

*On ne découvre pas de terres
nouvelles, sans consentir à perdre de vue,
d'abord et longtemps, tout rivage.*

*One does not discover new lands
without consenting to lose all sight
of shore at first and for a long time.*

—ANDRÉ GIDE

T R A N S F O

Out of the Darkness — Into the Light



R M A T I O N

HEALING
ENVIRONMENTS

CREATIVITY

ILLNESS

LOSS

SPIRITUALITY

TOOLS

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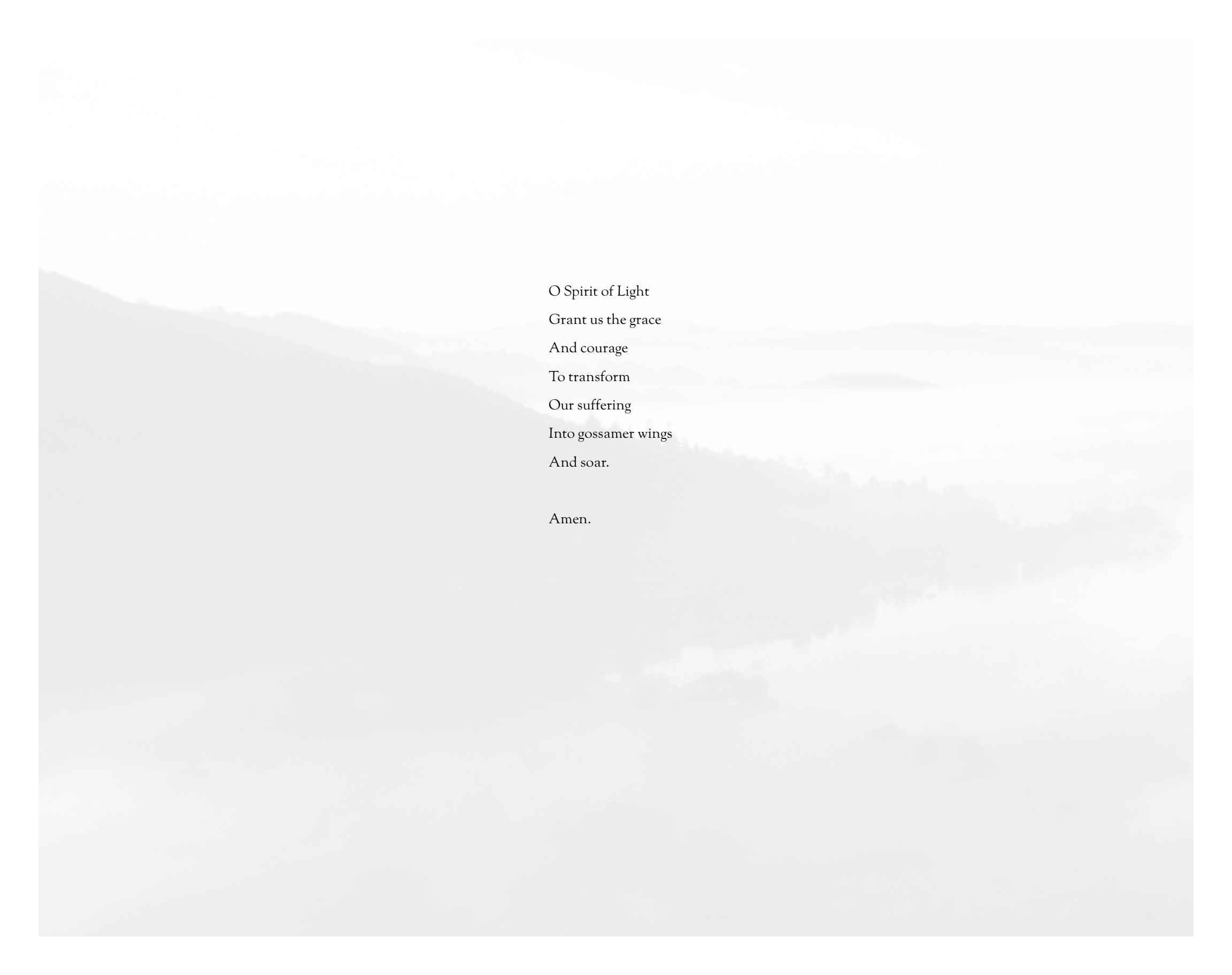
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A misty, mountainous landscape with a lake and a forested ridge in the foreground. The scene is hazy and atmospheric, with soft light filtering through the clouds and mist. The mountains in the background are layered, creating a sense of depth. The foreground shows a dark, silhouetted ridge with some trees, and a calm body of water reflects the light from the sky.

O Spirit of Light
Grant us the grace
And courage
To transform
Our suffering
Into gossamer wings
And soar.

Amen.

A Letter from Healing Environments

WHEN WE SELECTED a topic for our tenth anniversary issue, we chose transformation because nothing is more central to our mission, to what we are trying to accomplish with our nonprofit, Healing Environments.

It is our firm belief that the tragedy of life-threatening illness, along with all other suffering of major proportion, holds hidden within it a potential gift—the gift of transformation.

The reason for this is the following: Change is challenging. Emotional, psychological and spiritual growth is difficult. Left to our own devices we tend to prefer the comfort of the status quo.

The diagnosis of a life-threatening illness or other major crisis propels us into the fast track. We are left with no choice. We must adapt and meet the challenge or collapse under the stress.

The good news is that, as the ancient *I Ching* instructs us, chaos paves the way for creation. As we

are forced into acute consciousness—consciousness of our mortality, of our values, of what truly matters—we are given the opportunity to reinvent ourselves. Given sufficient grace, courage and support we may emerge—regardless of the clinical outcome—more loving, more compassionate, more complete human beings.

Transformation is, at its core, both mysterious and miraculous. In this small volume we explore some of its various forms: Transformation as it is made manifest in Healing Environments, in creativity, in spirituality, in illness, and finally in loss.

It is our sincere wish to bring those of you whose lives have been touched by tragedy—wisdom, comfort and most importantly, hope.

You are not alone.

We are with you.

Kate, Traci, Doree and Sam



TRANSFOR

AND

HEALING

ENVIRONM

The background of the entire image is a grayscale photograph of several tall, slender trees without leaves, standing in a misty or foggy environment. The trees are dark against a lighter, hazy sky, creating a somber and atmospheric mood.

MATION

ENTS

*A Healing State of Mind:
“Compassionate Friends” Bring a Sense of Home
to Health Care Settings*

BY JEROME GAGNON

STEP INTO HEALING Environments, located on outer Sacramento Street, and enter a place where comforting the seriously ill is the main priority. Not an antiseptic office, it has sunny yellow walls that serve as a backdrop for a collection of art, accessories and symbols representing a wide range of traditions.

Over 1200 books, many on the healing arts, are available to browse or borrow. Lively music blends with the distant sound of a fountain in the rear garden. Designer Traci Teraoka, co-founder of the ten-year-old non-profit organization along with friend Kate Strasburg, greets visitors as she would in her own home, inviting them to relax in overstuffed sofas and chairs, or to explore the peaceful tableaux installed throughout the cozy storefront.

“I think there’s something essential to having elements of meaning and beauty around us. If you take away everything and just put someone in a white room, do they thrive in a space like that?” asked Teraoka, a self-described “Army brat” who was born in Japan and graduated from U.C. Santa Cruz with a degree in Art History.

Teraoka and Strasburg, a native Midwesterner who holds a degree in European languages from Stanford, met in 1992 when both were living in Palo Alto, and the two quickly discovered a shared passion for antiques, design and the visual arts. More than that, they shared a belief that interior design could be used to help others in need. As an antidote to the depersonalization of the medical industry, they believed that a more humanistic approach in designing health care settings could restore a measure of dignity to patients and contribute to the growing movement toward holistic care.

Reflecting on the deaths of her parents by cancer, Strasburg observed, “I was struck by the contrast: my mother’s agonizing death in the hospital and my father’s healing death at home. Then, in my late forties, three of my closest friends fell prey to cancer. It was a wake-up call.”

“Searching for a way to make a difference, I listened to Al Tarlov, then head of the Kaiser Family Foundation. ‘The world is so filled with need,’ he said. ‘Follow the path that speaks to you. If you want to change the world, create a beautiful model.’”

The two women heeded the advice and, in 1994, opened their innovative model—a showcase of “healing environments” located in downtown Palo Alto. Designing each room or niche around theme words such as “create,” “rest,” “play,” and “meditate,” they sought to expand the boundaries of what is typically thought of as a hospital or hospice environment. In a six-by-eight foot vestibule labeled “create,” they placed emotionally significant hand-made items, including a papier-maché “Tree of Life”—created by a first-time artist who was coping with serious illnesses in his family—and a bright, patchwork “honor” quilt, lovingly pieced together by an artist from his late friend’s shirts. In another area, dubbed “rest,” they simulated a hospital room, layering accessories to illustrate a fictional resident’s life-story, and outfitted a comfortable spot for video watching. Since its opening ten years ago, over a thousand visitors have toured the center, which relocated to smaller quarters in San Francisco last year.

They also started a newsletter, *A Light In The Mist, A Journal of Hope* to spread the message of how health care settings—as well as homes—can be designed to “offer sustenance to the soul and give meaning to experience.” Past issues have dealt with creativity, finding your life’s mission, ritual and journal writing, and refer readers to resources on life-threatening illness, growth and transformation.

While Strasburg concentrated on outreach with the newsletter, Teraoka provided pro-bono design services for several local organizations, including Maitri, a


residential care facility for people living with AIDS (which opened in its current location on Duboce Street in 1997) and Brandy Moore House (opened in 1996), a project of the Rafiki Housing Program sponsored by The Black Coalition On AIDS.

Honoring the philosophy of Maitri, which derives its name from the Buddhist ideal of compassionate friendship, she acquired a mix of Asian art and antiques, arranging select pieces among donated items. A meditation room features an altar table, Tibetan thangka (painting), flowers, candles and Buddhist symbols that evoke a “deeper level of reality.” In both the residential lounge and a living room, attractive upholstered pieces are accentuated with art and plants, adding to the domestic appeal.

“What’s wonderful about the age we’re living in is, whether we’re working with a health care space or a personal space, we can infuse it with elements of different cultures—of that which speaks to people directly and isn’t necessarily contained in one ideology or one look,” said Teraoka, who serves on the board of directors of Maitri.

Kwan Henmi architects transformed the former garage and one-time plumbing supply business into a light-filled, 15-bed facility centered around a courtyard. A bold pergola with red patina defines the entrance, while the vestibule, consisting of an elevator and stairway, is graced with a mural depicting a sheltering tree, by artist Susie Wynn.

“I’m constantly taking people on tours,” said Executive Director Tim Patriarca. “I’m the one who



asks for money, and I almost don't have to say a word because people get such a rush of feeling when they come through here. Maitri is such a polar opposite of what people have in their minds, and it can be like this."

"It's a very home-like environment, like a family. The rooms all have armoires, pictures, dressers and TVs," commented former resident Tom Fairwell, who lived there for two years. "With the combination of medicines and good care I got, I started feeling better and was able to move on with my life. I couldn't have done that without my stay at Maitri."

The Brandy Moore House, architect Michael Harris's rehab of a three-unit apartment building in the Western Addition, takes advantage of bonus square footage and light with abundant bay windows. Teraoka integrated folk art and strong color throughout the eleven-bed transitional facility to reflect the African-American heritage of many of the residents. A combination living/dining area is highlighted with hand-carved masks on the walls, while a living/counseling room is enveloped in terracotta tones accented with a red, patterned rug, basketry and oak finishes on furniture. In both projects, bedrooms offer personalized retreats "as unique as those who inhabit them," she said.

In one of their latest jobs, Teraoka transformed an eleven by twelve-foot space for the Visiting Nurses and Hospice of the California Pacific Medical Center on South Van Ness Avenue. Designated as a bereavement/therapy room for those undergoing the turmoil of loss, the room consisted of four white walls, fluorescent lighting, industrial blue wall-to-wall carpeting and miscellaneous cast-offs. Staff members painted one of the walls a textured terra-

Shapeshifting

BY BARBARA SPILLER

ONE DAY WHEN he was four, as he worked with his crayons and markers, my son Michael announced: “I’m drawing a rooster.” Within moments, he had turned the paper around, added a few strokes and said: “Look! It’s a locomotive!!!”

