

A LIGHT IN THE MIST

THE JOURNAL OF HOPE

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Photograph by H. Okamoto

INTENTION
BENDS
TOWARD THE
LIGHT

Joseph Campbell

THE PRAYER

by Carole Bayer Sager and David Foster

*I pray you'll be our eyes, and watch us
where we go and help us to be wise in times
when we don't know*

*Let this be our prayer, when we
lose our way*

*Lead us to the place, guide us with
your grace*

To a place where we'll be safe

*I pray we'll find your light, and hold it
in our hearts*

*When stars go out each night, remind us
where you are*

*Let this be our prayer, when shadows
fill our day*

*Help us find a place, guide us with
your grace*

Give us faith so we'll be safe

*A world where pain and sorrow
will be ended*

*And every heart that's broken
will be mended*

*And we'll remember we are all
God's children*

*Reaching out to touch you
Reaching to the sky*

*We ask that life be kind, and watch us
from above*

*We hope each soul will find another soul
to love*

Let this be our prayer, just like every child

*Who needs to find a place, guide us
with your grace*

Give us faith so we'll be safe

*Needs to find a place, guide us
with your grace*

Give us faith so we'll be safe

THE PRAYER

by Carole Bayer Sager and David Foster

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BUDDHIST PRAYER

May I become a medicine for the sick and their physician, their support until sickness come not again. May I become an unfailing store for the wretched, and be first to supply them with their needs.

My own self and my pleasures, my righteousness past, present and future, may I sacrifice without regard, in order to achieve the welfare of beings.



JEWISH PRAYER

When Miriam was sick, her brother Moses prayed: "Eil na r'-fah, na la: O God, pray, heal her please!" We pray for those who are now ill.

Source of Life, we pray: Heal them. We pray for those who are violated by illness and pain.

Heal them.

Grant courage to those whose bodies and minds, holy proof of Your creative goodness, are invaded by illness and pain.

Encourage them.

Grant strength and compassion to families and friends who give their loving care and support, and help them overcome despair.

Strengthen them.

Grant wisdom to those who probe the deepest complexities of Your world as they labor in search of treatments and cures.

Inspire them.

Grant clarity of vision and strength of purpose to the leaders of our institutions and our government. May they be moved to act with justice and compassion.

Guide them.

Grant insight to us, that we may understand that whenever death comes, we must accept it — but that before it comes, we must resist it by cherishing our lives and making our life worthy as long as we live.

Bless and heal us.



PRAYERS OF DIFFERENT VOICES

Intercessory Prayer

If you're sick, and someone prays for you, will the prayers help you get better? That's a question Stephen Kopecky, M.D., Mayo Clinic cardiologist, is trying to answer.

Since last August, when some people check out of Saint Mary's Hospital in Rochester, Minn., at least five strangers start praying for them at least once a week.

There's also a control group of people who aren't prayed for. Patients aren't told which group they're placed in, just that they're part of this intercessory prayer study. The Mayo Clinic study is designed to determine whether intercessory prayer has any effect on the health of those who've been hospitalized for heart conditions.

Sound strange? It's not the first study to measure the effects of intercessory prayer. In 1988, cardiologist Randolph Byrd had born-again Christians pray daily for 393 people in the coronary care unit of San Francisco General Hospital. The patients who were prayed for were five times less likely to need antibiotics and three times less likely to develop complications than those in the control group who weren't prayed for.

In the Mayo Clinic study, 1000 people are asked to pray. All they know of their subjects is first name, gender, general diagnosis, such as heart attack or heart failure, and their current condition. The study will follow 800 people for 6 months to determine how they fare compared to an unprayed-for control group.

Dr. Kopecky believes the study is tapping an unmet need because so many people turn to prayer in times of need. "Ninety-seven out of 100 patients pray before bypass surgery," he says. He's amazed at the support he's received from people who want to pray for others. "People come up to me in the hallway and say, 'I want to be involved. How can I help?'" However, a number of people thought he shouldn't do the study, but for different reasons. Some are so convinced that intercessory prayer works there's no need to study it; others are just as sure it doesn't work.

