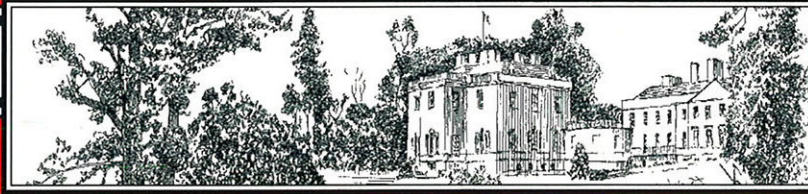


# R·E·T·R·E·A·T

ISSUE No. FOUR



AUG - OCT 1994

**MIND 'MAKE UP'**  
**DINING WITH VEGIEBORES**  
**GOD KNOWS**  
**PARADISE REMEMBERED**  
**CALMING DOWN...AGAIN**

# Passing Thoughts

The opposite to love is not hate, but judgement.

When we judge another as a threat to our needs and desires, we fear that person.

We see them not as they are, but through our interpretations.

We separate ourselves from them.

And when we judge another as the answer to our needs and desires, we think we 'love' them.

But we only love their behaviour and their form.

We see them not as they are, in their essence, but through our interpretations.

And again we separate ourselves from them.

We judge another to prove we are more worthy.

We judge because we are afraid to meet another as an equal.

We judge, lest in seeing others to be what they truly are, we feel we are not who we truly are.

Yet any judgement is but a judgement of oneself.

It is an admission that I am not what I truly may be

A knowing that what I see in the other is also in me.

When I know who I am, I know who other people are,  
And judgement is no longer necessary.

No judgement can be given of the being of another,  
And my being needs make no judgement.

When we see another as they are, without any judgement of how they are,  
then we see them through the eyes of compassion

This is true love.

*Peter Russell*  
*Passing thoughts Vol.1*

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ISSUE No. 4  
AUG - OCT 1994

**COVER**

Cover painting by Marie Binder showing the three worlds or three levels of consciousness

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# Beside Your Bed

*The nature of work is changing. Driven by the need to adapt and innovate quickly, the organisation of the 90's is transforming. Cumbersome, hierarchical management systems are crumbling as they give way to flatter, leaner structures where information flows swiftly, responsibility is devolved to teams and people are empowered.*

This is the learning organisation, where the primary resources are no longer raw materials and energy but the ideas and the intellectual ability of those at the front line. Peter Senge of MIT Sloan School of Management presents a taste of what it's like **Creating the Learning Organisation**.

In the fastest decade of the twentieth century both mind and body are under pressure as never before. As we continue to try to respond effectively to the pace of change and to our expectations of ourselves and to those of society, self-management is becoming an essential element in busy peoples' lives. In **Being Calm** Dr Craig Brown returns to guide us through his ten point plan for stress free living and how to stay cool on the journey through life. In the meantime, Archie Burnet presents the case for healthier eating in **Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?** while Mike George re-examines the quality of our thinking and **How to 'Make Up' Your Mind**.

Perhaps the most significant change this year has been in South Africa. A new start for a whole nation does not happen often. Lord Ennals gives us a flavour of the events following his time spent as one of the official UN observers of the elections in **Free and Fair**.

At a time when science and its offspring, technology, dominate our world, the arts have taken a back seat in our priorities and values. When the creative juices do flow and we flock to appreciate artistic expression, it is not long before it is reduced to mere entertainment and mass-marketed through the electronic deity in the corner of our living rooms. But there is a deep connection between art and science and Chris Challen reminds us in **The Great Divide**.

If you woke up tomorrow to find God sitting beside your bed what would you say to Him? How would you begin the conversation? Would you feel love, extreme fear, awe, appreciation or a warm welcome to a long lost friend? In the third part of the **Foundation Course in Meditation** God makes a return to our awareness and the possibility of a perfect relationship can be realised through yoga.

We hope you enjoy Retreat No. 4 Thanks to all the contributors so far. And thank you to our readers, for your support.

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Lord Ennals (white hat) with one of the leading ladies in Kyeletshia

# FREE & FAIR

Fresh from acting as an Observer to the South African elections, Lord Ennals celebrates liberation for millions.

## THE END OF APARTHEID

*With time to look back on the South African election and the four weeks I spent there under a Commonwealth Flag as an election observer, it seems to me that those elections may have been the most important event in Africa in the past 50 years. The significance is not just for the 35 million people of South Africa, but for the whole continent, and maybe for the health of our universe.*



Let me put it in a short term context. In April 1988 we launched the project Global Co-operation for a Better World. In every continent we asked people a simple, yet profound question "What is your vision of a better world?" At that time Nelson Mandela had already served 25 years as a political prisoner on Robben Island, a mile off the coast near Cape Town. And there was no sign that the architects of apartheid on the mainland had any intention of releasing him, or of the destruction of one of the most cruel systems of Government the world had ever known. It was based on the simple, but crude, assumption that white people were destined to rule, that black people were second class human creatures: "hewers of woods and drawers of water!" To complete this cruel nonsense, Asians and 'coloured' people were in worth and status somewhere in between black and white.

Apartheid could be compared to fascism and some of its practices



were akin to Hitler's concept of a master race. But the architects of apartheid justified it in quasi-Christian terms. It gave it a twisted degree of morality.

In 1988, when we launched the Global Co-operation project, Mandela was a political prisoner and F.W. de Klerk was the inheritor of the apartheid traditions. He was the jailer of not only Mandela but other fine people, many of whom are now Ministers in the new Government. President de Klerk was still a defender of the indefensible apartheid. Look at the Global Vision statement, the summation of the visions of people from 129 countries old and young, who responded to that question. The people of South Africa, except those who were in power and whose privileges were protected by force of law and wealth, had none of the rights which we would enjoy in a better world. Those who were literate - would say "amen" to each of the visionary statements enshrined in the United Nations Peace Messenger Publication "Visions of a Better World", so lovingly and painstakingly compiled by the Brahma Kumaris in five continents.

It is not for us to deduce that because one thing followed another it was the direct result of what's gone before. But the fact is that in 1990 the Afrikaaner leader, President F. W. de Klerk, announced that apartheid would end, that all the laws separating white people from black people ('White's only') would be rescinded and equality and racial harmony would prevail, that the political prisoners would all be

released, including the most famous and the best loved of all, Nelson Mandela. None of us will forget that moment when Mandela appeared as a free man. He looked rather tired and strained - but he was driven off to have a restful night in the home of a black Bishop, Desmond Tutu, before the massive press conference in the Bishop's garden in Cape Town. All the rest is history - South Africa is free, the visions are now all capable of becoming realities - although it will not happen all at once. The three great men involved, Mandela, de Klerk



and Tutu, have all joined the ranks of Nobel Peace Prize Winners. Bless them all!

For me to have been involved in those fascinating, exciting and deeply moving elections on April 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th was a dream come true. In 1958, - the year I moved from being Secretary of the United Nations Association to being International Secretary of the Labour Party - a group of us who were horrified and disgusted by all that apartheid stood for, pledged ourselves to do all in our powers to destroy it and launched the Boycott Movement to persuade British people to stop buying South African goods. It caught on and

was strongly supported by the churches, the Co-operative Movement, the trade unions and Labour and Liberal supporters. But in South Africa the situation got worse. In 1960 black people were mowed down by South African armed men at Sharpeville. The Sharpeville shootings spurred us on and at a big protest rally in Trafalgar Square we launched the Anti-Apartheid movement with Barbara Castle as President. In 1964 I succeeded Barbara Castle as President. You can imagine my delight when, in 1994, I was invited by the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Chief to join the team of Commonwealth Observers to be in South Africa during the election campaign and to declare, when it was all over, whether the elections were free and fair.

Together with the United Nations, the Commonwealth had played an important part in the eventual elimination of apartheid. There was a political task in condemning and isolating South Africa and then squeezing her economy by the applications of economic sanctions (including an arms ban). Everyone I spoke to in April, whatever their colours, agreed that sanctions had profoundly affected those who ruled South Africa as had the very humiliating sports boycott. They really wanted to rejoin the UN and the Commonwealth. The United Nations and the Commonwealth worked together on this, though Britain opted out of support for this policy during the 13 years when Mrs Thatcher was Prime Minister. By then Britain's political influence in the world was in decline and our opt-out was as ineffective as it is proving to be in Europe.

President de Klerk learnt the lessons and I believe fully deserved



the applause of the Nobel Prize Committee. A truly remarkable man. It is never easy to make a complete U-turn and carry the people with you. I totally believe his sincerity as he has preached the message of peace, harmony and racial co-operation. It is never too late to see

the light! In all there were 120 in the Commonwealth Observers Group - but with the European Union, the Organisations of African Unity and the United Nations we were 2,500 strong. In teams of 22 we were trained in election law and voting procedures and deployed in groups of voting stations all over the country. I was in the Western Cape Province with Cape Town as the base, and was personally given the responsibility of observing (and sometimes helping) in the huge black township of Kyelestria about fifteen miles from Cape Town. The people lived in temporary shacks in great poverty, deprived of main services like water, electricity and sewage. It was a terrible place to live and only black people lived there. But the worse the conditions the greater the hopes. The people kept themselves and their shacks clean and had great pride and dignity. If they had been able to do so, I'm sure they would have endorsed the Global Vision Statemen.

I would be misleading you if I said that the whole of the electorate fully understood the policies of all the parties. In all - nationally and in the provincial elections - there were 26 parties to choose from. Moreover a very high proportion of the black populations are illiterate. Many of the parties had no chance of success, but people

had to choose. The elections were really inspiring - tremendous excitement as people waited to cast their first democratic vote. There were serious problems with poor distribution of essential election materials, there were long hold-ups and more problems in the counting process. But forget about the things that went wrong. The elections were a triumph for those who had never voted before. One very old lady looked like she had been hanging on in order to vote, and she did not care what happened the next day.

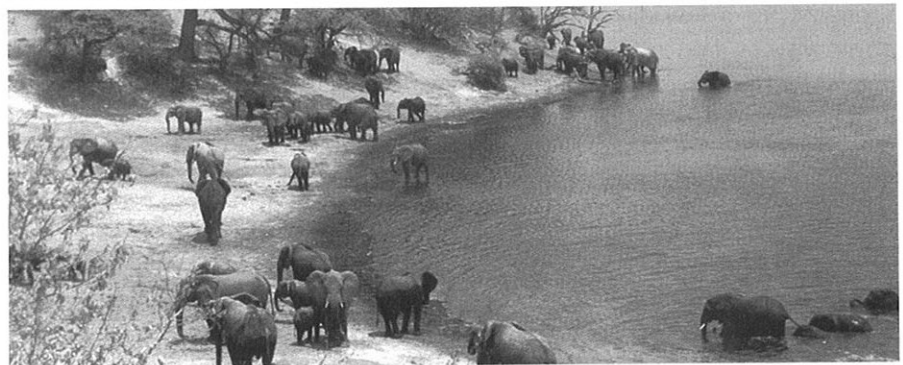
We were constantly on the move, helping and reassuring both the teams doing their best in the voting stations and the voters themselves.

We were widely welcomed and applauded when we signed our certificate of "Free and Fair". Our report "The End of Apartheid" was both a joy to write and to read.

There were many who prayed just for a peaceful outcome and there were, throughout the length and breadth of the country, renewed prayers for those in whom the future of the country is now entrusted.

®

*Lord Ennals is a member of the British House of Lords, a former Cabinet Minister (1976 - 79), Joint Chair of the International Advisory Committee for "Global Co-operation for a Better World", Chair of the Ghandi Foundation and Vice-Chair of the United Nations Asc.*



# HOW TO 'MAKE UP' YOUR MIND

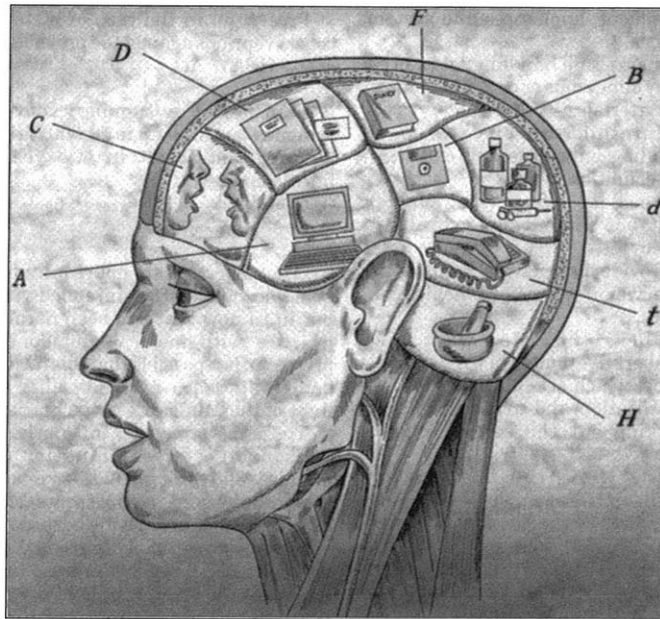
"You are what you think," and "It's all in the mind," are two phrases we all know and often use without really, well, ...thinking. But what do you think? And how do you think? And do you think your thoughts affect your body? And how do you think your thoughts could affect your body? Mmmm. No short answers to these questions. Yet it doesn't require an expert with an 'ist' at the end of his or her title to prove that your thoughts have a powerful impact on your body.

Think a thought of fear and feel your heart begin to pound and the adrenaline begin to flow. Think some worrisome thoughts about a job interview and feel the butterflies moving in V formation through your tummy. Think tense thoughts for a few days and watch the rash magically appear out of nowhere on your skin. Whatever you think registers somewhere in your body. That's why, long before cosmetics arrived on the scene, real beauty was said to come from within, and why most doctors today admit that over 90% of all physical disease is psychosomatic, that is, begins with the thoughts in your mind.

Do you have a beautiful mind, a busy mind or a mind always under pressure?

Living in the final decade of the twentieth century almost certainly means making more decisions,

Mike George looks inside to discover different kinds of thinking.



communicating with more people, and probably working longer and more frequent unsocial hours than any other time in history. In no other era has there been such a need for a *calm and clear* mind, with the sharpness to make accurate decisions. In the face of rapid technological change, the need for a *fast and agile* mind, with the ability to produce appropriate responses, under a

wide variety of pressures, is essential to keep pace with the demands of colleagues and family. With the never ending stream of news and events, much of which has a negative flavour, a *stable and positive* mind is essential for survival.

