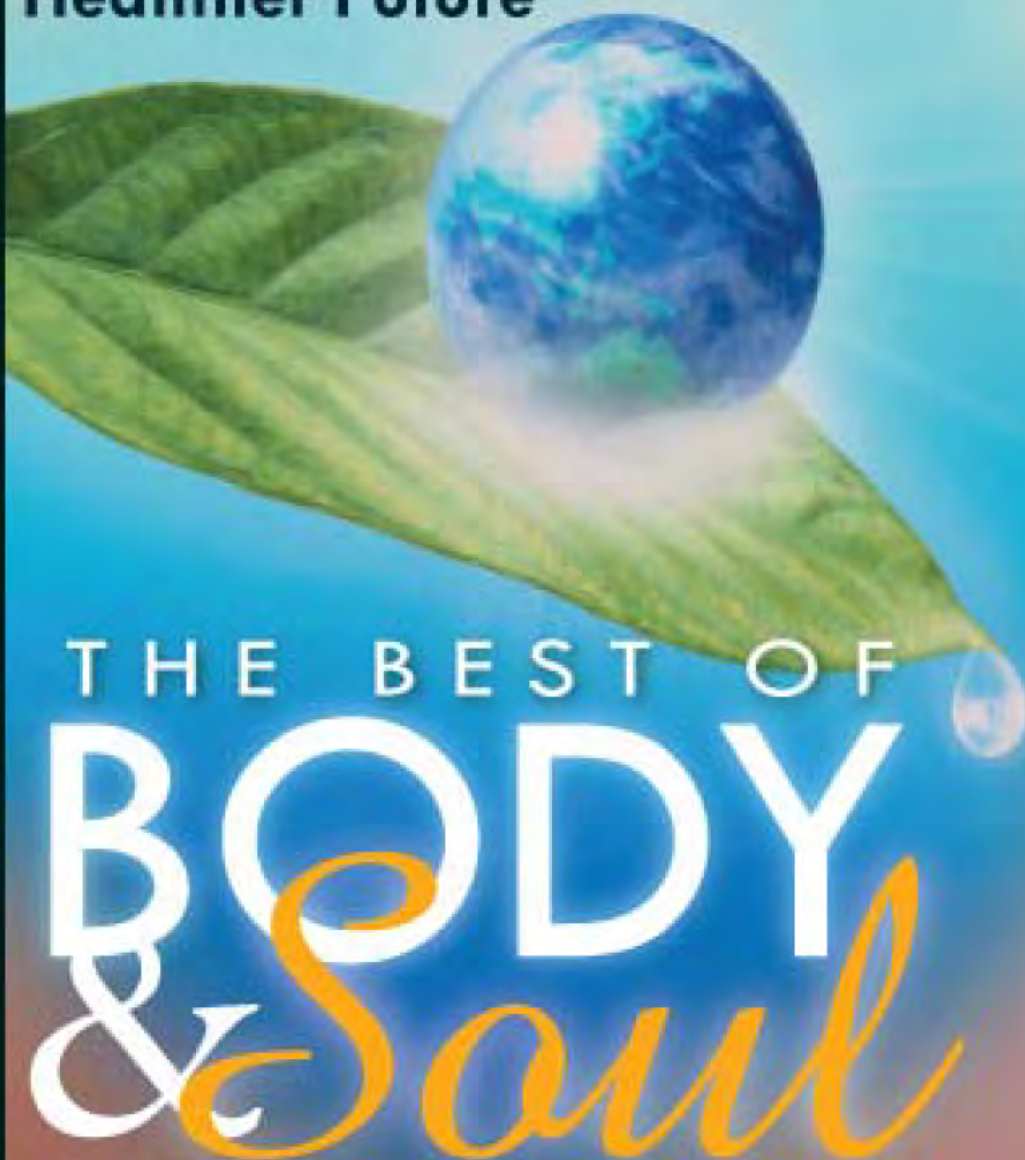


**Leading the Way to a  
Healthier Future**



THE BEST OF  
**BODY**  
& *Soul*

**A Compilation of Articles to Empower You  
By Ellen Laura**

Body and Soul Editor of *Nevada Woman Magazine*

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March 25, 2012

My wishing prayer is that the articles here brighten your world.

# BODY & SOUL

WRITTEN BY ELLEN LAURA



These words and their meaning may be more relevant today than when they were originally written and published several years ago.

To remain in contact with me and  
send me your comments,  
sign up for blog posts on my website:

<http://ellenmlaura.com>

# INTRODUCTION



*Welcome to the “Best of Body and Soul,” a compilation of articles originally published in Nevada Woman magazine.*

I consider myself to be a teacher, and writing is one way to communicate. My teaching comes from the wisdom I’ve gathered through years of working with fascinating people, being engaged in deep spiritual practices and my love for learning. My students and clients have inspired everything I write, and it is only because of them that these words have made it onto paper. My mission is to ‘pass on’ the wisdom I’ve gleaned from my mentors, and help to restore and replenish optimism where it has been lost.

One of my professional mentors was Thomas Leonard, the founder of Coachville and other professional coaching organizations. When Thomas departed this world in 2003, he left an incredible legacy of written materials for those of us who were his students. I once heard Thomas speaking and he was asked what his detractors had to say about him. His response was: “They say I’m too spiritual, and that I put out materials with spelling errors. I cannot comment on being too spiritual, but my creative spelling will eventually be polished by those who find what I write of value.”

My wish is that you gain spiritual insight from this eBook, and that you will not be burdened with typing or spelling errors, but if you do find them lurking here, perhaps any errors will make you smile instead of wince, and you will be inspired to help us instead of criticizing. Please email with any errors so we can correct them for the next version.

My partner in this project, Daniella Matutes, infuses each page with creativity, color and imagery to make the words come to life. She is everything I have prayed for in a partner, and much more.

Wishing you joy, peace and prosperity,  
Ellen Laura

# BODY



“Men's magazines often feature pictures of naked ladies. Women's magazines also often feature pictures of naked ladies. This is because the female body is a beautiful work of art, while the male body is hairy and lumpy and should not be seen by the light of day.”

— Richard Roeper





When you enter into and honor a healthy life partnership, it involves becoming skilled at handling three powerful forces: Eros, sex and pure love. Committed life partnerships, particularly marriage, carry the potential to be exceptionally healthy when the three forces merge to become something greater than any one of these forces alone. Therefore, blending and refining those three forces are essential in building and sustaining healthy relationships.

The erotic force, Eros, is one of the most potent forces in existence. The dictionary defines Eros as both the Greek god of erotic love and *the sum of life-preserving instincts that are manifested as impulses to protect and preserve the body and mind*. We often think that sex and Eros are the same force, but this is a misperception. Think of Romeo and Juliet as the classic story of Eros in full bloom.

It is the erotic force that opens the eyes to beauty and stirs the desire for union. More importantly, the erotic force has the potential to carry us into pure love. However, since most of us have been raised in a puritanical culture, both the erotic and sexual forces are at risk of being suppressed or perverted. Perversion, from a spiritual perspective, occurs when Eros and sex go off on a journey together and fail to arrive at the same destination: true, enduring love.

## Keep the Spark of Eros Alive

Traditionally, men are more active and adventurous, which has led them to become unfaithful when Eros is lacking in a relationship. Women of past decades have been more inclined toward sluggishness and compromise about their relationships, allowing themselves to continue in a monogamous partnership long after Eros has departed.

Unless pure love is present, when one partner has a stronger drive to experience that vibrating life force, Eros, an impulse to stray from the relationship develops – often leading to jealousy for the other partner. Jealousy has been described as a terrible monster that destroys relationships, and from a spiritual perspective, there is another aspect of jealousy still to be explored. According to Dr. Deborah Taj Anapol, in her book, *Compersion: Using Jealousy as a Path to Unconditional Love*, she states, “A jealous person is often reacting to the soul’s awareness that bonding with your beloved is incomplete. Ego may not be conscious of this gap but the soul always knows the truth. The soul has no secrets from itself. And no judgments either.

“When the soul sees that the beloved is not open to merging, whatever he or she may say to the contrary, fear threatens to overwhelm the ego. When the soul sees that you resist the call to union, whatever the official status of your relationship, the soul knows you’re on shaky ground.



“If, on the other hand, you are solidly grounded in the knowledge of your unconditional love for one another, any stirring of jealousy quickly dissolves in the light of the eternal bond between you. Nothing can shake a bond like this, not death, not separation and certainly not another human’s genitals.”

Armed with these new perceptions, jealousy and other relationship challenges cease to rob us of our own vital energy.

When Eros departs from a relationship, we feel empty and lost. But, instead of resorting to

worry or panic, we can begin to gently examine our own psyche. This doesn’t require endless hours of analysis, because action, coupled with awareness, is a more valuable antidote to dwindling passion than years of toxic introspection.

Since most people carry the wounds of being raised in a sex-negative culture, they swing from denial to over stimulation in a sad attempt to call upon the force of Eros. Those who are afraid of their own emotions and afraid to explore life will often do anything to avoid, subconsciously and ignorantly, the great experience of unity. On the other extreme, there are those who are overly emotional and undisciplined, and although they know other fears in life, they dive recklessly and greedily into Eros. They look for one person after another and use the erotic force for their pleasure, and when it is worn out, they hunt elsewhere. This abuse eventually takes a toll on the body, mind and soul.



Because the erotic force is primarily about vitality and power, it is essential to healthy lives and relationships. Success in rekindling that inner spark and bringing forth the erotic force within is a skill that can be learned. Women often bring back their inner spark through a makeover with new clothes, makeup, hairstyles and/or a renewed commitment to exercise. These are effective ways to jumpstart the process; however, maintaining healthy enthusiasm is an inside job. Another way to turn on the passion within is to get close to the powerful forces of nature such as mountains, lakes or the ocean. Being outdoors with animals and the elements awakens vitality and helps to heal the spirit of the traumas that keep people isolated. Working with the correct coach, healer or spiritual counselor is another way to dissolve the demons that destroy one's vitality and life force.

When an individual's inner spark is weak, it is not the time for sex without love. Why? Sex without love can lower self-esteem instead of calling forth inner power. Many people who have engaged in sex without love begin to experience bouts of depression and other symptoms of low serotonin. This may not be great news, but look around. Countless women and men who flaunted their sexuality in their 30s and 40s are heading into their 50s feeling angry and cynical instead of liberated and loving. This is partially because our authentic need for love and belonging can be obscured when involved in a hot and heavy romance.

The sex force is often referred to as animalistic without love or Eros. When the desire for sex is lost, it is most likely an indication of some form of illness of body, mind or soul. Sex that lacks the passion of Eros becomes mechanical. If a person experiences turmoil and conflict, it would be better to practice celibacy or bring oneself to orgasm than to interact with another.

## *The Joy of Union*

A healthy commitment within a relationship offers a glimpse into experiencing the ecstasy of union. Eros lifts the soul out of sluggishness and vegetation. Even the utterly selfish person will begin to have unselfish impulses. Laziness and inertia are overcome and the routine-bound person will become more spontaneous. As the erotic force awakens within, the opportunity to begin the journey of authentic love also appears. During those times when Eros is stirring, it's possible to break old patterns and enter into truly happy relationships. This is an ideal time to begin a marriage.



The main elements present in Eros are a childlike curiosity and a tender search for the knowledge of the other being. The desire to know the other is what drives a person into adventure and out of separation. Fascination with the other keeps Eros alive.

The vanity and arrogance that cause those so afflicted to believe there is nothing more to know of another, suffocate the spark in relationships. If you have become so cynical that nothing intrigues or fascinates you, how will you ever attract true love? Since the soul is not static, it can never be known completely. When you reach a state of familiarity and habit, you might begin to think you know the other. *The moment you believe that you have found all there is to find of the other, and that you have revealed all of yourself that there is to be revealed, Eros departs.*

Each day, you must affirm is a new day and that both you and your partner also are new. Instead of searching for evidence that a partner is the same, search for what is new in the world and in your partnership.

## *Communicate with Mindfulness*

Discoveries are being made each moment that open doors to healthier ways of living with each other. Decades ago little was understood about setting boundaries or communicating with mindfulness. Today, it is evident that life is ever renewing and unfolding.

A spiritual marriage enables the soul to reveal its being and to discover new vistas with the beloved. The more that happens, the happier a marriage will be. It requires your emotional maturity and a desire to be patient, not complacent, with your partner and self. When Eros, sex and love unite, authentically healthy and spiritual relationships are attained.





*Facts:* Healthy habits make it possible to transform stress into powerful energy instead of fat. The correct exercise, based on your unique [brain chemistry](#) and body chemistry, reduces stress and combats fat.

Exercise proponents have been singing the fitness song to the same 12 to 15 percent of the American population over the past 30 years. That population is very fit. The rest of the American population is very unfit. People, regardless of size, need to be moving more to burn up calories and overcome stress. Even 5 minutes of exercise every hour will make a significant impact on energy levels and stress.

So, why aren't more people succeeding at transforming stress into powerful energy? One often overlooked reason is that very few people get a physiological reward from exercising. People are not failing in stress reduction and weight loss programs because they are lazy or lack discipline. They fail because most programs for weight loss and stress reduction do not give them an adequate physiological reward. Simply put, they are not wired to feel happy when exercising.

The neurotransmitters and neurohormones released during exercising or stress reduction programs trigger a pleasurable response in some people, and a "flat" or even stressful experience in many others. Until we become conditioned to enjoy exercise, it is easy to sit on the couch and make excuses. For those who don't exercise, they just don't get a wow! — either in energy or self-esteem. Most importantly, our stress and weight problems should not be viewed solely as individual problems. These are cultural problems and a unified shift in our priorities could lead us out of our current condition.



## *Here is what science tells us about how the stress/fat cycle attacks us:*

- When faced with repeated incidences of difficulties, struggle or shock, emotions are volatile, mental overload is at a peak, and the result is fear or anxiety. This state continues until one of two things happen: (1) We either meet the challenge in front of us and transform stress into constructive energy, or (2) we are overloaded and succumb to conditions of uncontrolled anger, hopelessness or despair. When we succumb, a trigger of events begins in the body.
- Damaging stress signals cause the brain to send hormones and chemicals surging through our bodies, wreaking havoc (even low levels of anxiety such as driving and ordinary work challenges are enough to set this in motion.) The hypothalamus, located in the brain, sends messages to the pituitary gland, also located in the brain, to release the adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH).
- The adrenal glands (located above the kidneys) detect ACTH in the blood and release cortisol that then acts on the brain's appetite center and can cause food cravings.
- Once the appetite center starts signaling for more food, the problem is compounded. Poor eating habits and easy access to fast foods cause a majority of people to reach for fat-laden, sugar-packed foods, prompting even more cortisol production. The body then drains its nutritional reserves and stores the junk food as fat. When the stress is not effectively transformed into usable energy, cortisol levels in the bloodstream continue to escalate. This unbroken stress cycle causes not only weight gain, but also a series of other health risks.
- People who transform stress into useable energy before cortisol is released have a distinct advantage that shows up in both their health and accomplishments.

## *A Synergistic Approach Works Wonders*

Note: The following three components are meant to be combined.

1. **Honor your mouth.** Your mouth creates sounds that can heal or harm and that same mouth ingests foods that are medicine or poison. Upgrade all that goes in and out of your mouth. Get on a customized [Wellness Program](#) designed by a well-established professional. Don't buy another bottle of supplements until you understand more about your unique body composition.

Make a list of foods that you suspect (or know) could be "poison" to you. *Poison foods change your mood from spunky to sour; they cause abrupt energy surges; they rob the glow from your skin; and they negatively affect your metabolism and [brain chemistry](#).* Refined sugars, fatty foods, processed packaged foods, alcohol and dairy products are a good place to begin searching for your poison foods. Remember, on a day that you have been hit with many negative experiences, a food that is typically "neutral" could be a "poison" because you are already in a weakened state of health. Being mindful and aware of how your energy shifts and changes is essential to upgrading your food choices.

