

RETREAT

ISSUE
No.12

The Magazine with insights & inspirations to nourish your mind, your heart and your soul

In this Issue

BIRTH & DEATH

**UNLOCKING
OUR GREATEST
ASSETS**

**MOVED
BY LOVE**

**WINGS
OF SOUL**

PAST IS PAST

**ROADS TO
RELAXATION**





The Invitation

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living.
I want to know what you ache for,
and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.

It doesn't interest me how old you are.
I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool for love,
for your dreams, for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring in your moon.
I want to know if you have touched the centre of your own sorrow.
If you have been opened by life's betrayals or
have shrivelled and closed from fear of further pain.

I want to know if you can sit with pain, mine or your own,
without moving to hide it or fake it or fix it.
I want to know if you can be with joy, mine or your own;
If you can dance with wildness and let the ecstasy fill you
to the tips of your fingers and toes without cautioning us to
be careful, be realistic, or to remember the limitations of being human.

It doesn't interest me if the story you are telling me is true,
I want to know if you can disappoint another to be true to yourself.
If you can bear the accusation of betrayal and not betray your own soul.

I want to know if you can be faithful and therefore trustworthy.
I want to know if you can see beauty,
even when it is not pretty every day,
and if you can source your life from its presence.

I want to know if you can live with failure, yours or mine,
and still stand on the edge of a lake and shout to the silver
of the full moon, "Yes!"

It doesn't interest me to know where you live or how much
money you have. I want to know if you can get up after
the night of grief and despair, weary and bruised to the
bone, and do what needs to be done for the children.

It doesn't interest me who you are, or how you came to be here.
I want to know if you will stand in the centre of the fire with
me and not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me where or what or with whom you have studied.
I want to know what sustains you from the inside when all
else falls away.

I want to know if you can be alone with yourself,
and if you truly like the company you keep in the empty
moments.

Oriah Mountain Dreamer, Indian Elder, May 1994

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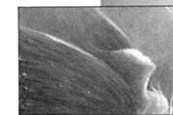
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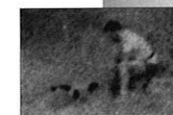
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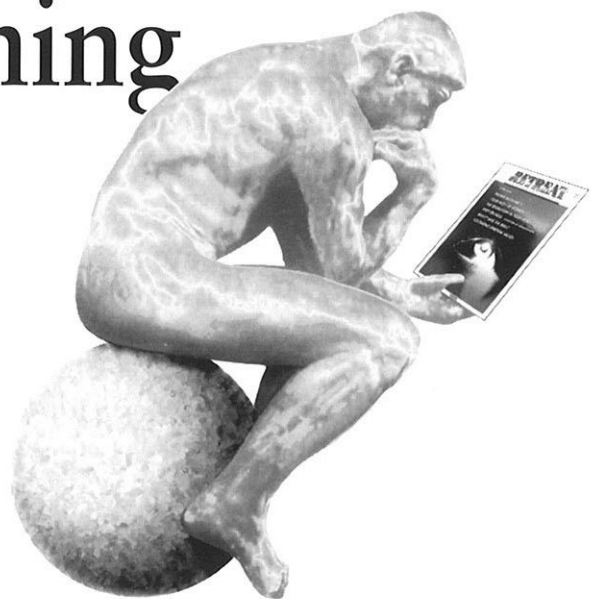
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Learning for Life

or learning for a living?



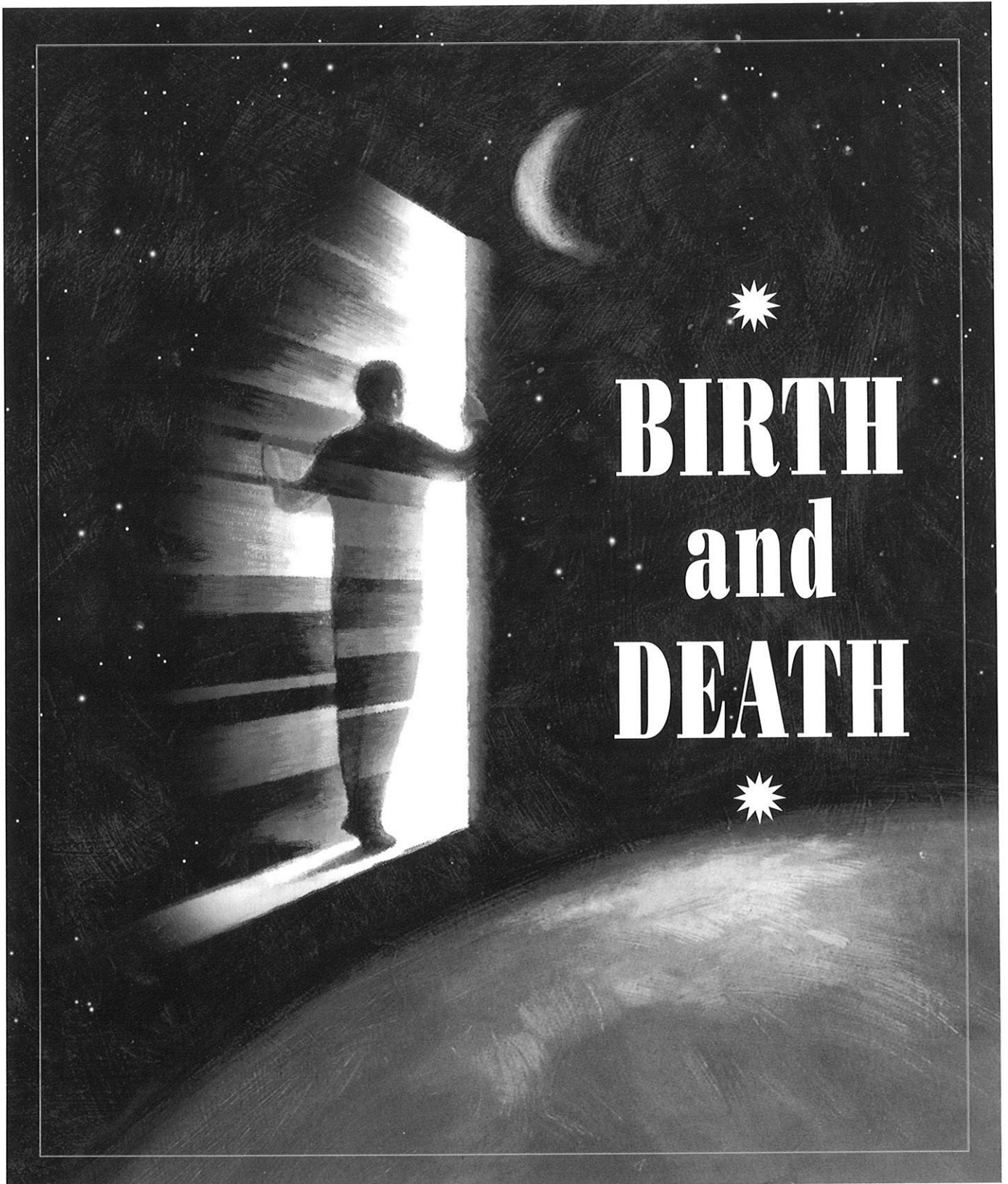
Perhaps one of the most powerful illusions which still has us in its grip is that our learning ends when we leave school or university.

In most countries the nature of work is now quite different when compared to only a decade ago. Company loyalty has long disappeared and job security is seldom based on a contract...

In Unleashing Hidden Potential, David Hemery demonstrates that business has adapted much faster than education to a changing world and he exposes the enormous gap between what children are taught in school and what is required of them to succeed at work.

Welcome to Retreat number 12.

Always a significant learning experience.



★
BIRTH
and
DEATH
★

*Passwords to the
Human Spiritual Encounter*

Andrew Powell takes a personal look at
human consciousness beyond space and time

What I am going to say is based on the premise that mind comes before matter, that mind is primary. Everyone has dipped into the great debate about the status of mind and, according to your preference, there is plenty of evidence to support whichever point of view you hold. So all I can hope to do is share my thoughts with you.

Unlike mind, the body is formed out of the matter of the physical universe. From atoms as old as the stars, it coheres for a time in space and then disperses. Birth is a miracle and so is death. As magicians well know, the best tricks are those when the mystery of an appearance is only rivalled by seeing it vanish before your eyes. The difference is that, situated in our culture, birth is a greeting and death a parting. In Ghana, the Ashanti say that every time an earth mother smiles at the birth of her child, a spirit mother mourns her loss.

In the West, three hundred years of mechanistic science has put such nonsense out of our heads! I refer to the Newtonian vision of reality, in which time is absolute and space is structured according to Newton's Laws of Motion: a cosmos of stars and planets suspended in empty space, all held in place by the checks and balances of momentum and gravitation. This is the world in which mankind learned how to dissect the whole into its parts and which gave us the atom with its electron spinning in orbit just like our own solar system. At the same time, reality was defined in terms of matter, a world in which God had to be dispatched to the far distant reaches of the cosmos, winding up the spring on which the clock of the universe turned. Curiously, although mankind had taken such a giant step forwards in mapping out the cosmos, the Cartesian divide between mind and body reduced him to a mere speck. And so, from the scientific perspective, birth had to represent a person arriving out of nowhere, and death could only mean leaving to go nowhere.

In my early days in hospital medicine, I worked for a time on a coronary care unit. I recall an elderly man who had suffered four or five cardiac arrests. Each time we 'got him back'. After the last arrest, he needed artificial respiration for several hours. At last we were able to take him off the ventilator. He lay there grey with exhaustion but seemed to be trying to say something. I leaned over and put my ear to his mouth. He whispered, "Let me go". I remember to my shame saying something like, "No chance, we'll get you right!" A couple of hours later the patient had another cardiac arrest and this time, no matter what we did, he could not or would not come round. I had got so excited

fighting this thing called Death that I did not grasp that my patient was on a journey. I was a young man and of course this could only happen because I could not face that one day my own life would end.

In our Western culture, we deal with the problem of our own death either by heroically rescuing others from its grasp or by projecting it endlessly and murderously in films, television and the media. In doing so, we have overlooked the simple truth that without death there can be no life, and that we all must make way in turn for others to follow. Our society has become a rat race, lived with frantic intensity and yet for many a kind of living death. We have all manner of thrills and spills, consumerism gone wild, at best an enquiry into meaninglessness, at worst a roller coaster of bodily desires and gratifications.

There is much more to life than this, of course. Humanism is a fine thing and we are indebted to it for many of the values by which decent people live, but for many of us there is a deep and persistent longing to penetrate the veil which is drawn around the limits of physical reality. From where does this longing arise? Why these 'other world' fantasies? The rational approach tells us to be satisfied with living out our lives on the stage of this theatre in the round called earth, yet there have always been mystics and visionaries whose powerful and personal revelations of the Ultimate set them apart from their fellow men; brave souls unloved by scientists and churchmen alike, compelled to seek a reality deeper and wider than the drama of human exchange. The orthodoxy of the Church has resisted change and so has a large chunk of the scientific community. But for those that have eyes to see, the world has been stood on its head by the 'new physics'. Here are a few examples of what I mean.

In 1905 Einstein published the first of his papers on the Special Theory of Relativity, showing that energy and mass were interchangeable. The theory states that all motion is relative and that the speed of light is always recorded as being the same. *This enabled Einstein to consider what it would be like to be a ray of light passing from the sun to the earth.* At the speed of light, length in the direction of travel shrinks to zero, as does time also. Therefore, from the point of view of the light ray, it goes no distance in no time. The concept of speed is

“The concept of speed is meaningless, for the passage of light is instantaneous. Time does not exist. Light is everywhere, all at once.”

meaningless, for the passage of light is instantaneous. Time does not exist. Light is everywhere, all at once.

What does this say about our physical universe? It is the very act of our observing this light ray travelling from the sun to earth which has drawn it out into the dimensions we know as space and time. The breathtaking implication is that *space and time are not things in themselves but are created by the act of outwardly directed consciousness.*

Turning to the very small, quantum mechanics tells us that an electron does not hop from one orbit to another like a spinning billiard ball. Instead it first extends into all orbits in a wave form, trying them out for size, as it were. Then at the moment of measurement, the wave function collapses and the electron appears as a particle, having a definite position in space and with a measurable spin.

In 1935, Einstein, Podolsky and Rosen set up a thought experiment which argued that two spinning particles which had shared a quantum field and were then separated in space would, in theory, still be related even if light years apart, by virtue of the common wave form. Einstein thought this must be impossible, but he was wrong. In 1972, Clauser successfully demonstrated that stopping the spin of one photon instantaneously stopped the other in its tracks. Non-locality was now on the map, and bearing in mind the Big Bang which started our universe, it follows that on some level *everything must be connected to everything else.*

Is nothing as it seems? Closer to home, we can surely trust in our own sense of time as dependable. We can measure it objectively and we are in good company, for the whole world is marching in step with millions of clocks. What is more, we know time goes in one direction only, an arrow which impales us all, king and beggar alike. The study of entropy tells us where the arrow is headed. Its destination is the heat death of the physical universe in about one hundred billion years time.

As it happens, quantum theory has upset the apple cart by knocking linear time into a cocked hat. Some years back, the quantum physicist John Wheeler proposed a thought experiment in which the experiment is carried out, but the observer who lives some light years away, does not decide until later whether he wants to measure the momentum or the position of the particle released. When the decision is made at some point in the future, it must therefore determine the outcome of the experiment which took place in the past. This raises the possibility that the cosmos is supremely intelligent and may have already decided how it will evolve, using consciousness as the tool for the job.

Robert Jahn at Princeton has now shown in studies on remote viewing that not only is there

spatial non-locality but temporal non-locality too. In the majority of successful episodes, *the mental message is received by the distant individual days before it is mentally sent.* For us in the Scientific and Medical Network, such ideas are the bread and butter of our discourse; but to what extent can all this help us in our quest for spiritual truth?

First the good news. In terms of our psychological well-being, we can feel greatly encouraged. These discoveries reveal another universe to us. Everything seems to be pointing in the direction of Bohm's 'Implicate Order'. Doors are opening left, right and centre into a cosmos in which our physical space-time is but a local ripple. The painful divide which many of us struggled with, to bring together the mystical and the scientific, has been bridged and there is a whole new road to travel.

Now to sound a cautionary note, unless we are careful, there is a danger that we replace one set of constructs, the Newtonian ones, with a new set which will seduce us with their beauty, relevance and applicability, just as Newton's did in their time. It is true that the ideas are beautiful, relevant and applicable; if they were not, they would have no power to seduce. But we need to remember that *the intellectual position examines the nature of reality. It cannot reveal to us the primary nature of that experience.*

I have one further point to make. When we step back from experience in order to objectify, measure, or communicate it, we have to convert that experience into an event. Even when we are studying processes like thinking, we still have to do it by referring to cognitive structures and so on. Events go hand in hand with linear time, always having beginnings and endings.

