

Raising Humanity



Robin Alexis and 22 Storytellers

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RAISING HUMANITY

METAPHYSICAL MOTHERING® IS THE ANTIDOTE TO TERRORISM

BY ROBIN ALEXIS
AND 22 STORYTELLERS

“WHILE CONVENTIONAL THOUGHT ATTRIBUTES THE CHARACTER AND TRAITS OF OUR LIVES TO BE PREPROGRAMMED IN THE GENES, RECENT ADVANCES IN BIOMEDICINE NOW REVEAL THAT PARENTAL BELIEFS AND EMOTIONS PROFOUNDLY INFLUENCE THE SELECTION, AND EVEN REWRITING, OF THEIR CHILD’S GENETIC CODE. **“RAISING HUMANITY;**

METAPHYSICAL MOTHERING® IS THE ANECDOTE TO TERRORISM”
BY ROBIN ALEXIS PROVIDES AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TOWARD NURTURING OUR EVOLVING CIVILIZATION. ROBIN’S ANTHOLOGY OF PERSONAL AND INTIMATE STORIES OF BIRTHING AND FAMILY VALUES OFFER INSIGHTS INTO THE POWER OF CONSCIOUS PARENTING THAT ARE VALUABLE TO ANYONE WHO HAS A CHILD, IS PLANNING TO HAVE A CHILD, OR HAS BEEN A CHILD THEMSELVES.”

BRUCE H. LIPTON, PH.D., CELLULAR BIOLOGIST, BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF **THE BIOLOGY OF BELIEF; UNLEASHING THE POWER OF CONSCIOUSNESS, MATTER AND MIRACLES**

DEDICATION

To the people who are living their lives with more
consciousness so we can manifest the truth that we are indeed
all ONE.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First I want to thank Christ and Mary Magdalene, my soul's parents. They have guided me to write this Gnostic book.

I would like to thank my husband, Bob Bordonaro. He makes it possible for me to offer what I do for others. I appreciate him in so many ways. Bob, my gratitude, always.

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And thanks to Parvati Markus, my editor, who took my pages and birthed them into a first book, with a second on the way.

WE ARE

by Ysaye Barnwell

For each child that's born,
A morning star rises
And sings to the universe that we are.
We are our grandmothers' prayers
We are our grandfathers' dreamings
We are the breath of the ancestors
We are the spirit of God.

We are
Mothers of courage
Fathers of time
Daughters of dust
The sons of great visions
Sisters of mercy
Brothers of love
Lovers of life
Builders of nations
Seekers of truth
Keepers of faith
Makers of peace
Wisdom of ages...
We are one

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INTRODUCTION

Once upon a time, all I wanted was to be “normal” and lead a “normal” life. I wanted to be a “good” daughter, wife, and mother. I tried, really I did. I attempted to shut down my intuition, hunches, dreams, visions, and other demonstrations of my “sixth sense.” The story of my personal journey from shut-down psychic to someone who uses her gifts openly is fodder for a different book called “Robin’s Song, Treasure Your Own Soul’s Wisdom). One part that is relevant to this book is that I sometimes get visions in my mind about events that will take place in the future that have to do with national and international security issues.

I don’t know when these visions are going to come. If I could, I would avoid them. They are very uncomfortable for me, like an electrical shock. Even though you can’t tell from looking at me, I am severely handicapped; I can’t function like other people. I’ve dealt with PTSS (post traumatic stress syndrome), been severely depressed, and can’t stand or sit for too long without having to raise my legs off the floor because of venous vein insufficiency. When I “download” terrorist information, my inner little child gets overwhelmed and says, “What do I do with this big package?” And I have to tell her, “Look, it was your responsibility to receive it, but we’re going to give this to criminal intelligence and they’ll handle it.”

In October 1998, I had one of my first horrifying visions concerned with terrorism. A woman had come to me for a session so I could “look” for her brother. He lived in Colorado and had been missing for three weeks. While doing my clairvoyant work in front of this client, my mind began to see a full-sized picture of myself walking in a terrorist training camp along a river in the Middle East. I was shocked at the concept that camps like this existed.

I split into a consciousness that could simultaneously experience different thought patterns and witness them; I made a telepathic connection with a soldier and was able to enter his mind. This was not a collaborative effort. I was extracting information without his conscious personality being aware of my presence. The soldier’s soul was giving me permission to reveal the information in his mind. In this way I learned that there were numerous training camps both in and outside our country. His thoughts said that the organization had planned terrorist events that would appear unrelated, and they would happen on United States soil. He told me that young American men, who were easy to mind control, would become instruments of his group leader. Young men in the Denver, Colorado, area would kill other students between April 21 and April 26, 1999, and try to hijack a plane from the Denver airport. He told me many details about other terrorist attack operations.

As my mind began to react to the magnitude of calculated horror, the scene in front of my third eye brought tears to my eyes. Then I became aware that

this man sensed me! How did he detect me? I knew it was because I was beside myself with a sense of hopelessness. I had no way to stop this demonic plan. I was out of my body, out of my mind, and way over my head psychically. I was literally in enemy territory! I became aware that these people were masters at mind control and I was just a rookie in the wrong place at the wrong time. As I tried to pull myself out of this “out-of-body” experience, my physical body was tossed into a backward somersault. My body slammed against the door and I went into spastic, convulsing fit.

My assistant Kellie sat on my chest, held down my shoulders and screamed, “Robin, you have to come back!” I slowly caught my consciousness and pulled myself back into my solar plexus. My client was frightened, and rightly so. I was extremely spent and hoped that my visions were completely wrong.

The client felt both overwhelmed and skeptical. To relieve our fears, she took the taped recordings of the details I had channeled and went to the local college library to investigate. The outcome of her research traumatized us all. The terms and names of cults that I had channeled were on the computer as common knowledge to those in this field of study. I was stunned. I had had no previous awareness that there was (and still is) an internal danger to our country.

Now the question was what I should do with this information. For a while I coned myself into playing it safe. After all, I was just a clairvoyant. Clairvoyants are never 100 percent accurate. I dismissed my own *knowing*. I focused on my commitment to make enough money to raise my children. Who would believe a small town clairvoyant from the White Mountains of New Hampshire? Then, three weeks later, the woman’s brother showed up exactly when I said he would be found. After that, I decided to inform a friend of mine who works for the CIA of my insights. I was shocked to discover that the government uses psychics, remote viewers, and mentalists to help protect our country. I was advised to join a six-week 24/7 program to be trained to use my psychic and clairvoyant gifts wisely.

I hadn’t expected the government to take action on my psychic vision. I just didn’t want the burden of knowing that I didn’t do everything possible, which for me meant to pray, and to get others to pray in order to release any potentiality for harm. I knew that scientific studies had shown that harnessing the human consciousness in mass prayer rituals could be very beneficial. In April 1999, I flew to Denver, Colorado, to hold a prayer vigil where I had been shown trouble could happen. As I was in the air, the Littleton school shootings occurred. Right then I started praying to prevent the disasters I had “seen” happening in September of the millennium year.

The decision to make a fool out of myself by sharing my psychic visions about terrorist activities in our country had less to do with a sense of patriotism than a duty of compassion. I didn’t want another parent to mourn the loss of a child, as I had to mourn the death of one of my twin daughters. As horrible as my experience of contacting terrorism was for me and for everyone who knew me, I

can sleep at night knowing I tried to prevent those deaths in Littleton, Colorado, and others.

Now, what does my work with terrorism has to do with Raising Humanity? Just in the same way that I had to sacrifice my privacy and face the possibility of scorn and derision about what I had “seen” in order to benefit others, the people who share their stories in this book faced personal decisions in relation to others in their lives – parents, children, spouses, siblings, friends, co-workers – and in relation to their own lives. Unless we’ve found a hidden cave of solitude in which to live, we come in contact with humanity. Every day. And it is our choice as to how we relate to these beings who share our planet. The key to our relationships lies in our ability to listen to the “still, small voice” within, or to the words of a friend or parent, or however we access the wisdom that allows us to make our choices.

Each voice in this book shows a person coming into more consciousness, more awareness of who they are and what they were meant to do. The individual threads weave together as part of the many colors and patterns that make up the collective fabric of our human society. As each story reveals, our lives can change and our vision can broaden from the experiences we encounter: a sick child, a rape, words spoken by a parent, a miscarriage, events such as 9/11, and on and on and on. It is how we choose to live our lives, the decisions we make on a daily basis, that determine whether or not humanity as a whole will lift itself up into realms of peace and balance or continue on in chaos and destruction. If each of us were to raise our children to acknowledge their own worth, to hear the voice of their own consciousness, and to live as if they really matter, global affairs would be impacted for the better.

I believe that the soul is our true Mother and a human body is simply the vehicle for the soul’s evolution and development. I believe that the soul creates a body because it knows it will learn from the senses and the mechanics of the subconscious mind as well as from the circumstances it encounters in its environment. I believe that the true Father is the energy of Universal Law. Imagine what the world would be like if we could perceive the Soul as mating with Universal Law to create a child of peace and harmony!

When the subconscious mind, the place where our senses receive and send messages back to the soul, shuts down, we become terrorists in one form or another. We become heartless, programmable people who are capable of doing and saying anything for political agendas. Like my friend at the CIA says, “You can be a soldier for love instead.”

We can embrace the spiritual understanding that we must go within to hear our soul’s voice, or we will continue to heed outer authorities, both personally and collectively. Deep in our beings, we know that it is not healthy to support dysfunction on a personal or planetary level. Let’s re-establish our communication with that which we call God or Spirit and decide to take the

intensely personal path of knowing our own *knowing* and having the courage to act upon it.

Parenting the Future

Children are the teachers of peace for future generations. Our lives, and theirs, are at stake. Our individual decisions affect all the souls on earth, not just the ones in our immediate care; the consciousness (or lack thereof) with which we were raised has brought us the global condition as it now stands. Most of us struggled with our parents in some way, as those of us who are physical parents often struggle with our children. The job of parenting is not easy. Through the stories in this book, I invite you to reframe your sense of what parenting means – not only for parents in relation to their own children, but how we raise ourselves as well as the rest of humanity.

Raising Humanity is a teaching of perception. Perceptions inform belief. I believe that we, as children, were not taught how to be teachers of peace. It is obvious that we are not peaceful within ourselves and that we do not live in peaceful times. So how can we, as parents and role models for our children, teach something that most of us were never taught?

First we have to become mindful of what inner peace and balance feel like, and then consciously discipline ourselves to create this feeling in our own environment. If we can learn to follow our natural instincts and feelings, we can also learn to observe our own behavior and stop, or at least pause and contemplate a different choice, before engaging in any activity that causes disharmony. In other words, we need to slow down and take control of how we respond to our environment.

In *The Biology of Belief* by Bruce Lipton, PhD, he states that scientific research has proven that our cells change behavior according to our perceptual environment. Moment by moment, he says, we can give ourselves permission to perceive what makes us joyful. Research by Dr. Lipton and other scientists also states that we are like sponges from conception to the womb time and through the first six years of our lives. Infants pick up by observation and download information without any way to screen what is being programmed into their young minds. Unless we are mindful, we are automatically going to act upon the information stored in our brains and subconscious mind. We will spend our lives *reacting* rather than making a conscious effort to live as proactive beings.

If we are to live in a way that brings more awareness into the world, mothers- and fathers-to-be would clear their own energies as much as possible before conceiving children. They would communicate with the soul of the child or children who will enter their home and create a loving sexual experience during which conception can occur. They would take responsibility for the possibility that the energy behind the sexual act also imbues the child with what the parents believe about themselves at the moment of conception.

Once children are in the womb space, we would remind them every day how sacred they are. Although we may not be adepts, we can promise to guide them to the best of our ability. Children who are perceived as sacred beings will grow up with better subconscious programming – a form of protection that is far more important than a seat belt, bicycle helmet, or sunscreen.

The soul's purpose

Most adults, including mothers-to-be, have a very limited understanding of pregnancy, birth, and child rearing. Usually, the physiology of the events takes precedence; the most critical issues aren't even addressed by the expectant couple. For instance:

- How not to repeat our parents' mistakes
- How to identify the past lives we have had with our children (whether they are waiting to be born, miscarried, aborted, or already here) so as not to repeat karma
- Knowing who that soul is who will be entering the world as a new baby
- Knowing when and how that soul will enter the womb
- Knowing that soul's reasons and purpose for being born

A mother's purpose is to support the growth – physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually – of the particular soul that has chosen to create a body through her. However, just because I may have a metaphysical perspective doesn't mean that same perspective will serve my child. We can't force understanding. We have to allow our children to seek their own truth. What we can do is role model the faith to let the divine intelligence reveal itself through us, so our children can see how it could work through them. Our job is to empower them to explore and develop their own relationship with Spirit.

I trust that there is a divine plan and have the faith to carry it out as I am so guided to do. I honor my children's soul purpose, even if that means they choose to leave the physical realm before I do. I have to reach deep inside the pockets of my trust in the divine and know there is a reason that I was given this assignment.

To know our soul's purpose is paramount in understanding why we experience certain challenges in life. It is the fortunate child whose parents know the soul purpose of their child prior to his or her birth. I was privileged to learn my soul purpose in a near death experience at the age of two. Jesus appeared and said that it was not yet my time to die. Rather, I was to become a mother and that was my holy purpose for living. I have come to realize that it is not my path to raise my family according to some outdated religious mythology or man-made laws based on domination and control, but with the universal laws that apply to us all – no matter race, religion, or politics.

I am able to witness other people's relationship with their souls. I reach them – wherever they might be in at any given moment, born or not on earth – in order to teach them to hear that “still, small voice” within. I witness the birth of their increasing awareness into their own knowing. It is my experience that the new babies coming to earth these days are more enlightened than previous generations. They are capable of strong telepathic communications. They remember who they are and where they came from and where they are going. Let's welcome these multidimensional beings with a sense of sacredness, common sense, and a good dose of sixth sense. These children will liberate us to commune with our own souls and to self-parent our own lives with as much dignity as we have the consciousness to muster. Their awakened presence on our planet will help us to recognize that our first creed is to cause no harm – to ourselves or anyone else.

Raising Humanity

The book is written with love and the hope that we will learn that the metaphysical is a simple, everyday occurrence. It just means that our communication styles are changing. First the Internet, then the cell phone – next, telepathic communications. It is the evolution of humanity. I believe that as we increase our awareness of our own intuition, our innate abilities will bring us into alignment with our true soul's purpose. And that will be good for everyone.

We are living in a period of gestation. Even while the world is immersed in war, calamity, and darkness, a period of rebirth and light is ready to emerge. The stories in this book are intended to awaken the mothering instinct in all of us as we give birth to a new generation of children, allow our dormant souls to rebirth our individual selves, and collectively give birth to a healthy planet.

The idea for this book came to me one afternoon while sitting in a state of deep meditation/communion. I heard the following message from what I can only describe as the core, or the womb, of Mother Earth.

“I want my children to be born remembering that the purpose of the universe is the creation of love. You must acknowledge universal laws, divine right timing, and the power of your intentions. You shall come to know that you are seventh sense beings having a human experience. The seventh sense is awareness.

“In your awareness you will transcend your physical limitations and realize the interconnectedness of all life, for we are truly all ONE. There is no gender, race, or class. Our purpose is to lead ourselves back to our sacred centers that place in our heart that is always love and light. When we feel the pain of someone else, we all hurt. In that awareness, we make choices to live in love and compassion.

“The Goddess, of who I AM, is cyclical, like all life that has a sacred center whose divine purpose is to create love. As awakened children, you must choose to obey universal law. These laws transcend man-made limitations. My awakened children are not to follow outdated and dogmatic rhetoric. Those thoughts and beliefs are the weeds of man-made limitations.

“You must change these beliefs in order for your love of love to be revered. You will gently place this decomposing energy into the universal compost pile to be used for fertilization while planting the evolution of love. My children, the human race, are the farmers of this consciousness. This will allow you to be conscious caretakers of me, your Mother Earth. I am Mother Earth and I intend to birth the Heart of our Global Family.”

Nothing on our planet was created, sentient or non-sentient, if it was not birthed through Mother Earth. How can we destroy what sustains us? In the same way that we, as individuals, are not in balance, Mother Nature is also not in balance or harmony. And we are not in a healthy relationship with the earth and each other. It is time for us to wake up to the fact that we are a global family. The following story is a great illustration of why it behooves us to start looking out for each other's welfare.

There was a farmer who each year entered his corn in the state fair, where it always won a blue ribbon. One year a newspaper reporter interviewed him and learned that the farmer shared his corn seed with his neighbors. He asked, “How can you afford to share your best corn seed with your neighbors when they are entering corn in competition with yours?”

“Why, sir,” said the farmer, “Don’t you know? The wind picks up pollen from the ripening corn and swirls it from field to field. If my neighbors grow inferior corn, cross-pollination will steadily degrade the quality of my corn. If I am to grow good corn, I must help my neighbors grow good corn.”

The lesson is simple: The farmer in this story is very much aware of the connectedness of life. His corn can’t improve unless his neighbors’ corn also improves. So it is in other aspects of life. Those who choose to be at peace must help their neighbors to be at peace; those who choose to live well must help others to live well. The value of a life is measured by the lives it touches. Those who choose to be happy must help others to find happiness, because the welfare of each is bound up with the welfare of all.

Perhaps reading the stories that are shared in this book will help you in the vital task of raising humanity – giving birth to the global family we are meant to be. I believe it is our ultimate responsibility to raise humanity’s consciousness. The authors whose voices you will hear in this book share their life experiences to let you know that no matter how old we are, it is never too late to learn about our

soul's plan for us and to act upon our soul's inner guidance. It is never too late to transform our lives through the power of grace and the courage to change.
Humanity's survival depends on it.

Part I

BEGINNINGS

Our first and most intimate relationship is to the mother. We are bound, quite literally, to the mother during our gestation in the womb. As we float in the embryonic waters of our mother's womb, we move from a state of pure consciousness into matter. We develop a body that is composed of 75% water, to live on a planet that is 75% water (the oceans are the womb of Mother Earth).

Most of us have no memory of our womb time, yet it has left an indelible mark upon us. The importance and sanctity of those nine months are not to be underestimated. Everything the mother thinks, feels, and experiences while she is pregnant adds to who we are to become. Our time spent in the womb lives on in our unconscious, ruling us from the forgotten realms. We spend the rest of our lives processing our experiences from the womb. These intangible memories create our life's momentum.

How different would the human family be if sexual union and the resultant pregnancy were respected for the power that they hold? Not only is the time in the womb of utmost importance to our future development, but the way we got there in the first place is also. We have grown accustomed to recreational sex, but what do we know about procreation sex? Why are we content to make babies as a soul-less experience created by soul-less sex? What potential would we humans have if conception were regarded as a sacred process? When parents want to conceive a child, why aren't they taught to do ceremony inviting the soul of a child into their family prior to mating?

In other words, how different would our parenting be if we remembered our Source, if we remembered that the soul creates a body so the soul can grow? A soul likes being in a body because the physical senses are tools for learning. The desire of the soul to learn is the single strongest driving force in the perpetuation of the human race. If we knew a soul's purpose, if we recognized newborns as spirits who have chosen to have a human experience, wouldn't pregnancy, birth, and parenting be viewed and treated with more respect?

BIRTH

By Debi Sanborn

As soon as you trust yourself, you will know how to live.
--Goethe

The process of giving birth is the process of becoming.

My daughter was born at home, pushed out onto the living room couch. Giving birth with a midwife present is the most powerful thing I've ever done. At 15, I thought I would save the world. When I gave birth at 27, I again knew it was possible. If I could get through labor and bring forth the miracle of birth, if women were capable of such a thing, then I could do anything. Such is the power of women.

The ability to give birth is woman's most sacred power. For both mother and child, birth is the moment of entry into all that lies beyond. The midwives know. Their knowledge and reverence for the unfolding of life has been held dear all these years. They hold sacred the moment of birth. They understand the importance of love, for all one's impressions of humanity are imbedded in those first few moments. When there is love, the babies come in with eyes wide open with wonder. The woman who chooses to bring forth her child with joy and strength receives divine blessings and beautiful gifts. These gifts bring a bond that fosters the love she has for her child, for herself, and for the universe.

These hands of mine have touched so many babies, so many women, and so many lives. It's a wonderful thing to be present at the time of birth. I've learned so much. As a community midwife, I am surrounded by women and babies who are surrounded by love at the time of their transition. It makes a difference. These children are happy, content, and grounded. The mothers are patient and attentive and enjoy the fruit of their wombs. They are able to give freely of their love and time and receive so much in return. The sense of joy and community is truly remarkable.

Sometimes, after a difficult birth or a rough reception, it takes a long time before the mother and child can find one another. Precious offspring have entered this world and been received by strangers. They have been forced and twisted through the birth canal and have known fear from their first breath. They are handled roughly in cold, bright rooms. Under duress and full of

narcotics, they scream and seek the solace of their mother's eyes. Unfortunately, for many children, that comfort is never found.

It is difficult to explain how the births I attend at home are so different from what most women experience in hospitals. When women give birth at home, they move through their homes as they move through their labors. Some attend to their children as they would on any other evening. Others prefer to lie quietly in a bathtub, surrounded by candles and a familiar presence. While we midwives are very attentive — monitoring the mom's vitals and the baby's heartbeat — our goal is to be unobtrusive and to let labor proceed at whatever pace is natural for that woman.

Anna, one of my clients, is an example of a good home birth. She sways her hips in time to some internal tune. Her partner tends the fireplace and the children are silent, watching their mother dance as she frosts a birthday cake for their new baby brother or sister. The contractions get stronger — someone else will finish the frosting — and Anna moves into the living room, leaning on walls and furniture. As she goes deeper into transition, she finds her partner and hangs on to him for support. "It's time," she announces and we move into the bedroom.

Making sweet, deep noises, Anna climbs onto the bed and finds a position in which she can rest. Ten, twenty minutes pass and still she rests. She is fully dilated now and moaning softly. We've spoken of this moment many times during her prenatal exams. We wait patiently and the pressure builds.

Anna's breathing changes; her body is pushing. She shifts position and adds deep, guttural effort — strong, purposeful — and her baby moves down into the birth canal. Anna looks at me, her eyes wide. I breathe with her and remind her to let her body do the work.

The baby's heart rate is fine. I take a deep breath and my gloved hands press warm compresses on Anna's bottom. The room is calm, serene. More effort, a pushing, but also a letting go. I help guide a head full of hair over the perineum. Anna reaches down and brings her daughter up to her breast. She nurses and we all bask in the glow of a heavenly presence. The newborn's eyes are open wide.

* * *

I have come to perceive the commandment to *Honor thy mother and thy father* quite differently than is presently explained by traditional religions. To me, the soul is *mother* – the collective consciousness of all my soul’s experiences – past, present, parallel, and future, throughout time/space and beyond. The universal laws are *father*. When a human mother and human father conceive of a child, I believe that they are allowing a soul to create through them a body in which to learn its soul’s lessons. I believe the role of the parents is to support that journey, which, in turn, supports the parents’ own soul purpose. When this is the case, we are creating a human race that has soul merit. Joy is earned with knowing that a soul job is well done; it is a sense of deep peace within when the time comes to exit that body. There is no better elixir than feeling fulfilled on a soul level.

I believe that when Jesus said on the cross that he and his father are one, he meant that the actions he experienced in his life were in alignment with universal law. I believe that the story of Christ is about consciousness, not that he died on a cross. We all die – some more glamorously than others. But the Truth is that Jesus was born into a family that remembered the true intention of life. His parents knew their son’s soul purpose prior to his birth because of their own ability to hear important messages from the metaphysical realms; they knew what their responsibilities to him were to be. Let it be duly noted, it was not a happy ride. They raised him with as much conscious awareness as they could humanly muster.

I believe that as each individual, family, community, and nation evolves, we will do as the Bible says, *Do all things in remembrance of me*. And honor the Mother/Father – the soul and the unchanging universal laws.

* * *

COSMIC MOTHER

By Janet Heartson

“...conflict in the world is the result of conflict within us. We project that feeling into the world because we are not ready to accept that we are the cause, and therefore the solution, to that conflict. Thus wars have raged in the world since the beginning of time, because we are not ready to deal with the conflict where it really is, within us.”

(Twyman, 1996)

I am a Cosmic Mother. I have no birth children, but I have many people that I have mentored into their full being. I have been told that I come to people in their dreams and help them find solutions to their problems or comfort them in their painful times. I have been through great loss in my life and this has prepared me to bear witness with others in their most painful moments. I am also able to help them walk the edge of their creativity and face the fear and the joy that comes up in those moments.

I am also a Mother of the Planet. There is a part of me that is aware of Her at all times, as if she were my child. She is also my Cosmic Mother. When I was a child, babbling brooks, grandfather oak trees, and animals consoled me. Sometimes the buzz of insects brought me into a deep trance, where I tapped into a collective consciousness that I think was the Akashic Records (“records” of our soul).

Unity consciousness has always been a part of me. I never lost awareness at birth as most people do, including when I was held up by my feet and slapped on the rear end. At that time I said to myself, “They haven’t progressed very far; maybe I made a mistake in coming now.”

