Odyssey

CONSCIOUS LIVING MAGAZINE

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Launch . Vol 7 July 1977



Rose de la Hunt
1984-2001



Founder Jill Iggulden
1982



Jill Iggulden in the news



Founder Jill Iggulden



Chris and Silke Erasmus with the
Odyssey Team early -mid 2000's



Jill, Mossie and Chris and Silke



Jill Founder and
Debra Current Editor



Team Odyssey 2024/2025

Editor's Note

Consciousness is NOT *'New Age'*



As we celebrate 250 editions of Odyssey Magazine and commence our 49th revolution around the Sun I contemplated what the one primary factor was that contributed to the longevity of this 'Grand Old Gal' that is Odyssey. The most compelling factors that emerged were that consciousness is not 'New Age' neither is it fad nor fashion, it is a gentle generational reminder from the ancients, a knowingness within, a reconnection to the timeless and unboundedness of the divine essence of who we are. Ed.

> **"We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience.**
>
> **Pierre Teilhard de Chardin**

"The concept of consciousness and its exploration is not limited to the 'New Agers', as it has been a subject of study and contemplation for generations. The idea of a personal, introspective self is present in various philosophical and spiritual traditions, with varying interpretations and applications. The New Age movement, while emphasising personal transformation and spiritual growth, draws upon and reinterprets these older traditions, but it doesn't originate the concept of consciousness itself."

Ancient philosophers: From ancient Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle to eastern traditions like Buddhism and Taoism, there's a long history of exploring the nature of mind, self and awareness. These philosophies often delve into topics related to consciousness, though the terminology and specific interpretations may differ from contemporary views.

Religion: Many religious traditions, both eastern and western, incorporate ideas about consciousness, self and the soul, often exploring themes of transcendence, enlightenment and connection to a higher power. These traditions offer frameworks for understanding and relating to consciousness within their respective spiritual systems.

Science: Modern scientific research, particularly in fields like neuroscience and cognitive science, is increasingly investigating the biological and cognitive underpinnings of consciousness. This includes exploring the neural processes and mechanisms that give rise to conscious experience.

'New Agers': The New Age movement, which emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, drew upon various philosophical and spiritual traditions, including theosophy and neo-Platonism. While it emphasises individual transformation and the potential for human evolution, it also incorporates and reinterprets older concepts of consciousness and the self.

Understanding, not invention: The New Age movement did not invent the concept of consciousness, but rather offers a contemporary and often eclectic approach to understanding and working with it.

The idea of consciousness has a rich history and there are many expressions of the ongoing exploration and understanding of this profound and complex phenomenon.