I’ve been guided by that moment, sometimes gratefully and graciously, sometimes reluctantly. There was something so wonderful in his ready acceptance of possibility and change. What startling, simple and instructive openness to the often frustrating reality that things do not always turn out as we intend or imagine!

In my own work as an artist, I have had to accept a process in which what I fully intend to be a painting or print may well become the skin of a three-dimensional piece, or an element in a collage combined in unlikely ways with bits from other contexts. This way of working involves seeing what

isn’t “good enough” as raw material rather than failure. (Michael didn’t see a failed rooster. He saw a possible locomotive.)

Similarly, my work as a psychotherapist involves heightening awareness and encouraging openness; looking at what else is possible rather than clinging to what was, or what isn’t! In changing one’s relationship to the material, seeing something differently—whether the paint and image of the artist or the historical/experiential stuff of the personality—transformation can occur. Seeing old material in a new context, letting go of rigid interpretations, allows for fresh meaning and movement, shifting us closer to what might be.

Thank goodness for four-year-olds to show us the way!!


Michael is now a director living and working in Los Angeles.



*The Zen of Creativity:
Cultivating Your Artistic Life*

BY JOHN DAIDO LOORI

*Getting in touch
with our intuition
helps us to enter
the flow of life...*



THE HUMAN FORM is absolutely magnificent when it is fully engaged. Most of us stumble through life using only a miniscule fraction of our potential.

Joriki taps into our physical, mental, and emotional reserves, and opens our spiritual capacities.

One way that our spiritual power begins to manifest is through the emergence of the intuitive aspect of our consciousness. This is one of the reasons why Zen and creativity are so intimately linked. Creativity is also an expression of our intuitive aspect. Getting in touch with our intuition helps us to enter the flow of life, of a universe that is in a constant state of becoming. When we tap into our intuition, whether in our art or simply in the

day-to-day activities of our lives, we feel a part of this creative continuum.

Single-pointed concentration develops our intuition. We become more directly aware of the world. We notice in ways that are not clearly understood, but are very accurate.

When the totality of our mind is focused on a single point, its power becomes staggering. Building concentration is just like any other kind of discipline. If we want to build muscles, we lift weights. Soon our muscles respond. To play the piano, we repeat the same exercises over and over. Eventually our fingers fly over the keys. It's the same with movement, with art. Repetitive practice builds our ability and skill. It's no different with meditation.

*A Healing Journey:
Writing Together Through Breast Cancer*

BY SHARON BRAY, ED.D.

*I write because it is not
enough just to live life.*

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE ONCE complained he could not get his own work noticed due to the power and dominance of the women writers of his day, a group he contemptuously referred to as the “damned mob of scribbling women.” Nathaniel, be advised: every other Wednesday evening at CBHP*, a similarly powerful group of women gather, not, perhaps to become literary giants, but as women possessed with a desire to write, to tell their stories, and to nurture their own creativity. These are the Scribbling Women of CBHP, a strong, courageous, and supportive community of writers who meet every other Wednesday for the creative writing workshop, “Stories of the Journey.”

“The group experience sustained me through the worst year of my life,” wrote Karen, who had come to the writing group in the midst of undergoing her chemotherapy regimen. “I felt heard, seen, validated, understood.” Karen’s short piece, “I Write Because,” speaks to the power of her writing experience during her cancer treatment.

* Community Breast Health Project of Palo Alto, California



I Write Because

BY KAREN USATINE

I write because it makes sense of my experience.
I write because I love words, language, images, expression.
I write because it is not enough just to live life.

I write to relive the joy and sorrow, sometimes making
sense of the senseless.
Sometimes I write just to say, “I was here, and
THAT happened to ME,
and this is who I was, who I am, who I am becoming.”
Witness, yes. To my own truth.
And to the experience of others.

I write because the multicolored passion,
the fire and ice, rage and joy cannot be silenced
within the life of one woman.
One frightened girl-child,
one shining warrior.

A Letter

BY ELAINE POGGI

*My wish is to give hope and comfort
to patients and their families...to help soften
the often stressful hospital experience.*

Dear Kate and Traci,

I received a copy of *A Light in the Mist*, the Health Care edition of 2002, in the mail from an interior decorator friend of mine. I then checked out your amazing website and want to congratulate you for what you are doing. I am sure you are helping many, many people with your ways of coping with suffering.

I would like to tell you a little bit of what I am doing along the same lines. I am originally from the St. Louis area, but have lived in Florence, Italy for many years. In 2001, my mother entered Barnes Jewish Hospital in St. Louis, MO with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. I left my family in Florence to assist her during her three-month stay. I was able to observe the life of the patient and the family in the hospital setting.

In response to my "hospital experience," two

extraordinary activities have developed since my mother's passing. One is a lecture series that I have been invited to give in several medical schools including Washington University in St. Louis and the University of Illinois at Chicago. I also spoke in Rome, Italy last fall at the Italian National Oncology Convention.

My lecture is about my mother's story, my story, and the importance of the doctor. I point out what our oncologist did to make a difference—how he gave us hope, how he felt our pain, how he was our refuge. I speak of the importance of learning the skills of caring, of communication and of compassion.

The other activity—my photo project—developed because of the great amount of time I spent with my mother in the hospital. Along

with my mother I experienced endless hours of loneliness, staring at sterile, white hospital walls. Out of desperation to bring life and color back into my mother's life during her stay, I decided to alleviate the cold and unfriendly hospital environment by decorating her room with my enlarged photographs of underwater scenes and landscapes of Florence. Immediately, her room had a more comforting atmosphere. The photos had the effect of boosting my mother's morale and also quickly became a topic of conversation for the hospital staff, other patients and visitors.

Although my mother did pass away in the hospital, I think that my photos made the last days of her life a little bit more pleasant. Upon my return to Florence, while mourning my mother's passing, a thought kept coming into my mind. If my photos had such a positive effect on my mother, perhaps they could help other patients and families to feel more comfortable, to take their minds off their illnesses if only for a few moments.

Because of this experience with my mother, my mission now is to place colorful, soothing photographs of nature and beautiful places from around the world in hospitals. My wish is to give

hope and comfort to patients and their families, visitors, and caregivers, to help soften the often stressful hospital experience. My hope is that those who view my photos will feel the joy and love I felt while photographing the scenes for them.

I created The Foundation for Photo/ Art in Hospitals, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation, to allow this project to expand. We now have more than 1000 photographs in the USA, Canada, Italy, Switzerland, and Africa. You may check my website, www.HealingPhotoArt.com, to learn more about what we do. I am also attaching an article which was written about my Foundation recently by the Neurosurgery Department of the University of Illinois at Chicago.

I am writing to you because I believe we have the same ideas about health care in the physical hospital environment. I would like to know how I can help or if we could work together in some way.

I look forward to hearing your comments.

Many thanks for your time,

Elaine Poggi

The background of the page is a light gray image of bare, tangled tree branches, creating a delicate and somewhat somber texture.

Things I Have Learned About Loss

BY TRACI TERAOKA


*...taking the
heart-wrenching pain
of loss and
transforming it
into a way of
helping others—*

IT WAS A beautiful evening in March when singer Tracy Chapman came out and sang from her heart for the benefit of people living with AIDS in San Francisco. The event was called Bliss—and as I told everyone at the event—it truly lived up to its name. The next day I went to Maitri, the San Francisco AIDS care facility, to deliver flowers from the altar arranged at the benefit. When I arrived, I found a candle lit on Maitri's altar—representing the passing of a resident. I stood there in disbelief when I recognized the name of a seemingly healthy 36-year-old office administrator. He had left work early on Friday and died home alone soon thereafter. My heart of bliss turned to shock and despair.

It was during the recovery phase of Kate's recent back surgery that the young man died suddenly. In her own fear before she went into the hospital she had found a special card to help her family and friends if something tragic happened

to her. She handed me a small three-inch, accordion-pleated square card entitled, *things i have learned about loss*. It felt perfect in the palm of my hand. It was graphic and product designer Dana Shields who created this small book after experiencing sudden loss herself. In 1991, she heard on national news that there had been a mid-air collision between two military planes. All 27 men on board were killed. A single helmet was all that was ever recovered. Her youngest brother Jeb was one of the young men lost. Ten years later, 9/11 occurred. She knew of two people on the planes. Her response was to write a letter to their families, shaving away the excess until a highly condensed, personal message appeared. She sent each of her friends' families, struggling with tragic, sudden loss, her small booklet and a tree to plant.

When one is hit hard by sudden tragic news, the mind and heart race to make sense and order, often when there is little, if any, sense or order to



be had. Whether unexpected or prepared for, sudden loss can leave us speechless and numb. The card that Kate found when she herself was frightened became a symbolic gesture of a friend making an offering to another friend in need. After Kate gave me the card, I passed it on to Maitri. There was no warning, no way to prepare and no memorial for the young man—so we created our own memorial at his desk. With the booklet, a Chinese prayer bell, and a black silk scarf we changed his desk into an altar to acknowledge his passing. Myra, the accountant, said that in Judaism mirrors are covered when someone dies, so we covered his computer monitor with the black silk scarf. The next day the memorial had been added to by Kirsten who put forget-me-nots in a pretty vase.

Since then, Kate and I bought 100 more booklets from Paper Chase in Menlo Park. They are almost gone, having been handed out to many good people who found themselves coping with sudden loss or trying to help others. We also shared the cards with two agencies specializing in bereavement support—they were quickly put to use. Special thanks to Dana for taking the heart-wrenching pain of loss and transforming it into a way of helping others.

EXCERPT FROM *things i have learned about loss*

I LEARNED THAT...

Crying is a good thing. I was amazed at how much energy it took to keep sadness inside. I was so tired. At times I slept a lot. I learned this was normal. I learned that if I tried to avoid feeling sad by staying busy—sadness came later anyway. I learned (the hard way) not to drive when upset.

...

WRITING


Writing was cathartic. I wrote a letter to Jeb saying all the things that I didn't get to say... like "Goodbye." I put my letter in a bottle and threw it in the ocean near the spot where his plane crashed. I also wrote my memories in a book: of teaching him the letter "h", of showing him how to ski, and of sneaking candy for our tree fort.

...

HOPE

I try to live in honor of my brother. I fill my life with adventure, fun, beauty and friends. I try to take advantage of unexpected opportunities. I work hard. I want him to be proud of me and what I will become.

www.danashieldsdesign.com



...chaos paves the way for creation.

Transformation

BY KATE STRASBURG

LIFE IS A journey. A journey filled with challenge. A journey filled with growth. For some of us, the journey leads us, or a loved one, to a life-threatening illness. When faced with such a challenge, it may comfort us to remember that the Chinese character for crisis is composed of both danger and opportunity, or as the ancient *I Ching* instructs us, chaos paves the way for creation.

Given sufficient courage and grace, we may use this opportunity to discover a new way of being—a deeper or higher level of consciousness—one that invites us to see things more clearly, to hold our loved ones more closely, to use our gifts more wisely. We may in time come to see this challenge as a mysterious gift. As Carlos Castenada once said, “Death is an advisor

looking over our shoulder showing us how to live.”

For some of us this illness will serve as a wake-up call to honor those parts of ourselves which have been silenced, a turning point to discover and pursue the dream which we have forgotten or never known, or an invitation to explore who we are and why we are here. For others, illness calls us to the greatest challenge and the greatest gift of all—transcendence—and to a realization that there is an inner reality which transcends exterior circumstances. In the midst of pain and loss there may be joy and gifts of incalculable beauty, for the power of the human spirit is greater than death itself and love transcends both time and space.

To all of us—life offers the gift of transformation.