I still wonder sometimes if I belong here. I am in harmony with our sweet Earth, but the disconnection that I see in humans surprises me. When I find someone who is an earth steward such as me, I rejoice and feel I have an ally. When I think about our politicians and what decisions they make, my heart hurts for the planet. I find it hard to believe that smart people could be so abusive to something that nurtures us so well.

I am trained in Kinesiology, NLP, and Reiki and have a Master’s Degree in Psychology and Spirituality. What I use most, however, is my capacity as a Seer or Shaman. I received training through my

life experiences and was then evaluated by an officially trained Shaman to be exceptionally suited to the work. This gift has brought me an awareness that would never allow me to deny what sustains me, as I see the connection of all things.

A major course of study that affected my competence as a therapist is called Spiritual Direction; it taught how to lead someone in discovering his or her own sense of the divine. It is my belief that our highest functioning comes from our deep spiritual base, and that discovering the depth and breadth of this foundation will enhance the whole of one's life. It is a highly developed skill that helps a person discover his or her own inner knowing without the therapist imposing his or her own. I went to this school because I felt the children with whom I worked had an absence of their sense of Self that could only be discovered in spiritual exploration along with psychological discovery. My experience has taught me that my perceptions were accurate.

Even though my degree is in Spirituality (the Psychology Tract), it is very much about therapy and personal growth. When I work with individuals, there is an element of the collective that also gets healed. Each piece, each person, is a part of a whole that also needs healing.

There are patterns of consciousness that need to be healed. One pattern that comes up repeatedly is the memory of a lifetime or lifetimes where a person was persecuted for his or her earth-based spirituality. Whether in Native American or Pagan form, massive genocide took place that was equal to the horrible atrocities perpetuated by the Nazis at the death camps. The present-day clues that indicate this pattern are: 1) Residual body pain that cannot be relieved in any standard way is sometimes the result of unresolved issues from a past life; 2) Fears or full-blown phobias can be residual from a past life of persecution; and 3) People can put limits on their awareness, such as creativity or psychic ability, because of past persecution.

Other major stumbling blocks to greater awareness can be the result of unconscious parenting in the womb. The power of the womb time on development is enormous and must not be underestimated. There was a study that showed that babies in the womb experienced pain when the mother smoked cigarettes. They have records of fetuses recoiling and screaming in pain as the smoke is inhaled. As the study progressed, they discovered that the fetus recoiled in pain as soon as the pregnant woman reached

for her cigarettes, thus demonstrating a telepathic connection between the fetus and the mother's intention.

I have an intuitive belief that this is one reason why fibromyalgia exists. Those fetuses were born with the concept that life is painful. People also often have environmental sensitivities that could be the result of experiencing life as toxic at a tender pre-birth age. This may not be the whole picture, but I would love to see the cigarette companies footing the bill for a study regarding this theory.

Birth trauma is also an issue that keeps coming up as the source of my clients' stress. Many body issues, from pain to self-criticism, can originate from trauma at birth. Nearly all of my long-term counseling clients do at least one session on the trauma of their birth. A whole counseling practice developed in the 1970s called "rebirthing" that emphasized this key to many people's distress. We are being called to awaken our own intuition so that we can create an optimum beginning to our children's lives. This head start can mean the difference between a happy and productive individual and a very dysfunctional one.

We have too many addicts, alcoholics, criminals, and people who are generally out of touch with their hearts and the heart of the divine. Let us return to our source and teach our children how to be aware of theirs. There are studies that prove that children learn best through the parents modeling the desired behavior. So parents, take care of your body, heart, and mind if you want your children to be well.

Robin and I have worked together for over 20 years. We do sessions with each other to clear out hurts, and frequently we are called to clear the collective energy related to the personal revelation that we have had. An issue that has taken the full 16 years to evolve is the problem with the Bible and the limitations that the stories promote about the divine feminine. Deep in my heart I knew two opposing things: The Bible was the truth and the Bible was distorted. I came to trust my inner knowing because I was so appalled by what I experienced as Christianity, both in this lifetime and in the lifetimes of the clients with whom I did past life clearings. I even went to graduate school in the unconscious desire to find answers to this issue.

I also became a Sufi in the desire to transcend Christianity and move to the heart of the divine. At Sufi camp I met Neil Douglas-

Klotz, who has managed the arduous task of learning Aramaic, the original language of the Bible. He is the heart and soul of brilliance and has published a book called *Prayers of the Cosmos:*

Meditations on the Aramaic Words of Jesus. I send great gratitude to him for the healing that this book has promoted in me and in my group of clients, associates, and friends. For over 2,000 years we have been leaning on a bible that was distorted by men who manipulated and controlled others by distorting translations to fit their perceived needs. No wonder we have a society that is gender-biased, power- and greed-oriented, and lacking in the respect that Mother Earth deserves. It is time to reclaim the divine in both masculine and feminine qualities.

Here is the King James version of the Lord's Prayer. It is probably familiar to you.

Our Father which art in heaven
hallowed by thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, in earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever.
Amen.

Here is a version of the prayer translated from its original language by Neil Douglas-Klotz:

O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos,
Focus your light within us – make it useful:
Create your reign of unity now.
Your one desire then acts with ours,
as in all light, so in all forms.
Grant what we need each day in bread and insight.
Loose the cords of mistakes binding us,
as we release the strands we hold of others' guilt.
Don't let surface things delude us,
but free us from what holds us back.
From you is born all ruling will,
the power of the life to do,
the song that beautifies all,
from age to age it renews.
Truly, power to these statements.
May they be the ground from which all my actions grow.
Amen.

Please allow this version to permeate your being, to feel how it opens you and liberates you from a duality that we must release. As you read this final prayer, please join me in supporting the Metaphysical Mothering perspective.

I honor the God and Goddess
The eternal parents of the universe...

Without The God
There is no Goddess,
And without the Goddess,
There is no God...

The life of one
is the life of the other,
and not even a blade of grass can grow
without the both of them.

-*Jnaneshwar*, translated by Jonathan Star

Some beginnings are noticeably rougher than others. Have you wondered why? I chose to include the following story because it heartened me to see how things had changed in the medical profession since I gave birth to my children. This story also demonstrates how desperate mainstream parents have to be before they open up to the metaphysical. Ethan's parents wanted the best for him, enough to put aside their doubts and contact me. When Ethan telepathically communicated to me what was medically wrong with his little body, I knew he was one of the new breed of enlightened children who have come to bless the human race. He was willing to suffer for the good of the whole, to teach us they are coming. Here is Ethan's story.

* * *

THE TOUCH OF A CHILD

By Brad Gilden

“Where’s the father?” someone shouted from the OR. “Get him in here now!” I heard the urgency in the doctor’s voice as I scrubbed my hands. I ran into the OR and took my place beside my wife, Kerry.

I sat next to Kerry with great anticipation and some fear, as the moment of birth was only seconds away. For the fathers-about-to-be out there, if you wonder whether or not you may get queasy from the site of blood, DO NOT LOOK OVER THE CURTAIN. I looked deep into Kerry’s eyes, trying to give her some of my strength, and then my eyes darted back and forth from the monitors to the anesthesiologist. The hospital bed jumped slightly and Kerry experienced a huge release of pressure. We heard some skin being slapped and then a faint cry. It was music to our ears. THEN EVERYTHING CHANGED.

“Code 67 in labor and delivery, STAT! Repeat, Code 67 in...” The words trailed off.

My eyes drifted down as I saw a large stream of blood beginning to paint the floor. Not wanting to scare my wife, I waited until she drifted to sleep, then I immediately asked the anesthesiologist if the code was for my wife or child. He said it was for our child. I breathed a brief sigh of relief, understanding that Kerry was okay. My attention shifted to our child. Kerry was in and out of consciousness, unaware of the code being called. In a weak voice my wife asked, “Doctor, what did we have?” He responded, “A big, big, boy. Wow, he must be at least 9 pounds!”

The pediatricians who answered the code rushed into the OR and started to attend to Ethan. We had no idea what was happening. The doctor asked me if I wanted to see my child before he was taken to the NICU (Natal Intensive Care Unit). Of course I wanted to see him. Although my eyes were glazed over from the past few sleepless days and the long night of delivery, I saw two pediatricians holding my naked angelic son in a sitting position. I snapped a quick picture and then they rushed him out of the

room. The moment passed so quickly, it felt like someone had given me a birthday present and then taken it away.

I walked back to Kerry's bedside. As the doctors were completing her sutures, I told Kerry how beautiful our son was. She asked me if everything was all right. I didn't know how to respond. Instead, I kissed her lightly on the forehead and told her that everything was going to be fine. We had made a beautiful little boy.

Once I knew Kerry was stable and comfortable in the recovery room, I made my way over to the NICU. I was so scared walking in, not knowing what to expect. Was he doing okay? Would he look like my wife or me? Millions of thoughts crept through my head. Most of all, I wished my wife could have been with me for the first real meeting with our son.

My hands were sweating from nerves and my mouth was dry. This was the moment of truth. I tried peeking in through the windows to get a sneak preview. I spotted Ethan immediately. As it turned out, Ethan weighed in at 10 pounds 3.8 ounces. He looked three times the size of all the other newborns. He was calm and collected, taking in his surroundings.

I, on the other hand, was just the opposite. My heart broke seeing the intravenous and CPAP (continuous passive assisted breathing) attached to his nose – a device that assists with inhalation. He deserved to have a better entrance into the world. When we finally made eye contact, it was the most incredible sensation I have ever felt. It was the first time I realized I was a Daddy. I placed my finger in Ethan's palm and he squeezed hard enough to blanch my skin. There was so much love in that single grip it brought tears to my eyes and I almost forgot to breathe.

We were finally parents. This same time one year ago, my wife had had a miscarriage. It was one of the most difficult events in our lives. We began to question whether we would ever be able to have a child. Our marriage remained strong, even though it was put to the ultimate test. We comforted each other with lots of hugs and late night tears. We knew that someday we would be blessed with a child. It just wasn't meant to be right now. Little did we know that this would prepare us for what was to follow.

The doctors met with me to explain what was happening to our son. At birth, Ethan had extremely low blood sugar and required an immediate infusion of glucose to bring up his sugar

concentration. The risk involved in having prolonged low blood sugar is severe brain damage. We were told that his condition was probably transient and he would most likely be home by the end of the week. The NICU nurses took some Polaroid pictures of Ethan so I could take them back to Kerry, who was still in the recovery room and had not yet met Ethan in person.

Over the next days, we spent countless hours in the NICU, waiting and praying that Ethan's condition would get better. We met other parents whose children were also there. We felt so sorry for every child and parent that had to go through this difficult time.

Each day, when we went to visit Ethan, there seemed to be another complication. We realized the condition of low blood sugar was not transient and that there was some other unknown condition affecting his sugar levels. He also contracted MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus) – a common infection in hospital settings that is transferred via skin contact. Ethan was placed in isolation and on a 30-day course of antibiotics. He required a central line put in through his umbilicus because the peripheral lines in his foot and hand could not handle the large amounts of sugar. There was also a period of time in which he had to be placed on a ventilator to help with his breathing.

We began endless meetings with doctors, from geneticists to gastroenterologists, cardiologists, and endocrinologists. I think we met every possible “--ologist” on the face of the earth. We were never so scared in our lives. In truth, Kerry and I became numb.

When Ethan was only ten days old, the doctors removed the central line from his umbilicus. He had developed a blood clot just outside the heart and required surgery to put in a broviac line – a central line directly into the arterial blood stream of the heart that is used to provide high doses of dextrose solution for patients that are hypoglycemic. He also had to be placed back on the ventilator because he was having some moderate congestive heart failure. I thought all these conditions should be seen in a ninety-year-old, not a nine-day-old. Kerry and I felt so guilty that his first experiences were filled with needles and monitors. We promised him there was so much more to life and that he would experience it very soon.

The doctors were still not sure of the diagnosis. We began hearing the doctor's whisper about his pancreas producing too much insulin. They spoke of a specialist named Dr. Stanley at Children's

Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). In the days that followed, Ethan continued to worsen. His required sugar infusions increased and his body became bloated from the large amounts of fluid intake. The following week, Ethan was finally transferred. In a span of twelve hours, Ethan made a miraculous turnaround. The doctors at CHOP were very familiar with his condition. They gave him a hormone called glucagone that metabolized stored sugar in the liver and were able to reduce his sugar infusions by half.

In twenty-four hours, he lost most of his bloating and looked so much more comfortable. Kerry and I finally took our first confident breaths of parenthood. We met Laura, a wonderful physician's assistant who walked us through all the procedures for determining Ethan's prognosis. She told us that he had something called *hyperinsulinism* – a rare genetic disorder affecting 1 in 50,000.

There are two possible scenarios with this disease. The first is called a “diffuse” lesion of the pancreas. If that's what it turned out to be, Ethan's entire pancreas would have to be removed. Side effects of this surgery would be adolescent diabetes and the need to take digestive enzymes. Even if Ethan had to go through this worst-case scenario, Kerry and I still thought we would be very lucky. The second scenario was a “focal” lesion, which only affected a localized part of the pancreas. In this case, the doctors would have to remove only a portion of the pancreas and Ethan would be potentially cured.

So was it a focal or diffuse lesion? We were fast approaching another turning point in Ethan's life, with surgery as Ethan's only chance.

Kerry stayed at the Ronald McDonald house in Philadelphia to be with Ethan. I had to travel back and forth from New York because of work. It was so difficult being away from my family. The stress was wearing us down, but we did not have time to deal with it. We needed to keep going and be strong for our son. It is amazing how God gives you inner strength when you need it most. Each time we felt like the world was closing in on us and we wouldn't be able to take much more, there was an outside force that kept us going. I fed off Kerry's strength and faith and she on mine. Our families also played vital roles, whether by lending a helping hand or just by us knowing they were there for us at all times.

My brother Lance kept calling. He wanted us to call this “baby medium,” as he described Robin, who our sister Stacy had met. At first we were skeptical. We both have a very strong faith in God and believed we were doing the right thing for our son. We were scared that she might direct us along a different path. We had confidence in the doctors at CHOP and they felt strongly that Ethan required surgery. What if she told us not to go through with it?

Kerry and I finally decided if there was anything that we could do to help our son, we would try. We trusted Stacy’s opinion and insight into the spiritual realm, and so Kerry called Rhobbin. After their talk, Kerry went through a transformation like I had never seen before. Their conversation gave Kerry a sense of calmness as well as reenergizing her strength. Not only did Rhobbin give my wife insight into herself, but she also gave us information regarding Ethan that lifted our spirits. She told us the surgery was necessary to cure his disease. She described a *focal* lesion on his pancreas just to the right of center, with long tentacle-like fingers coming off the main body. When we spoke to Laura, the physician’s assistant, we told her what we learned from Rhobbin. She said she would communicate the information to the surgeon.

On the day of the surgery, Kerry and I had were confident and calm. We knew everything was going to turn out all right. Ethan held onto us tightly that morning. He also conveyed the same sense of confidence and assurance.

The surgery was supposed to take 3 to 6 hours. One hour into the surgery, Laura emerged and pulled our family into a private room. I had no idea what she was about to say, except I noticed the beginning of a smile forming. Her words were music to our ears: “Ethan had an extremely large focal lesion, just to the right of center. There were some long tentacle-like projections coming off the lesion. You will get the full report from the doctor.” Laura gave me a big hug, than began to dance around the room singing. “It’s a focal lesion... it’s a focal lesion...”

An hour later the surgeon spoke to us. He told us Ethan was doing well and was in recovery. He said the lesion was quite large but that enough of the pancreas was left intact to function normally. We saw Ethan three hours following surgery. Even though he was still a little groggy, he gripped our hands with all his might, letting us know he was going to be all right.

One week later he met his final challenge: he had to pass an 18-hour fast without his blood sugar dropping below 70. Not only did he pass, but his blood sugar levels also were stellar. We were allowed to bring our son home on Memorial Day weekend at the precious age of six weeks. It was the best feeling in the world.

A child's love is a gift from God. The power of a child's love is *amazing*. It gives you the strength and drive to keep going. Throughout his hospitalization, Ethan rarely cried. He looked at us with his penetrating, big, blue eyes and communicated an understanding we couldn't quite explain. He was in so much pain, yet he was able to convey a sense of calmness and hope. He carried an inner strength that persevered through more trauma than I had experienced in thirty-two years.

We are so proud of our son. He demonstrated braveness beyond his years and a genuine love for life. He is truly our little miracle. Ethan has brought so much joy into our lives and has touched many other lives as well. We received many letters of support. One letter, addressed to Ethan, demonstrates what an impact he had.

Dearest Ethan,

I truly believe that each of us have been put on earth by God for a very special purpose. We each come to find this purpose, sometimes when we are young, sometimes when we are quite old. But here you are, just a few weeks old, and I truly believe that you have already begun to fulfill your purpose on earth.

You are truly an exceptional little boy. You have faced a life-threatening illness, surgery, hospital and probably more needles than many of us wish to have in a lifetime. But through God's grace and the dedication of doctors and nurses, you are now happy and healthy. But you have done so much more, things that you are not aware of, but oh, how important they are.

You have taught many of us to have faith. Sometimes, we take things for granted and yet there was not one among us that did not pray nightly for you and your Mom and Dad. You reminded us that there is a power much greater than ourselves and that so much of what we do and what we have is because of God's goodness. You reminded us that "little things" really

aren't that important, except when that little thing is named Ethan.

You've taught a lot to your Mommy and Daddy, too. Together they faced some of their most frightening moments, and because of you, they did it with strength and grace. Mommy learned what 'motherly love' is all about and you only have to look in her eyes to know that she loves you more than life itself. Each time your eyes met, she knew that you were telling her that you were going to be just fine. You gave her strength and love.

And Daddy, well, Dads are supposed to be super strong, capable of handling anything, our own personal superheroes. And from somewhere deep within your Daddy's soul, he did all of that and more. He took care of you and Mommy, always being strong, even when I am sure his heart was breaking. He moved you into your new house, went to work and went to school. He was always there for your grandparents, too. You really do have your own Super Hero for a dad. You made him realize the strength, patience and goodness that he has within him. He now knows that he truly can face any problem that comes his way. The lessons you taught your Mommy and Daddy will never be forgotten.

As for me – well you have taught me to take things in stride, that worrying over little things is senseless. You have also taught me that when the big problems come along, God will be there to show me the way and I only have to let him into my heart. I have your picture on my refrigerator and each morning I see your beaming face looking back at me and I am reminded of all that is right in the world. And I remember to thank God for his goodness.

So, Ethan, you have had a pretty powerful impact on this world already. I can only imagine what is ahead for you. Your life is filled with wonder and promise. Never doubt what you are capable of, never doubt the love of your parents, and never doubt that God holds you very close to his heart.

Enjoy a wonderful life – one day at a time.

Aunt Sue

* * *

Despite my early misgivings about my “gifts,” I have been communicating with non-physical worlds since my first near-death experience at the age of two. Since then, I’ve had two other NDE’s and have become adept at bridging worlds in ways that assist my clients. I work often with parents-to be, or with those who have experienced miscarriage, abortion, or the death of a child.

I have appeared as a paranormal expert on the late night show, “The Jimmy Kimmel Show,” and several up-close segments for K-Cal News 9 in Los Angeles, California. I have been a case study in several books and been interviewed dozens of times on radio. When James Van Praagh called me personally, I thought my career was a happening thing. He was meditating one day about his show “Beyond with James Van Praagh.” He noticed that many women had had miscarriages and abortions and that as a male he was very uncomfortable bringing up these topics with women. He asked his guides who could work with the women and the souls of unborn children. His guides suggested that he call Jo Carey, the events coordinator at the Bodhi Tree Bookstore in Los Angeles, California. Jo who knows and trusts my work, recommended me. My specialty is being a baby medium and medical intuitive for babies.

When I went to the studio to meet James I had to give a reading as an audition. He was so excited about my work he said he wanted me as a regular guest on his show. He personally walked me over to the producer’s meeting, a maneuver that broke protocol, to make his point of how much he thought I would make a positive impact to the show.

The following week I had to do a group reading as an audition. I was in a room with about 13 strangers who all took their jewelry off and put it in a pile in front of me. I was told to hold the jewelry and tell what I saw. Then the producer instructed me to give her a reading in front of everyone. I don’t know what I said that triggered her, but she left the room abruptly. Was that a good sign? I didn’t think so. She later called me and asked me to channel ways that the show could be improved. I provided her with a document.

Then the call came for me to be in front of the camera with James Van Praagh! I was so excited! We didn’t go to the studio, but went out in the field for a long day of shoots. We went to a women’s house who said her son was keeping her up at night screaming, waking up 10 times a night! The producer told me what to say and what to do about the baby’s problems. I did the best I could to stay in my authenticity and provide them with the material they dictated to me. About 6 months later, I saw the piece. It had been edited down to about 5 minutes. When James introduced me he said, “She talks spirit-to-spirit with babies.” I never

forgot that. Even though nothing further happened, having James' respect meant a lot to me.

All events are purposeful. No matter how brief a pregnancy, it is purposeful for the being who was to be the child of those parents. I connect with that Spirit and help the parents find peace and closure on this painful experience in their life. Even the tragedy of a stillborn child, or of a child who dies young, is only tragic from an earthly perspective. From the larger life view, these are exactly the experiences chosen by these beings to fulfill their purposes for these particular lives. We may never know or understand them, but the lives lived, *as they were lived*, were purposeful and fulfilled. The most important thing we can do is to make sure that we parent with our soul eyes, not our human eyes, so we're parenting in a new way for the future, not just recreating the way we were parented by our folks. Although sometimes that's not too bad, either.

If you have experienced an abortion, miscarriage, or death of a child, there is a strong likelihood that you are consciously or unconsciously still in relationship with that soul. I suggest you either work with a psychic who can attend to your grief or make up a ceremony on your own for the purpose of closure.

* * *

Empty Still

*You came in my arms and were silent.
I thought it would be sweet
But it was empty.*

*I held you with all passion
But it slipped by you unclaimed,
Unwelcome.*

*I offered you wholehearted love
But it echoed in the empty chamber
Of your neglected soul.*

*The moon and stars speak through my voice,
You heard only words
And deep sorrowful sighs.
- Janet Lawrence*

**EMPTY STILL
By Gene Morgan**

Hidden truths, dark secrets. Wounds deeply masked from view that affect every breath. We all carry them around. The reality of what had recently transpired carried a weight I had never imagined. Guilt seeped in through my pores as I gazed out from the mountain, looking at the vast desert below me.

Three weeks earlier, I had heard a heart-wrenching scream that tore me from a deep sleep. I found my wife pacing the small room in frenzy, tightly clutching a pink marker. She was pregnant.

The impact of her words sent me reeling. We had only been married four months and already the relationship was on the rocks. I had been played the fool and married a cocaine addict. Like a knight on his shining white horse, I rode in confident that I could overcome any obstacle and save this maiden in distress.

I stepped up to the challenge of recovery and met it head on, yet it soon became apparent that the empty promise of staying clean bore deep repercussions. I was shut out completely – emotionally, sexually. She had become a stranger to me and I had become a stranger to myself. I was lost and trying to navigate in a cesspool of rejection.

Fear gripped me. How could this be? My mind raced, covering the vast uncharted territory of memory. Sex had become a lost pleasure; intimacy of any kind was nonexistent. She had shut me out, even on our wedding night. The days had turned to weeks, the weeks now months.

Then the desert came to mind. Oh, the desert and its shimmering heat waves of seduction . . .

A month earlier, we had taken a long weekend under the guise of a romantic getaway. The romance was limited to a lounge by the pool and a nice dinner. For the most part, I was alone and left to wander aimlessly, while my wife stayed indoors out of the heat and ordered room service. On our last day, she stripped down and pulled me callously to the bed. Within minutes I was being pushed away as if I was an object of disgust. The faint flicker of hope that had been born was quickly blown out.

Her shrieking snapped me back to reality. I reached to comfort her, but was slapped away. “Don’t f--king touch me!” She was adamant about not having the baby and refused to hear any other option. My heart sank, succumbing to the inherent fear of what acceptance would bring. There would be no child born to us.

The darkness closed in around me.

I was raised differently. I believed differently, yet I could not deny the guilt-ridden relief that overtook me like a tidal wave and left me in a state of shock. Deep inside, I felt the pain with each breath. Was this not supposed to be one of life’s great joys? A blessing? The questions raced through my head, pounding for answers in the deep recesses of my brain.

But none came.

The silence at home was unbearable and, after a few weeks, I found my way back to the desert and climbed high into the

mountains, overlooking the plains. My thoughts wandered through a maze of guilt and shame. I couldn't bear to reveal the truth to anyone else, let alone face it myself. My illusions of love and marriage had been shattered into a thousand little fragments of shimmering glass.

Two years later we divorced. Irreconcilable differences. It is a harsh reality to awaken to one's own truth and the impact hit me as I crawled away from the experience, conflicted with a strange mix of devastation and relief.