All Love Debra

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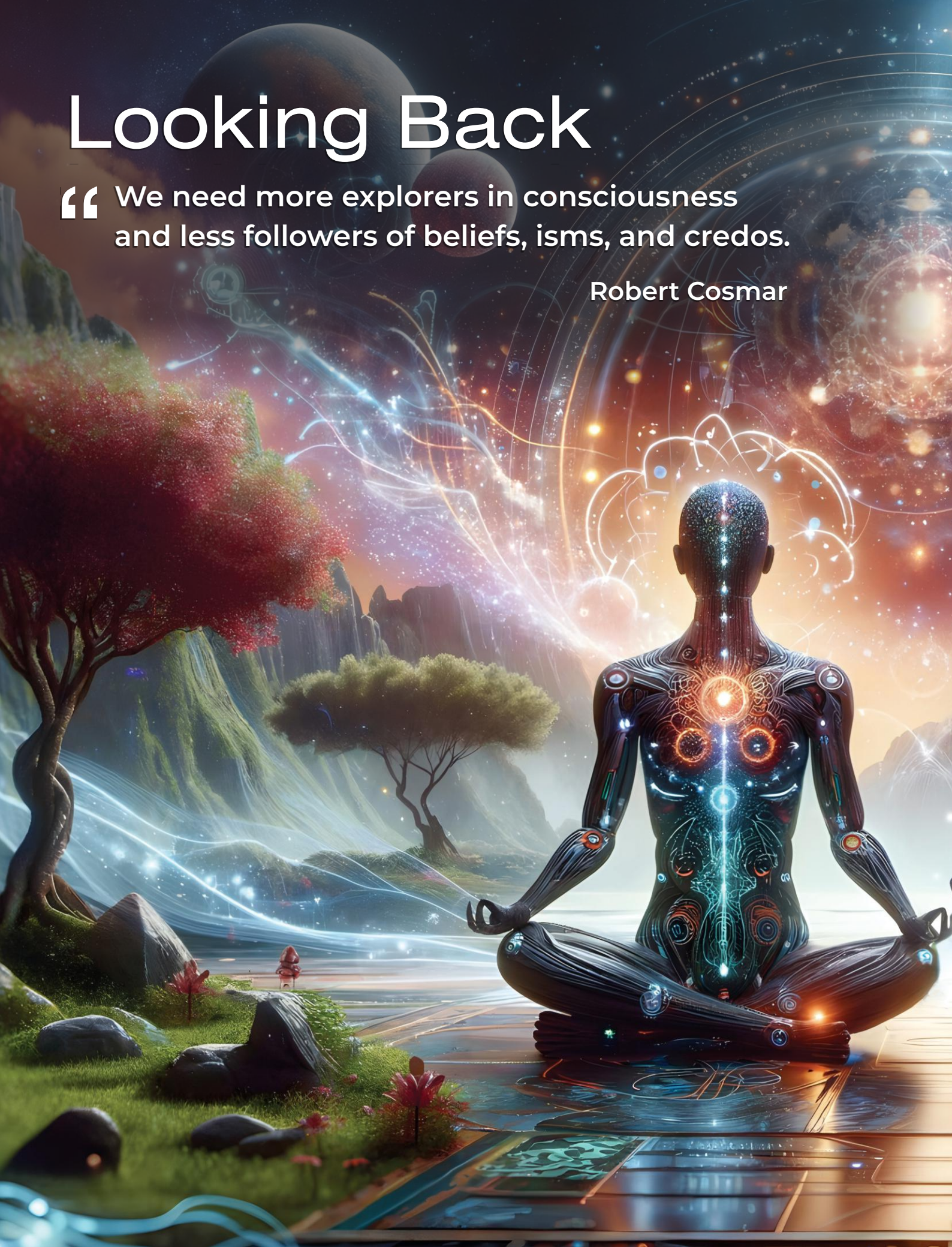
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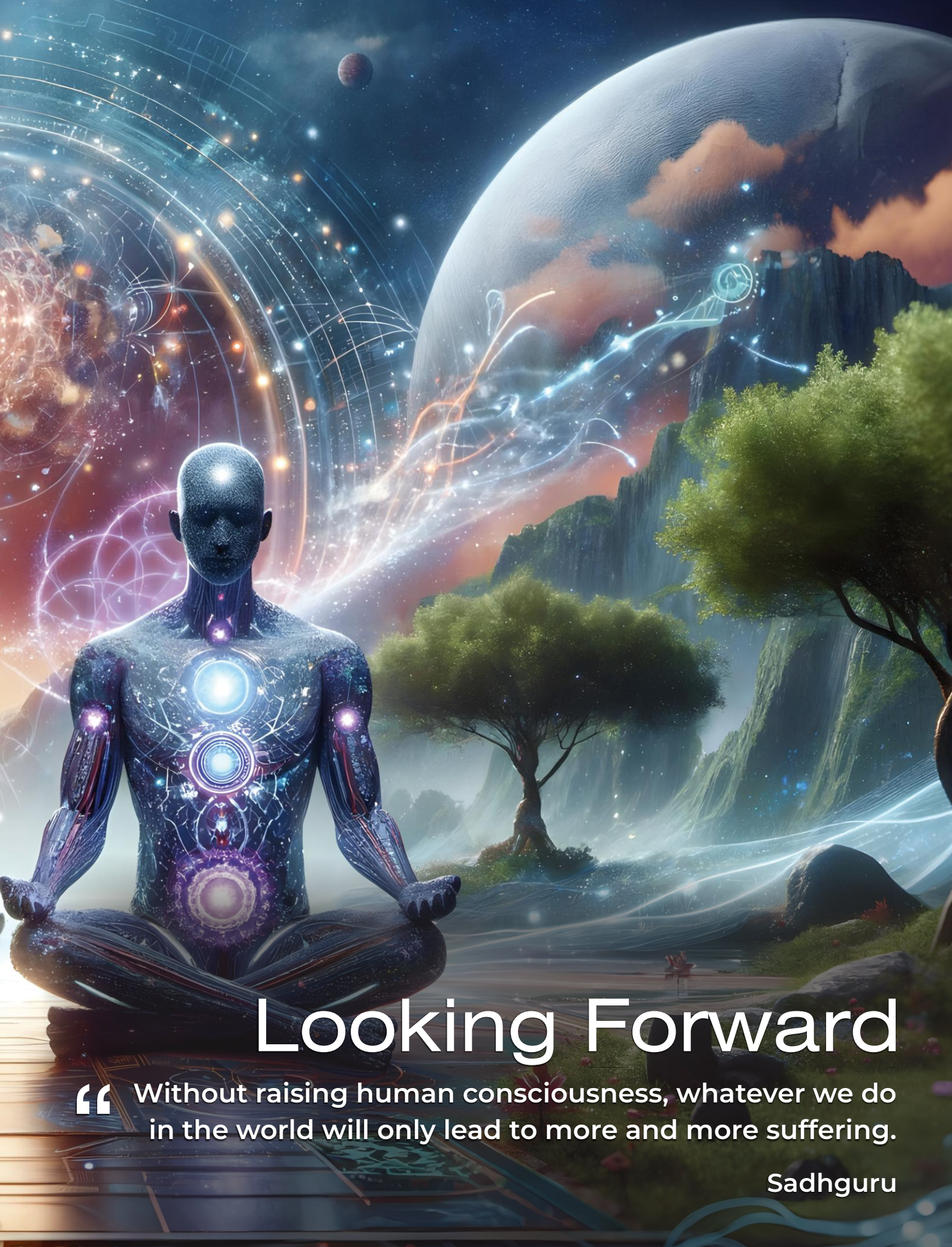
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Looking Back