Personally, Dr. Kopecky believes prayer works if the person receiving it believes. "If the person believes it works, it's a tremendous source of energy and a source of healing," he says. "Sometimes it's the best medicine we have to offer."



"We don't have to beg or bribe God to give us strength or hope or patience. We need only turn to the One, admit that we can't do this on our own, and understand that bravely bearing up under long-term illness is one of the most human, and one of the most godly, things we can ever do. One of the things that constantly reassures me that God is real, and not just an idea that religious leaders made up, is that people who pray for strength, hope and courage so often find resources of strength hope and courage that they didn't have before they prayed." Rabbi Harold Kushner, author of *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*.

Reprinted from July 1998 *Mayo Clinic Women's HealthSource*, with permission of Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, Rochester, MN 55905.



MUSLIM PRAYER

O God, give me the light in my heart and light in my tongue and light in my hearing and light in my sight and light in my feeling and light in all my body and light before me and light behind me.

Give me, I pray Thee, light on my right hand and light on my left hand and light above me and light beneath me, O Lord, increase light within me and give me light and illuminate me.



CHRISTIAN PRAYER

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Jesus Christ.



NATIVE AMERICAN PRAYER

O Great Spirit, whose voice I hear in the winds, and whose breath gives life to all the world, hear me. I am small and weak. I need Your strength and wisdom.

Let me walk in beauty and make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset.

Make my hands respect the things You have made. Make my ears sharp to hear Your voice.

Make me wise so that I may understand the things you have taught Your people.

Let me learn the lessons You have hidden in every leaf and rock.

I seek strength, not to be greater than another, but to fight my greatest enemy—myself.

Make me always ready to come to You with clean hands and straight eyes.

So when life fades, as the fading sunset, my spirit may come to You without shame.



SACRED PLACES IN THE HOME

by Lynette Evans

Perhaps we all need an altar — a special place where we can get in touch with our spiritual selves, or with a power beyond ourselves.

More and more, people are looking to create that altar within their own homes, according to San Francisco interior designer Victoria Stone, who specializes in designing sacred and healing spaces — “symbolic environments that resonate with us on a deep, soul level.”

“A sacred space doesn’t necessarily mean religious,” says Stone, who designed the meditation chapel at California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco. “It means connecting with our environment on a deeper level; having that awareness of our existence in a context greater than our day-to-day existence. Also, I think about ‘being’ as an inward journey. Some people call it soul, some people call it wisdom, some call it God, but it is that part we cannot see; we need to quiet down and be present with ourselves... be connecting.”

Stone believes our physical surroundings can contribute to finding that connectedness. “Certain things contribute to that environment,” she says. “It doesn’t have to do with style [but] with personal objects and symbols, colors, natural materials that speak to us on a different level; also a place where we can do a ritual, light a candle, [place] a photograph of family... that shows our link to history and community.”

For Kate Strasburg, an oddly shaped closet off her bathroom has become a private space for meditation. Here the co-director of Healing Environments in Palo Alto has placed a medieval stool to serve as a tiny altar for her medieval Madonna. She covered the slanting walls and pitched ceiling with a diaphanous material and put a small oriental rug on the floor where she — with her cats — meditates morning and evening, seeking “a still point as the stresses of the world swirl around me.”

Excerpted from “Sacred Places in the Home,” San Francisco Examiner, Wednesday March 25, 1998



THE POWER OF RITUAL

To a large extent, modern man has lost the power of ritual. In his efforts to be rational, he has forsaken the mystery of the universe. Many of us have left organized religion behind, creating a void of meaning. As the century ends and we face the new millennium in fear and uncertainty, more and more of us are exploring ancient ways and forgotten wisdom to replace what we have lost. The twentieth century, born in arrogance and boundless optimism, humbled us with the limits of our knowledge. Let us use our newfound humility to ask for guidance, to seek for solutions larger than science, deeper than materialism. Let us create personal rituals which connect us to our common humanity, which infuse our struggles with meaning, which frame our search for solutions. Let us reopen to the mystery of existence. KS

HOSTING THE DIVINE

by Vijaya Nagarajan

Madurai, on the riverbanks of the Vaigai River, is one of the great temple cities of Tamil Nadu. Each morning, just before slivers of sunlight crack open the dark horizon making night into day, Meena, a 29-year-old Tamil woman, steps over the night-blackened doorway of her family home. Meena lives along a street that parallels the bank of the river. When she walks down to the river’s edge, she sees the skyline of Madurai, with its four *kōpurams* (trapezoidal towers) of the temple for the fish-eyed goddess *Mīṇāksi* piercing the sky.