What goes on in your mind affects all that you say and do, making the difference between success and failure. When working well the mind is the source of ideas, inspiration and innovation, a creator of clear communication and high quality decisions. When working badly it can be the sustainer of hopelessness, depression and fear.

The raw material of the mind is thought. Business plans, complicated designs, new products and even whole new philosophies all begin as a single thought in someone's mind. This is then shaped and sculpted into the details of the plan or design, and brought to life through words and action.

Are you in control of the creation and sustenance of your thoughts? People who have created success in their life have usually taken some time to get to know their thought patterns and thinking habits. They recognise their mind as their most precious asset, an essential tool and their thoughts as their most important natural resource.

If you have never given yourself



this kind of time and attention to assess and measure the quality of your thinking, and how best to use your mental resources, the easiest way is to become aware of the four different types of thought which are:

1. *Necessary thoughts*
2. *Waste (superfluous) thoughts*
3. *Negative thoughts.*
4. *Positive thoughts*

*Necessary thoughts:*

‘What shall we have for dinner tonight?’, ‘At what time do I pick up my children from school?’, ‘What’s the number of my bank account?’. These are all the necessary thoughts which arise during our daily routine upon which we must act. But if these thoughts are repeated again and again, they become:

*Waste (superfluous) thoughts:*

These are worrying, brooding thoughts which keep running around in your head. This type of thought has a high tempo, achieves nothing, and wastes your energy. Superfluous thoughts are often about the past: ‘if only I had...’, ‘if this hadn’t happened...’, or about the future...‘I hope...’, ‘if so and so doesn’t show up...’

Since the past has already gone, and the future is yet to come, these thoughts are useless. In fact some people live their day three times over: once in bed worrying about tomorrow, the day itself, and then again at night, going over what they should have done but didn’t. This kind of thinking drains your energy and makes you less efficient.

*Negative thoughts:*

These are angry, critical, egotistical, greedy, prejudiced, lazy, careless and stressful thoughts. If they

become habitual they result in the breakdown of physical health and eventual external failure.

It may appear that these kinds of thoughts are the most prevalent today. And they are! They are the root causes of the stress, fragmentation, anger and disease in our society. On a practical level they are the greatest drain on your mental resources, a kind of internal pollution that is well worth cleaning up, to make your mind a more efficient tool.

*Positive thoughts:*

These on the other hand are always economic. They create a positive internal feeling and sustainable external success. Positive thoughts are enthusiastic, harmonious, honest, understanding, respectful, tolerant and happy. They are also patient thoughts, giving you the time to see the complete picture clearly, which is essential in order to make accurate decisions.

As you actively learn to watch the quality of your thinking you will automatically ferret out the superfluous and negative thoughts, denying them the life-giving energy of your mind. This will allow you to regain complete control of all your thought patterns, with no more auto-pilot reactions followed by a feeling of loss or regret. Using your mind to create positive thoughts puts you back in the pilot’s seat all the time, not only enhancing your relationships on the outside but giving yourself the right quality of experience on the inside.

In summary, eliminate the negative, accentuate the positive, act immediately on the necessary and clean up the waste.

®

*Mike George is a writer, lecturer and management consultant based in London.*

**GOOD HEAVENS!**

**If you can only go to Heaven  
After you are dead,  
Lots of things are evident  
Which simply must be said.**

**You have no tongue in Heaven  
So cannot speak a word;  
And God He has no ears,  
So speaking is absurd.**

**And if God has no ears,  
And you’re completely dumb,  
There must be total Silence  
There in Kingdom Come.**

**And if it’s really true  
That God He has no ears,  
We simply waste our time  
With endless spoken prayers.**

**Books of Holy Writ  
Are nothing but ‘the letter’  
We must be reading them  
To make ourselves feel better.**

**And God can take no thought  
If spirit and not brain,  
So thought shall have no place  
When Timelessness shall reign.**

**Every thought and word  
Is but the stuff of Time;  
No Reason they’re in Heaven  
Nor yet (thank God!) this rhyme.**

**So if Heaven is endless Silence!  
Dose this mean utter Void?  
Oh No! For Living Silence  
IS Here to be enjoyed.**

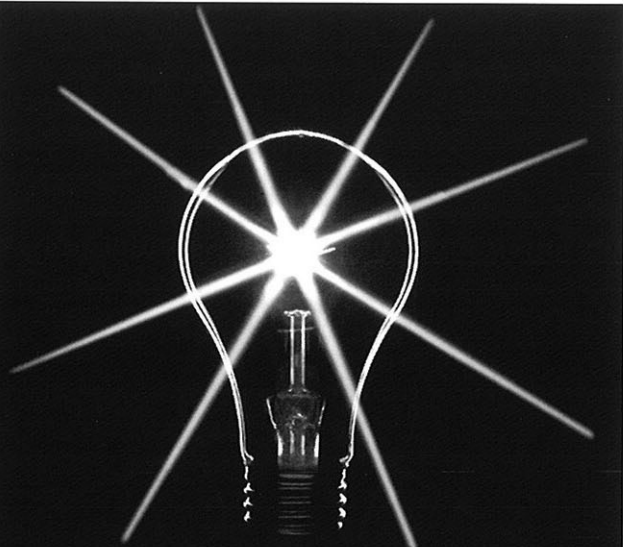
**Those who think and think on  
Earth  
Must see now very well,  
If they can’t think in Heaven,  
Their Heaven may be Hell!**

**Yet if you take no thought  
And let Love cast out Fear  
And wholly Live in Spirit,  
Heaven is ALWAYS HERE!**

**from Flashes of Silence  
by Francis Boston.**

**W**e fundamentally missed this point in all of our education, that what needs to precede everything is the impulse. We love to substitute technique for impulse. If you ever talk to a group of people who worked together in what was a truly great team, most of them spend the rest of their life trying to figure out how to recreate it. It is one of those experiences, like joy or love, that is so primal, providing a feeling of connectedness, of being part of something larger. That's where the impulse is.

Then you ask, "Well, exactly what made it great?" the responses always revolve around a few basic themes: there was a real sense of purpose being illustrated, being part of some larger endeavour, a sense that something is more important than my own personal interest, a sense of intimacy and connection with others, particularly around openness and candour, we could do whatever we needed to do, say whatever



# CREATING THE LEARNING ORGANISATION

Peter Senge reveals some of the reasons why organisations are creating a culture of learning

*When I was writing *The Fifth Discipline* one of the reasons I decided to focus the book on the subject of disciplines was to get out of a chronic tendency in education and in business to focus on technique or tool. I will never forget something a colleague told me years ago. He said, "America's full of musically handicapped adults because they were taught scales before they developed an impulse for music."*

we needed to say. There is a real sense of quality of communication that people feel.

When a group of people in an organisation start working together in a really extraordinary way, when that type of team begins to form, people's sense of who they are shifts. They don't necessarily lose their identity, but their personal identity becomes tied into something larger, something bigger. And then, when that happens, two very interesting but equally important things happen. First, their sense of purpose expands. Their goal is not only what I want, but what the team wants. They are not talking about sacrificing themselves, but there is a sense of what we are trying to achieve, the sense of direction becomes collective. They have a different sense of what's causing things when things are out of whack, and they'll maybe say, "What are we doing wrong?" instead of "so-and-so over there screwed it up!"

In the context of a team I see a shared vision as the

general purpose of what we are here for. It is why we, as a team, exist. Then there's how we operate, the way in which we talk with one another. It is some sort of collective intelligence that people are very aware of, that the whole is literally more intelligent, more creative than the individual could ever have been. In the first sentence of his autobiography, the famous physicist Heisenberg wrote "Physics is rooted in conversation." People have this experience of conversations that produces something on the level of intelligence and insight that they could never have produced individually.

So this is what seems to go on when groups of people crystallise around purpose. But purpose is not enough. It crystallises eventually into a real vision. Vision is different from purpose. Purpose is "why we do this", vision is "what we are trying to create". Picasso once said that if you could trace the evolution of any great work of art, not in a series of snapshots, but in terms of the inner state of the artist, the critical moment comes when the artist sees the vision. This functioning of a group really starts to gel when that group of people actually gets into their heads the image of what they are really trying to create.

What is less clear is what happens after the vision and what some of the subtler skills of such a group are. In a nutshell, what happens in extraordinary teams is they learn. Now, having said that, people immediately say, "Oh, yeah, they learn, big deal." It really doesn't say much and that's because we don't really know much about what learning means today. Learning is not about sitting in the classroom with somebody talking to you. It's not being a student or teacher. Learning is about capacity.

What happens in great teams is they develop a sense of real commonality and vision. They really go through a process where their capacity to achieve that vision expands. They become more conscious, more awakened, more able, more effective in action. Then the question is what's our level of ability to realise it.

One of the sad things about contemporary society is that we have lost our sense of meaning of what learning is. Stand in front of a group and talk about learning and in thirty seconds you will see their eyes glaze over. For most of us, learning has become synonymous with taking in information. It is a very weak notion of learning.

**The word discipline again is a word that we have to almost redefine. It doesn't mean to be good little boy or girl and sitting in the corner and being quiet. It actually comes from the Latin "disciplina" which means "to learn".**

By identifying what we are learning as a learning organisation we are actually practising what we are talking about. A learning organisation is a vision. It's not something that exists as "A" or "B". When we first learned to fly, what was important about the Wright Brother's plane? It worked. Was it the plane itself that was important? No. It was the knowledge and the understanding that was embodied in the plane. What we are pointing to in the order of a learning organisation is the gradual building of a body of knowledge and capability.

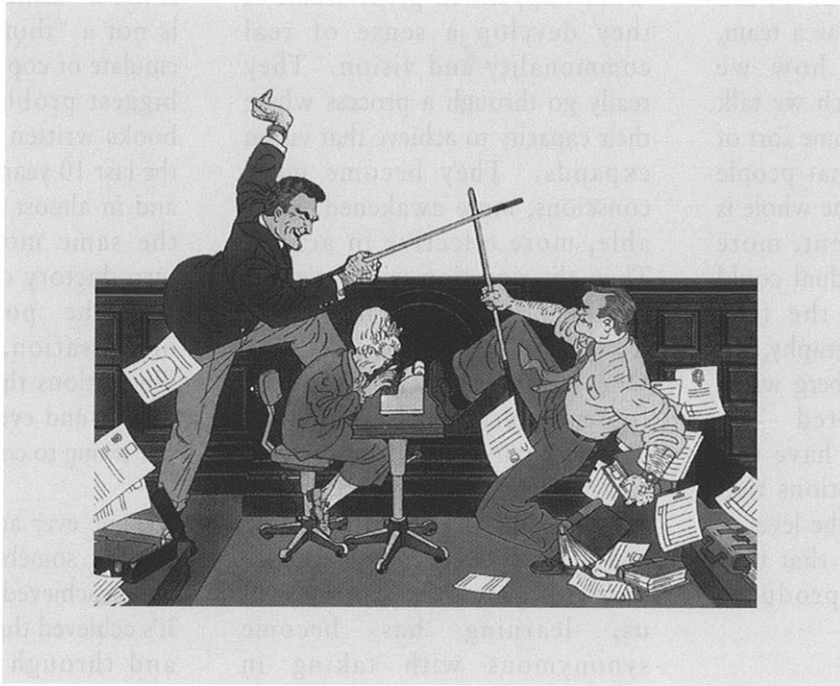
Occasionally groups of people within organisations function in the way we are talking about. But this

is not a "learning organisation"; it is not a "thing" that we should emulate or copy. This has been the biggest problem in most of the books written on management in the last 10 years. There is a model, and in almost all of the books it's the same model. First is the introductory chapter, which tells you the points of a good organisation, and the rest are illustrations that have those same points, and everybody rapidly sets out trying to copy them.

No one ever achieved greatness by copying somebody else. Greatness is not achieved through emulation. It's achieved through understanding and through aspiration. In a learning organisation it's not just a bunch of ideas, something new is being created. It's a generative or creative process and ultimately a process of diffusion.

For years I've had the experience of helping teams get to the point where something special starts to happen. It becomes one of these mountain top experiences where you really see what is possible, you really see people learning together, see them really inquiring of one another, probing, challenging one another without creating defensiveness. They have a shared sense of purpose and are really starting to think about their world in a different way. And then they slowly, gradually, slide back to what was going on before. I believe the reason for that is the same reason that we as individuals have mountain top experiences and then we come back to the real world.

We have not yet integrated, into our mode of operating in life, the foundations of taking whatever happens to us and making it part of our own continual learning and growth. That I think is exactly what disciplines are all about. The word discipline again is a word



that we have to almost redefine. It doesn't mean to be good little boy or girl and sitting in the corner and being quiet. It actually comes from the Latin "disciplina" which means "to learn". Discipline means a body of practice that helps us draw out and channel and make more reliable our own inner gifts.

There are five different disciplines that seem to be vital to making groups or teams, and I believe a whole organisation, work in a fundamentally different way. We have actually been talking about all five already, we just haven't pointed to them. One is building shared vision, second is personal mastery, the third is working with mental models, the fourth is the discipline of team learning, of dialogue, and the fifth is systems thinking. All of them fit together, and that's why systems thinking is the fifth discipline. It's the discipline that integrates the other disciplines.

The word "system" can be problematic because when most of us hear the word "system", we immediately think of computer

system or management control system; in fact most people hear "system" and they think of systematic, structured and constraining. What systems thinking is really all about is understanding how our actions shape our reality.

I actually think that the commitment to be a learning organisation is a collective choice and that if it isn't made at some conscious level by a group of people everything else pales in comparison. I was talking earlier about impulse versus technique, and that at some level real learning always emanates from the impulse, it comes from within us. This sounds very abstract but it's really very simple in practice. You start talking to people and you ask questions like, "Well, how is it that you would really like to work together? Forget about the way that it has been, if you could work together the way that you would really like to, if you could create this wild crazy universe any way you like, where you could actually create what you wanted to create, what would you create?" You

would be amazed at how people start to respond to the question. They say, "Oh, that would be exciting, fun, we would be continually learning! No day would be like the previous day! We would be close, we would have a sense of real intimacy with each other. We wouldn't agree with each other, but we would be continually challenging one another and learning from one another". Then you start to get to a point where people are really starting to make and exercise a choice.