Nutrient-rich foods are your medicine foods. A study at the University of Alabama, reported in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* No.37, 1983, showed that humans allowed to eat as much as they liked, but only high-quality, wholesome foods were satisfied with as little as 1,500 calories per day. However, given refined and processed foods, these same persons required up to 3,000 calories to feel satisfied. The wholesome foods included fruit, hot cereals, vegetables,



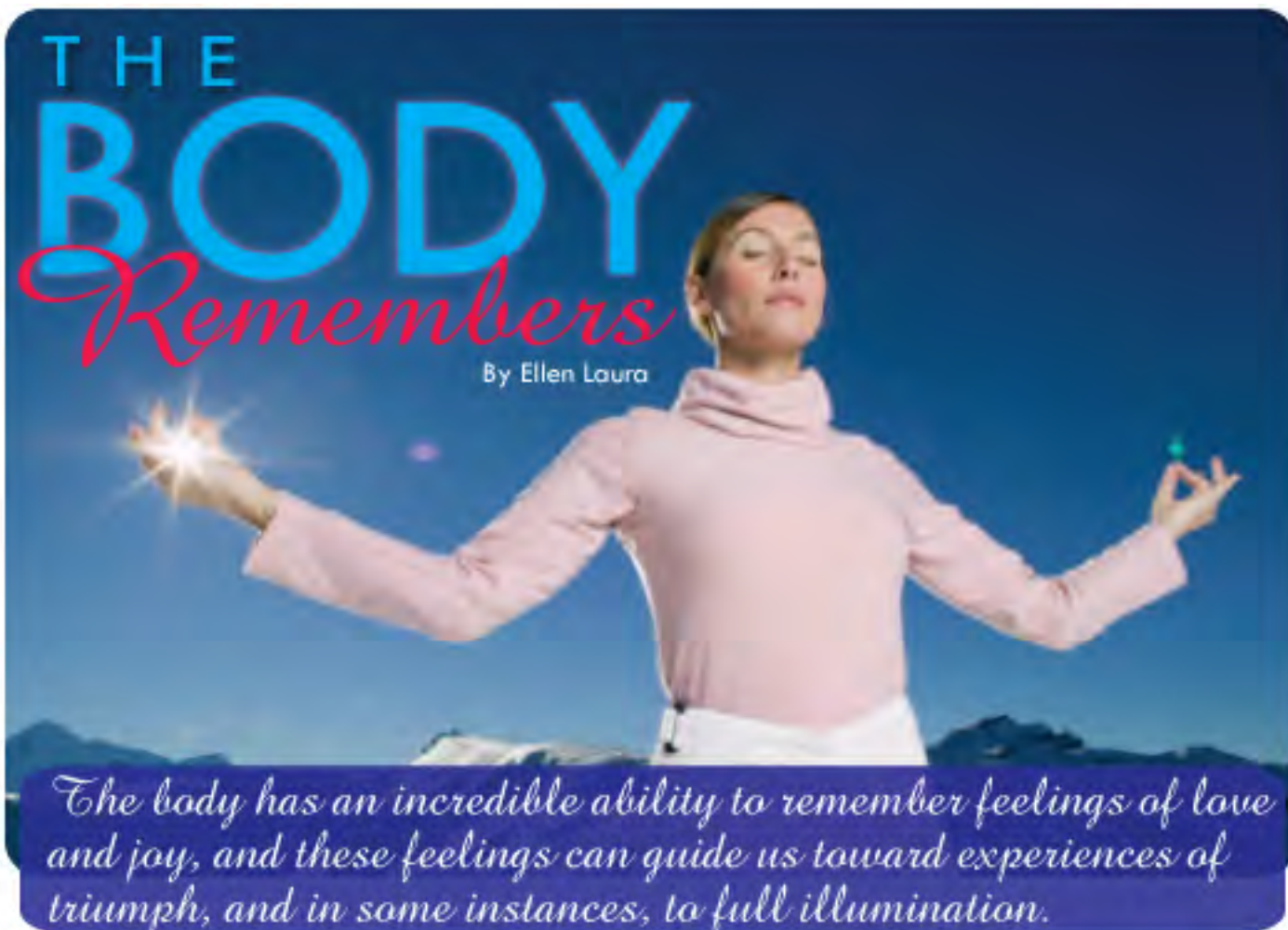
soups, salads, pasta, fish, chicken, brown rice and whole-grain toast and rolls. The refined foods were bacon, eggs, juice, buttered toast, fast and fried foods, steak, buttered vegetables, whole milk, cake and ice cream.

2. **Energize your life instead of exercise your body.** Do some deep breathing and movement for 5 minutes every hour to fill yourself with greater energy and enthusiasm. Experiment for 10 days and walk outside or get some exercise for just 5 minutes every hour. Your energy at the completion of a workday will be noticeably higher. Because exercise is unappealing to so many, we are overdue for a shift in both thinking and language. Instead of saying you must or will exercise, replace that dated language with “energize.” Tell yourself, and anyone around you, that you are taking 5 minutes to boost your energy. The optimal 5-minute practice is to put on some upbeat music and get on a rebounder and “shake your bootie.” The combination of music that lifts your spirit, plus the bouncing action on the rebounder is unparalleled for energy rejuvenation. When you energize yourself by bouncing on a rebounder, there is a stabilizing effect on the nervous system and a cleansing effect on the lymphatic system. The oxygenating effects are well documented. Remember the stress cycle? You can reduce cortisol levels – and begin to defeat fat – by simply getting up and moving around for 5 minutes every hour.
3. **Increase serotonin.** Serotonin is a special friend to your brain and your health. It is a neurotransmitter that boosts feelings of optimism, well-being, self-esteem, relaxation and confidence. Low levels of serotonin are linked to depression, low energy, fatigue and weight gain. Very few people have naturally high levels of serotonin, so we are constantly seeking (often unconsciously) ways to boost energy. Serotonin is also directly linked to feeling full or being driven to continue eating – even after large quantities of food have been eaten. There are two issues to fullness: The first is the stomach “feeling full,” which some amount of protein in your diet will provide; the second, and most important, is the brain recognizing “fullness.” This involves eating the correct foods in the correct combinations at the correct time of day for your unique brain chemistry.

Excessively high-protein diets cause a reduction in serotonin causing the brain to lose its effectiveness in determining “fullness.” This serotonin depletion from high-protein, low-carbohydrate diets may take months, thereby making a person feel like he or she wasn’t strict enough on their low-carbohydrate diet because it worked so well at first. Low serotonin also causes many people to develop a plateau in their diet plan. Finally, low serotonin causes many people to go through bouts of binge eating, and what do they crave? They desire the junk food that is trying to get serotonin levels up in the brain. To increase serotonin involves a process of (1) fine-tuning the timing of eating complex carbohydrates and protein, and (2) restoring a sense of optimism and hope to your entire life.

An example of how to elevate serotonin is to have a small snack of carbohydrates (rice crackers or a thin slice of 100% rye toast) two hours after a protein meal and before bedtime. Another alternative is to add the supplement 5-hydroxy tryptophan (which can be purchased at any health food store) each night before bed if you have a problem digesting carbohydrates or just don’t like them. However, negative thinking can undermine good nutritional habits, so this must be addressed simultaneously. The most comprehensive program on optimizing brain chemistry through diet, nutrition and behavioral change is the [Personal Enhancement Program](#), designed by [Dr. Joel C. Robertson](#).

Stress does not need to cause fat or other diseases. People can learn to transcend the normal range of human reactions and knowledge when they learn to embrace change. I occasionally hear complaining about new information from science and research studies, and people saying they have to “change” again. Those who most successfully transform stress into power, not fat, have a healthy respect for all manner of change.



*The* most precious, light-filled energy you carry lives inside your body, and like a caged bird, has either become conditioned to confinement or is still actively seeking freedom. This energy from the Soul sends forth a glow and luminosity that heals and inspires us.

Focus on the best day you have had this year. Was it at work, with loved ones or in the pursuit of a new experience? The body remembers our moments of victory and pulls us toward evolution. You are light years ahead when you focus on the bright moments of your past and visualize the great times that lie ahead.

Certain subtle energies, both within and surrounding the body, have been described throughout the history of humanity. The great pyramids of Egypt have been considered significant accumulators of energy. Just a few decades ago, these subtle energies were the sacred domain of mystics. Today, millions of people from all walks of life are investigating these subtle energies. More people are becoming aware of a frequency of energy that makes us feel more alive, and this is a highly sought-after experience.

Our hopes, aspirations and wishing prayers are etched in our bodies. Many oversimplifications about “body language” have been put forth in the past several decades. The most advanced systems and practitioners understand that we can evoke feelings of joy and wonder even though we have endured difficulties. We can learn to remember the best experiences in life and begin to attract more good experiences.



Our feelings are connected to unseen forces. Gravity is a force that we cannot see; yet, we are in constant intimacy with the force of gravity and the manifold variations of energy. There are electromagnetic currents around the earth to the poles, gravity's pull to the core, the spin of the planet in its orbit around the sun, the pull of the moon, as well as that of the planets. The unseen forces also influence whether we remember the good or negative experiences in life. We can learn how to move in harmony with the unseen forces and stimulate our memory of the positive, happy moments. We do this through intention, focus, awareness, responsibility and practicing loving kindness. Millions of Americans have now seen and heard the Dalai Lama, and they typically comment on the happiness he exudes. He is a living example of life in harmony with the unseen forces.

Do you know of anyone who complains of having too much joyful energy? On the contrary, most people want to be around those people who have preserved their body force and creative vitality. Our body is the contact point for a streaming flow of energy from sources both seen and unseen. A key consideration involves knowing the correct way to use our energy once we gain more: *Our spiritual energy is designed to flow into*

*acts of power, usefulness and/or beauty.* When we meet one or more of these three conditions, positive spiritual energy begins flowing through us more powerfully.

When our energy is not directed toward actions of power, usefulness and/or beauty, we become blocked and infected with stagnant energy. When this occurs, we experience a jamming (confusing over-activity) in the central nervous system. We should look for energy blockages in one of these areas:

- 1) Environment
- 2) Competencies (skills)
- 3) Values and beliefs
- 4) Identity (who we believe we are)

For instance, a woman who no longer feels challenged or enthusiastic in her work can change her environment (same skills, different location,) and if that does not bring greater happiness, she must gain new skills so she can move on and thrive.

Energy blocks and jamming manifest as “chatter” in the mind and it is a terrible waste of energy. Our musculature responds to this jamming by “holding” and blocking our energy flow. The more internal

chatter we have, the less external input our nervous apparatus is able to receive and act upon. The chatter begins to reveal which of the aforementioned four areas needs to be unblocked. Often a person can be blocked for years, ignoring the need to acquire new skills, and ultimately becomes trapped by a negative belief system and narrowed sense of identity.

Blocks often show in feelings of inadequacy. For instance, when someone is insecure and constantly asking, *Do you love me? Do you love me? Do you love me?* ...either indirectly or through their actions, be aware that the body is involved in this pattern. The individual's gestures and movements will be statements seeking validation. His or her eyes and voice reveal a pleading and helplessness. The body displays the dynamics of the individual.

When the energy block originates from a very deep level involving identity, it may require an encounter with a person who is very advanced in understanding energy blocks to break the old pattern and create new momentum in your life. You may find such a person within the [professions of coaching](#), massage therapists, advanced body workers or spiritual counseling. A professional guide can often take you to new insights and triumphs when you have moved beyond therapy and want something both spiritual and accomplishment-oriented.

## *Davender on Pressure versus Tension*

Davender Gupta is a spiritual leadership coach in Calgary, Canada. His words of wisdom on "Pressure and Creative Tension" will help you to know how, and why, listening to the body is so valuable. The following is reprinted with permission from Gupta:

"In this accelerating world, many people are under enormous pressure ... as you probably are in one way or another right at this moment. The feeling of "pressure" arises out of a feeling that something is not quite right ... that there is a disconnect between a commitment you have made and what you know the situation to really (consciously or unconsciously) be.

"Pressure is a sign that there is a block somewhere within you...Somewhere inside, you know something is wrong with the situation. Yet, either you are not able to tell the truth to yourself about what assumptions are being shown as false, or you are not able to communicate this truth to your coworkers, your boss, your clients, or other stakeholders in the situation.

*"If everything was okay, and you believed it with your entire conscious and unconscious mind, then you would not be experiencing pressure. The feeling instead would be one of creative tension – that energizing and inspiring tingling sensation that represents the gap between what you want to create and what is now. Creative tension energizes desire ... but pressure reduces desire to dread, just like bones turning to mush in a pressure cooker.*

"Creative tension inspires, pressure deadens. No creative work of lasting value comes out of a pressure situation.

"Pressure is a valuable sign that you need to take a frank look at the situation and reevaluate it. What is a truth somewhere in what's happening that you are not admitting to yourself?

"An extreme case of how deadly pressure can be is told by the Challenger Space Shuttle disaster back in January 1996. The launch team was under extreme pressure to carry on with the launch, even though deep down many senior people involved knew of the risks. Because of the pressure, they ignored warning sign after warning sign, even disregarding the safety protocols that were expressly designed to serve as an opportunity to pause and consider the factual reality of the situation. The resulting message the leaders gave to their staff was, 'Go away and don't bother us with the facts.'





"I have personally experienced extreme pressure in a fast-growth situation. Normally intelligent, experienced managers, developers and project managers (including myself,) ignored sign after sign that the project was falling off the rails. We were not willing to tell the truth to ourselves about the results we were creating (or lack of them,) and we failed to readjust our strategy and execution to get back on track. The result: the project crashed, clients were left without a product (after large sums of money were expended,) and what was left of the company was eventually sold and the team disbanded. Such a waste of talent, resources and effort.

"What struck me most about this situation was the toll that the pressure exerted on people, marriages, relationships, friendships, health ... In my personal case, I ended up within a depression for a couple of months.

"As I look back on my personal experience, I realize that the source of the pressure on me was that I failed to tell the truth to myself about the situation: the lack of time and resources to carry out the grand challenge we had set for ourselves as a company. Not telling the truth to myself and to the team caused me to unconsciously punish myself, making myself wrong, and especially not taking care of

myself as I normally would – lack of sleep, poor eating, too much drinking, quitting my exercise program – which ended up worsening my feeling of pressure.

"The key to dealing with pressure is to tell the truth. The moment I started doing that, I rose out of my depressed state, and realized the real message of the situation, which was an opportunity to take a giant leap forward in my life ... a career change ... a residence change ... a lifestyle change. It was from this pressure situation that I discovered my true-life mission, and invented a livelihood that I never would have previously imagined as being possible.

"Similarly, after the Challenger disaster, a great many lessons were applied to the Shuttle program, radically transforming it to the success it is today, over 120 launches later.

"It is too bad that pressure has to create a crisis before a beautiful gem can emerge. It is my wish to you that you find the courage to tell the truth about your situation now, before you have to experience a disaster of your own." – Davender Gupta

# DISCOVER THE *Path* WITH THE STRONGEST *Heart*

By Ellen Laura

*The correct path  
for each of us is the  
path that develops  
the strongest  
physical heart.*

Imagine a heart so strong and filled with such powerful life and spirit force that it could beat without the protection of a physical body! It sounds unbelievable, unless you've recently reviewed the life of Joan of Arc. The clearest collective memory about Joan of Arc recalls that she was burned at the stake after being found guilty of heresy. The breath of life was snuffed from her body by blazing flames, yet legend tells us that her heart continued to beat for several days, causing centuries of speculation about her mystical visions and saintly status.

As with many heroic tales, the message becomes distorted by time, particularly relating to the role of a martyr. The question for today's woman is not "How much martyrdom can women contain?" The answer to that is rather apparent by the skyrocketing number of physical and psychological illnesses women incur. What is more important as an antidote to the collective feminine pain is this: Be true to the path that develops the strongest heart and beats forth a message of beauty and goodness – this is the future destiny of women.

*B*ODY

## *Time to Redesign the Way We Work*

On a recent consulting project in Colorado, I met a brilliant woman medical doctor in her mid-30s, who was about to close her office after years of struggling with business practices that kept her from her true work as a healer. "I just want to stay home and work in my garden. The years of trying to maintain this large office with its high overhead, supervise employees, balance the finances . . . I'm exhausted," she said.

The path with the strongest heart for this woman was working as a healer. She had graduated from medical school before she was 21 and was always at the top of her class. Instead of offering her incredible healing work to a world of women in need of her special care, she has instead retreated into isolation because the system of finance and paperwork beat her down. What a loss for humanity.

So often we read stories about women abandoning prestigious, high-paying careers because they were becoming physically and emotionally drained. These stories can only begin to reveal happy endings when

women start redesigning the way they work, instead of quitting or retiring as the only healthy options. Working 65 or 75 hours weekly with no time for recreation or physical exercise does not strengthen the physical heart. The arenas of business, education and politics need a feminine presence to balance the out-dated patriarchal models. As this needed shift occurs, the health of women and men will improve.

Remember, our precious dreams and heartfelt goals fade when the heart is not fully



committed to a path guided by both wisdom and skillful means. The physical qualities of the heart are often overlooked when women begin the quest for the correct life path. It is an illusion to consider that one is moving on the correct path while the physical heart is suffering.

## *Remember the Feminine Power*

*The deep mystical power of the feminine force exerts a magnetic pull on all women. Any woman who feels lonely or powerless needs only to step outside, stand barefoot upon the Earth and call upon her allies in the heavens for solace. Mary, the mother of Jesus, has been a great source of healing for countless women. The wisdom of the ancients suggested that finding one's "real work" and being guided by angelic beings was the destiny of all women.*

Often our "real work" – whether that is motherhood, healer, teacher or artist – is obscured by a long history of oppression and missed opportunities. This can be the result of a childhood or an early marriage where we were directed toward some goal that had nothing to do with our true path.

To shift this pattern and recover your feminine power, beauty and goodness, get acquainted with the personal atmosphere surrounding your heart. Take a soft look around you to note the sensations, feelings, vibrancy and



glow of your personal atmosphere. To perform this correctly, actually soften your gaze, quiet your breathing, relax the jaw and mouth, and abandon your critical attention.

The first thing many women notice during this exercise is that they may have taken a terrible turn toward isolation to protect the heart. Each step toward isolation actually weakens the heart, making it more difficult to find the correct path. This does not mean that we should avoid privacy or time to retreat. It means that after we retreat, there is a gathering of power that must be put forth to benefit life.

Jaimes Whitegle, a medicine man and healer, teaches women how to access power and he shared his wisdom for today's woman to help recognize when we are on the path that strengthens the heart. As you read his words, you may discover that his way of communicating arouses an ancient memory within you:

"You sense freedom is gathering because restrictions and restraints are being removed. The woman who decides to change the patterns in her life is on the way to discovering the path with the strongest heart. Patterns that once consumed her body's physical energy and accentuated aging are naturally held up to the light for examination, with no fear.

"One of the most damaging patterns to a woman's evolution is when she is continually told that she is responsible for everyone and all things around her, instead of telling her she is responsible for directing her own destiny as she matures. This is the first pattern that must be worked on if the woman is to succeed in discovering the correct path, which develops the strongest heart.

