

Insights and inspirations for living in the light

ISSUE 16

heart & soul



the genius within

anger management

the art of seeing

a quiet revolution

the king and the wolf boy

the divine
relationship

Is it a Deal?

I did not want to take another birth. I had seen how other children were being treated and it frightened me to be at the mercy of parents. I thought I had better clarify a few things with you so I sent this letter through an angel.

Before you invite me, please make sure that you have enough time to take care of me.

I need a lot of time. Not just to be fed. I need you to just 'be' with me.

I will learn and grow from just being with you.

I also need to be played with - I do not see television as a substitute for your company.

I will not stop crying just because you put a dummy in my mouth.

Crying is my only way to communicate that I need something.

I hope that you will be sensitive to my needs and understand.

If you do not have time for me, please think again before inviting me into your world.

Before I come to you, please be aware of how dependent I am on you.

I need to grow not only with the right nutrition but with the right love and care.

Just as the body needs to be fed what it is made of,

the spirit too needs to be fed what it is made of - peace, love, happiness and truth.

I know you think that you will love me but have you stopped to think about what love is?

It is not possessiveness. You will be my trustees but I am not yours.

You can never own anything or anyone so please look after me in trust.

In fact, I belong to the Eternal Father and will be coming from my Eternal Home.

I will be with you temporarily and cannot guarantee how long I will stay.

The most simple introduction I can give of myself is this:

My nature is peace, my home is peace, my Father is Peace,

Please try to preserve this peace for me.

If you speak to me reasonably I will understand.

If you shout I may just cut off or run away.

I cannot survive without peace.

Don't blame me if I use bad language, speak rudely or sulk.

I will be your mirror. I will copy you. You are my first teachers.

What I learn in the first three years of my life will stay with me forever.

Please teach me to love, to share and to care.

I will also need to learn some lessons myself as I am growing up.

I will no doubt make mistakes.

I hope that you will be able to keep your trust in me at these times.

If you think you have the time, the patience and the love

I am ready to come.

I may sound demanding and this may seem like a one-sided deal

But I guarantee that if you can fulfil your side of the contract

I will return one thousand fold.

I am also your teacher. I am still tuned into the universe
and can help you to reconnect with your own peace and love.

I will bring you boundless joy.

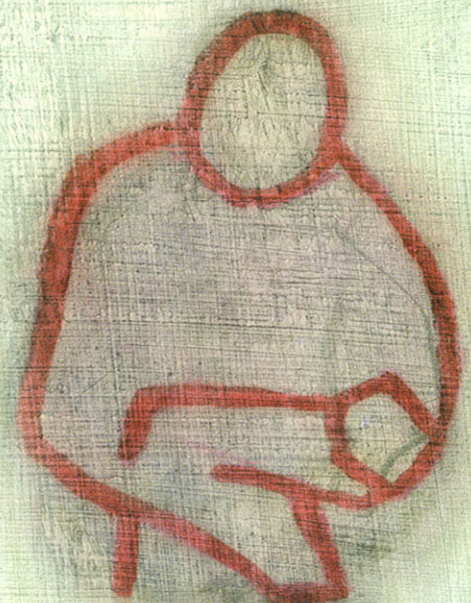
I will help you to see the world afresh if you take time to look through my eyes.

I will remind you of your purity and innocence.

I will remind you of the lightness of laughter and play.

I will love you.

Is it a deal?



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WELCOME

The Question of the Right Questions

What makes you clever? Your intellect or your intuition? What's the difference? What is more important, cleverness or intelligence? Is there a difference? What comes first doing or being? What difference does it make? Where do our values and beliefs come from? What is the difference between the two? Why is it so many of us find such questions are only occasionally interesting? And why is it that, when we do give such questions some time and attention, we struggle to find coherent, focused and shared answers? Could it be that they are the missing ingredients in our education? Could it be that our cultural conditioning scoffs at such enquiry as woolly, irrelevant and a waste of time? Could it be that, if we truly plumbed the depths of ourselves using such questions, we might find ourselves challenging very shaky foundations on which the modern world of mainstream human affairs is built?

While many school teachers know the value of self reflection and philosophical enquiry, and how much benefit it can bring to the development of young minds, only a very few schools deliberately build it into their curriculum. They have recognised that while a good academic education is essential, there are deeper and more important foundations for life which need to be established. One such school appears to be West Kidlington primary school near Oxford. There has been an extraordinary revolution happening at this ordinary school for some years, and it is helping to shape the lives of young learners in a way that we can all appreciate and applaud. **The Quiet Revolution** is the book which reveals the secrets of how children

are learning to love learning and learning how to love in authentic and inspiring ways within their academic curriculum. The author **Frances Farrer** tells us how values education is the foundation of all their learning and interactions.

For many of us one of our deepest learned and unchallenged beliefs is that there is not enough to go around. In **Abundance**, **Sean De Warren** shows us how to break free from this limiting mindset, and how to attract abundance into our lives.

And, if there was ever a time for us all to explore and develop our spiritual faculties, it is now. In **Discovering Spirituality**, **Anthony Strano** makes it look, feel and sound simple; perhaps because...it is!!

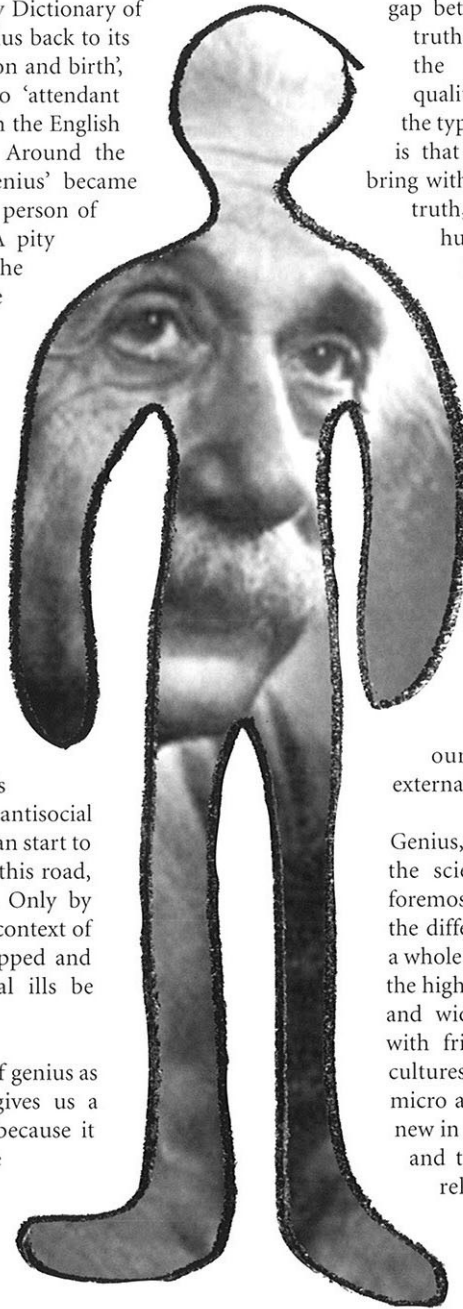
And if ever the monster of the conscious deep rears its ugly head in the form of anger, **Yogesh Sharda** explains in **Anger Management** how we can understand and tame the monster, defuse the power it has over our thoughts and feelings, and banish it from the inner kingdom for ever. Unless, of course, you like the company of monsters!

THE *GENIUS* WITHIN

*What does it take to be brilliant? What does brilliant really mean?
At a recent seminar, entitled Intellect and Intuition, Lawrence Newey
explained the true meaning of genius*

To begin a search for the genius within ourselves, we need a working definition of what it is we are looking for. The Bloomsbury Dictionary of Word Origins traces the Latin, genius back to its root meaning of 'Deity of generation and birth', and this later broadened out into 'attendant spirit', which was the sense in which the English language originally acquired it. Around the seventeenth century however, 'genius' became more widely used as a term for 'a person of outstanding intellectual ability'. A pity really, as this downgrading of the meaning of genius is the reverse process of our seminar theme and would be more suited to the title 'From Intuition to Intellect'. It is an interesting sign of the importance society places on intellectual power at present though, and the intellect is a necessary stepping stone towards the awakening of the intuition. The worrying aspect however, is that education is in danger of becoming obsessed with 'brains'. Where there is an intense development of the intellect without a parallel education of the heart to give it spiritual direction, the intellect is apt to be used for selfish ends, and antisocial traits such as pride and arrogance can start to appear. If we were all to go down this road, it would of course spell disaster. Only by developing the intellect within the context of love can the intuition be safely tapped and the healing of the current social ills be resolved.

But to return to the true meaning of genius as 'Deity of generation and birth' gives us a beautiful focus for our thoughts because it brings spirituality into the equation. The Deity residing within each one of us is accessible and responsive when we direct our minds towards it. To touch this divinity within is to tap an immense generating power -



a creative force that brings ideas to birth in the physical world - ideas that help to bridge the gap between the spiritual realms where truth, beauty and goodness reside, and the material world where these qualities should be expressed. And so the type of genius we are concerned with is that which gives birth to ideas that bring with them a higher understanding of truth, further social integration and lift humanity into a greater measure of light. The true genius is an agent of enlightenment.

If we recall the second definition we have of genius, that is 'attendant spirit', we see that outstanding creativity is really the soul demonstrating its powers through the personality - the spirit within 'attending' its lower expression in human form and transmitting energy through it. Each of us has this genius latent within, for it is our true self - all we have to do is learn to be ourselves more potently, to externalise our real selves.

Genius, therefore, is really a mastery of the science of relationships, first and foremost with ourselves, by integrating all the different sides of our personality into a whole and submitting it to the control of the highest within us. It is also developing and widening the sense of relationship with friends and associates, with other cultures and nations, the environment micro and macro. There is nothing really new in the universe except relationships - and these all stem from the one basic relationship between spirit and matter (we could think in terms of energy and fundamental particles to make the image easier to picture, though it's not quite the same thing).

This relationship between spirit and matter is the cause of all the kaleidoscopic forms that we see around us, and these forms, be they physical, emotional or mental, are constantly adapting and mutating - appearing, disappearing and reappearing as the relationship between spirit and matter constantly renews itself and evolves. The higher the mind reaches up to where truth resides, the greater the sense of this relationship and the unity of all things that is realised, and this is something to which the great mystics have all borne witness down the ages. So all the diverse things we see in manifestation have a common source, and genius is the realisation of this inner connectedness and the ability to relate things in new ways that bring a greater understanding of this to others. It follows on from this that education in its broadest sense is a means of developing an ever wider and more inclusive understanding of relationships.

Each one of us has a part to play in an interconnected world. If an understanding of this were brought more fully into educational systems, together with a background philosophy of the science of relationships, then the originality of each child would be carefully nurtured from an early age. The heart approach would be fostered so that a desire to serve areas of need in the world according to latent abilities would become a natural urge. Fostering the desire to serve is a safe and sure way of unfolding talent because desire, high or low, focuses the mind on a goal and evokes the will to achieve that goal. The transmutation of selfish desire and ambition into the flame of spiritual aspiration develops one pointed concentration to its maximum potential. It becomes a powerful tool of invocation and, with persistence, one that will evoke the intuition.

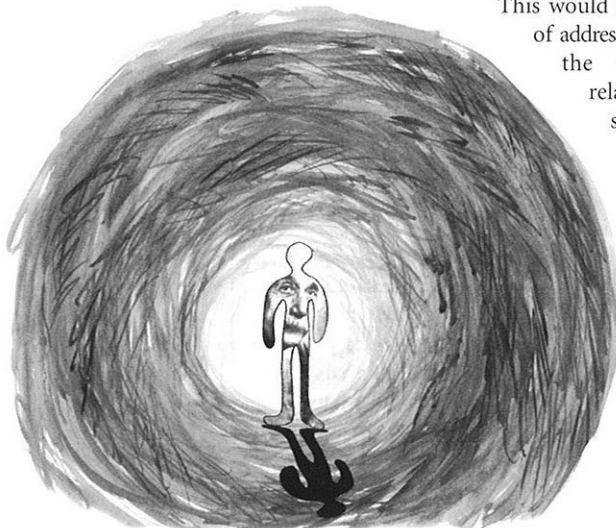
As we are redefining genius in terms of the science of relationships we can expect its growth to manifest itself in the phenomena of group genius and group service, as indeed, we are seeing today. The proliferation of non-governmental organisations, charities and welfare groups is an encouraging trend that is drawing men and women of goodwill into active service. These groups can also provide an important educational element for their members in helping to dissolve petty individual concerns in the light of a greater shared vision. Education systems need to throw more emphasis onto the promotion of qualities such as co-operation, tolerance and compassion as a foundation for enhanced group creativity. Against this background each person can flourish and be integrated into group enterprise where the multitude of differing qualities within the group serves as a source of mutual inspiration and accelerated development.

This would also be a sensible way of addressing the rising aggression, the violence and drug related crime in today's society too, which is a sign of frustrated creative potential.

The science of relationships has to begin with the individual of course, and this means an understanding of

the relationship between the personality and the higher self and how this relationship might be strengthened. If we believe in an individual soul standing behind the human being, it follows that there needs to be a way that they can communicate with one another - an interface of some kind. From the mystics of the past we have gained much visionary insight as to the wonder of enlightened states of being, but not so much the nuts and bolts of how it all works. When we consider the intricate beauty of the human being, there seems to be a gap between this complexity and the concept of the soul which is still commonly pictured as a remote, wispy entity that floats aimlessly around in a static, ethereal heaven world. Whatever the soul is, and let's hope it's not this, it would seem to require a network of informing and organising energy that relates it to its instrument. According to esoteric traditions, this interface is a network of light that interpenetrates the physical organism - a network of light that carries information - and in the 'information age', this is a concept that we are all familiar with. Within this network there are focal points that form centres of distribution called chakras, and these lie behind the main organs and the glandular system. They are constructed from the ethers and are a means through which the mind, emotions and the energy of the soul can reach its body of expression in the physical world.

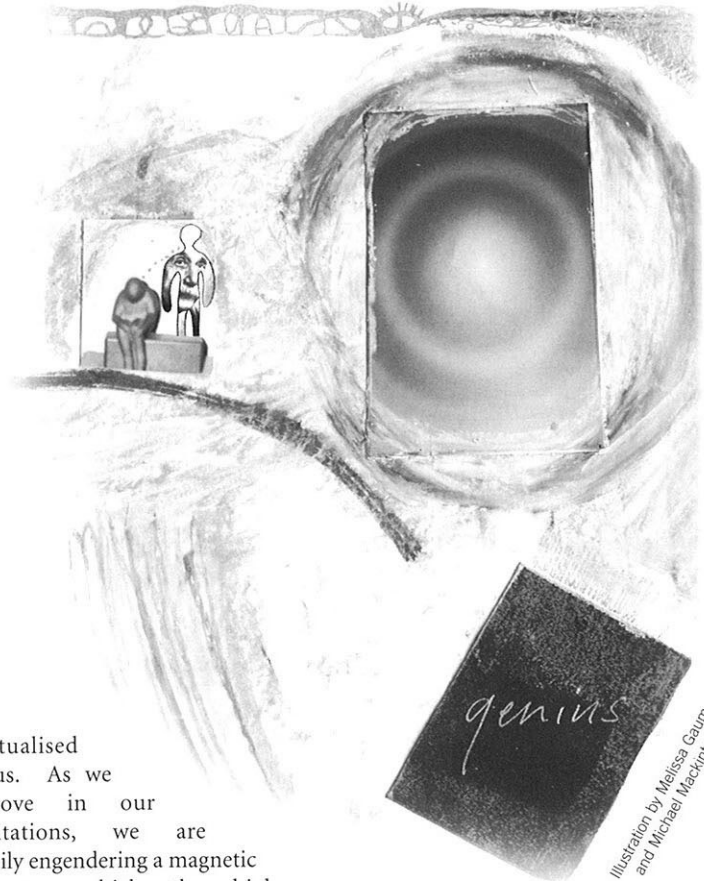
Of course, all these energies cannot occupy the attention at once and, like a radio receiver, we have to tune into the frequency that we want to hear. The coarse vibrations of the restless mind and the emotions have to be stilled in order to pick up the delicate voice of the soul. As the personality is rarely quiet however, we can understand why flashes of inspiration are few and far between, and quite rightly accompanied by a cry of 'Eureka' in scientific circles, though whether they occur in the bath I'm not so sure. It's not as silly as it sounds however. It's not uncommon for meditation to be a dry experience - we are trying to think through ideas but we are just going round and round old types of thought or being distracted by our latest emotional crisis. Alignment with the intuition often happens later in moments of comparative relaxation when the intellect and emotions have closed down for a while. So we might be pottering around in the shed, sitting under an apple tree perhaps or in the bath - when an unimpeded alignment jumps into place. There is an instant flash of inspiration as an idea that has been attracted by a previous period of sustained concentration suddenly comes through.