Having grown up on the older end of a large family, I had spent a considerable amount of my youth around children. But the sight of them now jolted my memory with guilt. I found myself wondering how old our child would have been, what would he have looked like, his hair color, and his eyes? The daydreams were endless and harbored tremendous pain. I resolved to find a way to release the burden, yet didn't know how.

Once again, I found myself drawn back to the desert. Four years had since passed since I had last climbed to my perch. Sunset came as I sat in silence, grappling with my pain, and I found myself praying to a God I had come to doubt even existed.

And then the vision came during a session with Robin . . .

An angelic little boy seemed to hover in front of me. He smiled with familiarity and his eyes seemed to pierce my wounded soul. I knew him in an instant and a wave of peace overcame me as he asked me to name him. I called him Joshua.

As his spirit lifted high above, I felt a shift in my heart and knew it would be okay.

* * *

I'M NOT YOUR DADDY!

by
Ralph Babarino

He that is not busy being born, is busy dying. -- Bob Dylan

I have known since my teen years that I did not want to become a parent. How did I know at so young an age? I'm a very sensitive person. My parents were Italian. I have four younger brothers and we grew up in New Jersey. If that isn't a formula right there for insanity, I don't know what is.

My parents are now sweet old folks who love my brothers and me very much, but as we kids were growing up, my parents were not very enlightened. They never saw how truly sensitive I was. I saw no joy in my childhood, but plenty of pain, agony, fear, sadness, and depression. The only thing I wanted to do in my childhood was to get away from my family. People always said that I would change my mind in time, but I always knew that parenthood was not for me.

My brothers and I can now laugh at family stories when we get together, but while they were happening, we were often truly terrified. I think the laughing we do together is cathartic and healing, but the memories never do go away.

I was not directly involved in one of my favorite stories, but I felt my brother's pain. During high school, Jerry (the fourth child) was re-building his first car. He asked my father to take him to the junkyard to pick up some spare parts. My youngest brother, Ben, (the fifth child), thought he would go along for the ride. My father was very anxious for his teenage son not to be driving "The Mercedes," so he was willing to drive them to their destination.

Jerry and Ben jumped out of the car and ran into this wonderland of secondhand treasures. They were so excited at the junkyard that

they didn't notice the inch of grease on the ground. My father waited in "The Mercedes" while my brothers shopped.

Let me explain a little about my father's cars. He came from a poor Italian immigrant family. Like many people who worked hard in the 1950s to attain affluence, success to my father was having expensive possessions. We lived in an upscale neighborhood and my father loved his cars. In the 60s he had Cadillacs, you know, the ones with the fins, and in the 70s, the car my father loved was "The Mercedes." My father loved his possessions. They had to be in perfect running condition and perfectly clean. He painted his garage floor, and then put down strips of rugs where the tires would rest. That created and maintained an impeccably clean garage floor.

Back to the junkyard. My brothers purchased the parts they needed, but needless to say, neither of them noticed that they had been running around in a virtual grease pit. They put their purchases in the trunk and jumped into the back seat of the car for the trip home.

At home, my father got out of the car and glanced at his back seat as he went to open the trunk. His beautiful "Mercedes" was permanently stained with junkyard grease all over the floor and seats!

Like an Army Drill Sergeant, he lined up my brothers and made them stand at attention. In front of the whole neighborhood, he screamed at them, "You're idiots and you are stupid." He repeated this over and over again. After about five minutes of this treatment, he looked at Jerry, the older of the two, and said, "From now on, your name is Stupid #1." He then looked at Ben and said, "From now on, your name is now Stupid #2." And that is how they are affectionately known to this day.

New Year's Eve – 10th grade. I was staying over at my friend Bruce's house with our third friend Andy. There was no drinking, but at about 10:30 PM we decided to go out in the front yard and bring in the New Year with a game of tackle football. I was on the line of scrimmage, with instructions to go a couple steps off the line and cut right, Bruce would hit me with a pass. I caught this beautiful pass, turned around with gusto, because I was going to score a touchdown. What I had not planned on was running into was a huge linebacker, in the form of a big old tree. The tree did not sustain much damage, but my face sure did. I was a mess. I was

scared to interrupt my parent's New Year's celebration, so we went back to Andy's house where his housekeeper doctored me up. The next morning I called my mother and forewarned her that I was coming home and that I didn't look too good, but I was okay and there was no need to be alarmed.

Andy's father walked me down the street to my house. My mother was standing in the front window waiting. When she saw my face with its fresh bruises and my right eye black-and-blue and swollen shut, she started to cry, which sent my father into a rage. He started to scream; he wanted so badly to hit me. He said, "If you weren't in such bad shape, I'd kill you." That is the kind of compassion we got in our household.

And then there was the Sunday afternoon family drive. This was always an adventure. My mother would sit in the passenger's side of the front seat, and the four brothers would sit in the back seat. Before the engine was even started, my father would turn around and smack all of us. This was a pre-emptive strike for any trouble we were about to cause, or as a taste of what would happen if we did cause trouble. It reminded me of an episode of *The Three Stooges*.

These were just a few of the happenings of my childhood and of how painful my childhood was, why I saw no joy in parenthood, and had no desire to bring children into the world. I felt like my home was a place of ongoing fear. I am grateful for having had life experiences that forced me to choose not to become a parent. It allowed me to meet my wife, who was also abused in her childhood. Both of us chose not to have children for the same reason. By my contribution to this book, we both feel that this is an avenue where we can help birth a global consciousness for families to create a world where all children can feel safe in their own homes.

I guess, in a sense, we became parents after all.

Part II

FAMILIES

When I was growing up in the early 1970s in rural New Hampshire, mothering as a part of women's lives was deemed inferior to getting out in the world and being "equal to men." Only after she had established a career was it socially acceptable for a woman to take on the lesser job of bearing children. Those who chose to become a wife and mother first, as I did, were not "living up to our potential." My high school girlfriends asked, "Why is a smart girl like you wasting her intelligence?" It was more acceptable to have abortions and continue in the work world than to be a mother who stayed home with her children. If one chose to be "just" a mother, she was somehow *less than* a working woman.

Nothing is more important in life than inner peace and raising children in a healthy manner. Yet in today's two-income households, it is still not "enough" to be a full-time mother. If there are children in the family, the mother is pressured to fulfill her career goals while still managing the household and children.

The house we grow up in is the equivalent of a societal womb. When I was growing up, the Fundamentalist Christian model of family was rigid. The Bible was literal truth. Mother tried to fit into that model, and was angry when I went against it to divorce my husband.

Due to what I had observed with my parents, I had trusted the traditional Christian approach as the "right" way to create family. Later, this perception would prove to have disastrous results in my married life. It was not the Ten Commandments that had graced my parents with an enduring marriage; it was their own inner strength and fortitude. They each had earned the other's loyalty. They each had earned the other's trust. However, they and I credited an outside force, the Christian god and the doctrine of Christianity. We didn't realize that it was a state of consciousness, a willingness to take all that happens and create the alchemy of wellness, which was at the core of their success.

Through the disaster of my first marriage, I learned that not all men and women have the willingness to change and grow. I, like my parents, would have to learn a way to redefine my approach to parenting according to the circumstances I had been dealt. That attitude of accountability and responsibility, along with the willingness to change, would be the perspective I would set: a perspective that was not based on any formal formula, but rather on my own self-proclaimed creed of staying in a state of consciousness that honors my own intuition and me.

In my devout Christian family, that perspective cost me the very thing I was trying to create – a family. My willingness to choose a lifestyle that was not based on a rigid definition of Christianity was a challenge for my entire extended

family. I was willing to risk the relationship with my religion and family members to get out of an abusive marriage. I had attempted in many ways at many times to honor my husband like it commanded in the Bible. I wanted to be a “good Christian wife,” but how could I honor a man who did not honor me? I decided that my life was worth more than a belief system. It was a deeply painful experience for all of us, his side of the family included.

But pain and love are the two greatest teachers. I could not sacrifice my integrity to create a false illusion of family success. If their father had been willing to walk through life with me in true partnership, we would still be a traditional family. When he abused me, he lost that right and my kids lost time with their father. Hence, my deep regard for the strength of my parent’s marriage. They both wanted it to work.

I found the following story in my (second) husband’s photo album when we were looking at family pictures.

THE JOY OF GROWING UP ITALIAN

Anonymous

I was well into adulthood before I realized that I was an American. Of course, I had been born in America and lived here all my life, but somehow it never occurred to me that being a citizen of the United States meant I was an American. Americans were people who ate peanut butter and jelly on mushy white bread that came out of plastic packages. Me? I was an Italian.

For me, as I am sure for most second generation Italian-American children who grew up in the 40s and 50s, there was a definite distinction drawn between US and THEM. We were Italians. Everybody else – Irish, German, Polish, Jewish – they were Americans.

There was no animosity involved in that distinction, no prejudice, no hard feelings, just – well – we were sure ours was the better way. For instance, there were the many peddlers who plied the Italian neighborhoods. We had a bread man, a coal-and-ice man, a fruits-and-vegetables man, a watermelon man, and a fish man. We even had a man who sharpened knives and scissors; he came right to our homes or at least right outside our homes. We would wait for their call, their yell, or their individual distinctive sound. We knew them all and they knew us. Americans went to the stores for most of their foods. What a waste!

Truly, I pitied their loss. They never knew the pleasure of waking up every morning to find a hot, crisp loaf of Italian bread waiting behind the screen door. Instead of being able to climb up on back of the peddler's truck a couple of times a week just to hitch a ride, most of my American friends had to be satisfied with the A&P.

When it came to food, it always amazed me that American friends or classmates ate ONLY turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, and cranberry sauce on Thanksgiving and Christmas. Now, we Italians also had turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes and cranberry sauce – *after* we had finished the antipasto, soup, lasagna, meatballs, salad and whatever else Mama thought might be appropriate for the particular holiday.

In case somebody walked in who didn't like turkey, the turkey was usually accompanied and followed by an assortment of fruits, nuts, pastries, cakes, and, of course, homemade cookies. No

holiday was complete without some home baking – none of that store-bought stuff for us! This is where you learned to eat a seven-course meal between noon and 4 pm., how to handle hot chestnuts, and how to put tangerine wedges in homemade red wine. I truly believe Italians live a romance with food.

Speaking of food, Sunday was the big day of the week! That was the day you'd wake up to the smell of garlic and onions frying in olive oil. As you lay in bed you could hear the hiss as tomatoes were dropped into a pan. Sunday we always had macaroni (the Americans called it SPAGHETTI) and gravy (they called it SAUCE).

Sunday would not be Sunday without going to Mass. Of course, you couldn't eat before Mass because you had to fast before receiving communion. The good part was that we knew when we got home we'd find hot meatballs frying. *Nothing* tastes better than newly fried meatballs and crisp bread dipped into a pot of gravy.

There was another difference between US and THEM. We had gardens, not just flower gardens, but huge gardens where we grew tomatoes, tomatoes, and more tomatoes. We ate them, cooked them, and jarred them. Of course, we also grew peppers, basil, lettuce, and squash. Everybody had a grapevine and a fig tree and in the fall everybody made homemade wine – lots of it.

Those gardens thrived because we also had something else it seemed our American friends didn't have. We had a Grandfather! It's not that they didn't have grandfathers. It's just that they didn't live in the same house or on the same block. They visited their grandfathers. We ate with ours, and God forbid if we didn't see him at least once a day.

I can still remember my grandfather telling me about how he came to America as a young man "on the boat," how the family lived in a rented tenement and took in boarders in order to help make ends meet, and how he decided he didn't want his children – five sons and two daughters – to grow up in that environment. All of this was spoken in his version of Italian/English, which I learned to understand quite well. So when he had saved enough (I could never figure out how), he bought a house. That house served as the family headquarters for forty years. I remember how he hated to leave the house; he would rather sit on the back porch and watch his garden grow. When he did leave for some special occasion, he had to return as quickly as possible. After all, "nobody's watching the house."

I also remember the holidays when all the relatives would gather at my grandfather's house and there would be tables full of food and homemade wine and music. Women in the kitchen, men in the living room and kids, kids everywhere. I must have a half-million cousins, first and second, and some who aren't even related, but what did it matter?

My grandfather, pipe in his mouth and thin mustache trimmed, would sit in the middle of it all grinning his mischievous smile. His dark eyes would twinkle as he surveyed his domain, proud of his family and how well his children had done. One was a cop, one a fireman, one had his trade and, of course, there was always the rogue. The girls had all married well and had fine husbands and healthy children and everyone knew respect.

He had achieved his goal in coming to America, to New Jersey. His children and their children were achieving the same goals that were available to them in their great country because they were Americans. When my grandfather died, years ago at the age of 76, things began to change. Slowly at first, but then uncles and aunts eventually began to cut down on their visits. Family gatherings were fewer, and something seemed to be missing. Although, when we did get together, usually at my mother's house, I always had the feeling he was there somehow.

It was understandable. Everyone now had families of their own and grandchildren of their own. Today, they visit once or twice a year. We get together at weddings and wakes.

Lots of other things have changed, too. The old house my grandfather bought is now covered with aluminum siding. Although my uncle still lives there, my grandfather's garden is gone. The last of the homemade wine has long since been drunk and nobody covers the fig tree in the fall anymore. For a while, we would make the rounds on the holidays, visiting family. Now, we occasionally visit the cemetery. A lot of them are there – grandparents, uncles, aunts, and my own father.

The holidays have changed too. The great quantity of food we once consumed without any ill effects is not good for us anymore – too much starch, too much cholesterol, and too many calories. Nobody bothers to bake anymore. They're too busy and it's easier to buy it at the store. We meet at my house now, at least my family does, but it's not the same.

The differences between US and THEM aren't so easily defined anymore and I guess that's good. My grandparents were Italian-Italians and my parents were Italian-Americans. I'm an American-Italian and my children are American-Americans.

Oh, I'm an American all right. I'm proud of it, just as my grandfather would want me to be. We are all Americans now – the Irish, Germans, Poles, and Jews. United States citizens. But somehow, I still feel a little bit Italian. Call it culture, tradition, or roots; I'm really not sure what it is. All I know is that my children have been cheated out of a wonderful piece of their heritage. They never knew my grandfather.

* * *

Here is a story about what can happen when fathers want to make babies but they don't want to raise children.

CHEATING ON THE DIVINE PLAN

By Mary Ellen Martin

Here I sit, age forty-five, pregnant with my sixth child, and wonder, how did I get here? Will anything ever take this pain away? Fulfilling my divine purpose had been my ultimate goal, but now I find myself barely able to function as a human being, let alone care for five children the way I should. I have been a mother now some fifteen years and I have seen a lot of heartache in my lifetime, but nothing, *nothing*, could have prepared me for the depth of pain and despair I now face.

I think back to eight years ago, when my three oldest children were seven, six, and four. I had tubal ligation surgery within a day of my third child's birth and almost immediately regretted my decision. I toyed with the idea of trying to have the surgery reversed, but always had come to roadblocks – emotional, financial, or medical.

Finally, by the fall of 1996, I felt strongly called by Spirit to find a way to do it. I didn't know why, but I was sure I was being asked to make it happen for a divine reason. Although my husband didn't agree, he was willing to cooperate and we started to save money for the cash-only operation.

The procedure was done in April 1997 and we immediately tried to conceive a baby. Three months later, we were pregnant and our daughter was born in April 1998. She was named after the Virgin Mary for the miracle that she was.

What a joyous time with a new baby, who was clearly a result of desire and intention! During my pregnancy, I had met Rhobbin Alexis, who was teaching a Reiki class out of her home. I had signed up for the class because I felt that it was the next step on my spiritual journey. God's intention for me to have this child despite all the apparent obstacles had brought me into daily contact with people who also walked a sacred path. Rhobbin has been blessed with the ability to communicate with babies in the

womb and made me feel that this was a very special child, as were the ones that would most likely follow.

Just before I became pregnant, my husband, who I had been with for 18 years and was always been a caring family man, added a second business to his already busy schedule. Consequently, he worked many fifteen-hour days.

We were a home schooling family that adored our new baby and made the most of our time together. We constantly looked for new and interesting ways to educate the children, with travel being of utmost importance. We were constantly camping or on road trips, always something new to see and learn about. Unfortunately, most of our trips were without Dad. Our lives eventually became quite independent of his, but we always tried to find ways to fill him in on what we were doing by phone or by visiting him at his job.

A year after the baby was born, we witnessed yet another miracle. We had been living in a rental condominium, always with the dream of a home of our own, but with little hope of ever being able to afford one. When Mary was just four months old, I decided the time had come to put forth the intention to manifest what we desired. I pictured us with a simple place brought about by hard work and savings. I presented the idea to stop all unnecessary spending and concentrate incredibly hard on saving for our goal and, somehow, the perfect situation would present itself.

After nine months of saving, with many miraculous coincidences along the way, we had come close to my goal of saving enough money to buy some land and camp on it for the summer months; we would build a foundation or garage that would be our temporary living quarters until we had enough money to continue building. This was a common practice in New Hampshire at the time and I knew we were certainly capable of doing it. Although my husband was absolutely not interested in the camping idea, he was an eager participant in the savings aspect, somewhat intrigued by how it could all come together.

By late spring, I was becoming nervous because we hadn't found what we were looking for and we needed to be situated somewhere for summer so we could stop spending money on rent. Late in May, an acquaintance of my husband's had shown him a piece of land in a tiny mountain town. He came home and said it wouldn't work out, as the land was very wet. Hating to hear disappointing news, I took the children myself to check it out. Despite the wetness of the

land, I found myself feeling strongly that we were supposed to live there.

A short time later, I brought a friend to look at the land, which by now was even wetter and looking less desirable. We decided to take a walk down the road to see what the rest of the neighborhood looked like and, there, in front of us, was a simple house with a *For Sale* sign in the window. A few days later I knocked on the door and the woman who answered told me that she rented the house. If I'd like to come in, she could give me the owner's number.

When I stepped inside, I knew I was home; the kitchen alone matched the image I had always held in my mind. Later, when friends came to visit, they would gasp when they entered because they knew the house was exactly what I had always dreamed of. It fell into place very quickly after that. My husband came to look at the house and loved it and the owners agreed to finance us. We were able to purchase and move in within two weeks time.

The day we moved into our home I was forty years old and my children were nine, eight, six, and one. My husband continued to work his unbelievable hours; he told people he was very happy to have purchased his first home, vacation home, and retirement home – all on the same day.

Less than a year later I was pregnant again, but sadly miscarried the baby at eleven weeks. I experienced a significant period of depression and found myself, for the first time ever, unable to do quite simple things. In time, the feeling passed, but it made me keenly aware of my own limitations.

Three months after the miscarriage, my husband and I put our intention into creating another life and shortly afterwards were pregnant again. I joyfully faced the holiday season knowing I was part of God's plan for these special children.

As we went into 2001, things became a little more difficult. I needed to balance my body's exhaustion, educational requirements for three children in 3rd, 4th and 5th grades, and the needs of a busy two-year-old. My husband became very frustrated with the children in the short period of time he was home each morning and seemed to undermine the whole schooling experience by daily threats to stick them on the yellow school bus.

One of our children had borderline issues that I was addressing in as natural a fashion as I could find. Daily it seemed I had to endure my husband's suggestions for medication. As the winter went on, it was clear that our five-year stretch of home schooling was most certainly coming to an end. I spent the spring sorting through educational options for the following year.

In the end, it was decided that our oldest daughter would enter 6th grade at a local public school, our son would go to a nearby Montessori School, and our third child would continue one more year at home for her 4th grade year. The decisions were excruciating to make, as is any major change, but by the beginning of summer we felt focused for the next school year and eagerly awaited the birth of our fifth child in late July.

Our darling baby girl was born in early August and she seemed to balance our family. The school year began and, after some transition, all seemed to settle in nicely. Every day posed a new challenge for a mother of five with a new baby, a busy three-year old, a nine-year old home-schooler and two children in two different schools with considerable drives each morning and afternoon.

I considered myself a single parent, as my husband was always at work and unable to help with day-to-day operations of the family. In the brief moments that I could catch my husband's eye, I would remind him that we had felt compelled by Spirit to create this! Frustration could have been high on my part, but I always thought that in time his workload would decrease as systems fell into place at his businesses and he would be able to be more of the family man he was meant to be.

The years went on and my life was taken over by the needs of our children. The following year our ten-year old daughter joined our son at the Montessori School, where they were both loved and nurtured. My husband still worked crazy hours and, in spite of his somewhat short fuse with normal kid issues, he seemed to be trying.

Our relationship, in its twenty-third year at that point, seemed quite strong. Even though he was often absent and not an affectionate man in front of others, I always felt that he was glad to be in our relationship, where I saw through a lot and understood him and where our private moments were our own. The last few years, however, had proven disastrous for my extended family. A

family member died. I looked to my husband for love and support. None came. If it hadn't been for the love of a few special people looking out for me, I would have collapsed in exhaustion. I wondered what it was about my husband that he couldn't see my pain and come to my aid.

Personality changes in a family member can sneak up on you. Before I even realized it, my husband was mindlessly mimicking the personality of one of his ancestors, much to my dismay. I feared that this was the way he was aging, which truly frightened me. He had become emotionally distant, with most conversations between us carried by me alone. I had mentioned to him several times that if I was going to continue to do everything alone, I'd prefer to be alone. He never responded.

This brings me to my original question, how did I get here? A few months ago, we celebrated our 25th year together. A short time afterwards, I found out that I was pregnant. This was the first child we had ever conceived by surprise, but I was delighted at what appeared to be my last chance to have the sixth child that Spirit had guided us to have. I felt like we were fulfilling our divine purpose. My husband, however, was less than pleased at the prospect and I was quite offended by the negative energy directed at the baby. We spent a rather strained Thanksgiving together.

Two days after Thanksgiving the phone rang and my world changed forever. My best friend called in tears telling me that she had something to tell me that she wished she didn't. She said she had been hearing rumors about my husband being involved with a woman that my friend used to baby-sit for when the woman's son was a newborn. I pretty much laughed it off as it seemed so far-fetched, but told her I'd run it by him when he woke up. I thought to myself, "What woman would be crazy enough to create that much karma for herself by getting involved with a married man with five children?" Apparently they *are* out there and one had hitched her fertility star to my husband's success with making babies.

I confronted him when he was getting ready to leave for work and he told me it was one of those rumors with no basis. I asked more questions; he gave more pat answers. Had it not been for his body language, which didn't add up, I would have let it go. But I pushed for the truth. I told him that I didn't know what was going on, but that I deserved an honest answer, regardless. He told me he didn't want to talk about it. I insisted on the truth, which was that he

was involved with a woman he'd worked with closely for the last four years. It started early on in my last pregnancy; the child that my best friend so lovingly cared for during the first year of his life was *his*. And the new woman was the "love of his life."

As my innocence was sucked out of my body, I was sent into immediate shock. In the place where my heart once was, a gaping hole appeared. In an instant, the person I had once been was gone. The person it had taken me years to create, the person who was fun and smart and confidant and loving, disappeared. I had struggled to overcome confidence issues brought about by childhood trauma and, in the previous six or seven years, I had felt very strong, able to rise to any challenge and to increase energy output, even as situations got more chaotic. I actually seemed to thrive on facing insurmountable odds.

In her place, here I am: a woman who can't drive her children to school without crashing the car. A woman whose friends, one after the other, bring over groceries, fold laundry, wash floors, make my kids laugh, and feed them dinner. A woman who can't think of anything else to say but thank you as friends clean out her car, put up storm windows, and drive my kids to their friends' houses.

I now sit like a victim of an auto accident, watching as others do my work, knowing I can do little to assist them. The shock is huge, brought about by years of deception compounded by the early months of pregnancy, during which nausea and exhaustion reign.

My children all sit with their own levels of shock and despair. They live with the knowledge that their father found the situation in our home so intolerable that he began a relationship with another woman, all the while pretending to be a part of this family. They think about the fact that while their overburdened mother nursed their baby sister and put them all to bed, their father would visit his girlfriend and eventually conceive a child with her.

They think about how it could be that their mother is pregnant, how it could even be possible now that their father has told them that he fell out of love with their mother many years ago. They remember what their mother has tried to teach them about fidelity and right choices in relationships and they wonder if they really understand what she's talking about. They think about their half-brother and wonder about their connection to him.

In the blink of an eye, a distorted reality disappeared and in its place came an ugly truth. In the countless conversations between my supposed husband and me since this revelation, the underlying theme I picked up was the pathetic nature of a coward. Early on in my last pregnancy, overwhelmed by children and bills and toys and noise, he set out to change his life.

Without warning, or any type of notification, he began another life with someone else, giving his heart and body to another and bringing home his soul-less self to us. He continued to have a sexual relationship with me throughout the four-year period, as he needed to meet his basic human needs, or so he told me after his lie was uncovered. The lie was placed in my body with little hope for health for me. The body that had served as a vehicle for these special children had been violated in the worst conceivable way.

As his awful lie sucked the life out of our happy home, it produced another human being who must now live with the weight of the lie for the rest of his life.