"The next pattern that must be faced is the confrontations or contacts with men who do not know how to preserve and protect her. A woman is the ultimate birthing process for human beings. It is a fact and law of the universe that women are supposed to be protected. Men need to wake up to this and begin to protect women and live in harmony with nature's laws and universal law.



"The path with the strongest heart reveals discoveries and mysteries of the feminine force of a woman. When a woman steps onto the path of knowledge, she comes into contact with a self-

communication of her own womanhood. This inner voice speaks to her intimately until she hears it saying, 'Stop practicing being a question, and start practicing being the answer.' This communication is actually a future prediction letting her know that 'the feminine force' is rising.



“Next, there is a discovery that the physical body is incredibly magnetic and has an ability to attract and to repel. As the feminine force begins to rise, it begins to repel outside disturbing sounds, thought impulses and sickness, which gives her feminine body force time to recover and accentuate cellular skin rejuvenation.

“One of the great secrets of the woman is that she has an enormous supply of unused energy that she rarely accesses during this ‘timed life.’ The path that develops the strongest heart sets a woman on a quest to discover the patterns that are keeping her oppressed, restricted and filled with fears. The correct path teaches her to be able to re-deploy this incredible reserve of energy she holds. Women must work to eliminate the patterns of restraint and restrictions that have accentuated the aging process upon her and damaged her mental immunity.

“When a woman is free or working to be free, there are not many forces in this world that can restrain her from the path that develops the strongest heart. A woman achieves by leaps and bounds when she is attempting to rise, especially when she has joined with a collectiveness of virtuous women and the feminine force. This is one of the great secrets about the path of freedom for the woman, which develops the greatest heart.”

***Signs that you are moving toward the path with the strongest heart:***

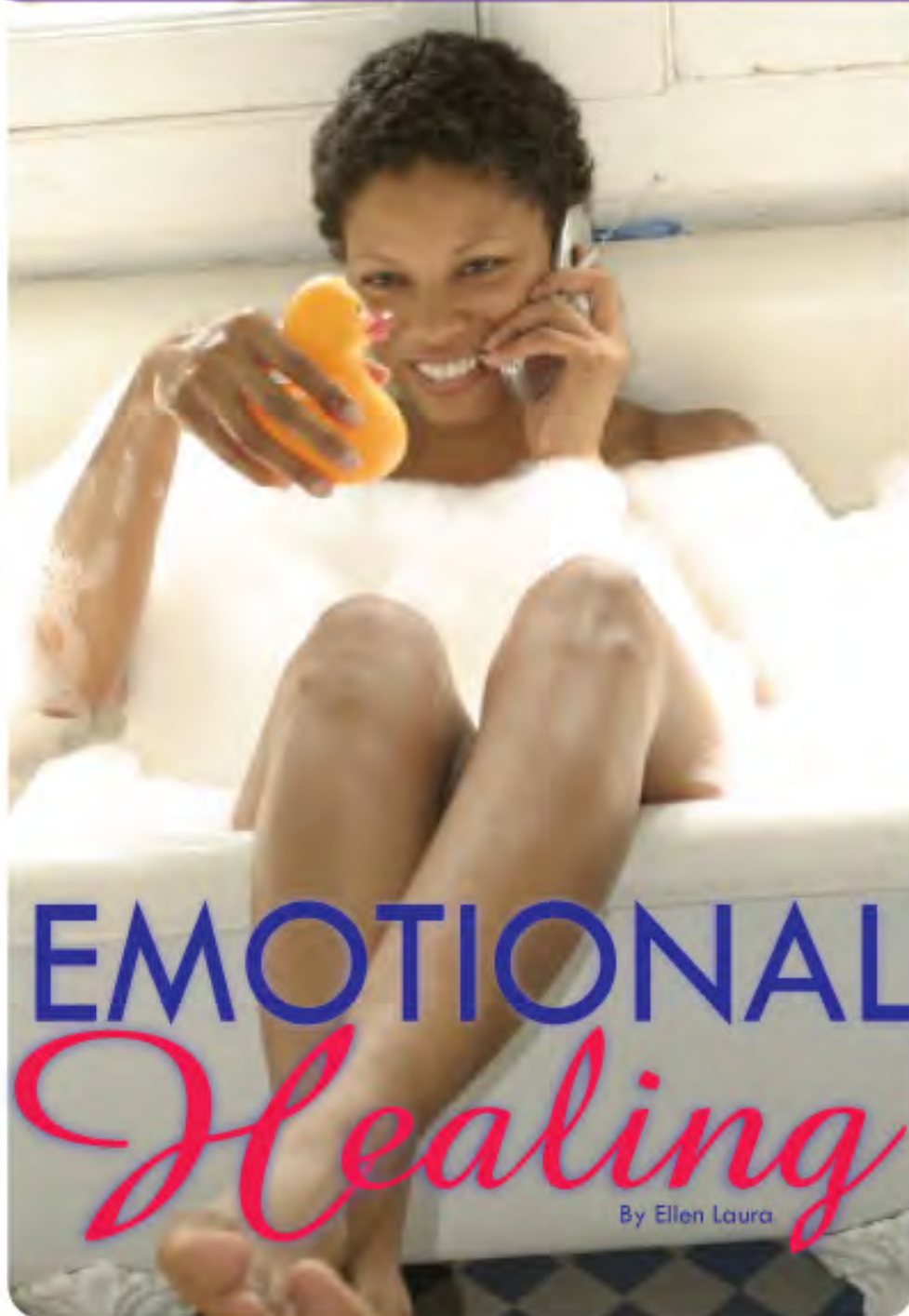
- You recognize that a draining pain or burden has left you and it doesn’t return.
- You feel a great generosity of spirit – you cannot be generous and fearful at the same time.
- You find yourself not “trying so hard.”
- You are more aware of your personal boundaries and you won’t allow people to waste your time or steal your energy.
- You stop making promises you can’t keep to yourself and others.
- Your desire to manipulate, control and change others diminishes and eventually fades away.
- You say good-bye to the “victim-martyr-drama” syndrome, and pity parties are short-lived.
- You stop tolerating and start living.
- You are kinder to yourself and others: abrasive self-criticism and prejudice dissolve.
- You keep a strong, conscious connection between your head and your heart.
- Verbal abuse and gossip become strangers.
- Your body becomes stronger and no one has to tell you to exercise.
- You become a breather – no holding in of fear and pain through shallow breathing.
- You attract “those of your kind” and let the magic begin!



“I don't believe in failure. It is not failure if you enjoyed the process.”

— Oprah Winfrey

*Healing and purifying our emotions creates open windows of opportunity to live a life with a loving heart and invincible power.*



*W*omen today are probing the mysteries of their emotions with renewed passion. When we are emotionally clear, relaxed and spontaneous, our inner beauty shines forth and we are empowered.



Although therapists and spiritual teachers have advocated emotional healing (often referred to as healing of the “emotional body”) most of us know how easy it is to fall prey to negative emotions and the destructive actions fueled by this negativity.

A practical and easy-to-implement approach to begin deeper emotional healing involves three stages.

### **Stage 1: Awareness**

Be aware that past traumas and memory demons are real and they contain trapped energy that must be reclaimed to feel happy and powerful. Memory demons reside in spaces of shame, remorse, aversion and ignorance, and we, in turn, experience the memory demons as pain – physical or psychological. Reclaiming energy that is stored in emotional traumas is a natural path to emotional healing and living your life with joy, vitality and power.

Think of the process of converting painful emotional energy to powerful energy, as similar to converting pesos into dollars. If we travel to Mexico and trade in American dollars for pesos, when we return to America, we cannot use the pesos in most transactions. It makes no sense to take the pesos and bury them, throw them into the garbage, or be ashamed that pesos aren't an acceptable currency in America. We simply take the steps to convert the pesos into a usable form of money. Converting emotional pain into powerful, happy energy is a similar process, and it can be learned. Once the precious energy that was trapped as pain becomes free, it can then be expressed as goodness, beauty and power.



### **Stage 2: Let Go and Triumph**

Attaining emotional healing involves experiencing some form of release that opens the window of opportunity for triumph while living in the present. This means we must position ourselves for blessings and happy occurrences and do so consistently. Most of us can recall a time when a small success has created the momentum to set and achieve larger goals. This is so obvious and yet so easily overlooked. Instead of excessive processing of old wounds, focus on opening the heart and mind to being successful.

Each triumph is part of the conversion process of taking the trapped, painful energy and converting it into dynamic energy. It is natural to express courage, compassion and enthusiasm as we heal and become empowered. One clear way to recognize that we are healing emotionally is to monitor our optimism. *Peacefulness that is not accompanied by optimism is usually apathy masquerading as peace – it is not the real thing.*



### Stage 3: Responsibility

This stage involves an empowered acceptance (not resignation) that emotional healing requires a lifelong commitment. As long as we live in a world where disappointing, shocking and traumatic events occur, we must build the stamina and energetic reserve to rebound from negativity. Believing that healing our emotional bodies is a one-time process is typically an illusion. The emotional body, like the physical body, must be consistently nurtured and strengthened. And, the quality and quantity of daily attention devoted to caring for the physical body should be balanced by the amount of time and love devoted to caring for the emotional body.

## *Freeing Memory Demons and Trapped Emotional Energy*

Emotionally trapped energy causes us to cling to our misconceptions, and we then tend to be irritated and affronted by those around us who may suggest to us that our version of reality may not be entirely correct. The ripple effect manifests as inappropriate reactions that aggravate confusion and emotional negativity. In a negative state we lose touch with natural laws and begin to choose ungrounded, even destructive ways of living in the world. This includes neglect of basic survival skills such as knowing how to eat, exercise, relax, behave, communicate, work and love. We rationalize our behavior and often become secretive about our questionable activities. We thus reinforce our confusion and its resultant consequences, which inevitably leads to psychological and physical illness.

If we closely examine our lives, it is not hard to see that most of our negativity shows up in the form of ignorance, attachment and aggression. Once we see these poisons with accuracy, we begin the quest to find antidotes to

neutralize the poisons.

Attachment can be transformed into compassionate action and an intellect that is luminous, clear and unimpeded. Aggression can be transformed into joyous and spontaneous skillful action. Ignorance can be transformed into a panoramic awareness that allows us to experience a refined consciousness.

For centuries, people from various religious and cultural backgrounds have engaged in spiritual practices to heal their memory demons, often with the guidance of a

spiritual healer, shaman or priestess. Today, advanced spiritual teachers are stepping forward to help humanity transform the energy of memory demons into usable power. Dr. Olga Kharitidi, M.D., a Russian psychiatrist, is writing and teaching about facing and conquering memory demons. Her book, *Master of Lucid Dreaming*, provides insight into deep emotional healing.



One thing is certain: *Healing is not a solo process.* It takes unified power to pierce the armor of the memory demons. Whether we invoke help from the unseen, celestial realms through prayer or work with a skilled spiritual counselor, alienation is not a pathway to healing. Shame and embarrassment are barriers to finding healing allies and must be faced. Some people find solace in 12-step programs or other group processes, while others are not suited to group programs and heal more effectively in private counseling sessions. Connection with people who exhibit a high level of health also aids in healing emotional traumas. In our modern world, we are practicing a new form of alchemy. Instead of discovering how to change straw into gold, we are beginning to transmute apathy, disappointment and cynicism into optimism and compassionate action.

## *The Hierarchy of Emotions*

A hierarchy of emotions, ranging from the higher and most beneficial to the lowest and most dangerous, provides a clear understanding of the territory we cover on the healing journey. Utilizing this hierarchy is valuable because it helps us to identify the stages of our own emotional health and can be of value in selecting people as friends, mates, clients and business associates.

The following is the range of emotions and consciousness, beginning at the most beneficial and descending to the most dangerous:

- Serenity & Inner Contentment
- Exhilaration
- Enthusiasm
- Interest & Affection
- Courage
- Stability
- Optimism
- Faith & Hope
- Boredom
- Resentment
- Antagonism & Cruelty
- Anger
- Covert Hostility
- Fear & Shame
- Grief & Embarrassment
- Disappointment & Sadness
- Apathy

Gaining skill in recognizing where we are on the emotional scale involves self-reflection without self-criticism. It requires courage to examine the ways our past traumas have pushed us down and blocked our happiness. The most effective strategy to “move on up” the emotional highway is to protect and replenish our reserve of physical vitality, enthusiasm, time and money, and to have more triumphs than defeats in life. **Caution:** Winning at any cost, or using manipulation and deception, is not advisable and will actually push us farther down the emotional scale.

It is also important to understand that it is natural to traverse the entire emotional scale. A healthy person does not avoid any of the emotional tones; they just don’t linger in the lower emotions very long. What is noticeable in people who are emotionally healthy is they have a dominant and high emotional tone; and they have the ability to move through the lower tones without attachment or aversion.

All emotions can be natural and appropriate in a given situation. When a loved one dies, it is natural to feel sadness, grief and/or resentment. Seeing a home destroyed by fire or flood triggers fear and anger, or losing a long-desired business opportunity can cause a tumble down into apathy. As natural as these emotions are, in a healthy person they are temporary. The ability to rebound is a key survival factor.

Emotional traumas give birth to memory demons, and each defeat we experience births a new demon. Before these demons grow to a proportion that dominates and controls us, we must take intelligent action to heal. The two aforementioned outlined stages can be helpful to give us the courage to face and dissolve the demons while they are manageable.

## *Ascend the Emotional Scale*

- Know yourself
- Listen to uplifting music
- Sing often, the sound of your own voice can heal you
- Read inspiring and thought-provoking books and poetry
- Spend time outdoors in nature and walk barefoot on the ground
- Practice loving kindness with your family
- Strengthen your boundaries
- Be good to animals
- Avoid excessive processing of past hurts
- Spend quiet time in meditation, contemplation or prayer
- Breathe deeply
- Live, work and play with people who nourish you
- Get quality rest
- Keep your word, and practice truthfulness
- Ask for help and guidance when you need it
- Make decisions and act on them
- After you experience a loss, brush yourself off and re-engage in life
- Keep your integrity intact
- Use your intelligence and creativity to benefit others
- Give up manipulation and deception
- Surround yourself with people who enjoy you naturally
- Take good care of the Earth's resources
- Lighten up and let your intelligence shine forth





*Learning how to set limits is the key to health in all your relationships, whether for yourself or the loved ones in your life. The good news? It gets easier every time you do it.*

### *Setting and enforcing boundaries may be*

the single most important part of ending repetitive dysfunctional behavior. One of the challenges of describing boundaries is that if we don't have them, we tend to reject the subject entirely or find it too ethereal to be of value.

Boundaries are limits. Clear boundaries help a person avoid unhealthy relationships. They help us steer away from unethical situations. They protect us from others who would harm us and even from our own negative thoughts and impulses. Here is a major problem: People stuck in deeply dysfunctional behavior are not interested in limits. They are interested in getting their needs met, often in wildly creative and subtly dangerous ways.

A need common to all humanity is to be perceived as a person of worth and value and treated with extraordinary respect. How many people are even close to having a

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*M*IND

consistent experience of their worth and value in personal and work relationships? This gap is indicative of the weakness of our boundaries, low standards and confusion about integrity.



A healthy relationship is one in which boundaries are clearly defined and flexible enough to allow us to flourish with our own uniqueness. This is not merely a psychological concern; it is also a physiological issue. Attempts to establish boundaries tend to be heavily focused on mental solutions, which is only part of the

equation. For instance, when [brain chemistry](#) is less than optimal, low self-esteem and weak boundaries are often present. In the research presented by [Dr. Joel Robertson](#) of the Robertson Research Institute in Saginaw, Michigan, 60 percent of women have low serotonin. Some of the symptoms of low serotonin are low self-esteem, negative thinking, weak boundaries and an inability to perceive love when it is actually present. Working toward establishing healthy boundaries is one way to help balance brain chemistry because it requires a thorough review of our lifestyle habits, including proper nutrition, exercise and spiritual practices.

After reading several books on the subject of boundaries over the past 10 years, I would give the highest acknowledgement to Thomas Leonard, founder of Coachville and other successful coaching organizations, for his profound insights and strategies on boundaries. Thomas died on February 11, 2003, and as a tribute to him, I'd like to offer some excerpts from his writings. His statement, "Tripling the width of personal boundaries is a good first step toward becoming a problem-free zone," is typical of his conversation style, punctuated with vivid and compelling imagery.

According to Leonard, "When problems just seem to pass you by, you are considered a Problem-Free Zone. There are a number of ways to keep yourself a Problem-Free Zone, but one of the most important is establishing, extending and maintaining your personal boundaries.

"Boundaries are what every human has a right to establish to protect themselves from the problems, needs and concerns of others. We all have boundaries of some kind, but most of us have established just enough of a protective circle around us to keep us from getting killed or severely damaged by others. What we actually need are boundaries to give us the extra margin of safety to get a good night's sleep and have the space to freely create, without having to maintain a watch for any intruders.

"Does this sound like gunfighters and the Old West? I don't mean to be so dramatic, but there are several points here that you need to understand if you hope to become a problem-free zone.

They are:

1. People are intruding on your space more than you know.
2. Boundaries are limits you set, not walls or weapons.
3. You get to decide how wide to cast your boundaries.
4. You probably need to triple the width of your boundaries.
5. To grow quickly, extend boundaries more than is needed.
6. The more sensitive you are, the more you need boundaries.