> We need more explorers in consciousness and less followers of beliefs, isms, and credos.
>
> Robert Cosmar

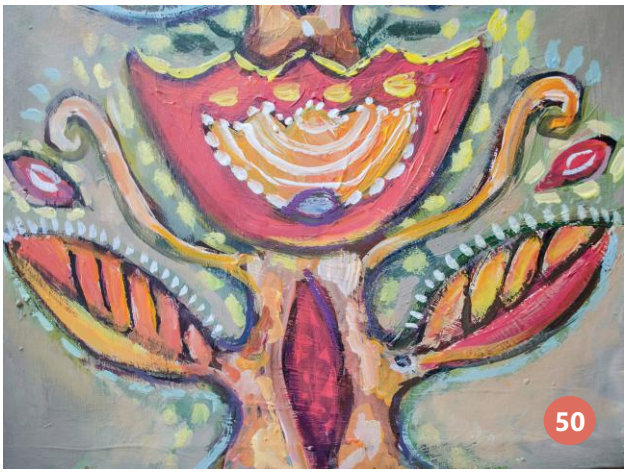


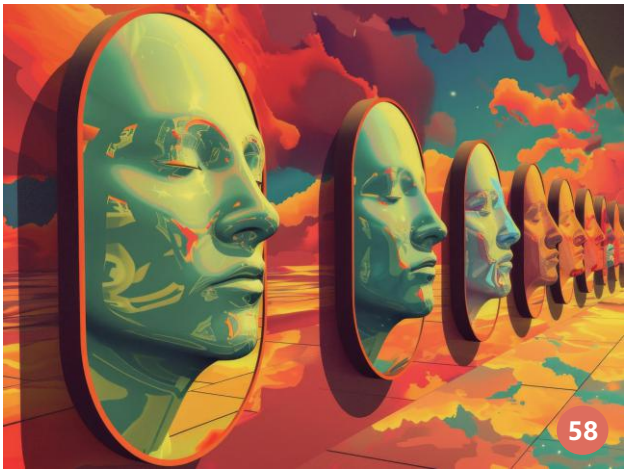


Looking Forward

> “Without raising human consciousness, whatever we do in the world will only lead to more and more suffering.
>
> Sadhguru