From the hypothesis that there are energy centres in the human being and the fact that they can receive energy from an even greater centre - the soul - we can touch upon a possible reason why genius is often associated with eccentricity and even madness. The geniuses of the past have often, though not always by any means, been characters of one-pointed development along a certain line of thought. And while they have received and skilfully utilised the energy of inspiration on their subject matter, aspects of their personality have not been pure enough to handle its potency. Force, as we know, seeks out weak spots, and personality traits can suffer from this and become warped and exaggerated. Hence the genius who may be brilliant in his or her field of endeavour may also demonstrate eccentric behaviour, absent mindedness and all those other endearing qualities that we associate with genius. It is an inability to handle the potency of the soul's touch, of an uneven development that leads to over-stimulation in some areas and under-stimulation in others.

We can also see from this why brilliant discoveries sometimes come through people who do not seem to be overtly spiritual, and why it is that those who meditate and are trying so hard to lift themselves towards the soul and the realm of ideas do not usually have anything specific to give humanity that could be labelled genius in the modern sense of the word. One-pointed concentration on a matter evokes the genius of the soul as we have seen, but it may be just the knowledge aspect of the soul and not so much the love aspect that is evoked. Anyone who can think powerfully enough can evoke this knowledge; it is as if the more specified the line of thought is, the more concentrated it becomes until it eventually develops a powerful magnetic field - and this attracts to it a measure of truth which descends through one narrow strand of light to the personality. Those who meditate for purely altruistic purposes are not usually entering meditation along a specific line of scientific or artistic endeavour, they are meditating on behalf of humanity to bring inspiration in a more general sense. The line of communication is not in this case so much a laser beam but a broad shaft of light that brings the three aspects of the soul: Light, Love and Power, flooding down into the collective consciousness of humanity.

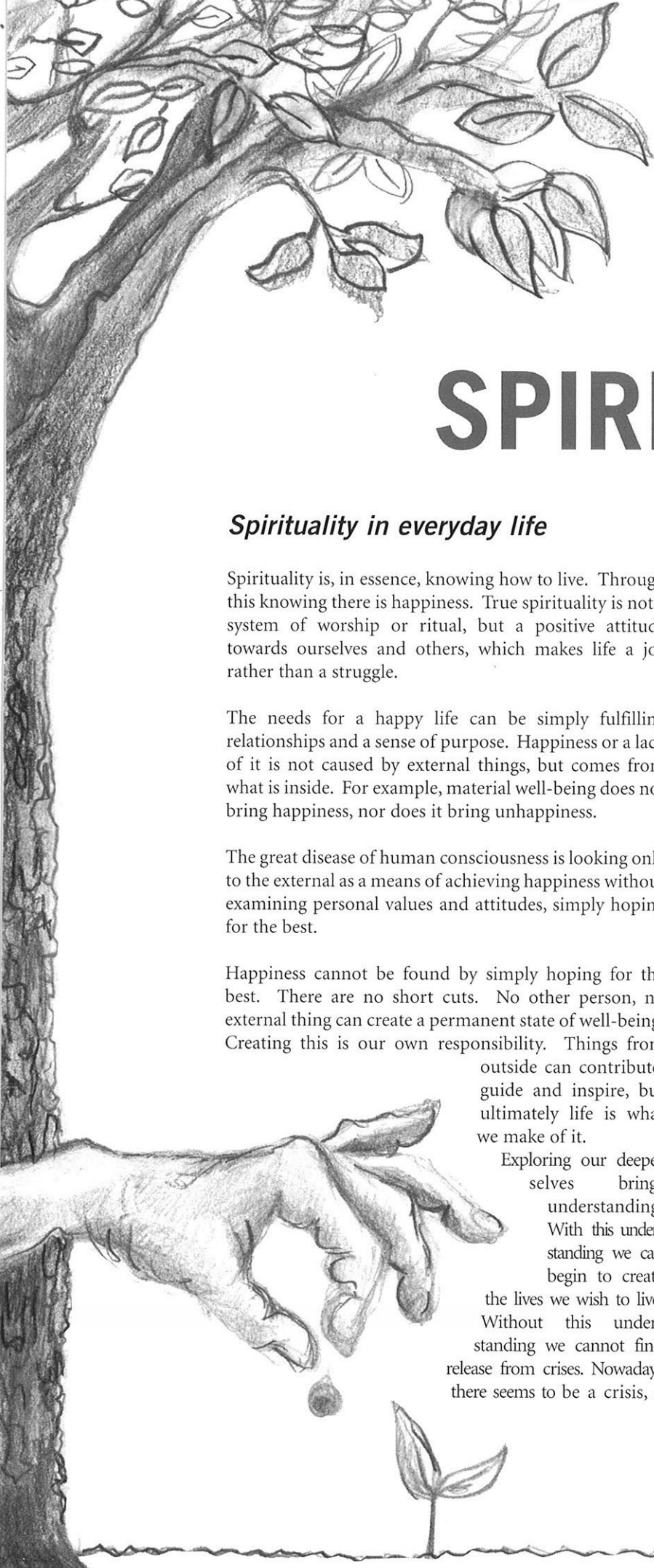
So we need not be disheartened if we do not come out of our meditations with definitive solutions to specific problems. Moreover, the well-rounded, balanced person is often said to achieve enlightenment before the partially



spiritualised genius. As we improve in our meditations, we are steadily engendering a magnetic aura on which the higher impressions can play - and this eventually sets up a resonance between the soul and personality that demonstrates in the most vivid and electric display of light imaginable. This allowed the Christ to proclaim Himself as 'The light of the world', and explains the association of the words 'illumination' and 'enlightenment' with the Buddha. The title of genius in its deepest sense therefore would have to be reserved solely for the spiritual greats such as these two. They were true 'deities of generation and birth', and in their lifetimes they demonstrated a perfected understanding of the science of relationships. The power of their genius radiated a light so vivid that it is still with us today, carried collectively by the millions of their followers the world over. This is the true type of genius that each of us is slowly unfolding, until in some distant future, if we follow the logic through, the whole of humanity will be enlightened. The implications of this are awe-inspiring. What would we do with all that light? What would be our responsibility in the scheme of things? One day we'll find out, for as the Christ said, "Greater things than He did shall we do." ♡

Transcribed from a talk at a seminar organised by The Lucis Trust

Illustration by Melissa Gaum
and Michael Mackintosh



*Insights into making
spirituality a real
part of everyday life
from Anthony Strano*

DISCOVERING SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality in everyday life

Spirituality is, in essence, knowing how to live. Through this knowing there is happiness. True spirituality is not a system of worship or ritual, but a positive attitude towards ourselves and others, which makes life a joy rather than a struggle.

The needs for a happy life can be simply fulfilling relationships and a sense of purpose. Happiness or a lack of it is not caused by external things, but comes from what is inside. For example, material well-being does not bring happiness, nor does it bring unhappiness.

The great disease of human consciousness is looking only to the external as a means of achieving happiness without examining personal values and attitudes, simply hoping for the best.

Happiness cannot be found by simply hoping for the best. There are no short cuts. No other person, no external thing can create a permanent state of well-being. Creating this is our own responsibility. Things from

outside can contribute, guide and inspire, but ultimately life is what we make of it.

Exploring our deeper selves brings understanding. With this understanding we can begin to create the lives we wish to live. Without this understanding we cannot find release from crises. Nowadays there seems to be a crisis, a

dead-end or a disappointment at every turn. This seems almost to have become the standard for a human life. When we are truly human, life is more than just surviving and overcoming obstacles. It is a joyful experience of love and meaning.

The quality of thought creates the quality of life

Think of a seed. It is like a point: small, tiny and compact, yet it holds all potential. A thought is like this. A thought is a seed. A seed that can be either positive or negative, depending on our mood, attitude and character. Thought creates feelings and attitudes. The combination of these is called consciousness. Human consciousness is the capacity to think, to reason, to feel and to express. All of this begins with just one thought.

Do we ever stop to observe our thoughts? Do we ever think of putting on the brakes, putting a full stop to our thoughts? Most of us allow them to scatter everywhere, wandering into every corner of our mind. Uncontrolled, scattered thoughts are like a speeding car: unless you brake, you'll crash. An uncontrolled mind is tense, worried and stressed. This causes a lot of damage. We need to put on the brakes if our minds are to work naturally. A natural mind is peaceful and a peaceful mind brings clarity. When we see things clearly there is no waste because we become mentally economical. The mind is not burdened with unnecessary

thoughts. The biggest disease of the mind is over-thinking, especially too much thinking about others: what they did, what they should do, what they should have done, what they said, what you wished they'd said, why they spoke at all. All of these rob the mind of its inherent serenity.

Thinking too much is like eating too much. The heaviness makes it impossible to remain light and flexible. We get stuck on little things and gradually, the little things become huge things which we cannot shake off. Often when we think too much, we fantasise and overreact. Thus we create negative feelings.

It is far better to observe than to absorb every word, feeling and attitude, to get over-involved or react too much. Observing gives us the patience and the clarity to think and act appropriately. Observing creates an inner focus that allows us to see reality.

We are constantly being influenced by the words and opinions of others. To bring peace back into our minds we need to journey inward. This re-balances us and stops us from wasting energy. We learn to think before speaking and to observe before acting. Without doing this the extremes of thought, speech and action eventually create disorder - emotionally, mentally and physically. This disorder brings tiredness, stress, restlessness and fear.

If we do not control ourselves, other people will. We do not like this. We react. We complain. Our tempers may explode. Unless we learn to journey inside and master ourselves, then others will definitely master us.

A brake on the mind means a brake on the tongue. Our thoughts and our words are closely connected, for what we think will lead to what we say. Our words - positive or negative - do affect others. If our words are harsh or critical, people react, giving back in turn what they received. This ping-pong game of words and emotions occurs daily and is exhausting. Some days it is more like kickboxing than ping-pong!

As are our thoughts, so is our consciousness; and as our consciousness, so is our life.

If we plant a positive, clean seed of thought and concentrate on it, we give it energy, like the sun gives to a seed in the earth. And as the seed in the earth awakens, stirs and begins to grow, the thoughts on which we concentrate awaken, stir and begin to grow. So let us sow positive thoughts.

Each morning before we begin the journey of our day, let us sit still, in silence, and sow the seed of peace. Peace is harmony and balance. Peace is freedom - freedom from the burden of negativity and wastefulness. Let peace find its home within us. Peace is our original strength, our eternal tranquillity of being.

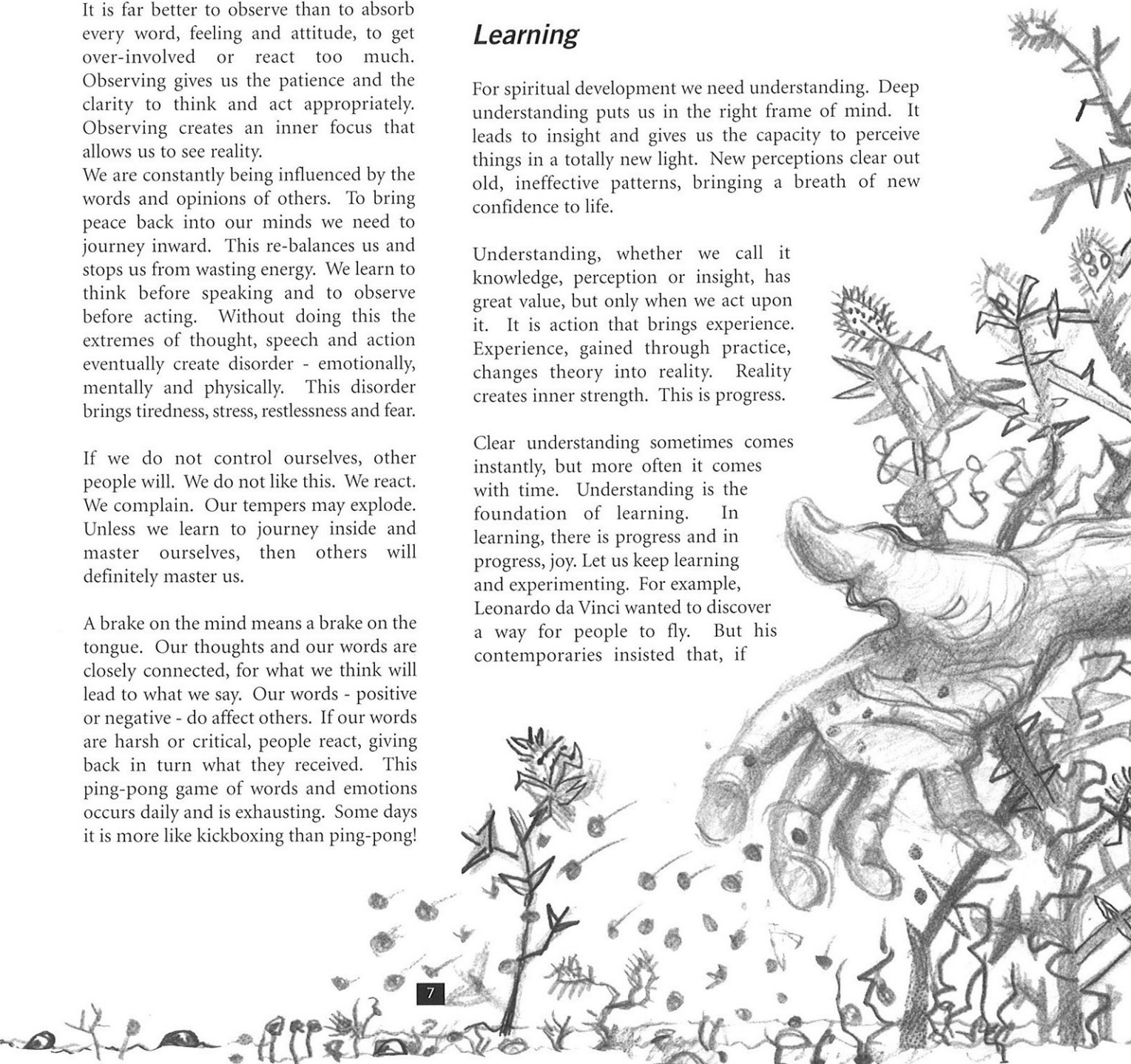
Let your first thought of the day simply be peaceful. Plant this seed. Water it with attention and you will gather the calm.

Learning

For spiritual development we need understanding. Deep understanding puts us in the right frame of mind. It leads to insight and gives us the capacity to perceive things in a totally new light. New perceptions clear out old, ineffective patterns, bringing a breath of new confidence to life.

Understanding, whether we call it knowledge, perception or insight, has great value, but only when we act upon it. It is action that brings experience. Experience, gained through practice, changes theory into reality. Reality creates inner strength. This is progress.

Clear understanding sometimes comes instantly, but more often it comes with time. Understanding is the foundation of learning. In learning, there is progress and in progress, joy. Let us keep learning and experimenting. For example, Leonardo da Vinci wanted to discover a way for people to fly. But his contemporaries insisted that, if



God wanted humans beings to fly, He would have made them with wings, like the birds; that our place is on the ground. In spite of this, Leonardo kept on trying. Leonardo did try and though he failed, his determined attempts in the face of all opposition are still remembered today. Four hundred years later, the airport in Rome is named the Leonardo da Vinci airport.

We never know enough. There is always something to discover. There is always something new to learn.

Patience

Patience is the willingness to work with the process of growth. The good, the positive and the true cannot be attained immediately or automatically, they require time and some form of process. Sometimes we have to act, but sometimes we have to wait. People often try to force things to happen. Occasionally force works, but then we are not left with the feeling of true accomplishment. If every inch of success is gained through a battle or a conflict, the victory is hollow.

The best results do not only depend on ourselves or our own input. Success comes from learning to let things be: not just situations, but especially letting people be. I must certainly do, but I must not be attached to the doing itself. It is attachment to what we do that limits the success of the results, because the attachment or desire for particular results robs action of its purity.