As the new couple continued on, day after day, month after month, and eventually year after year, they had pathetic excuses. My favorite was, "I told him we didn't have a future until he solved his problems at home with his family." My husband said his new woman reminded him a lot of me – both intelligent, beautiful, self-reliant individuals. I said that was probably true, as we were both single mothers raising his children.

I sit and await the arrival of my very special baby, who was physically created by egg and sperm, but who has been spiritually created by the outpouring of love to my family. I have seen friends drop what they are doing to help us, because they know it's the right thing to do. As a child who will not have a father, this one yet inside will always know a father's love; many special men have and will bless our lives. I sit and wait and I grieve.

I grieve for my children as they watch their father, who admits to not having what it takes to be a family man, leave them to be in a different family. I grieve for my daughters, who will now look at men without total trust, wondering if they have been told the full story. I grieve for my son, who may or may not turn into an immature adult as his father did, who may or may not be able to be honest with those who care for him, and who may or may not be the kind of man he could have been.

I grieve for family and friends who have had to carry sadness in their hearts since first hearing this story. I grieve for my soon to be ex-husband, who has fallen off the path and is comfortable in a world without Spirit. Mostly, I grieve for myself, for this assault on my sacred contract and for the work I have ahead of me to get back to where I was. I grieve for the tremendous sadness I feel when I think of the love I have for a man I once considered my closest friend.

We who are walking on God's path can feel confident that our work may be slowed down or even seriously stalled at times, but nothing can affect the ultimate goal if we are able to follow the light, even in the midst of the scariest periods of darkness. We parents owe it to these special children to give them no less.

Note: Mary Elizabeth gave birth on July 13, 2005 to a healthy baby boy. During the pregnancy, the couple was in counseling. While Mary Elizabeth was in labor, her husband, who was present at the baby's birth, told her that he wanted a divorce. As she screamed at him for his bad timing and for the pain of the contractions, they removed their wedding bands. As of October 18, 2009 this family has been happily reunited for over a year.

* * *

UN-NURTURED CHILD

By Khymmy

Am I allowed to cry?

Cry from the self-inflicted wounds festering gangrene on my
self-esteem?

Am I allowed to heal?

Heal, having survived a living hell taught so well by one who
wished me such ill?

Am I allowed to forgive myself?

For learning all the wrong things, burning with sensations
from the mind guards appointed to me?

Yes, you say. But I?

I say the rains won't come to the desert of my desolation.
No consolation for such a bad, bad, BAD little girl!

Can't you do anything right!?!?

Oh dear, oh my judge and jury,

Your fury of displeasure towards me is naught compared to
my measure of myself.

Don't you see!?! Don't you get it!?!?

Doesn't *matter* to me anymore what you think of me,
what I've done, or who you want me to be.

Doesn't matter anymore . . . never really did.

Slay me, slay me, but slay me no more.

I have washed ashore to the salvation of awareness
The Pit held the Knowledge
filled with the bones of those who chose not to know

But I . . . was not one of them.

I came back – battered, splattered, and trailing flamboyantly my
seeming misdeeds like trophies.

Giddy and starved, tripping, sliding, foaming insanity.
I fell exhausted before the Opening.

When I finally awakened, the blinding Light assaulted my senses.

Bad trip?

My Soul's lifetime, was it? Yeah, very bad trip.

And yeah....

I'm allowed to cry and heal and forgive myself.
Yeah, that and more.

Oh, so much more.

For I shall mother me.

* * *

THE BLESSING

By Diane Wall

*He or she who knows that enough is enough will
always have enough.*

--Lao Tzu

Why is it that every time your period is late the only things you see on TV are commercials for home pregnancy kits? I've seen more pregnant woman on *Lifetime* TV in one week than I've seen in the last four years. Or so it seems. Now, let me share . . .

I realize that women all over the world are praying for a "blessing." I never thought that the day would come when I would say, "OHHHH NOOOOOO! Please God, I'm blessed enough! I'm 50."

Oh, the visions flashing through my head. The guilt alone could kill me.

Every one of my friends has at least one horror story of someone who couldn't have children or the tribulations they went through in order to conceive at all. Not me. I have four grown kids. Two boys and two girls; ages 23, 21, 21, and 18. They will die of embarrassment (if I don't first). Where will this little blessing sleep? In our room for the first six months or so, as did all the others? My husband will be ever so happy.

Why me? Why now? I'm 50 and I'm tired. How can I be as stupid at 50 as I was during adolescence? Can I really be pregnant? I only did it once. Can you even *get* pregnant at 50?

Incredulous. That's about the only word that comes to mind.

We just started sleeping again for the first time in 23 years. My son got his license. No more picking kids up at random hours of the night. No car-pooling. I'll always look back fondly at those lovely times when you picked up your children and they asked, "Can you

drop off so and so?” Blindly, I would agree. “Where do they live? Okay, let me get my passport.”

I’m trying to get a hold of myself now and realize there is a light at the end of the tunnel. My oldest son could get married in a few years and the “blessing” could have his room. If the blessing is a boy, that would be swell. I wouldn’t even have to paint. Did I mention how tired I am? When did I get so old? The very idea of painting makes me want to take a nap.

Right now the idea of early retirement is running through my mind. I used to model when I was young. Recently, I went back to work and I was reassigned to the “Classic Division.” Cute, right? That’s the name for the ol’ broads, sort of like beloved antique cars. Do you have any idea how many Pilates tapes and hours of yoga it took to be a size 6 model after having four kids? I’m thinking, my income from this particular field could be coming to an abrupt halt.

Never mind tuition. TUITION!!! Catholic school tuition is skyrocketing. Just shoot me now. Seventy years old, and paying college tuition. I’ll be dead by the time the “blessing” graduates. God, are you still there? Can you hear me? I’m 50 and I’m tired. Did I mention that?

All right. This is it. God only gives you what you can handle, right? Look at St. Elizabeth. Late in life an angel appeared to her and told her she would be blessed with a child. She accepted this wonderful news with joy and thanked God for her gift. Now, I’m no saint, but I thought I would start praying to St. Elizabeth to help me accept God’s holy will and to be accepting of what he has planned for me. But then I started thinking: St. Elizabeth had no other children. I bet she didn’t even have a car. You wouldn’t have seen her running red lights to meet the school bus while trying to make the train!

People used to say thirty-five was the “now-or-never” age in a woman’s life if you were considering whether or not to have another child. I have four friends who opted for a dog when it came down to it. *Hmmmm*. A pet would be a beautiful thing right about now. No tuition, either.

The only redeeming quality I can think of at this point is that when the “blessing” wakes up for its two o’clock feeding, I’m up anyway. Roaming the house doing a head count, turning lights off, closing doors, checking for missing cars in the driveway, and listening to

phone messages telling me not to get up and answer the phone, because I'm spending the night at a friends.

Oh, the joys of motherhood. I do want you to know, though, how much I truly love infants. They are my favorite. But after three weeks, I realize the two's are also quite "cute."

Would I have to be class mother all over again? I swore years ago I'd never make another cupcake. This, after being class mother for four classes and 150 cupcakes later, plus Christmas parties, Easter parties, St. Patty's Day parties, Valentine's day parties, etc. Did I mention my personal favorite? Class trips! The class mother gets to take the school bus with the kids. Yeah!! Now that I'm 50, would they mind tuning into a classical station? It's very soothing.

I wonder if I will get a baby shower? I got rid of my crib years ago when they said children could get caught between the bars. I hear they don't use lead paint anymore.

Let's face it, ladies, this monthly thing is no picnic. I've almost been thinking fondly about menopause. After all, enough is enough. I asked my mom recently when she started menopause and she said 55! I'm still buying Kotex and my friends are talking about Depends. Are they nuts? Don't even get me started. At that stage in life, don't you want something called *Definitely? Depends*, I think not.

What if the blessing has colic? I know God only gives you what you can handle, but does He know I didn't handle that stage well? Does that count?

I've come to realize now what I couldn't see then. I needed to learn patience. What a hard lesson to learn; but learn I did. What I know now is that "I AM NOT IN CONTROL!" Once I learned to "let go and let God," things got a lot better. Now that I know more, I see the mistakes I've made in the past, so I've made some changes.

The blessing will have friends that have wisdom beyond their years. They'll spend their free time volunteering in soup kitchens and visiting museums. The blessing will be voted president of the science club and join *Habitat for Humanity* after school. He will study astrology and plan his day according to the planetary alignment through his natal chart.

The blessing will have a garden in the backyard where he will grow totally organic fresh vegetables with NO pesticides and will drink nothing containing red food dye. So no cupcakes for Valentine's Day. With any luck, maybe he will find a cure for Alzheimer's, so I can be sane enough to still understand how wonderful everyone says my blessing is!

One thing I have ruled out is sports. My blessing will NOT play sports. No more practices, summer camps, early morning games, weekend middle-of-the-day games, etc. One son played ice hockey. His practice ice time was 4:30 a.m. Saturday mornings. By the way, did I mention that I was a wee bit tired? Some mornings at the rink I would look down and notice I had on two different shoes!

No more bleachers, no more fields with lights. Let me tell you what lights mean: It simply means that you can go into overtime till tomorrow, thank you very much. I saw kids walking bases so many times, that the first time I went to a Yankee game, I didn't know why everyone wasn't out on the field, and why was it taking sooo long for someone to get to first base. Boy, those young kids could teach them a thing or two!

Did you realize they sell everything at the kids' games but not good fresh hot coffee? People used to look in my trunk and think I'd just returned from a camping trip. I had towels, umbrellas, winter coats, rain gear, water, food, chairs, and pillows. I'll tell you the truth: with four kids each playing two or three sports, I never really got it – goals, nets, scores, hits, checks, bases, lines, plates. It's absolutely exhausting. I could use a nap just thinking about it.

By the way, did I mention how tired I am? You see my husband is actually the sports enthusiast. He signed our kids up for everything and, unfortunately, has to work 24-hour shifts for the fire department.

One helpful piece of info I can share with you is to mark your child's sneakers with a highlighter. The nice bright color will certainly be a standout on the field and you will be able to spot them quite quickly! (Don't be expecting any thank-you cards when they realize what you have done.)

I have also ruled out musical instruments for my blessing. No more concerts or trying to figure out when the music really started. Oh, was that a new version of *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*? I've never heard it played quite so, ah, let me think, *long*.

Would you like a valuable tip? Always drive car pools. When the kids are in the mini-van, turn the music way up and keep it all in the back. They'll think you can't hear them and start talking really loud. This is not an exercise for wimps and you will hear plenty. After a while parents will start asking you why you seem to know what's going on and, if you like them, you'll tell them.

One thing the "blessing" has taught me is that I LOVE MY LIFE! I love my husband and my family. I am truly blessed! My children are my greatest gifts. I have learned patience, responsibility, kindness, thoughtfulness, forgiveness, and selflessness.

I have always told my children to reverse things in their life and they will always have an answer as to why that situation arose. As I reverse this occurrence of fearing pregnancy again, I think to myself... "If I never had this experience, would I realize how wonderful my life already is?" I get up every morning and thank God for my blessings. If I wind up with one more child to thank God for, so be it!!

Happily, I'm writing this after a much-enjoyed trip to the local drug store for supplies. I am not pregnant! I've never been quite so glad to spend the better part of an hour trying to decide what to buy from such a potpourri of feminine hygiene products – overnight, extra-long, thin mini, mesh liner regulars, ultra thins, heavy flow, almost flowing, thinking about flowing, etc. Phew! What a relief!

Thank you God, now and always, for realizing I'm 50. Did I mention how tired I am? Although, maybe now I can start my real career as a stand up comedian!

AMEN.

* * *

A GAY FAMILY

By Erin J

I am a lesbian. I have a very mainstream job in a plastic surgeon's office in Beverly Hills as a surgical nurse. I am exposed to what everyone wants to be. The ideal Hollywood look: youth and perfection. I feel like one of the most normal girls in the office. I just happen to be attracted to woman more than men. There is an occasional guy that makes me think, "I could like him. I could be in a relationship with him and be happy, and have kids and an easy life." Maybe I'm 'bi' or whatever the politically correct term is at the moment.

It comes down to this. Should I try to be with a man, so I can have kids and a "normal" life, where I fit in everywhere and my kids will not be teased because of me? I have thought about it many times and sometimes think it would be okay.

Most times, I really want to go home with a woman and wake up the next morning laughing about the night before with her, not him. I don't know why. What is strange is that I don't feel gay. I feel like all my other friends except that I am more attracted to women.

I don't feel like the lesbians with the rainbow stickers and male-hating personas. I look straight and act straight. I just want to kiss women. I grew up in Los Angeles and am a typical valley girl, wanting my prince to rescue me, except the prince would preferably be a princess. I don't see the big deal, really. It seems so normal and natural that it is devastating that people are killed for being gay. I cannot even comprehend it. I do think in my lifetime things will change and it will not be such a big deal. Until then, what I do, I do.

I always knew I would have kids and be a great mother, just like my own mother. Now in my late 20's I have been faced with quite a dilemma: how can I be in a gay relationship and have children? Is it selfish of me to create children who may not know their dad? Is it selfish of me to raise children who could and probably will be teased for having gay parents?

I want my children to have as perfect a life as possible and I don't want them hurt or suffering because of me. I could never do that. I have thought that I could find a gay man to be the father of the children and that man could be involved in the children's lives and be an active dad. Then my own homophobia comes out and I realize I don't want my children to be associated with so many gay people. This is, of course, because I do not feel gay.

At other times I feel like it would be okay and my children would grow up open to all walks of life. Maybe they would not be teased. Is it wrong for me to want children if they will not have a socially acceptable family? Will the parents of my children's friends think I am some perverted freak and not want to associate with me?

Maybe I should look at myself as an example for the future. I do not want to be known as the token lesbian couple. I do not want my family and me to be typecast as "the gay people."

I am open and accepting and see the whole picture more than others do. But, what do I say when my child asks if he or she has a father? Do I have the right to take away the opportunity for my child to have a father? I do not think so. I want my child to have a healthy relationship with a father. I want to have a loving relationship with their father as well.

I feel there are many homosexual people who choose the straight life and live in secret simply so they can raise a family in its existing form. What would happen if everyone chose to develop the families they wanted in the manner in which they wanted them? Would society accept diversity? Is it fair for my children to be the guinea pigs for the new America? If I do not use my strength to help start a new American family, then who will?

I see a better future full of many people living peacefully, accepting their neighbor's differences. There is no wrong. There is just love. I want to have the courage to know that love is love and know that I will raise loving, healthy, happy children that will have successful lives and futures and love me and the family I have created. I wish the world would catch up with my vision. Perhaps I will try in vitro.

Footnote: as of October 17, 2009 Erin and her wife are expecting their first child

* * *

ONE FAMILY'S STRUGGLE WITH INFERTILITY

by Pettit Gilwee

There are few things as heartbreaking as trying to have a baby when it's not happening as quickly or easily as you expected. According to the National Infertility Association, infertility affects 10 percent of the population today. For me, infertility was truly a life crisis. It affected all areas of my life, including my self-esteem.

No one likes to fail and that's what I felt like, a big failure. All around me everyone seemed to be getting pregnant. My well-meaning friends told my husband and me to take a vacation and

relax and then we'd get pregnant. But after 12 months of ovulation kits and taking my temperature, it still wasn't happening. Already discouraged, I started thinking it was God's way of telling us we weren't meant to be parents.

Slowly, I lost interest in my business, hobbies, and family – until a 30-second conversation with a colleague changed everything. She confided that her daughter was conceived via *in vitro* fertilization. She said that if I was over 30 years old and had been trying to conceive for six months without any luck, I should contact a fertility specialist regarding the options available.

That day, I made an appointment with the Northern California Fertility Center in Roseville, one of the top fertility centers in the country. After some initial web surfing, I learned some surprising statistics. Infertility is a female problem in 35 percent of cases, a male problem in 35 percent of cases, a combined problem in 20 percent of cases, with the remaining 10 percent of cases unexplained.

After months of tests, my husband and I fell into the last category. Physically, we should have been able to conceive, but for whatever reason we could not. The good news was that infertility is a medical problem and 50 percent of cases do respond to treatment, with a successful pregnancy resulting.

We were very lucky. The first procedure we tried, intrauterine insemination, resulted in the conception of our son. Intrauterine insemination involves injecting sperm, via a catheter, into the uterine cavity during a woman's natural ovulation cycle. Many women also take Clomid, a drug to ramp up egg production, releasing more than one egg during a cycle. I had three viable eggs that released during my cycle, but only one fertilized.

Was the process worth the result? You bet! However, it was difficult. The tests were invasive and I fainted a total of three times, threw up twice, and ended up on Valium for the final procedure. My husband fared better and was incredibly supportive, comforting me after tests with pizza and ice cream.

Sometimes I wish I could tell my son that he was conceived on an anniversary vacation in Hawaii, but, as my Mom says, a baby is the bottom line and it really doesn't matter how he was conceived because he's here and very much loved.

Pettit Gilwee is president of Lake Tahoe-based Pettit Gilwee Public Relations and mother to Travis James Turner.

Part III

TERRORISM

The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral, begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it. Through violence, you may murder the liar, but you cannot murder the lie, nor establish the truth. Through violence you may murder the hater, but you do not murder the hate. In fact, violence merely increases hate. So it goes. . . . Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already void of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.

-Martin Luther King Jr.

No one can flatter himself that he is immune to the spirit of his own epoch, or even that he possesses a full understanding of it. Irrespective of our conscious convictions, each one of us, without exception, being a particle of the general mass, is somewhere attached to, colored by, or even undermined by the spirit which goes through the mass. Freedom stretches only as far as the limits of our consciousness.

Carl Jung (Jung, 1942)

On the morning of the September 11th, I awoke feeling particularly relieved from my psychic “duties” in regards to national security. I knew that all the visions I had shared with people who had the power to use them were now going to be called on the evolutionary carpet. I felt lighter then I had in years.

When I turned on the television and saw the Pentagon and Twin Towers tragedies, two things flashed in my mind. First, was the memory of my near death experience when my great-grandmother informed me that I couldn’t stay on the other side because I would be needed on this planet after the “twins.” All these years I thought she meant I had to tell people about what it was like to give birth to twins and have one live and one die. Now I had gotten the bigger picture. She had been referring to the collapse of the twin towers.

I knew that I was no longer a small town clairvoyant whose family thought she was crazy for expressing predictions about national tragedies. The unthinkable had happened. Our nation was being forced to awaken. I became aware that I needed to help inspire compassion, forgiveness, national integrity, and unity consciousness. For me that meant encouraging parents who are free in their own spirits and minds to create healthy families. We need to inspire people to want to raise the vibration of peace by raising respect for the pursuit of freedom.

In the following story, Michelle's family is a perfect example of the old saying, "If Momma ain't happy, ain't nobody happy." It is the kind of energy behind her and her husband's parenting decision that will determine the survival of the family structure.

MOTHERHOOD MATTERS

By Michelle Dennehy

Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadow.

Helen Keller

I hand the money to Sherry and say goodbye, automatically reciprocating her pleasant smile. I close the door and step out into the crisp noontime air. It feels good to have come full circle and I am relieved, excited really, to be walking out of my doctor's office feeling so content and confident. This time last year was a whole different story. So much has changed and healed since then.

It is September 26, 2002, a year and fifteen days since my last doctor's appointment. That was where I'd been on that fateful 9/11 morning. I can recall it as clear as day, just as any human being can that was a part of it. It was a morning filled with emotions and images that continue to ripple out, then pulse back into me, impressing upon my core.

The details are as vivid as the ones I recall about the day that the space shuttle Challenger crashed: how my friends and I were all huddled together in our sixth-grade classroom, sitting quietly, staring intently at the television screen, captivated as the massive steel bird shot into the sky like a missile, then broke apart into streams of smoke and debris as it dove back towards earth. Even at age 10, in my small hometown of Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, I could feel the intimate loss of one of our own. Christa McAuliffe was the first civilian in space and she was a teacher. My parents were teachers. Up until 9/11, that was the most defining chunk of history that I had ever actually witnessed, the first national tragedy that had ever lodged into and been absorbed by my young psyche.

As Watergate, Vietnam, and the assassination of John F. Kennedy had devastated my parents' generation, September 11, 2001 was the pivotal event that would unite and crush all of us in three calculated and callus blows. That dark day would rock a sleepy nation from its slumber.

Looking back, there was such irony to that morning. It was cool, crisp, and bright. The sun's rays were bursting through the rich greens of the grass and trees, seeming to illuminate them from the inside out. It was the kind of morning that makes you move instantly away from summer and start sprinting towards fall.

There was newness in the air that you could taste, as earthy smells began to rise up from the ground, gently seeping into the palate and lungs with each hungrily inhaled breath. Soon the trees would be erupting in an unbridled symphony of color across every hillside – that last brilliant burst of life before death as the earth begins to turn herself inward and away from the coming harshness of winter. I have come to love this season, to derive great inspiration and peace in witnessing its ever-changing process.

I could feel that excitement pulsing through me as I rushed out the door and jumped into my waiting car. I had just dropped off my 13-month-old son, Sean, at my best friend Ryan's house so that I could escape for my annual ob/gyn exam. Ryan and I had joked about it as I'd left, rolled our eyes at one another and laughed – what a way to spend that rare hour away!

I was, however, looking forward to seeing the women who had taken such good care of me during my pregnancy. It had been a whole year since I had seen any of them, so I focused on the idea of that reunion instead of the actual reason for the visit.

Then I noticed that the energy around me had changed. Pulled from the inner world of my thoughts, I realized that the music that had been streaming gently from my radio had stopped. I was instantly captured by the adrenaline-charged tones of reporters' voices as they spoke, tones etched with human confusion, fear, and concern. I arrived at the office at 9:07, just as the news of the second plane crash began to tear across the airwaves. I killed the ignition, held my breath, and felt the world fall into surreal silence.

Could this really be happening? I forced myself out of the car and made my way across the parking lot. This was bad. This was really bad. I could feel the tension beginning to pool at the bottom of my stomach. I opened the office door and padded softly into the reception area, wondering if anyone in the office knew what was going on yet. Sherry was the first person that I saw.

"Why don't you have a seat, Michelle. Mary will be right with you." She paused a moment, then continued. "She just got off the phone with her son. He's okay as far as we know, but she hasn't heard from him since the second plane hit. His office is only a couple of blocks away from the World Trade Center."

Sherry's voice dropped off and I floated to the couch in the waiting room as my brain struggled to assimilate what it had just heard.

Mary's son was there – in the city. I sat in stunned disbelief as the last layer of protection that I had fashioned around myself was blown away.

There had been something about knowing that I was tucked away in the valleys of the White Mountains that had made me feel safe up until that point. But reality was starting to set in. I could no longer pretend. In this little office, five hours away from the terrorist attacks, I suddenly felt exposed and insecure. I was about to look into the eyes of a woman who was being intimately affected by the unthinkable horror that was unfolding.

I sat in the exam room wearing a loosely fastened gown, strategically covered by a sheet. *What the hell am I doing here? Is there a way to excuse myself politely?* I imagined that the last thing this poor woman wanted to deal with right now was me.

There was a light knock on the door and Mary entered, my file pressed to her chest. She seemed all right on the outside, as far as I could tell. I watched her walk in and take her place on the stool in front of me. Calmly she opened my file and scanned the top sheet of paper. She asked me how I was feeling. "Is Sean doing well? And Patrick?"

I was caught off-guard by how *present* she was and how easily I was able to answer her questions. She was genuinely interested in what I was saying. I watched her, while trying not to let her know it. How could she possibly have it so together? It was amazing.

She asked me again about Sean and, like any mother who is absolutely in love with her child, I was soon gushing about how wonderful he was, how much Patrick and I were enjoying him, and how blessed we felt to have this precious little boy in our lives.

And that is when I saw it. My ramblings were beginning to touch her somewhere deep inside her heart. I continued to talk and watched as her eyes moved downward, refocused inward. I watched what must have been her own sweet memories of motherhood play themselves back inside her mind's eye. A reminiscent smile crossed her lips and her eyes began to glisten as she raised them to mine. "They are truly wonderful, aren't they? Gifts from God."

I nodded my head in agreement, softly offering my sympathy about her son. She looked to the ceiling and thanked me, then declined

my offer to reschedule my appointment. I was completely awed by her composure, inspired and impressed by her ability to keep it together, and honored to witness this woman's strength in this difficult moment. I left having glimpsed her in a whole new light, as both a midwife and as a mother.

I drove home tangled in swirling feelings; everything seemed more and more unbelievable with each minute that passed. The Pentagon had been hit, two other planes had been brought down, and one of the towers had collapsed. The emotional overload was beginning to make me feel numb.

The irony was that this was the first appointment that I had had since Sean was six weeks old. Over the past 13 months, I had felt more love and more joy than I had ever known in the rest of my 27 years combined. And Patrick and I had just decided that we were ready to have a second child. I had gone to the office that morning bursting with pure excitement at the news and yet, somehow, because of what was happening, I had not been able to mention it. I hadn't even *thought* to mention it. Everything seemed so up in the air, so unstable. With one swift and colossal act of hate, ignorance, and violence, I found myself stopped dead in my tracks, not knowing which way to turn.