“Examples? Let's take a look at anger. Most of us have a boundary we've set called no hitting. Regardless of the provocation or the weakness of the other person, hitting us is just not okay, no matter what. (And as you know, some people have not yet established this boundary.)

“The next upgrade of this boundary is no screaming or yelling at me, regardless. Do you have this one yet? If so, congratulations. If not, you should, for your integrity's sake.

“Next are the no digs or cracks boundary. This means that the other person cannot belittle, criticize, make fun of or make cracks or jokes about you or what you're doing. Period. That's period. Cracks and digs are not humor; they are always a form of acceptable anger and covert hostility. There are many people with the habit pattern of using this form of negative humor, including sarcasm and mimicking. Beware. It is a sign of someone who could trip you up in many small and large ways.

“Next is the no getting upset rule. This gets a little tougher because you're now letting the other person know that they can't be upset with you. Wow. Isn't that controlling, you might ask. It could be, but not in this context. What you're doing here is letting people know that you are not the kind of person who will knowingly or deliberately harm another. And given this, it's simply not okay for the other person to assume that you did something hurtful, thus allowing them to feel justified in being upset with you. Now, if you did do something hurtful, and it was deliberate, this does not apply.

“Finally, welcome to the unconditionally constructive boundary. This means that you expect those in your life to always be honest, yet supportive and to cast what they say in a positive light. That is, to use language that forwards you always [versus] tripping you. This level takes practice, so work with your family and friends until you are both satisfied.”

As we progress in setting healthy boundaries, there may be people where it just doesn't seem to work. Remember, these could be the most dysfunctional relationships where both parties have become caught in a loop of extreme codependence. The person who continues to violate boundaries is only half of the problem; the one who has allowed the offensive behavior is equally responsible. It's bad karma for both parties. Remember, if your intention is to dominate, control or belittle the other person, you are not in the correct frame of mind to set boundaries. This is where working with a [professional coach](https://ellenmlaura.com) or therapist could offer major benefits. When working alone, start with issues that are simple and not highly emotional.

## *Steps to Enforce Boundaries*

1. Educate or inform people what is being done that violates your values and boundaries. Just inform them in a clear, calm, succinct manner, without a long explanation, and in a voice tone that is neutral. For instance, “Cracks like that offend me, and I prefer not to hear them.” Be sure the tone is not scolding or condescending and that your body language is not hostile.



2. If it continues, tell them what is not wanted and how you feel. This is the stage to become stronger. "Listening to cracks and jokes drains my energy. I don't want to be spoken to in this way. I prefer a warm and loving sense of humor." Again, avoid a scolding tone and posture.
3. If it continues, warn them how you will separate yourself from them and/or their negative behavior, either temporarily (while it continues), or permanently, if necessary. However, this will be effective only if you mean it when you say you will separate yourself, otherwise you set up a deeper pattern of codependence and you are not believable to the offender, i.e. "The sarcasm and cracks about me and others drains my energy. Don't ever speak this way in my presence again. If this habit is too difficult for you to break, then it is best for me to not be around you when you are sarcastic."
4. If it continues, distance yourself as you said you would, preferably short term or long term when necessary.

Memorize the steps to enforce boundaries, because most of us jump to the final stage of distancing before we have taken the earlier steps. When under pressure, the need to enforce boundaries is dependent upon following the aforementioned steps. Soon, because it works so well, you'll probably learn to do this fairly automatically and well.

The first few times we do this, it may be hard for people who already know us. They may overreact because they aren't used to it, and because the first few times we do this, we aren't as skillful at it.

It can be helpful to notify people about what is being learned ahead of time and to let them know at first, you may be heavy handed, but to please be patient and bear with you. It will help you and others to get along better and enjoy the connection that comes from mutually respecting boundaries.

# THE TRANSFORMING *Power* OF COMMUNICATION

By Ellen Laura



*The poetry of communication is found in mastering the tonality and physiology of our messages.*

*Cast a glance* over your shoulder and recall your most recent conversations. Would you describe the communication as enlightening, traumatic or a merely a cascade of words, tumbling into the easily forgettable realm that communication wizards deem the “non-event zone”?

The non-event zone, a realm of boredom and intellectual fog, widens because time is no longer a luxury. The exchange of insights, ideas, opinions and stories often turns into a frustrating experience. How sad! We miss out on potentially illuminating awareness every hour because of our diminished ability to send and receive compelling messages to each other.

In more peaceful times, what caused either a new insight or a warning was largely dependent upon the integrity of the message sent and the health and self-esteem of the recipient. Today, communication must be filled with shocking urgency or extraordinary love and respect before our ears perk up.



Consider these questions as you explore improving communication: With whom do you share your deepest dreams and dreaded fears, and more importantly, who do you allow to influence your thinking? Our need for love, belonging and intimacy involves our relationship with ourselves, with God, and with one or two other people who we can completely count on whether the sun is shining or not.

The hunger for authentic community and deep connection continues to gnaw away at most people, and truthful communication is a step toward connection. Alliances with people who evoke our strengths, talents, intelligence and clarity can

do more for our communication skills than dozens of books, audio-tapes or seminars. One of the surest ways to recognize power allies is their ability to transform us via the power of communication. Healthy communication stirs us in a way that reminds us of our potential, not of our inadequacies and foolish behaviors.

Consider the message of this poignant story:

A water bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on the end of a pole that he carried across the back of his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it. The other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the home of the water bearer's Beloved, while the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water to his Beloved's home. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made.



But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do. After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter defeat, the cracked pot spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream.

"I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you."

"Why?" asked the water bearer. "What are you ashamed of?"

"I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load, because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your Beloved's house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts," the cracked pot said.

The water bearer felt sad about what he heard from the cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return to my Beloved's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path."

Indeed, as they went up the hill, the cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again it apologized to the water bearer for its failure.

The water bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of your path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my Beloved's table. Without you being just the way you are, she would not have this beauty to grace her house."

The message here is poignant and you may wonder what this story has to do with communication. The water bearer transformed the cracked pot by the power of compassionate action and communication! Instead of just "knowing" that he was doing well for the pot, he needed to communicate this message before the cracked pot could shift from self-loathing and feelings of worthlessness to an experience of "I have something of value to contribute." The poetic message says, "In the Divine Economy, nothing goes to waste." Be sure to communicate to others and let them know how they bring gifts into your life.

## *The Practicality of Communication*

In order for communication to truly transform us and pave the way for embracing differences, practical matters must be addressed. One of my mentors once said: "We are beings of love moving through time and space together in a mathematical trajectory." How we communicate on this odyssey makes the difference between an enjoyable ride and a tormenting nightmare.

Communication is a most telling tale: Can't easily communicate with close friends, family and partners? The body reveals secrets. Assess your physiology and voice to find out what's amiss before either abandoning (or staying too long) in any relationship.

Speaking clearly with authentic confidence (arrogance barriers lowered) signals that a person of superior intelligence is present. Here's the great news: Research and study verify that top-level communicators have identifiable qualities that can be learned. *Communication power is acquired and accessed – not reserved for a select few.* The greatest communicators integrate the use of voice, language and body

*movements* so they can build and maintain rapport with virtually anyone, tell a story, ask for a decision and consistently gain commitment.

Did you know that . . .

WORDS comprise 7 percent of our communication message

VOICE QUALITY (volume, tempo, tonality, timbre) accounts for 38 percent of the communication message

PHYSIOLOGY (posture, movements, speed of movements, gestures, facial expression, eye contact, breathing, proximity and touching) comprises 55 percent of the communication message

Most people are surprised to discover that words make up only 7 percent of our messages; yet, most communication efforts are stalled at words. How many women struggle with the words while engaged in conflict with friends, family and co-workers? Based on these statistics, it would be wise to shift the focus to the tonality and physiology of our messages.

## *Stop Losing Rapport Today!*

The next practical step is to learn some basics about building and sustaining rapport. Why? Because whether you are in the midst of a crisis and need to call on someone at 2 a.m. for help, trying to tell your lover why you want more touching or selling a service, *rapport precedes cooperation*. What you can use immediately, starting now, is this elementary rule of pacing and rhythm:

**People will be more open to your message if you match their pace and rhythm when communicating.** Even the most sincere messages can be rejected and misunderstood because of faulty pacing and rhythm. By observing the pace and volume the other person prefers, discern if you are speaking and moving too fast or too slow or if you are speaking too loudly or too softly. Communication skill, like dancing, involves knowing who is supposed to be “leading” and when it’s appropriate for solo moves. Flowing communication reveals the electricity and grace of dancers. In most instances of lost rapport, we are too fast, loud and dominant or too slow, soft and tentative; remedy this and your communication message will be welcomed instead of snubbed or misunderstood.

Get in sync through your voice and physiology – your pacing and rhythm. If you talk and move too quickly while another person is speaking and moving very *s l o w l y*, you will be perceived as overconfident, pushy and potentially reckless or sloppy. If you talk and move too slowly while your partner moves rapidly, you will be perceived as indecisive, boring or incapable of handling demanding action.

By embracing the heart and soul, the poetry of communication, as well as the flesh and bones – the practicality of communication – an incredible opportunity awaits.

# CONFIDENTIALLY *Speaking*

By Ellen Laura



*“Lend me your ear and listen to me with your heart”  
conveys a call for a friend and confidant.*

*Psychology* informs us that a trusted listener nurtures both the body and soul. Finding the correct “listener” is no easy task. Many women live in isolation rather than risk confiding in other women. This hesitancy is both wise and presents a challenge worth scaling.



While interviewing dozens of women to discover the satisfaction they experienced when “baring their souls” to friends, the responses were diverse. In order to develop trust, a demonstration of both confidentiality and wise counsel must consistently be present. Consistency on both counts is the key.

## *The Role of the Professional Confidant*



The wisest plan for a woman in need of unburdening herself of her confusion or wanting to rise to a new level when stuck is to find a [professional coach](#) or therapist. It is very risky to take your hurts, betrayals and wounds to those unqualified to offer sound counsel, both for you and for the person who listens. Any time you share your pain with one who is not professionally trained and ethically bound to protect you, multiple risks exist – you could burden a budding or trusted friendship by unloading your problems.

A professional is not emotionally shocked or disrupted by listening, whereas many women suffer greatly because their friends are in need of a listener and won't take action to get appropriate help. The most consistent complaint I heard from women who were not working with a professional therapist or coach was, *I spent a few months* (which is not long enough for deep change) *with a therapist or coach and wasn't sure what I was getting for my money!* This telegraphs a message to all therapists/coaches saying people are expecting more. The issue of paying for a caring listener is another hurdle. Perhaps in the future, there will emerge billionaires and corporations that will make this a service available to all women employed or not.

Not everyone needs a professional to help them learn the art of unmasking and becoming a treasured friend. Some have it passed down from mothers and grandmothers. What is appropriate in each circumstance between friends is the presence of extraordinary love and extraordinary respect. Communicate with your friends and ask them if they want to hear your problems. Be alert: Are they saying they will listen just because they lack the skill to set boundaries? Watch for signs to see if the “listener” is becoming tense or drained of energy.

The most important quality of an authentic friendship is that it is never divisive; it always promotes that we are living beings within the same circle of life. It affirms that every thought, action and feeling issuing from the friendship ripples through and touches everyone. It is not merely a matter of ethics as to whether you should sleep with your friend's husband or “innocently” find your self in bed with a man who is the beloved of another. Those actions confirm and perpetuate our separateness. If you want to feel the joy within the unified heart of humanity, you also risk feeling the collective pain and being called up to transform it.

## *Nevada is Home to Awakened Hearts*

This is a modern fairy tale, set in Las Vegas. It's not about winning MegaBucks. It's about a jackpot of spiritual awakening and friendship.

### Saundra's Story:

"In June of 1999, I found myself in the shocking position of ending my marriage and simultaneously discovering I was six weeks pregnant with twins. On top of that, I was living out of state and facing the daunting task of returning home to Las Vegas and starting divorce proceedings. My trusted friends had not seen me in many months.

"The courage to rise up and become more than I had once been was fueled by my deep conviction in a Higher Power of goodness and benevolence. It seemed as though all I had was this faith and inner resilience to lead me through unfamiliar territory.

"Friends from years back surfaced and joined with newly found faces. My health and well-being had risen in direct proportion to this loving friendship. I had the joy of experiencing the depth of their nurturing and strength as they individually, and as a delightful newfound nucleus, banded together to care for me. In every tear I shed – as my body changed and became increasingly fatigued from the strain of carrying twins and the emotional burden of being a single parent – they were there to remind me of my own inner faith. Their gentleness and strength helped me overcome my own shortcomings, whether real or imaginary. My fears and limitations, both real and illusory, were faced with courage and power. They listened to me with open hearts and reaffirmed my faith that women could be trusted and could become wise confidants.

"The richness of friendship came into direct contact with morning sickness and eventually with dirty diapers. We were not dancing together under the moonlight or being showered with gifts from masculine admirers. Yet, the feminine power and high energy continued to swell until a glow of protection surrounded us. Money needed was provided. Floors got washed. Lovely meals served by candlelight nourished us. The women blessed my body and my children and the creative life force was swirling to life around all of us.

"After the cesarean birth of my two daughters, my friends took time away from their own homes, husbands, work and activities to stay in shifts with me for weeks. Not having any close female relatives, they became my extended family. They humored and loved me out of a five-week post partum depression. They fed me, held my daughters and sat in silence in the sanctuary of prayer that was my home.

"The mystery and magic of the feminine birthing process transformed us in ways still unknown. Even those who had, by choice, not wanted children, joined in the new awakening of feminine goodness and beauty. The mundane and the miraculous merged in a way that delighted us all.

"In my loneliest moments of missing the companionship of a husband to share in this miraculous journey of motherhood, and as much as I look forward to eventually including a man in my life, I realized that I had the perfect balance of strength and gentleness, of masculine and feminine energies. I further gleaned that the depth of connection and caring that we experienced as women might not have come if a husband had been present. I had the freedom to make my home their home and create the atmosphere for such magic and joy. One woman said it was more rigorous and more real than a Buddhist retreat or five months in an Indian Ashram! Each woman honored the spiritual discipline I live by and kindness and vulnerability melted our fears and weakness. It seemed as though the universe demonstrated how hard work, joy and laughter are the essence of human life.

“Almost five months later, I still hear the door of my home open with one of the many keys I had given to these women, and one of their faint whispers calling, ‘Saundra’ and my heart is flooded with warmth. Now my memories of my pregnancy and these early months of motherhood – a time that could have been filled with despair and self-pity – is a kaleidoscope of laughter, comfort and home that reminds me of ancient times and powerful female clans. Here in Nevada, a group of women lived without pettiness, without backbiting, without betrayals. The walls of my home did not hear harsh, angry or sarcastic words or gossip. Those who showed up for the experience demonstrated the power of women working in synchronicity.

“I’ve been given the gift of this feminine splendor in a way that is often lost in modern culture. How did I get so lucky? I believe these women were able to bring the wealth of their souls and the pleasure of their personalities because my deep love for God makes me feel completely worthy of love. And we weren’t just sitting around ‘talking love and light.’ We were working together in a physical labor that required synergy and power. I suppose it is true: ‘Before enlightenment, change diapers and explode with laughter; after enlightenment, change diapers and explode with laughter!’”

Does this experience sound too good to be true? [Authentic Community](https://ellenmlaura.com) brings forth miracles in all sizes and shapes. Upgrade your intentions and begin attracting fabulous friendships today.



# THE LAW OF *Attraction*

*The keys to attracting what you want are easily at hand – and they work. But first you must know what it is, say it to yourself and feel it.*

*The Law of Attraction* says that our thoughts carry forth vibrations that attract or repel people, situations and opportunities to us. Our attention and focus sets in motion a constant state of mental and emotional signaling. When we give our attention to the Source of Being, which is totally benevolent and good, we attract more goodness to ourselves. Success with this law requires repetition combined with passionate, positive feelings. One of the healthiest ways to be successful with mastering this law is to give 80 percent of our focus and conversation to what we want and limit the amount of time we speak or think about what we don't want. So many people will say: *I really want more prosperity and a better job* (which takes 10 seconds of attention). Then, they continue on for another two minutes of dialogue: *And I really am tired of not having a great paying job; I'm sick of living this way, and I know I deserve better and I don't want to go through this frustration anymore.* The amount of time we focus on the positive versus the negative is crucial to master the law of attraction.



Two major blocks that rob us of our spark of life and being successful with the Law of Attraction are the following:

- **Weariness:** When our vitality and creativity — our inner energy — has been drained, and we feel beaten, and weary.
- **Fatigue:** When we are physically exhausted because of lack of sleep, illness, poor dietary habits, environmental pollutants, overwork, etc.

There are many explanations for fatigue and weariness, but there are two situations that significantly increase both factors.

- **Scattered efforts, a series of unrealized goals, and a life filled in pursuit of goals unsuitable for a person's individuality:** Social conditioning can cause us to stray from our authentic callings. If you are not setting your own goals, someone else will be glad to put you to work in realizing theirs. Take intelligent action now to discover what is truly unique about you so you can set intentions that resonate with your spirit.
- **Continued, futile attempts to solve the same problems, over and over, and over again, often for years:** This kind of frustration causes weariness. Like trying to lose the same 20 pounds for years. Or, renting instead of owning when you know that conflicts with your dreams. Or, waiting for the perfect relationship while you go to bed lonely every night. Or, dreaming of leaving your casino job and spending all your free time in escapist activities. When we aim to solve the same problems and continue to meet them only with frustration, we are heading down an energy draining path. When stuck in the same unfulfilling situation and the “spark” is gone from the life —get acquainted with the Law of Attraction and understand how you co-create your destiny.