Meena has been painting the *kōlam* since she was seven or eight years old, and as she grew up her work improved. Throughout her life, her world has been centered around the town of Madurai, where her many years of discipline and concentration have made her a quiet authority on the *kōlam*. Every morning, her dimly lit shadow spills onto the *tinmai*, or threshold, located between the outside and the inside of her family’s home. The charged threshold separates the intimacy of everyday life in the family household from the more public and wider social nexus of community life. As she faces the slowly emerging sunlight glimmering around her, Meena begins to create the “canvas” on which the *kōlam* will be drawn by sweeping the front porch area with a broomstick made of coconut frond. The sound of the family broomstick striking the earth is echoed by the varying rhythms of

other women’s movements as they clean their own front thresholds.

After carefully sweeping away yesterday’s dirt, Meena turns back into the house, walks through several doorways lined up in a row, steps over the back threshold and approaches the brick-lined well. She draws water with an aluminum bucket. Leaning slightly from the weight of the water, she gathers fresh cowdung from the cowstall and hurries through the house with the contents sloshing back and forth in the bucket. She reaches the front door and crosses the threshold once again. After mixing the cowdung and water in the bucket with her hands so that no lumps remain in the mixture, she splashes handfuls of cowdung water over the earth. Cowdung water is antiseptic, she says; it keeps away *kirumikal* (small insects and bugs). For her, it is one of the primary ingredients in the creation of a pure, unpolluted canvas. Once again, she takes the coconut frond and sweeps over the wet surface, creating a brushed effect.

She then bends over, stretching far from the waist to reach the edges of her visualized framed space that will hold her rice-flour designs. With a half-coconut shell for a bowl, Meena pinches the rice flour and deftly translates it into patterns. Her hands move gracefully and quickly. In these purposeful hand movements Meena creates designs that can be geometric: concentric squares, interlocking triangles facing opposing directions, elaborately adorned circles, labyrinths of lines that circle around a series of dots but never touch them. Or she may create figurative designs: pairs of peacocks, a squirrel crunching a walnut, a *Bharata Nāṭyam* dancer in cobalt blue and chick yellow, or even a schoolboy in the middle of a soccer kick. When the *kōlam* is finished — sometimes hours later — it is an ephemeral rug that is worn away during the day under the feet of passersby and those who cross the threshold of the house.

Like Meena, every day throughout Tamil Nadu, millions of women rise before dawn to perform the ritual practice of the *kōlam* on the threshold of their houses, on the temple grounds, and at the feet of divine images in the main domestic shrines. The *kōlams* are designed to invite, attract, host, and maintain close relationship with Lakṣmi, goddess of wealth, luck and good fortune, and Bhūdēvi, goddess of soil and earth. One of the most visible ways a sense of sacred space is created, the *kōlam* is ubiquitous in ritual and cultural life. It is said to bless those who smear it accidentally with their feet, the power of the hands of the woman *kōlam*-maker passing through the *kōlam* to the anonymous bodies walking by, like a thread being woven through a needle.

Excerpted from “Hosting the Divine: The *Kōlam* as Ritual, Art, and Ecology in Tamil Nadu, India,” A dissertation by Vijaya Rettakudi Nagarajan, Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of California at Berkeley, 1998.

BREAKING THE MOLD

Giving Form to your Vision

In November Traci and I were invited to address the Symposium on Healthcare Design in San Francisco. A great deal of good arose from this conference, of which you will hear more later, but our favorite part of the presentation was an experiential exercise that we led. Our goal was to help our audience learn to design from "the inside out." By asking them to identify with a patient's deepest needs, we hoped to help them better address those needs.

We have included the exercise in this issue in the hopes that it may help other architects and designers as well as patients, their families and caregivers. While it may, at first glance, appear macabre to "design the room you will die in," like all exercises which explore our deepest truths, it can only bring us closer to our most essential selves. And in sharing those truths it can only bring us closer to one another.