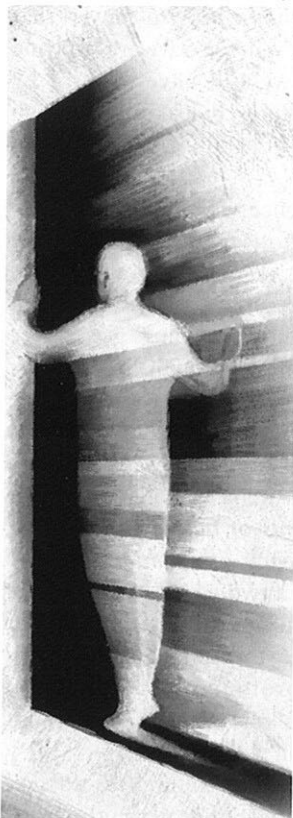
There is just one experience we cannot objectify, which is 'Being'. *It is how we are* all the time between those two great events, birth and death, which raise and lower the curtain on our embodied lives. It is no surprise then that 'Being' gets scarce mention in the old scientific paradigm. In contrast, birth and death as objective phenomena have fascinated mankind throughout history, for the one thing we can all be sure of is that we were born and will die. Making this measurement along the rule of time ensures that *the events of birth and death are always separated from each other and from our living in the between.* It is a two-edged sword: on the one hand we can shield ourselves from awareness of our mortality in this time and space; on the other hand, many of us are profoundly stimulated to search deeply for what it all means, why we bob into existence only to sink again without trace.

In the history of Western culture, the passion of Christ, with the overcoming of death on the cross,

“We have to assure ourselves of eternity because the alternative, non-being, is so unbearable.”

has been the centrepiece of Christian faith and the spur to spiritual attainment. In the early years of this century, psychology pitched itself against the bastion of the Church. Belief in the Father Almighty, said Freud, was the neurotic outcome of the ego's struggle against the fate which awaits. We have to assure ourselves of eternity because the alternative, non-being, is so unbearable. Thankfully, Jung took a different view and so have many others since, that the ego is but the personal aspect of a larger Self concerned with wholeness and that it would be as unnatural for the old man to shun death as for the young man to turn his back on life. Consequently, the study of psychology has taken many keen minds to the threshold of spiritual enquiry, including intensive study of the near death experience. Now the language of the 'new physics' has added to the spiritual debate. Respectable gatherings of people like us in the Network can speak without a qualm of God and science in the same breath!

The direction of this new science takes us away from the kick start of birth and death as events 'out there' to be studied and contemplated. As we exchange the role of the observer for the self-aware experimental subject, we seem to be moving eastwards, towards meditation as the natural field of study. In the East, time has a cyclical meaning. For Hindus and Buddhists, not only is birth followed by death but death by birth. This idea, and the law of karma which it describes, is a powerful incentive to spiritual practice, as is getting to heaven for the



Christian. But there is another, more immediate meaning to birth and rebirth for the Buddhist. This is that each day, hour, minute and second offers the precious opportunity of making a new start, a rebirth of consciousness. Hanging on to our thoughts drags us back into the history of events and into linear time. Letting go of them releases us. We are free to be born again instantly.

Looked at this way, birth and death chase each other so fast that the one enfolds the other. Described in quantum terms, to be reborn into the

consciousness of our space-time would mean the collapse of the wave function, as with the materialisation of the electron. Rather, we stay in the wave, a virtual state of possibility and readiness which is boundless. When we are in this virtual state, we are not weighed down by the burden of thought. *Instead, we experience a connectedness with all that is.* Like Einstein's ray of light, we are everywhere at once. We enter a continuity of being which knows no time. *Birth and death have become meaningless words.* In this dancing of stillness, out of time and space, there is a wonderful discovery. The heart overflows with joy, which is boundless. It is the language of the soul and the birthright of us all.

How different this is from our well-intentioned ambition to seek spiritual elevation by battling with the ego on its own terms! Then our heads are full to the brim with concepts about changing our ways and becoming a better person. As often as not, we are not very nice to live with either, because these strivings usually make us irritable and dissatisfied. The art, as always, is in finding the balance, *yin* and *yang*. We are embodied souls blessed with intellect and the intellectual quest is an honourable one. Used well, it takes us to the doorway of beyond. The passwords of Birth and Death will turn the key in the lock. But going through that door takes us beyond the limits of our physical world and straight to the essence of soul, which is love.

The soul needs nourishment. It is replenished in that moment of truth when we know ourselves to be part of all that is. When we have struggled long enough with the meaning of birth and death and confess ourselves beaten, we discover through the practice of meditation that we didn't have to struggle after all. I am not talking now just of the experience which we have while meditating. I mean the way in which we can be helped to approach life differently. To go back for a moment to my patient in the coronary care unit and that journey he was making, his need was to be released with love. From where I watched, I would see only the physical event called death. I did not understand that in death there is life, even when my patient's last words were "Let me go."

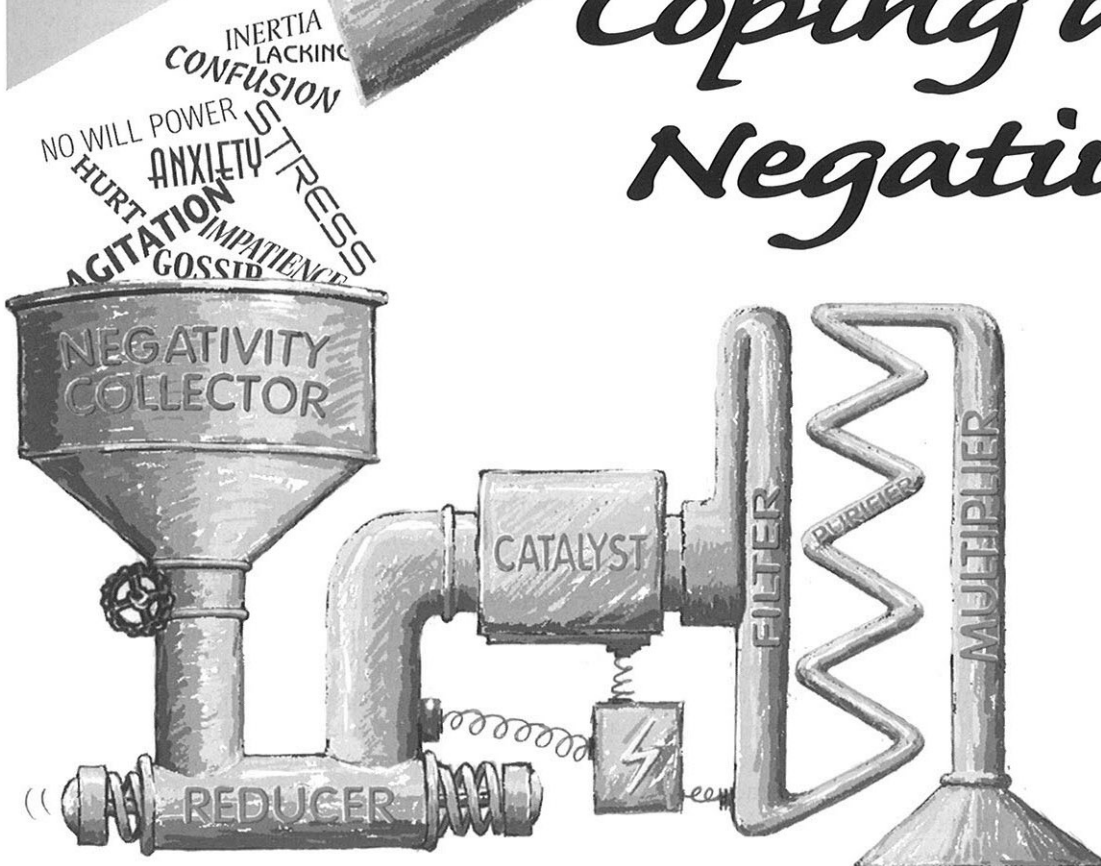
With every patient I have known since, who has ended this life well, I have seen the fear of death dissolve away. In its place comes a heightened awareness of *being*, growing purer and stronger by the day. When that time comes for me, I hope I will find myself as well prepared. I won't be troubled any longer by the meaning of concepts such as life and death and nor, I hope, will my doctor!

®

Paper presented in Durham at the Scientific and Medical Network 1997 Annual Meeting: *Putting the Heart into Science and Medicine*. Andrew Powell is a psychiatrist and consultant psychotherapist in the Health Service.

Sister Jayanti explains how to handle negativity within ourselves and when it comes from others.

Coping with Negativity



- SUCCESS
- FOCUS
- CLARITY
- WONDER
- CO-OPERATION
- TOLERANT
- PLEASANT
- JOYFUL
- PATIENT
- LOVING
- WILL POWER
- PEACEFUL
- HAPPINESS
- EFFICIENT

In this world there are so many questions about our future, the environment and population, the financial and political situation, distribution of resources.

You only have to pick up a newspaper to realise the world is in a horrendous state. It is easy to become negative. If I want to become negative I can find 1001 reasons to be so. If I allow all these factors to influence me then yes, it is as if 1000 guns were pointed at my head, so I feel extremely negative. Another factor is the people I am surrounded by; it is very easy to become influenced by their negativity. I may be influenced by people that I work with and sometimes it is their negativity attacking me, then it becomes difficult to

“If I can make sure that I remain my own master, their negativity will flow over me and above me and not influence me.”

maintain my balance, lightness and happiness because of their negative reactions and responses to everything, or it could be my negative response towards them. I might not like the way they talk to me or look at me, so there is a gradual build-up of feelings of being pressured from all directions. So how do I escape?

Even if I were to escape there will be another deep realisation - that the problem is not actually the world outside or the people I am with. If I spend a few moments in honest reflection I realise that whatever is going on inside of me is the root of my negativity. This probably won't bring joy or lightness and may even cause feelings of depression or heaviness because it means I have realised that the negativity is coming from inside. How do I cope with it? First of all, I can try to understand it, and by understanding and realising it I have gone a long way towards being able to put it right.

I understand that the period of history that civilisation is passing through now is a particularly dark one. But it cannot last forever. The condition of the world is horrific but it will change. After the darkness the light will come; night has to turn into day. This will happen in the passage of time; I cannot force the day to come, I cannot force the pace of it so I learn to be a detached observer. I can be part of the movements that will bring the day and not allow things to affect my own inner state of consciousness. This requires a bit of experimentation. I can draw on analogy here: an actor plays a role on stage and is totally involved in all that is going on. Someone in the audience is aware of everything on the stage also but has a different state of consciousness. I have to learn to be both in this game of life, I have to be an actor and an observer. I have to be able to step aside and look at things from a distance. This will bring faith and confidence in the fact that the darkness of night will pass and the light of day will come.

What about the negativity of other people? I know that if I am affected by the negativity of other people then I am going to be plunged into the cycle of actions, reactions and responses over which I have no control. But if I see them, hear them, respect them as human beings and individuals and I understand their point of view, I will not let myself be moved from my position of inner stability. If I can make sure that I remain my own master, their negativity will flow over me and above me and not influence me. I can ask myself what it is that I want and then move in the direction to reach that goal. I can develop the art of detachment, being friends and yet not allowing them to touch me. I can draw on another analogy here: think of the image of a

lotus flower. It is found in dirty, stagnant water yet the lotus has a waxy substance on its petals and nothing can touch the surface, the dirt just rolls off. I can create that layer of protection so my inner purity and stability remain unaffected by outside influences. Only in this way can I be true to myself. Otherwise I become a puppet of circumstances and situations that others have created and am no longer a master of my own feelings and destiny. I learn to have this protection through the experience of detachment and the awareness of God and this will bring a canopy of blessings influencing myself and others around me.

Is there a human being creating a shadow over you? Sometimes I find myself in a situation whereby I am reacting against someone and then it becomes more and more difficult and irritating to manage that individual. I am creating a huge burden for myself which will make it more difficult to live with myself, as well as the individual. If I want to create an environment of peace and love around me, my response of negativity towards anyone becomes extremely uncomfortable for me.

I must try not to allow this build-up of negativity to happen. If it's happened already, let me analyse the whole process and I will see that it is a subtle form of ego because I think that the way I think, the things I do and my understanding is all correct and the other person is wrong. So I am constantly criticising - this will mean a build-up of this negativity. Appreciate that it has come from my own ego and learn humility and respect, recognise the value of the individual and acknowledge the goodness in them.

Everyone has enormous value, I just have to have the right vision to be able to see it. When I start appreciating their value, I will realise the negativity is my own. Yes, they do things in a different way from me but there has to be variety so let me appreciate that. I cannot change them or control them; what I can do is change my attitude and my responses. If I continue to have the vision of love and respect for them I know that through this there is a very good possibility that I can influence them and help them in their change process. If I react against them I will not be able to influence them in the future because my reactions will have set up a barrier between us, thereby making communication very difficult. If I change my attitude in a genuine way - not from diplomacy or artificial courtesy but by seeing their eternal, original divine state - then with genuine respect a good level of communication will arise, and perhaps, at the right time, we can talk about things

**“Coming into the awareness of
my own immortality, of ‘I’ the soul,
I am able to change my vision completely.”**

and a change can take place. But I must not allow this build-up of negativity to destroy communication with them; otherwise walls will have been built up which will be difficult to sort out later on.

Perhaps the most difficult thing for me to come to terms with is the negativity I feel about myself. I see my weaknesses, I see the difficulties I have created, I see the emotional debts I have accumulated and I wonder how it is ever going to be possible to deal with all of this. If I lose hope things will get difficult. Therefore, I do not allow the cycle of negativity to come into being, I do not lose love for myself or negative thoughts will pull me further and further down. As soon as I see that there is the possibility of this negative cycle beginning, I make sure I cut it at that point because cycles are powerful; one weak thought and another and another and I am trapped. If I cannot stop it before it begins, it ties me into a knot. Firstly I must see the cause and what needs to be done, and look at the future so I can prevent things from happening; then I take precautions so that it will not happen again. When I recognise myself as an eternal soul, I alter my vision of myself completely. I come back to the realisation of my own original form and feel the divine being that I truly am, and hope returns.

Coming into the awareness of this experience of my own immortality, of ‘I’ the soul, I am able to change my vision completely. I know that in this awareness of being a child of God, I have within myself the capacity for purity, peace and love. If I allow these qualities to emerge and spend a few minutes in silence each day, just letting my mind become detached from all the other things that it’s usually caught up in, then I can value who I truly am. As this stage grows, the influence of this lasts longer each day. As I develop this awareness of self respect and self esteem and I move outside the cycle of negativity that has pulled me down, I make sure my vision, words and actions show this esteem. It is expressed in value and respect for others and from them I get the same response back.

Whilst I lacked esteem I sought support and confirmation from the outside world and usually if I am seeking something it is denied. Only in this state, where I am generating my own self respect within, can I earn respect from others. This is the way I can change my own negative image about

myself. When I learn to remove negativity I am drawn by the beauty that positivity can bring and, because I develop a liking for this, I learn to accept positivity and reject negativity. I therefore have a greater impact on the atmosphere around me and the people I am with.