## *Turn Toward the Positive*

Meditation, prayer, intention, invocation (affirmation) and breathing are the methods that begin to turn the mind toward antidotes to these two afflictions.



The power of affirmations has been overrated by its supporters and underrated by its critics. When making a powerful affirmation, we must breathe and move with our heads held high. It is just silly to sit on the couch, feeling sad and repeating positive affirmations. Imagine someone singing the song “The Sun Will Come Out Tomorrow” with droopy posture, sad eyes and a look of panic or despair. It would not work on Broadway, and making happy affirmations while frowning won’t win you success.

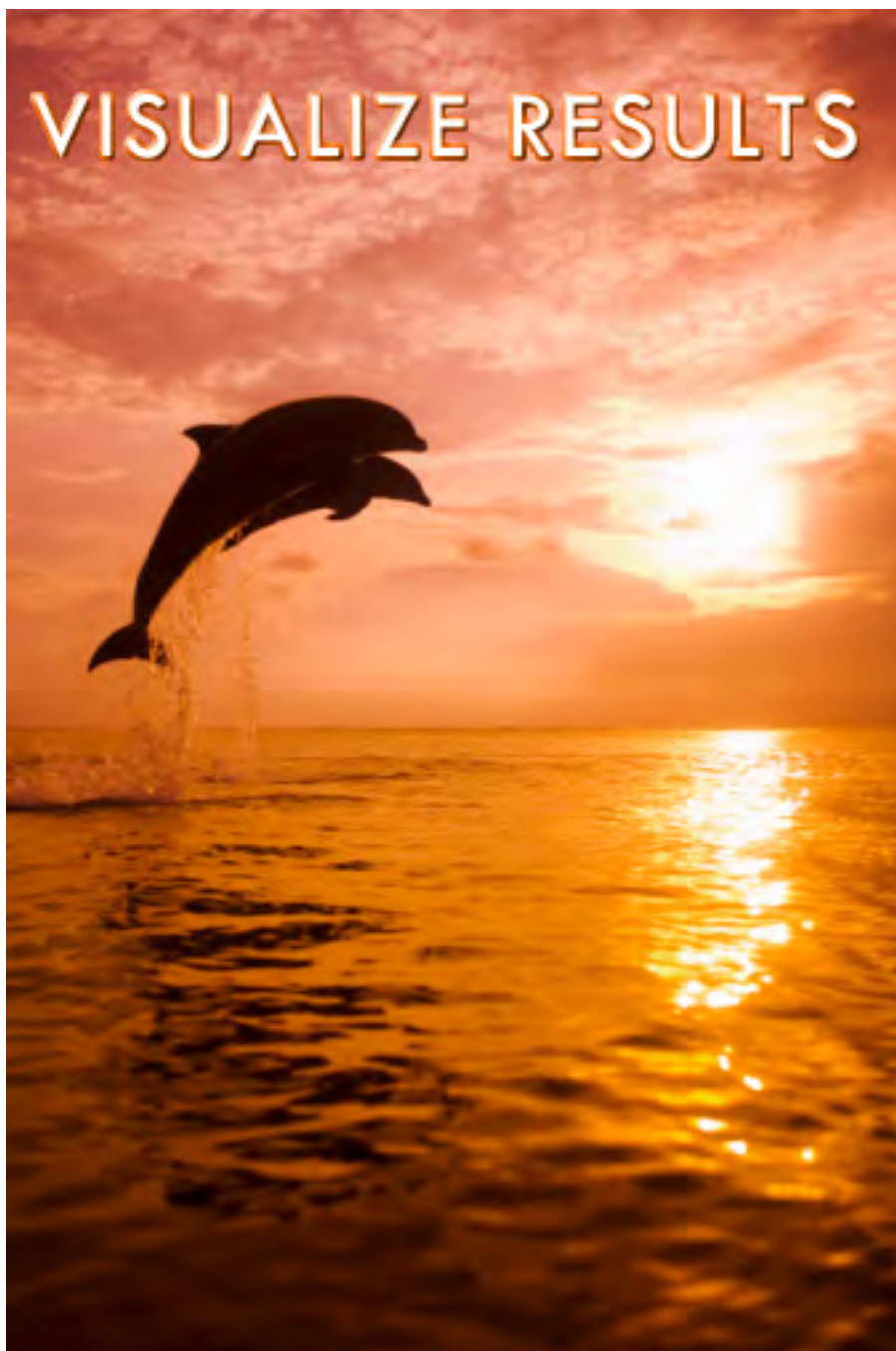
Affirmations help us set forth powerful intentions when they are authentic instead of mechanical. Affirmations aren't just special

phrases that we say when we have a goal. We are making affirmations every time we think and speak. Every sentence and phrase, whether we say it aloud or quietly to ourselves is an affirmation. When you are down, you need to begin by moving your body and changing the way you breathe to break the pattern of low energy.

Supporters of affirmations encourage you to visualize yourself as you'd like to be, rather than the way you are currently. This is supposed to tap the power of your creative subconscious mind and assist in your transformation. In the development of a renewed mental attitude, you are encouraged to eliminate negative self-talk and replace it with positive self-talk. Some newer techniques involve the use of kinesiology (muscle testing) to find the affirmations that will transform your life.

Question: What makes this method work for some and futile for others? First, the mind is much more complex than many proponents of affirmations would like us to believe. Since we all do not have equally developed mental power, we are not equally effective in the use of affirmations. Development of mental power takes dedication and an effective strategy – the same as building physical strength and stamina. And, the body is involved in the process of developing mental strength. Many self-help gurus insist that anyone can become a "mental Olympic gold medal champion." The truth is that anyone can increase and improve his or her mental power and reach new heights with persistence and refined strategy. To be successful requires discipline, persistence and passion, plus the guidance of a [professional coach](#) or mentor.

To make affirmations powerful, they must contain powerful, congruent feelings and colorful, vivid language. Affirming to yourself, *I know I can be happy, loving and prosperous*, while you feel worried and anxious may produce inner resistance and cognitive dissonance instead of the desired outcomes. Can you say with conviction: *I intend to attract people and resources that can propel me toward doubling my income next year?* Practice your affirmations in front of a child and they'll tell you whether you look sincere or phony. Friends may also be helpful if they also are devoted to mastering the Law of Attraction and can tell you if you sound believable.



Begin listening to yourself and others to understand how we constantly affirm or deny our own goals. Does this sound familiar? "It's always something that goes wrong — there are always more bills than money." "I just can't be on time." "I can't start exercising until I lose some weight." "I don't know what I want." "My age/metabolism made me overeat."

To affirm means to agree with or consent to. Why say things if you don't want to agree or consent to them? For most of us, it's because we've picked up these phrases from un-evolved sources: television, friends or parents — making us walking, talking, regurgitating machines.

In the book *Feeling Is the Secret*, by Neville, there is a practical means of visualizing an evolved version of ourselves. What we think, feel and visualize in the period before falling asleep is very important. The author puts forth the theory that the subconscious mind during sleep picks up these thoughts and feelings and materializes these impressions in our waking state. He writes: "Night after night, you should assume the feeling of being, having and witnessing that which you wish to be, possess and see manifested. Never go to sleep feeling discouraged or dissatisfied. Never sleep in the consciousness of failure." The emphasis is on having a feeling of naturalness while resting peacefully and practicing visualization. You are *idealing* a new version of yourself, more evolved.

There are ideal emotional conditions necessary to set forth intentions that will yield joy and unbounded happiness.

- Serenity & Inner Contentment
- Exhilaration
- Enthusiasm
- Interest & Affection
- Courage
- Stability
- Optimism

When we are in one of the aforementioned states of consciousness, we have a green light to unleash powerful intentions. The Law of Attraction says that which is set forth attracts that which is like itself. So, it is not natural to be feeling miserable and depressed, making affirmations for prosperity and joy. Instead, in your greatest moments of calm, begin making positive affirmations, until you find more days when you feel empowered, and then just let loose on those powerful phrases until you tingle from the power.





*If there is great abundance in the universe, and more than enough for everyone, why are so many people starving? Why are poverty and homelessness increasing? Why are so many afraid of the future?*

One reason for the lack of abundance and the suffering it causes is that our individual and collective life force and optimism have become repressed by a society that overvalues status and control and undervalues life and freedom. When the life force is anchored low and is so small it can fit on your baby toe, we see what is lacking rather than looking for ways to attract abundance. We have to fill every cell with energy and light, and be alert and awake, so we can act on opportunity when it knocks at our door – and it will. It is of utmost importance to remember that we are all connected to one another.

*Because we are connected to one another, our intent to attract prosperity and abundance must be put forth in such a way that causes each living being to thrive.*

*MIND*

There are many mixed messages about prosperity. Should we desire greater material wealth and indulge ourselves, or live simply to save the environment and our integrity? Here is a clue: There once was



a woman who asked a great sage why her material wealth failed to bring happiness. The reply: *Luxury and privilege are not ingredients in creating happiness.* What you need is something to be enthusiastic about, something to look forward to. The enthusiasm has to be fueled by wisdom and then the quest becomes worthy.

*If you've lost your enthusiasm, neither simple living nor luxury will satisfy you.*

As long as we plant seeds that yield just enough to get by, there will be scarcity. We need to care about causing life and care so much that we attract the necessary knowledge to heal from our past hurts and wounds. We need to care deeply about life and about the personal and collective quest of our species. Then, we can begin to heal from states of apathy, fear, resentment and anger. In order to create enthusiasm, abundance and prosperity, we must ask for a thousand times more light and love than we could ever imagine. After one asks for an abundance of light and love, be careful what else is asked for

– you just might get it! The best guideline to follow when asking for experiences or "things" is to ask for whatever you are able to take care of, protect and love.

*We need to care about causing life. We must care so much, that we attract the necessary knowledge to be wise caretakers of life.*

Occasionally, I find myself wishing for 10 cats, a dozen swans, a tiger, a lion and a bear. Even when I cut the list back to 10 cats, I realize that I am not yet able to take care of them and having them would drain the enthusiasm I felt when I first imagined them. Then I ask myself, What can I lovingly care for?

*As your wishes begin to come true, continue to feed and fuel your enthusiasm, because it attracts abundance.*

The story that follows is about a real person who faced a real life challenge with a triumphant outcome that created prosperity. Whenever the possibility of defeat looks us straight in the eye, that is the moment that our personal power can grow.

All that is necessary to unlock the message of the following story is this: Take several deep breaths, relax, be still and centered. That which is of most value to each one can easily be taken in and digested during deep inner silence. Never struggle. (The knowledge that resonates for each of us does not require struggle; it simply requires that we awaken to an evolved version of thinking and feeling.)



On his ride to work, Paul felt his anger swelling because he dreaded going to his office. He owned a successful mortgage company but doubted whether he could continue working there much longer. His mind continued to replay the same distressing thoughts whenever he gave attention to the guys who worked with him: They use the copy machine and leave me with no paper. They tie up the phone lines with frivolous calls. They eat like pigs and never bring in any food; they just devour everything in sight. The way they dress and the language they use are an embarrassment. Yet, they produce and bring in money. I left accounting because it was boring and look at me! Do I have to give up a great income for peace of mind?

Paul disliked confrontations and kept his frustration inside. Talking the situation over with his wife only made him feel worse. "Just ask them to be more polite," she said. He rolled his eyes as her sweet voice droned on and on.



Paul mentioned his dilemma to his friend Mitch. "Do you talk to them mentally?" Mitch asked. Paul admitted that every morning on his way to work, his anger felt like black bile in his mouth. He spewed his anger toward them as he drove using words he never would have spoken aloud.

Mitch helped Paul realize that we each have mental conversations, and when these conversations are critical and harsh, they intensify a negative situation instead of making it better.

Paul mistakenly believed he was relieving his frustrations. Instead of improving the situation, this draining habit multiplied his problems. Paul agreed to begin one-minute mental conversations before he got to the office, and to use only positive words and images. He mentally talked to his co-workers about an environment filled with "good vibes" and prosperity. He inwardly stated his intentions with strength and clarity. Mentally and aloud he began to praise them for small improvements. Within a few months, the office atmosphere transformed into a true community of team players. A few people left, and new people, who wanted to be part of a successful team, became part of the company. Paul found his income climbing, and the harmony in the office was tangible to everyone.

In order for this to happen to us, there is knowledge that we must embrace. Before we can embrace new knowledge, we must be animated and we must come alive in a totally new way in order to experience triumph. We know we are more alive and headed for triumph when our energy is animated and stimulated. In other words, we are not panicked and fearful. It is at this point that we are able to change the flow of our thoughts and emotions from a downward, polluted, life-draining spiral to a clean, upward, energy-expanding spiral.

*Our thoughts influence others to create prosperity and goodwill, or confusion and chaos. Others echo that which we whisper to them in silence.*

# One-Minute Affirmations for Abundance & Prosperity

With each breath we draw, we can live more abundantly. This is of primary importance, because intention directs the flow of your attention. Without abundantly directed attention, you can achieve only the results that everyone else achieves - that is, a supply equal to the demand.

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Your originating intentions and thoughts create their own hell or their own heaven-like circumstances and conditions. Your experiences are nothing less than your own choices and thoughts made visible.

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Clearly *affirm* what you want. Be precise and specific. Every sentence and phrase, whether we say it aloud or quietly to ourselves, is an affirmation. Affirmations aren't just special phrases you say when you have a goal; we all make affirmations every time we speak. The most powerful affirmations contain words that have great significance to you. And, remember: strong, clear, genuine feeling makes a more powerful affirmation, regardless if it is positive or negative.

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Genuine enthusiasm is such a rare commodity, that we have become a society constantly craving something new to excite us just to create a little enthusiasm. Look at the vast number of people who are heavily in debt because they are addicted to shopping, just to have a moment with something new. To create enthusiasm without going broke, focus on what is new inside of you blossoming and growing.

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People so often say they want a "new figure," "new love," "new career" or "better health." They talk about it as if they were approaching a mosquito hunt in a jungle swamp. Their tone of voice, facial expressions and eyes say what the mouth denies. Work at being congruent if you want success with affirmations.

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Everything we get comes to us by the Law of Attraction. A prosperous thought cannot live in a consciousness of scarcity.

“Everything in the universe is a pitcher brimming with wisdom and beauty.”

— Mevlana Rumi





# THE PRESENCE OF Joy

By Ellen Laura

*If there is an absence of joy plaguing us, then it is time for those who are most passionate about life to rise up, join together and create a culture of joy!*

*Dr. Deepak Chopra* brought the ecstatic poetry of the 13th century mystic poet, Rumi, into the consciousness of mainstream America, and today Rumi's poetry is selling in every major bookstore in America! Why? Because it brings to mind the wondrous experience of joy.

The visionary approach of celebrating joy and connection is gaining momentum from health authorities and stress-reduction experts. Focusing on joy and connection stimulates a strong and healthy immune system response. Did you know that when people recovering from heart disease mentally recall an anger-filled situation, the body experiences a stress response? The future – at least a health-filled future – belongs to the joyous!

## *The Pleasure Principle*

Consider the thought-provoking message from Dr. Paul Pearsall, Ph.D., the author of the best-selling program, *The Pleasure Principle*, produced by the Nightingale Conant Corp: “Guess what the number one health risk factor in the United States is. Normalcy! Just look at what we’ve become adjusted to. We are ‘alarmed’ awake to hurry and get ready for the day, spend more time in traffic than we spend with our family, feel stressed at work, fight rush-hour traffic and hurry home while listening to a relaxation or motivational tape. We then feel guilty about eating the wrong foods too fast, not getting enough exercise and not ‘being all we can be.’ And we think this is normal!”

Dr. Pearsall continues: “You can’t be so ‘crazy’ you don’t work and care for others, but ‘balanced weirdness’ can save your life. Another reason ‘crazy’ people live longer is their use of denial. We can learn ‘enlightened denial’ by accepting facts but drawing our own implications. Remember, life is not what happens to us, but what we make of what happens to us. Everyone dies, but not everyone fully lives. Too many people are having near life experiences.”

Learning how to get more pleasure out of the moment is the first key to better health and longer life. The second key is overlooked and almost forgotten: The healing power of “connection.” Look around. Why do you think so many people are run down and miserable, depressed, anxious, suffering from headaches, ulcers, heart attacks and cancer? One reason is they’re not connected.

## *Community Means Connecting*



When Dr. Pearsall talks of connecting, he means becoming a part of something or of someone else. For your health’s sake, you need to feel as *one* with your loved ones, friends, neighbors, associates, community, the Earth and with God.

Is the time you spend with the people in your life a loving, fun, together time? Or, is it what a lot of people do together – sit in front of the television, eat, go shopping, sun bathe or drive somewhere? Yes, they’re all together in the same space, but they’re not really together. This is not connecting – this is co-existing. Nothing happens

when you co-exist. For your joy juices to flow, you need to connect not only physically but also in mind, heart and spirit. There is tremendous healing power that comes with connecting, both for you and for those you connect with.

**Dr. Pearsall's Normalcy Health Risk Test**  
**Assessing Your "Sapience SAAD-ness"**  
**(Selfish, Anxious, Angry, Depressed)**

Has your dogma run over your karma? Have we evolved from "Homo Sapiens" to "Homo Dysphorous," forgetting how to enjoy life? Our new (50 million-year-old) big brain – our sapience – has crowded out our older (300 million-year-old) smaller inner brain where our pleasure centers are located. "Normal" now means to lead our lives working more and enjoying life less – a state of dysphoria instead of euphoria. Being "normal" is a health risk because it blocks the joy response.