*Journeying East:
Conversations on Aging and Dying*

BY VICTORIA JEAN DIMIDJIAN

*Life by life,
death by death,
how we live
and die
is being
transformed.*

husband brought home a kitten who shed everywhere but whose purring warmth comforted her through the dark hours of the night when she was so sick she could not sleep.

Now, she says with a laugh, she would never want to be the way she had been before she had the cancer. “I drove my family crazy. I even resented my guests because they disturbed the order of things. I’d been that way for years.”

She told me of a recent visit to her sister, a daughter of the same mother. “We were sitting together in the kitchen drinking tea and talking, and I happened to look into her living room. She has one of these carpets that shows every footprint. It had been vacuumed so perfectly that every fiber was pointing in the same direction. At one time, this would have given me a deep sense of satisfaction. Now it just looked sad and lonely, untouched by life.” She began to chuckle softly. “There is so much more to life than a perfectly clean kitchen floor, Rachel,” she told me.

The marks life leaves on everything it touches transform perfection into wholeness. Older, wiser cultures choose to claim this wholeness in the things

that they create. In Japan, Zen gardeners purposefully leave a fat dandelion in the midst of the exquisite, ritually precise patterns of the meditation garden. In Iran, even the most skilled of rug weavers include an intentional error, the “Persian Flaw,” in the magnificence of a Tabriz or Qashqa’i carpet. In Puritan America, master quilt makers deliberately left a drop of their own blood on every quilt they made; and Native Americans wove a broken bead, the “spirit bead,” into every beaded masterpiece. Nothing that has a soul is perfect. When life weaves a spirit bead into your very fabric, you may stumble upon a wholeness greater than you had dreamed possible before.

There is often more wisdom to be found at the edges of life than in its middle. Life-threatening illness may shuffle our values like a deck of cards. Sometimes a card that has been on the bottom of the deck for most of our lives turns out to be the top card, the thing that really matters. Having watched people sort their cards and play their hands in the presence of death for many years, I would say that rarely is the top card perfection, or possessions, or even pride. Most often the top card is love.

A faint, light gray background image of bare trees, possibly birches, with intricate branch structures, filling the entire page.

*A Midnight Tale of
Transformation*

BY KATE STRASBURG

*That is the power of
life-threatening illness
to transform,
with a large dose of grace,
the most difficult
of relationships.*

IT WAS FOUR o'clock in the morning. I sat bolt upright in bed, awakened by the realization that I had failed to pay for my airline ticket by the midnight deadline. I dialed the 800 number. A very pleasant man answered and we proceeded to have the most unusual middle-of-the-night conversation I have ever had with a stranger.

Besides being pleasant, he was actually humorous, all this at four in the morning. I don't remember exactly what he said, but I complimented him on his sense of humor. "That's the only thing my mother-in-law ever liked about me," he volunteered. Something about my energy has the odd effect of eliciting people's life stories. I can't tell you how many horrific stories of drownings I have heard while having my nails manicured by lovely Vietnamese refugees.

My middle-of-the-night companion proceeded to tell me the saga of his mother-in-law. She clearly had been a hateful woman. He had broken off his engagement with her daughter because her mother had refused to invite his friends (of whom she disapproved) to the wedding.

On one of her visits from out-of-town, he picked up his mother-in-law at the airport, and found her so despicable on the ride home, he actually turned around and returned her to the airport from which they had come. When she said her ticket would be invalid for an early return, he vowed to buy her a new one.

All this began to change when his mother-in-law was diagnosed with cancer. She began to soften and gingerly he agreed with his wife that she might move in with them. They began to build a new home to accommodate her. By pooling all their resources, he and his wife were able to achieve the home of their dreams. Meanwhile, as the planning progressed, the husband found conferring with his mother-in-law less and less odious. He even found their design sessions pleasant. Her gratitude began to heal old wounds.

As his story drew to a close, I could tell my narrator was becoming more and more emotional. I was curious as to how his story would end. "The day we were all to move into our beautiful home," he said, choking with emotion, "my mother-in-law died." "I actually miss her," he added incredulously, "And I thank her for our new home everyday."



*The Four Things That Matter Most:
A Book About Living*

BY IRA BYOCK, M.D.

*The Four Things
help us align
our words and deeds
to what
matters most.*

*Saying the
Four Things*

Please forgive me.

I forgive you.

Thank you.

I love you.

THESE FOUR SIMPLE statements are powerful tools for improving your relationships and your life. As a doctor caring for seriously ill patients for nearly 15 years of emergency medicine practice and more than 25 years in hospice and palliative care, I have taught hundreds of patients who were facing life's end, when suffering can be profound, to say the Four Things. *But the Four Things apply at any time.* Comprising just eleven words, these four short sentences carry the wisdom of what people who are dying have taught me about what matters most in life.

...

Transformations

Whenever we are able to open up and become vulnerable and honest with ourselves, we allow the opportunity for profound transformation. People who acknowledge that their lives may soon be over tend to have little patience with pretense, including their own. In the naked honesty that accompanies death's approach, many people feel a *need* to apologize for having been self-centered, irresponsible, or just plain wrong.

Most people who are dying still have the capacity to change in ways that are important to them. Their transformation can also

make an enormous, and lasting, difference to the people around them. Even the least introspective person may begin to look inward. Serious illness can allow people to experience the immediacy of life. Hard, angry, suspicious people (who, it seemed, would stay that way to the bitter end) often soften, becoming vulnerable and even trusting. I look at these changes not as deathbed conversions, but as quantum leaps in personal development—opportunities to achieve a state of mind and an intimacy with others that might not otherwise come to pass.

We know that our family and friends are the most important parts in life, but we tend to get distracted, enmeshed as we often are in the work and family responsibilities that fill our daily lives. Saying the Four Things *before* we or they confront eternity is a way to honor and affirm the primacy of our relationships. The Four Things help us align our words and deeds to what matters most.

...

Filling the Void

Transformations of this magnitude in response to saying the Four Things are not isolated or rare.

One day, I told Steven's story during a lecture at Johns Hopkins University. Afterward, a large, middle-aged black man came toward me as I was leaving the auditorium and surprised me by abruptly embracing me. At first I was taken aback. People were filing from the hall and here I was enveloped by an obviously emotional man, twice my size. He explained that he served as a chaplain at an inner-city public hospital in Baltimore and needed to tell me his story.

Like many of the most affecting stories that I've heard over the years, it was about transformation at the very end of life.

A few months earlier, the chaplain had been paged to the bedside of a 33-year-old man who was dying of AIDS. Just two hours earlier the patient, Antoine, had found out that he had a teenage daughter and that she was on her way to the hospital to see him.


"I was terrified about saying the wrong thing," said the chaplain. "I thought, 'Why me? What can I possibly do that would be of any help?' Then I remembered about saying 'the Four Things.' I was present for Antoine's and his daughter's meeting and used the Four Things to guide their visit. Antoine needed little encouragement, or help, to ask, 'Can you forgive me?' and to say, 'Thank you for coming to see me,' and 'I love you' to this frightened, anxious 15-year-old girl. And Chantelle, who really does have her father's eyes, was able to say, 'Thank you for being my father'; 'Of course, I forgive you'; and then, 'Daddy, I love you, too.'"

"They visited for just over an hour, each hungry to ask questions and tell stories. There were lots of tears; it was hard to separate the tears of sadness from those of joy. Ultimately, Antoine's fatigue and breathlessness forced their visit to end. They kissed each other as they said good-bye."

Listening to this story, I was trembling, but the chaplain wasn't done. "I checked on Antoine later that evening and found out he had died within three hours of the visit."

This work will keep you humble.

www.TheFourThings.org



LAURIE, AGE 14 and my daughter Sonia's best friend, died in October, of an overwhelming allergic reaction to restaurant food. Laurie—the charming young poet, actress, singer, dancer. She was out with us, me and my family.

We all blamed ourselves: I, for not realizing the potential severity of a peanut allergy; Sonia, for waiting too long with Laurie in the restroom before alerting adults; my husband, for not insisting on seeing a printed list of the food ingredients. He had asked the waitress. Check with the cook, he said. The cook didn't speak English, we learned later. No one there understood the urgency of the question. Five minutes after eating, Laurie's reaction started. Her EpiPen failed to release the medication. Thirty minutes later she was on life support. Three days after that, her parents gave permission for her organs to be donated. They had Laurie's favorite saying inscribed on her headstone: "God gave us memories so we could have roses in December."

Roses in November

ANONYMOUS

*...the deep, racking grief is gone—
healed forever
by roses in November.*

My route to work at that time took me past the cemetery, and every day I parked, walked up to Laurie's grave, and sobbed my heart out. Usually it took me the rest of the 45-minute drive to work to stop crying.

One morning—an especially cold one for November in New Jersey—I stopped as usual to offer homage at Laurie's grave. The grief, still overwhelming, welled up, and I sobbed uncontrollably as I drove away. Almost immediately, I noticed a fragrance like roses in the car. I knew no florist shop or greenhouse was on the route, a two-lane country road bordered by open, fallow winter fields and bare leafless trees. The fragrance grew stronger, and with it came a sudden sense of deep inner peace. I knew then that Laurie had come to me with roses and reassurance.

I have visited Laurie's grave many times since that day and wept some, prayed some, meditated some. But the deep, racking grief is gone—healed forever by roses in November.



*The Alchemy of Love:
Transforming Loss*

BY KATE STRASBURG

*How can
unspeakable pain
be transformed
with courage and vision,
into an
exquisite gift to
the world?*



HAT CAN BE done with unbearable loss? How can unspeakable pain be transformed with courage and vision, into an exquisite gift to the world?

We recently read of a woman who had lost her two children to a rare degenerative nerve disorder. Her response was to create a website for children with serious illness—BraveKids.org—as well as support their grieving parents.

On a recent trip to Denver to explore educational options for my teenage son, I met an extraordinary young man, Daniel Conroy. With his intense warmth and infectious good humor, I liked him immediately. But ours was to be a stronger and deeper connection. When he asked me what our nonprofit did, a strange thing happened. I answered with words I have never used before or since: “We help people die.”

Immediately Daniel’s demeanor changed. In a hushed and reverent voice he shared his story with me: “We lost

our first baby. It was absolutely horrible. She lived sixteen days. We watched her go from the most beautiful baby in the world to a shriveled and lifeless form. Seeing the life literally drain out of her. For sixteen days, we held her and tried to comfort her in the most cold and impersonal surroundings. I hated the hospital! How could my beautiful baby die in such an ugly place! I even brought pieces of beautiful silk in to beautify and dignify her environment.”

Overcome with grief, Daniel and his wife, Mae, started a foundation in memory of their daughter McLaine. Joining forces with Children’s Hospital and Centura Home Care and Hospice, they helped fund The Butterfly Program—a beautiful gift to dying children and their parents. The Butterfly Program’s mission is to create healing environments for those who must suffer the pain of such excruciating loss—and to transform that loss into a healing transition—for parents and their children. Daniel and Mae want no other parents to suffer as they suffered.




*Living a Life
That Matters*

BY HAROLD S. KUSHNER

*People die,
but love does not die.*

*It is recycled
from one heart,
from one life,
to another.*



A LICE McDERMOTT'S NOVEL *Charming Billy* describes an Irish-American family mourning the death of their lovable, hardworking, hard-drinking brother, husband, and friend. At one point, the widow says to a priest who has come to comfort them, "It's a terrible thing, Father, to come this far in life only to find that nothing you've felt has made any difference." The priest answers, "Of course it mattered. Everything felt, everything you did for Billy mattered, regardless of how it turned out."

When we have loved someone and that person dies, what happens to all the love we invested in that person? The Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai offers a bold and arresting image to answer that question. He suggests that a person's body absorbs and stores all the love it receives in the course of a lifetime, from parents, from lovers, from husbands or wives, from children and friends. Then, when the body dies, it pours out all that love "like a broken slot machine disgorging the coins of all the generations," and all the people nearby, and all the world, are warmed by the love that has been returned to them. People die, but love does not die. It is recycled from one heart, from one life, to another. Jacob, decades after he met Rachel and fell in love with her, decades after her tragic death, is still warmed by the memory of that love, the love he gave and the love he received.