Even one individual who comes into this awareness of making things positive, of learning to deal with things in a positive way, makes a great difference. The heaviness of the world has come about because of the accumulation of all our negative thoughts and actions and the only way we can transform and replace it is through the power of positivity. This enables us to bring about change, firstly in our environment, workplace, family and home which will inevitably reach out and change society. In the state of hopelessness and lack of courage, the forces of darkness grow heavier and stronger.



If I become aware that I am a child of God, a being of light, an instrument of light and I let the light of awareness, wisdom and truth change me, then I can be an instrument to bring light into the world around me. In the state of negativity there is a great deal of fear and ignorance. If I can understand this then the fear is reduced and gradually eliminated and there is greater understanding of the reasons for a negative state of the world and of my karmic connections with other individuals. By understanding all these things light has entered the picture, darkness is removed and I know what to do and how to do it. I have to bring light into the world and in this way darkness will not be able to influence me and I will be able to help remove the darkness of others.

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Sister Jayanti is the Director of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University in the United Kingdom

Unlocking our Greatest Assets

What I am going to say is based on the premise that mind comes before matter, that mind is primary. Everyone has dipped into the great debate about the status of mind and, according to your preference, there is plenty of evidence to support whichever point of view you hold. So all I can hope to do is share my thoughts with you.

David Hemery highlights the expanding gap between classroom and workplace, and the exciting opportunities it represents for education.

Unlike mind, the body is formed out of the matter of the physical universe. From atoms as old as the stars, it coheres for a time in space and then disperses. Birth is a miracle and so is death. As magicians well know, the best tricks are those when the mystery of an appearance is only rivalled by seeing it vanish before your eyes. The difference is that, situated in our culture, birth is a greeting and death a parting. In Ghana, the Ashanti say that every time an earth mother smiles at the birth of her child, a spirit mother mourns her loss.

In the West, three hundred years of mechanistic science has put such nonsense out of our heads! I refer to the Newtonian vision of reality, in which time is absolute and space is structured according to Newton's Laws of Motion: a cosmos of stars and planets suspended in empty space, all held in place by the checks and balances of momentum and gravitation. This is the world in which mankind learned how to dissect the whole into its parts and which gave us the atom with its electron spinning in orbit just like our own solar system. At the same time, reality was defined in terms of matter, a world in which God had to be dispatched to the far distant reaches of the cosmos, winding up the spring on which the clock of the universe turned. Curiously, although mankind had taken such a giant step forwards in mapping out the cosmos, the Cartesian divide between mind and body reduced him to a mere speck. And so, from the scientific perspective, birth had to represent a person arriving out of nowhere, and death could only mean leaving to go nowhere.

For nearly two hundred years the world of work has been dominated by the production line and task focused activity. With the revolution in communications and the reshaping of commercial organisations during the last two decades, a new culture of work has emerged. In this continually changing context there is now a premium on greater flexibility and creativity as the transition continues from individual task based activity to more co-operative team processes.

At the deepest level this calls for a set of values, something like, 'No offence, we'll get you right!' A couple of hours later the patient had another cardiac arrest and before long the gap between education and work had become a chasm. I had got so excited

fighting this thing called Death that I did not grasp that my patient was on a journey. I was a young man and of course this could only happen because I could not face that one day my own life would end.

In our Western culture, we deal with the problem of our own death either by heroically rescuing others from its grasp or by projecting it endlessly and murderously in films, television and the media. In doing so, we have overlooked the simple truth that without death there can be no life, and that we all must make way in turn for others to follow. Our society has become a rat race, lived with frantic intensity and yet for many a kind of living death. We have all manner of thrills and spills, consumerism gone wild, at best an enquiry into meaninglessness, at worst a roller coaster of bodily desires and gratifications.

There is much more to life than this, of course. Humanism is a fine thing and we are indebted to it for many of the values by which decent people live, but for many of us there is a deep and persistent longing to penetrate the veil which is drawn around the limits of physical reality. From where does this longing arise? Why these 'other world' fantasies? The rational approach tells us to be satisfied with living out our lives on the stage of this theatre in the round called earth, yet there have always been mystics and visionaries whose powerful and personal revelations of the Ultimate set them apart from their fellow men; brave souls unloved by scientists and churchmen alike, compelled to seek a reality deeper and wider than the drama of human exchange. The orthodoxy of the Church has resisted change and so has a large chunk of the scientific community. But for those that have eyes to see, the

phenomena of a few examples of what I mean. In 1905 Einstein published the first of his papers on the Special Theory of Relativity, showing that energy and mass were interchangeable. The speed of light is always recorded as being the same. This enabled Einstein to consider what it would be like to travel at the speed of light. He found that time would stand still and length would contract. At the speed of light, time would stand still and length would contract. At the speed of light, time would stand still and length would contract. At the speed of light, time would stand still and length would contract.

been a recent explosion in training and personal development, as many of today's 'World Class' companies realise they have to invest more in people development. Some of these companies are venturing into relatively new territory by assisting in communities and schools directly, with financial support and development resources. They are all too aware that if the changes in business could be matched in education, we could unlock the vast untapped potential in our children and better prepare them for the transition to the working environment.

When definitions of success within education are compared with the parameters for success in organisations, the gap between these two worlds becomes apparent, and we are faced with a stark but exciting reality:

This table is a gross generalisation and there are enlightened Heads who are making inspiring progress within their schools. However who would deny that most schools are not adequately or appropriately preparing youngsters for work or life? Business and industry are looking for flexible, team oriented, well balanced, articulate, confident, youngsters, eager to learn. How many schools have these attitudes, skills and behaviours articulated or prioritised?

Around the country there are pockets of great practice and individual teachers inspiring and drawing out potential. What seems to be needed is a fresh look at what schools are trying to achieve. We certainly don't want to throw out

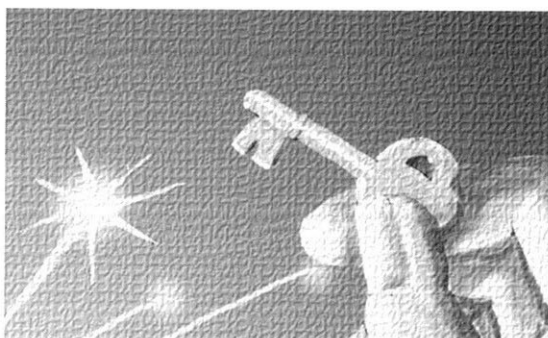
the baby with the bath water. It is not being advocated that academic subjects are canned, nor that literacy and numeracy should not be a top priority. However the number of uninterested youngsters is rising and will continue to do so as long as we continue down the academic route outlined above. It is becoming increasingly obvious that both *what* they are learning and *how* they are learning is creating a 'relevance gap' as more young people move into work without the co-operative team skills, relationship skills and creative ability to adapt to the fast pace of organisational life.

Equally, it is not being advocated that business and industry drive the whole education agenda. That has its own obvious dangers, including the swamping of education with commercial values. What is apparent however, is that business and industry have responded faster to the changes in the world and the changes within individuals. Humans are physical, mental, spiritual and emotional beings, with specific individual developmental needs at each level, which in turn require integration within personal development plans.

THE UNLOCKING POTENTIAL PROJECT

A pilot project has begun to address some of these issues at Hreod Parkway School in Swindon in middle England. Thirty six, year ten pupils, (twelve high achievers, twelve average achievers, and twelve low achievers, in equal numbers of boys and girls) have been selected, confirmed by parental and personal choice, to take part in ten 'enrichment days' (E-days). Following an initial benchmarking day earlier this year, a planned series of enrichment courses were designed, the impact of which will be measured later in the year.

COMMERCIAL STYLES/SUCCESS	ACADEMIC STYLES/ SUCCESS
<i>Working with others</i>	<i>Largely in isolation</i>
<i>Mainly verbal skills</i>	<i>Mostly written work</i>
<i>Problem solving and decision making</i>	<i>Highly analytical ability</i>
<i>Varying levels across different disciplines</i>	<i>Concentration on single subject(s)</i>
<i>Constant distractions</i>	<i>Generally uninterrupted work</i>
<i>Coaching and involving</i>	<i>Fact stuffing and controlling</i>
<i>Exploring creative possibilities</i>	<i>Convergent, one right answer focus.</i>
<i>Recognise and reward many</i>	<i>Reward and recognise only the very best</i>
<i>Flexible 'performance needs' based training</i>	<i>Rigid, inflexible, systems based content</i>
Other dimensions of work and academic life reveal further realities:	
<i>Managers feel supported</i>	<i>Teachers feel unsupported</i>
<i>Staff are supported and encouraged leading to enhanced learning, performance and enjoyment</i>	<i>Students and staff criticised leading to less enthusiasm, confidence and self esteem</i>
<i>Focus on whole person development</i>	<i>Focus on academic achievement</i>
<i>Life style and balance considered</i>	<i>Stress largely unaddressed</i>
<i>Largely experiential learning</i>	<i>Information based - classroom sitting</i>
<i>Visions are explored and goals are clear</i>	<i>What visions? Academic content driven by University exam focus.</i>



“Unlocking the potential within any human being means bringing talent, ability and quality of character from inside out.”

Elements which were measured include self assessment on -

liking for personal challenges; self-esteem/confidence; self expectations; self motivation; self discipline; openness & honesty; independence, regardless of what others think, say or do; supportiveness of others; curiosity; creativity & humour.

Independent assessment included:

verbal communication; teamwork; leadership; task focus; confidence; enthusiasm; humour; creativity; independence; involvement; liveliness; disruptiveness.

Additional testing looked at:

perception of the locus of control; commitment to school; perceived decision making in the school; future work priorities.

E-days are focused by an experienced facilitator/coach from outside the school system. Some are established experts in areas of self development, while others have long experience in a commercial/organisational environment.

Enrichment topics include:

- Mind mapping, study skills and memory enhancement.
- Verbal presentation skills
- Coaching/facilitation skills
- Intuition, creativity and visualisation
- Outdoor/Adventure Education days
- Values education

- Accelerated learning and humour
- Environment and sustainability
- Emotional education days
- IT skills for employability

Following the success of the initial E-days it is being proposed that during the next academic year, interested teachers from three Swindon schools undergo training to be able to help students better to unlock more of their untapped potential, through using more of the strategies, styles and focuses which have been introduced on these enrichment courses, i.e. a more holistic, personal development focus.

It was always the intention that this pilot programme would provide a basis to measure the effect of such experiences. A comparison is being made with other pupils in the same year group who are not involved in this pilot. Developing better coaching or facilitation skills (e.g. active listening and effective questioning, which are aimed to increase awareness and responsibility, in the pupil or performer) is seen as a fundamental underpinning process to assist in unlocking potential. All of the Hreed staff chose to take part in one coaching training day, prior to the start of this pilot for the students.

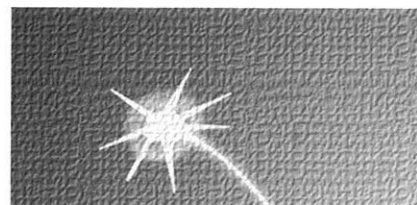
With the government pressing for education as a priority, this initiative provides a model and mould out of which will emerge a valuable approach to helping children grow more smoothly out

of the classroom and into the workplace, without the feeling of having to learn a whole new set of skills from scratch. With so many more young people becoming uninterested in what is being forced onto them, the hope is that this Swindon initiative may spark similar ‘unlocking potential projects’ in other schools. With some financial help from government and industry a follow on pilot could be run during the next academic year. The core belief is that, with some assistance, there is no reason why the teachers cannot be equally effective catalysts for positive development by more fully engaging the hearts and minds of our youth.

Unlocking the potential within any human being means bringing talent, ability and quality of character from inside out. This is not so much the function of a traditional teacher, more the art of a facilitator or a coach. Business has now recognised the value of the principles and practices of coaching, encouraging and empowering. Let’s give our schools and their much undervalued teachers the help they need to do the same.

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David Hemery is a founding Director of Performance Consultants and the Co-ordinator of the Unlocking Potential Project.



MODERNITY RULES, OR?

Communism or capitalism,
Labour or Conservative,
democracy or dictatorship,
republic or monarchy,
rule by any name,
Charlene Spretnak
says we are
ruled by
modernity.



the Gaia hypothesis in geobiochemistry. Turning to the political implications of this recovery of our 'lost integrity', he concluded that "the basis of the new world order must be universal respect for human rights, but it will mean nothing as long as this imperative does not derive from respect for the miracle of Being, the miracle of the universe, the miracle of nature, the miracle of our own existence."

Havel is conversant with various analyses of modern and postmodern conditions. The same cannot be said of most citizens in the post-communist democracies. Their attention is claimed, for the most part, by problems of great immediacy related to the economic free-fall that followed the revolutions.

I learned a good deal about their situation when I was invited to give a series of talks there in the summer of 1993. I spoke over a period of five days to a gathering of young professionals held near the Mala Fatra Mountains of north-west Slovakia, was then driven to the south-west corner of the Czech Republic to address a protest camp at the construction site of a nuclear power plant (opposed by sixty of the sixty-two local mayors but pushed through by the new federal government in Prague), and was subsequently driven back across the southern Czech Republic into Slovakia to address a group of philosophy professors in Bratislava. For all three audiences, I ended up putting aside my prepared lecture notes until I had addressed a subject that came up repeatedly during my stay, a perplexing paradox that seemed to weigh heavily on everyone I met.

My first inkling of the matter occurred during the thirty-minute drive from the Vienna airport to Bratislava. I was met by two members of the Green Party of Slovakia (later called the Green League) – a female biophysicist and a male engineer. After we had crossed the border into their country, they were pleased to point out among the rolling hills,

But the goal of passing through progressive stages of modernity has come into question. It has even been rejected outright as an orientation for the future by one of the most widely respected leaders of the post-communist nations. In February 1993, Vaclav Havel, President of the Czech Republic, delivered an address to the World Economic Forum entitled *The End of the Modern Era*. He asserted that the end of communism brought an end to the modern age with its positivist, scientific, rationalist view of life. On July 4th, 1994, Havel went further in a speech at Independence Hall in Philadelphia. He suggested that the industrialised societies have entered a transitional, post modern period because the modern, scientific relationship to the world has "failed to connect with the most intrinsic nature of reality and with natural human experience."

Havel went on to observe that post modern science is transcending the limits of modern science and is anchoring the human once again in the cosmos, through such discoveries as the anthropic principle in physics and

When Eastern Europe dissolved into post communist democracies, they were said to be in need of modernisation. It was an ironic ending for the political tradition that had prided itself on carrying forth the modern project more rationally than anyone else. 'Scientific socialism' rapidly industrialised previously agrarian countries, installed productive systems of social engineering and bureaucratic management, and all but eliminated the 'Medieval superstitions' called 'religion'.

several picturesque villages, Baroque towns, and ruins of medieval castles on high bluffs above vigorous rivers.

When we passed by the first cluster of high-rise apartment buildings jutting starkly from a distant ridge, the engineer pointed towards it and declared contemptuously over the engine noise, "That's socialism!" I, sitting back in the seat, thought to myself, "No, that's modernity! Do you think we don't have those sterile towering boxes in Western Europe, the US and Japan?"