HAVEN

COMFORT

ORDER

EXPRESSION

MEMORY

MEANING

IDENTITY

ICONS

RITUAL

ESSENCE

TRANSFORMATION

LIGHT

You have been given three months to live. The mass which your internist felt in your abdomen last week turned out to be a tumor.

He has just informed you it is malignant and inoperable. A rare and extremely virulent smooth muscle cancer: leiomyosarcoma. Within two months your belly will be distended until you look four months pregnant. Pregnant with your own death.

What can you do to comfort yourself? What healing environment can you create? Design the room you will die in. How can you make it a haven? How can you imbue it with comfort? What soothing sense of order, what personal expression will ground you? How can you expand time by infusing it with memory, with a sense of meaning? How can you celebrate your life, your identity? What personal icons or symbols can serve as touchstones? What rituals can you create to overcome both time and distance, to transcend the limitations your illness has placed on you? How can you use your physical surroundings to return you to your essence? How can this fatal illness become your key to transformation? How can it lead you into the light? KS



WHAT'S HAPPENING

The first ten weeks of the year have been packed with activity at Healing Environments. The first week of January, Traci was contacted by a large Canadian firm entrusted by the Canadian government with the creation of twenty-three new healthcare facilities in the province of Ontario. Would she please join the nine architectural and five design firms

involved and introduce them to the concept of healing environments? The project manager had heard us speak at the Symposium on Healthcare Design in San Francisco last November and had been inspired by a tour of Healing Environments.

Traci just completed her third trip to Canada. On her last visit, with the help of eight refrigerator sized cartons, laboriously ushered through customs, Traci created a small version of Healing Environments in a Toronto hotel room. Sharing the space with over eighty architects and designers over a two day period, Traci led them in an experien-

tial exercise designed to connect them with the deepest emotional needs of a patient.

As if that weren't enough, in January, she helped transform a basement into a large common room for Jordan House, a residential hotel for the formerly homeless in San Francisco. She also returned from Canada to complete the pro bono design installation of the Cancer Support and Education Center in Menlo Park. (More about them in our next issue.) Needless to say, she is looking forward to a much needed week in Hawaii at the end of the month!

AN INTERVIEW WITH EMILY

Altars have been on my mind lately. I have been encouraging friends to make them and noticing more and more. I had collected two boxes of materials to create something special with, and yet I have created nothing. So, with our desire to take these topics a step further, I thought I would share this experience with you, our readers. First let me ask you — Have you ever created an altar? If you have, I would be interested in hearing about it. If you haven't, but are interested, read on.

Emily is a good friend of mine. She is a San Francisco native with a creative flair that doesn't stop. She can create the most beautiful clothing (sometimes overnight) and the type of food that makes your mouth water from just one bite. She took care of her mother when she was dying. I know bits and pieces of the story, but mostly live with Emily in the present. On this particular evening, I asked Emily if I could ask her some questions about her mother and how she made an altar for her shortly after her death.

Emily, — tell me about the altar that you made for your mother.

It was December of 1992. I made it because we had a New Orleans-style party for her wake. Toffee Cheesecake, Gumbo, etc. Friends and musicians sang "When the Saints Come Marching In." I made the altar to create her presence at the party.

I framed several of her modeling photos—they were taken from the top of the Art Institute in San Francisco. They were pictures of her at her most glamorous. We also had her ashes at the time. They came in a simple container — not like my mother at all.

So, I needed to decorate the box — to dress it (her). I used bronze metallic designer fabric with a chocolate stripe. Disco—is how she would have wanted to have been dressed. Later, we spread her ashes through the fabric. She wanted to be spread around Union Square. I put the photos of her and the ashes on a Victorian sidetable.

As you remember how you created this altar, Emily, do you recall any other items that were on it?

Chili pepper lights and a mango scented candle of hers—Christmas decorations and lots of beautiful fabric. The candle had been in her room. Christmas was her favorite time of year — so there were ornaments on the table as well.

Sometimes it is so hard to remember everything. An altar gives us focus.

What was your mom's name?