*Sept. 11 Families
Build Foundations
of Hope*

BY MARTHA T. MOORE

*The most
important thing
you can do
is to give
your sorrow
meaning.*

USA TODAY HAS identified more than 130 charitable efforts, from \$200 essay prizes to multimillion-dollar foundations, started by families of those killed on 9/11. Most are scholarships: from St. Joseph-by-the-Sea High School on Staten Island (in memory of Joey Doyle, 25, a Cantor Fitzgerald employee), to the prestigious research institution Rockefeller University (in memory of Shaheed Hamdani, 23, a research technician who went to the Trade Center to put his emergency medical skills to use).

But the giving by families also includes a Fulbright scholarship to study in Malaysia, a program of geological walks in Ithaca, N.Y., a \$500,000 pledge for a new library in Piermont, N.Y., the cost of heart surgery for children from overseas and camps for bereaved children.

For the family members who work on them, these projects are a way to derive meaning from a deeply painful loss. They are a way to show gratitude for help from neighbors and friends after the attacks....

“You try to figure out what to do in order to help your own healing,” says Nikki Stern, executive director of Families of September 11 and the widow of James Potorti, 52, a geologist-turned-insurance executive, who died at the Trade Center. In August, she gave \$10,000 to the Museum of the Earth in Ithaca to provide free guided walks through spectacular gorges. “Because that’s what we did,” Stern says.

Perhaps the largest and best-known family charity was founded by Lisa Beamer, whose husband, Todd, died on United Airlines Flight 93 when it crashed near Shanksville, Pa., after being hijacked. The foundation, now called Heroic Choices, has \$4 million in assets.

The giving by 9/11 families, even added together, is small in the world of philanthropy. But that doesn’t really matter, says Kathleen McCarthy of the Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society at the City University of New York.

“Small amounts of money aren’t going to solve the world’s problems, but they solve a lot of other problems, both in the community and to the people who are grieving,” McCarthy says. “The short-

term function is getting through the grief.... These things do that.”

The impulse these families share is to keep alive the name and qualities of someone who, to them, was the most special person in the world—to make good, if possible, come out of bad.

On the night his wife’s body was found in the wreckage of the Pentagon, three days after the attack, a grief counselor told Donn Marshall, “The most important thing you can do is to give your sorrow meaning.”


“It was like someone flipped a switch,” Marshall says. He left his Pentagon job, moved his young children to his home state of West Virginia and now works full time on the Shelley A. Marshall Foundation. The organization funds art workshops and story hours and also holds intergeneration tea parties for high school students and nursing home residents.

“I don’t want (Osama) bin Laden to have the last word,” Marshall says. “I wanted to give Shelley the last word, and these”—paintings by high school artists—“are some of her words.”

As I Lay Dying

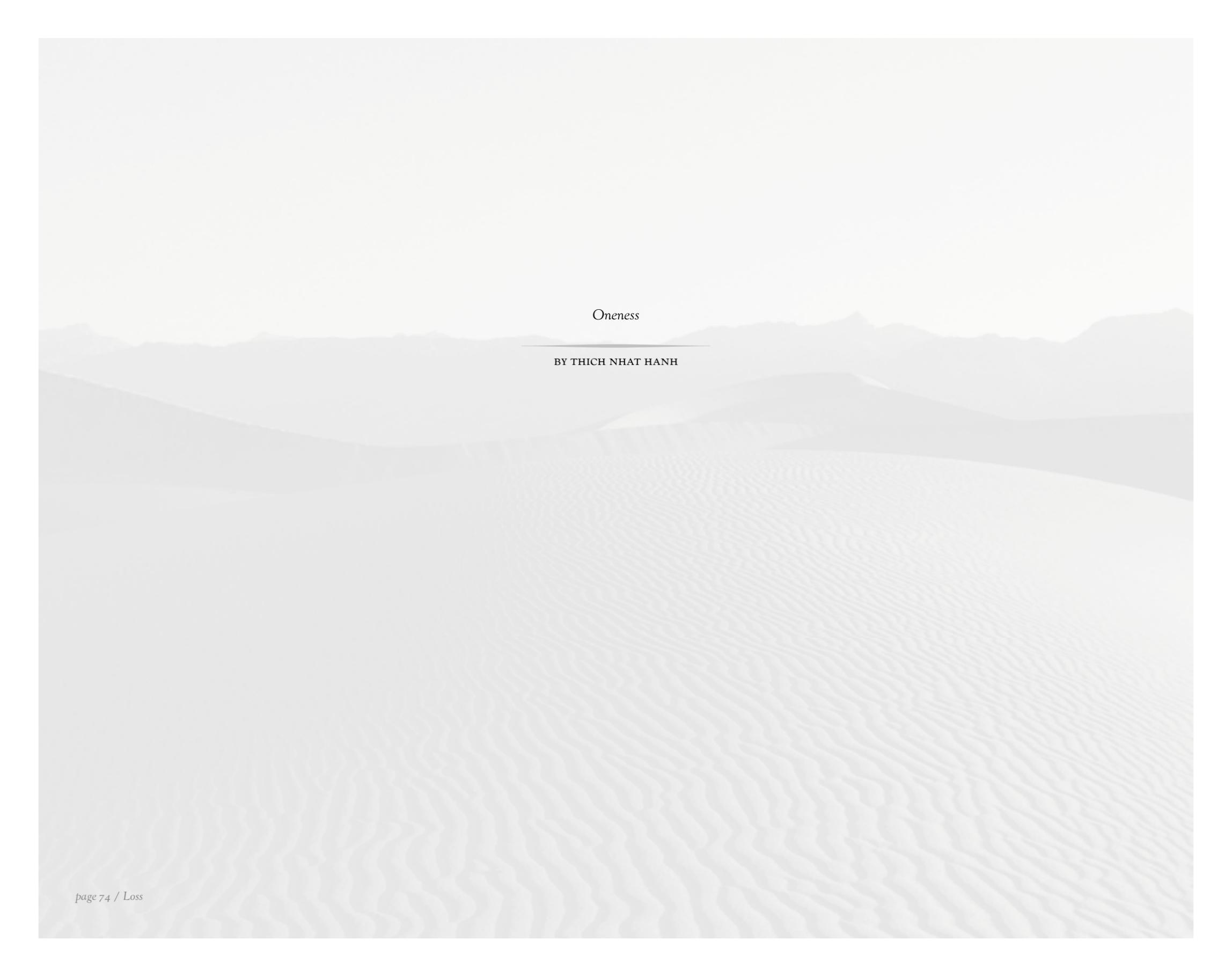
BY RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS

LIFE IS TAKEN seriously when life is held to account, our lives and the lives of others. The worst thing is not the sorrow or the loss or the heartbreak. It is to be encountered by death and not to be changed by the encounter.

The background of the page is a soft, misty photograph. It shows a long bridge with multiple pillars spanning across a body of water. In the distance, there are rolling hills or mountains, their details softened by the fog. The overall color palette is muted, with greys, blues, and greens.


*The worst thing
is not the sorrow or
the loss
or the heartbreak.*

*It is to be
encountered by death
and not to
be changed by the
encounter.*



Oneness

BY THICH NHAT HANH




The moment I die,
I will try to come back to you
as quickly as possible.
I promise it will not take long.
Isn't it true
I am already with you,
as I die each moment?
I come back to you
in every moment.
Just look,
feel my presence.
If you want to cry,
please cry.
And know
that I will cry with you.
The tears you shed
will heal us both.
Your tears are mine.
The earth I tread this morning
transcends history.
Spring and Winter are both present in the moment.
The young leaf and the dead leaf are really one.
My feet touch deathlessness,
and my feet are yours.
Walk with me now.
Let us enter the dimension of oneness
and see the cherry tree blossom in Winter.
Why should we talk about death?
I don't need to die
to be back with you.

The Power of Myth

BY JOSEPH CAMPBELL

ONE THING THAT COMES out in myths is that at the bottom of the abyss comes the voice of salvation. The black moment is the moment when the real message of transformation is going to come. At the darkest moment comes the light.




*At the darkest moment
comes the light.*




*Infinite Life:
Seven Virtues for
Living Well*

BY ROBERT THURMAN

*It is never
too late
to change.*



IT IS NEVER too late to change. We can liberate ourselves from laziness and despair with creativity, overcome self-loathing with true self-confidence, and get inspired to eliminate our addictions by finding deep-seated satisfaction in a new, inspiring, empowering worldview. Once we make this transition within, nothing can stop us from creating the buddhaverse we long for. We needn't feel any stress about this task, for there's no reason to hurry: we have infinite life and infinite time and space to transform ourselves and our world, since death is no obstacle. Filled with joy and inner peace, we can be energetically creative in building a realm of love and happiness.




WE SEE THAT the nature of consciousness works a bit like the hand of God in the famous Sistine Chapel painting which is reaching out to give life to a waiting being, a being about to receive the spark. Moment to moment we're receiving the spark. That spark is consciousness, the knowing faculty, the perception of which arises from the contact of awareness and its object; from sight and the tree seen, from hearing and the music heard, from touch and the earth felt, from taste and the water tasted, from smell and the flower smelled, from thought and the idea imagined. Moment to moment, consciousness arises anew in conjunction with each object of the senses, including the mind sense of imagination and memory. This is the arising and passing away of all that we know of our life experience. For mindfulness to enter this process is to discover genesis moment to moment, the continual creation of the universe.

...

We're constantly building a new image of ourselves and wondering what's next. We have allowed ourselves very little space for not-knowing. Very seldom do we have