®

*Dr Peter M. Senge is a faculty member of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Director of the Centre for Organisational Learning at MIT's Sloan School of Management, a consortium of corporations who work together to advance methods and knowledge for building learning organisations. He is author of the widely acclaimed book, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organisation* (1990), and *The Fifth Discipline Field Book* (July, 1994), published by Doubleday/Currency. He is founding partner of Innovation Associates and The Learning Circle.*

Dostoyevsky's  
Sparkling  
Vision of  
Paradise

THE

# RETREAT



*... Suddenly, quite noticeably, I stood on this other earth in bright sunlight of a day as beautiful as paradise ... Oh, everything was exactly as on our earth, but it seemed that everything around radiated with some holiday, and with great, holy and finally achieved triumph. The calm emerald sea gently splashed against the shore embracing it with manifest, apparent, almost conscious love. Tall beautiful trees stood there in full luxury of their bloom, and their countless leaflets - I am sure of it - welcomed me with their gentle, kind murmur, uttering, as it were, words of love. The grass sparkled with bright fragrant flowers. Little birds, in flocks, flew through the air, and, unafraid of me, alighted on my shoulders and hands, joyfully beating at me with dear little trepidation wings.*

**A**nd, finally, I saw and got to know the people of that happy land. They came to me themselves, they surrounded and embraced me. Children of the sun, of their sun. Oh, how beautiful they were! Never did I see on our earth such beauty in man. Perhaps only in our children of tenderest age is it possible to find a remote reflection of that beauty. The eyes of these happy people were full of bright glitter. Their faces radiated with intelligence and some kind of consciousness which had reached the level of tranquillity; yet these faces were cheerful. Innocent gladness sounded in the words and voices of these men.

Oh, at once, at the first glance of their faces, I grasped everything, everything! This was an earth not defiled by sin; upon it lived men who had not sinned; they lived in a paradise similar to that in which, according to the tradition of all mankind, lived our fallen forefathers, with the only exception that here the whole earth, everywhere, was one and the same paradise. These men, laughing joyously, crowded around me and caressed me. They took me to their homes, and each one of them sought to assuage me. Oh, they asked me no questions, but it seemed to me they knew everything, and they sought as quickly as possible to drive away suffering from my face.

... the feeling of love of these innocent and beautiful people stayed within me forever, and I feel that their love pours thence upon me even now. I have seen them myself, I got to know them, I became convinced; I loved them

and subsequently I suffered for them.

Oh, I understood at once, even then, that in many respects I should not comprehend them at all ... it seemed incredible, for instance, that they, who knew so much, did not possess our science. But soon I came to understand that their knowledge was amplified by and derived from revelations which differed from those on our earth, and that their aspirations were altogether different. They had no desires and they were placid; they did not aspire to the knowledge of life, as we seek to comprehend it, because their life was complete. Yet their knowledge was deeper and higher than that of our science, since the latter seeks to explain what life is; science itself endeavours to conceive it in order to teach others how to live; they, however, knew how to live even without science, and this I understood; but I was unable to comprehend their knowledge. They showed me their trees, and I failed to understand the measure of love with which they beheld them, as if they were speaking of creatures akin to them. And so you know that, perhaps, I am not mistaken when I say that they conversed with them! Yes, they did discover their language, and I am convinced that the trees understood them.

Thus they also looked upon the whole of nature - on animals which lived peacefully with them and never attacked them; they loved those men conquered with their own love. They pointed at stars and spoke to me something about which I was unable to grasp, but I am sure that through some means

they communicated, as it were, with these celestial bodies - only not through thought, but through some live medium.

Oh, these men did not even endeavour to make me understand them; they loved me without this; on the other hand, I knew that they would never understand me, and for this reason never did I speak to them about our earth. I merely embraced in their presence that earth on which they lived, and adored them without words; they saw this and permitted themselves to be adored, without being ashamed of being adored by me because they themselves loved much. They did not suffer on my behalf when, at times, with tears I kissed their feet, gladly knowing in their hearts with what force of love they would respond to me.

Sometimes I asked myself with surprise: how did they manage, all that time, not to insult one like me, and not even once to arouse in one like me a feeling of jealousy and envy? ...

They were vivacious and joyous like children. They roamed through their beautiful groves and forests; they sang lovely songs; they subsisted on light food, on fruits from the trees, on honey from the woods, on the milk of animals which loved them. They laboured but little and slightly for their food and clothing. They were endowed with love and children were born to them, but never did I observe in them those impulses of cruel voluptuousness which affect virtually everybody on our earth - everybody, and which are the sole source of almost all sin in our human race. They rejoiced over their new-born as new participants in their felicity. They never quarrelled and there was no jealousy amongst them; they did not even understand what these things meant. Their children were

common children because they all formed one family. There were virtually no diseases among them, although there was death. However, their old men passed away gently, as though falling asleep, surrounded by men bidding them farewell, blessing them, smiling to them and they departed accompanied by serene smiles. On these occasions I perceived no sorrow, no tears; there was merely

### I was unable to behold without tears the setting of the sun ....

love grown to the level of ecstasy, but calm, composed, meditative ecstasy. One could imagine that they continued to communicate with their dead even long after their death, and that the earthly communion between them was not interrupted by death.

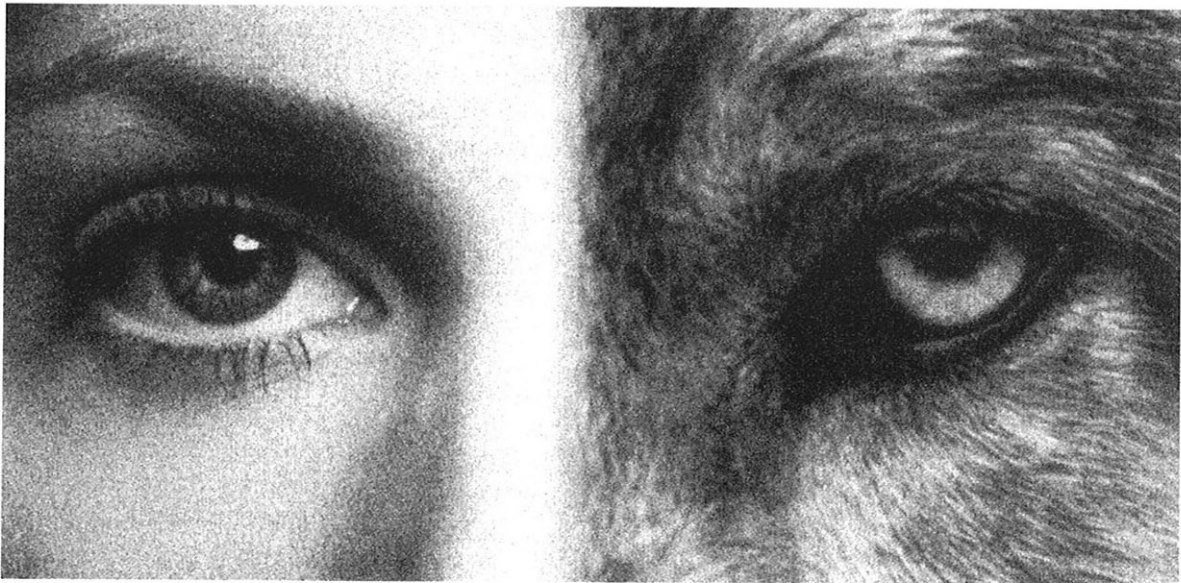
... they were so unaccountably convinced of it (eternal life) that it did not constitute a question to them. They had no temples, but in them there was some kind of a daily, live, unceasing communion with the whole of the universe. They had no religion, yet they possessed a firm belief that when they reach in their earthly gladness the full measure of earthly nature, there will ensue for them, both the living and the dead, a still greater expansion of their communion with the whole of the universe. They awaited this moment with joy, but without haste, without suffering about it, keeping, as it were, in the anticipation of their hearts which they communicated to each other. In the evenings, before going to sleep, they were fond of singing in concordant choirs. In these songs they expressed all sentiments derived from the passing day; they glorified it and bade it farewell. They glorified nature, the earth and seas and forests. They

were fond of composing songs about one another; they praised each other like children. Those were the simplest songs, but they evoked them from the heart and penetrated it. And not only in songs, but it seemed that they were spending all their lives in admiring each other. It was a sort of mutual complete and universal enamouredness.

Some of their solemn and ecstatic songs I almost could not understand at all. Comprehending their words I never was able to penetrate their full meaning. It remained inaccessible to my mind; but my heart, as it were, was moved, more and more permeated with it. Often I told them that all this I had sensed long before; that all this joy and this glory were vaguely expressed in me on our earth in the form of an appealing anguish which, at times, reached the level of unbearable sorrow; that in the dreams of my heart and in the visions of my mind I anticipated them all and their glory, and that often, on our earth, I was unable to behold without tears the setting of the sun .... They listened to me, and I could see that they could not comprehend the things I was telling them; yet I did not regret my telling these things to them; I knew they understood the full measure of my anguish for those whom I had abandoned. Yes, when they looked at me that dear expression of their eyes was permeated with love; when I felt that in their presence my heart, too, became as innocent and truthful as theirs, I did not regret that I was unable to understand them. Breath failed me because of the sensation of the fullness of life, and silently I worshipped them ....

*From "The Dream of a Strange Man" by Feodor Dostoyevsky, 1877*

# GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER



Archie Burnet reveals some hard facts, plain truths and real benefits of a vegetarian diet.

*You are planning a dinner party. You carefully think through your menu possibilities and finally decide what your culinary creation will be. You leave it to the last minute to buy the ingredients. And then someone reminds you that two of your guests are strict vegetarians. "Oh blast," you think, "why do they have to be different?"*

**S**ound familiar? Or do you regularly cater for your vegetarian friends? But it's not just the food that is the challenge to your creativity. If you are still a good old-fashioned meat eater it is the dinner conversation that can be the biggest test. It is a conversation that inevitably turns to the whys and wherefores of

vegetarianism, the benefits of going vegan, the horrible things they do to the meat nowadays and how many people consider themselves to be vegetarian although they still eat the occasional piece of fish! And depending on how well up you are on the latest research, your amateur dieticians for the evening will have the nerve to hold court in a debate



which is difficult for them to lose, and curiously depressing for your other guests to hear.

It is a debate that an increasing number of carnivores are not only losing, but giving up, as recent figures from the Vegetarian Society show that over two thousand people are becoming vegetarian every week. So why are so many people changing their diet so radically? Why are the herbivores winning the dinner table debates hands down? At the risk of sounding like a veggiebore these are some of the facts and figures which are having such an impact on one of the world's largest industries.

The discussion starts with the acknowledgement that the flesh of other creatures is just not designed to enter our flesh, quickly progressing to the understanding that the creatures whom we eat have the same feelings as we do i.e. pain i.e. and finally how the ancient wisdom of the East teaches us that different categories of food simply have different energy levels, with some food having almost no energy at all.

### *HEALTH IS AT THE HEART OF THE ISSUE.*

Vegetarians have been saying for many years that a vegetarian diet improves and restores health, and prevents certain diseases. Now medical science has clearly made the link between meat eating and such killers as heart disease and cancer. Ninety to ninety seven percent of heart disease can be prevented by vegetarian diet according to the Journal of the American Medical Association. The cause is high cholesterol, accumulating in the walls of arteries, constricting the flow of blood to the heart leading to high blood pressure, heart disease and strokes.

Cancer of the colon, rectum, breasts and intestines are rare among those who eat little meat such as the Japanese and the Indians, but they are prevalent among meat eating populations. Biologists and nutritionists point to the fact that the human intestinal tract is simply not suited for the digestion of meat. Flesh eating animals have short intestinal tracts (three times the length of the body) to pass rapidly decaying toxin-producing meat out of the body quickly, whereas plant foods decay more slowly than meat, so plant eaters have intestines at least six times the length of the body. Humans have the long intestinal tract of a herbivore so meat toxins overload the kidneys and lead to gout, arthritis, rheumatism, and even cancer.

### *THE CHEMISTRY IS NOT RIGHT*

As soon as an animal is slaughtered, its flesh begins to putrefy, and quickly turns a sickly grey-green. The meat industry disguises this discoloration by adding nitrates, nitrites and other preservatives to give meat a bright red colour. But research has shown many of these preservatives to be carcinogenic. Then there are the massive amounts of chemicals fed to livestock. Mary and Steven Null, in their book. "Poisons in Your Body", describe a scene that ought to make anyone think twice before buying another steak or ham: "The animals are kept alive and fattened by continuous administration of tranquillisers, hormones, antibiotics and 2,700 other drugs. The process starts even before birth and continues long after death. These drugs are still present in the meat when you eat it. In most countries the law does not require that they be declared on the package."

### *IN FOR THE KILL*

If by now you are still not convinced about the merits of vegetarianism your dinner guests could move in for the kill. The following imagery from an "Essay on the Ethics of Vegetarianism" from the Vegetarian Society only touches on the horrors of which most people are unaware.

"The entire life of a captive food animal is an unnatural one of artificial breeding, vicious castration and/or hormone stimulation, feeding of an abnormal diet for fattening purposes, and eventually long rides in intense discomfort to the ultimate end. The holding pens, the electric prods and tail twisting, the abject terror and fright, all these are still very much a part of the most modern animal raising, shipping, and slaughtering. Commercial slaughter houses are like visions of hell. Screaming animals are stunned by hammer blows, electric shock or concussion guns. They are hoisted into the air by their feet and moved through the factories of death on mechanised conveyor systems. Still alive, their throats are sliced and their flesh is cut off while they bleed to death."

This can be a rather convincing argument!

### *THE PROTEIN ILLUSION*

The most popular argument in defence of the meat diet is, "We need to eat lots of meat because we need lots of animal protein." This now appears to be one of the most powerful and widespread illusions, locking people in a state of mild fear should there be a lack of protein to supply the energy to get them through the day. Today the official recommended daily protein requirement is 45 grams, well down from 150 grams twenty years

ago. Not only is any excess protein wasted, but it can cause harm to the body and reduce the amount of energy available. According to the Vegetarian Society 45grams is easily attainable from a varied diet of grains, lentils, nuts, vegetables and fruits. In fact these proteins are easier to assimilate than those found in meat.

Finally, to completely dispel the protein illusion so deftly created by the marketing and advertising departments, vegetarians delight in pointing out that the vegetable kingdom is the real source of all protein - vegetarians simply eat it directly, instead of getting it second hand from vegetarian animals!