In the days that followed, as I became acquainted with more and more people living through the post-communist experience, I saw that they regarded state socialism as a historical aberration best forgotten. Moreover, they were largely baffled that so much of the texture of daily life has remained the same since they made that 180-degree shift from communism to capitalism, which had always been portrayed by both sides as polar opposites. An entirely different world was supposed to have manifested, a new society sparked by unleashed human potential.

The implicit promise of the capitalist West had been that of a radically different existence; the proposed euphoric scenario portrayed liberation from a paralysing malaise, followed by the unfettered dynamism of a modernised economy and unbounded prosperity for all. Factories, banks and retailing would have to be modernised in the former Eastern bloc, of course, but then it would be full speed ahead. Already, by the time of my visit, Viennese advertising agencies had plastered Bratislava with commercial posters, one of them so 'advanced' as to skip the car altogether and feature only an attractive young woman and huge lettering: TOYOTA.

As we now know, the various post-communist countries were fated to suffer through severe economic crises. That aspect of the new area, however, was not the main cause of the unarticulated puzzlement I encountered in Slovakia and the Czech Republic that summer. Although many people were facing grave

financial uncertainty and possible devastation, many others were in an occupation that apparently would weather the transition. Considering the profound differences between living in a communist police-state or a democracy, why, they wondered, did so much feel similar to what they had known under the old regime?

The answer lay in an understanding of the larger context: modernity. Marxist-Leninism was one of several economic systems that share the assumptions of the modern world-view. If one were to plot these systems on a spectrum of left-to-right political economies within modernity. 'Marxist-Leninist socialism' and its variations would occupy the far left, to the right of which would be 'democratic socialism' followed by 'regulated capitalist democracies', followed by 'laissez-faire' (corporate-controlled) right-wing capitalist democracies, followed by 'fascist corporatism in quasi-military dictatorship'.

Modern ideology asserts that each of these orientations shapes life in a mould that is entirely different from the others. That perception, however, reflects a central bias of modernity: economism, the tendency in modern societies to regard economics as the fundamental determinant of everything else. Such a perspective obscures the common ground shared by all of those political economies. They each subscribe to the following rules of modernity:

The human is considered essentially an economic being, homo economicus. Consequently, the arrangement of economic matters is believed to be the wellspring of contentment or discontent in all other areas of life. Economic expansion, through industrialism and computerisation, is the Holy Grail of materialism, the unquestioned source from which follow abundance, well-being, and the evolution of society. That evolution is understood to be decidedly directional: the human condition progresses towards increasingly optimal states as the past is continuously improved upon.

Modern socialisation structures our understanding of the world via

objectivism, rationalism, the mechanistic world-view, reductionism and scientism. The design and organisation of work in modern societies are based on standardisation, bureaucratisation and centralisation. Modern interactions with nature are anthropocentric and are guided by instrumental reasoning. Above all, modern culture defines itself as a triumphant force progressing in opposition to nature. As such, it harbours contempt for non-modern cultures, which are seen to be 'held back' by unproductive perceptions such as the 'sacred whole' and reciprocal duties towards the rest of the Earth community.

Modern life is compartmentalised into discrete spheres: family life, work life, social life, political life, love life and spiritual life, the last of which is devalued for being the furthest from rationalism. In modern societies, higher education is also tightly compartmentalised into insular disciplines. There, as in law and government, intensely agonistic modes of discussion shape all possibilities. The preference for competition and a dominance-or-submission dichotomy as the structure of relationships in all spheres of modern life reflects the extent of patriarchal socialisations. Modern societies are sometimes called 'hypermasculine' because 'masculine' traits, such as the persona of rationalism, are valued much more highly than 'feminine' traits, such as empathy.

The faces of my audiences in Slovakia and the Czech Republic lit up with recognition as I spontaneously rattled off the above characteristics of modernity. Seeing them nod and smile, I said, "This is what you were taught in school, right? It's what I was taught in school, too! Even though we were assured in the strongest possible terms that our two systems were almost unimaginably alien to one another!"

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This is extracted from *The Resurgence of the Real* by Charlene Spretnak who teaches at the Californian Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco. Available from the Schumacher Book Service at £15.99 + £2.40 p&cp Tel 01803 868547. First published in *Resurgence Magazine*.

GET THEE TO A MONASTERY, YUPPIE!

Valerie Simonson goes in search of enlightenment



A monastery was the only answer. “A Buddhist meditation course would do me a world of good,” I thought. “Expand my consciousness, challenge my spiritual beliefs, introduce me to Buddhism. The travel books call it the backbone of Thailand’s culture and way of life. What better way for me to get a first hand experience of this country?”

“Then it dawned on me. The misbehaving little child was actually my intuition talking to me and it was the very first time it had ever talked to me in my entire life!”

I decided on a forest monastery called Wat Suan Mokh, near the southern coastal city of Surathani. Arriving two days later, I booked into the women’s monastery and enrolled myself in a ten-day course of silence.

The first morning I awoke to a filling breakfast of brown rice and curried vegetables and, after our meal, we were directed to a large meditation hall for our orientation session. A sweet Thai monk gave a short lesson on meditation, and then asked us to experiment with some of the ideas. As I sat contemplating Nirvana, I found myself considering such meaningful questions as, “Do you suppose mosquitoes get their consciousness raised by the transference of energy as they suck our blood?”

Slap, slap.

Or, “If the Buddhist philosophy teaches there is no self or no soul, then who gets liberated?”

“Ten days of silence”, I thought, smirking to myself. “It’s going to be like being locked in a torture chamber. All I’m allowed to do is sit here and listen to my own mind as it dances and prances and darts all over the place. Sheesh! What a mind! It’s all over the map! Still, I know it’s going to be tough, but it’s what I volunteered for, and I’m going to see it through no matter what.”

“It’s only ten days”, I told myself. “How hard can it be?” The answer arrived instantly, as I adjusted the cushion under my bottom. “Hard”, my little voice said. I reached around and rubbed my sore back.

I mumbled on and on about my hardships, but somehow got through the first day. The day consisted of lectures and spending hour after hour alone with my own mind, surrounded by 99 other silent volunteers alone with THEIR own minds. It made for a pretty strange and eerie scene.

As I looked around at my fellow classmates, I was amazed at how many of us had left our comfortable homes

and affluent countries to make our way to a monastery in the south of Thailand, where we sat hidden away in a forest, sleeping on cement slabs, enduring the oppressive heat of the tropics, while battling fighter squadrons of mosquitoes, anxiously searching the night for scorpions and other little do-no-gooders. All of this, so we could earn the privilege of sitting and walking in silence while learning how to calm our minds by focusing on the subtleties and circular movement of our breath. The monks called it ‘Vipassana training’ or ‘Mindfulness Through Breathing.’

“Incredible,” I thought. How amazing. I could think of only one explanation for such ludicrous and insane behaviour. It was something called Enlightenment. For me, the word translated into, Trying To Get A Handle On The Meaning of Life.

“After all,” I reasoned, sitting lost in thought, “Life can’t just be about choosing good mixed doubles tennis partners or buying sports cars, or selecting the next holiday destination or even doing the coffee thing with my closest friends. I already know that I am a business woman and an athlete, but certainly there is more to life than building a bank account and burning up the volleyball courts – but what could that be?”

I didn’t have much time to consider an answer. I ended up spending the better part of my day trying diligently to locate my breath and calling out, “Yoo hoo. Here girl. Come on now, I know you’re in there somewhere; otherwise I’d be dead!”

While I searched for my breath, a catchy tune sprang to my mind, and I started singing (silently of course) “Getting to know you.....getting to know ALL about you.....”

Thoroughly amused by the meaningless meanderings of my mind, I began thinking about all of the amazing, titillating little tidbits one could entertain oneself with.

Right then, my mind started doing a little two step, tipped its top

hat and executed a perfect That’s Showbiz bow and suddenly switched channels. My cat Athena appeared in my mind.

“What now?” I thought, feeling myself beginning to lose patience with my erratic mind. But then I smiled again once I saw what she was up to.

She was writing me guilt-induction letters, expertly outlining her case for why I was a bad mother. She said I had done the unspeakable and quite possibly the unforgivable; I had deserted her to go on this world journey.

I giggled at the ludicrousness of my thoughts, then marvelled at how a funny little cartoon character face had suddenly taken her place. It looked kind of like a combination of a Bugs Bunny, Tweety Bird and Athena the Cat. Together, they formed a most perfect All-Innocence look, peering back at me from inside their sweet little pookie face; a face so cute and so precious, I swear it had the power to melt even the heart of the most treacherous, psychotic criminals, or worse, that of the most irresponsible travelling mothers. I’m sure in her mind, they constituted the same thing. I watched the little pookie-faced character go darting off into the distance of the dark recesses of my mind, but it stopped long enough to cast me a furtive, over-the-shoulder Come and Get Me look. I called out, “Stop!” As I did, I looked inside and suddenly realised I had been drawn into playing the role of the mother of this little cartoon character. And as a mother would call after a mischievous, misbehaving little child, I found myself yelling, “HEY! JUST WHERE do you think you’re going, MISS? Now you get back here RIGHT NOW. I mean it!”

After I caught on to her tactics, I began to wonder what this scene was really all about. Then it dawned on me. The misbehaving little child was actually my intuition talking to me and it was the very first time it had ever talked to me in my entire life!



“Oh God,” I thought, laughing. “I’m having my very first vision and it’s a cartoon! Why, this is hilarious! I would never have guessed my intuition was so playful! Yet here it is, acting out the role of my run-away breath, doing all kinds of disappearing acts, trying to entice me into searching for it in the playground of my own mind. Why it’s actually asking me to follow it, just like when kids play Hide and Seek. This is incredible!”

I felt staggered by my realisation. I suddenly started giggling and reflected on how my ego - my self-imposed arrogance - had actually gotten in my way all of these years. I guess I thought I knew everything. It seems all these years, my ego had made me believe that meditation and the ability to tap into my intuition would take a great deal of effort - and that I needed a super serious attitude in order to find it.

“Well,” I thought, grinning widely to myself. “My intuition sure put my ego in its place - now didn’t it?”

This is ironic, I thought, because didn’t Oscar Wilde once say: “Life is much too important a matter to ever be talked about seriously?” Well, I think it’s time to rework that one and say, “Playfulness ceases to serve its purpose when it takes itself too seriously. So stay light!”

I turned to my new-found intuition and laughed and exclaimed, “Okay little fella! Who’s turn is it to

be IT?”
Two nights later, it was hot and muggy and the teacher was offering his insights on the New Age movement in the West.

I sat up and adjusted my damp seat cushion. My legs were sweating so badly, the cushion was soaked almost clean through.

“The West’s idea of enlightenment,” he said, “is something we here in the East call Spiritual Materialism. From what we can see, people in the West equate spiritualism with New Age concepts like physical demonstrations of psychic power, or channelling spiritual insight from the other side, or healing people by placing crystals on different parts of their bodies.”

“In essence,” he continued, smiling brightly, “the West focuses on spiritualism only as it relates to the material realm rather than something purely spiritual; something non-material in nature. More often than not it implies that by having the gift of psychic abilities, one can conjure up dreams of winning the lottery or choosing horses at the horse races. In other cases, mediums or psychics make claims about having highly-evolved spiritual entities selecting their bodies as instruments - saying no one else’s will do.”

I nodded in agreement. I had seen a lot of that sort of thing when I was doing my New Age research - before I launched my spirit quest.

“Well,” he said, wiping away some beads of perspiration which had gathered on his brow, “don’t you think it all seems to boil down to an

issue of ownership and ego - and isn’t that what is becoming more and more prevalent in spirituality today?”

He looked expectantly around for an answer, but he knew he would not get one. It still felt quite strange to be totally silent - even after spending four days in the program. A lot of the time I found myself desperately wanting to call out an answer - or to maybe just raise my hand to ask a simple question.

I silently agreed with what he was saying, and thought about how my last six years had been spent enrolling myself in a variety of New Age esoteric classes searching for what I felt was that elusive goal - enlightenment.

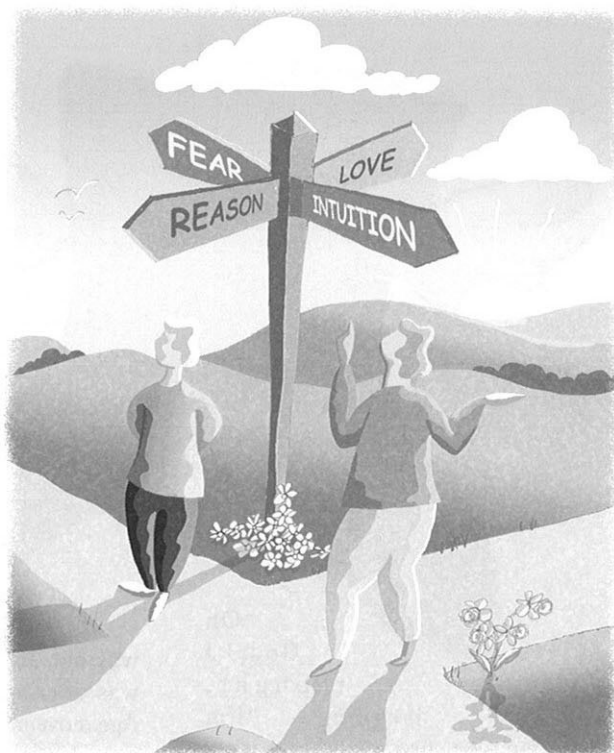
As I sat looking back at it all, I thought about how the more metaphysical books I read and the videos I watched which portrayed psychics channelling reams of fascinating and illuminating information, the more I came to believe enlightenment had something to do with a blinding flash of light - the Realisation To End All Realisations. I had somehow convinced myself that Ultimate Truth was something that would come soaring through to me in a vision, a blast of colour, the Universe, no no, the galaxy speeding towards me. Or better yet, me to it! I realised I had been exposed to too many Hollywood special effects movies in the Stephen Spielberg and George Lucas style. I had let my imagination get the best of me.

I kept discovering enlightenment was not the stage entertainment I expected it to be - nor was it a one shot deal. I began to accept that no one just became enlightened; every step and every new realisation meant enlightenment.

Valerie Simonson is a Publisher, Author, Motivational Speaker and Investment Consultant based in Calgary in Canada. If you would like to order a copy of ‘Orange Socks’, from which this article is extracted, email: kumaris@cadvision.com. Its also available from B.K. Publications, 65 Pound Lane, London NW6 2HH. Email: 101343.1621@compuserve.com Fax No: 0181-459 4793

Moved by Love

Ken Carey contrasts love and fear



All human motives have a root in either love or fear. In any given moment of time, if you examine your deepest motivation, you will find that you are either living for what you love or running from what you fear.