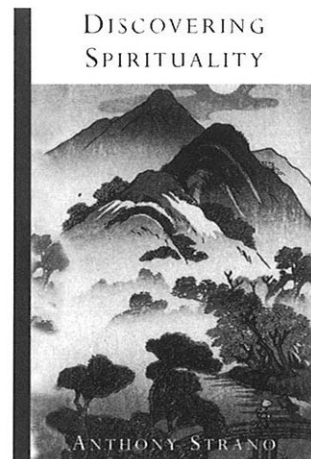
How does the gardener work? The gardener selects his ground and, according to the season, plants the appropriate seeds. He likes his work: he tills the soil, sows the seed, then waters the plant; but ultimately, he knows that it is up to nature to manifest her miracle of life. The gardener must always be attentive, making sure there is enough water, that the insects do not attack, but he cannot dominate the process. He co-operates and assists nature, but he must not interfere. The most beautiful garden is a product of the partnership between himself and nature; he aligns himself to her laws, understanding when to step in and when to wait.

True success is always based on a partnership. A real partnership recognises not only the role of the self but also the role of other people. We allow others to make their contributions without ignoring our own responsibilities. People forget to keep the balance.

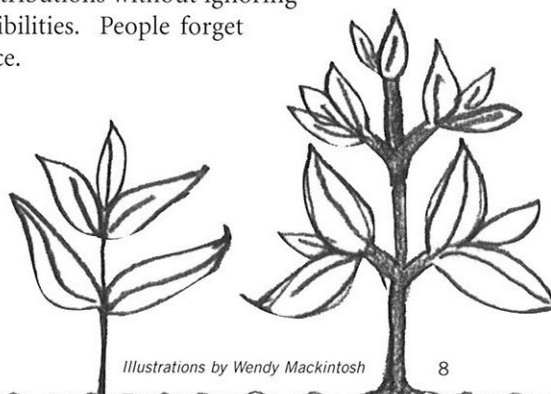
The gardener has to understand the law of balance, otherwise he will do too much or too little, and the beauty and productivity of the garden will be diminished. The gardener has to have respect for time. He must have the patience to wait for the right reason to plant his flowers, because if particular seeds are planted at the wrong time or in the wrong place, then no amount of attention will matter. Still, patience along is not enough. Patience without understanding what is appropriate means that the waiting is not aligned to the truth of a situation.

Inactivity and patience are not the same thing. Inactivity could be apathy, and apathy comes when there is no desire to make effort or to commit yourself.

We should plant the seeds of right action and water them with responsibility and attention, but never force things because of self-centred desires. Selfish desires ruin the crop we wish to reap. There cannot be success in terms of happiness and well-being, if one is constantly interfering and manipulating what should be left alone. We must work with respect for the natural process. With this respect, the inherent good emerges from all things. ❧



Anthony Strano is Director of the Brahma Kumaris in Greece and Eastern Europe



Illustrations by Wendy Mackintosh

A QUIET REVOLUTION

In her book A Quiet Revolution, Frances Farrer tells the true story of a cool school which has put values into the heart of education. It is a story of everyday life in an extraordinary Oxfordshire primary school where a programme of positive values is bringing remarkable changes in the lives of children and adults.



Honesty, respect, happiness, responsibility and peace are among the twenty-two positive concepts woven into the curriculum at West Kidlington School near Oxford.

Introduced by former headteacher, Neil Hawkes, this innovative values programme teaches children to deal with complex situations from a position of inner strength and self-respect.

The positive values work at West Kidlington has won high praise from teachers and parents alike. Even school inspectors, traditionally concerned mainly with academic tests and results, note the high quality of the children and the harmonious atmosphere in the school, and say it contributes to the excellent academic work done there.

In this extract from the book, Neil Hawkes recalls his arrival at Kidlington and Frances Farrer goes on to describe the approach which the school takes to integrating values into the educational programme.

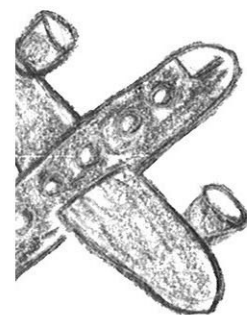
Arriving - Neil Hawkes

I came to West Kidlington Primary School in 1992 from the post of chief inspector of the schools advisory service on the Isle of Wight. Many found this decision incomprehensible since the status of inspector is much greater than that of schoolmaster and the usual career path would regard such a move as backwards. However, I had spent enough time looking at schools and their difficulties and was becoming

more and more clear about how I saw the future. It was time for me to get back to the practical, hand-on world of the classroom and see how much of my vision could reach practical realisation.

Kidlington is a village that has become more or less a dormitory suburb for the city of Oxford. It was built mostly in the 1930s and is not especially wealthy. Indeed the school population includes many from single parent homes and the children often need special help with early learning skills such as reading, as well as with their emotional distresses. Kidlington is famous because the millionaire businessman Sir Richard Branson has a home there and because it has an airport for private light aircraft which claims to have more take-offs and landings per square metre of airstrip per day than any other airport in the world except London Heathrow (although none of this has any noticeable impact on the 480 children of West Kidlington Primary School). In common with most of the people of the area, I find my way into Sir Richard's garden for the parties he generously gives in the summer for locals, and my attempt to thrust a petition for funds into his hands is skilfully foiled.

When I arrived at the school there was an expectation that I would generate new ideas. We needed a shared vision about creating a school of excellence. Aspects of the curriculum needed to be co-ordinated and the staff were working somewhat independently, so the immediate task was to define their roles and get them to work together. Curriculum managers had to be trained. The school needed re-energising. Two years before I arrived it had suffered a dramatic change in the form of a fire and some classes were still being held in temporary buildings. Perhaps the fact that we had to have so much rebuilding offered some sort of metaphor for the restructuring that we did elsewhere. Another visual change came when the parents voted to return to having a school uniform. It is blue and red, bright and functional, and it helps to weld the community together as well as ensuring that children who are not well off do not stand out.



Betty Brands - Teacher

Before I came here I thought discipline was something head teachers did, but here we all do it and nobody raises their voice. If a child hasn't done the desired action or behaviour you just have to speak to them and that by itself will upset them so much they don't do it again. It takes a lot of work and a lot of trust from the child. There's no need to raise your voice. I must say it's bizarre! I've never seen it before, a place where there's no need to raise your voice. I've seen both ways - I've seen the inner city sort, screaming and shouting down a corridor, and I've also seen this. It's so lovely to come into a school and just walk, and the children are walking. It's lovely not seeing the bullying. They're all little individuals, and that's the most powerful thing, they're being who they are, to the best they can.

Comments from visitors

First visitor

The quietness is impressive. It's not usual to see a primary school with no noise, but with the silence not being enforced. The children are working quietly but there's no feeling of being kept down, they're very confident - and yet they're very polite.

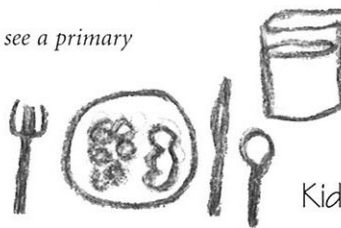
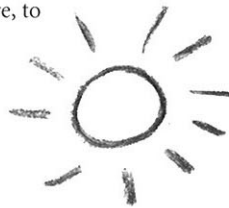
I asked a child which of her teachers she liked the best and she said, "I like all the teachers." I found that marvellous! In other schools children will always say, "I hate so-and-so." They've always got someone they don't get on with, but here it really doesn't seem like that. Another very unusual thing is that when you talk to the children they don't immediately answer, they think first. Such confidence! The answer they give you has been considered. The children are a lot more relaxed, so they're more receptive. They feel valued because of the way they're treated, so their self-esteem is great.

Second visitor

It's right to put the values first. It seems so obvious. Education is so concerned with targets that we're losing sight of the children as people: at the moment they're just numbers. Do we really want a nation (of children) who can write a story in 45 minutes, and do we really think that's all that matters? It's like having to produce so many cars an hour. The values deal with what's inside. Literacy and numeracy is the next layer; they're not the first. We've ignored what's inside for a long time.

US Researcher

A clear sense of purpose is apparent even from a very short visit. There are so many reminders of it. I walked in this morning to see the word care in the hall, and it's everywhere - you go into the classrooms and you see common themes expressed. Not every school has a common commitment to a mutual goal; the great thing here is cohesiveness. In this environment there's no sense of upset, of people with different agendas headed in different directions. The interesting thing is that it isn't imposed from above, there wouldn't be unanimity of purpose if it were. The structure has encouraged discussion and co-operation.



One of the teachers, Linda Heppenstall says, "The good rules have lasted because they work", and on this there was consensus.

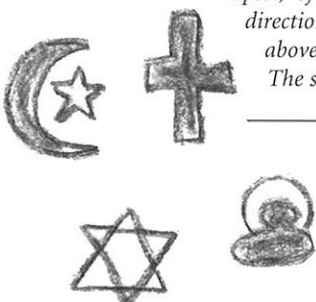
This is the basis of the Kidlington blueprint and the foundation of the quiet revolution.

Identifying key values

Linda Heppenstall was asked to produce 22 key values, one for each month of a two year cycle. Thus there are 22 peerless building blocks for the lives of all the children and the adults at the school. Values such as love and truth and hope, which are examined and re-examined and their outcomes assessed in terms of behaviour and perception. This structure for living could hardly be stronger. Such emphasis is like building a house on firm foundations, eating only wholesome food, or absorbing enough sunshine.

The 22 values at the heart of the programme are

quality, co-operation, unity, understanding, peace, honesty, happiness, appreciation, hope, courage, patience, love, caring, friendship, humility, thoughtfulness, simplicity, tolerance, trust, responsibility, freedom, respect.



Developing the Values Programme

The discussion of complex, abstract concepts is not something usually associated with young children and yet it turns out that five-year-olds are indeed able to consider quite complicated hypothetical situations. An example of this is offered by conversations on 'Who is your friend?', which are undertaken in depth by Year One children in a class conversation called circle time, when the children sit on the floor and the talk is led by their teacher. The questions begin, "Who is your friend?", "What do you like about your friend?" and "What do you enjoying doing with your friend?" In later years they move to more and more complicated problems such as, "What if you friend asked you to do something you did not want to do, would they still be your friend?" and ultimately the very taxing, "What if your friend said they wouldn't be your friend if you didn't do the thing they wanted you to do, would you do it then?" The example they use is emotive indeed, "What if your friend said they would not be your friend if you didn't share their cigarette".



A place for children

The children are given the tools with which they can clearly see their own part in the social world in which they live and their own contribution to its harmony. They are given them in such a way that they can make the necessary adjustments to their lives without feeling that if they have behaved inappropriately they have failed. They can adjust from a position of strength and self-esteem. They can say to themselves dispassionately, this course of action didn't work, then how shall I do it differently? How can I put it right? The foundation is this: the children of West Kidlington School stand straight with the world, they know who they are, and they know that they are valuable (this has nothing to do with ego). From this point they can make choices, they can do a great many things. The term self-esteem currently in constant use is one



they don't need to worry about since they have it already. The self that is esteemed can be defined: the best of themselves is admirable, less happy aspects are allowed or persuaded to disappear, leaving the virtuous core of the child intact.

Running parallel with the evolution of the classroom materials and the daily discipline of reflection for the school, either as a whole or in separate classes, was a strong feeling that the teachers needed some guidelines too. The logic of the values programme determines that demands made upon children must not be greater than those made upon adults. The teachers needed their own structure to support their own aspirations, and after thought and discussion they arrived at a definition of the effort they felt they must make for themselves. Here is a summary, and it is equally applicable to home life as it is to the school.

The values programme tool kit

Step 1: *have a clear understanding of what spirituality means*

Begin to develop an understanding of your inner world of thoughts, feelings and emotions. This is your spiritual world. A clear understanding of your own spirit will enable you to develop an understanding of the concept of spirituality, which is at the heart of values education.

What is spirituality?

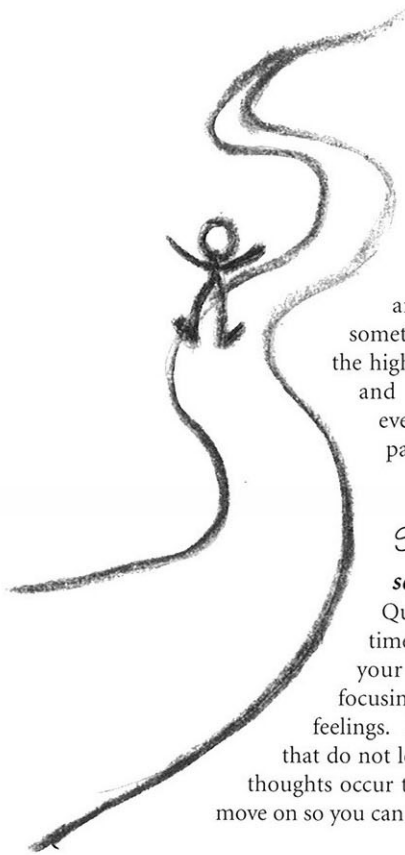
We are beings made up of body and spirit. We are aware of our bodies and a moment's thought will make us similarly aware that we are conscious beings, with ideas and powerful emotions. They are the essence of our spiritual world - of spirituality.

We can think of ways to develop the physical body or the intellectual mind, but what about the spirit? If the spirit is not developed we grow into incomplete adults, in just the same way as if the body and mind are not developed we will not be able to lead full and contented lives.

How can we begin to understand what our spirit is? Imagine a delicious chocolate with an almond centre. The wrapping is like the body, attractive and eye-catching. The chocolate represents the conscious mind, and at the centre the nut, or nugget, is the same for everyone. It is the source of qualities and virtues such as love, trust, truth and peace: it is the higher self.

It needs to be nurtured to affect the quality of our own and other people's lives.





We can appreciate that each of us has a spirit. It is possible to say, "I don't know your name but I recognise who you are," as an acknowledgement of something we all have and can all share, the higher self, the spirit. It is within each of us and it accepts that we are more than the everyday roles we play such as husband, wife, parent or teacher.

Step 2: get to know your spiritual self

Quiet reflection is the route. Give yourself time to be with yourself and begin to explore your spiritual being by sitting quietly and focusing on aspects of yourself that create good feelings. Make sure to create thoughts and images that do not lead to a critical frame of mind. If negative thoughts occur to you, acknowledge them and ask them to move on so you can concentrate on positive ones.

Then hold meetings with yourself.

Give yourself regular, quiet, reflective times to put you in touch with your spiritual self, create well-being and help you to be in control of your life.

During reflection, consider qualities such as humility, respect, responsibility and love. What do they mean? Are you aware of them within yourself? They may be hidden. Over time you will reach your higher self, and know and appreciate your spiritual identity. The method is simple and only needs a commitment to put aside a regular time for practice.

Step 3: have a desire to grow spiritually

Getting to know yourself is hard work; it is a lifetime's journey. Be on that journey. The rewards are enormous as you become more objectively self-aware and self-confident. If you teach, you will find that your teaching will improve and be less stressful as you concentrate on the positive rather than beating yourself up for perceived failures. Learn to praise yourself!

When you are on this journey, you consciously and unconsciously begin to show your inner self, your best self. You become a model for others, an example, and children recognise and respond to it. For instance, as you develop the quality of respect within yourself you may see your children differently, as equal beings sharing a learning experience with you. They will notice and respond with respect.

The more you raise your inner, spiritual qualities, the more you will raise the self-respect and self-esteem of children and adults around you. This follows when you appreciate your children, you are honest with them and you trust them. Without self-esteem there is no learning progress.



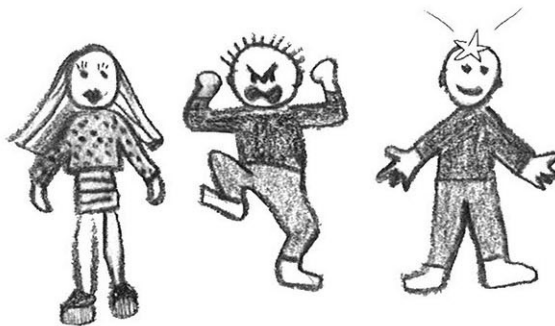
Step 4: communicate with others on a spiritual level

As you become more aware of your spiritual self you will find you are more likely to communicate with others spiritually. You begin to see people at a level not dominated by appearance. You are less likely to think of people from the viewpoint of your own selfish ego.