Her name was Susan Peterson.

What type of relationship did you have to your mother?

Special relationships that mothers and daughters are supposed to have. She really never wanted to give up. She was very tall. She was very open artistically. A spiritual lady.

She was 25 when she got pregnant with me. A flower child in the Summer of Love.

Could you tell me more about why creating an altar is important?

I create them all the time. Meditative spots. I know they are always there. They belong in churches — but you can find them anywhere. Rooms. Gardens.

It's a way of making a space blessed. We've created altars since the beginning of time — they are naturally a part of us.



Reprinted from *Altars and Icons* by Jean McMann

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EMILY'S ADVICE ON CREATING AN ALTAR.

◆ ◆ ◆

A memorial altar is one that gives life back to the soul—it creates an energy that is wholly reminiscent of that person or animal. I have often heard people say "it breathes life back into those who are missed." Here are some ideas on how to create your own altar:

1. Create a space that can be used just for this.
2. Take a picture that is meaningful to you and frame it or stand it up.
3. Express the vibe or theme — give it a piece of art—something that expresses: picture, toy, objects.
4. Offerings are my favorite.
5. Things from nature: branches, things from the sea, fruit, pine cones, prickly berries, leaves from a favorite tree, a rock.
6. There are no limits or rules of what it should look like. Simple or decadent — however you can honor the memory.
7. To make it personally meaningful is most important. You have to follow your own instincts when making it.

Bo

For more inspiration on altars please find *Altars and Icons*. A Chronicle book, by Jean McMann, that I carried with me from car to home to work and eventually passed onto a friend who needed help with her "altar block."

For those of you with reference libraries or waiting rooms with available space, I would highly recommend this book. As a caregiver is waiting patiently for news or before a patient heads back for an appointment, what better gift than to aid them in their journey. **TTP**

ILLUMINATED PRAYERS

In addition to that exquisite quote from *A Return to Love* on the cover of our "Mission" issue, Marianne Williamson has gifted the world with a return to spirituality. By writing beautiful, simple prayers that express our hopes and dreams in everyday language, Marianne has invited us all into the realm of the spirit. As she says in the introduction, "I think of prayer as a spiritual lifeline back to where I most want to be."

We loved her first volume of prayers, *Illuminata*, but our love of illumination made her second, *Illuminated Prayers*, even more appealing. **KS**

DEAR GOD,

AS I WAKE UP THIS MORNING
MAY YOUR SPIRIT COME UPON ME.
MAY MY MIND RECEIVE
YOUR EMANATIONS,
MY SOUL RECEIVE
YOUR BLESSING,
AND MY HEART RECEIVE
YOUR LOVE.
MAY ALL THOSE I MEET
OR EVEN THINK OF ON THIS DAY
FEEL BETTER FOR IT.
MAY I CONTRIBUTE PEACE.
MAY I SERVE YOUR PURPOSES
WITH ALL I SAY AND DO,
TODAY AND ALWAYS.
PLEASE SHOW ME HOW.