Another baby? Bring another baby into this world?

The line that had been drawn that day was a line that would separate what had been before from what was now. Our nation, our world, would never ever be the same. I was forced to take a major step back. My heart began to reevaluate my plans and dreams. How could a loving and conscious soul bring a child into such a chaotic and hateful place?

I felt warm tears as they began to flood my eyes, and looked towards heaven in an attempt to keep them at bay. And that was when my consciousness spoke back, when my inner voice, my higher voice, my clearer self in an unknowing internal debate responded: *If that is who you are, how could you not? How could you not be the ones to have children?*

With that answer, logic began to fight off fear. As I stepped away from my doubt and into my soul, I felt those words and knew them to be true. I may not be a soldier or a person who will ever set foot upon a physical battlefield, but I am a warrior of sorts. I hold a very important and powerful place in this war: I am a mother, a

woman responsible for molding my child's sense of what is right and what is good.

In my heart, I work from places of faith, love, honor, respect, loyalty, and compassion. Although I take the time to teach my son of the consequences of his actions and am not afraid to hold him responsible for his not-so-good choices, I much prefer to reinforce lovingly the brilliant ones that he does.

I parent with as much patience, understanding, and forgiveness as I can muster. Through my choices and my movements and in the ways that I choose to communicate and interact with others, I teach my son and those around me how to choose, how to be, and how to communicate.

It is a simple thing that we Americans can do: live well, love often, and laugh much. It is in the conscious raising of our children and the nurturing of our relationships with one another that we will find the greatest reward. Over time, the battle will be won by raising smart, compassionate, and caring children, immersed in kind, loving, and supportive environments.

I am a stay-at-home mom. I do not receive a paycheck for the things that I do. It is the hugs and kisses and giggles that melt into belly laughs that make it all worthwhile for me. I am with our son every day, and the quality and ease of our relationship have proven to be greater gifts than I ever would have imagined before he was born.

I am blessed to live a simple life and to be married to a man who wants the same. We have forgone the road that might have brought our family greater financial stability and, in doing so, have been repaid ten-thousand-fold by the richness that is our family. Our greatest wealth and success is in the open and loving relationships that we have chosen to create and nurture with one another and with our son, families, and friends.

A deep sigh escaped my lungs as I exhaled the fresh autumn air that swirled through my car and, somehow, despite the morning's turbulence, felt peace beginning to settle into my soul. My heart burst open as I felt a deeper form of validation, an internal validation pulsing through my chest, for what I have chosen to do with my life. There is no more meaningful, rewarding, or challenging a career than dedicating your energies to being there

for your children, through all the good and all the bad (*especially* the bad).

As I neared campus, where my husband worked and we lived, I became emotionally overwhelmed by my need to be with my family, to hold my son in my arms, and to feel my husband's arms wrapped tightly around us. I could not get to them fast enough.

Two years after this story was written, our angelic daughter, Kaely Weston, was born. Divinely, Mary was the one to deliver her. She is absolutely perfect and we are all (Sean included) completely in love with her.

Peace and faith be with you in whatever road you may be on.

* * *

Terrorism also occurs on a private level, not just a national one. Sometimes we receive painful lessons in life that shake the very foundation of our beliefs in who we are. We must be willing to take these shattering experiences and give ourselves the womb/room to mother ourselves into a new understanding. And to stand up for ourselves when we have been harmed.

The following story illustrates our ability to respond to abuse by mothering our own souls to health. Jane Piper is the founder and director of SAAV¹: Survivors & Artists for Abolishing Violence. When I met Jane and heard her compelling story, I knew she was carved from the same warrior spirit as I. When we experienced harm, we chose not to sidestep it, but to face it squarely in the face and say, "NO! You cannot treat people like this!"

More of us need to come clean and stop letting shame silence us. We need to teach our children that being victimized is, unfortunately, part of the world we live in, but we can revolt against victim consciousness. Allowing harmful people and events in our lives without challenging them is to birth the consciousness for hat to flourish. Jane is currently creating a one-woman show exploring the experience of her assault and how violence has affected her life and the world around her.

* * *

1

VISION OF A NIGHT NEVER VOID OF STARS

By Jane Piper

This story is dedicated to my dear Di, who unknowingly gave me the courage to get up and say, 'This happened to me. And I'm going to be all right.'

It was my father's birthday. I had planned my afternoon to fit in a few minutes of down time so I could call him and wish him a happy birthday. My parents are in Canada and we're not really the long-distance-gift-sending sort of family, so the birthday call is top priority. Not just for a chat, but also for the obligatory birthday song sung in the most creative and often embarrassing way as possible. Using a cell phone in public, singing at top volume and off-key makes for an entertaining moment for some lucky passers-by.

I was working as a personal assistant and, after running a few errands, I decided to speed through some grocery shopping before I had to pick up my boss's kids at day camp and take them to their tennis lesson. There I'd have a spare moment to call my dad and, with the time change, I'd hopefully catch him at home. I had it all planned.

But I never made the call. I never picked up the kids.

After loading the back of the car with groceries, I climbed up into the driver's seat and arranged my purse on the center console. When I turned to close the door, there was a man blocking the door. In a matter of seconds, he pushed his way into the car and locked the doors. He shoved what I thought was a knife against my side. I later discovered it was a corkscrew. I figured he couldn't do much damage with a corkscrew, but the stab wound scar on my leg will always remind me I was wrong.

Sadly, we've all heard stories and news reports. Many have nightmares, but mine came true. I was forced into the furthest back seat of the Suburban, with no windows or doors to open for escape.

I tried my hardest to defend myself, but after being severely beaten, my blood splattering across the seat before my eyes, I realized that if I did not comply I would no doubt be killed right there, in broad daylight, in the parking lot of Ralph's grocery store.

The man raped me, while repeatedly punching me in the face and screaming at me. When he finished, he announced that we were going for a drive. I knew he was going to kill me. The enormity of the SUV with its tinted windows made for the perfect prison, but finally opportunity came my way. There was no way for him to drive and keep me in the back seat at the same time. Seeing as it was 3:30 on a sunny afternoon in Brentwood, California, and the parking lot was far from empty, he decided he better get out of there fast.

He chose to leave me in the back and commanded me to stay put. As soon as he got to the front, I leapt into the center seat and desperately tried to get out of the car. I was so hysterical that I couldn't even figure out how the door locks worked. I pressed every button on the door in despair and, as though a beacon was suddenly showing the way, the window began opening just as the car began to back out of the parking spot. I barely remember jumping out, but somehow I squeezed through the opening. As he tore out of the parking lot, I ran for my life into the supermarket.

The police were called immediately and an ambulance took me to the Santa Monica Rape Treatment Center for treatment and a rape kit. Fortunately, the beast left his DNA behind. Although it has yet to match any other in the databanks, I have hopes that he will soon be found so no other woman will have to endure his torture and terror again.

My life changed that day. The life I'd lived before getting into the car was over. The person I'd once been was dead. With her died her independence and self-reliance. She'd been a woman who always felt safe and had a strong sense of personal security. She trusted her instincts and trusted most people. But that woman was gone. I wasn't *me* anymore. The *me* I'd known my whole life was obliterated: physically, a mess; emotionally, destroyed.

It took a long time before I believed I could rebuild, but I caught a glimmer of the hope that would be the source of my healing only a few days after my assault.

I was taking my first shower since I'd left the hospital. I'd been afraid to, and in far too much pain. It had been a couple of days and I was putting it off, since the shower at the Rape Treatment Center had been so awful. At the time, I could barely stand up, my hair was falling out in clumps, and was so matted I couldn't wash it. A nurse had to cut out a big chunk. This was my last shower memory and I was afraid to wash away more of myself, as if bathing might cause me to lose the last part of the identity I was grasping onto.

The funk I lived in those first couple of days comforted me somehow, or maybe just distracted me. I wasn't really living, just going through the motions. Ice on the face, ice off the face. Look at the bruises, stare at my unrecognizable face in the mirror. I replayed the attack uncontrollably in my head like a skipping DVD. (I always say "attack." It seems less scary, more general, than the 'R' word. It also doesn't make people feel as uncomfortable, like they should do something, but know they can't.)

I wanted out of the funk, I guess, because I finally took a shower. What happened in the shower changed my life. The cleansing of the water opened up something in my consciousness. I'd had visions before that have guided me to do things in my life, but this was a vision that connected together every vision I'd ever had, as if everything in my life had been leading up to this one moment.

Standing there, water running over me, two days of dirt washed away. With it went the sadness, anger, guilt, confusion, helplessness, loss of control, terror, and self-pity. Every emotion swirled down the drain. I came to an instantaneous understanding. I suddenly knew why I'd had this horrific experience, why I'd been chosen to be a victim of such brutal violence. I remember the moment as if I were watching a movie of my future life. The movie was on fast forward, so I don't remember some of the specifics, but as they replay now as the reality of my life, I remember them from that moment in the shower.

I got out of the shower a different woman. I immediately told my boyfriend that I realized I'd been raped and assaulted because I had to have that experience in order to do what I needed to do with my life. I told him that I would someday write about my story and from my experience I'd be able to relate to other women's similar experiences around the world.

My story of being “victimized” would one day empower me to help others come forward to share their stories. A new collective voice among women and all humanity would be created, where until now there has been mainly silence. I would create an organization to bring together survivors to express their stories and the feelings experienced through the healing process.

In empowering women to rid themselves of the shame and secrecy that surrounds rape, we would create a new population of women strengthened by our experience, instead of victimized by it. By uniting, and using all forms of creative expression, we would together address the notion of violence and begin to tackle the great feat of ending it.

I felt such a range of emotions after my attack, but I never really felt shame (except for how I looked; I can’t lie about how I hated my ugliness). So often when we hear about rape, we hear about women’s shame for what happened to them. They sadly often stay silent and tell no one, neither the police nor a doctor. They mistakenly feel responsible and embarrassed and want to keep it a secret forever, as if they were the ones who had done something wrong. These feelings never came to me.

Perhaps I was *fortunate* to have been attacked by a stranger in broad daylight in a wealthy neighborhood. I never felt responsible. All those disgusting blame games that defense attorneys love to play wouldn’t work on me. My sexual history wasn’t in question, I wasn’t walking down a dark alley, and my skirt wasn’t “asking for it,” I didn’t “start something I couldn’t finish.” None of the horrifying, malicious “justifications” rape survivors have to endure fit my case, so I felt no desire whatsoever to hide what had happened to me. I wanted everyone to know. I knew my life was changed forever and I wasn’t willing to pretend that I was the same old person. I wasn’t.

It was all part of that odd moment of clarity I felt that day in the shower. Everything was laid out in front of me: I would write about my experience. I would speak about it publicly and break down the concept of violence. I would talk about being terrorized. Terrorized in the same United States that condemned other countries for harboring terrorists.

I really believe I was a victim of terrorism – one of many. A silent yet rampant form of terrorism striking hundreds of thousands of women each year in the U.S. alone. A form of local terrorism that

gets no national media attention, yet affects a huge percentage of American citizens. It is a form of terrorism that seems to be limited to females and committed by males. I point no fingers, but have so many questions. There are so many things to fix in our society and so many things to fix within us. I was bombarded with the notion of violence in general.

Why do human beings kill or hurt one another willfully? Why is violence sometimes justified, as in “just” wars? Yet that same act can be considered “inhumane” and punishable by life in prison or even death? How can we live in such a constant state of hypocrisy and expect our children to grow up feeling compassion and empathy for one another. I am a grown woman and I’m not sure I could explain to a child why one act of violence is acceptable and necessary, but other similar acts are against the law and “evil.” I’m not sure I would want to attempt that explanation, not even to an adult.

We’ve worked very hard to create a justice system that is *Just*. When someone commits an act of violence, it is not acceptable on a local, state, or federal level to strike back in vengeance or that act of vengeance will also be addressed in a court of law.

However, when we look at our international policies, we strike out in vengeance quite often. We use the term “defense,” but we are often not “defending” at all. We are striking out with a strong offense, and innocent people who happen to get in the way of our “targets” are usually hurt. Of course, those “targets” always involve other human beings.

How do we explain this to a child? How do we explain it to ourselves? Do we value all human life or just certain lives? Most importantly, do we really think we can live in this hypocrisy and not have it affect our children and us? Our views of the world? Our local and global communities? Are we not teaching that violence is how changes are made, how problems are solved? And if this is the message being spread, consciously or not, does it not bleed over into all forms of violent behavior?

Rape is not a sexual act. Rape is violence. It is violence using the sexual organs as both weapon and target. There is nothing sexual about rape, except its after-effects. Since it is an attack on the sexual organs, there is sexual dysfunction during the healing process. This is hard to avoid, as the psychological effects of the trauma often last for years.

It is difficult for the mind to let go of terror, and when terror is associated with a certain act, it is difficult and often uncontrollable to disassociate from those feelings. Many psychologists and psychiatrists (including Judith Herman, M.D., author of *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*) have compared the trauma of rape victims to that of combat veterans and political prisoners. So, again, we come back to violence in general.

Why do we accept it? Teach it? Live it? Ignore it? Encourage it? Profit from it?

Sadly, I don't have the answers. These are questions that must be addressed by all of us individually as human beings and collectively as a society. However, I think we can learn a lot from the survivors among us. In sharing our experiences and not keeping them as dark secrets, we shed light on that darkness and bring us all closer to a world of non-violence. We first have to accept that darkness is among us and within us.

It is here that survivors are so valuable to humanity, for we have experienced the darkest of times and survived them. In many cases, we become stronger because of the challenges the darkness forced us to face in the world and within ourselves. For we are all just mirrors of one another, rejecting what we fear in some, accepting what we love in others.

I return to my vision that day in the shower just days after my brutal attack: I have embraced the horrors I experienced. I have looked for the strength the experience has brought me. I have struggled, cried, and screamed in frustration and anger. But each day I move closer to creating the reality of my vision.

I founded *Survivors & Artists for Abolishing Violence (SAAV)*, an organization dedicated to developing a collective community voice using creative expression to empower survivors to share experiences and spread awareness on the issue of violence. I envision that one day the organization will grow to cover the spectrum of violence prevention. Programs will be developed to work with parents and children and the parental element that exists within each of us. We must instill, in each child across the globe, the integrity to pursue a world based in non-violence so that collectively they may envision a world of peace that we sadly have not.

SAAV will one day create cross-cultural festivals to tour the world teaching compassion, empathy, and tolerance to populations “at war” with one another. It will hold workshops with men and women, racist organizations and the populations they are prejudiced against, including Christian right organizations, gay rights groups, and the Israelis and Palestinians. It will bring people together to discuss their fears and hatred face-to-face, to find similarities where they least expect them.

Tragically, we have yet to fill the void left by the necessary separation of church and state. But we don’t need one religion or another to teach both children and adults the importance of compassion, respect, love, kindness, empathy, and a strong sense of Self. We teach best by example. So we’ve got to start living this example to pass on a world our children deserve. It is a grand dream and a beautiful vision, but I believe it can happen. I believe in communication and I believe in the power of coming together.

Some would say I experienced “evil” and looked it right in the face. I thought it would kill me, but I survived. I have faith that there is good everywhere, even in that same “evil” that attacked me. Perhaps the being we see as “evil” is just someone who hasn’t been exposed to enough “good.” Or perhaps those of us with potential for “evil” (and I believe that is each of us) have never taken the opportunity to express the rage or anger that creates “evil” within.

If we can learn to express those feelings in non-violent ways, perhaps the need to *act* violently would be deterred. It’s an idealistic, airy-fairy notion, if I do say so myself, but if we don’t believe in that possibility, what exactly can we believe in?

As an actor and a stand-up comic, I used to do a bit about why we have such extremes in society. We either fight or kill or we dance, wearing long flowing gowns, singing songs in a circle. Lodged somewhere between “Kumbaya” and assault weapons is the answer. I’m not sure what it is, but it’s there, staring us in the face. We’re just too busy frolicking and killing (or worse, doing nothing) to figure it out.

After my horrific experience, my life now has a greater purpose than before. Somehow the most terrifying, horribly negative experience of my life has become a gift, teaching me empowerment and compassion. This potential lies within each of us, to turn

negative into positive. We all have the power to make that change and we surely don't have to experience tragedy in order to do it.

As a survivor, I feel a responsibility to follow a calling of service. I have experienced something that I must use to help others or else I remain a victim. I am not a victim. I'm a survivor. Being raped didn't destroy me. Before it happened, I might have thought it could, but I have somehow gained power from the experience. We all have access to this power. We just have to figure out what to do with it.

* * *

DON'T SHAKE BABIES

By Tristan & Yvette Bujeaud

I write this story in memory of my grandson, Tristan.

Approximately 50,000 babies a year are victims of shaken baby syndrome in the United States. One in every four of these babies dies. I was completely unaware of this information until it touched my life in a personal manner. Recently, I was shocked to discover that I had a grandson. My son was also unaware that he had a son. We were shocked to learn that not only was our country attacked by terrorists on September 11th, 2001, but our family had been too.

My grandson's mother had badly abused him. The state of New Hampshire ordered DNA testing when Tristan had been brought to a local hospital emergency room at six weeks of age with severe medical trauma to his brain and brain stem. A thorough medical examination revealed a broken leg and rib that had begun to heal from other ghastly days this infant had endured.

Tristan needed to go no further than his own mother's rage to be a terrorist victim, an abused infant in his own home. His mother was arrested. She is now in prison, pregnant with twins.

Although my son had only been intimate with this woman once and barely knew her, he was now a father. How my son wishes he had known right away about this responsibility! He potentially could have saved his son from becoming permanently disabled.

The doctors said it was the worst case of shaken baby syndrome they had ever seen. When Tristan was taken to Mary Hitchcock Hospital in Lebanon, New Hampshire, he was not expected to live. He did. He is, however, totally deaf and blind. He has a feeding tube and makes gurgling sounds because of an inability to swallow. He also has seizures.

I had worked with Robin Alexis before. She had predicted a dear friend's death as well as my husband's. I had been grief stricken on both accounts and her love had seen me through those difficult times. I called Robin to see if she would be able to tell me something about Tristan. She said Tristan wanted to be a poster baby for shaken baby syndrome. He didn't want any other babies to suffer this way ever again. He made us promise that we would help him get his life's purpose out in the open. Hence, I asked my son if he was willing to have Tristan's story be told. Of course, we all agreed to help Tristan make his life worth living.

According to Robin, when Tristan's mother shook him, his spirit became so frightened that it left his body. Rhobbin and I prayed that Robin be given divine permission to telepathically communicate with Tristan. We wanted to let him know he was safe to be here, that no one would hurt him like that again.

During our conversations with Tristan, Robin explained to him the spiritual purpose of the experience he had had with his mother. When Tristan's spirit was soothed and calmed, Robin watched it spiral back into his body. Robin began to intuit what other services could help him. She said he needed to be christened and to have someone do some alternative healing on him called Reiki, a form of hands-on healing that is channeled from the Infinite Wisdom of the Universe. I called Tristan's maternal grandfather and told him I would like them to get Tristan christened. They willingly got someone to perform a baptism.

I didn't think I could explain what Reiki was to them, so I undertook my own pilgrimage to seek the ability to give my grandson this gift of healing. I sought out a Reiki Master by the name of Dick Perley. He gave me an attunement, so I could do "hands on healing" with my grandson. The process of allowing Spirit to work through us is referred to as an attunement. It is an ancient tradition passed down from one master teacher of Reiki to others. Dick showed me the hand positions to use. The ancient art of healing was within my ability to use with my grandson. I only wanted the best for him on his journey back to God. I was willing

to open my heart and mind for what little comfort I could bring to this poor child.

I was really wondering if I would be able to convince the home caring for Tristan about Reiki. When my son and I arrived at the unit, Tristan was asleep. It was such a nice day we brought him outside. We were there for about five hours. He never woke up or even seemed to notice the difference between outside and inside.

Finally, I got up the courage to do Reiki on him. When I placed my hands on him he began to move his arms and legs and his head moved from side to side! I was quite amazed at the reaction, since Tristan does not move much. I left my hands on him for about half an hour, allowing for the faith healing to occur.

We then went back inside to the family room and an elderly woman came to say goodnight to Tristan. She was leaving for the evening. She said how much she loved him and what a special child he was. She ran her hands over him lightly and said he was doing okay. Then she said she had energy in her hands. She said she could tell if the children were resting peacefully. I asked if what she did was Reiki. She said she simply had the ability to help the children with the energy that came out of her hands. She was a 92-year-old lady and had volunteered there for twenty-five years. I couldn't believe it! My prayer had been answered.

We stayed a while longer. It was so hard to leave him. My son and I both know this facility was where he belonged. Tristan began to get uncomfortable and started to cry. He probably sensed we were getting ready to leave. My son was going through the television channels at the time. One channel was having a Catholic mass. I asked my son to stay on that channel. Tristan quieted down right way. My son was completely amazed. I wasn't. I felt it was what he needed.

The whole day I was there I felt a lot of love surrounding my grandson, my son, and myself. I knew there was someone helping us through this. I just knew my deceased husband was there with us. Since that day, Tristan has died. I trust he is with his grandfather in heaven. Robin says that my husband was there for Tristan the moment he passed over. She says he loves Tristan more than we can imagine. I just know that Tristan was a very special child and extremely bright. Bright enough in his own way to find a family to be born into that would help him express his heart's desire: to stop shaken baby syndrome.

Tristan has been dead for over a year, but I can feel his spirit with me as I type this. He and Robin's daughter are begging us to pay attention to what is happening to children.

If you would like more information about shaken baby syndrome, please visit: www.dontshake.com or call the National Abuse hotline, 800-4-ACHILD (800-422-4453).

* * *

SOLDIER FOR LOVE

By Bob Brown

In a gentle way, you can shake the world.
-Gandhi

My name is Robert Brown. I am a contract employee with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), having previously served as a staff employee for the Agency for ten years. My job description is not available for media scrutiny. Our operations are classified.

I have known Robin for years and consider her a person of impeccable morals and character. Robin has predicted several national and international events over the years, and has presented her predictions to Federal Agencies. I will cover a few of her predications at this time.

1. Oklahoma City Federal Building Bombing:

Robin reported her predication that there would be a bombing of a Federal building in a western state by a person upset by the Ruby Ridge Standoff, resulting in the building being completely demolished and great loss of life. Further, she advised that the bomb would be in a large moving-type truck parked in front of the building. This prediction was presented to me approximately nine or ten months before the tragic event occurred.

2. Littleton, Colorado

Although Robin didn't report this psychic vision to me directly, I am aware that she reported the Littleton, Colorado, shooting incident to Federal agencies in November of 1998. Robin reported

having seen the school shootings happening at a Denver, Colorado, school between the dates of April 21st and April 25th 1999. She saw two young men shooting other students at school. She also saw that they would try to hijack an airplane out of the Denver airport.

3. Chandra Levy

Ms. Levy was an aide to a member of Congress, and lived in an apartment complex close to the White House in Washington D.C. She had been missing several months and presumed dead. I asked Robin if she felt the victim was dead, and if so, would her body ever be recovered.

Robin reported that Chandra was abducted in front of her apartment complex by a man and woman in a dark colored van. Chandra was “accidentally” strangled while resisting her abductors. The abductors only intended to “scare” her into silence about her relationship with the congressman and then let her go, but Ms. Levy fought back with such force that they accidentally caused her passing. She said the body was very close to the apartment building in a wooded area used for hiking, and was at the bottom of an embankment only a hundred feet or so off the trail, covered by brush. The body was found almost a year after her disappearance by a man looking for frogs and it was about one hundred fifty yards off a hiking trail, covered in brush at the bottom of a thickly wooded embankment.

4. World Trade Center and Pentagon Bombing

Robin contacted me in August 2000 concerning her visions of terrorist activity in DC, NY and Chicago. She was certain the event would occur in September of the millennium year. We both assumed that was 2000. She told me to be very careful at work for the next few months as she envisioned me standing outside a bombed building. She felt strongly that there were other buildings involved but they were in another location. She predicted two high-rise buildings called “the towers” in New York or Chicago were the targets. She predicted terrorists would fly aircrafts into the buildings, causing total destruction of both buildings, and loss of life would be extremely high. She further felt the President’s life was in great danger. She also saw our food and water supplies being poisoned.

When these events did not happen in 2000, I thought she had been wrong. As we are all aware, her predictions were very accurate. Most people believe the plane forced down in

Pennsylvania was intended to crash into the White House or the CIA. After 9/11, I e-mailed her and shared with her that I remembered what she had said. She then asked me to write this chapter. I was more than willing.

* * *

I was an average kid growing up in a large dysfunctional family. The kids were left to their own means, with the older ones looking out for the younger ones. I remember walking to school when I was 6 or so, about two miles away from our home. I would pass by Isaiah and Dora Hickey's house. Isaiah was probably in his late 60's or early 70's, a very friendly, jovial man, quite tall and slender. He was a wonderful storyteller. He would always be outside, rain or shine. I would go over to his house on my way to school. Dora would give me a snack and Isaiah would tell me stories.