How do people communicate?

Usually at three points:

- through appearance (nice but transient).
- through personality/emotion (can be very nice but can also be painful).
- spiritually. This is what we really want: a deeper, spiritual connection with unconditional love and acceptance. When you communicate with people at this level it will be evident in everything you do and say, manifest in your interactions and your relationships.



It is important to communicate with children spiritually too. You will find that they respond appropriately without realising why. They will have respect for you. If you are a teacher, they will consider you to be a good teacher, and you will find the job of teaching becomes easier and more fulfilling.

Step 5: actively teach others

Plan to develop your children's ability on all the steps given up to now. Emphasise:

- stillness, calm and reflection.
- monthly values, through well-planned assemblies, class lessons and circle time (if you are a teacher), stories that penetrate deep layers of human experience and discussion of values, both at home and at school.
- the children's spiritual core.



Conclusion

Developing the spiritual climate of home and school for values education requires total commitment. In a school, it follows that the head teacher must model values education for the staff, and the school as a whole must walk its talk. Children are quick to spot inconsistencies. Do not expect behaviour from a child that you are not prepared to offer yourself.

If you are dedicated to raising standards you cannot ignore spiritual development. And if you work on that, you are committed to developing the whole individual, child or adult.

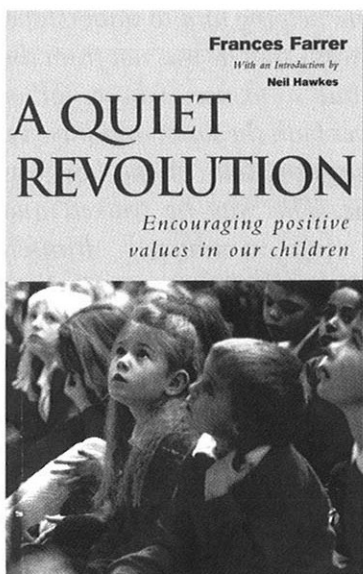
The school is a microcosm of the world. What is created in school today can provide a glimpse of how our world can be tomorrow.

The values programme in practice

With the values programme in place, the staff at West Kidlington Primary School find that they like the ethos of honest hard work, the parents like their motivated, happy children and the children like the clarity and security of shared values. The whole school works well and the teachers say again and again how much the programme has enhanced and simplified the work in the school and also their own lives. In response to questions about the work put into devising the 22 words, they say that it was time-consuming but engrossing and has made their lives much easier. It is quite simply easier for everyone within the school community to be working from the same point outwards and for that central point to be seen to be energising and positive. It makes life clear and takes away the fuzzy edges.

The Quiet Revolution by Frances Farrer, published by Rider Books at £9.99

To order a copy of the book P&P free telephone 01206 255 800



THE KIDLINGTON BLUEPRINT

The child as reflective learner.

The practice of contemplation, reflection and consideration before taking action.

Adults as partners in and supporters of children's growing-up and development.

The building of mind, body, heart and soul.

The work of the adult world: to enable the next generation to grow positively, strongly and joyfully.

Emotional stability at school and in the home.

Sensitive listening.

Calm discussion.

Spiritual endeavour.

As a result of one of the creative sessions based on values, children were asked for a piece of written work. Eleven-year-old Alex brought in the honesty rap.

Being honest is the right thing to do,

Being honest with your friends and honest with you,

So brighten up and be the best,

If you work on it you'll be better than the rest.

Honesty is a real nice feeling,

Tell the truth and you'll hit the ceiling,

Tell a lie and you'll regret it,

It's no good saying, "I never did it."

How do you feel when you tell a lie?

Doesn't it make you want to die?

Stealing is a bad thing to do,

We don't do it, why should you?

Do what's right and you will see,

Be honest, and happy is what you'll be.



Illustrations by Wendy Mackintosh



John Wilson tells a royal tale and draws out some powerful insights.

THE KING AND THE WOLF BOY

There was once a King whose palace stood near a forest. It happened one day that the young prince of the Kingdom was out playing and was kidnapped by a wolf. Having fallen among a pack of wolves, he was brought up by them and grew up out in the jungle. After a long time the King was out hunting and chanced to see a child among the wolves. The King chased them on horse back and, seating the child on the horse, took him back to the palace. As the prince had grown up, his appearance and habits had changed. His hair had become long and dirty. He made noises like an animal as if he had become one of them. It flashed into the King's mind that this was the very same prince who had

disappeared all those years ago. The child was thoroughly cleaned and given bright new clothes. He was given to a tutor who taught him how to talk and behave. The tutor worked with him, helping him to understand who he was - that he was not from the jungle but a prince, whose father ruled over both the forest and the city. The transformation in the boy was dramatic. The way he walked and talked and conducted himself changed entirely. He came to believe in his own greatness, that he was a prince and everything changed accordingly.

Psychologist Erich Fromm said that “the deepest need of man is the need to overcome his separateness”. Separateness is ‘the awareness of aloneness’ and “Man of all ages and cultures” according to Fromm “is confronted with the solution of one and the same question; the question of how to overcome separateness, how to achieve union, how to transcend one’s own individual life and find ‘at-onement’”. His view is that “there has been a disintegration of love that can overcome separateness in contemporary western society” and that this is the deepest problem.

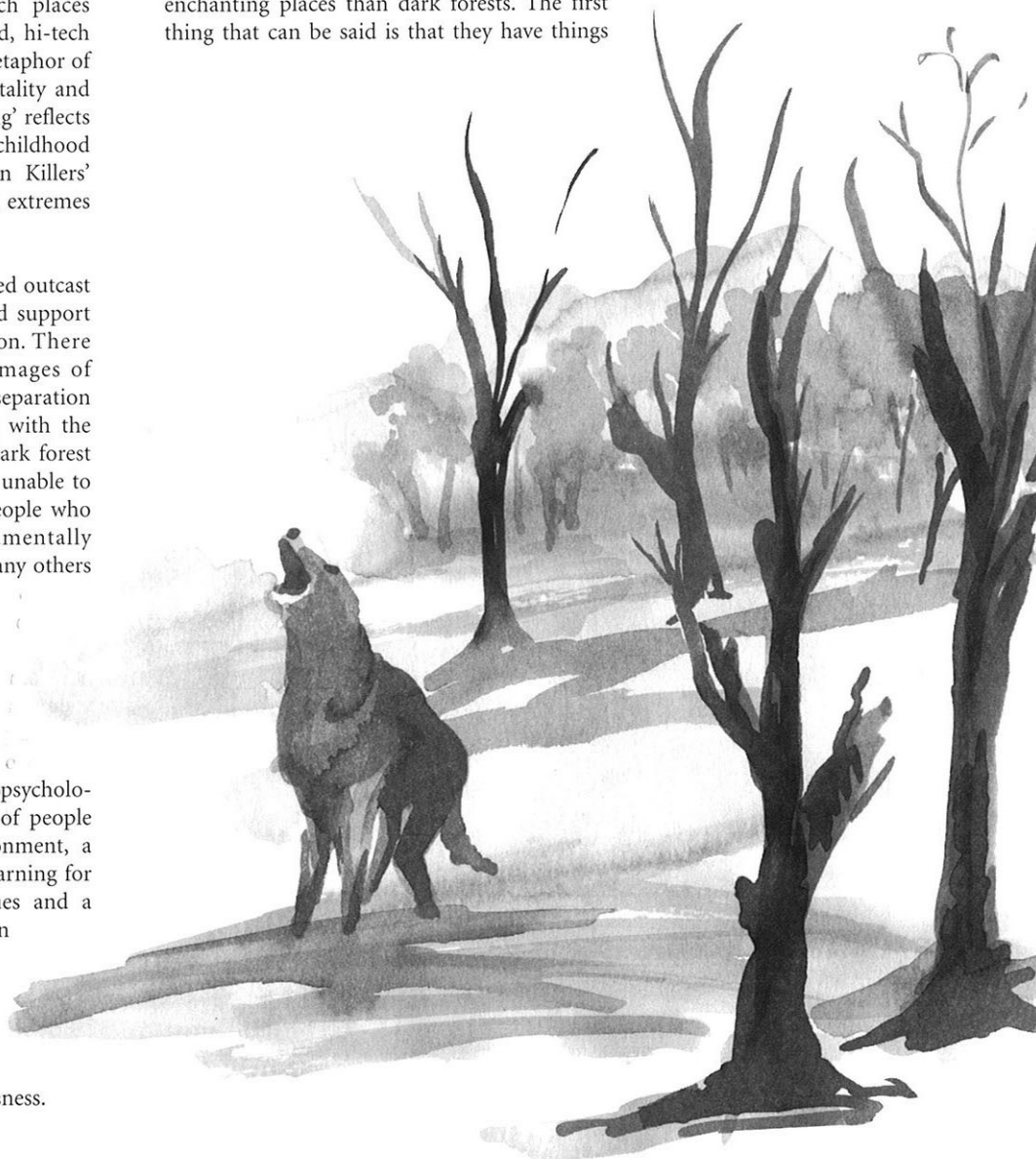
This theme of separation is also seen in the existentialists, like Sartre in ‘La Nausee’, Camus in ‘L’Etranger’ and ‘The Exile and the Kingdom’. “Resign yourself” said Kafka “to being a stranger”. Man is alone, a stranger to himself, and the spiritual isolation leads to a kind of nihilism in life. More recent versions of the theme in popular culture can be seen in Scott Ridley’s ‘Bladerunner’ which places modern man in a soulless, alienated, hi-tech jungle. ‘Apocalypse Now’ uses the metaphor of a war as a jungle of alienation, brutality and meaninglessness. ‘Good Will Hunting’ reflects a kind of emotional jungle of early childhood abuse. Oliver Stone’s ‘Natural Born Killers’ depicts the jungle at its pathological extremes where insane acts are celebrated.

The modern hero is often an alienated outcast lost in a hostile world, which would support Fromm’s view of the human condition. There are no shortages of these hard images of disenchantment. We can say that separation leads to a kind of disenchantment with the world. The world becomes like a dark forest jungle with the experience of being unable to find a path out. There are many people who believe that the world is fundamentally disenchanted. And yet there are many others who believe that there can be a re-enchantment in the world and in life.

Psychology has another, more modern and everyday language for this kind of separation. Thomas Moore talks of “the problems that psychologists hear of everyday” and that is of people complaining of a “vague disillusionment, a meaninglessness, an emptiness, a yearning for personal fulfilment, a loss of values and a hunger for spirituality”. The modern condition is not unlike the wolf boy’s condition of being lost in a dark forest and unable to find a way out. There is a problem with a separation and disenchantment that comes from a spiritual homelessness.

Returning to the story. There is a boy who gets lost in a jungle that is not a very enchanting place. He began at the palace and was of noble heritage, but was orphaned out into the jungle and became half boy and half beast. He is not naturally of the forest or jungle, but has been orphaned out into that environment and into a step-family. The problem for the wolf boy is that he came from a palace and has been exiled. He has experienced the ‘fall of life’ into a world more cruel than expected. He has become an orphan. In this story it is the halfness of the boy that is interesting. When the boy leaves the palace he falls from a kind of wholeness into halfness and he has to return to wholeness once again. The halfness (half boy half beast) is a code for not being whole. It suggests the experience in life of being exiled from the spiritual side of our nature, away and separated from the inheritance of wholeness.

The King takes the boy back to a palace where he rediscovers his noble heritage. We are starting to think of a re-enchantment. It gets a little difficult here as it is harder to talk of the softer world of enchantment than the hard world of disenchantment. There is a return in this story. What would the palace be? We would have to say that palaces are much more enchanting places than dark forests. The first thing that can be said is that they have things



such as fountains, gardens and lakes which are all symbols of the spiritual realm. The Palace symbolises an inward journey of the mind, heart and spirit that can lead into a new form of existence. When we think about the palace (and enchantment) we begin to think of a place to cultivate the soul and to get back in touch with that spiritual side of our nature. The palace is like coming back into a sense of right relationship and connection with the 'self' and with the spiritual realm that was forgotten.

The jungle is a 'wilderness' for the soul and the palace is where the concerns of the soul take a higher place. When the wolf boy comes back to the palace the main revelation is that he was of 'a higher nature than he had supposed'. The palace is an opportune time to go inwards and cultivate the soul. You could start to think of re-enchantment in this way. When a person starts attending to their soul and noticing the things of the soul once again, they start to find valuable things about their nature that had been buried away or forgotten. These aspects of the soul are like an inheritance or a form of riches and wealth that had been lost in the dark forest.

The poor and orphaned condition has created a separation from this wealth that has led to disenchantment. When the wolf boy returns to the palace he is returning to all of these things for which he has been longing.

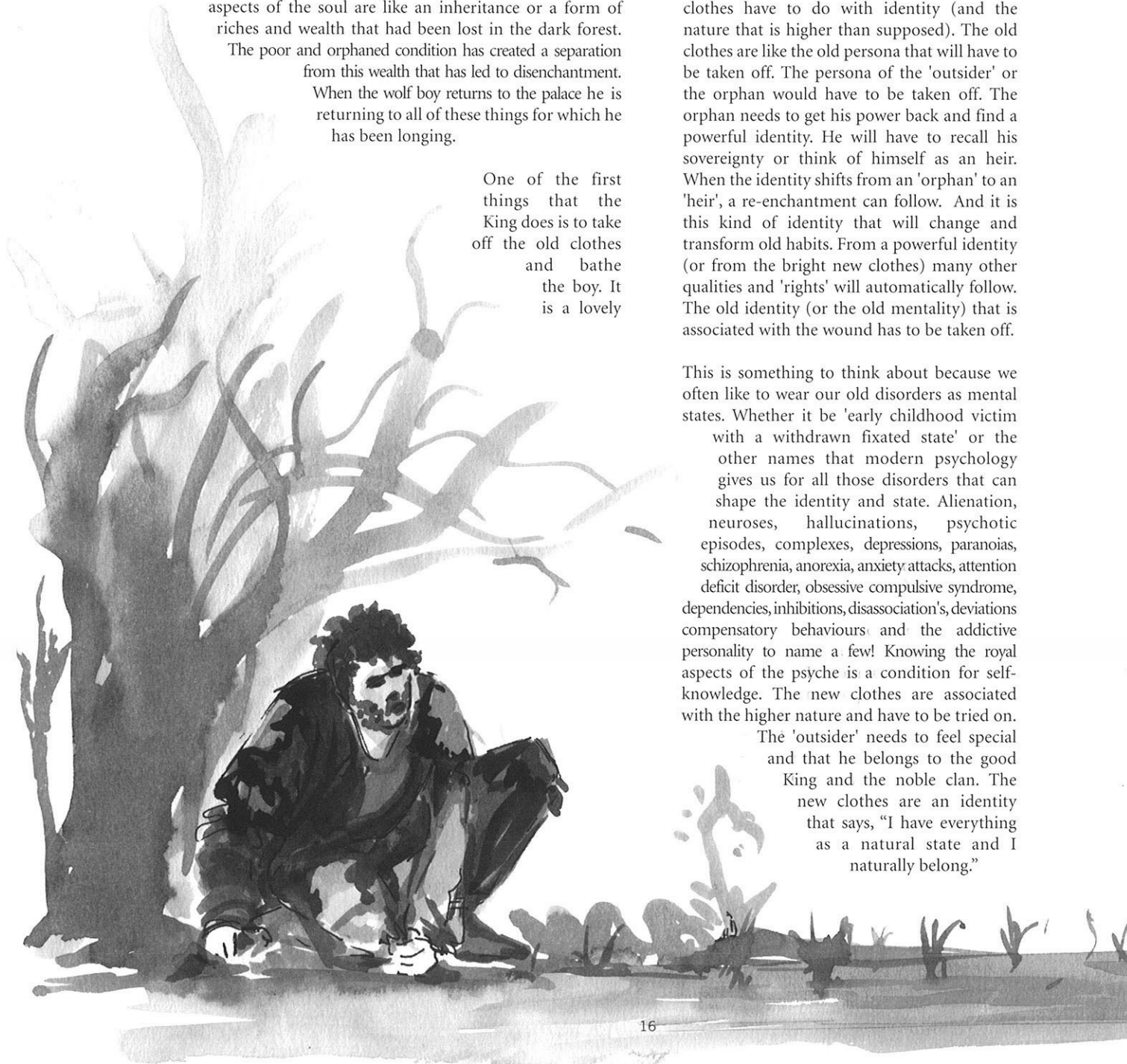
One of the first things that the King does is to take off the old clothes and bathe the boy. It is a lovely

aspect of the story, how the King brings the boy back to the palace and bathes him. He is not in a good condition and there are the wounds from the jungle. Bathing symbolises the heart. The heart needs to be comforted and the heart needs to be washed with love. We go back to Fromm, "it is love that overcomes separateness". Bathing is like the gentle patient work of the heart where the wounds of separateness are cleansed or attended to. These wounds could be of abandonment, betrayal, neglect, disillusionment, loneliness or fear. The wounds are a kind of separation anxiety and the soul needs pure love and pure experiences to heal these wounds.