### THE PAIN IN OUR POCKETS

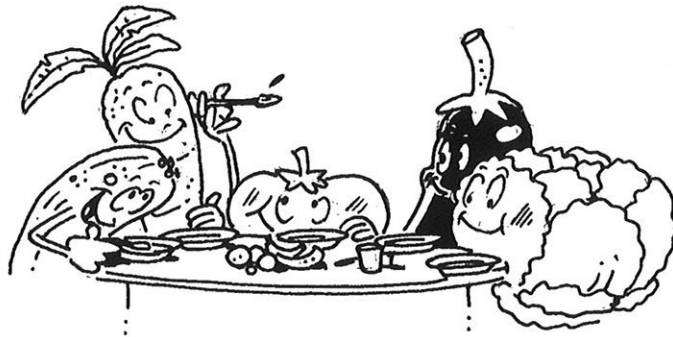
Meat feeds few at the expense of many. It is a grossly inefficient food production mechanism, operating in the midst of an extremely hungry world. Consider the facts. For every sixteen pounds of grain fed to cattle only one pound of meat is produced, for every ten pounds of protein feed fed to cattle only one pound of meat protein for humans is produced. In "Diet for a Small Planet", Frances Moore Lappe asks us to imagine sitting down to an eight-ounce steak. "Then imagine the room filled with 45 to 50 people with empty bowls in front of them. For the feed cost of your steak, each of their bowls could be filled with a cup full of cooked cereal grains." The average European and American meat eater uses five times the food resources of the average Colombian, Indian or Nigerian. Facts such as these have led food experts to point out that the world hunger problem is artificial. Even now the world produces enough food for everyone

on the planet.

Degradation of the environment is the other price we pay for the cultivation of cattle and not crops. The heavily contaminated runoff and sewage from slaughterhouses and feedlots are major sources of pollution of rivers and streams. In their book "Population, Resources and Environment", Paul and Anne Ehrlich show that to grow one pound of wheat requires only sixty pounds of water, whereas production of one pound of meat requires anywhere from 2,500 to 6,000 pounds of water.

### ANCIENT WORDS OF WISDOM

By now the meat eater may look for some support and direction from their religious beliefs. But



there too the message is also clearly in favour of a vegetarian diet. In Genesis (1:29) God Himself proclaims, "Behold, I have given you every herb-bearing tree, in which the fruit of the tree yielding seed, it unto you shall be for meat". Many Christians believe that Christ ate meat and the many references to meat in the New Testament. But closer study of the original Greek manuscripts shows that the vast majority of the words are translated as meat are "trophe brome", and other words that simply mean "food" or "eating" in

the broadest sense.

The Lord Buddha is known particularly for his preaching against animal killing, while the Vedic scriptures of India also stress non-violence as the ethical foundation for vegetarianism.

### GOOD VIBRATIONS

If your vegetarian guests are also meditators, it is likely the conversation will go beyond just the pros and cons of vegetarian diet to explore the effect of certain foods on the mind. Recent experiments have shown that certain foods directly influence the brains chemical neurotransmitters. Foods rich in lecithin for example, can increase memory power. A meal lacking proteins, but rich in carbohydrates is guaranteed to make the brain drowsy for hours afterwards.

The important effects that food can have on the the mind has been known by leading practitioners of yoga and meditation for centuries. Long before the discoveries of scientific research they learned that the universe is composed of vibrations of energy and ultimately the vibrations of consciousness. All foods have their own subtle vibrations which

affect body and mind. After experimenting with the effects of different foods they defined three categories corresponding to the particular energy predominating in a particular food.

The first is Sattvika or Sentient food. This energy force is characterised by purity, self-awareness, love, peace, and joy. This category of foods includes fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, grains, milk and dairy products. The second group is Rajasika or Mutative food. This has a mutative

## GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER

continued from p30

energy of restlessness, constant movement or change. When this force is predominant the mind and body become agitated and nervous, unable to calm down and relax. These foods include caffeinated drinks such as coffee and many teas, hot spices, fermented foods and some medicinal drugs. The third group is Tamasika or Static food. This has a static force of dullness, inertia, decay and death. Death occurs when the other two energies are spent and the static force is solely dominant. Static foods include meat, fish, eggs, alcohol, mushrooms, onions and garlic.

If, after all that, you are still eating dinner, and the herbivores have given up trying to convince the carnivores, congratulations, it probably means the steaks were just right, and the vegies were full of love and peace! ®

*Archie Burnet is a freelance writer based in London.*



# BEING CALM

THE TEN POINT PLAN FOR STRESS FREE LIVING  
Craig Brown sets out his stall for a more relaxed and effective life

*All too often in our society people work long stressful hours without giving themselves time to eat and relax. I find that every day in my general practitioner's surgery, illnesses such as duodenal ulcer and angina and symptoms of headache and depression are often caused by such stress. I usually ask my patients to give a description of a typical working day and week. An example would be a business man getting up at 5.30 in the morning to drive to the city to get into work before the rush hour, then working all day without a break. He usually arrives home after 8.00 at night, has a quick supper and collapses in front of the television exhausted. He also tends to take work home at the weekend to catch up and will rarely take a holiday.*

ask such individuals why they do this, and strangely enough they have often forgotten. At some time they needed to meet a deadline and never stopped, or they wanted to make a good impression with the boss, or they feared losing their job and being unable to pay their mortgage. More often than not, they actually had not given themselves time to sit down and think through their own problems. Such people are often very good at sorting out others problems, but not their own. Doctors and nurses are good examples.

The first thing I do as a doctor, when people come to the surgery with stress-induced illnesses, is to give them a medical sickness certificate for however long I feel they need to go home and rest. They often need up to six weeks. I ask them to come and see me again when they feel better. Then I ask, "What do you think brought on your illness?" so that they might look at their stresses in life and consider what to do about them.

*So my first rule to calm down is to make time for oneself.*

*My second would be would be to see illnesses not as interruptions and problems but as lessons and opportunities.*



### *The Lesson*

One thing I did learn as a houseman was from the physician I worked under. When he saw patients after they had made the initial recovery from a heart attack, he would ask them to make a list of all the things they enjoyed doing and all the things they disliked. When he returned to visit them before they were discharged he would ask for their lists. He would tear up the lists of their dislikes, and hand back the lists of what they enjoyed - with his advice to go and do them.

*He was a wise man because the underlying truth is my third principle. We will only become healthy if we ourselves are willing to change.*

### *Working in South Africa*

After my year as a junior houseman, I did a further three years training for general practice in Dumfries and then went to work in a mission hospital in South Africa in the Zulu homelands for two years. The hospital and work was typical of a third world

country. There were three doctors to look after a large three hundred and fifty bedded hospital. The main causes of illness were poverty and malnutrition. All the children were malnourished and the mortality rate was high. But one of my lasting impressions was of how generally the people were happy. They were open and friendly, and would wave as we drove past their houses. The nurses, despite the discrimination of apartheid, were always cheerful and ready to share a joke.

*Which brings me to my fourth observation: being calm is not dependent upon material wealth, but is a spiritual quality.*

I remember particularly the Zulu way of saying farewell. "Hamba gauchlie" is said to the one who is leaving, and the one who is leaving replies "Sala gauchlie". Literally this means "Go slowly" and "Stay slowly". It can also mean health, so it implies "Go healthily" and "Stay healthy". The further implication is if you go slowly, you will be healthy. It is a reminder to

be mindful of the present, and to live in the present.

*I think this makes a good fifth principle to live by; being mindful.*

### *Littlehampton*

Returning to this country, I joined a general practice in the south of England in Littlehampton. The practice had problems. The senior partner was a workaholic. He liked to take on more and more patients and more commitments. In addition to our normal general practice work, we were each doing fifteen hours a week medical work. There was no structured management of staff or finances. What had started as a one man practice in the front dining room was now six partners with a staff of fifteen. It was chaos. Bringing about change was slow, but tragedy struck when one of our partners died at the age of thirty-eight. We all knew in our hearts this was due to stress and exhaustion. It was the jolt we needed. We cut out our extra commitments and limited the number of our practice to 12,000

and to a fixed area. We appointed a practice manager to organise us and the staff. Reducing stress is not only a spiritual ideal, but it has to be practical. We had to plan and organise how to at least shine a light of calm on the chaos.

*And so my sixth principle is to plan and organise.*

#### Westcourt

As a group of doctors we now realised that to practise as we wished we would have to move from our two over-crowded surgeries and build a new centre. As fate would have it, I ruptured my achilles tendon, and spent six weeks in bed. It gave me the chance to think about how we wanted to practise for the rest of our medical careers. Together we framed a plan and, after much work and discussion, created a building that reflected how we wished to work. It is a building both homely and welcoming; at the same time it reflects quiet efficiency. In every aspect we try to build an atmosphere of a healthy environment, using plants and good lighting, and making it comfortable for the staff.

*The seventh principle of calming down is to create a vision of how we would like our world to be, then working in co-operation with others towards it.*

Today, the team comprises six doctors, three practice nurses, one social worker, two health visitors, ten receptionists, three administrators and three district nurses. And one has constantly to work at communication between members of the team. We always have a Christmas party and a summer outing. Small gestures, birthday cards and flowers when someone is sick, are important. Last year, with the introduction of the new contract for general

practice, we all felt we had worked very hard so we gave ourselves, and the staff, an extra week's holiday.

There are many stresses in life we cannot avoid and a doctors surgery proves no exception. But feeling part of a supportive team makes everything easier.

*The eighth principle is, then, working together, considering others, helping others. In a word: service.*

#### Stress Clinics

Having our own centre meant we could begin to practise as we wished, and I began to organise stress-reduction clinics. Firstly we targeted tranquilliser users, then sleeping tablet users and then opened the groups to anyone. We would talk and counsel within the group and teach various relaxation techniques, exercises, breathing routines, visualisation and meditation. The latest group is for 14 - 17 year olds to help them with exam stress. This is run by a yoga teacher friend of mine. At the end of six weekly sessions we ask the students what they enjoyed most and found helpful. The verdict usually is meditation. In fact, our adult stress group classes are now 80% in meditation, but we don't call it that in the south of England.

*The ninth principle to cope with stress is meditation.*

#### Healing

Something else I have been interested in is spiritual healing, and for the last six years a healer has been attending one of my clinics each week. The focus of our working together is to look at the spiritual context of the consultation. We start the therapy with a simple meditation of connecting our inner source to the supreme source and bringing down

the light through ourselves into the consulting room. We finish the therapy with a closing meditation and sending the same healing light to our patients who attended.

Two main lessons I have learnt from this experience are:

1) Healers see themselves as channels for the energy of God's love. When we deal with sick people they tend to drain us and this is what is known in the medical profession as 'burn out'. But by first thinking on and then creating the reality of this energy of love - which is inexhaustible - it gives us more energy and vitality.

2) The doctor/healer is himself the most potent remedial treatment; his or her own state of being is a major influence on the outcome of a doctor/patient consultation. So the onus for all therapists is to calm down ourselves and to try and reach a sense of peace that will heal (not necessarily cure) our patients.

*My final and tenth principle using the energy of love.*

So in short, the ten rules or principles:-

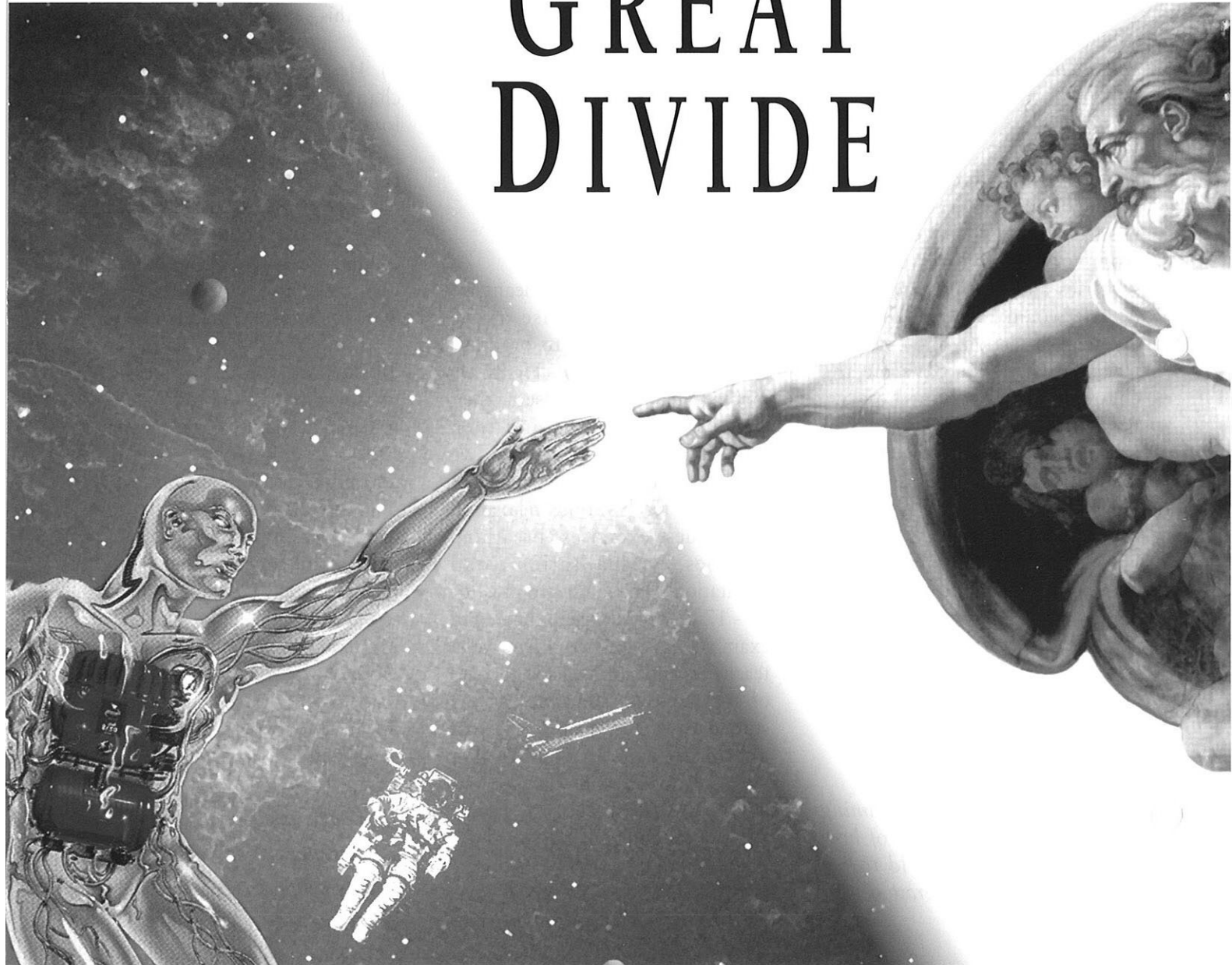
- 1 Make time for yourself
- 2 See illness is an opportunity
- 3 Be willing to change
- 4 Happiness is not dependent upon material wealth, but spiritual quality
- 5 Cultivate mindfulness
- 6 Plan and organise
- 7 Create a vision and co-operate with others to achieve it
- 8 Be of service to others
- 9 Practise meditation
- 10 Work with love

®

*Dr Craig Brown is a General Practitioner in Littlehampton in Sussex*

Chris Challen reminds us of the original relationship between the arts and sciences

# THE GREAT DIVIDE



*Art and science are implicit in our every thought, feeling and act. Avoiding contact with the arts and sciences is impossible; they extend into all realms, from the seemingly mundane to the sublime. To this end, the quality of our culture and environment is the direct responsibility of everybody, both individually and collectively. This responsibility can be avoided only at great risk to our mental, emotional, physical and spiritual well-being and development.*

The 20th century has seen the continued alienation of the arts and sciences. This trend - exacerbated by the collapse of true empiricism - has left us with a tendency towards historical rather than experimental learning, and a passive rather than active approach to life. Regardless of scale or realm, art and science are counterparts; art is concerned with knowing the world via the intuition - science is concerned with knowledge of the world via the mind. Neither art nor science can have any meaning in isolation but, to the scientist, art can appear illogical and unnecessary, and to the artist, science is cold and rigid. Although both share the same creative urge - to comprehend ourselves and our relationship to the Universe - rarely are these disciplines unified enough to reveal the whole.