There may be mixed motives, of course there often seem to be, but I am thinking here of our deepest and strongest motives. They make themselves clear with observation. Such observation is worth the trouble, for deep rooted motivation is always creative and fear-rooted motivation is almost always destructive. The only case where fear-rooted motivation might be of value is when it would keep us from some dangerous and perhaps biologically damaging activity. But that sort of fear doesn't come up too often. So it is accurate to formulate a sort of general principle stating that habitual motivation by vague and poorly identified fear is always destructive; it turns our own energy against us. Yet we have been programmed to accept it. At an early age, we are taught to accept the presence of an almost constant

subliminal tension. We are taught to regard this disturbing inner turbulence as if it were customary and unavoidable. In many cultures, the acceptance of subliminal fear is even seen as a sign of maturity! That the actual day-to-day management of our lives is rooted in either love or in fear may not be immediately evident. Take two neighbours for example. Outwardly, they have similar lifestyles.

They are both regularly employed, good at what they do and earning similar incomes. However, one of them experienced dire poverty as a youth and is motivated by a fear of poverty. He is going to make certain that he does not experience it again. Meanwhile, the neighbour across the street is simply enjoying the application of her talents and skills; she is pursuing her potential. There is a difference between the two lifestyles considerably greater than that which may strike the casual visitor. The essence of success (materially and every other way) is to consciously design a life around love motivation and check fear motivation whenever it crops up. In allowing our love to translate, moment by moment, into appropriate behaviour, we stay immersed in a creative flow, and invariably, because of that, we stimulate creativity and enjoyment in those around us. This takes deliberate intention at first. It takes a certain stubborn determination

to break the many, often subtle and devious patterns of the past. In my own life, I look upon such discipline as 'simulated freedom'. Just as a piano player must discipline his or her fingers, accustoming them to long hours of practice before they are truly free to run up and down the keyboard in uninhibited musical expression, so we too, if we really want to be part of the solution on earth, need the willingness to stop from time to time, evaluate where we are coming from, examine our motivation, and do what is required to keep it centred in love.

I do not want to imply that this is particularly difficult. But it would be misrepresenting the challenges involved if I failed to mention here a certain lethargy that almost always crops up and attempts to channel our thoughts back into familiar habit patterns, patterns typically laced with subliminal fears that have been so long accepted, we hardly even notice sliding back into them. There are probably few of us who do not have within ourselves a mixture of both love and fear motivation. However, for a number of reasons, not the least of which in this present cycle, which certain Native American traditions call the Great Day of Purification, we are finding that as the days pass we are gravitating increasingly towards one mode of operation or the other. The love/fear mixture which has

historically characterised most human motivation will continue to separate during this cycle, ultimately resulting in two distinct groups of people, clearly distinguishing the motivations which drive them. To understand the transformative times in which we live, one must realise that anything organised in love will continue to benefit from the rapidly intensifying energies of love-centred consciousness.

Controversial as it may be, I am convinced that the key to understanding the next quarter century is to recognise this separation process at work on the motivation level of all human organisations. Whatever system you examine, you will find it either growing or diminishing, depending on the dominant motivation. But let us focus on the personal. The implications are staggering! People who are at peace within themselves, people who are consciously designing their lives around love, people who recognise love as the only valid source of motivation, are increasingly being drawn into business and social groups with others who feel the same way.

Those who are stubbornly insisting that we have to motivate ourselves by fear in order to survive are similarly congregating more and more frequently with others of like mind. Those who serve a god of fear, suffer from hardening of attitudes. Rigid concepts of reality become increasingly preferred over the ongoing experience of life. These rigid concepts give these people the illusion of security. Their convictions become like shields that protect them from the requirements of actual heart to heart interaction. They hold their belief systems, their concepts, their ideas of the world out before them at arm's length, like a shield. And they do not allow true relationships to occur between themselves and the others around them. The greatest drawback of this approach is that these belief shields prevent genuine and heartfelt relationships. People relating to the world through belief shields find themselves unable to meet with others in any kind of real or meaningful exchange. They become accustomed to their shields clashing. They become used to the interaction of their beliefs with other's beliefs. They grow increasingly uncomfortable with the

interaction of open hearts. The organisation of their lives becomes a strictly rational process. And although that rational process may seem to bring them a certain degree of short-term outer success – for our culture does its best to reward such servitude – there will not be, nor could there be, any genuine inner success, for their inner lives are firmly curtailed. They begin to die inside. They dry up inside from lack of genuine heartfelt emotional exchange. During times of crisis, times of great sweeping change, rational methods of organisation can no longer make decisions quickly enough to meet the challenges of the moment. These crisis situations help people to see clearly the inadequacy of fear motivation but, with many, crises just drive them deeper into confusion.

Not until the ego lets go and relinquishes its incessant need to control human decision-making, is the spirit able to take over. And what a difference! When the spirit is given access to human understanding, it delivers a quality of comprehension infinitely more accurate, efficient and insightful than the sluggish conjectures of the ego.

Spirit comprehension is synonymous with spirit perception. The moment something is perceived, it is understood. The processes of assimilating information, analysing and understanding its relevance and becoming aware of its most effective application occur simultaneously.

This is the intuitive edge that is now being so widely hailed in the business world as the key to effective management. You may be surprised to learn that many of America's most successful corporations are guided intuitively. In fact, there is a popular test for prospective managers to determine if their mode of operation is primarily rational or primarily intuitive. Twenty or thirty years ago those who tested intuitively would have been disqualified for managerial positions. Today however, just the opposite is true. It is becoming common knowledge that intuition is the only *modus operandi* rapid enough to keep up with the variables of the marketplace. However, what is required of us now is more than just the transformation of business. What is required is the transformation of our

personal lives. To bring this home to the day-to-day level, we have to understand that reason was not designed to monopolise our consciousness. Reason is a tool, and a good one, but like any tool it is designed for a specific purpose. When used in any other capacity it fails to deliver the goods. Reason was given to us to help implement, actualise and apply the decisions of the heart. But decision-making itself, in healthy function, does not occur on the level of the mind. It occurs as a spontaneous outpouring of the heart that is in love with life, and finds, flowing out of that love, a natural enthusiasm for creation and service on the material plane.

Whether through business, government, the home, the arts, literature, or the sciences, one who is centred in love finds that love interfaces with one's interests, talents and opportunities. It is translated into a form of expression that naturally brings the individual's unique gifts and talents into the world of form. In a healthy state, an individual's physical means of support is a secondary result of the application of heartfelt talents and skills.

For thousands of years now there has been a gradual intensification of the love energies in this planetary field. What many of us are sensing is that this intensification of love is occurring at an exponential rate. If we are unwilling to love, if we shut down, we do not understand, the world appears confusing. But as our hearts open up and as we allow our love to flow from one to another, we find that understanding comes. Like a bird riding the wind or a surfer riding the crest of a wave, comprehension rides upon the current of love – and the more we are able to understand love, the more we are able to understand. You can understand anyone you can love. Even among people who come from radically different backgrounds, when love is present, there is no lack of understanding.

Love is not just a blind or neutral energy. Love is intelligent! Behind it is intention and design. Love is the very energy of creation. It creates what we are and the world we see around us.

®

Ken Carey is the author of several books including 'Starseed – The Third Millennium'.

PAST IS PAST - or is it?

Elizabeth Handy's photographs chart a century of continuity and change in a small Norfolk community.



In only one hundred years, the blink of an eye in cosmic time, we have transformed our earthly lifestyles. From the horse and cart to supersonic jets, from sea mail to e-mail, from corner store to superstore, from village sport watched by hundreds to international extravaganzas watched by millions, from the office in town to the office in the lounge.

Such is the effect of the technological revolution as it sweeps all before it on the wave which is the digital age. Information is now the common currency of exchange between countries, companies and communities. It is transforming the way we work with and talk to each other.

Too often drowned by this surging tide of change, are the values which had their roots in a quality of life that was yesterday. We may bow at the feet of the great god of technological progress, but more often we now cry out for the chance to step off the train, sit still, be quiet, walk slowly, be aware, think deeply, talk



Bressingham Musical Society, 1918.

1995

THE
DRAMA
GROUP

1918

profoundly, relax and reconnect with ourselves, other human beings and the rhythms of the natural world.

In cities and large towns up and down the country, more and more people are voting with their feet (and their four wheel drives) and demonstrating their desire for a taste of a quality of life now past, as they head for village life. Technology and

travel allow those who want a foot in both worlds to take the office home and blur the boundaries between work and wellies, business and babies, the lounge and the laptop, while zipping and zapping in and out of the old race of rats. Others are 'going country' to downshift their lifestyles and put the virtues of simplicity, calm, contentment and the green balm of trees

THE POSTMAN

1995



1910



and fields at the heart of their inner and outer worlds.

In her book *Behind the View*, photographer Elizabeth Handy contrasts time past and times present in snapshots of a small English country village called Bressingham. While the size and the layout of the village has stayed the same, sophistication and machines have taken residence inside the buildings.

For sure, past is past, it can neither be changed or recreated – to attempt to do so is futile, and many a life, to a lesser or greater extent, is wasted in such vain attempts. But images of the past can conjure inner feelings of calm, a moment's rest from speediness, a different kind of intimacy, a reminder of royalty of manner, attitudes that radiate patience and gestures which are genuine in their generosity.



Nellie Noble, mother of six, in 1910

THE FAMILY

Naomi Rawlings, mother of seven, in 1995



Canon Nock's wedding in 1940

THE RECTOR

Today's version, David Hunter



Some weeks ago my mother died, so the three of us sons gathered, to tidy possessions and the loose ends of her estate. From a deep and dusty corner of an ancient wardrobe emerged the box of 'black and whites.' Photos of childhood holidays, of parents' childhood holidays, of grandparents' weddings and honeymoons. In every faded rectangular image lay a hundred symbols, reflecting a pace, the space, the values and a quality of living lost to the evolution of speed and accumulation.

When we take the yearning out of nostalgia we are left with a true taste of times past, a flavour of bygone eras, but equally a recognition and immediate experience of many of the values which defined those times. In these awakened intuitions we easily hear the call of the country, we see why downshifting is catching and why there is such disenchantment with the world of now. It is the call of those values from within which are beckoning us to be true to ourselves.

Explore the contrasts as you reflect on the pictures of Bressingham and see what they say to you. An image in a photograph is always well and truly of the past, but feelings are extremely now! When we give those feelings a voice, the scars left by the sharper edges of modern living can be healed more easily.

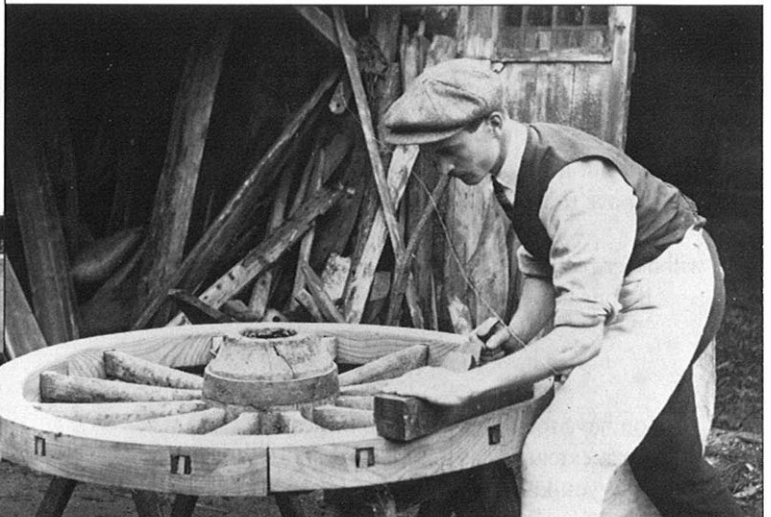
The Editor



1995

THE MECHANIC

1920



All photos from her marvellous book entitled *Behind the View* available from book sellers (ISBN 0-95275490-8) or directly from Elizabeth Handy, Old Hall Cottages, Bressingham, Diss, Norfolk IP22 2AG @ £10 including postage.

Wings of Soul



The world and the wisdom of Dadi Janki

In her new book Dadi Janki answers a variety of questions concerning spiritual development. In this extract she responds to the issue of forgiveness.

Is it really possible to forgive and forget?

Yes it is, but it needs to happen the other way around. First you have to forget. Then your forgiveness can be real.

You will never really be able to forgive an incident or situation, if your heart or head is still holding on to it.

You have to be able to let it go.

You have to really be able to forget the scene, to such an extent it's as if nothing even happened and you know nothing about it at all.

I Remembering

The way to achieve this level of 'forgetting', however, is less a matter of forgetting and more a matter of remembering...

We need to be remembering something else entirely; namely, the significance of that incident in our life, now.

This is the effort to make when a scene you wish to forget comes in front of you.

Say to it, again and again, 'OK, but what does this have to do with me, here and now?'

II Our Duty

In fact I don't even like to use this word 'forget'.

The process of trying to forget something in itself will keep reminding you of what it is you want to forget.

Why should you want to do that to yourself?

There are so many things it is our duty to remember, like our own dignity and divinity, not to mention that of others.

'Forgetting' is not the problem.

'Forgetting' is not our duty.

Remembering is.

How do I forgive my own self?

Self-forgiveness takes place on two different levels.

The first level is practical and straightforward.

The second requires a very subtle and secret kind of effort, which is worthwhile understanding, because the process is extraordinary and far more permanent.

I The Practical Effort

On the first level of effort, the first step is to realise that you have made a mistake. It is not a case—as it is in forgiving others—of simply forgetting the mistake!

To think that you can simply forget your mistakes and everything will be OK is to be careless.

Instead, there needs to be realisation about the seriousness of your mistake.

No matter how small other people may consider them to be, it is good to consider even your smallest mistakes to be big ones.

The true dignity and reality of the self does not allow for anything less.

II Signs

If you have honestly realised your mistake, but your mind continues to go over and over it, to no avail, consider this a sign that you are now in need of forgiving yourself.

Another sign is when, having realised the mistake, the soul is flooded with feelings of guilt, accompanied by an unstoppable flow of unnecessary thoughts.

Why feel guilty?

Learning how to forgive yourself is a much better use of your time.

Finally, be careful about remaining too much on your own.

This can emerge a lot of old, internal patterns and thoughts will again begin to circle uselessly over and over in your mind.

III Spiritual Awareness

With these signs alerting you to the need for self-forgiveness, the next step is to understand what to do.

On the first, practical level of self-forgiveness, it is a question of using your spiritual training to discover new ways of looking at the situation.

Injecting your spirituality into a mistake creates freshness. You get a new hold on the present, which enables you to let go of the past.

There is new enthusiasm for doing things the right way.

The thought is, 'OK, it's now over. Let me move on.'

This produces hope for the soul and renewed feelings of interest for the task of self-transformation.

IV Doing it Right

If feelings of guilt are the problem, what you need to do is engage yourself in better things.

After realising your mistake, there is no need to go on punishing yourself.

Involving yourself instead in good actions will not only erase a mistake, it will also replace it with a higher, more honest, inner programming.

It's just like recording an audio cassette.

If you've taped something poorly, and the recording isn't good, you wouldn't spend a lot of time crying about it. You would simply re-record over the mistake.