The good King in this story bathes the boy and then gives him new clothes and a tutor. The bathing has to do with the heart and the new clothes have to do with identity (and the nature that is higher than supposed). The old clothes are like the old persona that will have to be taken off. The persona of the 'outsider' or the orphan would have to be taken off. The orphan needs to get his power back and find a powerful identity. He will have to recall his sovereignty or think of himself as an heir. When the identity shifts from an 'orphan' to an 'heir', a re-enchantment can follow. And it is this kind of identity that will change and transform old habits. From a powerful identity (or from the bright new clothes) many other qualities and 'rights' will automatically follow. The old identity (or the old mentality) that is associated with the wound has to be taken off.

This is something to think about because we often like to wear our old disorders as mental states. Whether it be 'early childhood victim with a withdrawn fixated state' or the other names that modern psychology gives us for all those disorders that can shape the identity and state. Alienation, neuroses, hallucinations, psychotic episodes, complexes, depressions, paranoias, schizophrenia, anorexia, anxiety attacks, attention deficit disorder, obsessive compulsive syndrome, dependencies, inhibitions, disassociations, deviations compensatory behaviours and the addictive personality to name a few! Knowing the royal aspects of the psyche is a condition for self-knowledge. The new clothes are associated with the higher nature and have to be tried on.

The 'outsider' needs to feel special and that he belongs to the good King and the noble clan. The new clothes are an identity that says, "I have everything as a natural state and I naturally belong."



The King bathes and washes the boy, gives him a 'bright new set of clothes' and then gives him a 'tutor'. Tutor implies an education. Education means to lead someone out, to draw something out of someone. The psyche would have to be lifted out of its old worldview and led into another. It could be imagined that the education of the soul includes a widening, broadening and deepening of the worldview which is a prerequisite for getting out of the jungle. To see the world as a sacred place and not a hostile jungle of survival needs is a new worldview. The education brings the wolf boy into a larger story and leads him out into a re-enchanted worldview; one that is more connected to a sense of right relationships and contribution within the kingdom. There would need to be a shift in worldview from a dark jungle world to a world with a sacred reality and all of its relationships and possible contributions.

Psychologist Alfred Adler drew attention towards contribution as an aspect of psychological health. A movement from being on the isolated outside towards a new social feeling and to a feeling of giving. For Adler there needs to be "the feeling of intimate belonging to the whole spectrum of humanity." "The fuller and more mature the being" says Adler "the more this social interest determines a person's behaviour and goals." For Adler a person wants community and to contribute to the common welfare. And Adler saw isolation as leading to neurosis. "The highest degree of isolation is represented by insanity", he said. And thus he saw this 'social feeling' as a prerequisite to psychological health. The wolf boy, spiritually speaking, has to come out of the cold.

A Good King, father or God like this is absent in our society. "There is a hunger for a Good King", says Robert Bly. A long time ago God was pronounced as dead which has contributed to feelings of separation, division and chaos. "In the twentieth century since the death of God has been widely proclaimed - the orphan has been the dominant philosophical position", according to Carole Pearson. This sense of relationship with God and the divine can be seen as a way to address our real and ultimate needs, and our sentiments for ending separation and entering into a deeper

relationship and belonging. To be separated from God is disenchantment. In a dark forest world we are separated from ourselves and also from God.

The story of the King and the wolf boy reminds us that isolation and alienation occurs within our society when the spiritual dimension are missing. The Palace, the bathing, the new clothes and the tutor are all speaking of the spiritual dimension. The Good King is speaking of the true parent who can heal and unite and create a sense of relationship. "Men are restless", says St Augustine, "because they have wandered for the God of their hearts." This speaks to us in ways that are powerful and will help address the modern condition. Disenchantment increases as the sacred goes missing. The story points to the happiness of coming home to the place (palace) and the Good King we came from, but had forgotten. It is a story of the happiness of a homecoming to those relationships and feelings that have been denied out in the dark forest. The heroic path of this story is the path of coming back into spiritual relationship and belonging.



John Wilson is an author, story teller and spiritual teacher based somewhere in the mountains of Australia!



One of the unhealthiest emotions is our old friend anger. It has been connected with cancer and it destroys our ability to think clearly. Yogesh Sharda explains how we can manage it better.



ANGER MAI

What is anger, can it be overcome

If one were to ask a selection of people what triggers their anger I suspect there would be a wide range of answers. However one thing I am certain of is that whatever the cause, even a single word spoken in anger can leave an impression on a person's heart that may remain for a long time, and has the ability to ruin the beauty of any relationship.

A famous sage once said, "How can there be peace on earth, if the hearts of men are like volcanoes?" If within the person there can be peace and freedom from anger, only then can they live in harmony with others. So how can we set about creating that sense of peace within ourselves?

It starts with the realisation that we do have the choice to think and feel the way we want to. If we look at what it is that makes us angry we might discover there is nothing that has the power to make us feel this way. We can only allow something to trigger our anger - the anger is how

we respond to some event or somebody. But because we are so used to reacting on impulse, we forget to choose how we want to feel, and then respond inappropriately, leaving ourselves with angry feelings.

Have you ever heard someone saying, "I really hate it when you speak like that to me"? Or how about, "How many times do I have to tell you to do it like this?" One lesson I have learned is that try as I might I can never control circumstances, people or situations, as they are constantly changing. The only thing I can control is the way I choose to respond. Only I can increase my capacity to tolerate; only I can develop my ability to understand; and only I can nurture my love for others regardless of whether one day they praise me and the next they defame me. Modern



MANAGEMENT

..., and indeed should we even try?

day life comes with a whole host of challenges. In facing these I have come to see every interaction within our world as part of one large drama or game. And within this drama, every single individual has their own unique part to play, which is essentially an expression of their own inner self. As I come to accept this, rather than spending my time keeping an eye on what others are doing, I can begin to use my energy to play my own part to the best of my ability. I realise that I cannot possess or own the behaviour of others, because if I do, this will ultimately lead to conflict. Instead I need to practise the understanding that regardless of whatever action a person may be doing, according to their own part within the play there is some reason why they are behaving in that way. Therefore I should try not to jump to

conclusions too easily; and rather than trying to control another person's behaviour, it will be far easier and more productive for me to focus my energy on my own actions.

So what is so wrong in judging their actions? There is a danger that if we become too concerned with their activity, we may begin to feel anger toward that person, which may lead to dislike for them. We put them into some kind of box and fix a label on them. Then whenever we come into contact with that person, we will see him or her in the light of their past mistake. But in doing this, we are effectively imprisoning them in their past actions. However if we allow the person the dignity of actually growing out of their own mistake - if our vision allows them to do that - then, sooner or later, it is possible for people to change.

This concept of life being a drama can help us to detach ourselves from what's happening around us, and this detachment or space is of great help in learning not to make judgments so quickly about others. If we create a small space, a healthy space between ourself and the drama of life, we find that that space acts like a buffer. Neither will we jump out and grab someone's throat, nor will the drama of life be able to suddenly grab us unawares.

This is one of the many benefits of practising meditation. It helps us to create personal space within ourselves so that we have the chance to look, weigh up the situation and respond accordingly, through remaining in a state of self-control. When we are angry, we have no self-control. At that moment we are in a state of internal chaos, and the anger can be a very destructive force.

It is often said that anger can be a useful thing. People say, "Look at all the problems in the world, surely unless someone got angry about it nothing would happen?" It reminds me of the story about an old man sitting by a river and talking to a group of his disciples. His hand was stretched out behind him and an insect came crawling along and bit him badly. As it did so, it slipped and fell into the river. This old man looked behind him and saw the insect struggling in the river, so he picked it up and placed it back on the ground. A few minutes later, the same insect crawled over to his hand and bit him on the finger, and again slipped over and fell into the river. The old man looked round, picked it up and placed it back on the ground. When this happened a third time, one of his disciples said to him, "Master why do you do this? The insect bites you and yet you save it. Why do you not let it drown and then it won't be able to bite you?" He replied, "It is in the insect's nature to bite, it is in my nature to save." Similarly, someone's nature might be to criticise, or to backbite, or even to challenge us. Yet that is completely out of our hands. We can only do what it is that we have to do. We can't justify a negative action by saying, "Oh well, you do the same thing too." If we say that, then we are saying, "I will only grow

and change when you decide to grow and change, it's in your hands." But can growth ever happen like that? If we wait for each other to change it is likely that we will be waiting an extremely long time.

Sometimes anger is used as a kind of self-defence mechanism, a sentry guard standing outside the fortress walls of our inner selves. When anybody tries to attack or criticise us, anger pops up and demands, "Who do you think you are? Look at you!" Anger reacts. Anger is the emotion which tries to hold all the other illusions together. If anyone tries to attack what we believe in or care about, anger comes out to chase them away. This is

The only thing I can

an example of using anger to protect our simulated self, our sense of ego. However, by recognising ourselves as spiritual beings, and through the awareness and experience of the beauty of our true nature, our dependency on other people's approval reduces as we rediscover an inner stillness and stability. Thus the need for anger as our protector is eliminated.

This form of stability can create a firm foundation, a kind of positive stubbornness. Others can say whatever they want, and it may also be true, but we don't lose our peace or happiness for any reason. This is to respect what is eternal within each of us. We give ourselves the opportunity to maintain our own peace of mind, because let's face it, no-one's going to turn up at our door with a box full of peace and say, "Here, I think you could do with some of this today!"

There is a particular story about Buddha which illustrates an important principle. Buddha was under the tree of enlightenment when someone who had heard that the Buddha was an enlightened person came along to test his self-control. He came in front of Buddha and started swearing at him, calling him all the names under the sun and yet there was no reaction. Some time later this person got a bit tired so he went off and had a rest and came back and had a second go. He abused his family and hurled every insult he could think of, but there was still no reaction. He grew very tired and so asked Buddha, "I am defaming you every way I can think of, and yet you do not say anything back at me." Buddha looked up at him and said, "If someone gives you a gift, but you don't accept it, then whom is the gift left with?" This highlights a crucial insight. We have a choice. If we have taken sorrow from someone, we cannot blame the other person and say, "It's your fault, you spoke to me like this." We recognise that we do have a choice in

every moment. We can use our intellect as a filter to decide what we are going to allow to enter and what we are going to prevent from coming inside and affecting us.

Broadly speaking, there are two methods which people suggest one should try to deal with anger. Some say if you're feeling angry, then be angry as a way of expression - let it out. And indeed, at that moment we do become free from the anger, because we have let it out. However, as we deepen our understanding and experience of the way in which our consciousness works, we realise that the more we do something, the deeper that habit becomes. So tomorrow we will find it easier to become

told to bring a yogi back with him, he went searching into the forest. Eventually he found one sitting under a tree and quietly sat down next to him. After some time, the yogi opened his eyes. Alexander said to him, "I want you to come back to Greece with me." The yogi just looked at him. Alexander continued, "If you come with me you'll have your own people to attend to your needs and you will be well known throughout the land." Yet the yogi explained that he had no desire to go. So the exasperated Alexander drew his sword

control is the way I choose to respond.

angry because we have already done it today. It is like a smoker trying to give up cigarettes. When he feels like smoking, he smokes, and so he doesn't feel like smoking any more. Nice idea. But instead of removing that desire, the act of smoking has only temporarily fulfilled it, and the habit has taken an even firmer grip such that tomorrow the desire will be even stronger. So expression doesn't transform the habit or feeling.

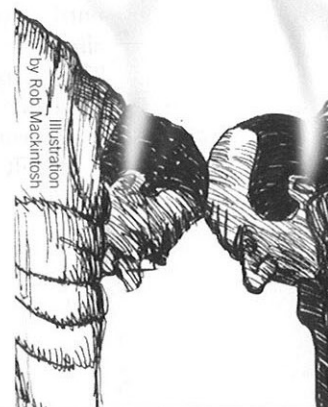
Another suggestion people might make is that you should suppress anger. If you feel yourself getting angry, stop yourself, suppress it. But this is the pressure cooker situation. I just get more and more heated up inside until I explode! I can only ever suppress for a certain period of time. And actually when I am suppressing, I am really pushing those fears and emotions into my subconscious, from where they will emerge in another form, rather like weeds.

But there is a third method, which could be described as sublimation or the changing of form. Through the daily practice and application of spiritual principles, the experience of our own inner peace can become very natural. In this way, just as the form of water can be changed from solid to liquid to gas, so too the energy which was previously being used to express and feed anger, can also be changed to the force behind the expression of determination or courage instead. Rather than being angry with someone to prove a point, we can learn to be assertive. Assertiveness contains respect for oneself, whereas anger shows respect for neither. Only by ridding oneself of anger can we become free to experience the peace of our true spiritual nature.

There is a story about Alexander the Great, as he was about to return to Greece from India. Since he had been

and shouted, "Do you not realise who I am, I am Alexander the Great Conqueror and if I want I can cut you up into pieces!" The yogi smiled and replied, "You have made two statements, neither of which are true. Firstly you cannot cut me into pieces; you may be able to injure my body, but I am the eternal soul, deathless, immortal. And secondly, you say you are Alexander the Great Conqueror, but may I tell you that in fact, you are nothing more than the slave of my slave." Alexander put his sword out to him and demanded the yogi explained himself. The yogi said, "I have conquered anger through the process of meditation, and yet look how easily anger gets the better of you. Anger is my slave and you have become the slave of anger." I never did find out what Alexander did to that yogi! ❣️

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ABUNDANCE

Living in the Vision



The first thing is to understand that abundance is a state of consciousness, it is not a sum of money, though money may be an important part of abundance. Abundance resides within us. Just as the sun shines, the sun needs nothing, the sun has everything it expresses. In the same way we are naturally abundant beings. It doesn't matter what the circumstances of our life seem to be, there is already abundance inherent within us. If we take that step from struggling to fix the outside world to one of recognising the abundance that already exists 'out here', we will see an abundant Universe. Then there is what I call 'apple prospects'; which means that sometimes there aren't any apples on the tree, but then the season comes and apples come. So every season there are apples. It is the same in our life. There may be times when

*Sean De Warren explains
the principles behind
creating all that you need
and want in your life*

there's no money in the bank or we seem to be not doing so well, and we might interpret that as being that we're not in abundance. Abundance has its own rhythm. The apples will always come.

To manifest abundance I have to start with a thought, because all manifest things, everything that you see around you - house, chair, car etc - started with a thought. So here is the key - watch your thoughts. If we start to watch our thoughts, we might be surprised to find that a lot of them really don't serve us, they're not creative in delivering for us that which we would really like. You look and you say, "I can't, I shouldn't, I mustn't do this or that, I'm poor, I don't have any friends, no-one loves me." These are thoughts of scarcity.

