteen kids, a teacher, and I sit in a comfortable blob at the start of the trail. No one asks what's going to happen next. The solo night walk wraps everything up neatly like a present. Though safe, it pits each kid's new-found realizations and feelings against their old ones, in the oldest place on Earth: nature. Thirteen can't wait to go. One is afraid I'll make her go. I have no idea what will happen. Breaking the silence, Eric asks, "Can I go first?" "No, I wanted to!" Shelby hisses from behind him. "I was trying to get up here to ask!"

"Can I?" Three others chime in. Suddenly there are seven hands waving in my face. We draw lots and Shelby wins. She strides confidently down the trail, the faint crunching of her boots on gravel fading away. The group is silent, transfixed by both the perfect evening and the triumph of Shelby's walk, despite the fact that they haven't seen her reach the other end yet. There is no doubt in their minds that she will.

Marisa is calm too, watching with plain wonder beside me. Maybe she'll go after all, I muse. Next is Jason, who marches off so jauntily that I have to remind him to slow down lest he catch up with Shelby and ruin it for both of them. Eric. Sammie. Alejandro. Eventually, only Marisa and I remain. "Well?" I say. Her audience is gone.

continues next page

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The Three Hurdles continued

The moment of truth has arrived. She's quiet. Then: "I can't." Her voice is flat, gravelly. No tears, no drama. This is the truth, then. "Why not?" "Because something might be there. Maybe everybody's dead and we don't know it." "No one is dead."

But no matter how much I want her to share in this triumph, I can't force the experience on her. Maybe she'll face this one later, but right now it's not hers. Sometimes the lesson is for me. We walk back together and find our group sitting in a circle, unharmed and in barely contained silence. No sooner do Marisa and I sit down than they erupt like a giddy volcano. "Oh my gosh, that was so cool! I didn't think—" "I was so scared, I thought I was going to die—" "I know, I can't believe it, either! We can do anything!" Marisa sits motionless, a smile frozen on her mouth. She's bravely trying to be happy for them, but the thin smile can't disguise her dawning regret. This, too, is an experience.

Sitting here with my group on their final night of sixth-grade camp, listening to each one in turn relive every nuance of the walk, I catch glimpses of the new people they're becoming. Some broadcast their pride, others glow more quietly. One looks miserable. I know what opportunities to learn I gave them this week, but as to which bright pearls they've actually secreted away in the pockets of their psyche, I couldn't guess. I'd probably be wrong.

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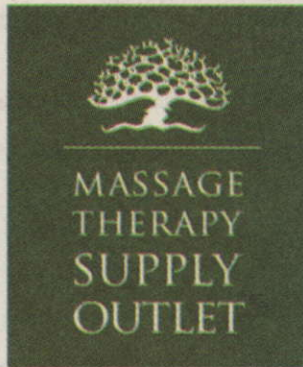
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