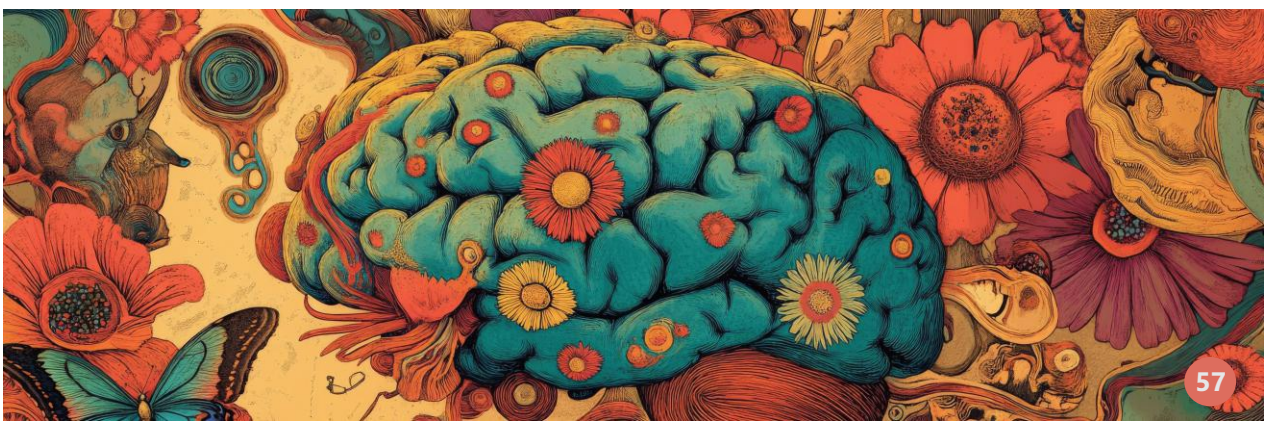
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Mosaic scene from Homer s Odyssey in the Bardo Museum in Tunis, Tunisia

Uncharted Waters

Our Epic Journey

Odyssey Magazine has come full circle as the 250th July 2025 is released and as the 49th revolution around the sun begins. Once a journal for like-minded souls it has matured into the foremost, long-standing holistic and conscious living print magazine in South Africa and quite possibly the world today.

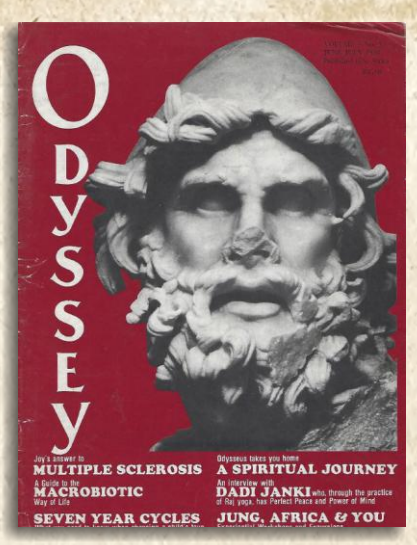


odyssey
cambridge.dictionary.org
noun
[usually singular]
UK /ˈɒd.ɪ.si/
a long, exciting journey:
Figurative a spiritual odyssey

I thought how wonderful it would be... a magazine with articles on religious philosophy, a new approach to education, alternative technology, parapsychology, holistic healing and the inter-relationship between thought and manifestation,
remembered Jill

Jill went on to say, *"It seems like yesterday that Gerald Moskovitz and I emerged from the premises of associated press carrying our first few copies of Odyssey Magazine, literally hot off the press. The bulk of the 5000 print copies ordered would be delivered to CNA's warehouse manager at Buitengacht Street, and the rest would be distributed by Mossie, on foot, to his established distribution network".*

Seven years later, a healthy and well-established publication was handed over to a new team - Rose de la Hunt and Jean Mitchell; Rose with a 10-year tenure as a counselling director at Life Line, decided to take the leap of faith..