The easy way to manifest abundance is to live in vision. In other words, instead of struggling to get what we want, live in the picture of how we want our life to be. Again, it begins with a thought. Let me give you an example of what I call the 'camera model'. This is the model that can tell us how we can turn an idea, a thought, a vision into action. If you want to take a photograph the first thing you do is take the camera (the film in this analogy is consciousness) and point it at where you want to take the picture. Let's say you want to go to the Cayman Islands, so

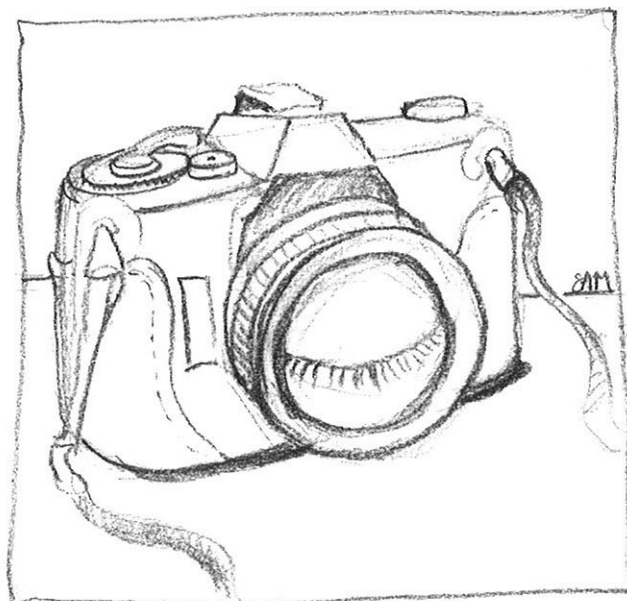
you point your camera towards the Cayman Islands, you point your thoughts towards the Cayman Islands. Now you need to focus, to get clear, exactly what you want, what sort of holiday. And when you focus, there's only one more step to take. That is the decision to do it, that is pressing the shutter. So if you decide to do it, it is already happening because everything we create within us has a way of turning outwards. You don't have to know how to do it. The Universe will handle the details. All you need is to be very clear in what you want. You've got the picture, you're clear on it and you've decided to do it. Often the decision is the hardest part because most people say, "Well I'll decide when I've got the money", or "I'll decide when I know who's going to come with me", and that's back to front. In all creation you make your decision often not knowing where the money's coming from, not knowing who's coming with you, if anybody; you just make the decision. The decision changes our life. Every time we make a new decision, we've gone in a new direction. If we make the decision, we've created a way in which the mind can go to work to bring us all of the things that we need in order to go on this holiday. If we need money, or somebody to come with us or whatever, we trust, we live in the trust that that will then happen.

So we make the decision, now all there is, is process. We've done the creative bit. The important thing in the process is not to open the camera and see how the film is doing, you'll ruin it. Just live in the knowledge that you've decided and what you decide comes about. So ultimately, you go down to the chemist and collect the film and ultimately you find yourself on the plane to the Cayman Islands. How did you get there? You had your vision, you were clear about it, you made a decision. You booked space in your diary. If your diary is full of things to do during those two weeks, or whatever period of time you've chosen, your mind is confused, you're not clear, you have confusion. If you have confusion, you confuse your creation. If you clear that space of time in your diary, now you are very clear that that's what you are doing, you're going on holiday these two weeks. We can use the same principle with every creation, whatever we're creating, if we're creating a new job, a new life, new friends, it is the same process, clear the space and live in the vision.

Yesterday's dreams are today's reality. So what we dreamt yesterday, is what's happening today. But what we didn't dream yesterday is what's happening today, in other words, we don't have anything. So if we look at our today and its lacking, it's because our dreams weren't strong enough yesterday, or we didn't have sufficient commitment to that particular dream or we were confused. It's not bad, its just something to learn from. But today's dreams are tomorrow's reality. So the question really is, "What are you dreaming today? What are you envisioning now?" Is it clear? Is it what you really want? Are you putting your attention on what you'd really like to have or are you putting your attention on what you'd like not to have? In other words, if you're putting your attention on what you want to get rid of in your life, you get more of it, because where you place your attention increases. Put yourself in what you want, rather than complain about what you don't want and thereby sustain the wrong vision. It's exactly the same principle at a spiritual level of being. What do you want to be? What qualities of character do you want to shine out. What do those qualities look like, feel like - what kind of thoughts do they stimulate? Do I want anger or peace, fear or love in my life. What you see in yourself, will eventually be in yourself.

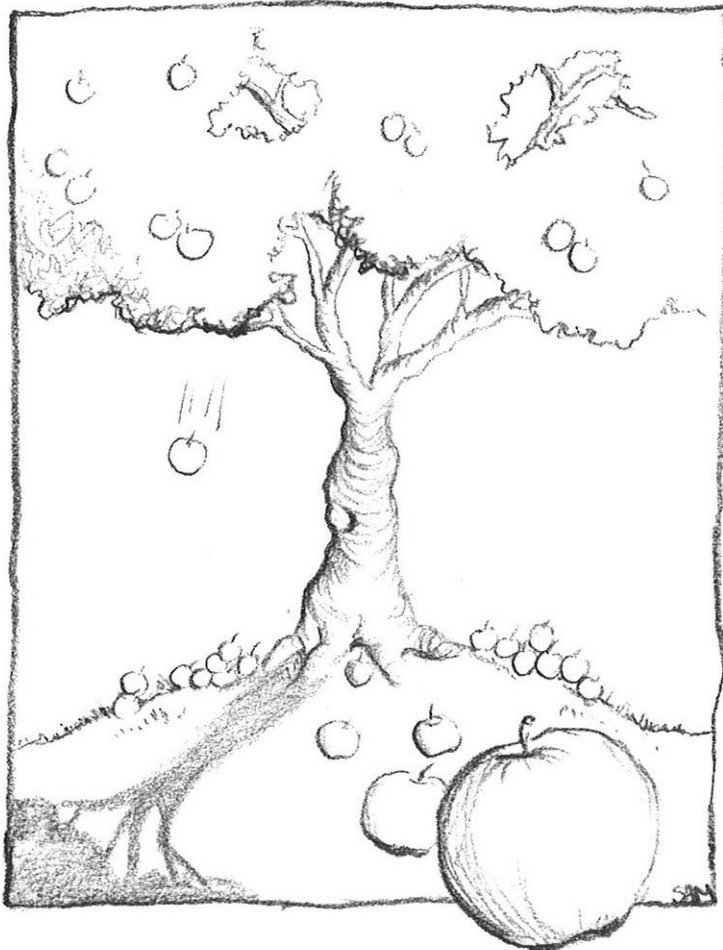
Abundance is a here and now experience. It's not something that's either past or future, it simply is. So once you've created a vision, it's already a reality to you, it is already happening. That's the same as saying, "Don't open the back of the camera to see how it's doing." It's happening. I don't need to worry about the process, I've done my part, I've had my clear vision, I've pressed the starter button. It's just that it takes time to play out in the physical Universe or in my spiritual development.

Be sparing and you have enough for one, cultivate sharing and you have enough for everybody. It's a wonderful abundance principle and what you want for others turns out to be what you get for yourself. So to want everybody to be abundant is a good thought, it's a good desire. By desiring



prosperity for all, you're opening the door for your own prosperity. It's the principle of giving and receiving, we give what we want to receive. We receive what we want to give, so they go together. You can't have just giving. If you have just giving you block the receiving. A lot of people give a lot, but they say, "Well why don't you give to me?" But that's cheating. It's not true giving. True giving is, "I give of my abundance and I'm open to receive of yours." It's a giving and receiving world. Ultimately you can only get yourself and all you're giving you are giving to yourself. In other words if I am giving gifts of money, friendship or opportunities, I'm opening the door to receive the same for me. If I am giving judgment, criticism, blame, putting people down, I can expect it back again. In other words, it's the Law of Karma, that which I give I receive. But Karma's not something to be afraid of. Watch the thought and make sure it's the highest thought, it's the most loving and most generous thought, then it will come back that way. It's important to give to yourself.

Unless we give to ourselves, who's going to give to us? Often we're sitting waiting, "Why isn't anybody giving us the things we want, why isn't anybody giving me any money, why isn't anybody giving me the love I want, opportunities I want?" The answer is, because you're not giving them to yourself. You're the person to give them to you. It starts



with you. Ask, "What is it that I want for myself? Is it love?" By loving myself I've stopped judging myself. I've stopped all the "I shouldn't be doing this, I shouldn't be doing that, I should be happier." I've stopped judging." Now that's a gift you can give yourself, to approve of yourself, to acknowledge yourself, rather than to put yourself down. We are the centre of the Universe. We create through our thinking. The question might be, "Who would I be without my stories?" Now if we could see all our stories as video tapes in our head and we were to put them aside and ask ourselves the question, "Who would I be?" we'd be left with pure abundance, pure love, pure awareness, pure consciousness. We'd have no other way of describing it. It would be the essence, the infinite. It would be the pure being, prior to incarnating through thinking. All our thoughts create incarnations, which create the personality, which create the Universe. So we might as well create a Universe for ourselves that is pleasurable to us and for others. So in the giving to others of what we would really like to have, we are in fact giving to ourselves.

If we live in anger, upset and complaint, we block all the gifts that are there for us. So many people are angry at the world, because they think it isn't giving them what they want, and you can see that the world couldn't possibly give them what they want because they're so angry. They think the world and people should treat them a certain way and so on. But what they forget is they're not treating themselves that way, they're not treating themselves lovingly, they haven't let go the armour that stops the flow. So I would recommend to those people that they dissolve their angry and resentful thoughts and realise that you cannot change the world from without, it's impossible. Change the world from within, have a better vision, have a better relationship with yourself and be willing to receive the gifts that come to you, then you can play. If we're grateful then we increase what we are grateful for. Be grateful for what you have and be grateful for all the things you're looking forward to having.

Don't be distracted by fear in any form. Fear blocks our giving and it weakens the vision. To recognise fear, understand that it means False Evidence Appearing Real. It's not actual reality. The reality is you're an abundant being, so if you live in fear it's because you have a thought, "I can't pay that

bill, I can't pay the mortgage, I have to work hard in order to pay my way," and yes that seems to be the way it is, but if we examine it we find that it doesn't have to be that way. If we return to a vision which is to see the bill paid, maybe something wonderful will open, a whole new way of doing it. When you play billiards there's 'ball in the hole thinking' or 'sequential thinking'. That is, if I hit this ball here, it'll hit that ball and that ball and that ball and then it'll hit that ball into the hole. That's sequential thinking. If I work hard, maybe I'll get some money in order to pay the bill. Now 'ball in the hole thinking' is to see the ball you want in the hole. You can do it in billiards, you can do it in golf. All the great golfers actually see the ball landing in the hole. They don't say, "If I line up my club this way, it'll do it." They say, "I see the ball in the hole, the Universe lines up the club for me." So if we live in the vision the bills are paid, we may be shown a whole new way of doing it, rather than being in the struggle of it. Then we can lift ourselves out of the fear into the creativity. It's impossible to be fearful when you're creative. Before actors go on stage most will tell you of their terror. It's called stage fright because they're in fear of missing their lines, getting it wrong, of the audience booing them. But once they're on stage the fear goes. Why? Because in the creativity of the moment the fear goes and you just walk in courage and faith. Faith means to hold the vision without there being any real evidence that it is going to turn up - that's faith. So it's the bridge between the vision and the manifestation, one day it turns up - this brings the magic back into life. It takes away the drudgery of creativity.

I find with people who are depressed and miserable, when they get in touch with their creativity, when they visualise what they want, suddenly there's a smile on their face. Suddenly their heart lightens and it all becomes possible. So what happened? The thoughts changed, that's all. They lived in a different picture. They moved from a place of doom and gloom to a place of possibility. Everything is possible, this is abundance thinking. There's nothing that isn't possible. If I can think of it, it has to be possible, because wherever there's a thought, then there's a possibility to manifest it, whatever that thought is. If you say, "I think I'll be a concert pianist" and you'll end up a concert pianist. You might have to spend twenty years practising - are you willing to do that? Or win a gold medal in the Olympics - are

If we look at our today and its lacking it's because our dreams weren't strong enough yesterday.

you willing to focus on that and go for that cutting out everything else? Is it a clear decision? To decide means to cut out every other thing. A nice idea is not enough. A lot of people have a nice idea, and say, "Well it didn't happen, see!"

We have to follow our call. It might sound callous to say, I have this call to do this, I have to go. People around them might say something like, "Wait a minute, you didn't think of me, what about me?" Yes, I did think of you, because if I didn't do this I would be angry and upset, and wouldn't be fully with you, therefore it's not in your best interest for me to hang around. It's always down to us. If I'm following my call then anybody around me is going to benefit from it, because I will be at my best. That doesn't mean that I'm throwing them away, it just means that I'm following my passion. They will benefit from that. Ultimately, we live life together; we're all part of the same whole, so prosperity is people. But you may find that if you're hanging onto people from the past, it's necessary to let them go and let the Universe take them to the right place. You don't have to hang onto the stars. You don't even have to manage the stars. If you look up at the sky, they're fine. So if we have this belief that we've got to control the world, manage the world, fix the world, drop it - it's too much of an effort. Follow what's true for you and that will be the greatest contribution. ♡

Transcribed from a talk by Sean De Warren, Life Coach and Mentor.



Illustration by Sarah McConnell

THE ART OF SEEING

Andrew Machon's photography is quite unique. His search and sensitivity to the presence of spirit in the physical world can be seen in his subtle and striking photographic images. He explains what motivates him and what he sees in the ordinary everyday world. The images in this article are from an exhibition of Andrew's art entitled 'Timeless Echoes of the Soul'. These were created to mark the end of the millennium and to affirm, in times of seemingly continuous change, the importance of a place of peace: an inner sanctuary that is to be found at the 'heart' of our own everyday busyness.



Walking high in the mountains of Andalucia in southern Spain, I was suddenly stopped by the sight of a butterfly. Effortlessly it navigated the breeze, a flick of wing, now turning to complete a wide circle, now hovering above a single flower. Gently, and with precision, it touched the centre then away again, then back to savour the nectar. In these moments, I noted that this paper-thin being had an unusual combination of grace and majesty. And its play seemed to make every complex movement simple. It appeared to trust the support of the breeze and maybe heeded some call deep inside the silence. Not only did I find this moving but I found myself becoming increasingly conscious of my breath and realised my own trust in an invisible presence that also silently sustains and feeds my life.

I always think of nature as being the work of an eternal artist. And in his presence, as I reflect, I find myself drawn back to the consciousness of the moment. As a photographer keen to learn about creation and creating, I am a seeker of moments. And in the seeking, I choose to relinquish the everyday chase of time to more fully explore the 'landscape' within the moment. I realise that time can never be captured and held in the chase but waits instead to be rediscovered in the ample space within the moment. There are many moments that I've missed and yet some I will always remember. Like the instant when I actually saw frost transforming to dew in the first light.

I realise that the craft of photography is for me a meditative practice where in capturing and creating the image I am somehow brought back 'home' to the awareness of the pace and space of the moment. And how can I know the moment? What is its measure? To seize the moment is as simple as catching one's breath, for to know the moment is to know the very contours and rhythm of the breath. I feel the moment is in fact where my consciousness is brought with attention and focus to a single point. It is simply that point of complete stillness where the past and future are made present. A point that is also a bridge, standing both in and beyond time. For all that is, that was and will be finds communion within the present moment. Imagine such a point where memory and ambition creatively converse and find expression right here, right now.

The central paradox of photography is that a moment can be captured, held in frame and observed throughout time. So in the craft of photography, moments can be experienced and examined - like insects in amber.

It is in the presence of the moment that seeing is cultivated. I consider my camera lens to be like a 'third eye'. It has a retina, a film that is sensitive to the infra-red energies of light. These wavelengths are subtle and lie beyond the normal everyday vision of my physical eyes. Through the lens of the camera I therefore trust my intuition and imagine and sense what my final image will be.

As I study each image I experience different dimensions in the moment. First, there is the dimension of matter that is the material form, shape and composition of the image. And when I print this dimension I apply the more technical aspects of photographic lore. Beyond this I am aware of a deeper level that I think of as the 'soul' of the image. This I seek to express through the subtlety of tones and grain of the print. In the depths of the moment I find myself able to experience the very geography and physiology of the soul. It is as if the moment is like a gateway where I pause, study the form and then accept the invitation to enter both within and beyond.

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I have always been curious about what draws me to a particular subject to create an image. Although difficult to express in words, I sense I am drawn by some deep creative force that silently calls to be brought into form and find expression. In responding to this call, I too feel as if I arrive at a place where paradoxically I seem to meet my inner self, who is quietly waiting to be seen and rediscovered from behind the outer everyday mask of 'the runner'. It is as if I find myself in nature's mirror. In this inner meeting, I experience peace, which I feel marks the presence of a soul friend who is my guide. This relationship within the moment reminds me of that split second where night meets day.

Photography is essentially a craft that teaches the art of seeing. Perhaps the greatest challenge for me is to be able to continually open new eyes that not only see and craft every physical detail of the image but also courageously look beyond to fully experience the soul qualities beneath. Kahlil Gibran essentially captures this when he writes in the Prophet:

*It is not the image you would see...
But rather an image you see though you close your eyes...
...beauty is life when life unveils her holy face.
But you are life and you are the veil.*

K. Gibran (The Prophet, 1926)



Every person

Andrew Machon is a Corporate Change Specialist and
Psychospiritual Psychotherapist based in London

AWAKENING THE ORACLE WITHIN

Have you ever lost your keys and then spent the next half an hour frantically scrambling around the house trying to find them? Having exhausted yourself (to no avail), you give up and decide to make yourself a cup of tea. You sit down, take your first sip and in that moment of relaxation it dawns on you that you left them in your bedside drawer yesterday, whilst the coat in which you usually keep the keys was being washed.