The following is a test for the presence of 10 "Sapience SAAD-ness" factors that have become "normal" ways our new big brain has overwhelmed the old, little-brain, pleasure experience of our lifetime. Take Dr. Pearsall's "Pleasurable Thinking Test." The test will help you understand your own cognitive map, and whether or not you are traveling the road to super joy. Use the following scale to score yourself on this test.

- 5 – Strongly Agree
- 4 – Agree
- 3 – Mildly Agree
- 2 – Mildly Disagree
- 1 – Disagree
- 0 – Strongly Disagree

1. People should work and play to their full potential.
2. Underachievement is a waste of your natural skills and capabilities.
3. You should get the most out of everything you do.
4. Being very productive is a good personality trait.
5. You should consistently work to improve yourself.
6. Wasting time is wasting life.
7. Winning is not everything. It is the only thing.
8. If you are going to do something, do it right.
9. When you can do several things at once, you are getting the most out of every moment.
10. Being happy is a result of hard work and sacrifice.
11. You should set your priorities clearly and work on the top priorities first.
12. You can't be really happy until you have solved most of your problems.
13. Being healthy means being free of physical symptoms, eating wisely and exercising regularly.
14. Joyful people are usually lucky people who have few problems in their life.
15. Enjoy life while you can. You are only young once.
16. Work now and enjoy the fruits of your labor later.
17. You can't be totally happy unless you are totally independent.
18. It is childish and unrealistic to think or act as if you can be happy all of the time.
19. You can thrive on stress.
20. The world can be a very unhappy place. We have no right to be joyful when others are suffering.

Total your points. According to Dr. Pearsall, if you total more than 50 points on this joyful thinking test, it is likely that you have learned to think in a joyless fashion and have accepted a set of assumptions about life that block your potential for pleasure. Your addiction to the stress and reaction pattern is determined by your quality of life.



## Heart-Centered Joy



Whether your score is high or low, activate the joy response by experimenting with this practice immediately after any experience of genuine calm: take a few deep breaths, lift your head and look up toward the sky. You can do this in the morning when you first awaken, as long as you are not rushed (having a great bed with luxurious pima cotton sheets and down-filled covers is a giant plus). While still in a state of deep peace, take a few moments to fill yourself with joy. Allow yourself to relax and become intimate with the peaceful experience. Silently say the words, "Eternal life," as if you are speaking to an infant and you want to welcome her or him into a world of protections. When you can feel the essence of joy, you arouse a powerful and vibrant life force. Accessing this state of consciousness gives a healthy boost to your immune system.

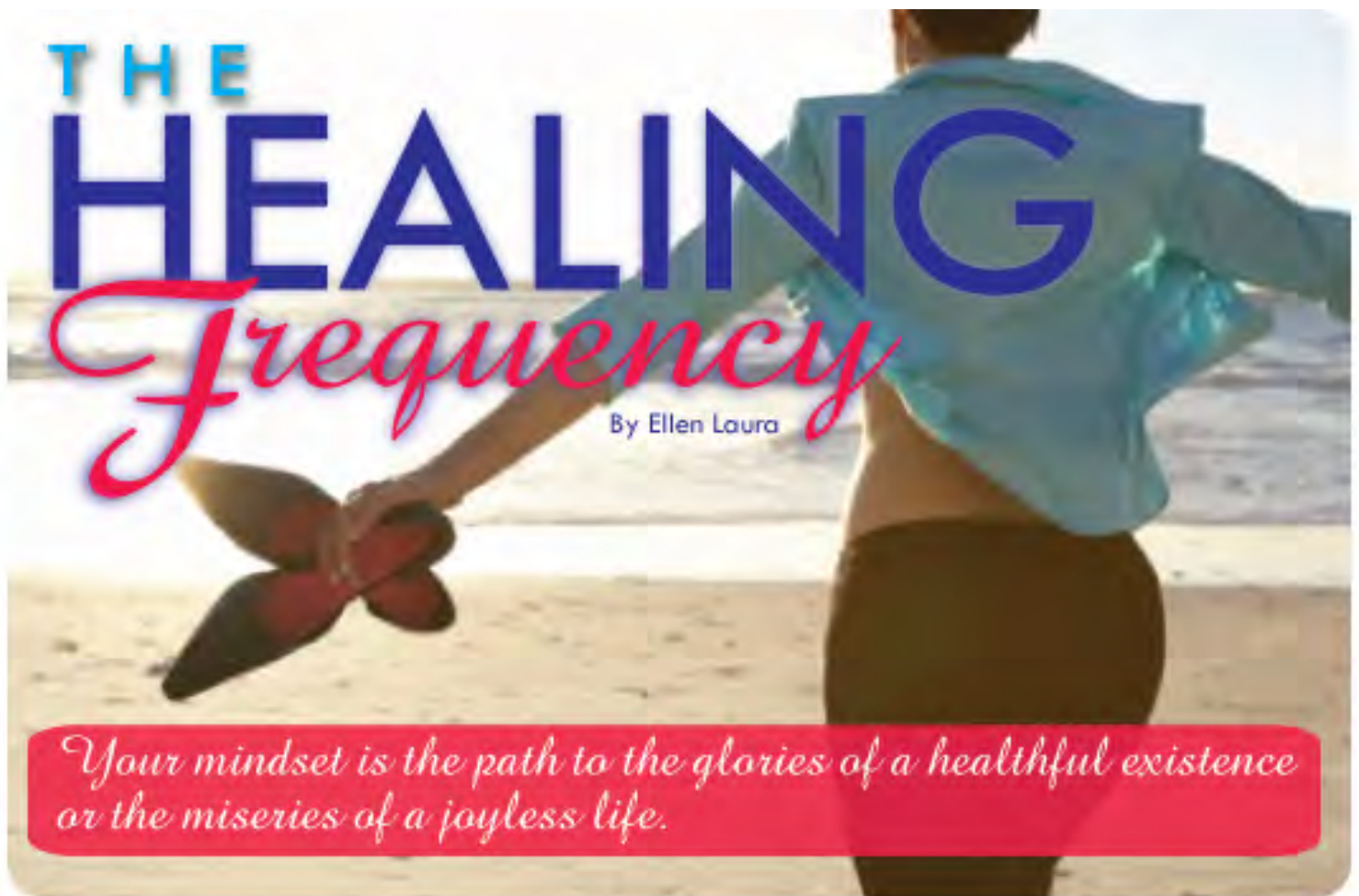
Living with heart-centered joy comes from a life dedicated to living in harmony with nature's laws and creation's laws. Hawaiians display more joy than most modern cultures because for many centuries they have lived in harmony with universal laws. The Hawaiian language does not even have words for "ownership" or "hate."

To sustain the joy response in life, all living beings including plants, animals,

trees and humans must be experienced as precious. Past grievances must be flushed from the cell's memory in a relaxed way. The feeling of gratitude is truly the key to cleansing and opening the heart center in preparation to deeply connecting with others. The word for the state of grace comes from the Latin "gratis," for "thank you." The deeper we experience our gratitude toward others, particularly those we see daily, the more open the heart is and the joy response naturally flows.

May the joy response fill you with life everlasting.





*The healing frequency is a living heartbeat from the Source of Life, signaling a pulse of joy...love...peace.* The healing frequency is either present or absent in our lives. Now, that is not great news because we prefer to believe that the healing frequency can be with us in degrees. Actually, it is like being pregnant: the growing fetus is either alive or not. The same is true for the healing frequency: it is either alive in us or not.

When the healing frequency is alive, we recover from all illnesses ahead of schedule, and time seems to dissolve away. When the healing frequency is absent, first, the body becomes weary, and then the mind becomes clogged and muddled. Terrible decisions ensue. Internal dialogue is incessant and fear begins to grow. Then, the heart becomes burdened and heavy. The pulse of joy...love...peace is gone.

## *Your Biography Becomes Your Biology*

It is generally accepted that stress is the cause of many diseases of the body and mind. The problem with this mindset is that it blames external circumstances, when more and more evidence verifies that most stress is internally generated by one's attitudes. It is not just the ups and downs of a bank balance or a devastating loss: It is our reaction to these events that releases poisonous stress hormones into our bodies.

Our attitudes stem from our positions, and our positioning has to do with motive and context. The context in which we see our relationship to life creates a ripple

effect in our bodies. Our perception of our position to the food chain of life causes us to interpret the same situation as either tragic or comic. If we see the food chain of life as a pyramid instead of a circle, we can easily fall to the bottom.



It would be foolish to claim that the only impact on our health is that which originates internally. Impersonal elements of the physical world can also increase or decrease the healing frequency. It is well documented that emotions have psychological consequences. In the early days of psychoanalysis, research to identify diseases with specific psychological conflicts gave rise to the field of psychosomatic inquiry. We have all heard about the connection between heart disease and 'Type A' versus 'Type B' personalities and how suppressed anger can result in hypertension and stroke.

An idea or constellation of thoughts presents itself in the consciousness as an attitude that tends to persist over time. When the mind is dominated by a rigid and narrow world view, the direct result is a repetition of minute changes in energy flows to various body organs.

In spontaneous recovery, there is frequently a marked increase in the capacity to love and the awareness of the importance of love as a healing factor. We have been told that to love is to live healthfully by numerous books on the bestseller list. But the mind resists change as a matter of pride. Love of all beings can only ensue when we stop condemning and fearing. Such radical change can be disorienting: the courage to endure the temporary discomfort of growth is required.

Recovery from any disease process is dependent upon a willingness to explore new ways of looking at one's self and one's life. This includes the capacity to endure inner fears when belief systems are shaken. People cherish and cling to so many things that are destructive: to heal humanity, it may be necessary to pry whole populations away from lifestyles of excess, greed, spite and revenge.



## *Where Have All the Healers Gone?*

Living joyously comes from accepting that the delights of the physical life are transitory and must be appreciated while integrated into a spiritual perspective. A great orgasm is wonderful when experienced as a natural expression of love. It is when we obsess about orgasms or any other form of joy that we actually distance ourselves from the healing frequency. As exhausted and overworked as people claim to be, the wish to do and have more is still evident. We are encouraged to construct a material fortress that is impenetrable. These false notions chase many of the authentic mystics and healers of our world into hiding and into retreat. So much of what we believe rests upon the false concept that we deserve permanent security. The nature of our world is impermanence and change, and we must learn to flow with both the fleeting nature of joy and ride the winds of change with the lightness of an angel.

What if there are healers or mystics who could raise a disabled child from a wheelchair and remove tumors from a cancer-infested body – in other words, cure diseases that have been pronounced incurable? What if our way of thinking and living pushes these healers farther and farther from us by the structures of mental illusion and distortion?

Haven't you sensed that there is a collective call from humanity wanting to know more about spontaneous healing? Unfortunately, profiteers who sell half-baked concepts about joy, love and peace to those who are hungry to believe in something often answer this call. And, typically they sell these concepts to people who are already loving and compassionate. Meanwhile, who is reaching the hardened hearts of those who are snickering at "this love stuff"? Has anyone noticed that there is something wrong with this picture? Why teach people who are already kind and loving to become kind and loving? What about adding a strong dose of courage, confidence and conviction to the mix?

## *Keenly Focus On the Healing Frequency*

Anytime we focus on a goal with passion and persistence, we can reap tremendous results. More than 20 years ago, I focused on recognizing the healing frequency in any person or place. I have polarized my mind, heart and spirit on the intent to meet and embrace the healing frequency anywhere.

The cliché "Be careful what you ask for, you might get it," stopped me in my tracks more than once upon meeting people who blasted my consciousness with the healing frequency. They are not shy or timid people!

Instances of miraculous healing often are cast into the realm of irrationality. Many times that is precisely where they belong. I am not suggesting that you should eagerly chase the healing frequency. Greed is greed whether people are chasing money, sex or healing. The greedy and impatient can easily be sold idiotic and fraudulent methods of healing.



If miraculous healing has happened to other people, why not you? The healing frequency is constantly on the move. It is spontaneous and joyful and does not wait around passively. Healing moments flash as truly and quickly as lightning. In one timeless flash a problem or illness that has drained you could dissolve.

We can learn to love by practicing forgiveness and living with spontaneity. Joy comes when our preferences, not just our needs are met. One of our greatest challenges is that we cannot create peace. Peace is a natural state of affairs when that which prevents it is removed. Relatively few people are genuinely committed to peace as a realistic goal. In their private lives, some people prefer being “right” despite the cost to their relationships. When coercive means are used for solutions, no peaceful resolutions are possible. All three ingredients – love, joy and peace - are present within the healing frequency.

The challenge of healing is not only personal; it is a collective challenge. Now is the time to abandon feelings of guilt because you have not healed yourself! The quest for healing was assigned to all living beings – to all of humanity. You are no more and or less responsible than every other living being for attracting the healing frequency to the planet and its people.

When humanity unites in consciousness and shifts from the complacency, mediocrity and mendacity, the mysteries surrounding the healing frequency will dissolve. Now, if that sounds impossible or far-fetched, it is time to discover who has programmed your thoughts. There are those who know it is possible, and they send out strong pulsations of love, joy and peace to fill the world with healing.



# LIVING

By Ellen Laura

# Lessons

*Las Vegas businessman Bruce Layne explores the path of success, wisdom and wonder in his personal memoir.*

*Bruce Layne*, a winning Las Vegas businessman, has lived the proverbial American Dream, building his company out of nothing through hard work, commitment and perseverance. As the largest private insurance brokerage in Nevada, Layne and Associates had insured many of the major hotels and casinos in the city of Las Vegas until Bruce successfully sold his business in 2001.

Layne was, and still is, a man who people believe in. They trust him and his compassion and genuine desire to help people. One of his most outstanding qualities is his complete lack of prejudice, particularly toward women. He has championed women in business and credits his grandmother, Mimi, as one of his most significant mentors.

*SPIRIT*

At the pinnacle of his career, life dealt Layne a card labeled Parkinson's. Instead of despairing and bemoaning his fate, he looked this new obstacle full in the face and set up a foundation that will eventually unlock the secrets of this debilitating disease. In his words, he's "Charlie Chan, out to capture the Green Hornet."

With the help of well-known author, Jack Sheehan, Layne has written a book of his memoirs and philosophy of success called *My Gift, The Collected Thoughts of a Wisdom Junkie*. According to Layne, "I had been tremendously impressed by the message of the movie *Pay It Forward*. The movie dares to imagine doing a favor for someone and telling that person not to pay it back, but to pay it forward to three more. The result in an ideal world would turn into a global outpouring of kindness and decency. I just love that concept and have thought about it at length. It occurred to me that by writing a book to give to my friends and family, I could maybe pass on some of the lessons and philosophy I've developed through my own life that would, in a sense, 'pay it forward.'"

Excerpts from Bruce Layne's *My Gift, The Collected Thoughts of a Wisdom Junkie*.

## *A Philosophy of Life*

The more purpose you have, the easier life will be. You have to have a purpose, and put it in writing. My personal purpose is to grow and learn, and universal purpose is to make a significant contribution, somewhere, somehow. Having a purpose will help you handle and appreciate life.

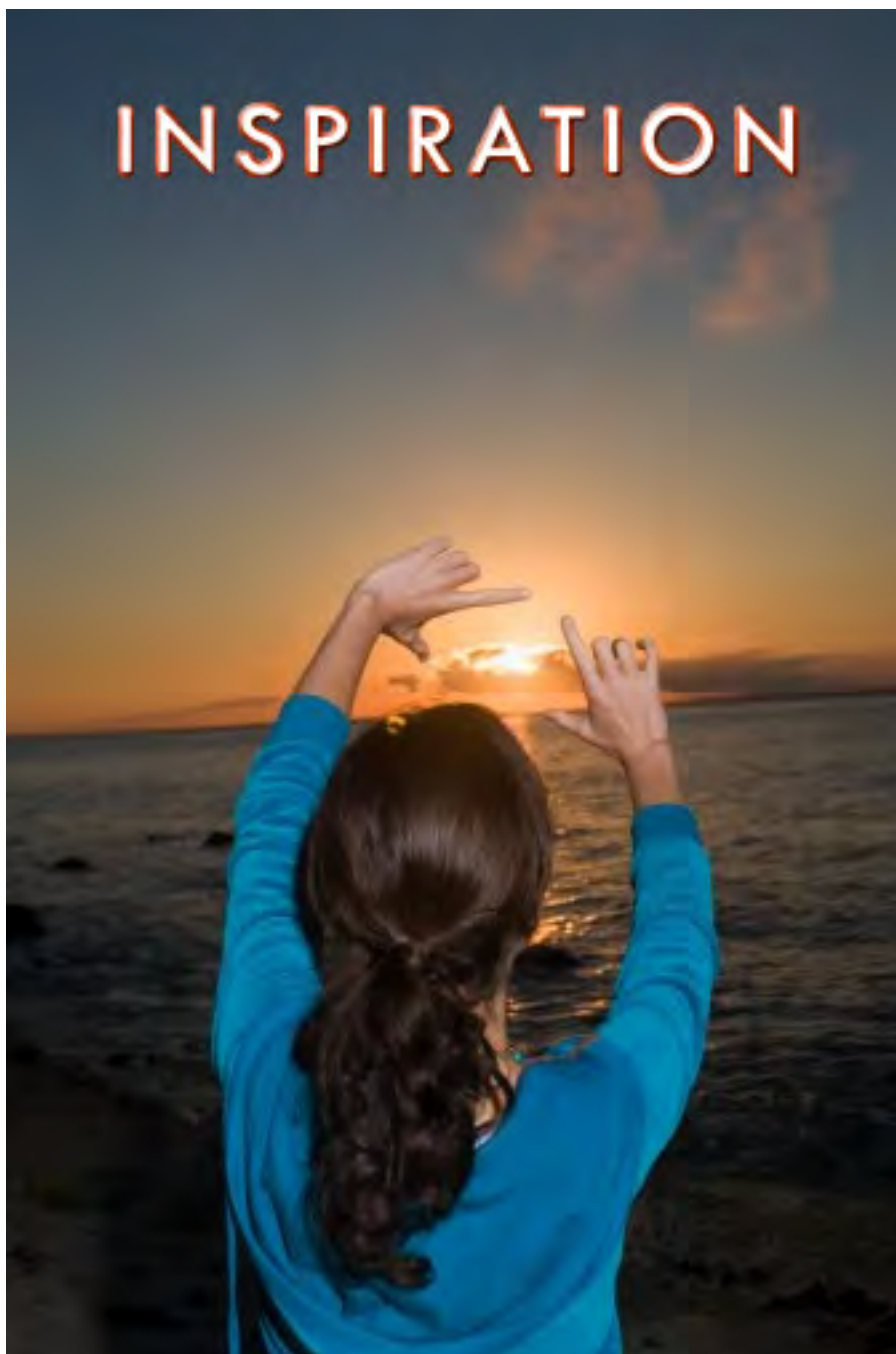
The most important thing we do in life is pursue our spiritual quest. Obviously, the more meaning we give to our lives the greater will be our purpose for living. Your life should be lived with the guiding determination to make a significant contribution to yourself and to the rest of humanity. This will help you appreciate life more, and you will find peace and contentment, satisfaction and fulfillment. We are all trying to find the road to contentment. I have found six fundamentals that help me find that contentment. I try to review them and practice them every day and incorporate them totally into my life.