AMEN

BOOKS OF LIGHT

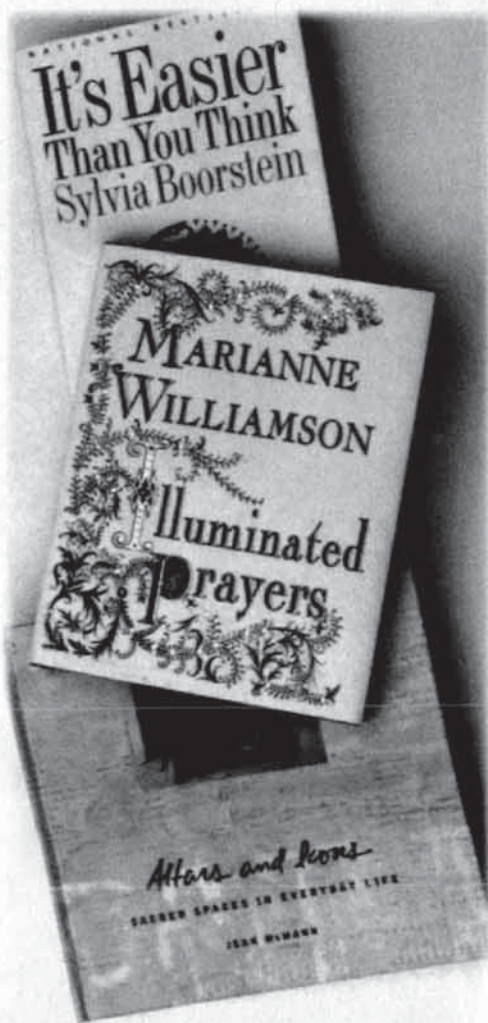
MANAGING GRACEFULLY

I knew I would need to steel myself against millennialism when on the second or third morning of 1999, I read an article in the San Francisco Chronicle about an impending shortage of fine champagne to celebrate the year 2000. Although I am somewhat embarrassed to admit it here, I read the entire piece, fascinated by the particularity of concern that surrounded this issue. Not only did the turning of the millennium pose the menace of Y2K (the news had already made that very clear, indeed), but I was now being urged to consider the dire possibility that there might not be enough Veuve Clicquot to go around.

As the twentieth century prepares to take its leave, we have been made to fear time even more than usual. Apocalyptic thinking haunts us at every turn, continually drawing us out of the present moment and leaving us with a persistent sense of foreboding and malaise. If this specter seems familiar to you, I recommend Sylvia Boorstein's *It's Easier Than You Think: The Buddhist Way to Happiness* as a guide for keeping your equanimity at this fin de siècle.

Written in short chapters, the book is a reassuringly straightforward and endearingly wise introduction to the basic tenets of Buddhism. Beyond this, it is also a primer for keeping perspective and heart in our daily lives, especially in these postmodern times where an out-of-body experience has taken on an entirely new meaning. Composure, balance, awareness, and what Boorstein calls spacious acceptance are the constituents, and rewards, of a mindful approach to living. And while Boorstein seems to speak to these states from first-hand experience, she is also completely schooled in the frailties of our human natures, where attachment, aversion, sloth and doubt make their predictable appearances.

In the chapter entitled "Albuquerque Mind," for instance, she writes knowingly of the unnerving stories we tell to ourselves over and over again: "We bewilder and frighten ourselves, forgetting that the dismay and the fear are always about what might have been or what might yet be but what isn't happening now. We also forget that what's happening now is not going to be happening for very long." And later, in "Soup with a Fork," she shares her own antidote to this kind of catastrophic



SPEAK TO US

EVERYDAY I LOOK FORWARD TO THE AFTERNOON'S MAIL MUCH AS A CHILD LOOKS FORWARD TO CHRISTMAS MORNING. YOUR RESPONSE CARDS, WITH THEIR WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND THEIR EVOCATIVE ADDRESSES: FROM NANTUCKET TO KAUAI — WARM US WITH A SENSE OF CONNECTION.

THIS YEAR WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US IN OUR QUEST FOR RENEWAL. SHARE WITH US YOUR THOUGHTS ON INTENTION — BLESSINGS IN THE COMING YEAR.

thinking: "When I remember the dramas of my life are the energies of the mind dressed in the sheet of a story, I manage them more gracefully."

Perhaps the true gift of this book is the reassurance that for every reality we cannot change there is one we can: the point of view we bring to any experience. In some sense, then, Boorstein gives us an alternative to bracing ourselves for the eve of the next millennium and that is managing the century's turn gracefully, one new moment at a time. **DA**

SAM'S FRIENDS

Audiobooks on tape

I try to begin each day on "the right foot" by strolling to my studio from home (about an hour's journey). I've been doing it for years and I love it. I've combined it with photography, music-listening and just appreciating all the sensory phenomena along the way. Being a visual person, I enjoy the subtleties of shadows, glares, reflections and so on.

A few months ago, I decided to add a new component to my experience: a friend to walk with. A book on tape. I went to the bookstore. As I scanned the audio tape section, I remembered my friend Kate's intuitive method of random selection. A six-tape collection by Joseph Campbell seemed to elevate itself and drop into my hands.