A Gradual Awakening

BY STEPHEN LEVINE

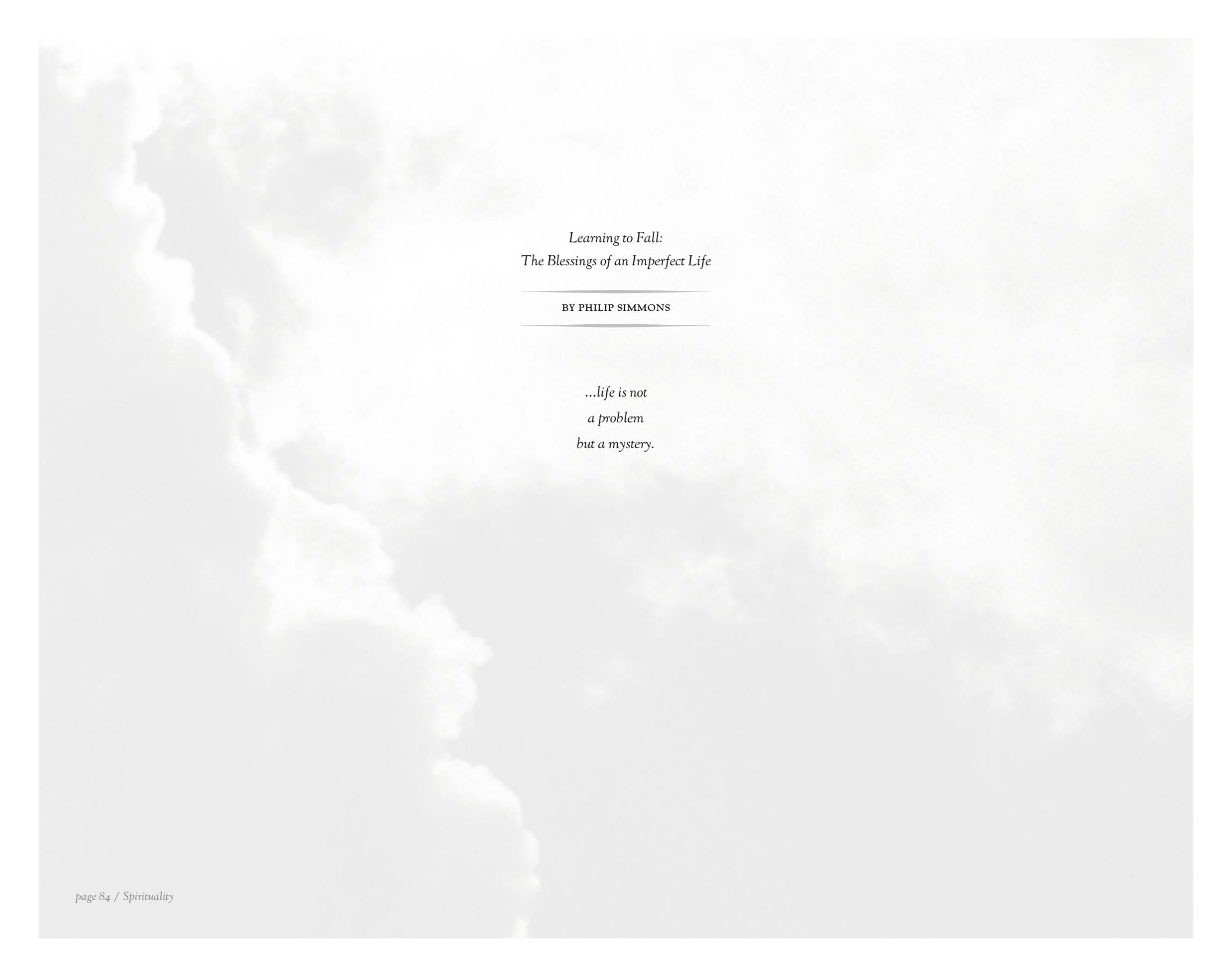


*Moment to
moment,
consciousness
arises anew...*

the wisdom not-to-know, to lay the mind open to deeper understanding. When confusion occurs in the mind, we identify with it and say we are confused: we hold onto it. Confusion arises because we fight against our not-knowing, which experiences each moment afresh without preconceptions or expectations. We are so full of ways of seeing and ideas of how things should be we leave no room for wisdom to arise. We desire to know in only a certain way, a way which will corroborate our image of a rational, separate, autonomous self. When we open our minds, our hearts, not *trying* to understand, but simply allowing understanding to occur, we find more than was expected. When we let go of our ignorance and confusion, we allow our knowing mind to arise.

...

By clinging to what we think we know or don't know, we block our deeper knowing. By gently letting go of everything—not through force, not by slaying it, but simply seeing all the content as passing show, as process and flow—we become the whole of our experience and open to our natural understanding.



*Learning to Fall:
The Blessings of an Imperfect Life*

BY PHILIP SIMMONS

*...life is not
a problem
but a mystery.*

AND HERE IS where we go wrong. For at its deepest levels life is not a problem but a mystery. The distinction, which I borrow from the philosopher Gabriel Marcel, is fundamental: problems are to be solved, true mysteries are not. Personally, I wish I could have learned this lesson more easily—without, perhaps, having to give up my tennis game. But each of us finds his or her own way to mystery. At one time or another, each of us confronts an experience so powerful, bewildering, joyous, or terrifying that all our efforts to see it as a “problem” are futile. Each of us is brought to the cliff’s edge. At such moments we can either back away in bitterness or confusion, or leap forward into mystery. And what does mystery ask of us? Only that we be in its presence, that we fully, consciously, hand ourselves over. That is all, and that is everything. We can participate in mystery only by letting go of solutions.

This letting go is the first lesson of falling, and the hardest.

I offer my stories not as illustrations of a problem but as entrances into the mystery of falling. And now I’ll offer not advice, not bullet points, but mystery points, set off in my text not with the familiar round dots but with question marks:

? If spiritual growth is what you seek, don’t ask for more strawberries, ask for more tigers.

? The threat of the tigers, the leap from the cliff, are what give the strawberry its savor. They cannot be avoided, and the strawberry can’t be enjoyed without them. No tigers, no sweetness.


? In falling we somehow gain what means most. In falling we are given back our lives even as we lose them.



*The Spiral Staircase:
My Climb Out of Darkness*

BY KAREN ARMSTRONG

*...if he wants to succeed,
he must enter
the forest “at a point
that he, himself, had chosen,
where it was darkest
and there was no path.”*



THE GREAT MYTHS show that when you follow somebody else's path, you go astray. The hero has to set off by himself, leaving the old world and the old ways behind. He must venture into the darkness of the unknown, where there is no map and no clear route. He must fight his own monsters, not somebody else's, explore his own labyrinth, and endure his own ordeal before he can find what is missing in his life. Thus transfigured, he (or she) can bring something of value to the world that has been left behind. But if the knight finds himself riding along an already established track, he is simply following in somebody else's footsteps and will not have an adventure. In the words of the Old French text of *The Quest of the Holy Grail*, if he wants to succeed, he must enter the forest "at a point that he, himself, had chosen, where it was darkest and there was no path." The wasteland in the Grail legend is a place where people live inauthentic lives, blindly following the norms of their society and doing only what other people expect.



*Healing Through
the Dark Emotions:
The Wisdom of
Grief, Fear, and Despair*

BY MIRIAM GREENSPAN

*Transforming your
dark emotions
entails making meaning
of your suffering.*



Making Meaning

TRANSFORMING YOUR DARK emotions entails making meaning of your suffering. The meaning may or may not be intrinsic to the experience. Thinking that painful events have intrinsic meaning is just another meaning-story. Do things happen for a reason? Or do they just happen and we make up the reasons afterward? The answer to this depends on your theology and the kinds of meaning-stories you prefer. My answer is this: Whatever meaning I make out of suffering, I want it to be one that makes me feel more open to life, not less; more authentic, more loving, and more compassionate. I want it to build, not diminish, my integrity. If the story helps me do these things, it's a good story. If it doesn't, then I must go back and keep walking the old existential ground till another meaning story emerges.

The background of the page is a soft, misty photograph of a landscape. In the foreground, a wooden bridge with several vertical supports spans across a body of water. The water is calm, reflecting the light. In the background, there are rolling hills or mountains covered in dense evergreen trees, all shrouded in a thick mist or fog. The overall color palette is muted, consisting of various shades of grey, blue, and green, creating a serene and contemplative atmosphere.

Dark Nights of the Soul

BY THOMAS MOORE

*At every moment,
we are...
an emerging butterfly.*

LIFE IS A continuous cycle of births. Imagine yourself as made up of three parts. One part arrives at birth and never changes, the eternal self. At that level, you are eternal, and throughout your life you recognize that unchanging self in the midst of developments, a quintessential star ever shining in the deep interior of the soul. A second level is so completely defined by events and environments that it changes all the time. This is the self that tries to survive and thrive in the everyday world, the practical self. Yet a third level is the caterpillar-and-butterfly part, the unfolding self. This self is always becoming, always evolving, unless it is blocked, and goes through deep transformations. It is the go-between that links the eternal with the


everyday. Ancient societies focused their attention on the unfolding self, while we favor the practical self. At every moment, we are a star, an agent, and an emerging butterfly.

To keep the unfolding self alive, you have to open yourself to change, every step of the way. Of course, there are times when it is appropriate to step back, settle down, and maybe not move for a while. But to be a person means to be faced every minute with the decision to live or to die, to accept the invitations for yet more vitality or to decline them out of fear or lethargy. Dark nights of the soul seem to seek out this unfolding self and create a mood in which the necessary developments can take place. You may not go through the deep initiations when you're busy or carefree.


*Everyday Grace:
Having Hope,
Finding Forgiveness, and
Making Miracles*

BY MARIANNE WILLIAMSON

FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IS not a casual occurrence. We cannot casually commit to the process of spiritual transformation. It's not enough to say, "Oh, I think I'll be a mystic this year." Mysticism is not a *trend*. Our entire being is called to the task, for the journey from density to light involves every aspect of who we are. Whether we are angry at the dry cleaners because they've ruined our favorite sweater, upset with a friend who has broken a promise, or frightened at the diagnosis of cancer in the breast of a best friend; whether we're worried about the state of our marriage, looking for a new job, or anxious about nuclear bombs and terrorists in our midst, we see that everything we go through is a step along the path. We are taking the mystical journey as a way of transforming the world by transforming *ourselves*. Only by finding the love within us can we provide the love that will save the world.



*Only by finding
the love within us
can we provide
the love
that will save
the world.*



IT'S NOT EASY to discuss mysticism with a mystic. The more he knows, the less he says. When I offer my shorthand definition of mysticism—only God—the normally loquacious rabbi looks sideways and says, “Sometimes.” When I propose that such an all-encompassing worldview must be hard to live with, he says, “Yes. You want at least a corner where not everything is God.”

There are no such corners in the world portrayed by Kabbalah. Its reality is very different from the one we perceive with our senses. According to its scheme, creation is, as the rabbi writes, “the transmutation of the divine reality into something defined and limited—into a world.” In kabbalistic language, the universe is the “emanation” of a mysterious divine

light that created it. Somehow, everything that has ever existed—including the sparks that are souls—is destined for ultimate reunion with this sacred source.

...

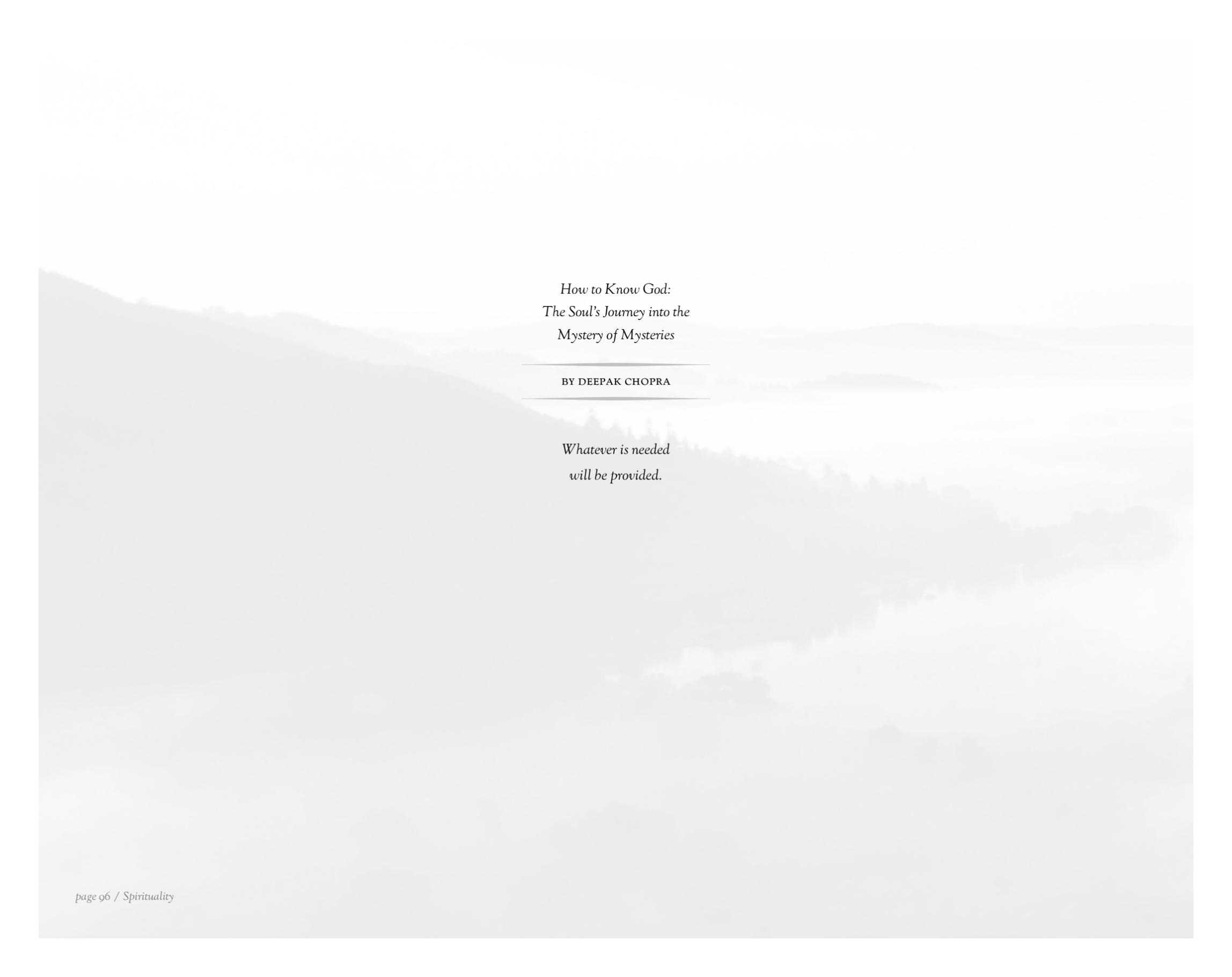
Unlike many traditional religious leaders, however, the rabbi takes people's hunger for spiritual experience very seriously. American religion has traditionally stressed good works and regarded personal spirituality as narcissistic at worst and, at best, the carrot on religion's stick. The rabbi is indignant at this notion. “Experience is not the carrot,” he exclaims, “but the substance! The best religious poetry here is in the black spirituals. Why? Because they are a deeply religious people. When they sing or pray, it's real, and when it's real, it's moving, touching.”