In the same way, instead of losing sleep over whatever wrong you have done, get busy instead in doing something right.

This is what allows you to put the past to rest, once and for all.

V Positive Influences

If a lot of old things are coming up and there is a flow of unwanted thoughts from the past, the next step is to put yourself under some positive influences.

Put yourself into some good company!

The company of those who exude the vibration of peace can be a very effective influence. Have at least this much mercy on your self.....

VI The Subtle Effort

On the second, more subtle level of self-forgiveness, the effort is more internal. At this level, mistakes are addressed from within.

If the mistake involves words or actions and you find that the mistake keeps repeating itself—in other words, there has been no transformation—then you can understand that you have not yet done the truly internal work of taking care of the problem at the level of its roots.

You might defend yourself, saying, ‘This is just the way I am, this is my usual tone of voice, this is how I always act, etc.’

However the truth is that this mistake has now become your habit. . . it is now part of the way you speak and behave.

You will find that even if you want to change it, you can’t.



VII Change of Attitude

What needs to happen in order to erase even the last traces of a mistake is nothing less than a total change of attitude.

Until your attitude towards that mistake changes, it will continue to come up again and again, colouring your thoughts, speech, behaviour. . . everything.

VIII Checking Yourself

What do you need to do is cultivate the habit of checking yourself on a very deep level. Go deeply into that introspective state of remembrance, where the dignity of your original divinity lies.

Check yourself against this highest, innermost truth.

This is a very subtle kind of checking, which by itself does all the work.

IX Real Change

This is a very wonderful secret; note it well! To start thinking, ‘Well, now, I have to forget and now I have to forgive’, etc. is a very complicated and time-consuming process. It is not even very effective!

However, by using the more subtle method of measuring yourself against your highest truth and letting the power of self-realisation work for you, you will find that your role in life will change.

The role of being one who makes mistakes will end.

And you will actually see, coming towards you, the role of being your perfect self.

You will start moving towards that more stable state.

It is the moment when your original, divine characteristics, such as purity, peace, love and joy again start working for you, more and more.

These personality traits of divinity, deep within, are an enormous help in the process of transformation.

Emerge them! Use them!
They automatically work to remove all those other, useless traits.

And what you thought was impossible becomes possible.

Your process of transformation becomes real and you start changing. Truly.

®

Extracted from Dadi Janki’s latest book *Wings of Soul* available from BK Publications. Tel. Orders 0181 830 0317

A PARTICIPATORY WORLD

Peter Reason presents a participative point of view of how we can see the world as a creative dance of mind and cosmos



MANY WRITERS and commentators are suggesting that the current world-view or paradigm of Western civilisation is reaching the end of its useful life. There is a fundamental shift occurring in our understanding of the universe and our place in it. New patterns of thought and belief are emerging that will transform our experience, our thinking and our action.

Since the Reformation, the beginning of the era of modern science, and the Industrial Revolution, we have made enormous strides in our material welfare and our control of our lives. Yet we can see the costs of this progress in ecological devastation, human and social fragmentation, and spiritual impoverishment. So if we fail to make a transition to new ways of thinking, our civilisation will decline and decay.

Gregory Bateson, one of the greatest thinkers of our time, argued that the most important task facing us is to learn to think in new ways. He was deeply concerned with what he called the epistemological errors of our time, the errors built into our ways of thinking. So it seems to me that the challenge of changing our world-view is central to our times.

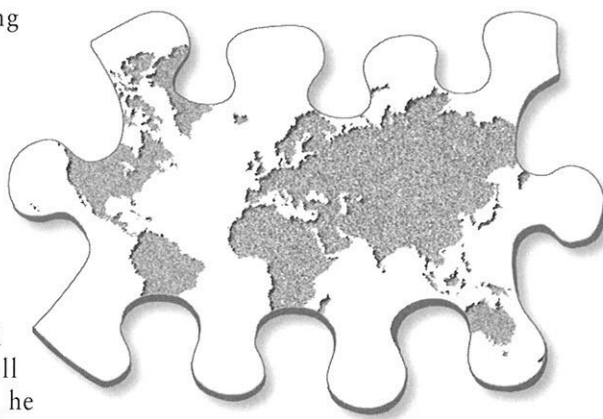
The notion of a paradigm or world-view as an overarching framework, which organises our whole approach to being in the world, has become common place since Thomas Kuhn published *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (University of Chicago Press, 1962). Kuhn showed that normal scientific research takes place within a taken-for-granted framework which organises all perception and thinking, which he called a paradigm. However, from time to time, the paradigm itself shifts in a revolutionary fashion as a new perspective is deemed to make better sense of the available knowledge. This idea of a paradigm in science can be transferred to the world-view of a whole culture, and the notion that the Western world-view may be in revolutionary transition has been part of intellectual currency for quite a while.

This emergent world-view is multifaceted: it has been particularly described as systemic, holistic, more feminine. These are all important notions. However, more recently, a new characteristic of the emerging world-view has entered our consciousness. It is the notion of a participatory world-view.

Henryk Skolimowski, in his book *The Participatory Mind* (Arkana, 1994), sketches out what he describes as the four great cycles of Western mind, each of which provided us with experience of a different world.

If we go back to ancient Greece, the experience of people was defined by a world-view we can call Mythos: people saw in the stories of their lives the visible presence of the gods, intervening from Mount Olympus. Then there was a radical transformation as classical Greek Logos emerged: the search for the coherent and harmonious order of the Universe. The fusion of Greek Logos with Roman power provided the hegemony of the Roman Empire.

However, it seems that no world-view can persist: the seeds of decay set in, leading to the Dark Ages. Out of



this came Theos, the Medieval world-view in which all thought and action was inspired by and dedicated to the glory of a transcendent divinity. Theos led to the glories of Chartres, but disintegrated with the rise of a mercantile middle class and the increasingly corrupt power of the Church.

Then Bacon, Galileo, Descartes and Newton gave us a new and powerful world-view: that is Mechanos.

Mechanos has been the world-view of modern times. It is based on the frighteningly simple yet powerful metaphor of the clockwork universe. In this perspective, there is a real world made up of real things we can identify, operating according to natural laws

which govern their behaviour - laws which we can deduce by analysing the operation of the component parts. Mind and reality are separate. The rational human, drawing on analytical thought and experimental methods, can come to know the objective world. So the objective world spawns the objective mind. It becomes detached, analytical and thus in the end uncaring and cold. Human progress is dependent on the processes of science, the purpose of which is the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake.

In the late twentieth century Mechanos is no longer a guide to wise action. The ecological, political, social and personal crises we confront at this time need no rehearsing here. Fundamental to all these crises is the way we think and how the way we think separated us from our experience, from each other, and from the rhythms and patterns of the natural world. For example, since James Lovelock put forward the Gaia hypothesis in *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth* (Oxford University Press, 1979), it has not been possible to see the world as an assembly of separate parts; we have been pushed to see the planet as a living whole, a complex system of interrelated entities - of which we are a part.

Despite all the challenges, some form of mechanical world-view remains the 'official' view of knowledge, to which we resort publicly when challenged by BSE, AIDS or other crises. It may not be how our understanding is created, but it remains a central myth of our time. And the fact is that this notion of knowledge is not what we draw on in everyday life, from putting on our trousers to driving a car: there we draw on knowing that is much more intuitive and embodied - and increasingly it is clear that this is true even of professionals such as doctors, who are supposed to practise a scientific profession. This puts us in a strange situation, almost in a classic double-bind, because we know, deep down, that the official knowledge is

breaking down, doesn't represent everyday life, yet we don't know how to comment on it.

THE MAIN CHALLENGE to what Charlene Spretnak, in *States of Grace* (Harper Collins, 1991) calls "the failed certainties of objectivist modernism" has been various forms of relativism. The argument here is that what we take for reality is nothing more than a construction of the human mind, supported by various cultural and political forms to create a reality which favours those who hold power. Reality is a human creation embedded in language. All is relative. The extreme relativist position is 'deconstructive postmodernism' which is suspicious of all overarching theories and 'grand narratives'.

While these perspectives help us immensely in seeing through the myth that is Mechanos, they don't help us move beyond the problems it has produced. If we were alienated from our experience by the separation of mind and matter, we are even more alienated if all we can do is circle round various forms of relativist construction. Any sense of a world in which we are grounded disappears.

One result of all this abstraction is the dishonouring of the body and the separation of humanity from the natural world. Morris Berman drew attention to this in his book *Coming to our senses* (Simon and Schuster, 1989), arguing that in a quite literal sense we need to honour again the wisdom of the body, locating knowing in the experience of sensation instead of intellectually elaborated paradigms of thought. The body is the lodge of spirit in this life, yet we have an immensely ambivalent relationship to it, often very concerned with the presentation of a 'face', powerful or beautiful, to the outside world, yet being quite out of touch with our physical inner processes. The body and the natural world are deeply

connected. Our body is that piece of wilderness that we carry around with us all the time, a living ecology which provides a home to many creatures and life events, which may be in balance or out of balance.

Of course the systemic world-view, as presented by Gregory Bateson and championed in particular by Fritz Capra in *The Web of Life* (Harper Collins, 1996), does offer an important counterpoint to both the mechanical and relativist world-views.

However, systemic thought can miss an important point that we are embodied participants in the co-creation of our world. The human mind makes its world by participating in its being. Our theories and models of the world are grounded in our experiential participation in what is present, in what there is. Therefore, the notion of *participation* must be central to the new world-view.

WORD-VIEWS may be regarded as sets of basic beliefs about the nature of reality and how it may be known. These beliefs are thrown into relief by three fundamental and interrelated questions: *ontological, epistemological and axiological*. Let us look at these three questions closely.

Ontology: what is there to know? While the mechanical world-view sees a world of things independent of human thought, and the relativist world-view asserts that there is nothing but the constructions of the human mind, a participative world-view accepts that there is a given cosmos, a primordial reality, and that human presence actively participates with it. Mind and the given cosmos are engaged in a co-creative dance. Mind actively participates in the cosmos. It is through this active

participation that we meet what is the Other: we call these trees, rocks, persons, spirit and so on. This brings about a subjectively articulated world, whose objectivity is relative to the perspective of the knower. Reality is *subjective-but-real* always called into being and shaped by the participation of the knower in what is known.

Roads to Relaxation

Epistemology: what is the nature of knowledge? While Mechanos and relativism are based on dualism between mind and reality, and in relativism all that can be known are the constructions of the human mind, a participative world-view rests on at least four different ways of knowing. We can call this an 'extended epistemology' - *epistemology* meaning a theory of how we know, and *extended* meaning beyond the primary theoretical knowledge of academia.

Mike George offers visualisation and meditation as pathways back to a more relaxed lifestyle.

❖ *Experiential knowing* is through direct face-to-face encounter with person, place or thing; it is knowing through empathy and resonance, and is almost impossible to put into words.

❖ *Presentational knowing* emerges from experiential knowing, and provides its first expression through PERSONAL MYTHOLOGIES and story, drawing, sculpture, movement, dance and so on.

When we are children, our developing picture of self is determined by what we hear about ourselves: "What a beautiful girl," or "He is very shy." The culture of those around us is the foundation of our self-image. Our parents' and friends' comments about us form the first labels that we give ourselves, and help to provide the basis for our outlook and behaviour.

Knowing will be more valid - richer, deeper, more true to life and more useful - if these four ways of

knowing are congruent with each other. Our knowing should be grounded in our experience, expressed through our stories and images, understood through theories which make sense to us, and expressed in worthwhile action in our lives.

Methodology: how do we go about finding out? While within a traditional scientific view of the world, the creation of knowledge belongs to specialist researchers, within a participative world-view research is something people do together to solve a problem. Hence a collaborative form of inquiry, in which all involved engage together using the four ways of knowing:

- ❖ they define the questions they wish to explore and the methods they will use for that exploration (*propositional knowing*);
- ❖ they apply this methodology together or separately, in the world of their practice (*practical knowing*);
- ❖ this leads to new forms of encounter with their world (*experiential knowing*);
- ❖ they find ways to represent and share this experience in significant patterns (*presentational knowing*);
- ❖ which feeds into a revised understanding of the originating questions (*propositional knowing again*).

Thus co-researchers engage together in cycling several times through the four forms of knowing in order to enrich their congruence and to deepen the complementary way they are grounded



in each other. This is most fully described in John Heron's book *Co-operative Inquiry: research into the human condition* (Sage, 1996).

Axiology: what is of value, what is

The human mind makes its world by participating in its being. Our theories and models of the world are grounded in our experiential participation in what is present, in what there is. Therefore, the notion of participation must be central to the new world-view.

worthwhile? The first three questions - the ontological, the epistemological and the methodological - are really about truth. What is really, truly, there? What is the nature of truthful knowledge? By what method can the truth be reached? The fourth, axiological, question is about values of being. And the first question is about the value of knowledge itself. In a participative world-view the purpose of knowledge is practical: human flourishing, in its widest sense. This means the flourishing of human communities, and it also must mean reconnecting the human persons and communities to the ecological networks of which we are an integral part.

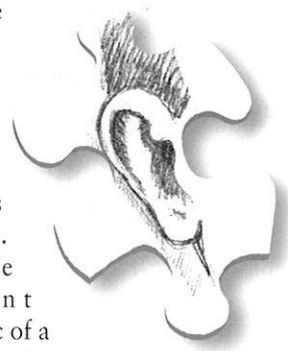
While it is possible to divorce thought from action, you cannot divorce action from thought. So we learn more profoundly about our worlds when we are interested in enhancing them with excellence of action than in simply learning about them. So the purpose of learning, of knowledge, of inquiry is to change the world! Our action in the world is based in our values and in our

knowledge; valid action must be grounded in our experiential, presentational and propositional knowing.

There is another important aspect of a participative world-view. It is not so much about the search for truth and knowledge as it is about healing. And, above all, the split that characterises modern experience. As R.D. Laing put it in *The Politics of Experience* (Ballantine Books, 1967), "...the ordinary person is a shrivelled, desiccated fragment of what a person can be...", alienated at least in part by the abstracted and disembodied qualities of modern life.

To heal means to make whole. We can only understand our world as a whole if we are part of it. As soon as we attempt to stand outside, we divide

and separate. Making whole necessarily implies participation. One important characteristic of a participative world-view is that the individual person is restored to the circle of community and the human community to the context of the natural world. To make whole also means to make holy. In a participative world-view meaning and mystery are restored to human experience. The world is once again experienced as a sacred place.



®

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SILENCE

Anthony Strano points the way to a conversation with God



When Silence is deep, brimming with fullness, when there is no more yearning for sound, when there is complete concentration on One, then thought, like an arrow, finds and melts into its target; there the human soul not only glimpses God, but is absorbed in the purity of that Being; absorbed totally, wholly, absolutely. Filled with the pure light that has now become its being, the soul radiates this energy as peace and love to others; a living lighthouse.

Silence is the bridge of communication between the Divine and the divine in the human. Silence is where I find what is most precious.