I remember this one quite clearly: Isaiah told me he was getting fat and that Dora told him to exercise. He started running up and down the street, but said the dogs would chase him, so he decided to run on the electric light wires. He would climb up the pole and then run on them. He said that way no animals or kids or cars would bother him. He said he ran all the way to the North Pole and told Santa to make sure I got a nice gift for Christmas. I, of course, believed every word he said and marveled at it all.

I was always late for school. I sometimes didn't even go to school. I would stay with Isaiah and work in his garden. His wife would get real mad at him, saying I should be in school. He would always retort, "I am teaching him more than they ever will in there!"

Well, my mother got word of my absences. She stopped by the Hickey house one morning during our normal ritual, and told Isaiah, "You take him to school and explain his absence! I am done with it all!" So I would usually get to school quite late, if at all.

Despite my attendance problems, Isaiah was a very positive influence on my childhood development. He was very honest, hard working, and caring. This man and his wife were the only ones who ever took an interest in me. They passed away when I was in the army and news of their deaths was quite hard on me. I remember him saying, "Don't you be bawling when I die! I will always be there even if you can't see me and I will smack you if you're not a good boy! Remember, I am going to a place that I have lived all my life to

get into, so you do the same and we can be together again up there.”

He meant every word of that, and I look forward to seeing them both again some day.

My father was an alcoholic and my mother was unstable. My family was really poor and by the time I was in high school, my mother was constantly telling me I should quit school and join the army. So in my senior year I did quit school and immediately went into the army. I was on my way to Fort Dix, N.J. after forging my parent's signatures on a waiver since I was only seventeen. My parents didn't even know I had gone into the military until I wrote them from basic training about a month later. I really don't think they cared, just as long as I was gone.

I did well in the army and joined the paratroopers. Jumping out of planes made sense to me because I had to do it on my own, no help from anyone else. I also took all the training I could to be a “trained killer.” I thought it was the macho thing to do – jungle training, ranger training, raider training, and training in explosives. I wanted to “be the best.”

After three years I got out and married to a girl from my hometown that was very attentive to me. I liked that. She was a very cheerful and attractive girl with a friendly smile. I tried to live as a civilian. I worked in a textile factory for 86 days and by then I knew that wasn't the life for me. So I re-enlisted. This time I had a wife with me. So away we went – her fresh out of high school and me going back to the life I enjoyed.

We went to Germany for three years with our newborn daughter. Glad to be back in the army, I worked hard at being a father, husband, and soldier all at the same time. Unfortunately, I failed at the first two.

By then I had started drinking. In retrospect, I see that I had become an alcoholic, although I denied it. I drank to “fit in,” not knowing it was simply a crutch, an excuse for not taking on family responsibilities. After Germany, we went back to the United States and I was stationed in Virginia. By this time my wife was pretty fed up with my self-centered ways. I decided to volunteer for Vietnam, get killed so my family would have the life insurance money to start a new life with someone more responsible.

Off to war I went. I decided the best way to carry out my plan was to be in the thick of it, not knowing there was no thick of it. The war was everywhere. I found that it was not that easy for a soldier to get himself killed.

What finally made the war a personal thing for me was when my unit adopted a bunch of kids from a local church. We brought them clothing and food, whenever we could steal some. One day we took them out to a rice farm where they could play in a courtyard and have a picnic. On the way out, the Viet Cong ambushed our convoy and made a point of only killing the kids. No Americans.

One boy had been like an adopted son to me. His name was Bah and he had been forced to watch his mom and dad and sister get murdered by the Viet Cong. He had been in the “orphanage” for over a year and never spoke a word. I would take him away from the other kids and talk with him, knowing he didn’t understand a thing I said, but just to let it be one-on-one. After six or seven months, he would hear us coming and be right at the gate waiting for me. He surprised me one day and said, “Bah is Bob’s friend.” What was shocking is that he said it in English. No one knew that he had been quietly learning English.

Well, Bah was standing right next to me and was killed instantly by a gunshot to the face. I was busy returning machine gun fire and didn’t even know he was hit until it was over. I looked down and saw him and 15 other kids – all dead – and another 10 or 15 injured. I just lost it. I couldn’t stop crying. I wanted to kill every Vietnamese around me.

When I picked up Bah’s body to bury it, I noticed he had a photo of us standing together. On the back he had written (in English), “Bah and dad.” I buried the picture with him along with a set of my dog tags. It was all he had of his own. I will never forget him or the people that deliberately killed innocent civilians. I hope and pray that others can understand that war is simply not the answer to countries getting along. The only ones who profit from war are those in power. The people are the losers.

When I got out of the war, I tried civilian life again, this time for about two years. I was still a drunk and blamed everything and everyone else but me for my problems. By then, my wife was pregnant with my second daughter and, strangely enough, still supportive of me. Once again I packed them all up and returned to the army.

This time we went to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where I had originally started my career. Things were pretty good for a short time and I didn't drink quite as much. I was aware that I had a "problem" with booze. I dealt with my alcoholism and was then assigned to Belgium, where my family and I relocated for three years. I retired in 1984 and began to work for the Central Intelligence Agency. I am still employed there now.

My work is classified, so I cannot go into detail about that. I can say I am quite proud of the work I am doing and proud to continue serving my country. The "Agency" is a proud organization, but very secretive by the nature of its mission.

My wife and I started marriage counseling and we seemed to be making progress, but I was still putting all the blame outside of myself. Finally, I divorced my wife and she moved back to New Hampshire. I continued counseling for several years. I finally stopped when the counselor said I was doing much better and didn't need to continue any longer.

My ex-wife and I made contact again. We got back together after being divorced for a couple of years. We went to marriage counseling and started making progress. We were remarried in 1998.

My wife and I became involved in a spiritual practice called Reiki. Reiki is a word that means "Holy Spirit" in Japanese. It allows the healing energy of Spirit to come through you. To put it mildly, I am astonished at the physical and spiritual change in my wife and me. I must admit that I was skeptical at first, but the change in us since this experience was magical.

We still fuss at each other, but I have been opening up more and more with my inner self. I have developed a sense of "being" and find life much more pleasant. I have a bond with God I never experienced before. Now, instead of looking outside myself for life's pleasures and displeasures, I look within. I have learned to meditate, although only for short periods of time (my attention span is about as long as a 3-year-old's), but I have been working on this and am doing better.

I have found that I am not alone in this body. Being one with God and placing him first in our lives has enriched us so much. We are the same people, but we are able to discuss things we could never

discuss before without conflict. We seem to respect each other and ourselves more and we don't judge others as much. My wife and I have a dream of creating a Reiki practice that supports us financially.

I know it is kind of hard to imagine a Vietnam Vet, former drunk, and Central Intelligence Agency employee wanting to experience the metaphysical path, but it's true. It is good to be true to your heart's desire. It makes you a soldier for Love.

Footnote: Bah telepathically communicates to me. He has told me to thank Bob for him, which I have done. He also says that we need to look beyond the battlefields. It is time.

* * *

What would the world be like if people like Bob Brown didn't even entertain the thought of being involved in a war? What if all they knew was to be a Soldier for Love?

And when the war is over . . .

ADOPT A DAUGHTER By Thi Guyen

Live for another, if you wish to live for yourself.
-Seneca

On September 3, 2001, I went back to visit Vietnam for the second time in my life. I arrived in Tan Son Nhat airport in Ho Chi Minh City on a hot sunny afternoon. The airport was crowded with foreign tourists and the local Vietnamese. I was traveling with my American fiancé.

We got our luggage and presented our passports and visas to the customs official at the arrival gate. She gave us a quick glance and motioned us to move forward. I was glad. My mother and our friends in the U.S. had warned us about corrupt officials who could delay our departure from the airport with thorough luggage searches if we did not give them money. My mother had even suggested that I put some money in my passport as I handed it over. I did not do that, in fear of what might happen should the

official not be corrupt and question why I was trying to bribe him or her.

I had to push through the crowd that formed a thick circle around the exit to get out of the airport. From their stares, I could tell they already knew I was a “Viet Kieu” or overseas Vietnamese. As I was walking forward, I felt a tap on my right shoulder. A young man smiled and asked, “Are you Thi?” I nodded. “Your father is waiting over there.” He was pointing to a man standing by a pole, wearing dress pants, a white shirt, and sunglasses. I walked over, put my right arm on his left arm, and with a big smile said, “Hi, Dad.”

My father is in his mid-sixties. I left Vietnam when I was 5 years old and since then had not had many contacts or conversations with him, so he is practically a stranger to me. Everything I know about my father comes from my mother and siblings, and they do not have many warm memories of him to share with me. After all, this is the man who decided not to escape with us in the aftermath of the war.

I sometimes feel he chose wealth over family. But whatever his real reasons, I still feel grateful for what he has given me and my brothers and sisters simply by sending us away from our birthplace: a brighter future.

My father likes to boast about how he has achieved what many parents could not, that is, to send their children to America or a foreign country where the standards of living and education surpass that of Vietnam. My father managed to send me and my eight other siblings to France and the United States, and send one stepbrother to Australia to live – an achievement that is now almost impossible to accomplish.

I was born in 1976 in Saigon, now known as Ho Chi Minh City, the capital of Vietnam. The Vietnam War had ended on April 30, 1975, with the Viet Cong’s (Vietnamese Communist Party) takeover of Saigon and the declaration of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Within a few months, the Viet Cong had taken away practically everything my parents owned. My parents were denounced as capitalists because they owned a hotel, a restaurant, and a convenience store. The Viet Cong closed my parents’ bank account and took all their money. In addition, my parents had two foreign cars that the Viet Cong particularly liked and wanted. One day, they came to the house and asked my father if they could borrow the cars for a drive around the city. Of course, my parents could

not say no. The Viet Cong who borrowed the cars for a “drive” never came back with them. After that, they wanted my father to give them our house. My father said no and argued that he had nine children to house, so they put him in prison for two years.

One night they came to our house in the middle of the night and tried to frame my mother for possession of an illegal weapon. They wanted my mother to sign a paper confessing her crime, but she refused. So they took her to the police station. Another Viet Cong at the police station saw that the “illegal weapon” my mother had been charged with possessing was nothing more than a long, Japanese sword sealed in a glass case. He released her.

Shortly after that, two Viet Cong families moved into our house and we were forced to live with them. Since we lived in a nine-room house, they occupied six rooms, while we were allowed to live in the other three. While my father was in prison, my mother sold food and other goods in the streets to support us.

My parents decided that because of the political situation, my mother would leave Vietnam along with the children. By this time, my two eldest sisters were already living in the United States and my eldest brother was residing in France. We tried to escape eleven times by boat, all unsuccessfully. We were imprisoned four times for attempting to escape. Once, the Viet Cong imprisoned us for five weeks in My Tho (closest Mekong Delta city to Saigon).

My mother said that it was easy to find a boat as long as you had the money. Since we attempted to escape so many times, the person in charge of finding a boat knew us well. He took the money and found a navigator for us. The navigator himself was looking for people with money to finance the trip, so he could bring his family along. In total, the boat had forty-nine passengers.

On May 9, 1982, our twelfth escape attempt and two years after the first attempt, we finally made it out of Vietnam’s territorial water with the Vietnamese police chasing after us for over an hour while shooting at the boat. We became what people would later call “boat people.” Our boat left Rach Gia (a port city on the Gulf of Thailand) and two days later we were in Pulau Bidong Island, Malaysia. During these two days, we encountered Thai pirates five times.

In Malaysia, my family lived in a refugee camp in Pulau Bidong Island for seventeen months while waiting for the United States to

grant us entry visas. Then we had to go to a Philippine refugee camp to study English for six months to prepare us for assimilation into American culture. We arrived in New York on June 24, 1984.

As a child born shortly after the war into a country controlled by oppressive and corrupt Communists, I know what it is like to hope for a better place and future. Every time I see or hear news about children, especially orphans, abandoned or neglected in foreign countries in need of assistance, I wish there were ways I could help them directly.

I have always considered adoption a choice should my future husband and I ever decide to have children. Adoption is a fascinating institution. The idea of being able to bring an orphan into your life and share your love, thoughts, and culture with him or her is hope to those who are unable to conceive or choose to adopt.

There are a lot of resources available to guide those interested in adoption, covering places of adoption, legal process, agencies, social workers, parenting, expenses, etc. Through my research of adoption, especially international adoption, I find that although many people want to adopt, they are often overwhelmed by the amount of money needed to complete the process. I know I felt a little discouraged when I realized the expenses involved. According to sources on the Internet, international adoption can cost between \$8,000 to \$25,000 or more, and it can take from one to three years. One of my fears is that I would not be allowed to adopt because my income does not meet the criteria of most adoption agencies.

In Asia, the five countries with the most children available for adoption are Korea, Philippines, India, China, and Vietnam. I have chosen to focus in Asia because of my Vietnamese background and my experiences living in China.

Despite our problems, growing up with my family was one of the happiest times of my life. When we first came to the United States, I was 7 years old and my five siblings were under the age of 16. We received public assistance, since we did not have a lot of money, but my brothers and sister all had jobs delivering newspapers or working at the local Chinese restaurant. Even though we were poor, we knew how to have fun. We used to drive over an hour to a Vietnamese store to buy Asian food and rent Chinese movies

dubbed in Vietnamese. Watching Chinese movies was what started my fascination with China and the Asian culture in general.

My family was the first minority people to reside in Bangor, Pennsylvania. I remember how the elementary kids were intrigued by the way we looked and acted. That used to make me think I was unique in some weird way. But being different is not always good in a small town. By the time I got to junior high, I was experiencing racism.

We moved from Bangor to Reading, Pennsylvania, when I was in eighth grade and I experienced culture shock for the first time. My new junior high school not only had different minorities, but also had Vietnamese kids just like me! I was ecstatic. I was not even sure how to act around them. I met one of my best friends there. We could both speak English, but we would sometimes speak in Vietnamese so that other kids could not eavesdrop. For the first time in my life I felt special because I could identify with a group of people who shared my same culture.

I went on to attend a small college in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. I was determined to study Chinese and travel abroad. I accomplished that goal by studying in Beijing at the People's University of China during my junior year. While in China, I traveled to different cities, including Xian, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. I spent my last two weeks in China traveling from Beijing to Lhasa, Tibet. The bus ride took over 30 hours and the view consisted of mostly sparse land unsuitable for farming or living. I also visited rural areas in southern China and observed ethnic minorities going about their daily lives. During my trips throughout China, I remember seeing lots of children. And I could not help but think how the one-child policy was affecting them and their future.

China has a population of more than 1.2 billion people. The Chinese government instituted the one-child policy in 1979 and since then there have been 65 million only-children born, most of whom live in urban areas. They are the "little emperors." Chinese parents typically spend over one-third of their family income to raise this new generation of pampered but well-educated children.

Most parents' hopes and dreams of succeeding economically and socially rest on their only child. It is widely known that most people in Asian cultures place a higher value on boys. China's one-child policy was passed to curtail population growth, but it also led to abortions and the abandonment of young girls.

In cities, where people are more educated and earn a higher income, they will abide by the law and have only one child, boy or girl. In rural areas, though, parents much prefer to have a boy who will help them around the farm or generate higher income. Girls will someday marry and leave. Studies have shown that the percentage of births of boys is alarmingly higher than that of girls – at least in reported births. There are many stories of baby girls being abandoned. This is why China has become one of the top Asian countries where prospective parents from overseas are going to adopt baby girls.

As a girl, I feel sad that these little babies are judged solely on their sex and are unwanted by their parents. I know my parents like boys better than girls, but at least they accepted me and raised me to value the worth of family and life. I am happy for the “little emperors,” but we should love and support all children.

During my visit in Vietnam, I discovered that the Vietnamese government is encouraging people to have only two children, but has not officially enforced the policy. Since I come from a family of nine children, I find this policy understandable. Vietnam, like China, is overcrowded and there are not a lot of jobs and resources available. I do not know what the statistics are, but I do know from the people I have met that well-paying jobs are almost impossible to find, which makes the standard of living low. I often wonder what my future would have been like if my family never made it overseas by boat.

I want to give children in need the opportunity to grow up in a family that will love, nurture, support, and accept them for who they are, regardless of their origin or sex. Growing up with my family gave me some of the happiest moments of my childhood and these children deserve the same.

PART IV

KNOWING

For me, truth resides in the *knowing* within. I have the ability to think, feel, and act from my own personal perspective. My psychic ability is my way of connecting to my soul, yet it is interesting to note that the church teaches us that using psychic abilities is bad. That message shuts us off from our true nature. I find it inappropriate to be taught that my ability to communicate with the divine is evil.

In order to *know*, I have to trust myself to respond to my own inner knowing. Response-ability is our “ability to respond” to the truth. We access our inner knowing by feeling what our energy is teaching us. Are we drawn to something or fearful of it? Are we experiencing love or fear? As we listen to our energetic responses, we become wise. Responsibility also includes the willingness to recognize that we are all learning life lessons and that it is normal to make mistakes. I choose to allow my experiences to become lessons for others and myself.

When I was 47 the left side of my face froze. The muscles wouldn’t work. I couldn’t close my eye, spit, or swallow. When you looked at my face you could see that it drooped. Accompanying the paralysis was excruciating head and neck pain. It was not the first time this had occurred. I went to many alternative practitioners before deciding that I needed to trust the medical profession enough to get some kind of diagnosis.

An MRI, or CAT scan, of my head and neck revealed that I had two conditions. One is called Arnold Chiari I malformation and the other is syringomyelia. Many babies who are victims of shaken baby syndrome show these characteristics. To my knowledge I was not a shaken baby, but I certainly was in a lot of pain. The doctors said that my case was not severe and that I would have to learn to live with it. How does one live with a crooked face? I was devastated and wanted my husband to take me out back and shoot me! I live in Beverly Hills, for god’s sake, where it is illegal to be ugly let alone have a crooked face. Bob intuitively knew I needed to see his chiropractor, who, along with other practitioners in his office, saved not only my face but also my life. I am a vain woman after all.

One night I had a vivid dream. I was told that Bob must drive me to a bookstore so we could purchase a book either about Mary Magdalene or Mother Mary. Bob, being the good sport that he is with my telepathic whims, drove me to Barnes and Noble. As we entered the store and were approaching the information desk, I remarked to Bob, “Remember, we are here for a book about either Mary Magdalene or Mother Mary.” In a New York minute, the sales clerk looked up while simultaneously grabbing a book. He said, “This book just came in about

Mary Magdalene.” I looked at Bob and he said, “Well, what do you know!” That was easy.

Our next stop was the chiropractor. Bob was not out of his session as quickly as I was. I settled into the window seat, book in hand. I noticed an elderly man in the waiting area. He had a Jewish cap, a yarmulke, on his head. He had a cane and looked very very old. He moved to the seat next to me and said, “Miss, are you reading a book about Mary Magdalene or Mother Mary?” I replied yes, thinking what does this old guy want? As he looked deep into my eyes, I saw that he was blind.

“In 90 days I will be 90. This is the 9th day of the 9th month. The Creator told me to come sit in this waiting room until I met a woman reading a book about either Mary Magdalene or Mother Mary. I was to tell her that she has something to do with the second coming of Christ. I know you have seen my yarmulke so you know I am not even a Christian. But I figured that if the Creator asked me to pass on a message I had better be doing it. I live across the street at the Beverly Hills Nursing Home. I made my way over here to this office to give you this message. I hope you will believe me.”

I felt terribly guilty that this poor old man had to make his way out of a nursing home across dangerous Los Angeles streets to make such a statement to me. The least I could do was walk him back across the street. I told the front desk what I was doing so if Bob came out he wouldn't wonder where I was. The receptionist said, “I was wondering what he was doing in here. He didn't have an appointment.”

Many miraculous things happened in Dr. Campion's office. It was interesting for me to ask him to write a story for my book. He hadn't wanted to be a doctor. He wanted to be a writer. It is a good thing he is a doctor. I would still have a crooked face, or worse.

* * *

I AM A WRITER
By Toby Campion

Throw your heart over the fence and the rest will follow.

-Norman Vincent Peale

My mom and dad made a conscious effort to avoid giving advice to us five children as we were growing up. They let us stumble and fall, get up, fall and get up again. For some years I resented their withholding of wisdom. Oh, the pain and embarrassment they could have spared us by explaining how the world worked! Later on, I realized their silence *was* the wisdom and felt humbly grateful for it.

Then, lo and behold, I became a parent myself. *Mom and Dad, I truly understand you now – the agony and the ecstasy. I will follow your example and never, ever pontificate upon my progeny.* That resolution lasted two or three years – long enough for my firstborn to start making mistakes. Mistakes! Man, did I let him have it:

- ✓ “It’s a give-and-take world.”
- ✓ “You reap what you sow.”
- ✓ “Don’t go to bed angry.”
- ✓ “Express what you feel.”
- ✓ “Do the hard thing first.”
- ✓ “Put yourself in the other person’s shoes.”

Well, Godzilla, what demon of ‘know-it-allness’ had taken possession of my tongue? How else to explain my plunge into the checklist of platitudes? Slowly, the answer emerged. In point of fact, I *was* possessed and had been for years. By what? By ignorance. The part that thought he knew, knew not.

My inner guru was turning out to be a smarty-pants, an arrogant poseur. This bad news didn’t arrive in an overnight letter from the cosmos, however. No, it came by fits and starts. Financial loss, public humiliation, misjudgments about my wife and others – these were my teachers, my bearers of bitter nourishment.

By the time I began to wake up – and shut up – my two children were grown and gone and I was feeling like the butt of a cheesy old pop song about feckless parenthood.

Parenthood. Starting out, maybe we are all a bit, if not feckless, at least uncertain. The focus at first tends to be on coitus and

conceiving. The finished product, when it emerges, seems hardly to have begun – a tentative prototype. Well, okay; so now it's up to us to coax it along, bring it to fullness. It, this twitching doll, this cute little milk-processing machine, will soon be looking and acting a lot like us. So we do that; we fill it full of love... and so much else that is lesser than love: impatience, imprudence, projection, resentment, prejudice, prattling, poor nutrition, misplaced ambition, bald conjecture, and raw fear.

The pendulum swings of parenthood evinced by my little history can be tracked on a macro scale in the books that succeeding generations have turned to for orientation and comfort. Talk to them; no, command them. Discipline them; no, give them free reign. Teach them love and compassion; no, punish them and let the slings and arrows do the teaching. Nature makes the child; no, nurture. Genetics sets the course; no, moral authority. Now, in middle age, I've stopped trying to keep score. I keep coming back, instead, to something my Grandma (never shy in the advice department) used to remind us: "Imitation is not the best teacher, it's the only teacher."

What I learned from mom and dad, my kids from me, has had mostly to do with the examples that were set. My parents clearly knew this better than I. To the extent I lived out the drama of my own truth in front of my kids, they have learned from that. And what was my drama? Mainly, it had to do with inner conflict.

I am a man who has never known if he is a doctor who writes or a writer whom everyone calls Doc. Mom was a writer of some repute by the time she had me, so even if the literary itch wasn't in my genes, it was certainly tapping the typewriter keys within earshot of my crib.

I spent my fourteenth summer taking a "creative writing" course at an old-guard prep school. In that hallowed realm, some shocking news was imparted: to be a writer you had to "write what you know." Oh, dear. Did I know anything? Anything, that is, besides how to imitate Poe and Salinger?

I dragged myself home in a funk and compounded that fall by the mental breakdown, as it was called in those days, of an older brother. I visited him at the institute to which he had been consigned. It was depressing to see him in that dreary place. I went home and, as a sort of cleansing, put pen to paper.

I submitted the resulting short story to the high school literary magazine, which selected it for the winter issue. Promptly, the high school principal called me in and recommended I pull it; such a frankly personal piece would embarrass the family, he said. I went ahead despite. If I was to be a writer, I had to write – and publish – what I knew or else what was I worth? Only years later, reflecting with more compassion, did I take pause in the publishing of that story.

I completed freshman year at Harvard College and nary a book with my name on it. Balls-zac! I was a disappointment to myself, to the muses, and to the great writers of all ages and continents.

That summer, a charismatic painter and philosopher from Fordham University invited me to join in the making of that counter-culture shibboleth, *An Underground Movie*. It was to be unscripted, a cinematic version of abstract expressionism. I was the screenwriter; in other words, my job was NOT to produce a script. This was a relief, because I had no idea what the beast looked like.

Nevertheless, being a “screenwriter” for a summer did wonders for my self-esteem; no, let’s call it my self-swaggering. I had the part and I acted the part. *Seventeen* magazine even anointed me by commissioning a piece on the experience entitled, “Five Thousand Feet of Film.” Finally! A real writer! And what had I written? A very nice, nationally published piece about not being a writer.

Sophomore year, I took another “creative writing” course, this time from an author of recognized merit. More shock from academia. “I can’t teach you how to write,” he told us, day one. “If you really want to write, leave college and go out and live. Only when you have lived can you write.” His model was Hemingway.

For a while, Papa became mine too and I read his canon. This led to the sad realization that all that could be written, and written well, about men and war and women and men and drink and war and killing animals and men and getting tight and sleeping around and feeling damn bad about it already *had* been written, and with unmatched skill. I would have to scavenge in other precincts. In short, I would have to “live.”