1. **Faith:** It's the source of everything significant in our lives. Inspiration, positive action, and conscience are all connected to faith. Faith is a firm belief without solid evidence. Spiritual faith is trusting God, and seeing Her as a benevolent being. One of my daily affirmations is that with a sincere faith in God and myself, I will have the confidence, courage, and conviction to go about my daily life and accept the bad and the good. I believe that healing depends on faith. It is my faith that convinces me a cure will be found for Parkinson's in my lifetime. And it is my faith that gives me the positive attitude to battle this thing all the way. From my Catholic religion, I've learned the importance of prayer and how it can have a calming effect in times of stress.
2. **Tolerance and Patience** from pain and suffering: The Dalai Lama writes about this in *The Art of Happiness*. He has a set of beliefs that function as substrata for all of his actions: A belief in the fundamental gentleness and goodness of human beings, a belief in the value of compassion, a belief in a policy of kindness, and a sense of commonality among all living creatures. He says we must train our mind, and that can lead to a transformation of our entire attitude. The Dalai Lama says we must

eliminate those factors that lead to suffering and cultivate those that lead to happiness. This can be manifested in a simple willingness to reach out to others to create a feeling of affinity and goodwill.

3. **Happiness:** Both the Dalai Lama and Rabbi Kushner have said that happiness is an emotion that comes on a moment-to-moment basis. As much as we'd like happiness to be a permanent condition, it doesn't work that way. But it's important to appreciate that happiness is determined more by one's state of mind than by external events. Happiness certainly isn't derived from material things. Witness the beatific expression of contentment that never left the face of Mother Teresa, who lived in utter poverty but was uplifted by the great feeling of knowing that she was helping others; and the look of discontent that exists on the faces of many very wealthy people who are miserable because they are consumed by greed and money. I can honestly say that Parkinson's disease has in many positive ways transformed my life. I appreciate much more just waking up in the morning and seeing what the day will bring. True happiness comes not from merely having what we want but from appreciating what we have.



4. **Inspiration:** It is all around us if our eyes are open to it. I gain inspiration from Christopher Reeve, who rather than wasting time on self-pity has chosen to use his mind and his celebrity status to increase awareness and to educate the public about spinal cord injuries. His infinite determination to walk again and his unwavering conviction that it will happen serve as inspiration to thousands of people who have suffered similar injuries. His faith is absolutely unwavering. I'm also inspired by the fact that he hasn't given up his occupation of writing and directing films.

5. **The Power of Now:** Eckhart Tolle wrote a book called *The Power of Now*, which is a guide to spiritual enlightenment. The essence of the book is that "now" is all-important and that living in the present is much healthier than dwelling in the past or worrying about the future. I know that great golfers like Tiger Woods emphasize the importance of playing the sport "in the present tense." The typical weekend golfer like me

tends to fret over bad shots and let them affect the next ones. Tiger has learned, probably through

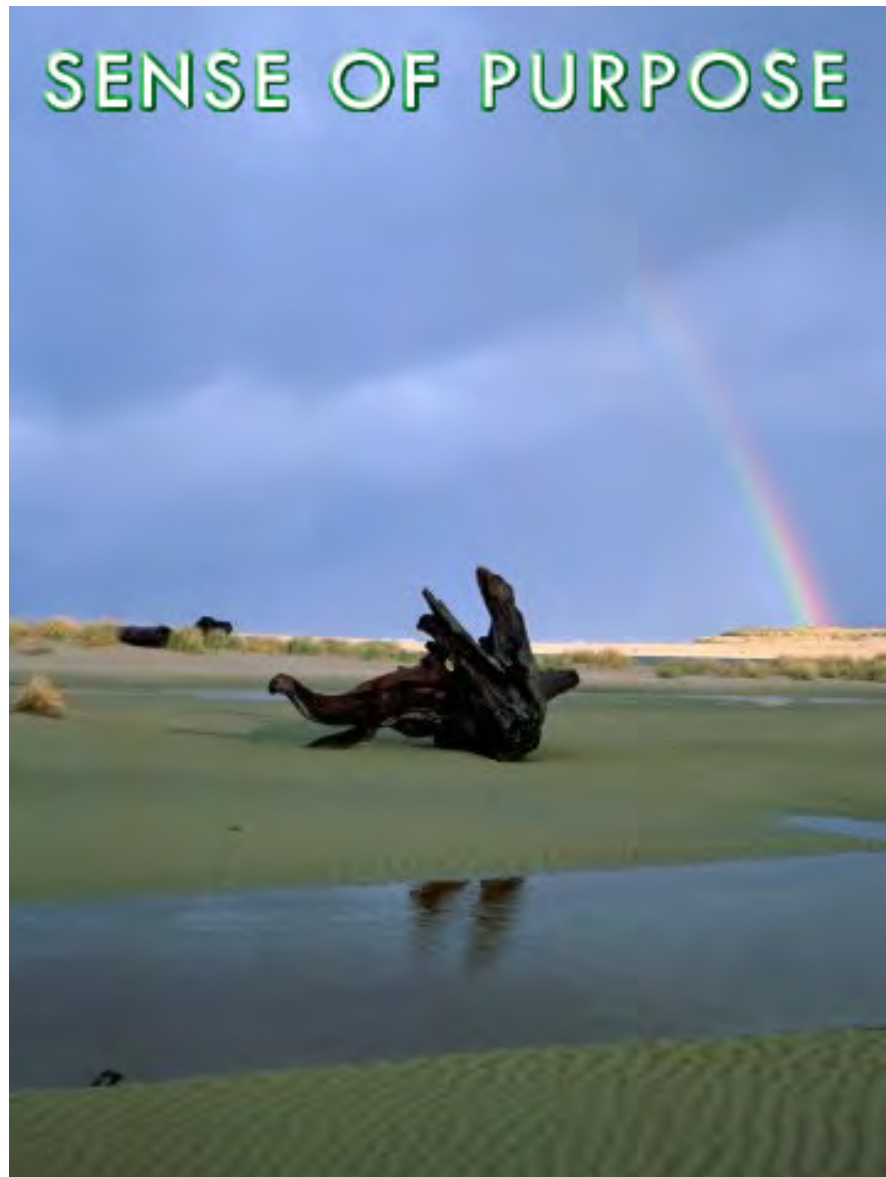


the influence of his Asian mother and her belief in Eastern philosophy, how to block out the previous five minutes and the five minutes to come and give his full attention to the shot he's hitting at the moment. Tolle's book talks about wonderful healings and transformations and how to increase the level of joy in your life. He says it's our own mind that generates much of our pain and problems, not other people or outside influences, and if we can channel our own thoughts toward contentment and living in the "now," we will keep our mind more quiet and content. I highly recommend this book to everyone.

6. **Positive Self-Talk or Learned Optimism:** When something bad happens, pessimists perceive it as permanent. Optimists perceive it as temporary. Finally a short list of watchwords that I use myself, and encourage others to use in a search for a better life:

Have a clearly *defined* sense of purpose for your life that you write down and refer to daily. *Integrate* into that sense of purpose your faith, and make certain that your life goals always stay in harmony with your larger beliefs. *Build* a philosophy of life based on common sense and your everyday experiences, and always live by it. Keep a *positive* self-image. You will be far more attractive to others and set your own bar higher if you don't get down on yourself or diminish your self-importance. *Search* for 10's in your life, those moments that you will celebrate with your friends and loved ones and cherish forever. *Hone* your talents constantly. *Acknowledge* your gifts and areas in which you excel, and work at being even better at them. *Endeavor* to create a satisfaction and contentment wherever you go; leave people smiling, not frowning. *Savor* the richness of life and never take the wonderful people and moments you share with them for granted. Always remain in the pursuit of happiness.

I am convinced that, if you follow these guidelines, you not only will find more happiness and fulfillment in your life, but you will inspire others to do the same and "pay it forward."





# ETERNAL

By Ellen Laura

## Life

*What really eases grief is a blend of wisdom and love, plus having the language and spirit to articulate the message of eternal life.*

### *Healing, Living and Dying*

These are three words that are empowered to evoke ecstasy or agony – depending upon our position in the school bus of life. If we find ourselves or a dearly loved one, human or animal, confronting disease or death, our merry-making ceases abruptly. Unlike some of the more spiritually diverse countries in the world, the Western world is today groping for new ways to express our feelings about life and death.

The phenomenon of the near-death experience offers a bridge from pain to joy, a way to ease the suffering surrounding death. For many, near-death experiences offer hope for the existence of life after death and for reconciliation with deceased loved ones. Timothy Ferris, writing in *The New York Times Magazine*, acknowledges that near-death experiences are often described as times of illumination and ecstasy. These experiences purport having inside information about life after death – or about a life existing concurrently with physical life – a dimension of which we only are dimly aware. Ferris believes that the teachings offered by proponents of the near-death experience indicate that the physical act of dying is a positive experience.

Death is painless – in fact, possibly downright pleasant. Ferris suggests that our sense of resonance with the larger whole at the time of death may be a sign of our resonance with the cosmos, possibly revealing our place in the web of life that stretches back to the beginning of the universe.

*SPIRIT*

## Religious and Cultural Bias



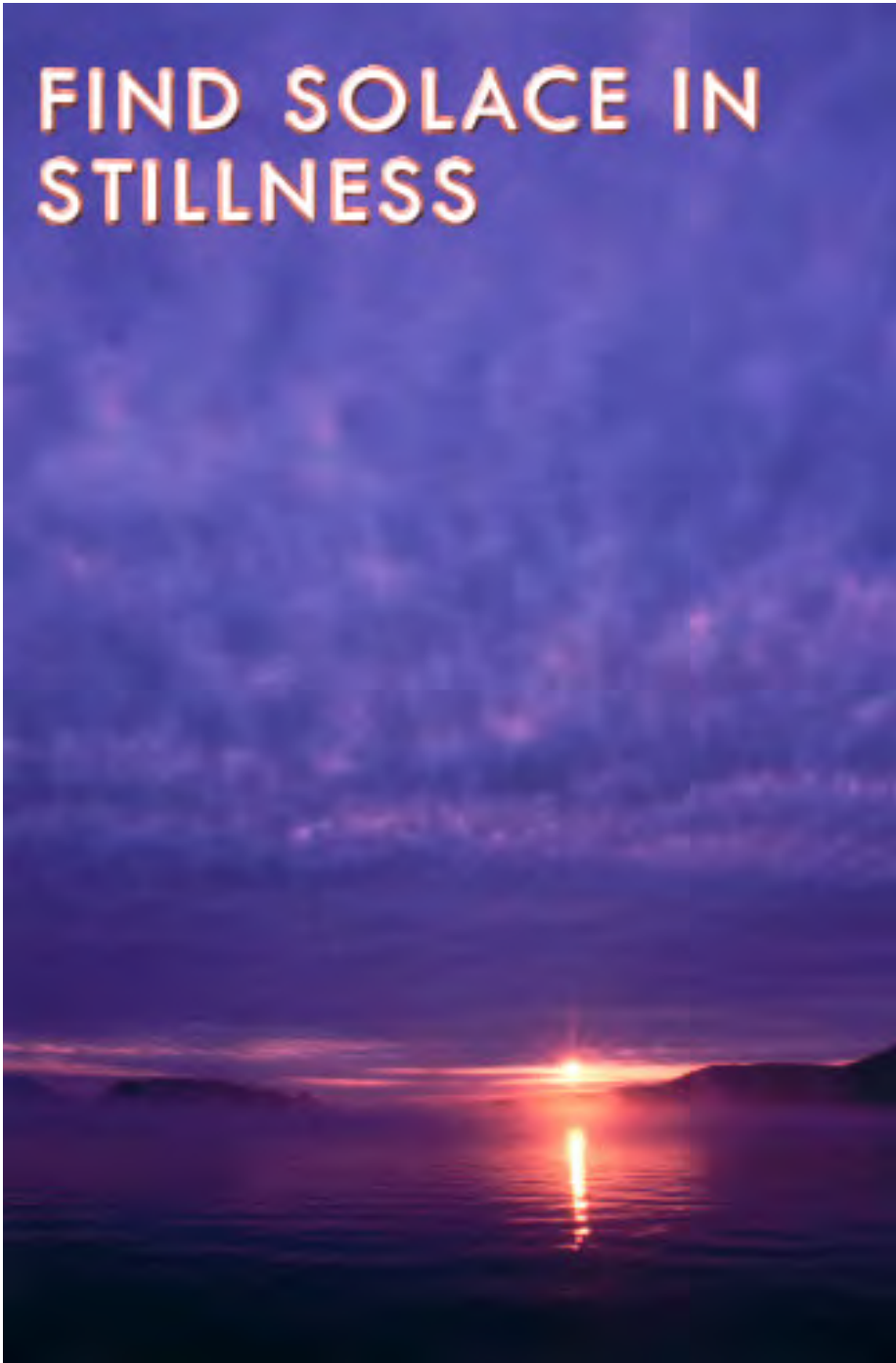
By widening our view to encompass ancient traditions, such as those of the Toltec's, the view of dying demands constant awareness and respect. According to the Toltec tradition, just because life is eternal, we must not become lazy while living. On the contrary, life is so precious that we must shed the layers of social conditioning that prevent us from embracing life with vitality and vigor.

Today we are exposed to cultures that consider accessing memories of past incarnations as a sign of high evolution. The belief of sects such as Hindus, Buddhists and Toltec's is that to forget your past life lineage is as lame as forgetting which bank holds your savings account. The movie *Seven Years in Tibet*, aimed to educate Westerners to the concept that Buddhists are adept in tracking a lama from one life to another. These cultures are not insensitive to grieving. What they aim to achieve is an integration of healing, vibrant life, dying, evolution and spirit-based integrity. They want us to consider the "long Journey," not just the quick walk around the block.

The challenge is how to integrate this into the Judeo-Christian worldview. Michael Ignatieff, writing in *The New Republic*, explains, "Cultures that live by the values of self-realization and self-mastery are not especially good at dying, at submitting to those experiences where freedom ends and biological fate begins. Why should they be? Their strong side is Promethean ambition: the defiance and

transcendence of fate, the material and social limit. Their weak side is submitting to the inevitable." Thus, most of the Western world leaders struggle with the issues of dying, particularly in the way it impacts our moral, social and economic decisions. Questions erupt surrounding the issues of skyrocketing health care costs and overpopulation. If these issues are undervalued while examining extending life by any means possible, consider the predictable outcome for society. If we embrace religious beliefs from Third World nations, will we inherit their economic chaos?

## What Really Eases Grief?



A Catholic woman in her early 70s sought solace after her husband of 45 years passed on. Relatives urged her to attend a widow's support group, but instead, she headed for the library. Encouraged by the kindly librarian, also an elderly widow she knew from church, she began reading *Embraced by the Light*, by Bettie Eadie, a bestseller vividly describing the near-death experience.

After she read Eadie's book, I queried the grieving woman. "Did learning about the glorious light that is met upon dying ease your suffering?" I asked. "Well, I'd like to believe," she said. "But, she lost me when she insisted that a drunken misfit had as much chance of arriving at heaven's gate as a good church going person. I just don't think that woman knows what she's talking about." Although her response reflects her religious conditioning, she was not willing to switch from Brand X (Catholicism) to Brand Y (New Age Metaphysics) without more compelling evidence. Instead of recommending any further New Age reading, I waited for her to make the next move.