Spiritual silence is the positioning of the heart and mind in readiness for communication with the One. Neither is it communication based on repetitive words, nor on intellectual theories nor on asking for the fulfilment of limited desires. Sacred communication is the harmonising of the original self with the Eternal One.

Spiritual silence gives me energy, pure and selfless, from

***“The act of silence is as necessary
for living as breathing is for
physical life.”***

the Creative Source, to burst out of the cocoon of dust and routine, opening up unlimited horizons of new vision. To release the self from negativity, I require silence. Absorbed in its depths, I am renewed. In this renewal the mind clears itself, facilitating a different perception of reality. The deepest perception of all is my own eternity.

The act of silence is as necessary for living as breathing is for physical life. Strength for living necessitates finding a point of stillness from which I begin and to which I return every day: an oasis of inner peace. Silence brings my mental and emotional energy to a point of concentration, where I can be still. Without this inner stillness, I become like a puppet pulled here and there by the many different strings of external influences. This inner point of stillness is the seed of autonomy which cuts the strings, then the loss of energy ceases.

Silence heals. Silence is like a mirror. Everything is clear. The mirror does not blame or criticise but helps me to see things as they are, providing a diagnosis to release me

from all types of wrong thinking. How does silence do this? Silence revives the original peace of the self; a peace that is innate, divine and, when invoked flows through one's being, harmonising and healing every imbalance. Silence is full and it fills; gently, powerfully, consistently active.

To create silence, I step within. I connect with my eternal self: the soul. In that place of unblemished tranquillity, as if in a timeless womb, the process of renewal and restructuring begins. There, a new pattern of pure energy is woven.

In this introspective space I reflect. I recollect what has been forgotten for a long time. I concentrate slowly and gently and as I do so, those original spiritual blueprints of love, truth and peace emerge and are experienced as personal and eternal realities. Through these, quality begins to enter life. Quality is a closeness to something purer and truer in ourselves. Quality is the principle for more enlightened thought and for integrity of action. In that space, Silence teaches me how to listen, how to

develop an openness to God.

Listening guides me into the right position, opening the channel of receptivity. Receptivity aligns me to the reality of God; a very necessary alignment, if I am to truly know and be at one with Him. For receptivity I must clear myself of myself. I must stand clean, bare, simple, stripped of artificiality, then genuine communication begins.

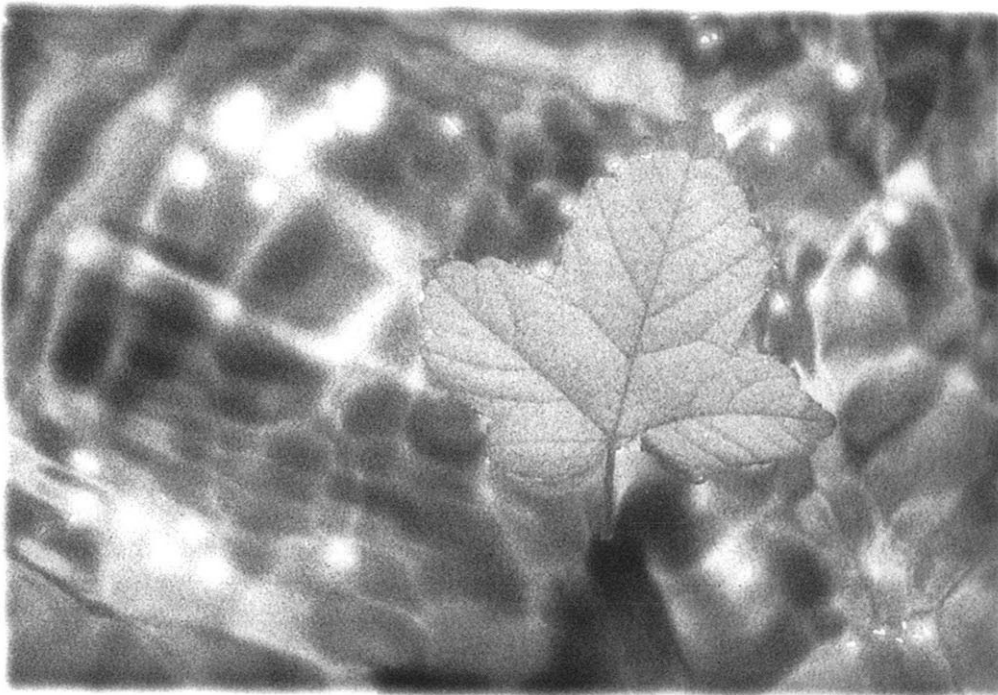
As I listen, I receive, as I receive, I feel and reflect, and gradually move into concentration; concentration is when I am completely absorbed in one thought. Where there is love, concentration is natural and steady, like the still candle flame radiating its aura of light. The thought in which one is absorbed becomes one's world. When the human mind is absorbed in the thought of God, the person feels resurrected, the harmony of reconciliation is deeply felt. In this silent link of love, one becomes fully reconciled, not as an intellectual process but as a state of being. I awaken. This wakefulness is where I am fully conscious of Truth. Simultaneously I become conscious of



“To achieve inner change, silence has to be love-filled not only peace filled.”

the illusions in me and around me and of the effort needed to remove them.

This wakefulness enables me to respond and receive what I would not normally notice, either on natural or supernatural levels. In wakefulness, in this heightened state of



knowing, a person spiritualises the self, he or she becomes a truer being. Within silence the subtle invisible rays of concentrated thought meet God – this is the power of silence, this is often called ‘meditation’. Sound cannot achieve this meeting with God. Sound can only praise and glorify, through song or chant, the closeness of union with the Divine but it cannot create it. Only silence creates the practical experience of union.

Concentrated silence is the wordless focus of pure attention on One. Love for that One makes the focus easy and steady, fulfilling. This closeness of the self with the Supreme inevitably inspires the desire for change in the self; inspiration to better the self, to make the self worthy by fulfilling the original potential and, where one can, sharing the fruits of that realised potential with others. This sharing is not achieved through saying a lot, but rather through the integrity of personal example.

In silence, the deepest orientation of consciousness is the desire to achieve personal perfection. This desire is a result of the divine flow of energy entering the human consciousness and inspiring belief in

one’s own worth. Personal reflection is accepted as being possible. It’s the faith given by God as a gift to the soul. The possibility of perfection is accepted because the soul knows it is not alone in its effort, it constantly has the support of Divine Love to achieve its goal.

In its connection with God, the soul is filled and feels itself complete; it has found what it was looking for. Divine Love works especially through silence; the soul is awakened from its sleep of ignorance and given new life, as in the story of Sleeping Beauty. The soul is the Sleeping Beauty, God is the prince and ignorance is the witch who casts her magic spell of slumber upon the princess. God’s love for the soul is such that it is not stopped by any darkness or barrier but reaches the soul to awaken it, bringing it back to life, back to reality. Love breaks the iron spell.

It is through Love that I, as a soul, am awakened and acknowledge my eternity. My reality is far more than my material appearance. My eternity is my reality. This is the truth of my existence. In Greek the word for truth is alitheia which means ‘not to

forget’. The human being is under a very deep forgetfulness; an amnesia of spirit. I cannot achieve the awakened state, the true state of myself with my own skills of intellect. Attainment of Truth is not a matter of cleverness. I can only awaken

when God helps me to remember. To remember is real knowing, it is Truth.

To achieve inner change, silence has to be love-filled not only peace filled. Many think that it is enough just to experience peace in the silence of meditation in order to achieve transformation of consciousness. Peace stabilises; peace harmonises and gently quietens; Peace lays the foundation. However, Love actively inspires; Love is the catalyst for change; Love moves the universe. Love moves all things towards their original freedom and happiness.

Both Peace and Love are needed, and in their archetypal form, come from God, the Universal and immutable Source. It is this God-filled silence that restores a human being and the earth to their original state.

In silence, we realise that it is not only a return to the roots but, even more, it is a return to the seed, to the Beginning; it is a return to God, a return to myself, a return to right relationship.

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Anthony Strano is Director of the Brahma Kumaris Centre in Athens, Greece. This is extracted from his forthcoming booklet *The Alpha Point*.

If you really want to travel!

Tom Hodgkinson isn't sure travelling is the best way to see the 'world'!



Have you noticed that there's a travel bug in the air? More than a bug, it's a kind of virus, a disease, an untreated, unquestioned malady; coming from the ether, a collective lust for travel, an urgent need to get away. Alex Garland's book *The Beach* is about a group of young people shooting off to Thailand, and was one of the surprise hits of last summer. At the same time, the GAP year between school and university has become sacred, an untouchable institution with its own industry.

The result of these and other related phenomena is a kind of moral pressure to travel. The untravelled person is lesser, inferior. For those who find the whole business of travel pointless and unnecessary, and resent the image of the stay-home as lesser beings – and there are many of us around – it seems worth putting forward the arguments against travel fever.

The first is that travel is really much like work. Whether by plane, train or automobile, most travelling requires Herculean efforts. Heat, waiting, crowds, strange tongues, exhausting trips around museums and churches all take their toll. It amazes me that we work all year and then take two weeks off, during which we fill our hours with a different sort of work. In fact, it is only relatively recently that travel has become associated with pleasure and relaxation. The origins of the word give us a clue as to the truth of the matter. Going right back, the word comes from 'trapelium' meaning a three-pronged instrument of torture (today's three prongs being, of course, airports, taxis and insects). This

turned into the word 'travail', French for 'work', which for many aeons was synonymous with 'travel'. The first meaning given for travel in the Oxford English Dictionary therefore is 'labour, toil, suffering', which to me is exactly what it is, unless you believe the propaganda put about by the conspiracy of airlines, travel supplements and tour operators.

Back in Chaucer's day, if you had some time off, you made the most of it by staying exactly where you were, and you certainly did not fill it with more work. To me, taking a break means doing as little as possible, and this modest goal can be accomplished anywhere. Another travel myth is that your expeditions will make you a better person: more tolerant; free of prejudice, open-minded. Anyone who has ever been to university will know that first-year students who have spent a few months in a third-world country may return with a funny purple bag but are not more pluralistic or generous-spirited than those who spent a few months in their 'local'. Similarly, I have met many seasoned travellers who remain the same misanthropic, prejudiced people they were before they began their great perspective-broadening exploration: if anything they return worse, because they have that smug superiority of someone who has seen some things, someone who had the gumption to get out. Unlike you, poor unimaginative Muggins, sadly lacking in courage, who got stuck in England.

And after all, what is travel? Can its aims not be achieved from home. For one Chinese philosopher of the 1930's, Lin Yutang, the essence of travel is "to have no duties, no fixed hours, no mail, no inquisitive neighbours, no received delegations, and no destination". These criteria could be as well fulfilled by spending two nights in a flash hotel around the corner as by hoofing off to the Caribbean. Lin Yutang goes on to

argue that the traveller can "get the greatest joy of travel without going to the mountains, by staying at home and going about the field to watch a sailing cloud, or a dog, or a hedge, or a lonely tree".

And you can learn a lot by staying local. More sentiments to help build resistance to the travel virus comes from *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau, history's first downshifter. He quotes an earlier mind-traveller, William Habington, who wrote these lines in the early 17th century.

*Direct your sight inward
And you'll find
A thousand regions in your mind
Yet undiscovered. Travel them, and be
Expert in home cosmography*

A beautiful notion, requiring no passports, ear-threatening aeroplane flights or risk of tropical disease. Thoreau also quotes from Claudian, from the 4th century A.D. who has the Old Man of Verona Who Never Left His Home putting forward a similar point of view.

*Erret, et extremos alter
scrutetur Iberos
Plus habet hic vitae, plus
habet ille viae
(Let them wander and scrutinise the
outlandish Australians.
I have more of God, they more of the
road.)*

All of which leaves us with a satisfying paradox with which to conclude: if you really want to travel, stay at home.

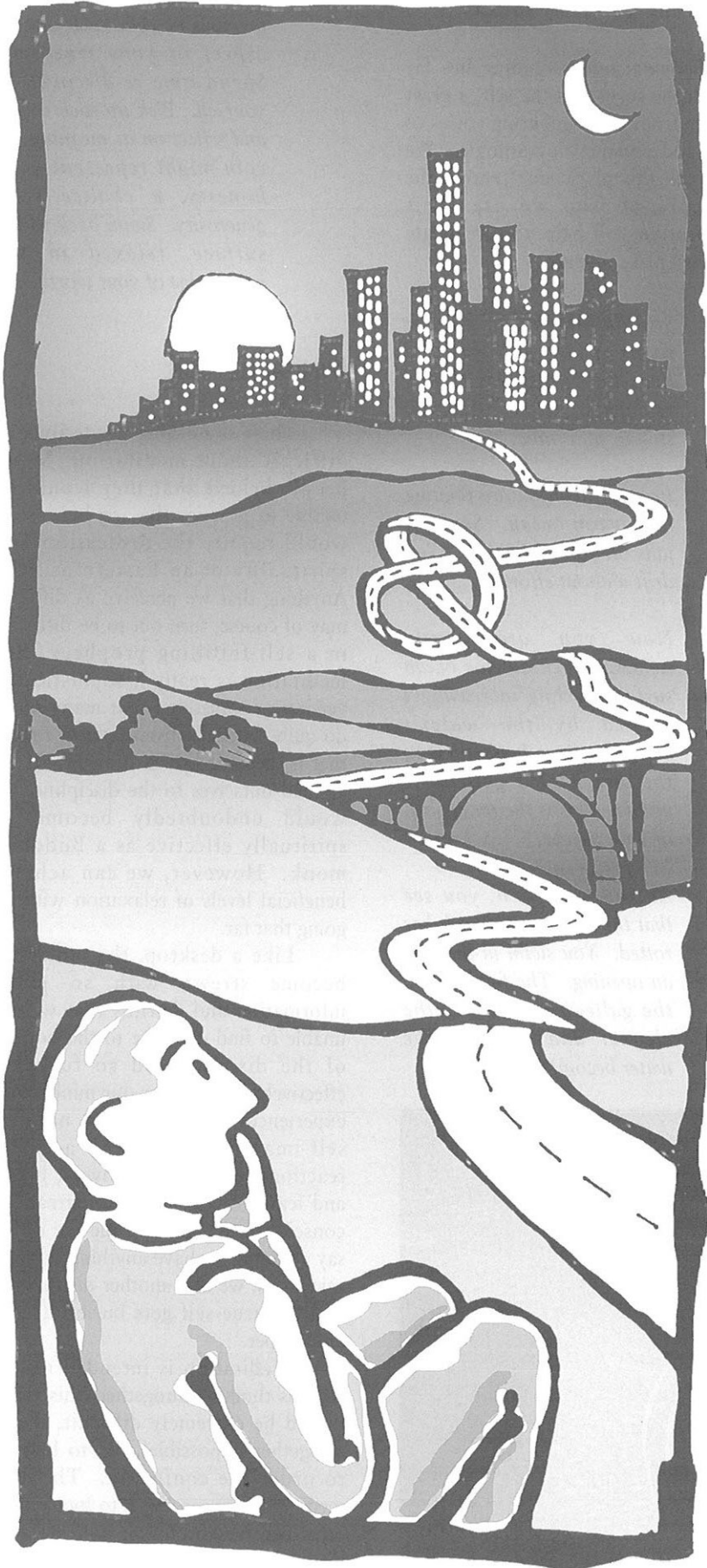
Tom Hodgkinson is Editor of the Idler Magazine.
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Roads to Relaxation

Mike George offers visualisation and meditation as pathways back to a more relaxed lifestyle.