These types of instances can occur quite frequently, but lost in our relief at finding the keys we can tend not to reflect much upon the process that went before. However, I wonder whether such episodes reinforce the notion that many psychologists purport, namely that the capacity of the human mind is much more than our day-to-day experience may have us believe. Moreover for me it is not just a question of learning not to waste the energy of our minds but that we can remember more effectively.

on this planet has the potential
to become enlightened.

I am convinced that deep within us lives an inner Oracle - a source of wisdom within which the answers, to all of the questions which arise in our minds, can be found. However in becoming accustomed to seeking those answers from friends, teachers, family members or perhaps even from so-called experts on TV phone-ins, perhaps we have forgotten to even consider looking inside. Whilst the opinions of other people may well be valuable, I think that they can only ever give us those people's own personal perspective of the truth, which may not necessarily be the right perspective for me. At times when I have needed to make a decision and have

Ravi Khanna recalls what happened when he followed that quiet voice within



felt confused, I have found that if I really want to take the right course of action which I won't regret in the future, I must first consult the Oracle inside me. The Oracle (or my intuition) will always look to guide me, either directly, through inner feelings, or externally, by bringing individuals or circumstances to me which will make my next course of action clear.
But when the mind is in conflict, how does one hear

ignored and isolated and will stop communicating with me.

This analogy rang true for me as before I had prided myself on my ability to think through things logically and then act, after all I do have a degree in philosophy! However at the same time my decisions

▶ When the mind is in conflict, how does

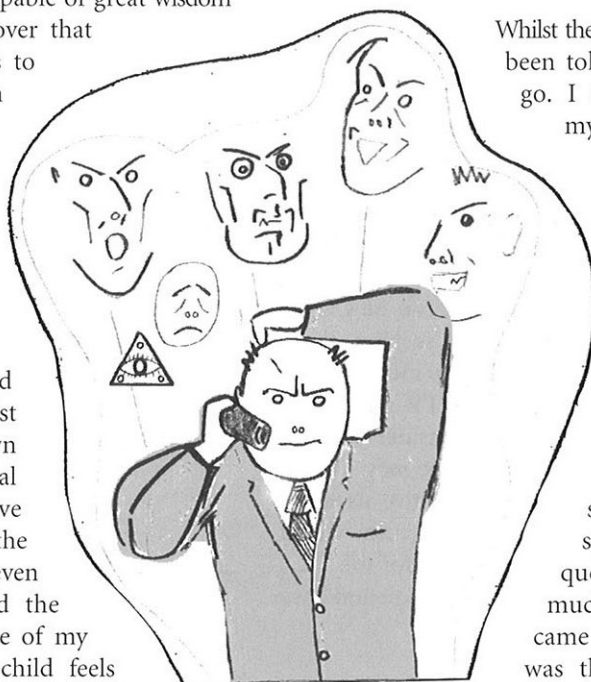
what the Oracle is trying to say?

When I was at school, I tended to think of myself as an intellectually capable student, but seriously lacking in ability when it came to the creative arts. Some years later when embarking upon my spiritual studies this belief re-emerged and I found myself feeling equally lost when trying to comprehend the subtler and non-intellectual aspects of awareness, such as being in tune with my intuition and inner feelings. Upon hearing others speak of how they were guided by their own inner voice, I initially thought that this was simply a matter of their own imagination. Later, as I became less sceptical, I decided that such insights could only be realised by people less rational or intellectual than myself.

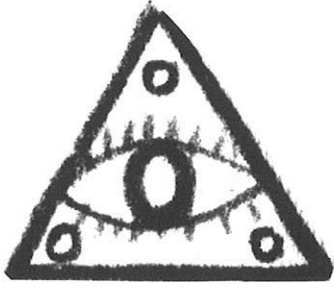
Thankfully a couple of years ago my perception began to change. I was fortunate to come into contact with a lady who described intuition as a child. She explained to me that this child is capable of great wisdom and insight, and moreover that this child's purpose is to guide me at all times in order that I may be at peace in my life and ultimately reach enlightenment. However, at the same time as being wise, this child is also very sensitive and in need of love and attention. Thus, if whilst caught up in my own analytical or emotional thoughts, I have forgotten to listen for the voice of this child, or even worse have developed the habit of acting in spite of my conscience, then the child feels

did not always work out right, even if they were logically astute. My mentor advised me to listen to my intuition and trust the message I received, rather than think my own way through my next decision-making process.

Six months later I realised I was soon to be made redundant from my job in Oxford, and whilst I was happily living amongst a very warm spiritual community there, for the sake of my career I wondered if I would be better off moving to London. My mind went through turmoil, as one day I felt I should stay in Oxford whilst the next day I felt I should move. After three months of this I was exhausted so I decided to go and live on a mountain in India for a couple of weeks.



Whilst there I remembered what I had been told and decided to give it a go. I sat by myself and asked myself the question, should I stay or go. But this time instead of reacting to the question by allowing my mind to go through the usual series of pros and cons, I then made an effort not to think, but rather to use some of the meditation techniques I knew, just to bring some stillness to my mind. In that stillness, I then placed the question and waited. Pretty much straightaway a response came into the space saying that it was the right time to make a



so have created even more noise. Rather, I just listen to the thoughts and acknowledge them, but do not devote any more energy to them. It may be that I need to make a mental note to address something later, but not now, for now my purpose is to listen, not to act. As I listen in this way I am not trying to stop the mind thinking (for I believe this to be the purpose of the mind), but rather to create some quiet space in my mind into which I can

one hear what the Oracle is trying to say?

move, and this time instead of questioning the thought in terms of what about my friends, and what job I would do in London, etc., I said OK.

I came back to Oxford, handed in my notice and within 10 days had moved into a friend's house in London. Moving turned out to be the best decision 'I' had ever made, and yet was taken on the basis of the least amount of analytical thought that I had ever applied to any decision.

So now, although I still value the opinions of a number of wise people around me, when faced with any type of decision, I have learnt to consult the Oracle more and more. The process I follow is as follows. First of all I have to make myself receptive to receiving insight from my intuition. If my mind is consumed by the noise of my own thoughts then there is no space to hear. So I sit quietly, listening to whatever physical sounds there may be around me. I then listen a little more closely - to the sound of my own breathing. As I bring my breathing under control then I am able to listen even more attentively - to the sounds of my own thoughts. My mind is constantly thinking, and often I can be so caught up in whatever I am doing that I am hardly even aware of many of these thoughts. But when I start to listen I become aware of them.

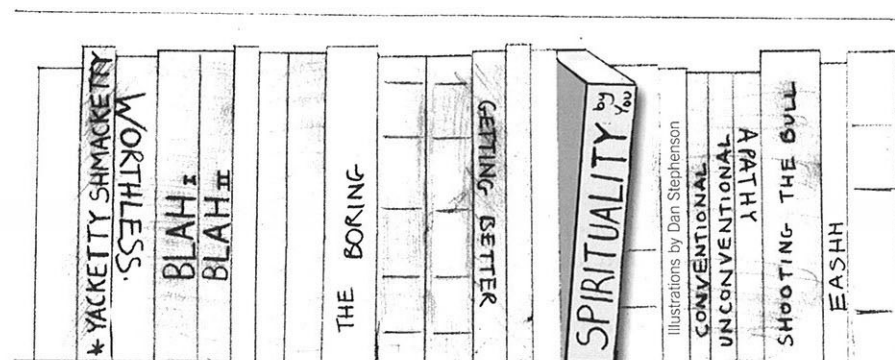
But the trick is not to become engaged in those thoughts, otherwise before I know it I have been taken down another path and am thinking about what someone said to me last Thursday afternoon, and in doing

place a question. I then leave the question suspended, if you like, in that space and just observe whatever words or images then emerge, without judging or trying to make any sense out of them.

In learning to be receptive, it has become a lot easier for me to hear the Oracle, and especially when I started acting on the advice received. My life has become so much easier. I have also felt more at peace with myself as I can live in accordance with my own truth, rather than solely on the basis of the feelings of other people, which in the past has caused me to become confused. Furthermore, when I have acted on such intuitive feelings, that decision has always proved to have worked out wonderfully well, not just for me, but for everyone else concerned as well. In my experience, I have seen how, with patience and love, I can begin to build a close relationship with this inner child, and once the child realises that I am starting to respect and listen, then he or she recognises this and starts to communicate with me once again.



Ravi Khanna is a teacher of meditation and stress management
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THE DIVINE RELATIONSHIP

Judy Pemell explores the relevance and importance of differentiation, intimacy and celibacy in our relationship with God

As we acclimatise ourselves to the new millennium, with world population tipping the scales over 6 billion and science able to fly men way out into the solar system, why is it so difficult for two people to live under the same roof in a relationship of peace and harmony?

Within all relationships, two counterbalancing life forces are always present - individuality and togetherness. Individuality propels a human being to follow her own directives, to be independent and a distinct entity, whereas togetherness propels her to follow the directives of others, to be dependent, connected and an indistinct entity. The bringing of these two forces into balance therefore shapes the nature of our relationships.

Differentiation is a term frequently employed to describe the process by which a person manages individuality and togetherness in a relationship. On a basic level this is revealed in an individual's ability, across life, to keep thinking and emotions separate, and to choose between behaviour which is governed by emotional reactivity or thinking; and to set a life course based on carefully thought out principles and goals.

A high level of differentiation allows a person to be emotionally involved with others, without losing touch with his own sense of individuality - both of which can be done simultaneously, and with profound depth. No matter what intensity of emotional and external pressure

may be applied to coerce such a person to operate in a non self-determined way, he will be able to retain his autonomy.

However, people with low levels of differentiation lack beliefs and convictions of their own, and adapt quickly and uncritically to the prevailing ideology. Even if the beliefs conflict with the facts, conviction is so fused with feeling that it becomes a cause. An individual with unresolved issues of differentiation may pursue intimacy to achieve the feeling of being fused or merged with another. This, of course, is not possible and ultimately leads to frustration, disillusionment and alienation.

Closely related to the notion of differentiation are the concepts of true self and false self. In the usual kind of relationship between two people, there will mostly be an exchange between the false self of both. This kind of exchange is called games, manipulation, control and patterns of interaction. We often refer to it as 'the fit' between a couple. As people try to reshape each other and react to one another's values, beliefs, etc., one may get the upper hand and become dominant in a certain part of the relationship, where other parts are either traded off or fought over.



The false self is vulnerable to being moulded by others and is most vulnerable in emotionally intense relationships. This is where most people have difficulty just allowing their partner to be who they are. They complain of a lack of intimacy and sexual intensity, but intimacy is about the last thing they can tolerate.

Such an individual is expressing an almost non-existent awareness of essential self and is functioning totally at the level of personality.

What is the difference between the soul and the personality?

The soul is the spiritual essence or being, that is I. When we are born into this life, the soul is emerged and pure. Babies are natural, innocent, defenceless, pure and loving little creatures.

Children and adults alike find these qualities very attractive. As we grow, we begin to develop personality or ego defences, as a way of resisting the pain experienced from little hurts or rejections and, in many cases, to resist the pain of trauma, abuse and neglect. Personality forms around the soul, in a sense, and builds up as layers and layers of defence mechanisms. This construction of personality is completely false, since it is based solely on resistance to the environment. Our emotional reactivity comes from the personality, not from the soul. The more layered with defences we become, the more we are distanced from

our essence, until the soul is completely forgotten. This state of spiritual lostness results in the conviction that I am my personality.

The experience of the soul is anchored in the essential states of being; strength, love, will, value, bliss, power, peace, etc. These states are experienced with our spiritual senses, our mind and our feelings. In other words, they come from our innate being and are not based on a reaction to an external person, place or situation. It is in meditation that we bypass personality and connect directly with the soul, and experience these super-sensuous states of being.

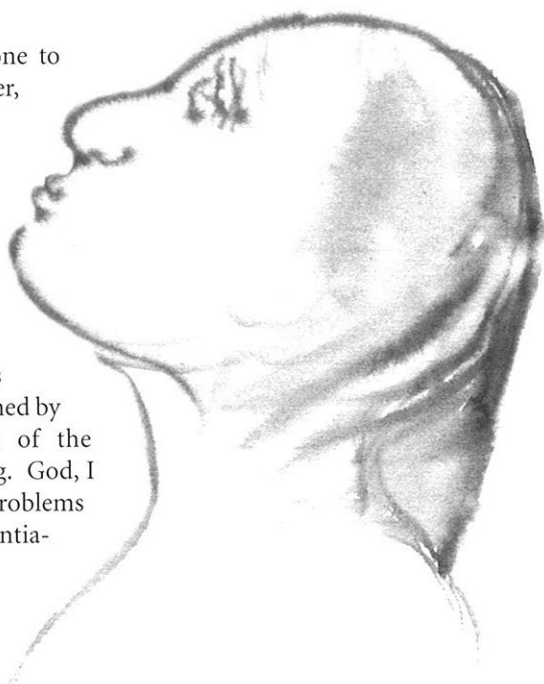
A realised self is central to our capacity for intimacy, for intense experiences of self are at the very core of intimate exchange. It is this self which is disclosed during intimacy and it is this self which allows one's partner or other to be who he or she is. Relinquishing expectations of reciprocity and tolerating existential separateness determines an individual's upper limit for intense intimacy.

It is also worth noting that intimacy is apparently experienced most rarely in marriage and most commonly in friendship.

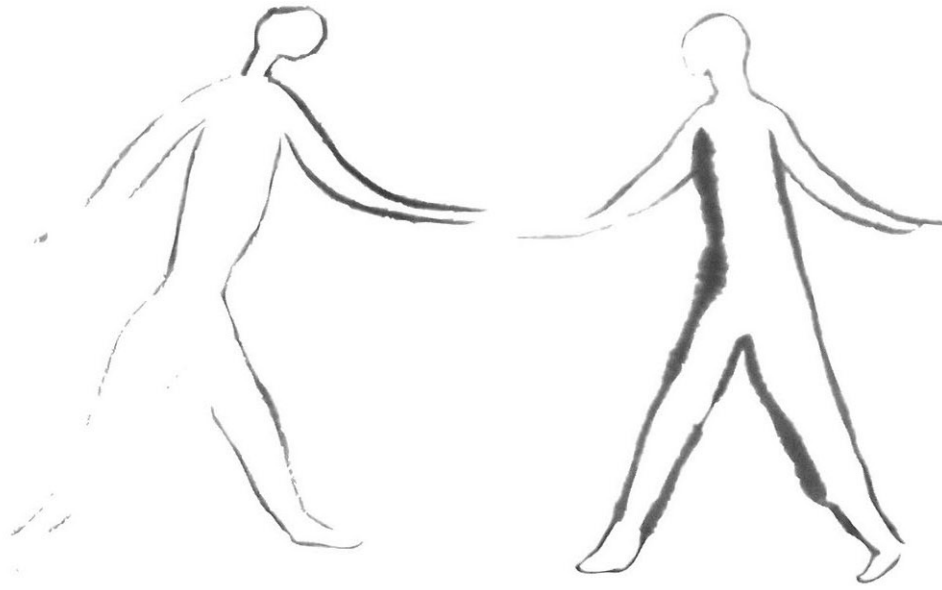
During the 16 years that I have been developing my ongoing practice of Raja Yoga, the relationship that I experience with God has been a crucible for my spiritual growth.

Within the spiritual context of Raja Yoga, we are called upon, ultimately, to experience all relationships with God, to relinquish all our falseness (personality) and relinquish attachment in physical relationships. Instead, we are incited to have spiritual relationships with our fellow souls. This doesn't mean giving up relationships, but it does mean an exchange which takes place between real selves.

The aware soul is not one to coerce or control another, or be controlled. Games of the false personality have no place within the spiritual encounter. When the soul engages in yoga, or union with God, the intensity of this connection will be governed by the intimacy tolerance of the person who is meditating. God, I believe, doesn't have problems with intimacy or differentiation, we do.