Before the Whole was divided into separate disciplines, there was only one path of knowledge leading to the deepening and enriching of consciousness. This knowledge was the sole means by which the human race was to discern the 'secrets' of the four dimensions and the immutable laws that regulate the Universe and all it contains. Our level of individual consciousness is directly related to the degree we can comprehend and manifest these laws within our lives.

It is easy to be misled into believing the mind is the seat of all knowledge. This deception, I believe, represents the beginning of materialism and the division of knowledge into the arts and the sciences. At a deeper level it represents no less than the division of mind and spirit, conscious and unconscious, and practice from theory. Art, in addition to using the mind, plumbs our intuition and unconscious - the faculties that enable us to receive much deeper and more potent forces than the lower mind can alone provide. The higher mind is a screen onto which our intuition and unconscious (once part of our conscious mind) can project their powerful creative forces and, if the lower mind and planetary conditions are receptive, can be brought through and made manifest in concrete form. Art provides us with

vital spiritual impulse and creative nourishment because the Sun - representing the highest possible direct emanation of God in this System - is unable to meet these needs directly. However, if the lower mind is isolated from the spiritual faculties the result is a cold and materialistic mentality that can justify the use of art and science for selfish or even destructive ends.

Works of art are the greatest feats of organisation and daring the world has achieved; art is immortalised and romanticised in the records of nations. Western history is even referenced to the arts - the Renaissance, Baroque, Romantic - and eulogies are sung to the memory of hero artists. To this end, the quality and quantity of art in the world is a measure of its civilisation - art is able to flourish, and does, in those places and times where concern for human welfare can also flourish. When nations are at war, works of art are removed to safe places, often being considered more precious than people (if creating people were as agonising as creating art, there would be fewer wars). This is not because art is valuable monetarily, as at such times art can be purchased for lesser sums; rather it is because art contains the history and aspirations of the human race. It is also vital for planning present and future actions which are entirely dependent on past experience. For these reasons the destruction of art would signify the disintegration of society in its present form.

Throughout long ages there have been many attempts at reintegration, as the many written records will attest. The last great attempt in the West was the Italian Renaissance. The Renaissance ideal was to become multi-disciplined - to be a fully integrated being. Thus for Michelangelo - whilst studying in the Medici sculpture garden under the guidance of Bertoldo - it was considered vital he should receive instruction from the scholars of Lorenzo Medici's Platonic Academy, including Fichino, Poliziano and Mirandola, in order that he could draw on a wide range of knowledge and inspiration for his work.

I find it helpful to think of the various combinations of arts and sciences as 'tools'. By this I mean utilising our working materials - the arts and sciences - in order to create tools to gain insights that will help make us whole. For example, music,

during its evolution, has utilised science in a most effective and delicate way. Many scientists found music the perfect vehicle for defining their theories; for example, Pythagoras conceived of dividing the octave into ratios that are very close to the intervals used today, and Ctesibius, Hero and Archimedes between them invented the pipe organ.

In the fine arts, both Italian artists and musical instrument makers had a powerful grasp of colour theory. During the last hundred years there have been many people (including myself) who gazed - sometimes for hours on end - into the surfaces of Antonio Stradivari's overwhelmingly beautiful instruments in order to discover the 'secret' of his colours. Why this urge? Stradivari's instruments, like so many other highly developed and inspired 'tools' give me glimpses - sometimes much more - of a reality infinitely more powerful than any cognitive or objective observation can provide. And, like everybody who gazes at the secrets of human creation, I am perhaps, in reality, being drawn to something much, much more important. For these secrets - in their Edenic form - once comprised the whole. It is we who have debased and fragmented them and are now involved in the long process of rebuilding the whole from the parts; just two of which - the arts and sciences - the Western world has, as yet, managed to identify.

®

*Christopher Challen has been passionately involved in the arts all his life and has established several projects involving the reinterpretation of traditions in forms relevant to the needs of the present day. He is currently in the process of setting up a Foundation entitled "Village of Arts and Sciences". The idea is to provide a working and living environment for creative people in need of support. The village will be housed in a rural estate containing a variety of accommodation to suit the needs of both work and living.*

# Love is



Dadi Gulzar adds another dimension to our ongoing reflections on that four-letter word!

*Love comes in two forms: selfish love or selfless love. Selfish love reaps only temporary attainment; its happiness is short-lived, though you may not realise it at the time. Real, lasting love can only be selfless, where you experience permanent happiness and attainment in the heart. We receive love from God, because He does not have any desires of His own. People usually express their love while harbouring some or other desire. But God teaches us to see each other as souls, as brothers; this is spiritual love; this is true love.*

**T**his brotherly love enables us to see that in everyone's heart there is a deep desire, a craving for love. A small child without love from its mother is like a spindly, dried up sapling. When a human soul receives the water of love its love is like a vibrant and beautiful tree, very lovely and fresh. Similarly, when someone gives you a piece of bread with great love, it always seems to taste delicious and is so satisfying. But should a person unwillingly serve you a feast, it will leave you feeling as if it were no better than a piece of bread.



Love is the most essential element for human beings and for life. And within that the greatest is the love of God. The love of God will never deceive you. He never deceives anyone whether their personality is like a “thorn” or a “flower”. Moreover, God gives love to everyone and transforms thorns into flowers. In this way, we see His love as constant, perpetual. God, and everything about Him, is imperishable. His imperishable love makes the soul melt, and everything else just disappears. This is spiritual love.

*Work without happiness is like a burden that you have to endure, but when you are internally happy it becomes a game, and you're just having fun.*

People melt into physical love too, but it does not last - and too often there is deception. But not the love of God! When you are totally in union with God, that union is so beautiful. But how can you get this love of God? Everyone wants it. If you could just disappear into the love of God there wouldn't be any need for any other love. But how are you going to achieve it? What is the way? Actually it is very simple and easy. It is simply a celebration of a meeting between the soul and the Supreme Soul. You need to be in soul consciousness i.e. the awareness of yourself as a soul, a spark of spiritual light, for your love to merge with His, because he too is a soul. It is simply a matter of forgetting your consciousness of the body, then you will be aware that “I am a soul”. The word “I” refers to the soul, not the body. When we refer to the body, we speak of it as “mine”- the ownership is the soul's. My original form however, is just this

little dot of light. We all forget this and from this lack of awareness all other mistakes are born.

To pass a current through an electrical wire takes only a second, but what we do is remove the insulation from the wire and try to pass a current through that. It is impossible, just as it is impossible to connect with the Supreme Soul when the mind is absorbed in physical matters. The simple solution: if, even for just a second, you hold yourself steady in the awareness of being a soul, and for a moment break your mental connection with all others, then you can forge a connection with the Supreme Soul. When we desire to experience the love of God, this is the one simple method we need to apply. “I am a soul, a child of the Mother and Father, the Supreme Soul” and when we are meeting, experiencing a union, a love, it is so divine, so different from anything in the world, so lovely that you will not want to leave that love.

Once you return to the more mundane matters of work and other activities, your mind and intellect will not forget your experience of God's love and the attainment of that love, even while you are engaged in action. Consequently, your work and activity will be filled with the achievement of love.

*Happiness is such a nourishment that can transform a person from weak to powerful.*

Wherever there is a sense of

# Love is

achievement, there is happiness, and whenever you are happy, how will your work be? When your mind is happy, just watch your hands and feet become tireless. You will never become tired because happiness is such a nourishment that you dismiss any tiredness. Work without happiness is like a burden that you have to endure, but when you are internally happy it becomes a game, and you're just having fun.

All I need to realise is who I am. I am a soul and the soul has been both female and male in different births. I have the awareness of how to be both, so I shouldn't now think of myself limited by physical gender. I should think of myself as a very powerful unlimited soul with the qualities of both male and female. In that way you will feel more complete and that brings much inner happiness.

Happiness is such a nourishment that can transform a person from weak to powerful. That power is a spiritual power, achieved through spiritual happiness. It makes difficult things easy, heavy things light. Real spiritual happiness comes about through spiritual love, the imperishable love of God. If we are alive, then it might as well be a happy life. No matter what happens in life, your happiness should not be lost.

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*Dadi Gulzar is the Director of the Brahma Kumaris Centres in Delhi*

# CAUTION

## Cultural Values at Work!

Asma Abdullah highlights the importance of discerning the personal values of the individual before training and education

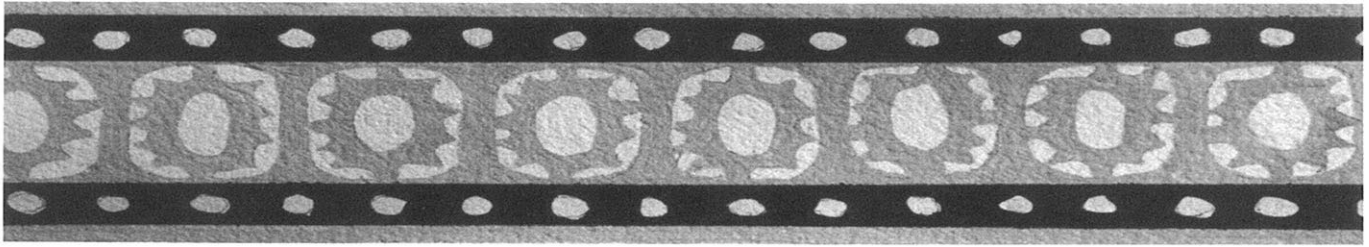
*The common approach to a corporate training event is to focus on skills and the “how to’s”. The assumption that there is one person who knows what to do and teaches another person “how to do it” suggests that skilful behaviour, when performed in proper sequence or with well-chosen timing, can bring about positive meanings and outcomes. In conducting human resource development-oriented courses, I am finding this assumption to be no longer appropriate.*

**T**he development of skills must be triggered by an awareness and even transformation of one’s values at the individual level. The heart of personal change is not on acquiring skills and competencies but the attachment of meaning and value we give to our actions.

To be able to relate and work with people from different cultures, we need to look at how they perceive, believe, think and evaluate the world, self and others and their relationship with God. It is only when our actions are congruent with our values that we can begin to maximise our assets and minimise our liabilities - enabling us to function from a position of strength and commitment.

The influence of culture and how it shapes our behaviour is clearly accentuated when we communicate with people who are not like us in terms of language, religions, customs, etc. While common principles of management such as planning, organising, co-ordinating and controlling, and certain elements such as technology, structure and processes, are universal phenomena, specific managerial functions are culture-specific and reflect the culture and historical developments of a particular society or culture. The main difference is the human behaviour within those “universal” principles.

At the workplace, it becomes even more important that we understand these differences and specifically



how our cultural values influence our daily functioning, personal productivity and work habits.

Very often, the evolution of our work culture is based on how these values are expressed through shared practices by those who are in positions of power and influence. For example, if managers value hard work, discipline and spiritual well-being, it is likely that they will bring these values into the organisation to influence its corporate culture and shared practices.

To promote a work culture which is congruent with the values and aspirations of their staff, therefore requires managers to explore the revered values of their workforce and develop shared practices which are congruent with those they have acquired at an early age.

To understand values, we have to recognise that they give meaning and purpose to our lives. Values are the unseen aspects of our culture which influence our thoughts, feelings and actions and drive our work patterns and habits.

For values to be instilled, they must be meaningfully communicated to the individual at any early age by parents, significant elders, etc. These values are a set of clear and uncompromising statements about what is critical to him. They must also be freely chosen by the individual and cannot be externally imposed upon him. Values need to be acted out and made visible as efforts towards an intended destination.

It is therefore essential that we become aware of our personal and cultural values - our own "baggage" - because they have a significant influence on our work lives. To enable us to understand these values and how they are "programmed" in all of us, let us examine the following three sets of values:

*Personal/Individual/Family:*

We acquire a set of values regardless of our ethnic group at an early age through the process of socialisation by our parents, teachers and many significant others in our lives. Values relating to honesty, discipline, sincerity, trustworthiness, integrity and others are expected to be internalised in all of us as we become fully mature and normal human beings. These values are often considered as universal.

**To understand  
values, we have  
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and purpose to  
our lives.**

*Ethnic/Cultural:*

We are collectively programmed to adopt a set of values commonly identified with a racial group. These values are therefore unique to us and our ethnic culture. They form the basis of symbols and rituals which we share with members of our primary group, the

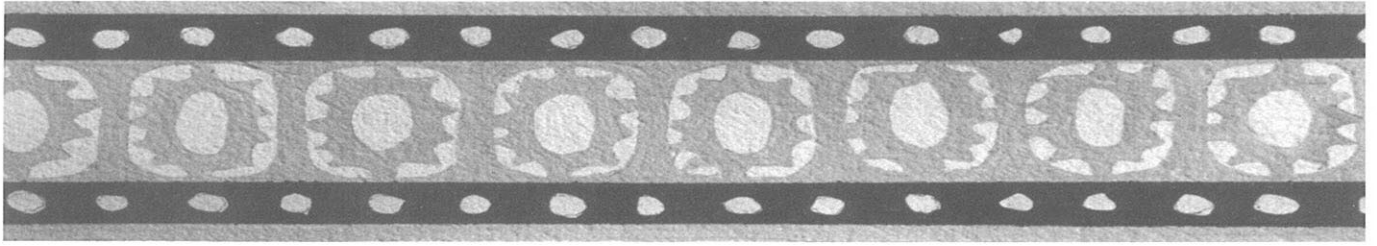
family and significant elders. Over the years these values are integrated and they influence our own value system and govern our daily behaviour.