*Spiritual Genius:
10 Masters and
the Quest for Meaning*

BY WINIFRED GALLAGHER


*...the universe
is the “emanation”
of a mysterious
divine light
that created it.*



*How to Know God:
The Soul's Journey into the
Mystery of Mysteries*

BY DEEPAK CHOPRA

*Whatever is needed
will be provided.*



I BELIEVE THAT LIFE events do not unfold randomly; our materialistic worldview may insist that they do, but all of us have reflected on turning points in our lives and seen, sometimes with bafflement or wonder, that lessons came our way at exactly the time we needed them.

In a word, some hidden intelligence seems to know when and how to transform us, often when we least expect it. By its nature inspiration is transforming—it brings in spirit—and no model of the brain has come close to explaining how a cluster of neurons could transform itself. One school of neurology is predicated on the notion that the human brain is a computer of enormous ability but computers don't wake up one morning and decide to have a new attitude toward life.

Nor do they have moments of spiritual awakening, whereas human beings experience them all the time. Computers don't find any idea suddenly meaningful. For them every download of data is the same, a collection of zeros and ones arranged in a coded language. Yesterday's E-mail is no less significant than the New Testament, and no more.

Inspiration is the perfect example of how the invisible level of reality works. *Whatever is needed is provided.* A person may not be prepared to accept the insight, and therefore a chance for transformation will be missed. But that isn't the essential point. The mind is greater than any individual. Your mind isn't a computer; it is a living intelligence, and it evolves, which is why fresh insight is needed.



W

HAT DO THE Psalms say but this?

“Stay vigilant, you will see
the help of the Lord upon you!”

How deep is this truth, how
tremendously important.

We do not *wait* for this *auxilium Domini*, this
help from the Lord! Others announce it has
arrived, but we feel that it has *not*. Stay vigilant:
Constantes estote. It will arrive for me also at the
proper time, in secret, in God’s own freedom be-
yond all control of timetables, even ecclesiastical!
This is a deeper and truer aspect of the Church’s
mystery: the freedom of her inner life, which may
or may not correspond to the exterior indications
of the ritual moment.

The Intimate Merton

BY THOMAS MERTON


“Stay vigilant,
you will see
the help of the Lord
upon you!”



The Compassion Box

BY PEMA CHÖDRON

*...awaken your
compassionate and
open heart.*



WHATEVER PROBLEMS OCCUR in your life, instead of reacting to them in the usual habitual way, you could transform them into the path of the bodhi heart. That is to say, you could awaken your compassionate and open heart. Use the tonglen approach and breathe in the pain of the situation, wishing that all beings could be free of it. Then breathe out and send loving-kindness to all suffering beings, including yourself!

When the world is filled with evil, transform all mishaps into the path of bodhi.

A grayscale photograph of a vast mountain range. The mountains are layered, with the closest peaks in the foreground and more distant, hazy peaks in the background. A bright, circular light source, likely the sun or moon, is positioned in the center of the image, slightly above the horizon line, creating a strong glow and illuminating the scene. The overall atmosphere is serene and ethereal.

Each morning presents a new calling.

*Kabbalah:
The Untold Story
of the
Mystic Tradition*

BY KENNETH HANSON, PH.D.

EACH MORNING PRESENTS a new calling. One rises eagerly from slumber, being made holy and becoming, as it were, another person. One is found worthy to create, imitating God himself by shaping his own world. Creation does not cease with the Sabbath; but human beings join God in continuing the works of creation. Indeed, the individual joins God in one's *own* creation.




*The Knowing Heart:
A Sufi Path of Transformation*

BY KABIR HELMINSKI

*...become ever more
subtle, refined, spacious,
penetrating.*

ONE WAY THIS process of transformation can be described is in terms of the changes of state from solid to liquid to gas. The compulsive-obsessive self is like ice—hard, separate, and alone. The balanced self is more like water, fluid, able to merge with others and flow, able to dissolve and even purify the negativity of life. The higher stages are more like the molecular state of a fragrance—very subtle, penetrating, not nearly as limited in space or time. We can visualize the self as something that can become ever more subtle, refined, spacious, penetrating. The more we spiritual-



ize our animal qualities and bring them into service, the more we tame “the beast” with love, the more we attain wholeness, and the more that natural self can be the instrument of real values, which are transpersonal or spiritual in nature.

The Seven Levels of the Self (Nafs)


The Sufi tradition has generally understood the transformation of the human being in seven stages. Previously we described a model of the self consisting of an interplay of three aspects of individuality: self, heart, and Spirit. In the healthy, spiritual state the self is in relationship to the heart, which is in deep spontaneous communication with Spirit. Our individuality is the synthesis of two aspects of our being: self and Spirit. We could also call these the natural (or animal) self, on the one hand, and the transpersonal (or spiritual) Self, on the other. The animal self is not necessarily evil, but it lacks self-awareness and self-control. It is motivated primarily by instinct and desire. The spiritual self, on the other hand, can supply consciousness, higher reason, wisdom, and guidance. The synthesis of these two forces, as I said, is the individuality.



Living in the Light


BY SHAKTI GAWAIN

*The more
you are willing
to trust...
the more you will
live in the light.*



TRANSFORMATION BEGINS ON an individual level and moves out into the world. The more I'm learning to trust my intuition and act on it, and the more I'm willing to experience and accept all my feelings, the more the energy of the universe can move through me. As it comes through, it heals and transforms me and everyone and everything around me.

This is true for each one of us. The more you are willing to trust and be yourself, the more you will live in the light. Everyone around you will benefit from your energy and being to trust and be more themselves. In turn, they become powerful channels for everyone in their sphere of influence. And so transformation spreads rapidly throughout the world.

A misty forest scene with several birch trees in the foreground and a body of water in the background. The trees have white bark with dark horizontal lenticels. The background is a soft, hazy landscape with a body of water and distant hills.

*There are
as many paths
to transformation
as there
are souls in the
universe.*



*A List of
Healing Tools*

- prayer
- meditation
- retreats
- nature
- ritual
- therapy
- body work
- movement
- creativity
- dreams
- spirituality
- rites of passage
- walking
- gardening
- journaling
- music
- art
- writing
- collage
- cooking
- knitting
- poetry
- reading
- traveling
- film
- design

The Transformation Game

BY TRACI TERAOKA

*...come closer to
a personal awakening.*

S EVEN YEARS AGO Kate gave me a game created by two members of an intentional community called Findhorn in Scotland. It took seven years—but finally the time was right to open it up and investigate. My friend Benjamin and I set it up and commenced playing. Each player must first set a personal focus for the game and then work on his or her own life path—not in competition against one another. The Transformation Game helps to facilitate the connection between four levels—the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. There are cards that are drawn during play to offer support and insight, quite literally they are named: Life Angels, Life

Insights, Life Setbacks and Universal Feedback cards.

The first time we played I seemed forever “stuck” on the first level, the physical level, then finally I hit my stride and soared through the various levels until slowing down on the final fourth level, the spiritual level. After playing the game, Benjamin and I both agreed that it was useful and more interesting and contemplative than we had originally thought. We both made notes about the cards we had drawn on each level to keep as reminders of this special journey.

In 1978, Joy Drake and Kathy Tyler, two of Findhorn’s members, created The Transformation Game. I spoke with Joy and Kathy about their intentions

in designing this unique spiritual and developmental tool—which is now nearly 30 years old. Kathy explained, “This game is unlike a traditional board game. It is a platform for a spiritual and mystical journey. The game can reveal our best strengths, our weaknesses and re-occurring patterns. By becoming aware of our misconceptions about ourselves and how we need to live our life we can expand our own unique expression and meaning. The game creates a safe, loving structure to explore these issues.”

I asked Joy about their original intention in creating the game. “This is a tool for personal growth by increasing awareness, and revealing the clues to help us come closer to a personal awakening. By creating focus and participating in the game you can create a personal record, a documentary, that traces the connection between personal will, feelings and intuition which will show the way to change and transformation. This game is designed to help us find what are the essential values in our lives. It is for those who seek to look inside—not only outside of themselves for change. It is for the times in life when we are tired of blaming others or feeling victimized by our situation and we are willing to ask, ‘How do I get to a place of

power? How do I get back into soul infusion? How do I feel the love and wisdom of my soul?’” Kathy added, “Life presents opportunities to work on ourselves. We are still actively learning and opening up to the richness of life. This can sometimes be overwhelming.”

Now that I am familiar with the format it is a favorite healing tool. I am also a fan of their Angel Cards, 52 small cards with each one having a single virtue or value on it. They can be a quick way of grounding oneself everyday or when the whim occurs.

These products and games have been sold internationally and translated into several languages. There are many different ways in which you can participate: the solo version, facilitated game playing with larger groups, a life-size version called the Planetary Game Workshop and a business and retreat version. Joy and Kathy are based in Asheville, North Carolina. They are now coaching individuals and businesses based on the framework and values of the game.

www.innerlinks.com

www.findhorn.com

www.frameworkscoach.com

The Transformation Game is a registered trademark.

*Awakening the Heroes Within:
Twelve Archetypes to
Help Us Find
Ourselves and Transform
Our World*

BY CAROL S. PEARSON

*For true transformation
to take place,
we must die
to our former selves.*

FROM SEEKER TO INITIATE

THE TRANSFORMATION OF caterpillar to butterfly traditionally has been a symbol of a spiritual transformation so extreme as to appear to turn one species into another. It symbolizes the death of life at the physical/Ego level only, and rebirth into a life imbued with spirit.

Many people today channel their urge to ascend into various kinds of achievement—academic, athletic, vocational. And initially this is very positive and healthy. That’s exactly what adolescents and young adults should be doing. Achieving and also traveling and exploring the world, are what youth requires. In this way, the archetype of the Seeker aids in Ego development. Eventually, however, as we grow and mature, the archetype emerges again at a deeper, more expressly spiritual level. It is at this point that the call of the Spirit requires the ability to transcend the Self and to experience cosmic oneness, an experience that carries with it the capacity for rebirth into life as a spiritual being.

Such transformation requires more than active questioning. For true transformation to take place, we must die to our former selves.

EXERCISES

Give some thought to when, where, how, and how much the Seeker expresses itself in your life.

1. How much or how little is the Seeker expressed in your life? Has it been expressed more in the past or present? Do you see it emerging more in your future? Is it expressed more at work, at home, with friends, in dreams or fantasies?
2. Who are some friends, relatives, co-workers, and others who seem influenced by the archetype of the Seeker?
3. Is there anything you wish were different about the expression of the Seeker in your life?
4. Since each archetype expresses itself in many different ways, take some time to describe or otherwise portray (e.g., draw, make a collage, use a picture of yourself in a particular costume or pose) the Seeker as it is expressed or could be expressed in your life. What does or would it look like? How does or would it act? In what setting does or would it feel most at home?



*Creative Visualization:
Use the Power
of Your Imagination
to Create What
You Want in Your Life*

BY SHAKTI GAWAIN

*Once you are aware
of your higher self,
you can call on it
whenever you need it.*

WE HAVE ALL had experiences of being connected with our higher selves, although we may not have conceptualized it in that way. Feeling exceptionally high, clear, strong, “on top of the world,” or “able to move mountains,” are indications of being connected with your higher self; so is the experience of “falling in love”...when you feel wonderful about yourself and the world because your love for another human being is causing you to connect with your highest self.