Remarkably,



at the age of **thirty-six**, my programming

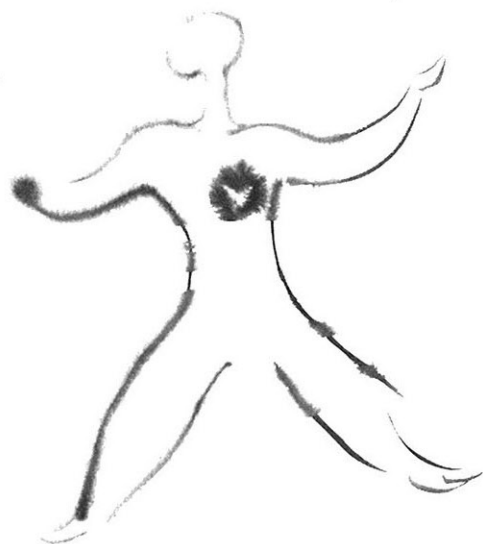
Thus, God comes completely into the union which occurs with us. Because the experience is subtle, if the false self is in the way, the experience of contact will be contaminated by waste thoughts and projections of the personality.

We often speak about the fire of yoga, meaning intense yoga or connection, in which the impurity and falseness (of the personality) that the soul carries is incinerated. There is no other explanation for the magic of what happens. This is the transforming alchemy. Intimacy with God means intense fire, melting down to one's very essence. It is reassuring to realise, especially at times when old pieces of identity seem to have flown far away, that it is only possible to lose what is false. At first the true me is not obvious either, but emerges as a rather quiet, flowing and gentle beingness, relative to the louder experience of ego identity.

For all of these reasons, committing to a partnership with God involves the practice of Brahmacharya, meaning physical and mental purity. Brahmacharya is not a path of celibacy through repression, since the mind will not be free, even though the sexual urge may be rigidly (albeit temporarily) restrained. Sexual relationships won't support the task of differentiating in the way that brings us into the company and intimacy of God either, even in a spiritually-oriented relationship. Truly spiritual relationships with other human beings are, by their very

nature, loving, non-attached, giving and pure. Part of the differentiation process is understanding in a deep way, that I cannot have my cake and eat it too. Sacrifice is part and parcel of any mature relationship, and the integrity, which develops as a result, carries high dividends.

Thus the paths of spirituality and sexuality must, of necessity, diverge, for it is not possible to attain the Parnassus Heights while pulled, even subtly, by body image and attachment. Yet this is a choice we must make for ourselves. God cannot



make the choice for us, let alone any organisation or religion. Such a decision remains with the self, alone. Hence the decision must be self-validated, not other-validated or organisation-validated. This is what differentiation is all about, self-validation and self-reference. The decision to practice Brahmacharya is not likely, in the West at least, to be valued and respected by society. It means not conforming and stepping outside accepted practice.

Nor is celibacy a spiritual refuge for undealt with sexual and emotional problems. Sooner or later they will fester, obstructing growth and demanding to be

messages, values and double standards of my society had caused me intolerable confusion and pain. Remarkably, at the age of thirty-six, my programming was disabled, the blinkers were off and I was flying.

My worldview was changing fast, as I found myself released into a very different consciousness. When I bravely shared this with one of my friends (who happened to be a sex therapist), she was utterly shocked. Pulling herself up to her full height, "I would never recommend celibacy to any of my clients", she retorted, reeling with horror.

Perhaps it is only through direct encounter with God that this practice of purity is possible. I don't know, but I suspect it is.

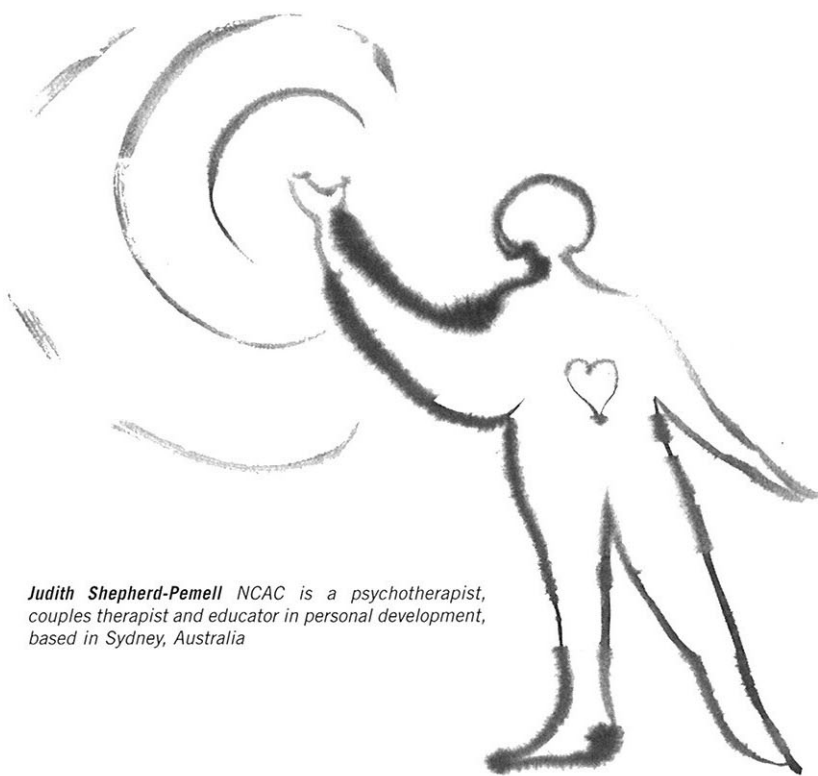
was disabled, the **blinkers** were off, and I was **flying**.

dealt with. This is the nature of the spiritual path. Whatever remains dark and unfinished within me will be exposed. Maintaining the game of repression, in the guise of elevated attainment, is spiritual suicide.

I realise it is almost inconceivable for many to entertain the idea of such a relationship with the Supreme Soul. Sixteen years ago, it was inconceivable to the atheist in me too. Finding myself in a profound spiritual attraction was, first of all, way beyond the boundaries of my life experience. Later on, the hook, if you like, was that celibacy seemed such a radical thing, it actually appealed to me as much as atheism. I saw it as a brilliant act of rebellion against the beliefs and practices of a society which, quite frankly, had let me down.

Three months after I decided to give celibacy a go, to my great surprise a new perspective awakened in me. Overnight it seemed, I was liberated from the entrenched beliefs, projections and covert web of games between men and women. I was free, realising a new level of respect for the opposite sex, for my own gender and of course for myself. I realised that the

In conclusion, I would like to say just one thing. If God taps you on the shoulder and invites you for the next dance, I wish you the best of luck in refusing. ♡



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IS *SUCCESS* MORE ?

Mike George challenges some cherished beliefs

How do you define success? Is it simply the completion of the next task, another job well done, a promise kept, an exam passed, a medal won, a mountain climbed? Whatever we believe success to be will have a profound influence on our life. If we were to follow the trends of the world then success would be measured by acquisition. The more you have the more successful you are. More can be almost any quantity - objects, money, properties, celebrity, fame, fans, and in terms of position, it simply means higher.

Success equals more as soon as we inherit and absorb the prevalent beliefs that the world is a place of scarcity, that the purpose of life is survival, that we must accumulate to prosper, and that the more you get the happier you will feel. We believe there is not enough to go round and we speak the common tongue of 'not enoughness!' We then strive and struggle for what we consider is our rightful share, and more is not only good, but applauded when attained. (Although, if sustained, it may eventually be attacked by envy) And then we wonder why there is so much greed, consumption, accumulation, manipulation, polarisation, conflict and war.

Even our education systems are geared to producing people whose character and skills are shaped and developed to produce More. Economic growth is the yardstick for national success based on the production and selling of More. And amidst all this we continue to avoid the connection between the philosophy of more and the unprecedented levels of unhappiness, abuse and breakdown of human relationships worldwide. Some say that because we have more telephones there is more communication between more people in more countries every day than any other time in history. But communication of what, electronic symbols, packets of data, cold information? This is far from human communication. We seldom nourish each other at the level of mind and spirit over a telephone. We simply develop more intimate relationships to our techno-toys than we do with each other.

So what does it mean to be successful? At what level, in what context and by whose standards? If we were to live in this question for long enough it would challenge us at the deepest level. It would invite us to review and probably revise our core values. But we don't want that challenge because it means we might have to change how we think and what we do. So we live instead in avoidance and denial, while going with the flow of traditional belief, and then we wonder why both contentment and fulfilment are so elusive.


Imagine for moment that every single school classroom in the world spent one year discussing and debating the question, "What is success?" inside out, and upside down. Not all the time and every day, but as a theme they return to frequently to develop and explore. What would our children tell us? Would we have the patience and the faith to listen and to learn from them? Instead

of imposing our inherited beliefs, definitions and conditions, would we have the humility to facilitate their discussion and allow them to tell us? Or do we intuitively know they would be wiser than us and therefore pull the carpet from under our comfortable feet? Would we be threatened if their wisdom defined success as a simpler, more considerate, caring, sharing, spiritual state of being and giving, and not a material state of acquisition, accumulation and possession? Would success be less and not more for them?

If we were to give ourselves the time to explore this question we would likely arrive at the fairly obvious insight that success is not a material thing, it is not something that can be possessed, it is a state of being. We might call it contentment, or happiness, or even peace. These are the deepest and most meaningful symptoms of success, but only when they are not dependent on anything outside ourselves.

Other signs of success to someone who has challenged the staple diet of modern beliefs at the deepest level might include:

- *to be able to act with total honesty and integrity*
- *to be both content with oneself and have others be content with you*
- *to be able to be peaceful and stable when all around you are in crisis or chaos*
- *to value what you are more than what you have*
- *to accept full responsibility for all thoughts, feelings, words and actions*
- *to be able to see past the weaknesses/mistakes of others and focus on their inherent goodness*
- *to put thoughts and words into action without delay*
- *to be able to let go of the past instantly*
- *to give without the desire for anything in return*

Notice how intangible all these measures are. In fact, no one else can measure them except oneself. Notice how we seldom, if ever, ask ourselves why we cannot achieve these inner states of being and enlightened behaviour. But unless we can do all of these, how on earth are going to be content with ourselves? Are these the deepest measures of success? Is there a new awareness of wealth embedded in their realisation? Now there's another interesting question, "What is real wealth?" 

I had gone a begging
from door to door
Along the village path
When thy golden chariot
appeared in the distance,
Like a gorgeous dream,
and I wondered, who was this
King of all Kings!

My hopes rose high
and me though my evil days
were at an end.
I stood waiting to be given,
Unbidden, alms
and for the wealth to be scattered
on all sides in the dust

The chariot stopped where I stood.
Thy glance fell on me
and thou camest down
With a smile
I felt that the luck of my life
had come at last
Then, of a sudden, thou didst
hold out thy right hand and say,
"What hast thou to give to me?"
Ah, what a kingly jest was it to open
thy palm to a beggar to beg!

I was confused and
stood undecided
and then from my wallet
I slowly took out the least little grain
Of corn and gave it to thee.

But how great my surprise
when at the day's end
I emptied my bag on the floor
To find a least little grain of gold
Among the poor heap.
I bitterly wept and wished
That I had the heart to give thee my all

The Beggar and the *King of Kings*

By Rabindranath Tagore

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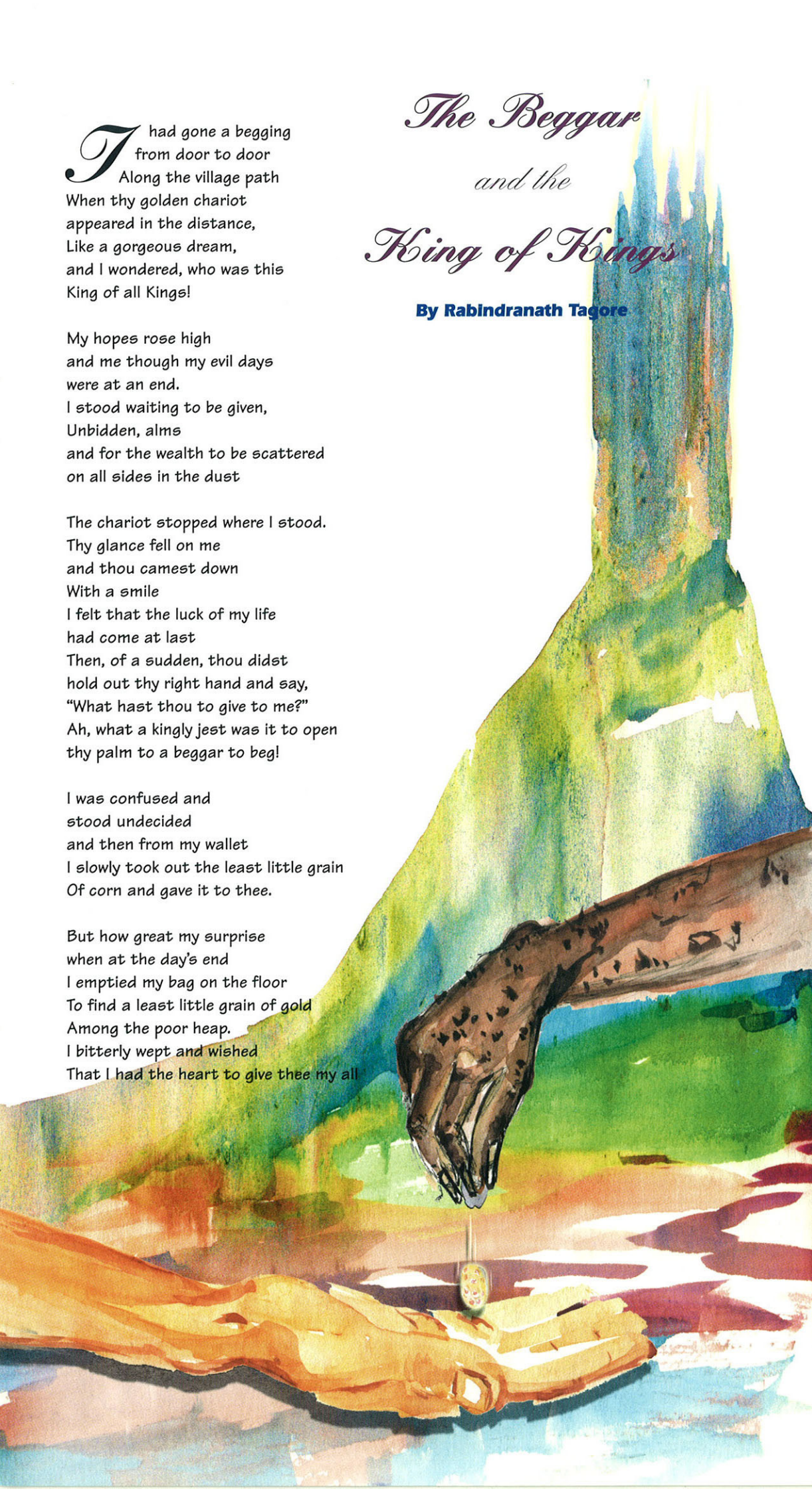
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Wise People

Wise people understand what they understand, and understand what they do not understand. They use what they understand to increase their understanding of what they do not understand.

Wise people do not strive to avoid poverty, nor do they strive to attain riches. They do not make grand plans. When they make mistakes they do not feel regret. When they have success they do not feel elated. They can scale great heights without becoming frightened. They can become soaked in a storm, and not be anxious about falling ill. They can be burnt by fire, and not be disturbed by the pain.

Wise people sleep without dreaming, and awake without anxiety. They eat without relishing the food, and they breathe very deeply.

Wise people do not cling to life, nor do they fear death. When they arrive somewhere they do not demand attention, and they leave without a fuss. Wherever they go, no matter what befalls them, they remain calm. They do not forget their origins, yet they

have no ambitions for the future. When they are given something, they receive it with pleasure, when they hand something to another person they do it with equal pleasure.

Wise people have serene hearts, and tranquil faces. They are as chilly as the autumn and as warm as spring. They are not curious to know the future.

Wise people may appear to be hungry and in want but they demand nothing. Their own conduct is dignified, but they do not pass judgment on those who lack their dignity. They are simple and courteous in their speech and demeanour. They appear content and smile cheerfully. They are calm and at one with their surroundings. They are tolerant of the foibles and follies of others.

Nothing inhibits or impedes them from doing what they feel impelled to do. Thus they are content to do nothing, whenever their destiny commends this.

Chuang Tzu

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