*Organisational:*

We adopt a set of work values which may not be congruent with those at the ethnic/cultural level, in order to become more effective and productive at the workplace. These values are often demonstrated through common practices which the organisation specifically considers as part of its shared rituals and symbols and are reinforced by policies and procedures. They determine our success as a functional contributor at the workplace and as a member of that workgroup.

Hence, in addition to the personal and cultural values, an individual upon entry into an organisational setting, has to learn to internalise a new set of work-oriented values through common practices which are seen as organised rituals in the life of an organisation. Rewards, incentives and pressures are often used by management for employees to accept these new values as they remain within the organisation.

While employees willingly accept most of the new work values, they may find some that are not in harmony and therefore incongruent with their own revered values at the individual and ethnic/cultural levels. To understand these different interpretations requires us to go a step further by looking at the underlying assumptions of these values in different cultures.



*These are as follows:*

*\*A belief that we (humanity) must live in harmony with the world around us rather than control the environment to suit our needs.*

*\*An understanding that the basis of doing business is trust and relationship rather than obtaining a contractual agreement.*

*\*Communication tends to focus more on vocal tone, body language, facial expressions and eye contact in order to build and maintain relationships rather than merely focusing on facts and information.*

*\*A strong sense of social responsibility and a feeling of shame mean people are less likely to do negative things because of adverse social consequences rather than be driven by a sense of guilt.*

*\*A tendency to be holistic in terms of development involving both material and spiritual dimensions rather than focusing mainly on material development.*

*\*A preference for combining personal and professional lives when evaluating people rather than separating their personal lives from their professional lives.*

*\*An emphasis on co-operation, as the quality of life depends on the spirit of interdependence and harmonious relationships with others more than on competition, individual achievement, assertiveness and pursuit of material success.*

These differences in our cultural assumptions must be understood as they influence the priorities that each culture places on the values they instil in their members during the early process of socialisation and acculturation. Failure to look at them causes us to evaluate people from another culture according to one's own set of cultural assumptions.

Based on these cultural differences and the manner in which values have been programmed into us from a young age, it becomes essential that we examine the importance and significance of values at the individual and ethnic/cultural levels of the target audience. This is especially so

when we conduct courses in the area of skills development. It is therefore advisable to begin with where the group is, what they cherish and value and want to bring to the workplace to enhance productivity and relationships.

People, we know, are often motivated to perform when their actions are congruent with their own individual and cultural values. This is especially so in most Asian societies which consider work to be anchored in spiritual beliefs and ancient wisdom.

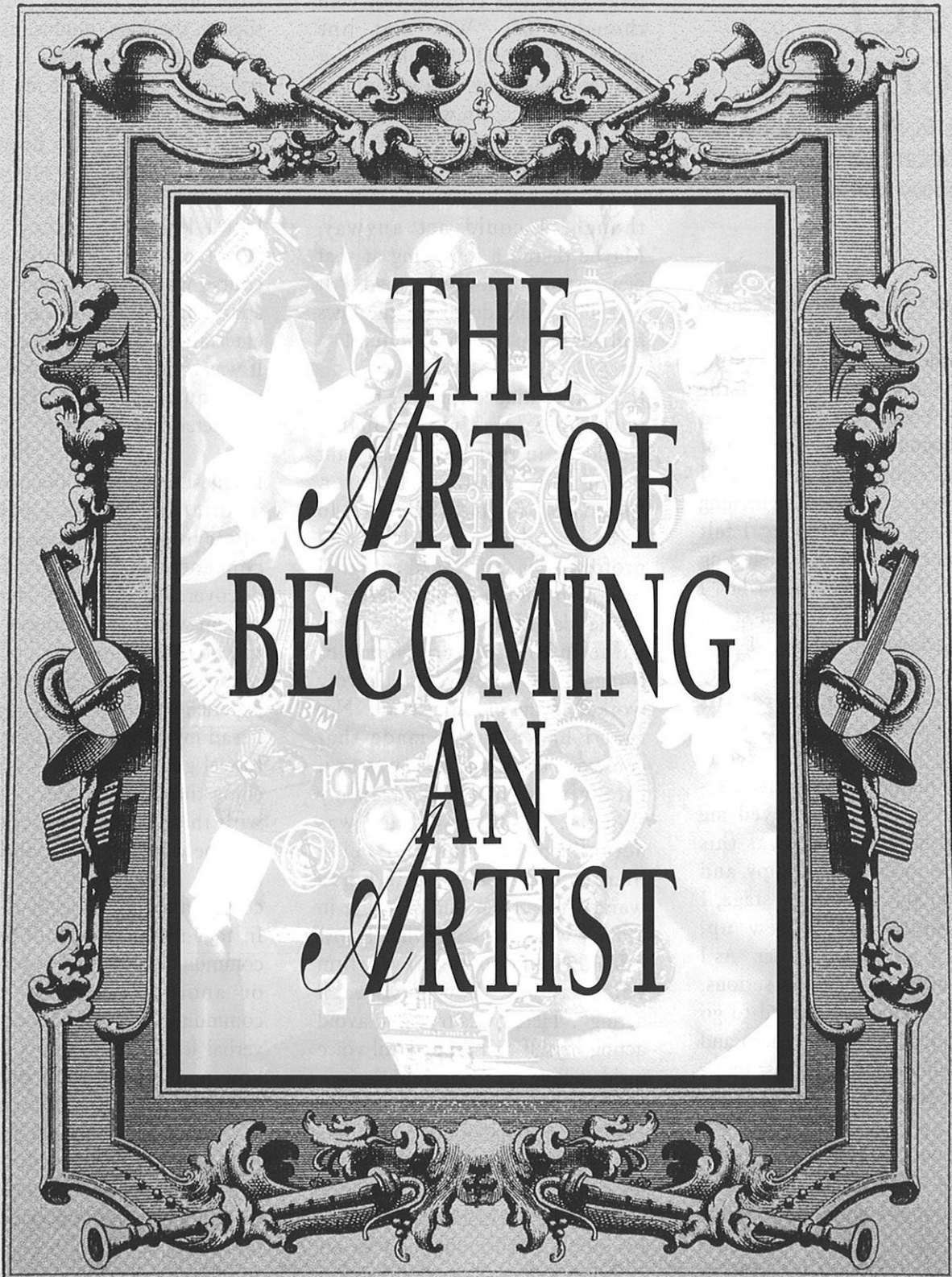
So, in transferring skills and techniques it will be more appropriate to begin by triggering values at the individual and

cultural levels. Communicating new concepts and ideas can be made much faster when we incorporate their individual/personal and ethnic/cultural values to help develop appropriate "how to's" relevant to the group and to its culture.

The challenge for those who work across cultures is to be able to understand, appreciate and respect value differences and make a genuine effort to explore what's beyond these values and get into the realm of underlying assumptions.

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*Asma Abdullah is a management consultant and trainer in Kuala Lumpur specialising in intercultural affairs within organisations.*



*It takes courage to get 'out there' and perform for a public audience. Inside the fear and resistance can be extraordinary forces stifling creative expression. But there is also a steep learning curve where learning means growing and expanding personal capacity. Here two performing artists describe some of their most interesting moments.*

# GETTING MY ACT TOGETHER

Actress Roslyn Gentle recalls some traumatic moments on her journey to the stage

Where do I begin? I can't seem to remember a time when I wasn't acting either on the big stage of the world or the little stage of the theatre - I was writing, directing and performing my own reviews at five - and charging an entry fee! I think it was my way of lightening the sadness and suffering I felt around me at the time, including my own. My mother died when I was very young and I spent seven years in a boarding school. I used to dream about being a hero who saved the whole world from its pain and sorrow and made it a beautiful place where everyone lived in peace and happiness - forever - and they all loved me especially! Perhaps it was this desperate need to be happy and loved that put me on the stage, I don't know. As I grew up, however, it all seemed harder. As I became more intense and serious, the joy and laughter seemed to go and my dream of being a hero and saving humanity became just that - a ridiculous dream.

When I was at NIDA (National Institute of Dramatic Art) the teachers would always say to me "Roslyn, just get the thought right and the rest will happen automatically ..." and "just enjoy it!" Difficult when your head is in a major spin over a dropped line or because you just tripped onto the stage and your entire family is sitting in the front row. Or are they...? Don't tell me they're late again ... I told them I was only in

the first 15 minutes! How could I get the 'thought right' when my inner critic was running riot with thoughts of: "Was that line important? You'll probably forget another one now you've done it once, Roslyn ... Ah,well, it doesn't matter again the family's not there to see me anyway, so who gives a damn. Don't know why I ever thought I could act anyway. Maybe there's a job going at that new restaurant down the road". It was all I could do to say the lines and not bump into the furniture!

If it had continued this way for too much longer I think I probably would be in that little restaurant down the road. However, fortunately for me, it didn't. In 1984 I underwent a deep and profound spiritual awakening. I began to question intensely the whole idea of acting: what was its value in the greater scheme of things? For three years I hardly worked in the industry at all. Not that I had actually made that conscious decision, but it was as if the universe had picked up my thought. I fell very ill and was actually at the point of being unable to work even if I had wanted to. Then one morning in 1987 I woke up with what I now call a divine inspiration, a very firm voice saying, "You must teach acting". Here I was trying to avoid acting myself and a powerful voice inside telling me to teach it!

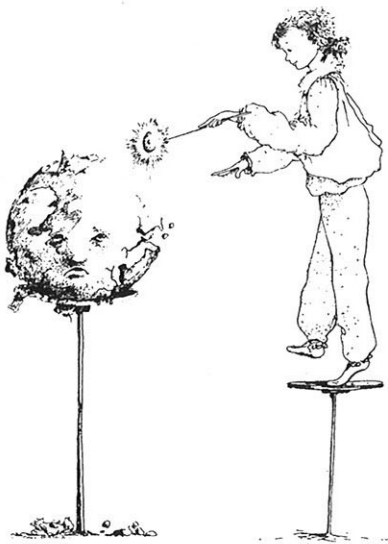
So I did! I prepared and taught one session a week, and during the next ten weeks I began to see what was really going on: of course, it was all for me! I was learning how to act ... the easy way! I also realised that what I was teaching to make acting easy and fun on the little stage could actually work on the big stage. I had known it intellectually, but somehow the knowing it and the doing it hadn't come together.

I discovered that the greatest block

to my own creativity was actually me! By really letting go of my past - the input of parents, education, society, the fears, doubts, attitudes, etc. - and coming from a space of stillness at the core of my being, I was free! I was at a source of creativity that was no longer hard work, but a space from which I could act and "just enjoy it". At last I knew what they meant! What made it so enjoyable of course was that coming from this space of freedom I was actually entertaining and surprising myself. It was an awesome discovery that I was quite separate from this character called Roslyn!

I had started experimenting with meditation and as I practised observing, directing and concentrating my mind, I discovered that I could create and sustain whatever experience I chose to at any moment. I was responsible for whatever I was experiencing, or feeling (even when I read my reviews it was my choice to feel good or bad!). I started to enjoy the whole notion of playing with the language of feelings. It became very clear to me that this is the language we are communicating most of the time. In fact it has been said by some communications expert somewhere or another that 92% of our communication happens at a non-verbal level (wild, when I consider how much attention is placed on the sacred script) and... if there is any discrepancy between the verbal and non-verbal, the non-verbal wins hands down. Wonder what the audience was picking up back in those early days!

"What I am feeling others will also experience!" The repercussions of that statement continue to echo in my mind to this very day. It was this whole idea that started to bring a flicker of the childhood dream of the hero back into my life. I was beginning to glimpse what I could



offer humanity as an artist. John F Kennedy once said, "I see little of importance to the future of our country and of civilisation than the full recognition of the place of the artist. If art is to nourish to the roots of our culture, society must set the artist free to follow his vision wherever it takes him". Nice thought. However, the sad truth is that many artists don't have any kind of vision or indeed any sense of purpose at all. I know; I was there myself. I used to look around at the state of the world, at the suffering, the violence, the starvation, war, pollution, and general mayhem and say to myself, "What the hell am I doing up here singing, dancing and playing games while the world is falling apart? What kind of contribution am I making?" I felt guilty about not becoming a missionary and going and living in some remote little village in Africa and teaching them ... something or other. Oh, the arrogance - I've since discovered they would have taught me a lot more about ... everything!

But now I have a vision, a real sense of purpose. I know that

when I indeed get the "thought right" I can actually affect an audience in a profound way. I can lead them to an experience of freedom, an experience of stillness that can rock their soul because in that silence I am the closest to God that I can be, and they can experience it too. I now realise what an amazing opportunity I have, as an actor, to reach people's hearts in a most beautiful way, uplifting and inspiring them. I thank God for my talent as a blessing, instead of a curse. The stronger I make that connection the more creativity flourishes as I let go of the control that is held so desperately in place by fear. Where there is truth and clarity fear cannot exist. Recently I read an interview with Barbara Streisand in which she talked about her new shift in attitude; a shift that inspired the return to the stage of one of the world's truly great entertainers after twenty-seven years! She said, "I say this to myself a lot to get me out of my fear: "Let go and let God". In the same article she says, "I've got to help better the world in some way. I've got to be of service because this enriches my soul, this fills me up, it makes me feel good."

*Ros Gentle is an actress based in Australia.*



## SITTING AT MY PIANO

Mark Hooper remembers the inner moments as he grew into an international concert pianist

1977

It was the final recital at the end of an exciting and demanding four year performers degree course at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music. A taxing programme ending with Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition. It had gone well, well enough to win me an overseas scholarship to the Royal College of Music, London. As I came off the stage having rendered the last tumultuous chords of triumph, I felt an incredible weakness in my legs and the tears beginning to flow. Was it relief, exhaustion, ecstasy, or the release of months of anxiety, worry and relentless work? I only just managed to walk back onto the stage to acknowledge the applause. After the last hands were shaken and congratulations accepted I was finally alone. Yes, I felt enormous relief that the culmination of four years had been more successful than I'd ever dreamt, but also I wondered if this was only the beginning of a journey that would be punctuated with more and more daunting and demanding milestones? I came to London, continued as a student and gradually began to transform into a 'professional' musician.