When you first become consciously aware of the experience of your higher self, you will find that it seems to come and go rather sporadically. At one moment you may be feeling strong, clear, and creative, the next moment you may be thrown back into confusion and insecurity. This seems to be a natural part of the process. Once you are aware of your higher self, you can call on it whenever you need it, and gradually you will find that it is with you more and more of the time.

The connection between your personality and your higher self is a two-way channel, and it's important to develop the flow in both directions.

Receptive: When you quiet your personality during meditation, and come into a “being” space, you open the channel for higher wisdom and guidance to come to you through your intuitive mind. You can ask questions and wait for answers to come to you through words, mental images, or feeling impressions.

Active: When you are experiencing yourself as the co-creator of your life, you make choices about what you desire to create, and channel the infinite energy, power, and wisdom of your higher self into manifesting your choices through active visualization and affirmation.

When the channel is flowing freely in both directions, you are being guided by your higher wisdom, and based on that guidance, you are making choices and creating your world in the highest, most beautiful way.



His Path from Patient to Healer

BY HILARY E. MACGREGOR

I don't practice alternative medicine...

I always call it complementary.

EVAN ROSS' BATTLE WITH BRAIN CANCER
BEGAN A LIFE-CHANGING JOURNEY THAT LED
TO HIS EMBRACE OF EASTERN MEDICINE.

EVAN ROSS LOST one eye to cancer at age 2, and then nearly lost the other. Then, 22 years later, doctors told him he had cancer again. This time it was a tumor in his brain. And this time they told him he would die.

Ross had moved to Los Angeles from New Jersey to follow his dream—to work in the music industry. He was working as a record producer when he started getting severe headaches, experiencing shortness of breath, and twitching. His therapist told him he was having panic attacks.

The strange symptoms persisted. He grew weak on his left side. He had trouble keeping food down. One day he passed out on the bathroom floor.

He went to the doctor. They scanned his head, and by the time he got home there was a message on his telephone answering machine.

“You appear to have a rather large mass in your head,” he recalls the doctor telling him when he called back. “It appears to be a glioma.” “I didn’t even know what a glioma was,” he says.

The mass in Ross’ head turned out to be a grade 4 glioblastoma multiforme—a common and highly malignant type of brain tumor. Like many people who battle cancer, the experience would change his life. But it also would change his career. Ten years later, Ross has left his job in the music industry and is a licensed acupuncturist and doctor of oriental medicine at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, helping patients not unlike himself.

Today, cancer-free for eight years, he works closely with teams of doctors in the hospital, visiting patients in the ICU, rehab unit and cancer wards. He sees about 80 patients a week, many of them cancer patients, and about three in four of them are referred by medical doctors.

A decade ago, integrative medicine was little more than talk at most medical centers. But according to a 2003 survey by the American Hospital Assn., 17% of hospitals offer complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) services.

Ross’ ties with top medical doctors at a prestigious hospital give him a badge of legitimacy in a world often unequipped to assess either the effectiveness of alternative medicine therapies or the qualifications of its practitioners.

“It definitely makes a difference having him here at Cedars,” says Dr. Edward Wolin, an oncologist at the hospital’s Comprehensive Cancer Center who refers patients to Ross. “He has staff privileges. He is able to come to the hospital room, if the person is an inpatient, and he is able to give acupuncture at the hospital. He is treated as part of the medical team. It is a unique relationship with someone in the acupuncture field.”

But it is Ross’ first-hand experience with cancer, it seems, that makes him even rarer.


A spiritual journey

Ross’ tumor was the size of a lemon, in a part of the brain—the right frontal lobe—that controls movement on the left side of his body.

“I didn’t believe I was going to die,” Ross says. “From the beginning—I have an entry in my journal—I believed it was about learning a set of lessons. I believed it was destined to happen. And I welcomed it as a challenge.”

In May of 1995, he underwent a 10-hour surgery at UC San Francisco during which doctors were able to remove only 50% of his tumor. Doctors told his family he would be paralyzed on one side and that after the surgery he would be treated with chemotherapy. But the doctors told him it was unlikely the treatment would save his life.

Ross is 35, with the boyish face of a graduate student. He is matter-of-fact, almost clinical, when he talks about




his battle with cancer. So his detours into topics of spirituality feel all the more unexpected. He frequently draws on his personal story to inspire patients, so that at times it begins to feel like a spiel. But as he tells his tale once again to a reporter, his professional veneer cracks. “It’s hard to talk about this,” he says.

Ross spent three weeks researching conventional cancer treatments on the Internet, and many nonconventional ones too. Even while undergoing chemo and other standard treatments, he went on a macrobiotic diet and meditated twice daily. He tried acupuncture, took nutritional supplements, practiced Qigong and was treated with ayurvedic herbs. He kept a journal, to allow his subconscious to speak to him and teach him lessons. He saw a shaman and consulted with a Jewish mystic.

That experience informs his work today. “I don’t practice alternative medicine,” he corrects during one interview. “I always call it complementary. There is a danger in thinking of it as alternative medicine, because it implies one kind of medicine or the other. Both types of medicine have to be used together.”

Dr. Michael Lill, the medical director of the Cedars-Sinai Outpatient Cancer Center and director of the blood and marrow transplant program, says that perspective is part of what makes Ross an asset.

“He is careful to still send people for conventional therapies, rather than trying to do everything himself,” Lill says.



Ross believes his diet and alternative therapies enabled him to withstand high doses of chemo, and endure two stem cell transplants with few side effects. He considered his illness a spiritual journey and reflected deeply on his disease. He understood that genetics play a role in his disease. But why was he cancer-free for more than two decades? What had set it off?

He came to L.A. to compose music for films. Soon, he was caught up in having a nice car, a nice place to live and trying to schmooze with famous record producers. He was hanging out at bars until the wee hours, always wheeling and dealing and “trying to make it happen.” He felt lost.

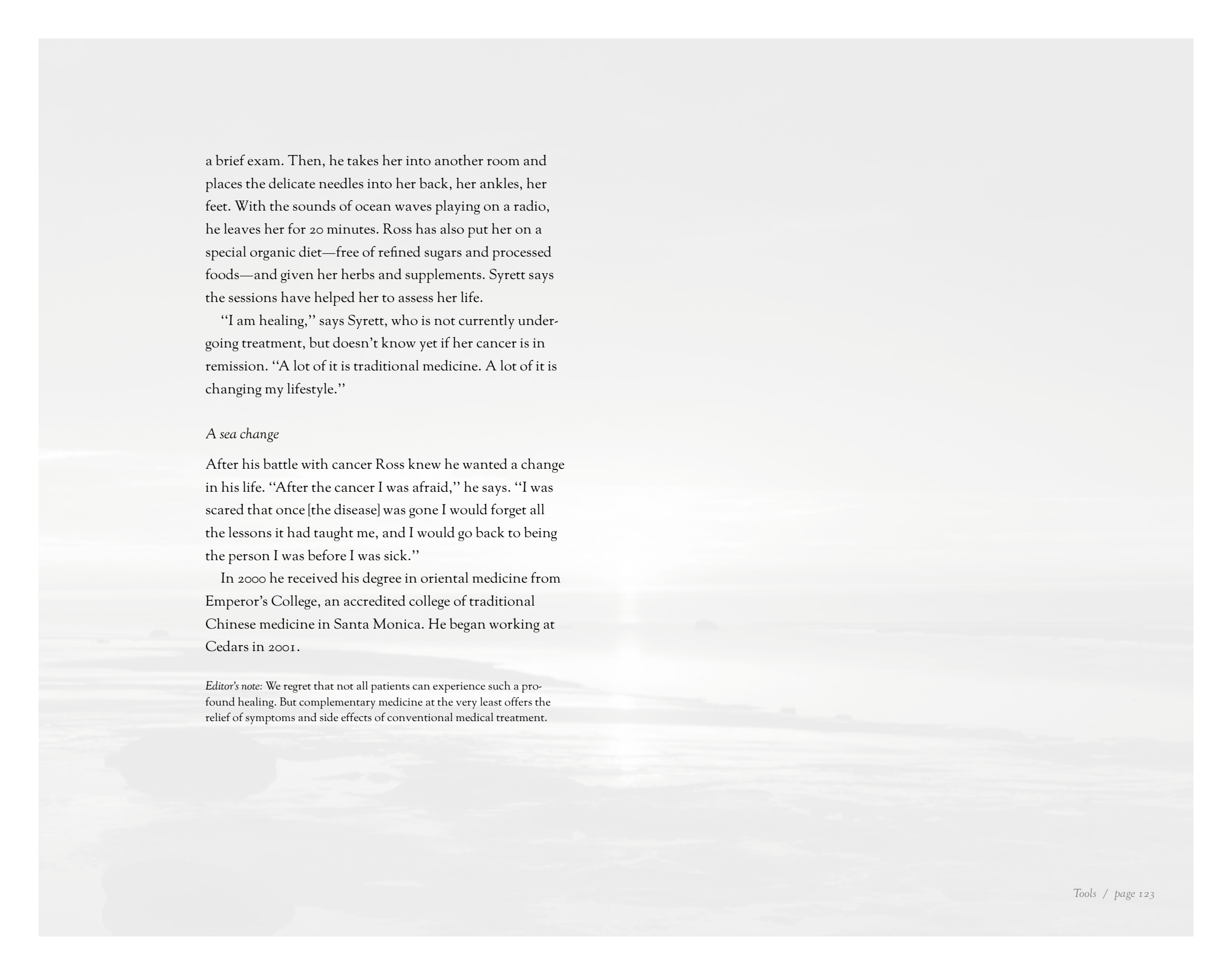
“The way I was living my life—mentally and spiritually—I was in a state of chaos,” he says. “What is cancer but a state of chaos? Cells lose the ability to grow normally, and begin growing haphazardly and chaotically.”

Empathy, rapport

It is a hot, summer afternoon and Ross calls in his next patient, Amy Syrett. A nonsmoker with two young children, Syrett, 44, was diagnosed with advanced lung cancer last fall and received aggressive chemo and radiation. She was referred to Ross by her doctor to help overcome her treatments’ side effects. It meant a lot to her that he had survived cancer against long odds.

“He could relate to me,” she says. “He inspired me.”

Ross talks to Syrett about how she’s feeling and does



a brief exam. Then, he takes her into another room and places the delicate needles into her back, her ankles, her feet. With the sounds of ocean waves playing on a radio, he leaves her for 20 minutes. Ross has also put her on a special organic diet—free of refined sugars and processed foods—and given her herbs and supplements. Syrett says the sessions have helped her to assess her life.

“I am healing,” says Syrett, who is not currently undergoing treatment, but doesn’t know yet if her cancer is in remission. “A lot of it is traditional medicine. A lot of it is changing my lifestyle.”

A sea change

After his battle with cancer Ross knew he wanted a change in his life. “After the cancer I was afraid,” he says. “I was scared that once [the disease] was gone I would forget all the lessons it had taught me, and I would go back to being the person I was before I was sick.”

In 2000 he received his degree in oriental medicine from Emperor’s College, an accredited college of traditional Chinese medicine in Santa Monica. He began working at Cedars in 2001.

Editor’s note: We regret that not all patients can experience such a profound healing. But complementary medicine at the very least offers the relief of symptoms and side effects of conventional medical treatment.

The background of the page is a soft, misty landscape. In the foreground, there's a gentle slope covered in what appears to be grass or low vegetation. In the middle ground, a line of trees stands on a small rise. The background shows more rolling hills under a pale, overcast sky. The overall tone is serene and atmospheric.

*The Thomases'
Victory Garden*

BY CHUCK SALTER

*Creating an
Eden involves a complete
transformation.*

LIVING, NOT DYING, SHOULD BE THE SOUL OF A NURSING HOME, SUGGESTS BILL THOMAS. HIS ALTERNATIVE TO THE STATUS QUO WOULD BRING NEW LIFE TO ANY SETTING.