Thus primed, junior year could not contain me. I dropped out of college and headed west with a portable Remington typewriter in my duffle. Young love was the theme of my first novel. Passion

recollected in tranquility. First, the passion; six months later, the tranquility. But, I didn't feel tranquil at all writing about that broken love affair; I felt *bummed*. She left me.

Besides ouch, what else was there to say? After 249 pages of ouch, I put aside that manuscript and never brought it out again. Maybe this reflected the precocious wisdom – at that time I still had a little – that comes with being 21 and living on roasted potatoes and spring water.

Along came a kindly believer who gave me \$300 to write a book he would turn into a movie he liked to refer to, eyeballs spinning with dollar signs, as “the next *Easy Rider*.” This was 1970. By living in boarding houses and washing dishes in restaurants, I stretched that stipend over 12 months, at the end of which I submitted the book and never heard from the man again. At least I had lived something. Lived what? Well, the supreme frustration of trying to “become” a writer.

Here life – unplotted, unpremeditated, real-live life – mercifully intervened. I fell in love. We were married within six months. At twenty-two, I had half of all I ever dreamed of: love. Could the other half, success as a writer, be far behind?

We moved to a small town in Arkansas. The rent on our shack was \$20/month. To support ourselves, we opened a bookstore and stocked it only with those titles we enjoyed. Besides the predictable novels and poetry, an altogether different category crept in: health, yoga, diet, herbology, reflexology, organic gardening, fasting, etc. What did such fascinating stuff have to do with becoming a writer? I let this question sink unacknowledged into the yeasty mash of my subconscious and set about getting as healthy as Dr. Jethro Kloss.

A bout of hepatitis landed me in quarantine at the regional hospital. Was it a “healing crisis?” Liver detoxification provoked by my new and, it says here, healthier diet? No matter, I was sick as a stray dog. The M.D. in attendance, a truly holistic practitioner – though at the time the word had yet to be coined – began to pepper me with questions. What was I going to do with my life? Sell books? Nothing more? Why didn't I become a doctor? Helping people feel better was a great life.

I knew he was right, which made me angry. I loved helping people. Looking back on my life, when not “becoming” a writer, that was

what I had spent my time doing. Helping people made me feel useful, purposeful and happily quiet inside. All right, then, I would do it! I would become a doctor. But not an M.D. like him; others had a better knack for that. No, I would learn how to heal with plants and food and my own hands.

Chiropractic college was a revelation, a blossoming of instincts and talents I never knew I had. Once graduated and practicing in the field, the rewards were as satisfying as that Arkansas medic had promised. On the side, I fed the beast of my old ambition with the writing of poems and short prose, but the focus now was people. Being with them and for them. Every person was a story, a flesh-and-blood novel with all the humor, pathos, drama and surprise found in the best of Dickens, Dostoevsky, Garcia Marquez. I was in the thick of life, and life was great literature.

But, no, the worm was not so easily purged. One day my wife and I went to see a film. It was well made and wonderful. I walked out and wept. I could create something like that. I had it in me; I knew I did. So why was I holding back? Certainly, the reason was not doctorly responsibility. There have been a lot of doctors who also wrote – Chekhov, W.C. Williams, Walker Percy. I had stopped writing because....because....

Resolved to resuscitate my secret sharer, I reordered my weekly schedule: three days caring for patients, two days courting the muse with pen and paper. For twenty-four years, then 'til now, that has been my schedule. My kids have grown up with this example of professional schizophrenia lived out deliberately. Living my dream, while dreaming my life.

This dualism, this peace pact between need and ambition, compassion and artifact ion, is not what I set out to teach them; it's simply been what my inner workings obliged me to live. What they've learned from it all, or suffered, only they can say. Something valuable, I hope. Certainly on this end, there has been a price.

So I write and I doctor, doctor and write. Like the riding of a bicycle, this round-and-round has gradually taken me places. A few things published. A number of screenplays optioned. Some plays work shopped. I've never had 'The Big Break,' nor do I have any regrets about my chosen m.o. It's taught me some worthwhile lessons.

Lesson One: I am not “becoming” a writer, I *am* a writer. No one needs to crown me; I crown myself and get back all that energy I expended all those early years while waiting for exultation. The shift has been from incipience to initiation, from becoming to being.

Lesson Two: If I write to please others, to see my name in lights or on the bestseller list, I am a buffoon, an organ grinder’s monkey at the end of his own rope.

Lesson Three: What doctors and writers have in common – well, what *I* have in common with both pursuits – is the urge to be present to beauty and truth. Every sick person is wanting – sometimes dying – to reconnect with his/her truth. So is every blank page that stares back at me from the glowing monitor.

Lesson Four: People before things. Myself, my wife, my children, my friends, and my patients – they ALWAYS come before my wordsmithing. One is a reflective pursuit and the other, a full-bore, heart-rending, mind-expanding action-adventure.

Lesson Five: If you write long enough, the themes closest to your soul (for me: healing, perseverance, personal and cultural rapprochement) will rise to the surface, make a funny face at you and ask: “Are you living me? Because if you’re only writing me, what’s the point?” I like to think of my scripts and poems as meditations for this lifetime, not the next.

Lesson Six: “If you are not writing about the most important moment in this character’s life, why bother writing about it?” This plum, proffered in so many texts and seminars, applies equally to life. The corollary to it is found in the words of that incomparable sketch artist, the late Max Hershfeld. Whenever asked which of his drawings was his favorite, he would always reply without a trace of irony, “Why, the one I just finished!”

Lesson Seven: Everything a writer ever writes will eventually fall into silence. Sometimes – oh humility, thy name is rejection letter – this happens in a matter of days. Health and disease, thoughts and deeds, failure and success will likewise fade away. This is good news, not bad. It frees self-expression into the realm of play and experimentation.

Lesson Eight: Any writer who thinks he has fully come to know himself/herself had better stop writing because the fun is over.

This is why I will stop my spouting right here. I'm up against the wall of my own ignorance... a word that rhymes with arrogance.

Thank you for accompanying me this far, dear reader. See you in the next chapter.

* * *

SINGLE MOMS

By Dr. Cara McComish

Sister
Woman Sister Friend
Don't Stop
Moving to your rhythms.

Your energy
Emanates
Clear Powerful Bright.
I see you
Emerging
From your cocoon.
It's time
Now
Open your damp, fresh wings.
Sister, they will take you
Wherever you want to go.
You are strong,
Woman.

* * *

I have a very unusual disability. I can't sit or stand for any length of time without moving or putting up my feet. I don't have valves in my leg veins that can pump the blood back up to my heart. Therefore, I literally have to keep my legs elevated or moving or my legs swell up. This condition is called *venous vein insufficiency* – a chronic, degenerating, and inoperable condition brought on by the deep vein thrombophlebitis that I have had since I was 23.

So how do I keep moving? My husband and I love to go hiking up at the Sequoia National Park in Three Rivers, CA, the home of redwoods – ancient beings that are the oldest and biggest trees are on the planet. There is a very remote section called King's Canyon, up a very steep, curvy drive. Hardly anyone bothers to go there. In September 2004, we decided to meet the challenge. As we drove up the road, a deer popped out in front of us. When we stopped, the deer began to speak to me. I told my husband that we needed to drive into the next campground area and park. We were to take a path winding down into a gulley-like area. My first husband would have said, at a time like this: "You are softer than a sneaker full of shit. I ain't goin' down no path and if you do you will be hitchhiking home." (Not an idle threat, by the way.) Thank God my present husband is a true companion in spirit. The deer dove back into the bushes and we found the campground shortly up the road.

We parked the car and I clairvoyantly began to see the spirit of the deer guiding our way. As we silently walked down the path, the deer telepathically informed me that we would soon need to get off the path and go down into the forest in an extremely remote area. My husband still agreed. We gingerly made our way down a steep embankment. We found a *huge* redwood, so large that the roots had risen to form an arch up over the ground. I followed the deer and stood under the tree's roots. Bob took my picture. We thought this incredible tree was the gift from the deer spirit. But then I looked up and saw a small piece of paper stuck to the underside of the bark.

For two years this note from a mother about her dead infant had been nestled in the roots of this great tree. For us to find it was nothing short of a miracle. Coping with grief is an astonishing challenge. What an incredible parent to know how to express her grief so powerfully! Bob and I prayed for this parent and child. We gave thanks to the spirit of the deer who led us to this sacred spot for this sacred purpose. I hope this child's soul purpose has been fulfilled. Her parent is a role model for us all.

For Baby Zoe

9/23/02-9/28/02

Here I am leaving my sadness.
 Here I am leaving my sadness.
 Here I am leaving all of my shame and anguish.
 Here at the feet of this mother
 I am leaving all my shame and anguish.
 Here at the roots of my mother
 I lay down my grief.
 Cold shadow.

I lay down this grief
 in her blessed shadow.
 I will not carry this burden any longer.
 My small, heavy burden
 I lay here and with empty hands
 take up this seed.
 Now in my empty hands
 I take up her seed,
 Tiny and closed
 not yet open.
 Mother's seed comes with me
 As a promise.
 My promise
 to grow as grand and sure
 to withstand the forest fires that await
 to cultivate tenderness in myself
 so that I may comfort others
 in their sorrow and loss.
 All these things I will do
 For one who cannot grow any bigger
 in this world
 Tiny and closed
 not yet open.
 I carry with me
 Her light
 Her courage
 Her future

October 6, 2002

* * *

In September 2000, while on a trip to Ireland with author Carolyn Myss, I met Bob Bordonaro. I could see he was struggling with a past life issue and I offered him assistance. Bob readily accepted my offer. When he had recovered from his emotional trauma, he said, “An astrologer told me 28 years ago that I would meet a psychic like you and that I was to introduce you into the media.” I looked at him stunned, not realizing that I had just helped out a Beverly Hills media executive, and replied, “When I was 2, I drowned and Jesus told me that in the second half of my life I would move to the place where movies are made and have a career in the media teaching the truth about spirituality.”

Two months after we met, Bob sent me a plane ticket to Los Angeles. Although we got along well, I did not fare well on the radio. I went back to New Hampshire feeling like a real hillbilly. We continued to get to know each other over the telephone, however, and discovered that we had a lot in common. We felt that our meeting had occurred with divine intervention and that we should not ignore the intrigue of getting to know each other better. After all, Jesus Christ and an astrologer can’t be wrong. The following March, I moved to Tinsel Town.

The following story is written by a friend of Bob’s. It’s about a man’s moment with a parent that affected his life. Through the intense synchronicity and abundance of his life circumstances, David saw the value in accepting the promptings of the inner voice. David created a life not only for himself, but also for thousands of television viewers.

* * *

REMEMBER THAT YOU MATTER

By David Isaacs

For the past thirty years, I've made my living as a comedy writer. I've had the privilege of working on some of the best sitcoms of the past few decades, including *MASH*, *Cheers*, and *Frasier*. To participate in any one of those hits would be a lucky stroke for a writer; to take part in all three makes me pretty sure that someone up there must be on my side. A gift for writing is obviously part of my success, but I can't help feeling that fate has been especially kind to me. My career has been a series of fortunate chances that I've had the good sense, sometimes in spite of my fears and misgivings, to take.

I've never been what you would call a confident or self-assured person. Never had the kind of ego it usually takes to make it in Hollywood, that mythic town that chews up psyches far stronger than my own. I've had serious bouts of depression that might be termed clinical. But somehow, despite feeling ill equipped to break in, let alone make it in 'the business,' I've had a career that's lasted longer than most. I can only attribute that to some vague sense of my purpose in this world. A feeling that I was meant to be doing the work I do, living the life I am. As simple and as unsophisticated as it sounds, that thought has had a profound effect on me at the most crucial times in my life.

I'd always been attracted to the absurd worldview of comics, such as Woody Allen, Bill Cosby, Jonathan Winters, and Robert Klein. They were my idols growing up. I listened to their albums, stayed up late when they were on "The Tonight Show," watched their movies, and read everything I could about them. Most importantly, I identified with them, their separateness and their ability to observe some incongruity and turn it around until it was funny. I recognized that talent in myself and the genuine reward of getting a laugh and how it immediately gave you an audience and, with that, acceptance.

I grew up in Miami as an only child in what is probably a typical only-child's dysfunctional family. My parents had what most

people would call a long successful marriage, but there were great stresses and times when things looked pretty bleak. As the sole child I felt their love, but also their day-to-day frustrations with their life and each other. In many ways, I was the bridge between them. The reason they stayed together. I think my lifelong aversion to any kind of conflict comes from trying to keep a steady balance in the house and making sure never to stir things up.

Needless to say, I couldn't wait to get away from that pressure, but at the same time we become comfortable with what we're used to and it was hard to pull away from being their child. My dreams were to leave Miami and make my way to New York or L.A., where I would become a comedy name. They were wonderful dreams (many featured me out on the town or in the bedroom with hot women who were dazzled by my quick wit), but they didn't prepare me for the reality ahead.

I attended college close to home. For me, it was a blur of uncertainty. I took film and TV as a major, but I found little that inspired me and, even when it did, I underachieved. I got a 'C' in my only screenwriting class, and if that's not personal irony, I don't know what is. I graduated with a mediocre GPA and faced the real world with only the assurance that I had to be out there eventually. I still had my dream, but New York and L.A. were far away and the idea that it was time to go made actually going a lot scarier. What used to be the 'Emerald Cities' became dark and foreboding places.

Lucky for me (that phrase pops up a lot), I had a good friend named Bob Bordonaro, who had already moved out to L.A. Bob has been like an angel on my shoulder, always there at a critical juncture, as if he were around to guide me. Maybe we all play those parts at some time in our friends' lives, but Bob's timing in mine has been uncanny. You might even say heaven sent.

He began to call from L.A., telling me how great it was out there. It was everything we'd talked about and more. He told me I should pack up my few things and drive out. It sounded great and I wanted to go. I'd get all pumped up, but in the middle of the night at about 2 a.m. (which to this day I call my 'hour of doubt'); I'd chillingly review all the reasons not to go. No money. The loneliness of a big city. All sorts of unsavory people preying on you. (The last one I was right about. It is, after all, L.A.)

My parents weren't particularly encouraging. "What are you going to do there?" is one of those bigger existential questions that can get under your skin. So, I kept putting it off. I had a job in Miami that was at least putting some walking-around money in my pocket. Why give that up? Still, I had a nagging feeling that I belonged in L.A. and that my life almost depended on me going. Not in any dangerous sense, but more that I had no purpose remaining where I was. That soon I would be lost, even living near my own home. My destiny was calling me. Not real loud, but enough to get my attention. I decided to heed the call. I packed up my things and said a very emotional goodbye to my father. Suddenly, we had to deal with a farewell we had both put off.

I drove to California and found it tougher than I ever imagined. L.A. is an exciting town at first sight. It is a bright city full of young, good-looking people. But, it's also as sprawling and lonely as the songs say – I'm thinking of "It Never Rains in Southern California," not "I Love L.A."

Six hundred dollars in life savings didn't last long, even in the early seventies. I lived on Bob's couch for weeks and made the rounds looking for jobs in 'the business,' of which there were none. I wanted to get involved right away in comedy, but was not confident enough to try stand-up. Avoidance of conflict being a big theme for me, putting myself up on stage in front of hecklers never seemed to be a wise choice. I believe we all need the courage to overcome the fears that cripple us, but I also believe we're entitled to one free pass in life and I took mine when it came to stand-up.

I got odd jobs and made enough to move into a one-room efficiency. That's my lyrical way of describing a sink, a toilet, and a bed. Like a thousand other young people who had come to L.A. to find themselves, I started running out of hope. I talked to my parents about returning to Miami and I was sure my father would immediately lay out the 'Welcome Back Home' mat. Instead, he told me to stay put. There was nothing for me in Miami.

His words surprised me. Not so much the advice, which was sound, but that he had echoed my earlier instinct. I had never said anything to him about my future not lying at home. I felt it would have hurt his feelings at a sensitive time. But there he was saying the same thing I'd been thinking. I knew that in his heart my father wanted me nearby, but he was telling me to stick it out. His selflessness inspired me and I was more determined than ever to

make a name for myself in comedy, even if I had no idea how to do it.

Once again, “my guide” Bob appeared with a means to my end. Bob and I had both joined the Army Reserves during college. A great many draft-eligible men had taken the same route during the Vietnam War. When Bob moved to L.A., he transferred to a new unit, a public information detachment. It was made up of some very talented soldiers (and I use the word soldier very loosely here), who had day jobs as reporters, on-air newsmen, and disc jockeys.

When I arrived in town, Bob got me into the unit and it was a turning point in my life. During a reserve camp in Colorado, I met Ken Levine, a very funny guy who was a Top 40 jock in San Bernadino, California. He spotted me reading a biography of George S. Kaufman, the famous playwright and a hero of his. Needless to say, we hit it right off and found that we had a lot of comic icons in common. We both talked about wanting to write comedy screenplays or TV shows like “*MASH*,” which had just premiered. The problem was both of us were a little unsure of ourselves when it came to the craft of writing.

A good screenplay seemed like a daunting task (we weren’t wrong about that), especially working alone. We decided to team up and tackle something together. The thought was a good one, but the logistics made it tough. We both had day jobs and Ken’s was out of town. We had to meet nights and Sundays. It was tough going and our first works, of course, were rejected.

We had no contacts to speak of, but we did have each other. Even when the days without rest piled up, we knew we could rely on the other person for motivation. With a few years of hard work, we sold our first script. It was an episode of “The Jeffersons” that was completely re-written by the show’s story editors, but we had a sale. We were on our way . . . to the unemployment office.

After our first script, we found an agent to represent us. We quit our day jobs to write full time, but no more assignments came for six months. The initial high had long worn off and we found ourselves desperate for work to the point where Ken was ready to take a radio job that would move him far enough away that writing together would be impractical. But then, out of the blue, our agent called with one of those big break Hollywood stories (a little hyperbole).

The agency that represented us also handled the producer of “*MASH*.” As a favor to the agency, he read one of our scripts and liked it enough to bring us in for a pitch. *MASH* was a show I could only dream of writing. He filled our arms with research about the Korean War and we returned with scores of ideas, one of which he liked. Still, he had his doubts about us. Whether it was our age or lack of professional experience, I guess our eagerness overcame him and he gave us a shot to turn our idea into an episode. We came through and he gave us another assignment. We were full-on writers.

No doubt, we worked our butts off to take advantage of our opportunity. To this day, I don’t think Ken or I would have had the chance to write “*MASH*” if either of us had gone it alone. Nor would we have been as proficient had we not spent time in the military, not in combat thank God, but experiencing Army life firsthand.

In that sense, we were ahead of other comedy writers our age. We were lucky to have found each other, but I’ve never believed it was just dumb luck. We were guided there by the actions of friends and family, but also by the faith, however weak at times, that we were on a path to our own true destinies.

But, there are always stumbling blocks. “*MASH*” gave me a good career foothold, but it also brought me new insecurities. I started to wrap my self-worth in my success as a writer. I began to enjoy the writing less and less and worried all the time about the work not being good enough. I stopped feeling funny. Generally, this is a bad condition for a comedy writer.

I put such pressure on myself that I eventually crashed and fell into a crisis of spirit. A fancy way of saying I was deeply depressed. I’d been in these periods before, but never like this. I could not shake the feelings of hopelessness. Trying to write my way out of it only made it worse.

I went back to Miami for the first time in years, mainly because I couldn’t think of anything else to do. I was almost thirty years old and back with my parents. Not the healthiest of situations, and yet it was a side trip I needed to take.

My father and mother tried their best to understand what I was going through, but they had no background to help me. Their talks and pleas could not break through the darkness. When you’re in a depression nothing much makes sense.

One morning as I lay in bed, my father came into the room. He didn't ask how I was feeling for the hundredth time. He didn't try to give me a pep talk. He didn't try to impress on me again that worrying would ruin my health. He just sat down on the edge of my bed, looked at me and said, "*Everything is going to be okay. You matter.*" Just those words. No explanation. Nothing more. Then he got up and left the room.

My father was never a man of few words and rarely succinct in his thoughts. But at that moment, when it counted most, he summed up the problem in two short sentences. He was telling me it was all right to be who I was. Success, money, possessions, respect, fame, and accomplishment are all fine, if they don't get in the way of finding meaning in your life.

I first chose my path because it brought me joy and purpose. If I lost my way because I was too busy trying to prove my worth, then I had to go back to enjoying the writing for its own sake or I would stay lost. That's a lot to get from "*Everything is going to be okay. You matter.*" But it quickly became clear to me that's what he meant. Even if it wasn't what he meant (I never asked him), his words brought me the message. I've never forgotten that moment. When I lose my way (and it happens almost weekly), I can remember it and begin to center myself again.

I'm 53 now and I have a wonderful wife (Bob introduced us, if you can believe that) and children. Fifty-three is an age that's usually last call for comedy writers. But I'm still hanging in there and getting great enjoyment and blessings out of the work. The late nights in re-write rooms take a bigger toll then they did when I was in my thirties, but I still enjoy the company.

My greatest blessing is my children. No accomplishment, no award, no recognition can compare with the sense of peace they've given me. If the first half of life is career and making a reputation for oneself, the second half is about seeking meaning. My children have brought that and centered me in a way I never experienced before. In short, their very presence made me more selfless, and that I think speaks for itself.

Another joy and meaning I've discovered is teaching up-and-coming writers about the craft, guiding them along their own path. Not to get all *Lion King, circle of life* here, but I'd like to give back a little to young folks who remind me a whole lot of me. Not all of

them will be as lucky as I've been career-wise, but if I can help just a few follow their own dreams, then I'll know till the end of my life that my father was right... I matter.

* * *

Raising Humanity involves knowing what gives us as individuals our own personal sense of balance and harmony. It involves choosing to be with a partner who also knows how to create balance and then role modeling that peace and stability in our families. The goal is balance and harmony, within oneself and with each other, to create a joyful family, harmonious community, and peaceful world.

Do we want parents who are stressed and out of balance to have the sacred mission of raising humanity? We don't want the least tended vegetable garden to be the source of our nutrition, do we? Why aren't day care workers and teachers acknowledged as being as important as they are? They, along with parents, are the farmers of our most important natural resource, the future of the human race.

A farmer who is about to spend twenty years growing a particular crop is often more aware of his plants' needs than we are of the needs of our children. The farmer takes the time to research his investment. He wants to be certain that the kind of plant he chooses to raise in a certain environment will prosper there. He studies what a crop needs and makes sure he has the resources to provide for that plant's best development. He knows not to plant an orchid in a desert.

DID I MISS THE EXIT RAMP? By Mary Elizabeth

Today I turned 45 years old, a pivotal point in a women's life. A mere breath away from turning the page to 50, a tearful, yet final farewell to youth.

For so many women, this is a joyous time. Their children are well on their way to being adults and they are able to capture more intimate moments alone with their husbands. Most women have homes they have nestled into that are both an expression of themselves and an accumulation of their family's memories. Financially stable, it is a time to plan those weekend escapes and leisurely vacations that have been put off between diapers and college tuition. But, what if?

What if you are still single and have yet to meet your soul mate? Is there such a thing? Every one talks about it, your friends have found them (not once, but twice), and songs are written about them. Where is mine? How is it possible for a friend to divorce, remarry, and have a baby, all in the time that you haven't even met a guy you would like to date more than twice?

What if your friends are starting to talk about their premenopausal symptoms and somewhere within you is still the yearning to have a child? What if you see that child in your mind's eye and continue to wonder where the father is and whether he can feel it too?

What if you have made a choice to leave your career and follow your purpose? A choice that leads to financial instability and your own parents worrying about what will happen to their 45-year old child?

What if deep inside beats the heart and spirit of a 25-year-old, but the mirror tells a much different story? America worships money

and loves youth. Both of which you no longer have. Where do you fit? Do you check “Miss” or “Ms” on the application? What does that even *mean*?

But, what if you change your mind? You defy the illusion of the so-called *American Dream* and create your own sense of belonging and participation in the world. Is it really imperative for a woman to have a man and a baby to attain happiness? Can I choose my own personal recipe for happiness without Mr. Right and a six-figure income?

Why not ask the pregnant woman who was killed in her sleep by her husband and thrown into a trash bin. Or the woman held captive for ten years and beaten by her husband, while her children silently watched, numb to the repetitive horror. What about the 50-year-old woman whose high school sweetheart divorces her for a 22-year-old trophy wife? What happened to their storybook endings? Their happiness?

Personally, I have refused to settle.

When men marry, not only are they marrying for love, but they are also thinking maid, cook, accountant, etc. Their life often gets easier, while the woman’s load gets heavier. Personally, I don’t like cleaning up my mess, much less someone else’s.

Now this might seem ridiculous, but why should I take on maid duty if I’m not crazily in love? He is not doing me any favors. I would rather deal with my own dishes and dust bunnies, thank you. This may sound bitter and it may sound harsh, but laundry comes in many forms – not just dirty jockey shorts.