1985

Having received a further scholarship to Banff, Canada, an exclusive haven for a select few of the profession's aspiring young artists, it was time to dive in the deep end! A friend suggested a Wigmore Debut Recital. Why not?

The date was tentatively fixed, 23 January. An old scenario was about to be replayed. Not the loyal Brisbane audience and sympathetic examining panel now, but one of the most highly critical and detached audiences in the world who the night before could be hearing Ashkenazy, Pollini, Gilels, Richter. I was to play on the same stage. How would I cope with the stress? I was never one to find performing anything but agonising at least up to the moment I walked onto the stage, and occasionally after.

Fortunately, my life had opened up in new directions just that year through the study of meditation. Since my teenage years I had been fascinated with the notion of understanding myself, others and life in general. But despite all my ideas and practices, deep within me was a malaise that often surfaced as melancholy and depression. On one side this seemed to fuel my musical expression, but on the other side made it increasingly difficult to manage nerves and cope with the stress of facing others appraisal and criticism.

In the months that preceded that momentous day, I was doing all the physical practice that was necessary, and I was also preparing myself mentally through a new understanding that had brought about a mini-revolution in every aspect of my life. The simple question of "Who am I?" had unexpectedly been answered. I had been habitually dependent on all the things I 'did', and on the responses coming back for my sense of self and worth. When 'they' loved me, I loved myself.

When things went well, I was OK, but in between there was not a lot of spare love floating around in that competitive society and I could never guarantee that things would

'go well'. I had come to know myself far, far beyond even the state and appearance of this body which, like the piano, I was now seeing as an instrument. As I sat and came to know myself without the trappings associated with 'doing', I experienced that I was a complete and whole 'being', worthy of the utmost self-respect and love and all I had to do was to 'unlearn' the conditioning of society, family, education etc. Through a clear understanding of the spiritual laws that govern our existence I began to 'live' life from a truly creative and informed paradigm. I began to understand the inextricable link between self-knowledge, creativity, truth and integrity. All this helped to prepare me for an evening that, although not without its intense pressures and threatening moments, was a success. Another poignant milestone in a beautiful journey.

1987

What was becoming clearer was the difference between using music as the vehicle to express my emotions and using my emotions as the vehicle to express the music. I experienced my feelings on a profound level and really enjoyed becoming a 'master' who creates whilst observing and being responsible for the creation rather than the one who is 'being' created by a tide of emotions which are unpredictable and sometimes uncontrollable.

A concert tour throughout Germany of nine concerts. The concert was number five, in the Recital Hall of the Music Halle in Hamburg. A capacity audience of Germans who, of any nation, have 'fathered' the spirit of the music which I enjoy playing most. At the end of the concert the audience sat in total silence as I experienced the profound sense of the 'eternal' at the conclusion of Liszt's 'Benediction'. Not a sound until I stood up from the chair. We shared that which can't be expressed purely by words, or images or even music, but which can only be received by the soul. As I accepted their appreciation I was aware of a feeling that can only be described as pure detachment. After the concert I felt as if 'I' had done 'nothing', there was no exhaustion, no tears, just a 'well-being'. It was a glimpse of what I know my soul had searched for. Being a musician is finding its rightful perspective amongst all the roles and relationships that I use to know and express myself.

1994

The process continues: being a creator, using my tools, learning to be an instrument myself; learning to be myself.

®

*Mark Hooper is an international concert pianist based in Oxford, UK.*





# FOUNDATION COURSE IN MEDITATION

## Part 3

### *The Three Worlds and The Supreme Soul*

*In part two, we looked at mind, intellect and sanskaras as the three faculties of consciousness.*

*We discovered why we lost our true self-awareness as a spiritual being and, as a result, how this has diminished our will power during many different births through the accumulation of experience and the gradual expenditure of our spiritual energy.*

*In part three, we explore three levels of consciousness, the experience of which is like being in three different worlds. And we discover how to recharge our spiritual batteries by connecting with the source of spiritual power.*

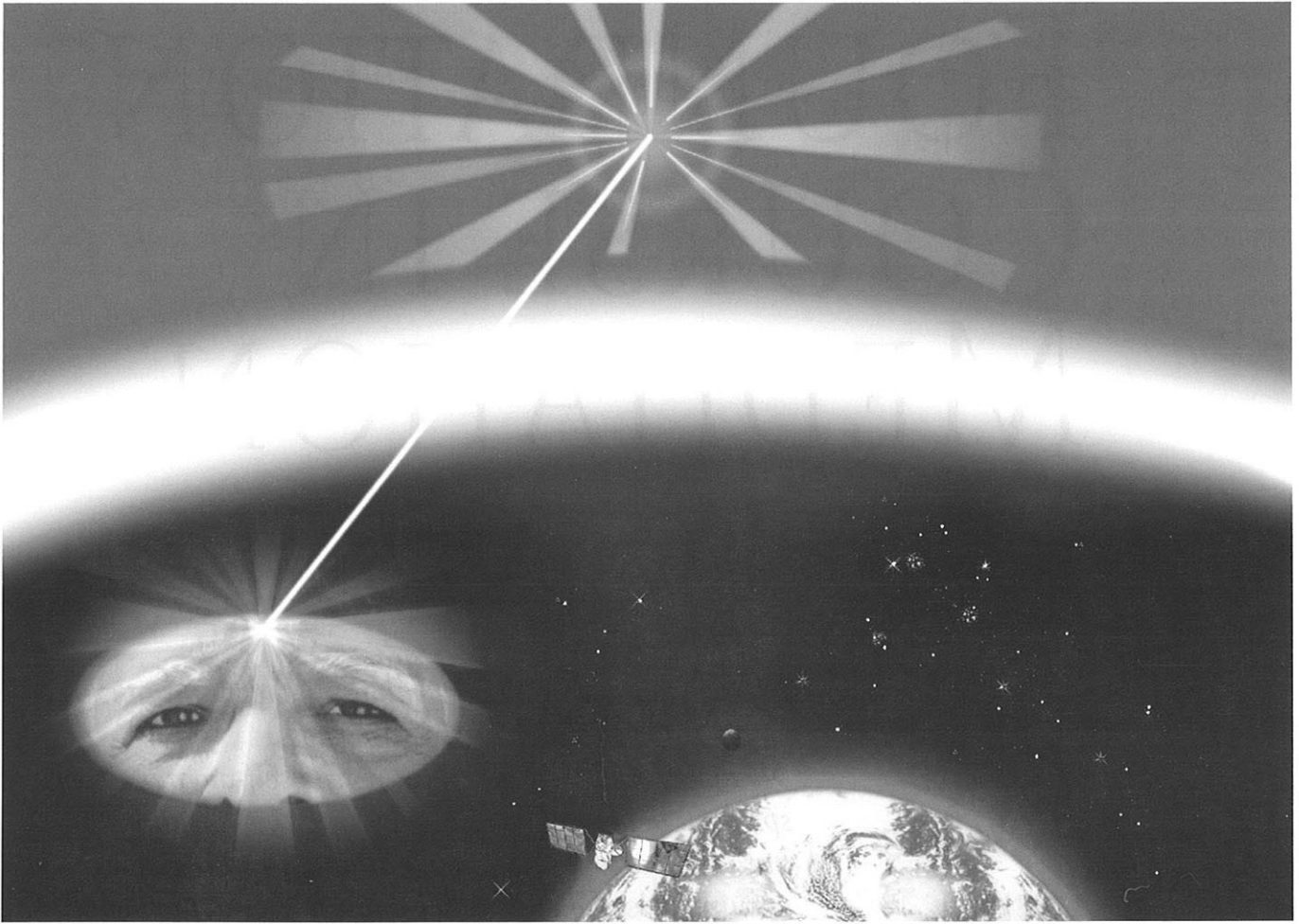
*Remember, physical energy is quite different from spiritual energy (or the energy of our consciousness). Physical energy is replenished by physical, tangible quantities of food, whereas spiritual energy can only be replenished by spiritual, intangible quality of thought in the form of love, truth, light.*

### **THE THREE WORLDS**

The soul (consciousness) has the ability to inhabit and be aware of the three worlds (levels of consciousness)

- ***The Physical World*** (Corporeal World)

This is the world around us. Our physical environment is full of noise and constant movement as we play our role through our physical bodies. It is a world we experience through our physical senses. It is a world in which we directly relate to and interact with other embodied souls. In



our relationships, we express what is inside our consciousness through our words and actions. This is the purpose of “life”, our reason for living; to express, to experience, to enjoy.

In many ways the soul is like a seed. Within the seed is the future expression of the flower. Given soil, water and light, the seed begins to express (press out) its form, its fragrance and its colour. In the same way, the soul in the body is able to express its nature through the fragrance of its virtues and the colours of its personality. Like the physical garden where every flower is unique, so too each soul, and its personality, is unique.

However, we now live almost entirely on a physical level, as we have come to identify ourselves with our physical body and our possessions above all else. This means our words and actions are

motivated by our physical identity and external surroundings. The shape, form, beauty and strength of our physical bodies now dominate our thinking, blocking our awareness of our spiritual beauty and strength. As a result we find ourselves trapped in our awareness of the physical world, having lost our original and true awareness of higher levels of consciousness.

### • *The Subtle World*

Beyond the physical, or corporeal world, is the subtle world - sometimes referred to as the astral plane. In simplest terms, the subtle world can be considered as a world where there is purity of thought. As such it is a world of light and movement, but no sound; the light is therefore not visible to the physical eye. In our meditation, our aim is to leave the physical

world behind for a little while, and turn our attention inwards to rediscover this subtle world through pure thought.

Thought is the energy of consciousness shaped by us. As a sculptor shapes a block of raw stone into something beautiful, we shape our thoughts into whatever we choose. The energy of thought is then transmitted like a signal from a wireless transmitter; an invisible vibration, but directed by us.

Everyone has had the experience of picking up someone else’s thoughts, anticipating what they were about to say. It is this subtle energy of our thoughts which is being received. It is by using the energy of our consciousness, by shaping or creating the right thoughts that we can reach the highest level of consciousness: the soul world.

## • *The Soul World*

(Incorporeal World)

Beyond the physical world of constant change, constant noise, constant movement; beyond the subtle world of pure thought, there is a dimension of complete silence and stillness, where nothing changes and time has no reference. This is the soul world, or the home of all souls, from where each one of us has come, and will eventually return.

Imagine, for a moment, that you the soul, the conscious point of spiritual light, have moved outside your body. You no longer have your senses. You cannot see, hear, touch, smell or taste. You cannot speak or communicate. You just are. You are not asleep or non-existent, you are totally absorbed in your own being. This is the experience of the soul world, a dimension of soft red light in which all souls are totally absorbed in their own being, rather like seeds, dormant, but with a complete future plan of living expression inside.

This is our most natural state of being, where we are concentrated in our original form as a point of spiritual light. We are totally blissful, enjoying complete rest and peace, unaware of the noise and action of the material world, or the subtle world of thought.

### *Finding the Source*

And then, at the appropriate moment in time here in the corporeal world, each one of us is drawn down from the soul world into the garden of life, where the opportunity to take a physical form and to express our own beauty, joy and happiness awaits us. Through

our form we are then able to experience ourselves and the colours of the physical world, to know and relate to other members of our spiritual family who have also taken physical forms.

Regardless of our culture or circumstances, race or religion, every soul is born into a family. The family is one situation everyone shares. The family represents creation, growth and development, intimate relationships and eventually death.

Today, because our consciousness is so physically-based, we tend to see only our immediate family in a physical way. But sometimes our vision widens and we get a glimpse of the larger family of humanity, relating to all of humanity as our brothers and sisters. In the soul world, where we were all in the same original form as points of light, we were part of the original family. And in the same way that we have physical parents, so too there is a spiritual parent: God or the Supreme Soul. He is the one soul who plays the role of father and mother, who nurtures and gives love to all His children, who has been called by many names, and has been remembered as Light in many religious traditions here in the physical, corporeal world.

In many ways, the Supreme Soul is not different from us. He is an individual, conscious entity, with the capacity to think, decide and express his love, joy and happiness in His eternal relationship with us. What does make Him different, and therefore the eternal parent, is that He does not incarnate into a physical form. He therefore never loses His awareness of his true self as a spiritual being and therefore never loses spiritual power. He constantly remains perfect, beyond space and time and therefore

beyond the influence of both. His form is also a point of light, infinitesimal yet infinite in quality and power, like an ocean of love, an ocean of peace. He constantly gives His spiritual energy, totally and unconditionally, yet He never loses His power. He is totally absorbed in Himself, and at the same time radiating His love, peace and bliss towards us. It is the power of His love which restores our original spiritual awareness. We, however, have to be in the right state of consciousness to receive it.

## MEDITATION TO TRAVEL TO OTHER WORLDS AND HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH GOD

*Meditation can be described as the method to turn within to become aware of yourself, understand your own consciousness, create and concentrate your thoughts, and realise your own true nature of peace. It is a preparation for yoga; meaning union, communion and communication. Yoga is your communication with God, in which you consciously direct your thoughts towards Him and establish a silent conversation. Use your thoughts to communicate, to draw you closer to Him, and allow Him to fill you, the soul, with spiritual power. The powerline is this link of pure thought. The experience of being filled with power is one of deep peace, love and lightness.*

*(‘Him’ is used to describe God, the Supreme Soul. However, the Supreme Soul is neither male nor female, but has the qualities of both.)*

# BUT HOW DO YOU MEDITATE?

Sister Jayanti describes the preparation and the process of Raja Yoga Meditation

*Whilst I kept my head down, I could not see anything high. When I raised my head in self-respect, I saw the magnificence of the spiritual Sun.*

The difference between “meditation” and “yoga” is that meditation is the thought process; the process of tuning in, and yoga is the result; the connection or union with God.

### *Impact of time*

The greatest impact on establishing powerful meditation is the attention we pay to our time generally. When we sit down to meditate it is the influence of our past activity that comes onto the

screen of the intellect. If, throughout the day, we have maintained a spiritual consciousness, then our yoga will be powerful.

What do I have to pay attention to during my working day? Consciousness, interaction with others, reactions, state of mind, motives. If I ensure that I am not causing sorrow to anyone, at the moment of meditating my mind will be free, otherwise that sorrow comes to mind. Am I conscious of being a soul as I move and talk and work? Do I realise that the person I am talking to is a brother soul? Do I throw out useless worries and complaints about life? Do I waste valuable energy, thought power, time and action in sustaining a negative state of mind?