BILL THOMAS, M.D., took an unlikely tack when he wrote a book about improving long-term care for the elderly. Rather than laying out his ideas in a wonkish tome, he wrote a contemporary fable. In *Learning from Hannah: Secrets for a Life Worth Living* he imagines that he and his wife, Jude, are shipwrecked on a mysterious island called Kallimos. Here the older residents are embraced by the younger generations, their wisdom and experience valued. Inspired by Hannah, their mentor on the island, the Thomases return to civilization and start Eden Alternative.

Back in the real world, Thomas hit the road to promote *Learning from Hannah* and his prescription for change. He appeared on radio and television, and met with public officials, offering his perspective as a gerontologist on the flaws of nursing homes: they were utterly devoid of hope, love, humor, meaning—the very stuff of life. He lectured on the changes he had in mind, which included adding pets, plants, and children to nursing-home life, and nurturing the relationship between caregivers and residents.

The book wasn't enough though. Thomas, now forty-two, also developed a one-man show based on the tale. In the summer of 1999, he launched the Eden Across America Tour, traveling by private bus to twenty-seven cities in thirty-one days with his wife, their five children, and his parents.

The tour never ended. It can't. Not if Thomas is going to fix long-term care in this country. For all practical purposes, he says, the industry is broken. "Does anyone want to leave his home and go live in a nursing home?" he asks. "Does anyone want to put a parent, spouse, or loved one there? That's why we're turning the industry upside down."

It's an audacious mission and a truly big fix. It demands an unorthodox approach to mobilizing and motivating a wide range of forces, many with little incentive to change. "You need to have people go a little nuts about what you want to do," Thomas says. On its own, the industry isn't going to do an about-face and overhaul its core ideas. And individual nursing homes are simply overwhelmed by the day-to-day care of residents in a heavily regulated field. Hoping to prod people into going a little nuts about radical reform, Thomas appeals to their imaginations and their hearts with the book, the tour, and the play. "A lot of innovators don't focus enough on the story that they're tell-

ing,” he says. “But the story is the only thing that ever gets people to change. It captures your passion and conviction and inspires others to feel the same way.”

A garden—as in Eden—is the central metaphor behind Thomas’s vision. “Human beings aren’t meant to live in institutions,” he says, “but that’s what most nursing homes are: big, impersonal, cold institutions that don’t treat people the way they want to be treated. People are meant to live in a garden, a place where they can grow and thrive as human beings.”

So far, about 250 nursing homes in the United States (and a handful in Europe and Australia) have been registered, turned into warm, nurturing human habitats. The results have proven good for residents—and good for business. Impressed by the improved quality of care, residents’ health, and staff retention, several states have begun offering Eden grants—funded with the fines levied against facilities in violation of regulations.

An Eden nursing home is divided into neighborhoods, with a staff that knows the residents personally—their background and interests as well as their medications. There’s all sorts of activity: children playing, birds chirping. The institution becomes a closely knit community teeming with life.

Creating an Eden home involves often arduous organizational and cultural change, because administrators, staff, and residents must think differently about care, priorities, and old habits. Residents have more input into how the facility operates, as do the staff members who work closest with them—a shift that often proves difficult for traditional-minded administrators.

“No one says, ‘This is a horrible idea,’” says Jude Thomas, who conducts Eden workshops with her husband. “But some people think that all they have to do is bring in a dog, and everything will be better. It won’t be. This is an entirely different philosophy. It’s a total change.”

AFTER GRADUATING FROM Harvard Medical School, Bill Thomas had his heart set on the emergency room. But in 1991, after completing his residency in family medicine at the University of Rochester, he tried something different: becoming the physician at Chase Memorial Nursing Home in New Berlin, New York. He enjoyed working with the elderly, getting to know them, hearing their stories. But he discovered that even the best nursing homes were seriously flawed. At Chase, the equipment was up-to-date, the staff was

dedicated, and the inspection record was spotless. Yet residents were miserable. “What appalled me was how lonely and bored they were. They were dying in front of my eyes,” says Thomas.

He concluded that nursing-home residents suffer from three plagues. They feel lonely because they’ve been uprooted from their family, friends, and even their pets. They feel helpless because they’ve lost control of their lives; for the most part, they eat, sleep, get dressed, and bathe according to the institution’s schedule. Finally, they feel bored because the few activities that are available to them, such as watching television, aren’t meaningful or fulfilling. “Care for the elderly is not simply about health care or medicine or technology,” Thomas says. “It’s about creating the right environment and caring relationships that sustain an older adult in his last years.”

While working at Chase, Thomas received a \$200,000 grant to improve life for the facility’s residents. Bringing animals into nursing homes was not a new idea, but in the past, they were usually brought in for visits. They didn’t live on the premises, enabling the animals to become companions, and the residents to grow attached to them. As one of the ten Eden principles says, “Loving

companionship is the antidote to loneliness.”

If the elders—Thomas finds the term more dignified—are able, they lend a hand in grooming or feeding the animals, watering plants, or reading with children, satisfying the fundamental human need to give care, as opposed to only receiving it.

Eden residents and staff are partners. Whenever possible, the two groups work together, voting on what type of pet to add or what type of decorations to put up. Staff members understand that what they call the workplace is an intimate and personal home to residents. This understanding shapes decisions without hierarchical or autocratic management. Like the residents, the certified nurse assistants, who make up the bulk of the staff, have more control over their schedules and help make decisions about how to divvy up work. “What you find is that as the managers do to the staff, the staff does to the elders,” says Thomas. “So if you treat the staff well, the elders will benefit.”

That’s the case in the Toombsboro Nursing Center, a sixty-two-bed facility in rural Georgia. Since adopting the Eden model, the staff have become more responsive and unified, and the care more compassionate and individualized, recalls Jane Lough, a former administrator at the center. Instead of giving orders,

Lough would tell the certified nurse assistants, “You know this resident. Tell me what you think she needs.” By working in teams—the Conquerors, Earth Angels, Outrageous Girlfriends, and Untouchables—employees began seeing beyond their roles as cook, laundry aide, nurse, and housekeeper. They realized that every staff member provides care in one way or another. As the stickers they wear declare, “I’m a world-maker.” “That’s one of Dr. Thomas’s terms,” says Lough. “In a nursing home, the staff are the residents’ world, and they have the opportunity to make it a special place.” Eden does not reverse the aging process, of course, but studies indicate that the residents’ overall health does improve. They have fewer infections and require less medication. Meanwhile, the staff absenteeism goes down and retention goes up—significant in an industry notorious for high turnover. “Relationships are the foundation of good health care,” Thomas says. “This is nothing new. But it’s not something that the industry has made a priority.”

In fact, some institutions actively discourage relationships between staff and residents. “When I started out, I was told, ‘You don’t share yourself with residents, because it hurts too much when they die,’” says Lough. “That’s definitely not the attitude here.”

SINCE FOUNDING THEIR organization, Bill and Jude Thomas have become change experts out of necessity. Merely tweaking facilities wasn’t effective. Creating an Eden involves a complete transformation. “Some homes think that Eden and the operation of the facility are two separate things,” he says. “But Eden is all over. It affects everything you do.”

The duration and success of the change process depends on what Bill Thomas calls the “warmth” of the organization. A warm culture is open to change, because employees have trust and generosity for one another, whereas a cold culture is characterized by pessimism and cynicism. After conducting a survey to determine an organization’s temperature, the Thomases or one of 5,000 Eden-trained associates worldwide begin “warming the soil.” Managers might hold a potluck dinner at someone’s house, where they can’t discuss work. Employees perform good deeds, or mitzvahs, for their colleagues and the residents without expecting anything in return. “You open people’s minds by opening their hearts,” Thomas says.

Before virtually every step—before adding pets, before switching to self-scheduling—the staff votes. If the outcome isn’t unanimous, the group continues the education process. “Consensus is the only way.

You have to get the entire staff to see the advantages for themselves and become excited about what you're going to do. We call it creating 'suction,'" says Thomas.

He also expects setbacks, or "frost," as a natural part of change. "I tell the leaders to expect that what they're changing will be smashed to bits, and when that happens, they have to be ready to pick up the pieces and move forward," he says. "People are going to get scared. They're going to make mistakes." Every year, about 5 percent of Eden homes drop the program. But Thomas doesn't give up hope for them. He prefers to think that they're just experiencing a long frost.

EDEN ALTERNATIVE'S HEADQUARTERS is located on a lush farm in the rolling hills of upstate New York, sixty miles southeast of Syracuse. On 220 acres that had been abandoned for fifty years, Bill and Jude Thomas brought Summer Hill Farm to life, building a house, barn, retreat center, and twelve-room lodge. It's here that you fully appreciate how much of a Renaissance man Thomas is. In the fields behind his house, he uses draft horses to pull the machinery that cuts and rakes the hay. Come early spring, he takes the family on a horse-drawn-carriage ride into the

snowy woods to tap maple sap for Summer Hill Syrup.

This is the Thomases' personal Eden, a home with dogs and children and individuals who need long-term medical care. Hannah and Haleigh Thomas, five and eight, suffer from a rare neurological disorder that prevents them from seeing, speaking, or walking. "When people ask if the Eden program can make a difference in someone who's in a nursing home, I tell them that it can, because I see how Hannah and Haleigh respond to loving care," says Jude. "I honestly believe they're alive because of Eden."

When Bill isn't at Summer Hill, he's giving about forty talks a year to nursing-home administrators, regulators, insurance companies, policy makers, and industry associations. Thomas is an optimist—"It can be different," his business card says—but also knows that he can't fix the country's nursing homes on his own. He relies on Eden associates to promote the program, share success stories, and conduct training sessions in their communities.

Part of changing an industry is about choosing wisely where to focus your energy. In long-term care, as in any field, the stalwarts vastly outnumber the progressives. In general, Thomas says, the progressives have ideas and enthusiasm but lack real authority or

management skills, and the stalwarts have authority and experience but resist changes in the status quo. He doesn't turn down invitations to address the latter, but he doesn't court them either. "The reason I'm not racing to Edenize 17,000 nursing homes across the country is because I know that I'll never convert the stalwarts," he says. "I'm focusing on the progressives, because they're interested in changing things."

Ultimately, Eden Alternative is only a repair for a broken industry. The replacement, says Thomas, is his greenhouse project: houses built for small groups of elders with a dedicated staff—real homes, instead of an institution that calls itself a home. The Utica Greenhouse Project expects to break ground on the first greenhouses within the next couple of years. After that, he says, the next logical stage is an Eden Village, where the greenhouses and the elders are part of a larger community.

But why stop there? he wonders. Why not apply these principles to other institutions, such as schools and prisons? Thomas jokes about starting a group called "Institutions Anonymous." Maybe he's only half joking. "Don't get me started," he says.

The Heart of the Eden Alternative

1. The three plagues of loneliness, helplessness, and boredom account for the bulk of suffering in a human community.
2. Life in a truly human community revolves around close and continuing contact with children, plants, and animals. These ancient relationships provide young and old alike with a pathway to a life worth living.
3. Loving companionship is the antidote to loneliness. In a human community, we must provide easy access to human and animal companionship.
4. To give care to another makes us stronger. To receive care gracefully is a pleasure and an art. A healthy human community promotes both of these virtues in its daily life, seeking always to balance one with the other.
5. Trust in each other allows us the pleasure of answering the needs of the moment. When we fill our lives with variety and spontaneity, we honor the world and our place in it.
6. Meaning is the food and water that nourishes the human spirit. It strengthens us. The counterfeits of meaning tempt us with hollow promises. In the end, they always leave us empty and alone.
7. Medical treatment should be the servant of genuine human caring, never its master.
8. In a human community, the wisdom of the elders grows in direct proportion to the honor and respect accorded to them.
9. Human growth must never be separated from human life.
10. Wise leadership is the lifeblood of any struggle against the three plagues. For it, there can be no substitute.

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To those who have died well loved
To those who have died in pain
To those who have died in peace
To those who have died with lives fulfilled
To those who have died with dreams unlived
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For we are one