Have you ever had your life threatened by the very man who was so desperate to marry you and father your babies? The harsh reality is that one-third of all relationships involve emotional abuse. For six months I was part of that ugly statistic and, for seven years afterwards, I was continually harassed and threatened, in spite of three protection orders and one guilty verdict for violating the order.

After I left, Psycho (my nickname for him) attempted to destroy every aspect of my life: he called my boss and posed as a customer to try to get me fired, fraudulently tried to obtain my personal records, anonymously called a credit card company accusing me of fraud, and put sugar in my gas tank. That was just one week....

Step by step, police reports were filed, but unless he actually shot me with the unregistered gun he owned, how could I prove any of this was him?

Then one night he provided the straw that broke the camel's back. He left a phone message from a movie trailer, "*Have you ever thought about committing the perfect murder?*" Combined with one pissed off Boulder detective, the harassment stopped. The trick? He couldn't find Psycho, but he found his dad and threatened to extradite his son to Colorado on a felony charge. The endless phone hang-ups (thousands), magazine subscriptions (92 in all), nails in the driveway, and the other nuisances to my parents and me finally stopped.

So, how does an intelligent, confident, and independent woman get into that kind of relationship? The answer is simple. The relationship doesn't start out abusive. In fact, for six months he treated me like a queen. Then gradually the calculative manipulator drops a condescending comment here and there, starts picking fights that he blames on you, and the downward slide into the "black hole" begins.

Unbelievably, you start making excuses that it was stress at work or an argument with his dad. You think the real guy was the one you dated the first six months and you hope and wait for that prince to return. He never does. Tragically, you start forgetting the boundaries of a normal relationship.

If I could rewrite history, would I wish Psycho had never been a part of my life? Absolutely not! That relationship defined who I am today. I allowed the abuse to continue because I did not stand up for myself. It was not until the end that I told him I would not tolerate his behavior. It was not until the end that I realized that I deserved so much more. Through the seven years of hell he put me through, I found my voice and I found myself and I will never allow anyone to take it from me again.

So, what's the deal? It has been ten years since that fateful relationship. Did I miss an exit ramp or make a wrong turn?

For seventeen years I worked in the male-dominated, manufacturing side of the fitness industry. Always *just one of the guys*, an endless number of them told me I intimidated the heck out of them.

Lets get this straight. I am 5'3", 125 pounds, and a size 4 (size 2 on a REALLY good day), and 6-foot-tall former athletes tell me that my confidence scares them.

First of all, I must commend myself on the academy-award performances that I have able to pull off in the "confidence" category. Second, I have to ask myself, are men really that insecure? Does a woman have to be needy and helpless (or act it) to find a man? Is this macho-crap all a ruse?

In my random, unscientific poll, the results were overwhelmingly *yes*. Cher recently said in an interview that no one is interested in being "Mr. Cher." So, I ask you, where are the real men? I mean the real men who aren't boasting phallic-powered Porsches and multiple prescriptions for sex-enhancement pharmaceuticals? The ones that aren't emotionally or physically abusing the women in their life because of their lack of self-worth? Where are the ones that my friends all seem to find?

Is it this pathetic state of insecurity that has resulted in such scandals as Enron and World Comm? Or the decision to go to war or ram fully loaded planes into fully loaded buildings? Isn't there a better way to test your manhood? Wouldn't it just be easier to drop your pants and get out a ruler?

The bottom line is that I have things to do. I can't worry that I am too confident, too old, too wrinkly, or too aggressive. If a man is insecure and feels unworthy, it is not my appointed role to be the peppy cheerleader pumping my pom-poms and telling him *you can do it*. I will just do it myself, minus the ticker-tape parade.

I've been told by many to lower my standards or else I am going to be alone. How do you lower standards on acceptance and respect? I already made the mistake of doing that once.

To be with me, it will take a man who is strong, who likes to be challenged, and who knows, if all else fails, that I can go out and get my own oil changed. He'll be able to call me on my crap and won't be offended when I call him on his. It will be a partnership based on love, passion, respect, and friendship. No games. No pretense. Just what is.

Maybe I will find him, maybe I won't. Maybe it's not meant to be this time around. At the end of the day, I'm okay alone. And if Mr.

Right does waltz into my life, I prefer to make him the yummy icing on an already perfectly delicious cake.

As for kids, single motherhood has never appealed to me. I don't have the yearning to pass on my biology to a child without a loving, nurturing father by my side. Am I missing out? Most mothers would say yes. But, maybe my purpose is different.

Every year for the last 27 years, I have had a gynecological exam. I have talked endlessly with male and female doctors, both young and old, and with nurses, while trying to ignore the latex fingers probing my uterus. During that time, not one ever asked me the proverbial question, *Are you planning on having children?*

Not to place blame, but my generation saw that crack in the glass ceiling and decided to blow through it. Getting married and having kids in your twenties became something that only non-educated women did. Granted, as I was approaching 40 years old, I knew my days were numbered, but I had taken phenomenal care of myself. My little eggs had to benefit from all the organic vegetables and leg presses, right?

I can't recall when the media blitz occurred, but I do remember the cold cock to the chin that floored me, along with millions of other ambushed women that week. The statistic:

By age 40, women have only a 5 percent chance of conceiving naturally.

All of a sudden that simple statistic was screaming from every newspaper, magazine and TV newscast across the country. Was I the only one left out of the loop for the last twenty years? Apparently not. Infertility treatment is now a *\$4 billion-a-year* business.

If I had known that statistic at 25, my life might have been different. The truth is that I did pass up opportunities to have children earlier in life. Psycho guy pushed and pushed for me to have a baby. But what kind of mother would I have been if I had brought a child into the world under those conditions? I had lost my own self-worth. How could I have been a role model in teaching my own child confidence and self-esteem? I would have perpetuated the cycle.

Maybe I have gone mad, but I still see myself with a little boy. Sometimes at night, I feel him patiently waiting for the proper moment to make his grand entrance. I could be selfish and give in to my desire not be alone and the need to have someone love me, but I just can't. I would rob him of the greatest gift of all – two parents who love each other and are united in bringing a miracle into this world. I love him too much to give him anything less than that.

So, my challenge to the women of the world is this: We are incredibly powerful beings, yet we do not see our own power. That is a choice that we consciously make and one that we can consciously change.

Before bringing a child into this world, ask yourself some important questions. Are you are happy? Are you complete? Are you fulfilled? If not, is this baby a means to fill a void? What about the father? Does he respect, accept, and love you? Does he support your dreams for yourself and your future? Would *you* want to be born into this family?

If you answered no to any of those questions, ask yourself one more. Do you want to be part of the solution or part of the problem?

In the frightening age of terrorism, war, and the escalating epidemic of emotional and physical domestic abuse, it is within your power to say NO. It is within your power to refuse to tolerate these conditions for your children and for yourself. It is time to take your power back and reacquaint yourself with the brilliant, fulfilled, and joyous woman inside of you. She is waiting to come out and she is more powerful than you could ever imagine.

* * *

Sacred Chalice

By Janet Heartson

The Holy grail, the Sacred Chalice is a woman's body.
A man can only fill it with Love.

This chalice waits for the knight
 Who reveres the Divine Feminine.
 Who kneels before great mysteries,
 And knows the Source of Wonder.

Are you the key to the holy grail within me?
 Are you ready to surrender to the mystery?
 Are you opening to the heart of the Divine?
 Then you may drink this cup of wine.

* * *

RAISING HUMANITY

By Diane Wall

My mom once gave me a plaque to hang in my kitchen that read, "Raising children is like being pecked to death by a chicken." My mom is the mother of eight children and I figure she has it pretty well figured out. Mom always wanted a big family. She was an only child until the age of 12 and dreamed of having a big dinner table with lots of children sitting around it. "Little House on the Prairie" we weren't, but my mom definitely had her dream come true.

She loves nothing more than her role in life – being a wonderful mother. I came to realize what makes my Mom so wonderful is her deep faith in God, which she always shared with us. *And Dad backed Mom one hundred percent.* With help from Catholic school and lessons learned the hard way (from our mistakes), they led by example, teaching us that God is in everyone's corner and to trust that He will guide us through.

I remember coming home from school one time and seeing her lying on the couch and the doctor leaving. We NEVER saw Mom sick! All of us thought she was going to die. We ran to get her very special statue of the Blessed Mother from her dresser. We set up flowers and her statue and all of us knelt around her saying the rosary. The next day she was back in the kitchen as usual and we thought we had received a miracle. Mom never mentioned the antibiotic she was on. We kept thanking God and The Blessed Mother for sparing Mom's life.

I was my parents' first daughter, one of six. My aunt had just taken her vows as a nun, and I was offered up to the Blessed Mother in a special service when I was a few days old. I was to wear blue for the first two years of my life. I had almost no hair as a baby and, along with the blue attire, most people thought I was a little boy. Later, like most young girls in Catholic school, I was impressed beyond words by different saints and their journeys and I toyed with the idea of becoming a nun – until I realized nuns didn't wear lipstick. Then I wanted to be a model!

Well, things change; so do our belief systems. Trying to rid myself of the old "Catholic guilt" has not been easy, but in my search for spiritual enlightenment, I've come to know a much more understanding God. I've always known, but now I *understand*.

Throughout my life, I've found myself in situations where faith seemed to be all I had. After the attack of September 11th, it was hard to think of praying for each and every person on our planet. The thought of praying for people who brought so much pain to others was unbearable. My husband and I lost our best friend, Matty, a New York City Fire Department Battalion Chief. In his void stood his wife, Margaret, and their family. We had celebrated our children's births, communions, graduations, promotions, and anniversaries together for many years. When I looked at her face, I saw grief beyond measure. How could I handle this and help her? I pulled on one of the ribbons from my gift of faith. God said, "Ask, and you shall receive." I asked and received strength – pure, raw, unselfish strength for both of us.

Helping Margaret go through Matty's papers and other memorabilia from their life together, I was amazed at her quiet strength. I listened and hugged her at times as she came across special things of Matty's. If you don't have faith at a time like that, it would seem impossible to get through. In the first few weeks after September 11th, Matty was with us constantly. I know of many times he made known his unending love for Margaret and helped me with the love of his life and my best friend. Matty is here right now as I write this. He wants the whole world to know that "Love transcends death."

From my meditations where I've prayed to know my path, I know why I'm here: to help raise the consciousness on this planet. I have so many people helping me on my journey; Jesus Christ, the Blessed Mother, and Saint Theresa, my patron saint, is with me always. I start my day by saying "Good morning, God! Nothing is going to happen to me today that you and I can't handle." I have given the holy card with that saying on it to many people. My

children all have it in their rooms and we keep one in the kitchen, right next to the coffee pot where we start our day.

I've always felt that attending mass was another ribbon on my gift of faith. I go to church because it makes me feel wonderful. There are times I stop by church and I'm the only one there. It's like a spiritual cocoon. Being so close to God in his home, talking to all the angels and saints in the stillness and sanctity, I find it easier to reflect on what they are trying to tell me. Our Father is always there, ready to listen. The peace and joy of time shared with God remains with me for hours.

I had a tough time with one of my daughters, right before she went off to college. I was so frustrated that I had been attending Monday night novenas to the Blessed Mother. One night I came home and called my mom to tell her, "Well, Mary has answered my prayers." Mom asked if my daughter had finally relented and was going to do what I wanted her to. I said no, but I didn't care any more. Mary had given me the gift of being free of demanding anything of my daughter. I realized my daughter had to find her own way, no matter what I thought. She had to make her own choices, good or bad, just as my parents had let me follow my own path. Like Mom, my job is to keep my faith in God to help me be there for her as best as I can.

The secret to finding happiness that I have tried to teach my children is to be ALWAYS THANKFUL. Thank God every day, all day, for the abundance in your life. The more you thank him, the more abundant your life will be. Maybe it's the realization of how much you have to be thankful for. Start in the morning, thanking God for your safety and the safety of your loved ones through the night. As you go through your day, thank him for the simple things, such as heat, water, light. Thank him for the car that is getting you to work. Thank him for the work you do, and on and on. You'll soon realize how much abundance you have in your life.

When my sister was first married and wasn't working, her husband came home from his day at work and asked her, "What do you do all day?" Without blinking an eye, she looked at him and said, "Well, honey, as soon as I get up in the morning, I start counting my blessings. Before you know it, the whole darn day is shot." Well, she really wasn't far from the truth.

I've also taught my children the Law of Reversal. Always reverse a situation, and ask, "Is this is how *you* would want to be treated? Will what you are about to do hurt or help someone? Does it feel right? The answers come loud and clear. If you act on the law of karma – "what goes around, comes around" – you will act out of

love. You can't lose. People may not agree with your course of action. However, if you are making your decision based on love, knowing in your heart you're doing this for the best reasons possible, you can't go wrong.

In this life we are given free will. I've made decisions I've questioned. My answers at times leave a lot to be desired. It's an ongoing process. But it's good to remember that God has a tremendous sense of humor. Where do you think we got ours? I've laughed so hard at times as I wondered, "What's next?"

A little secret between you and me: Don't ask – you'll find out soon enough.

Thank You, Oh Wonderful God!

And so it is...

Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene appeared to me on a hot day in August 2005. I was standing in my backyard just behind the mint. As I smelled the mint, I could see Jesus on my left and Mary Magdalene on my right. She appeared with a full head of red hair, he was lean, with brown hair to his shoulders. Both taller than I. Jesus spoke, "We want to give you what is called a Twin Ray attunement – an energy that will clear out the entire akashic records of your lives as both male and female. These memories no longer serve you. This consecration will align your soul and your senses to the Divine within you. It will be a cleansing of light, so powerful that it could possibly kill you to receive it. Do you desire it?"

I immediately said yes. As a gold ball of light entered my third eye, a wave of love came over me. I fell to the ground like a leaf falling from a tree in the autumn air. I lay on the ground, fully cognizant of my surroundings. I felt like my spirit and my ability to create had become One. I was present. I knew my soul's purpose was now more refined.

Jesus spoke again, "Pass on this kind of Reiki attunement to people and places. Let them know the significance of this cleanse." I knew in those seconds that I would teach what I had learned in the most sacred moments when I was listening to my soul's parents. Years passed before I shared this SACRED ENERGY. Then for six months from May 2009 to October 2009 I was telepathically told by Mary Magdalene to lead virtual New Moon Twin Ray Reiki Master Attunements meditations. As of the New Moon on October 18, 2009 that Twin Ray Reiki Master Attunement energy is available to you at anytime you set intention to receive it. It is my honor to pass this Attunement to you.

As the ATTUNEMENT ENERGY passed into me to give to others, Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene then told me to write and publish this book.

I was left with this Gnostic Knowing about RAISING HUMANITY with the METAPHYSICAL MOTHERING® perspective.

KNOWING

You know you are helping to Raise Humanity with the Metaphysical Mothering® perspective when:

1. You realize the creation of a body is not the sole purpose of pregnancy.
2. You understand that pregnancy is an opportunity for a soul to create through you the 'body vehicle' that it needs to forge its way back to the awareness Source.
3. You know that the eternal soul is creating from the accumulations of all of its past life experiences.
4. You appreciate that each body created in each lifetime with its essential seven senses for the soul's enlightenment is being created through you. You are the temple for this divine experience to occur.
5. You know this soul intends to return to Mother Earth and has selected you as the physical vehicle for the best and highest potential for the fulfillment of its soul's purpose on earth at this time.
6. You understand that the body and soul select a spirit of supreme value for its purpose of Being.
7. Your baby's body and spirit have a connection to its own Higher Self and so do you. If you remember this, then your child will remember this. Each action both of you take will be based on reconnecting with the Divine. In your remembrance of this, your higher self will begin to have telepathic communication with your unborn child's Higher Self.
8. You believe that spiritual development or connection to this remembrance is achieved through your own inner knowing.
9. You are aware that your emotions and actions feed your child's soul and cellular memory.
10. Before you become pregnant, you make sure that you value your own independence and are responsible. Do not be dependent on someone else. Know that you are enough.
11. You are able to grow and generate your own strength and happiness. From this, good relationships can develop. You will then enjoy the process of having your own children.
12. When the going gets tough, you know that "this too shall pass."

13. You make a list of your strengths and weaknesses regarding parenting. Let go of the shame and guilt over weaknesses and then work around them.
14. You know the way to connect to this remembrance is through the senses and sensuality. You understand that your feelings and your senses are the gateway to your spirituality.
15. Your goal is to have an open heart and your seven major chakras are open and balanced.
16. Your personal path to motherhood engages inner preparation, introspection, and transformation.
17. You are not afraid of physical death. You know that your body will die, but your spirit won't.
18. You acknowledge that your child has his or her own soul purpose. If your child's soul purpose is achieved quickly, the body will leave, but do not feel you have failed as a mother. Acknowledge the presence of your child in your life, no matter how brief the encounter.
19. You understand that your job as a parent is to guide your children to fulfill their purpose.
20. You recognize that the merit of your child's soul is the goal of consciousness.
21. You know that raising consciousness through conscious parenting gives you a strong global political voice.
22. You recognize that you have two ears and one mouth, so you will listen twice as much as you talk.
23. You develop your attention to subtle perception, so that you can have telepathic communication with your child.
24. You orient your senses, emotions, and intelligences to the sacredness of the Divine. You know that the only sin is to forget to do that.
25. You do not betray your true self by desiring to be that which you are not.
26. You observe the pattern of cause and effect in your life and take responsibility for all that happens.
27. You know and teach your children that they are not victims, although they may be victimized.
28. You know that every experience is a learning experience for yourself and others.
29. You stop accusing yourself and others of making mistakes, but rather choose to "grow or go."
30. You know that "turning the other cheek" means to engage in not seeing evil, hearing evil, or speaking evil. JUST MOVE ON. Unless, of course, it

- is your soul's purpose to engage and teach. Know when to pick your battles. Are they serving your ego or the Divine Plan?
31. If you are not comfortable in a situation, you listen to your body and speak up instead of harboring resentment. Be part of the solution, not the problem.
 32. You know that you are the sum result of your attitudes and actions. You always ask yourself, "Is the choice I am making bringing me closer to the Divine?"
 33. You never preach any sort of belief system.
 34. You create harmony in your life by being in a loving and conscious relationship with divine self.
 35. You know that to harmonize with your own body, heart, and mind is the first step to that experience.
 36. You know that all psychic and bodily suffering is a lack of harmony with human nature, your divine nature, and the nature elements.
 37. You know that conversion means the return to 'what is' with nature, not against it. You know you are to be with nature, and respect it.
 38. You desire to experience wholeness for yourself and your child and you are a role model to this way of balance.
 39. You are content with giving and receiving, not exploiting and producing.
 40. You know the purpose of the universe is the production of love.
 41. You teach your children that when they pass over, the love they experience transcends death. Help them see love as the goal.
 42. You create time for yourself. Just because you are a mother doesn't mean you can't rest.
 43. You honor your parents just as they are, even if you do not love your mother and father. Make a decision not to live in your inner child's projections. Just see your parents as they truly are and let it go with a ritual conducted by yourself or with friends.
 44. After making peace with your perception of your parents, determine your own parenting goals. Create a mission statement for parenting. Type it, print it, and frame it!
 45. You do not raise your children from your accumulated memories. Teach your children to connect with the laws that Mother/Father, God /Goddess taught you about Universal laws.
 46. You do not allow your mental associations from the past, in this lifetime or others, to carve your relationship with your children.
 47. You know that the time to clear your children's path to their divinity begins prior to conception, during gestation, and in the first three years of

- their life. Therefore, clear your own genetic codes before pregnancy, so you don't pass them down in the pregnancy process itself.
48. You say a prayer to clear out any soul karma by releasing past lives with your child. This way any lingering drama and trauma from other lifetimes doesn't interfere with the alchemy of what you two can create in this present time/space continuum.
 49. You consciously request that all vows and contracts from other lifetimes be null and void. Intend that your relationship be based on unconditional love and true healing.
 50. You make certain that you and your partner invite this sacred soul into your hearts and homes. Acknowledge the significance of what is really taking place.
 51. You think about what kind of environment you intend to create for the conception to occur. What sights, smells, feelings, tastes, and sounds do you want the moment to be nourished by?
 52. You spend a minimum of sixteen seconds a day imagining and passionately feeling what it will feel like in that moment when your child's soul contract and you become one.
 53. You make parental decisions in total innocence that was created from this pure, strong and delicious moment of intimacy, rather than from the wounded child within you. The blueprint of your child's destiny has been created. You create a symbol of this sacred moment and give it to your child when they are born to remind them of your commitment to serve their Higher Purpose for being on the planet.
 54. You teach your children that the energy behind their decisions will determine the outcomes of their decisions.
 55. You don't buy your child's cooperation, unless you acknowledge that you are truly doing this.
 56. You teach your child about other family structures, cultures, and traditions.
 57. You teach your child about marketing and materialism.
 58. You teach your children to think and feel. That is their birthright.
 59. Every night, you have your children thank their hearts for beating and see their bodies as their best friends.
 60. You do not force your child to love. Awaken love in them by creating a desire in them to experience love.
 61. You know that the love your children experience with you is how they will perceive the God/Goddess. Your child will have the memory of your love and they will recall the deep love of the God/Goddess and then they will learn to love themselves

62. A child that loves itself, respects itself. A child that respects itself is compassionate and respectful of others.
63. From this platform, you build a strong inner self, a strong individual, and strong relationships based on love. We build families and communities and countries of loving individuals – one loving parent at a time. It really is that simple.
64. You make today your proudest moment of parenting.
65. You love the opportunities that problems offer for you to teach your child a way of Being.
66. You imagine your child all grown up, self-sufficient, and self-disciplined.
67. You be what you want your child to be. Lead by inspiration.
68. You don't have unprotected sex with a man with whom you are not willing to raise a child.
69. You practice the ritual of cleansing your sexual energy field after having recreational sex.
70. You realize that your baby's soul has chosen you and your partner to be his or her parents. You realize that you have agreed to be chosen.
71. Your priority is to maximize the opportunity for your child's soul to grow.
72. You do not give your parenting power away to those with "credentials."
73. You validate your mother's intuition.
74. You choose to be a vehicle for the best and highest good for all, including yourself.
75. You know that being a martyr is an antiquated parenting style.
76. You teach your child to say yes to joy. You observe what gives them joy and reward that choice for them.
77. You teach your children to become stewards of the earth.
78. You teach your children that sometimes the most productive thing they can do is nothing.
79. You wouldn't think of conceiving a child if you are smoking or drinking.
80. You don't make fun of your child's perceptions of things.
81. You don't let teachers and/or schools destroy your child's connection to the unseen world.
82. You teach the power of Universal Law, the Power of Intention and the Law of Attraction.
83. You teach wonder and love of learning.
84. You read, read, and read some more to your child.

85. You make messes with your child.
86. You vacation and teach relaxation skills.
87. You sing with your children.
88. You don't hate their father, no matter what. You don't destroy a potential relationship with their father.
89. You teach that love is not gender, race or culturally based.
90. You pace your teaching so your child is not overwhelmed.
91. You actively bless food and call in abundance as our divine birthright.
92. You love and adore the gift of free will.
93. You know poverty and hatred have no power over the power of LOVE.
94. You teach your child about their chakras.
95. You teach your child that not living up to their Divine Potential will make them ill.
96. You teach your child to persevere.
97. You apply the law of Quantum Physics, which states that if 51% of any energy is dominant that the rest of the energy will follow suit.
98. You teach your children that their thoughts, feelings, and actions have an impact on themselves and the well being of others.
99. You know you have achieved your parenting goal when your child has the self-confidence and courage to be his or her authentic self.
100. You teach your child that living in joy is giving back to God.

A Message from Archangel Gabriel

KNOW THIS

There is a force in the universe more powerful than hatred.

Appreciate your mother.

Think about how each object got into your hand.

Who made that book you are reading right now?

How many people did it take?

What are their stories?

Give yourself permission to experience the feeling of balance.

Make your own way.

Know your own heart.

Put your hands over your beating heart right now and thank it.

Put your ears to the chest of a loved one as soon as you can.

Begin now to appreciate.

About the Author



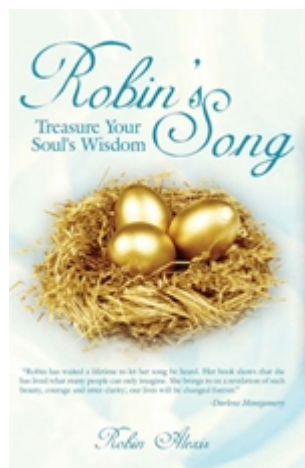
Robin Alexis

As a Reiki Master Teacher, her daily Reiki practice catapulted the awakening of her eclectic metaphysical gifts.

Now she has served many people with her extra-ordinary gifts as an Clairvoyant, Clair-audio, and Clairsentient.

Learn more at:

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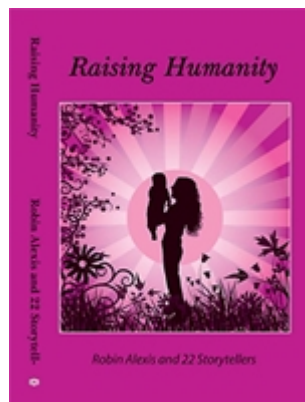
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