In a conversation with this same woman a few months later, she confided that she was going to

die within one month, since her 73<sup>rd</sup> birthday was approaching. Her certainty about her impending death was influenced by the fact that her mother and her older brother had both died at this same age. In a flash, I knew she had already spoken these precise words, with conviction, to her grown children. And, I knew they had scolded her for her pessimism: she had no disease and she had beautiful grandchildren who loved her. *I knew this because the woman was my mother.*

I asked her, "What other plans do you have for yourself, just in case you don't die?" My attitude and the tone of my voice conveyed genuine compassion. This allowed her the space to reflect and search within herself to begin to recover meaning in her life. A few months passed and I flew to New York to visit her. One highlight of my trip was watching a movie that had become one of her favorites, *To Dance with the White Dog*, the tale of an elderly woman who convinces her husband of her love after she has departed



from this world. As we watched the movie together, I understood why this story of eternal love provided the comfort she could not find in Eadie's book. The hopeful message of life-after-death portrayed in the movie could be categorized as fiction, yet it still eased her pain. It provided a dose of faith and added a jumpstart to her recovering optimism.

Written and oral teachings aiming to validate the eternal nature of life often add a jumpstart when enthusiasm for living is low. It is beneficial to contemplate on these inspiring teachings daily. Over the past 25 years I have met many people who are proficient in adding this "spiritual jumpstart" to the lives of those who are losing faith in life. Many of these people have experienced instantaneous healing, near-death experiences and display extraordinary love for life. Some are seers and healers, while others are quietly touching people with their acts of goodness and beauty. My entry into this world of spiritual people came as a result of an experience that may be unusual to many, and it is detailed in my book, *The One-Minute Healing Experience*.

## *Language Plus Compassion is the Beginning*

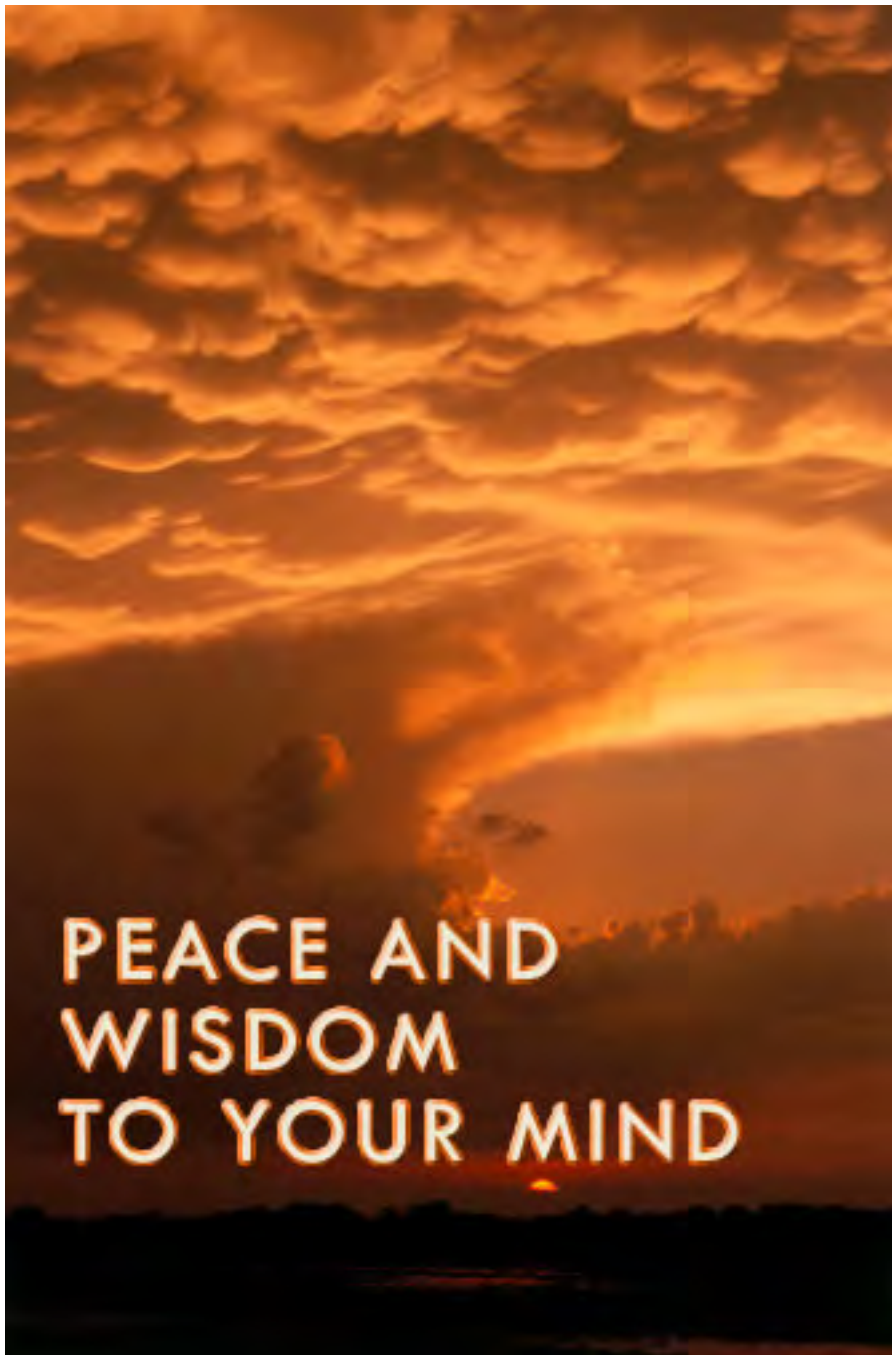
What eases grief is a blend of wisdom and love, plus having the language and spirit to articulate the message of eternal life. Without the meaningful language, condolence messages can sound like worn clichés to the grieving one. I know this firsthand. At 19, I became a widow when my husband was killed in Vietnam. The well-meaning comments from relatives and clergy sounded so empty and trite: *You're young. You'll recover. It's not like losing a child. You can find another husband.* Comments like these, even when spoken with sincere compassion, revealed the great poverty of language skills in communicating at the time of death. Instead of being consoled, I found myself having to come up with ways to console them.



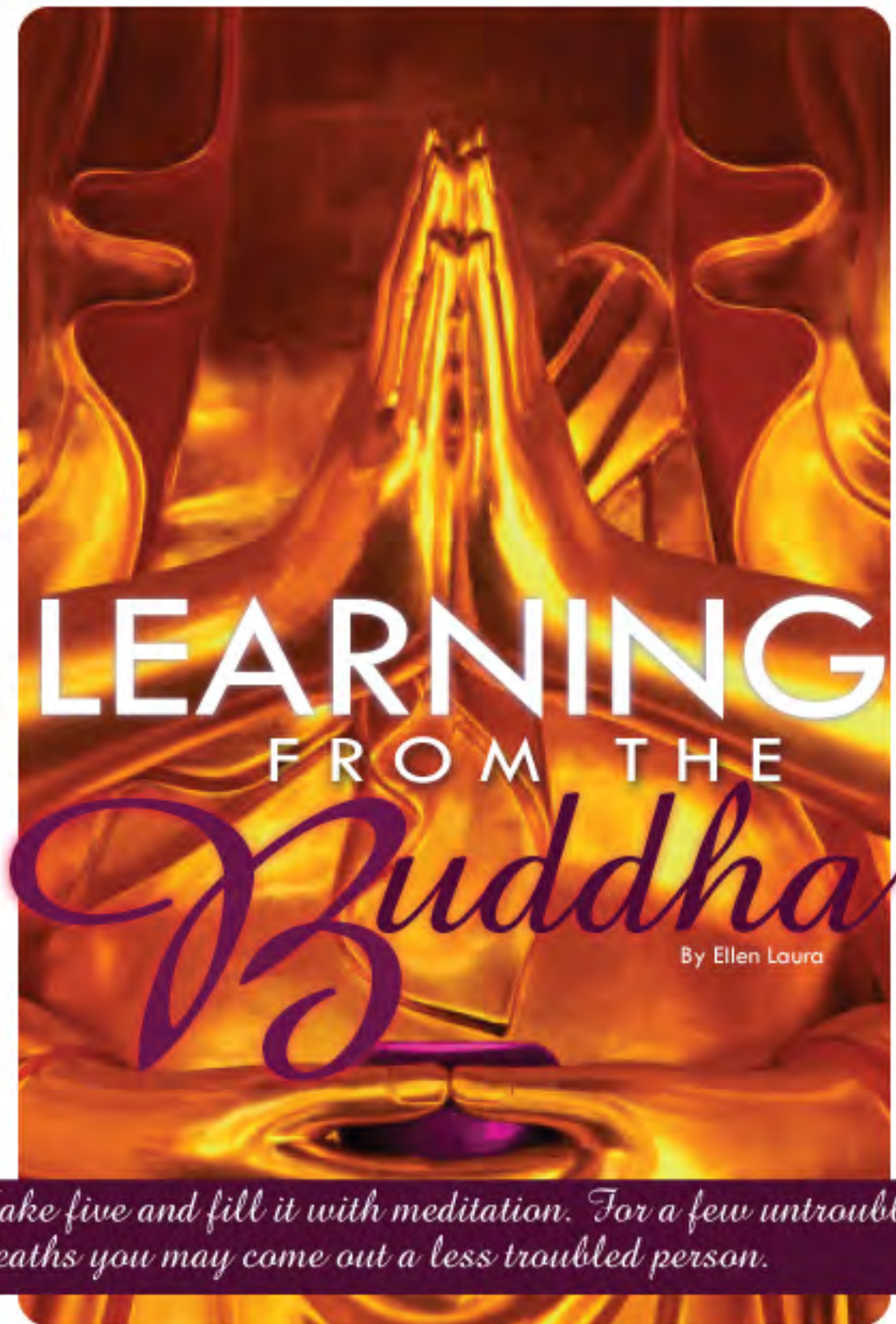
Reflecting back on that time, and reviewing my years of working with people who have experienced the death of a loved one points to our great need for having language and practices to express what we feel with both compassion and wisdom. Death put me on a path to seek wisdom at an early age. One of the spiritual practices I've found valuable in

communicating with someone who is suffering is to have a short, mental dialogue with the person whom is grieving – whether about death, disease or any kind of sadness. This involves the use of telepathy. First, stand tall and erect, signaling strength and courage. Next, quiet your body (no fidgeting) and send a mental mind message to the person in need. Then, speak these words in silence, either in the person's presence or while vividly picturing them: *Peace and wisdom to your mind. Silence, Silence, Silence, Peace.*





As you become comfortable with this telepathic manner of communicating, you may notice a shift in the atmosphere surrounding yourself and the other person. At first it may be subtle, but with persistence and practice, you can master the art of inner communication. This helps you learn "the spirit of communication." Once this becomes a practice, you will naturally gravitate to books, people and experiences to provide the verbal language skills to match your inner intent. Each day resolve to evolve your language and catch the spirit of authentic communication. You'll be glad you have aligned with eternal life.



*Take five and fill it with meditation. For a few untroubled breaths you may come out a less troubled person.*

"May we be well, happy and peaceful. May no harm come to us. May no difficulties come to us. May no problems come to us. May we always meet with success. May we also have patience, courage, understanding and determination to meet and overcome the inevitable difficulties, problems and failures in life."



These phrases are used in a loving-kindness meditation, also known as Metta practice in Buddhism. Buddhist psychology is based on the notion that human beings are fundamentally good. Their most basic qualities are positive ones: openness, intelligence and warmth. As Buddhism is making its way into the hearts and minds of millions of Westerners, we may wonder what the appeal of these exotic practices is.

One answer is that Buddhism views happiness as a natural outgrowth of loving kindness and compassionate action. According to the Buddhist view, humans have problems, but they are temporary and superficial obscurations that cover over one's basic goodness. Even more attractive, Buddhists are open to teaching their meditation practices, particularly the loving-kindness practice, to followers of other religions (or to those with no religious affiliation).



During these troubled times, more people are open to learning meditation practices because they are not idealistic, but rather practical. A growing interest in the practice of meditation is often motivated by research on the positive health benefits. For those who approach meditation as an effective way to lower blood pressure and reduce risk of heart disease, the attainment of emotional equanimity is a rewarding experience accompanying the physiological benefits.

A primary obstacle to deeply effective meditation practice is anger and resentment, either directed toward others or oneself. We may think this is not so, since we don't have a sense of all our hatred toward others or ourselves. But anger and resentment have their subtle sides that can be manifested in harsh judgment of our own actions and emotions and thoughts. Or, those mental spears that keep arising, pointing their blades at those irritating "others" out there.

In directing loving-kindness toward ourselves and other groups of people, we are sending the same wish for well-

being to all. A wish for my well-being is no different from the wish for a stranger's well being. A wish for a stranger's well-being is no different than a wish for my own. What we all share as people becomes dominant, rather than how we differ.

## *Where to Begin*

The practice always begins with developing a loving acceptance of yourself. If resistance is experienced, then it indicates that feelings of unworthiness are present. No matter. This means there is work to be done, as the practice itself is designed to overcome any feelings of self-doubt or negativity. Then, you are ready to systematically develop loving-kindness towards others.

Before we can extend authentic compassion toward others, we must first feel love. If we find our own heart is wounded or walled up, the Loving Kindness meditation can help reconnect us to the source of love within. Once this love opens our heart and heals our pain, then we will be able to offer our genuine love and fearless compassion to others.

Four types of persons with whom to develop loving-kindness towards:

1. a respected, beloved person, such as a spiritual teacher, minister, or priest;
2. a dearly beloved, which could be a close family member or friend;
3. a neutral person, somebody you know, but have no special feelings towards, e.g. a person who serves you in a shop;
4. a hostile person, someone you are currently having difficulty with

## *Ways to Arouse Feelings of Loving-Kindness*

1. Visualization: Bring up a mental picture. See yourself or the person the feeling is directed at smiling back at you or just being joyous.
2. Reflection: Reflect on the positive qualities of a person and the acts of kindness he or she have done. And to yourself, make an affirmation, a positive statement about yourself, using your own words.
3. Auditory (repetition): This is the simplest way but probably the most effective. Repeat an internalized mantra or phrase such as "Loving-Kindness."
4. The visualizations, reflections and the repetition of Loving-Kindness are devices to help you arouse positive feelings of Loving-Kindness. You can use all of them or one that works best for you. When the positive feelings arise, shift your attention from the devices to the feeling, as it is the feeling that is the primary focus. Keep the mind gently fixed on the feeling. If it strays, bring it back to the device, or if the feelings weaken or are lost, then return to the device, i.e. use the visualization to bring back or strengthen the feeling.

## *A Beginning Practice of Loving-Kindness*

Sit quietly and allow all the scattered aspects of your mind and energies to settle down. Acknowledge and embrace gently any suffering or struggle of which you have become aware. Now, remember a person from your life who once loved you very much. (Using the image of a spiritual teacher you deeply respect can elevate this practice.) Imagine this person sitting in front of you at this very moment, extending his or her love to you once again. It's alright if you can recall only one happy memory with the person – make that memory of love your entire experience and bathe in its healing warmth.

Feel the other person's love coming toward you like warm rays of sunlight, permeating your entire being, and especially filling and warming your heart. If there is an old barrier around your heart, see it not as a



massive or impenetrable wall, but as fragile as a thin layer of ice. Let the love flowing toward you melt the ice of your old hurt or fear, warming and nourishing your heart.

As this healing love comes into you, feel your heart overflowing with love and gratitude. Feel peaceful, whole and replenished with love. Naturally, your love and gratitude goes out now to the person who evoked it, wholly and unconditionally.

## *Expand Your Love*



Once this giving and receiving of love is flowing strongly, expand the direction of your love another degree. Imagine that on either side of this person in front of you are other people in your life whom you love and cherish and extend the same love to them, fully and joyfully. Then consider that on either side of this central person are also people you don't know very well: co-workers, shopkeepers, neighbors, even strangers you pass on the street.

Extend the same love to them, fully and wholeheartedly. Expanding your love further, consider that on either side of the central person loving you are those who irritate you, those you've been angry with, or who seem to be your enemies. Extend the same love to them, fully and unconditionally, loving and accepting them exactly as they are.

Finally, expand your love to embrace all beings. Consider now that the whole space in

front of you is filled with beings throughout the universe, all forms of conscious life including the tiniest insects and even those who have died. Now your love is boundless and unbiased, and it shines powerfully onto each and every one, extending happiness to all existence.

## *Maintain the Inspiration*

As you conclude the practice, don't shake off the inspiration, awareness or limitless love it has aroused. Instead, as much as you can, continue practicing the essence of this meditation throughout your day, extending unconditional love toward yourself and everyone you meet.

This meditation can be brought in to help keep the mind open and sweet. It is a fact of life that many people are troubled by difficult emotional states in the pressured societies we live in, but do little in terms of developing skills to deal with them. Yet even when the mind goes sour, it is within most people's capacity to arouse positive feelings to sweeten it.

Loving-Kindness is a meditation practice that brings about positive attitudinal changes as it systematically develops the quality of "loving-acceptance." It acts, as it were, as a form of self-psychotherapy, a way of healing the troubled mind to free it from its pain and confusion. Of all Buddhist meditations, Loving-Kindness has the immediate benefit of sweetening and changing old, habituated negative patterns of mind.

Loving-Kindness is a heart meditation and should not be seen as just a formal sitting practice removed from everyday life. So take your good vibes outside into the streets, at home, at work and into your relationships. Applying the practice to daily life is a matter of directing a friendly attitude and having openness toward everybody you relate to – without discrimination.

*May your heart be happy and kind.*