### *Meditation = Concentration*

There are ways to prepare oneself before launching into meditation. Refresh the consciousness by reading spiritual knowledge. Write positive, spiritual points to bring focus.

When we bring stillness to our movements in this way, our thoughts are directed towards soul-consciousness, towards reaching the point where all that I am aware of is that I am a soul, a point of consciousness within the body. This is the first level of yoga. At this stage spend a little time in “om shanti”; “om” means “I, the pure soul”, “shanti” means “deep peace”. Soul-consciousness is about being in touch with our own original, true, spiritual qualities, such as peace and purity.

What do you do if thoughts stray? Don't be aggressive or angry with yourself, after all, the door to such waste thoughts has been kept open for so long that they feel most welcome to keep visiting you. The important thing is not to then close the door on high, spiritual thoughts, associating meditation with labour and stress instead of a cure for stress. Let it be like this: I notice my thoughts straying, I gather those stray thoughts into a bubble, and blow the bubble out of the window, letting it float far away into the sky. I then invite the good thoughts back into the house. I continue my meditation where I left off. The maxim, “ignore it and it'll go away,” is also appropriate. I simply get on with the sweetness of soul-consciousness. How lovely it is to be a soul. Think about it yet further, to live it is to be in great happiness.

When you do get in touch with

your own original state, it filters through into your actions, into your life. There is happiness in the awareness of your own original qualities. There is love for that true self.

Whilst I kept my head down, I could not see anything high. When I raised my head in self-respect, I saw the magnificence of the spiritual Sun. Having got in touch with yourself - om shanti - you can go to God and experience a deep connection, of peace, of love, as a right, for a child has a right from its very birth to all that belongs to the father. This deep connection is Raja Yoga; the highest yoga attainable, the link (yoga) with the Lord (Raj). You first touch your own qualities, thereby raising yourself up to that level whereby you can see God's qualities.

Having reached God, then you can either start a conversation with Him or simply let your mind be quiet. If it can be quiet, let it. But it is not a lesser choice to converse with God. Through conversation, you discover relationship. "Who are You to me? You are my ..." The value of silence is that God becomes very real to me. I feel His peace. I feel His love. I feel His bliss.

Sometimes it is asked: "Am I having good yoga? What is good or bad yoga?" What I would describe as bad yoga is when I have let my thoughts scatter. In contrast, if in meditation, my thoughts are based on truth, knowledge, that would be called good yoga. If I have been able to fill myself with God's qualities, that would be called extremely good yoga. If I fill myself so much

that I can share these qualities with the world, that is the best yoga of all.

By experimenting in the laboratory of silence - no external words, no internal scattered thoughts - a soul can see the truth of being a soul. Experiment with soul-consciousness and experiment with your consciousness of God too.

#### *Location*

A picture cannot exist without a background. Whenever someone says something to me, I search for the context or background to which that comment refers. Then I can understand what is being said and how to respond. It's the same with the background, e.g. the location, because there are other backgrounds of God too.

Sitting in meditation, let your mind visualise a place which is infinite, in complete and utter silence, glowing in the spiritual colour of golden reddish light, a place that has never seen badness - eternally pure. Then you get the sense, "I don't belong down here. I belong there." Home is a place that draws a soul. Though the soul is present in the physical world the mind has gone beyond. Experiment with such mental travellings.

#### *Do it*

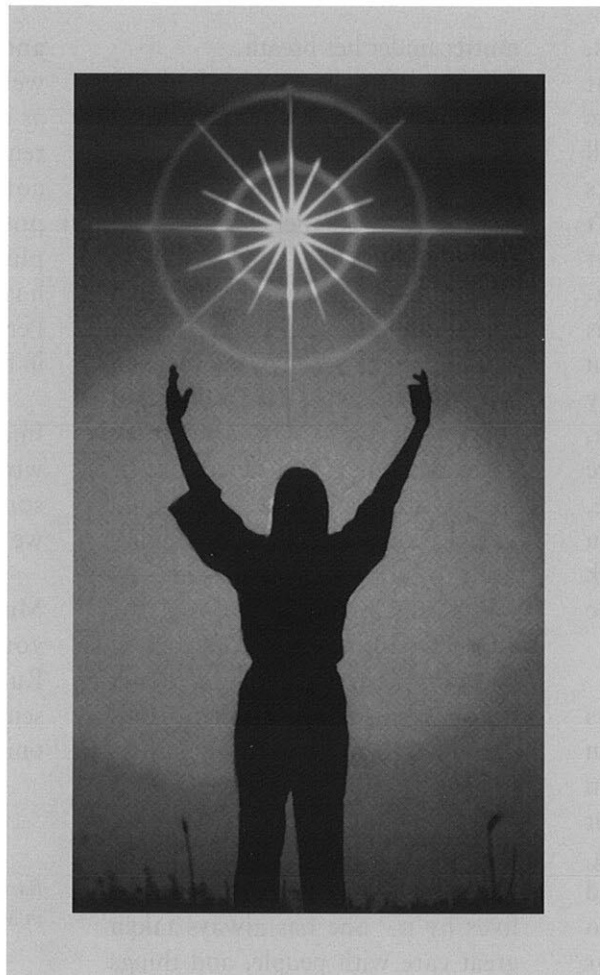
External disciplines are important. If I say, "I will meditate when I can", I never will. Other matters will always take priority. But what time of the day can I be certain to have to myself, when no-one else will disturb me, telephone me, call on me? The only permanent and reliable time for me is the early morning - when others are asleep. And that's the purest time when the vibrations are less convoluted.

The only catch is possibly - well, you can guess it - sleepiness! But we can become accustomed to early rising and find that the yoga compensates for less sleep, even giving a type of energy that sleep cannot provide. Drink caffeine, if you must, to help get you to yoga.

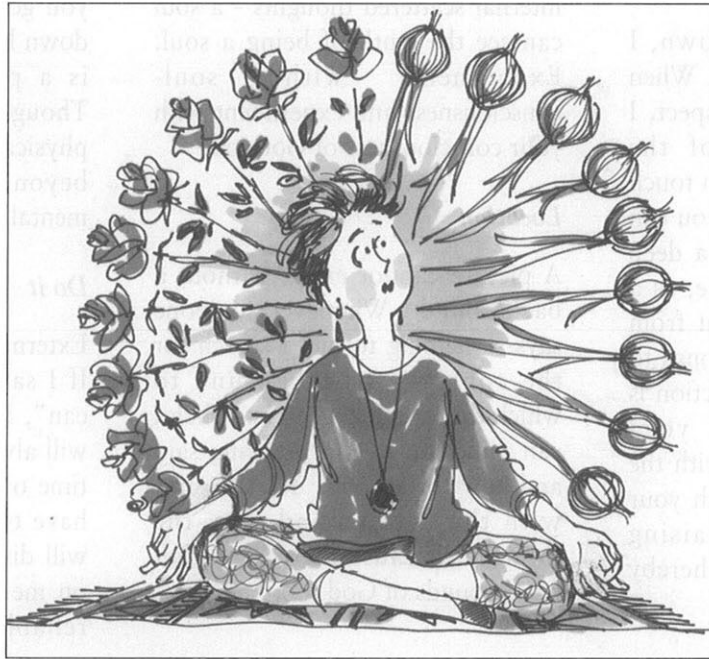
Morning yoga sets you up for the day, with strength, clarity of mind, power of soul-consciousness, lightness of mind. Who will come to you at that time? Only God!

Om shanti

*Sister Jayanti is the Director of the Brahma Kumaris in London*



# MOTHER KNOWS BEST



**T**he business world says, “you only get out what you put in.” The Bible says, “As ye sow, so shall ye reap.” My Mothers says, “If you plant an onion, don’t expect to smell a rose.” This is her version of sowing and reaping. Mum is a firm believer that life is just, and that you get what you give... eventually. The other day we were in her car, blinker on, waiting for the traffic to pass so we could back into a parking space. As soon as it was clear, a woman nosed in from the back and took the parking space, even though she saw us quite clearly.

Now this sort of thing usually gives rise to feelings that range from miffed to murderous, but Mum didn’t even blink. She may not have felt like bursting into song, but all she did was pull out and start looking for another place to park. She didn’t even glare or

mutter under her breath.

All my life I have watched my Mother handle this sort of thing. Even when I was small she was hardly ever angry, and I would have tried the patience of a saint. Once, when I was in my teens, she told me that if she got angry with a friend, they would probably take it out on their kids, who in turn would argue with each other and cheek their father, who would then go to work in a bad mood and be short with a workmate, who would ... well, you get the idea. She didn’t want to be responsible for that. As we drove around looking for another parking spot, I mentioned karma. She replied that she didn’t much like Indian cooking and could we find something Italian instead.

Well Mum may not know anything about the law of karma, but she lives by it. She has always taken great care with people, and things

and events ... she treats life very well. She has always referred to it as insurance. Of course, if you add reincarnation to karma, you really come up with some dazzling possibilities. That woman who pinched our parking spot might have been settling an old debt. Perhaps our chariot took her spot in the colosseum chariot park!

Imagine how different the world would be if we all believed that somewhere, sometime, whatever we did would in turn be done to us.

Mum is right again. Call it what you will: Karma, or the Golden Rule, or justice, or plain common sense, if you plant onions, you get onions. I would rather have roses.

®

*Barbara Ramsay is a freelance writer based in Melbourne, Australia*

# ONE OR MANY

What is your Vision of the World?



When the astronauts of the sixties and seventies returned from space, many of them brought back a profoundly different vision of the world. As they looked down on the blue and white pearl floating in the darkness they saw no borders, no boundaries, no bits of yellow, or red or green coloured land. They saw no printed labels for China, America or Russia. They saw only one earth and one race of human beings.

The same fragmentation which characterises the world on our printed maps has gradually found its way into other areas of our lives – our cultures, our beliefs, our communities, our families and even ourselves - resulting in fear, anxiety and conflicts on a global scale.

We may not all look the same or even share the same feelings but we are all human beings and as we share one home we all value peace, desire love and search for happiness. Is this vision of one world and are these common values not enough to dissolve the illusion of separation and division and to unite us on our journey together?

What is your vision of the world?

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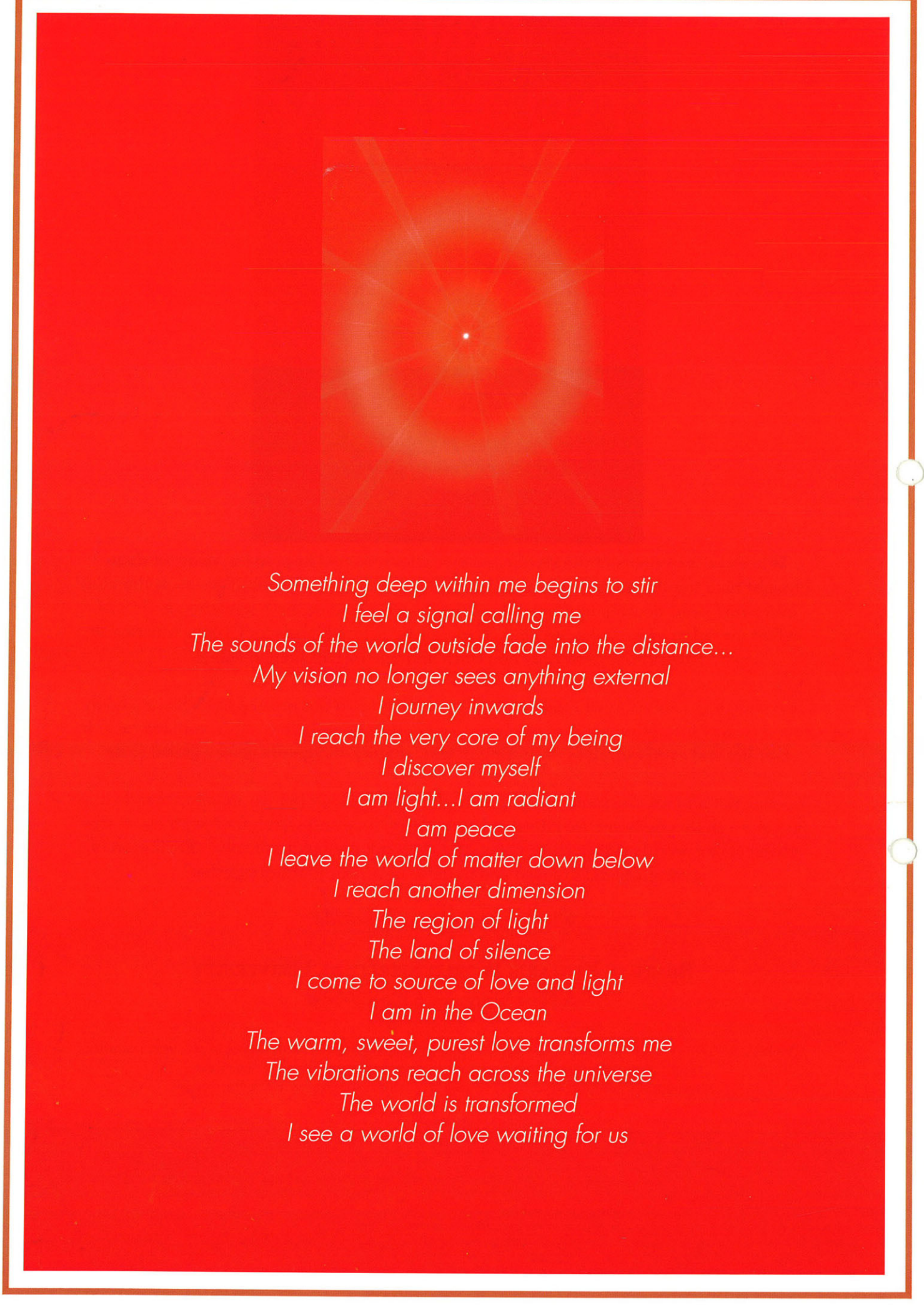
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*Something deep within me begins to stir  
I feel a signal calling me  
The sounds of the world outside fade into the distance...  
My vision no longer sees anything external  
I journey inwards  
I reach the very core of my being  
I discover myself  
I am light...I am radiant  
I am peace  
I leave the world of matter down below  
I reach another dimension  
The region of light  
The land of silence  
I come to source of love and light  
I am in the Ocean  
The warm, sweet, purest love transforms me  
The vibrations reach across the universe  
The world is transformed  
I see a world of love waiting for us*