PERSONAL MYTHOLOGIES

When we are children, our developing picture of self is determined by what we hear about ourselves: “What a beautiful girl,” or “He is very shy.” The culture of home is the foundation of our self-image. Our parents’ and friends’ comments about us form the first labels that we give ourselves, and help to provide the basis for our outlook and behaviour.



As a result, we each have an internal committee of voices. Whenever we want to try something new or difficult, we subliminally recall the legacy of opinions, "Don't do that, you might hurt yourself," "I wouldn't try anything so ambitious," and so on. Such simple statements fashion our expectations of ourselves, and can make us fear the consequences of our action.

We not only listen to such voices; we also embellish them. We create myths about ourselves that explain our behaviour. A parental comment such as "He's very shy" can become "My parents favoured my brother and neglected me, so I have always been very shy." Or, "She finds it very hard to make friends" becomes "I can't form relationships because my parents always quarrelled." We use our mythologies to gain sympathy and affection: as reasons to opt out of projects that we find daunting; and to explain our failures. But our anthology of mythical excuses serves only to perpetuate self-doubt.

To be totally honest about ourselves, avoiding the temptation to mythologise is difficult, but it is the only route to self-understanding. Self-knowledge lies deep within, at our 'centre'. Meditation is the one route there, stilling the mind to let us focus on our inner needs and unabridged thoughts. Visualisation exercises, such as the one below, can also help free the mind of illusion and encourage clear insights into positive aspects of the self.

A VOYAGE TO THE CENTRE OF THE SELF

Personal understanding lies far beneath the surface of the self, a great distance from the clamouring voices of labels and personal mythologies. We might call this place our 'centre', the true core of who we are. This visualisation will help you to locate your own place of truth.

1. *Sit comfortably in a quiet room. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for a few moments. Concentrate on stilling your mind.*
2. *Imagine that you are floating in a warm ocean. Sunlight falls on your shoulders. You drift without effort.*
3. *Now you are gently swimming beneath the ocean surface, feeling increasingly calmed by the water's caresses. Just beneath you, the wreck of a galleon is visible. This is the outer shell of your psyche.*
4. *As you approach, you see that the ship's woodwork has rotted. You swim in through an opening. The further into the galleon you swim, the cleaner and brighter the water becomes.*

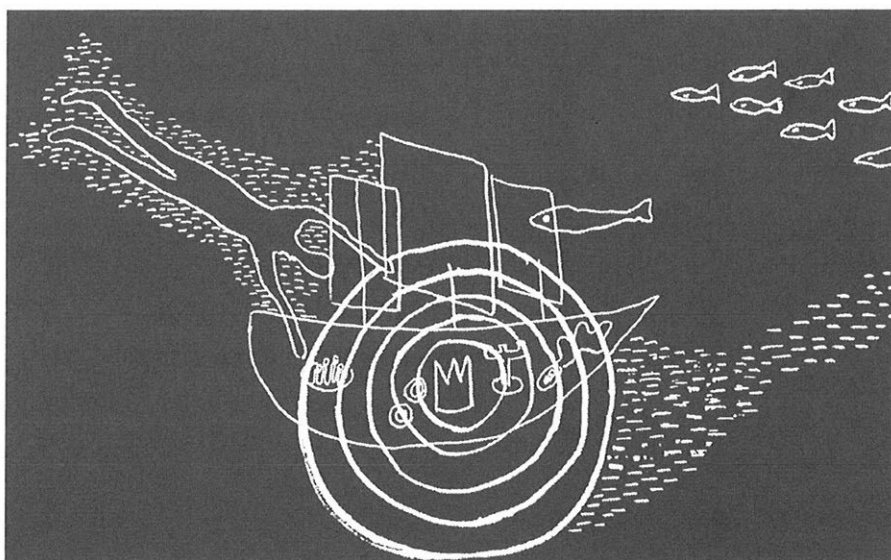
5. *At the centre of the ship, unspoilt, lies a chest of precious objects, each one an aspect of your true self. Spend time re-discovering yourself. Pick up each object and reflect on its meaning. A coin might represent your honesty, a chalice your generosity. Swim back to the surface, relaxed in the knowledge of your worth.*

INNER SPACE

There is nothing mysterious or difficult about meditation. Many people believe that they would be unable to practise the art, because it would require the dedication and spirituality of an Eastern ascetic. Anything that we perceive as difficult may of course, turn out to be difficult, in a self-fulfilling prophecy. But meditation is really a sophisticated version of something that many of us do quite naturally from time to time – that is, become lost in thought. If we applied ourselves to the discipline, we would undoubtedly become as spiritually effective as a Buddhist monk. However, we can achieve beneficial levels of relaxation without going that far.

Like a desktop, the mind can become strewn with so much information and detritus that we are unable to find our way to the bottom of the disorder and so function effectively. We clutter our minds with experiences, worries, regret, negative self-images, memories, actions, reactions, emotions, analyses, hopes and fears – all in a protean stream of consciousness. Every time we do or say anything, or have anything done or said to us, we add another distraction, and our true self gets buried deeper and deeper.

Meditation is intended not to stop us thinking altogether (this really would be extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible), but to help us to order the confusion. Through meditation we can begin to focus upon constructive thoughts, and start to discover positive images and ideas of



ourselves. When we become lost in thought, we tend to daydream about a better future; or we might reflect upon a problem in order to prompt a range of possible solutions. Meditation aims to do the same thing, but in a more purposeful way: it maintains its focus on the subject, whereas a daydream might wander off towards a random target. By relaxing our minds through meditation, we can clear our desks and experience a renewed sense of self. This will bring with it identity, clarity and freedom, in a cascade of revelatory thinking.

Knowing who we really are is at the heart of our potential for contentment. If that essence of our identity is based on other people's opinions, or on the pressures that others place upon us, then our self-esteem runs out of our control, rising or falling at the will or whim of others, like a thread of mercury in a thermometer.

Meditation can gently steer us away from this emotional dependency to put us back in charge of our own lives. By helping to restore a true relationship with ourselves, it gives us a firm footing on which to establish strong and equitable relationships with other people.

Such is our addiction to action, we may find ourselves saying that we don't have time for inward reflection – or that it is self-indulgent. We feel that we will lose our dignified sense of purpose if we are not constantly doing – helping, building, improving, moving forward. However, these are precisely the circumstances when our real needs become obscured, blurred by our own momentum. Time spent organising our inner self is time gained for clarity and fulfilment.

Many of us hardly spend a single minute thinking about ourselves – or, if we do, our thoughts may tend to be selfishly calculating. Meditation is unselfish, as its aims are to be better, or purify ourselves so that we may live happier, healthier lives, which impact upon all those around us.

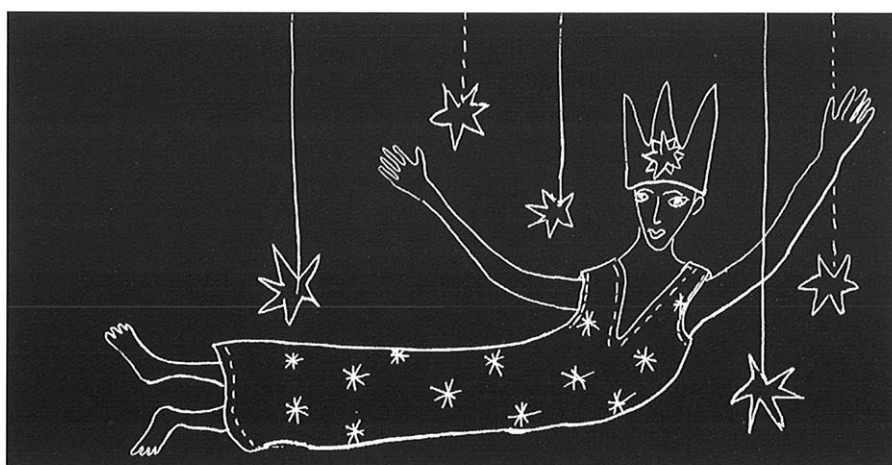
As a first step towards meditation, practise the exercise which follows – a basic visualisation, in which the mind imagines a vivid inward journey. Words or syllables may be used in meditation (a mantra

may be chanted to still the mind), but there are definite benefits in using visual techniques, which may more readily solve the problem of what the mind should do if it is not to flit randomly over our preoccupations.

Meditation has been practised for thousands of years in Eastern cultures. It has taken different forms, but its essence remains the same – to find inner peace so that our adventures in the world are calm, contented and purposeful.

2. *Create a point of consciousness. Focus on the centre of your forehead. Think of this point as a radiant star. This will transmit positive energy, making you feel good about yourself.*

3. *Affirm the positive energy through positive thoughts*



A FIVE-STEP MEDITATION

A first step in meditation is to be able to introspect without fear or compromise. This exercise takes you through an open door into the vast labyrinth of your unconscious so that you may begin to appreciate and love who you are. Sit comfortably in a pleasant room and close your eyes (You may like to recite the exercise onto a tape so that you don't have to remember it.)

1. *Withdraw energy mentally from everything around you – not to reject or resist, but to turn your attention inwards. You might think of how a tortoise withdraws into its shell to detach itself from the outside world, but carrying the experience of the world with it inside its shelter.*

and images about yourself, such as "I am a conscious being" or "I am a peaceful soul."

4. *Focus your energy on peace and let this become the object of your meditation. As you focus, you will give peace life, turning a thought into a feeling.*

5. *Experience this feeling by 'watering' it with your full attention. This is the beginning of self-realisation through meditation.*

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Extracted from *Learn to Relax* by Mike George, Illustration by Trina Dalziel. Published by Mitchell Beazley in association with Duncan Baird Publishers in the UK and Chronicle in the USA. Available from BK Literature. Telephone Orders: 0181 830 0317.

Ten Steps to Beating Stress!

1

Essential Oils

Fill a dish with warm water, then add a few drops of pine oil or ylang ylang. Place a small candle beneath the dish and light it. Unsuitable for: gas repair workers



2

Mantra

Repeat one word in your mind over and over for 20 or 30 minutes. Or focus on a sound. Unsuitable for: railway platform announcers.

3

Put your feet up

Lie on the floor with your feet on a chair, knees bent, for 10 to 20 minutes. 'A relaxing break in itself'. Unsuitable for: traffic wardens.

4

Daydream

Follow 90 to 120 minutes with 20 minutes of daydreaming, and you're well on the way to becoming a calm and efficient worker. Unsuitable for: heart surgeons.



5

Watchless

The simple act of removing your wristwatch could remind you to act like an easy going personality. Unsuitable for: bus inspectors.

6

Say you're secure

Repeat as loudly as you can get away with, "I feel complete confidence in my skills and abilities. I radiate this confidence to all around me." Unsuitable for: football managers.

7

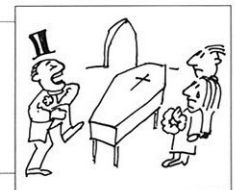
The power of no

Set goals and outcomes for every aspect of your work, say "No" to everything else. Unsuitable for: people on short term contracts.

8

Grin and bear it

Go to any lengths to find something to smile about in your work. Better still, laugh. Unsuitable for: undertakers



9

The sound of calm

Play Debussy or a Chopin nocturne, or any contemporary music without lyrics, at the lowest possible volume. Unsuitable for: judges

10

Self hypnosis

Rest your hands on your lap, fix your attention on a patch of sunlight in the room and slowly fall into trance. Unsuitable for: air traffic controllers



How would you respond?

There was an old spiritual master called Shonoko who lived alone in a hut at the foot of a mountain. One night while Shonoko was sitting in meditation, a stranger broke into the hut, brandishing a sword, demanded Shonoko's money. Shonoko did not interrupt his meditation while he addressed the man, "All my money is in the bowl on the shelf up there. Take all you need, but leave me five yen. I have to pay my taxes next week"

The stranger emptied the bowl of all the money it held and threw five yen back into it. He also helped himself to a precious vase he found on the shelf.

"Carry that vase with care," said Shonoko. "It will crack easily."

The stranger looked around the small barren room once more and was going to leave.

"You haven't said thank you," said Shonoko.

The man said thank you and left.

The next day the whole village was in turmoil. Many people claimed they had been robbed. Someone noticed the vase missing from the shelf in Shonoko's hut and asked if he, too, had been the victim of the burglar. "Oh, no," said Shonoko.

"I gave the vase to a stranger, along with some money. He thanked me and left. He was a pleasant enough sort of fellow but a bit careless with his sword!"

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KNOW ME

origin unknown

*Desperately, helplessly, longingly, I cried:
Quietly, patiently, lovingly God replied.
I pled and I wept for a clue to my fate,
And the Master so gently said, "Child, you must wait".*

*"Wait? You say, wait!" my indignant reply.
"Lord, I need answers, I need to know why!
Is your hand shortened? Or have I not heard?
By Faith, I have asked, and am claiming your Word.
My future and all to which I can relate
Hangs in the balance, and YOU tell me to WAIT?
I'm needing a 'yes', a go-ahead sign,
Or even a "no" to which I can resign.
And Lord, You promised that if we believe
And Lord, I've been asking, and this is my cry:
I'm weary of asking! I need a reply!"*

*Then quietly, softly, I learned of my fate
As my Master replied once again, "You must wait."*

*So, I slumped in my chair, defeated and taut
and grumbled to God, "So, I'm waiting – for what?"*

*He seemed, then, to kneel, and His eyes wept with mine,
And he tenderly said, "I could give you a sign.
I could shake the heavens, and darken the sun.
I could raise the dead, and cause mountains to run.
All you seek, I could give, and pleased you would be
You would have what you want – But, you wouldn't know Me.*

*You'd not know the depth of My love for each saint;
You'd not know the power that I give to the faithful;
You'd not learn to see through the clouds of despair;
You'd not learn to trust just by knowing I'm there;
You'd not know the joy of resting in Me
When darkness and silence were all you could see.*

*You'd never experience that fullness of love
As the peace of My Spirit descends like a dove;
You'd know that I give and I save – (for a start),
But you'd not know the depth of the beat of My heart.*

*The glow of My comfort late into the night,
The faith that I give when you walk without sight,
The depth that's beyond getting just what you asked
Of an infinite God, who makes what you have LAST.*

*You'd never know, should your pain quickly flee,
What it means that 'My grace is sufficient for Thee.'
Yes, your dreams for your loved one overnight would come true,
But, Oh, the Loss! If I lost what I'm doing in you!*

*So, be silent, My Child, and in time you will see
That the greatest of gifts is to get to know Me.*