The thing about tapes is that they're "in your ear." They are very personal and private. It's pretty wonderful to have Jeremy Irons reading *Lolita* to you, or Joseph Campbell explaining *The Powers of Myth*. Or, the deeply moving Molly Bloom Soliloquy (from James Joyce's *Ulysses*) read by Irish actress Siobhan MacKenna. These performances stay with you.

There are many other advantages. You can stop and review, make the tape run slower or faster, stop at a café for coffee and not miss a beat, skim a long novel on tape, then, if you like it, check out the actual book from the library. It's good exercise, they offer companionship at lonely times, get your mind off troublesome concerns, and much more.

I have spent my life building my career though working and teaching. Now, these tapes are providing me with the opportunity to catch up with some of the classic literature and poetry that I have always longed to experience. **SS**

Dear Friends,

I was heartened when I dropped off my seventeen-year-old son for the first time to volunteer at St. Anthony's soup kitchen. A banner stretched across the front of the church proclaims, "Renew 2000!". How much more uplifting than the notice I received from my tax accountant enumerating all the dangers of "Y2K"—predicting with apocalyptic doom everything from not being able to drive my car to starving for lack of food and funds.

As the millennium approaches we stand at a crossroads. Which fork in the road will we take? Where will we place our psychic energy? What momentum will sweep us away? Will we join the doomsayers—huddled in fear, foreseeing banks frozen and looters marauding? Or will we see this transition into the new millennium as an opportunity to review and renew our goals, to become the best we can be?

We at *A Light in the Mist* have decided to dedicate this year's issues to helping us all take the path of renewal. It is the same path for those of us facing death and those left behind. At what level will we choose to live our remaining days? Will we choose to live in fear or hope? Will we choose to be preoccupied with material well-being or will we seek to live on a higher plane?

We believe it may be helpful to frame the year in the following way: First, *intention*—let us make the commitment, as Joseph Campbell says, "to bend toward the light." For intention has a mysterious way of focusing our being and enabling us to become the best that we can be.

To help us "set the stage" for renewal, let us explore the use of prayer, meditation and ritual. All of these tools serve the purpose of focus, of aligning ourselves with our highest purpose. My spiritual advisor once told me that if I took as little as ten minutes a day to so align myself, the results would be stunning. The Tamil women of India spend hours daily adorning their thresholds to welcome the divine. What a sad commentary on our harried lives that ten minutes sometimes seems unattainable!

Second, after dedicating ourselves to our highest purpose with intention, let us "*clear the decks*" so that we can be fully present. This can be done with grace, gratitude and forgiveness. Medical intuitive Caroline Myss believes that the saints were able to accomplish miracles because, unlike the rest of us, all of their energies were focused on the present. If we are each given limited units of energy, how many of those are tied up with issues of the past (anger, resentment, regret) or issues of the future (fear, worry, anxiety)? Can we ask for grace, gratitude and forgive-

ness to free us to be fully present? To concentrate those energies on what can be done here and now?

Third, after aligning ourselves with our highest purpose and freeing ourselves from both the past and the future, *let us give attention to what really matters*. Let us "set our sights." What do we hope to accomplish in the new millennium? What social ills remain unaddressed? What new models can we forge for the way things might be in the best of all possible worlds? Having attended to our own personal healing, how might we heal the planet?

Finally, having aligned ourselves with intention, freed our energies with grace, gratitude and forgiveness, and forged models for the new millennium, *let us give them power through manifestation*. Let us will them with all our intent and energy, and ask the highest powers of the universe to aid us in making them a reality.

Attend to your computers, stockpile food and cash if you must, but please join us in the highest form of renewal, in vowing to be the very best you can be, for your own sake, as well as for the sake of those you love, and, ultimately, for the sake of the planet.

Yours with intention,

Kate

TOGETHER
WE
WILL
COMFORT
THE
SUFFERING

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to aid the current movement toward holistic medicine—toward treating the whole patient (mind, body, spirit) and encouraging hospitals, hospices and individuals to nourish patients, families and caregivers with healing environments. What is a healing environment? We believe a healing environment is one that offers sustenance to the soul and gives meaning to experience. It is one that enables those who are suffering to transcend their pain by connecting to the universal through the transformative power of beauty and art, and that gives comfort through this connection.

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