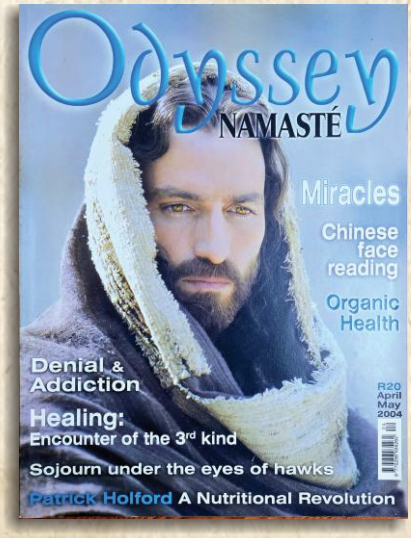


"If you can grasp the fact that matter is energy brought to a point of visibility and that thoughts can influence energy, then you have that which makes anything possible." Friends of Findhorn.

Rose's 17 years as editor of Odyssey coincided with a period of enormous growth and change in the world of spiritual ideas and experience. Rose described it as "truly a time of the 'rebirth' of the sacred" and during her tenure Odyssey was the only magazine of its kind in South Africa. In 2001 the magazine was taken over by Chris and Silke Erasmus following Rose's health having deteriorated.

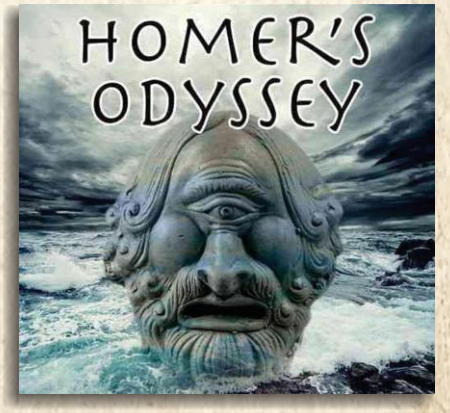
Before her passing to spirit, Rose wrote *"For me those 17 years were incredibly rich and fulfilling, though I worked extremely long hours, the deadlines were relentless and things were not always easy. I really loved my work. And I felt blessed by the opportunities it brought me to meet many great and beautiful souls, visiting luminaries and 'forerunners' of a new kind of spirituality."*

In 2004, Namaste' Magazine merged with Odyssey Magazine and they teamed up to become one. Namaste's aim was to empower the individual to take full responsibility for their own life – on every level – physical, emotional, mental and spiritual - a vision that is still infused in Odyssey magazine today.



Following the incorporation of Namaste into Odyssey Magazine and the opening of a Johannesburg office, Odyssey grew rapidly through 2005 to 2007. In 2007, rather than publish monthly, a collective decision was made to retain Odyssey as a bi-monthly publication. In late 2008, Simply Green was launched and Odyssey reached its all-time circulation high of over 18 000, with a print readership roughly 10 times that number.

Silke Erasmus shared her experiences with us stating that *"the global downturn of 2008-09 hit Odyssey magazine and its sibling as severely as any other print publication, but both ultimately rode out the storm, emerging stronger. With fewer competitors and Simply Green having won an eco-journalism award in 2010, Odyssey and its sibling were actively at the forefront of making the move to digital media consumption. In early 2011, Odyssey and its sibling launched fulltime into digital. Whilst difficult and challenging as well as requiring a whole range of new skills, the move proved to be almost immediately and dramatically successful in terms of producing highly readable and free digital publications. Issue 5 of December 2013 achieved a remarkable reach of over 366 000 reads and impressions within 30 days' of going live; and ultimately achieved in excess of 450 000"*.

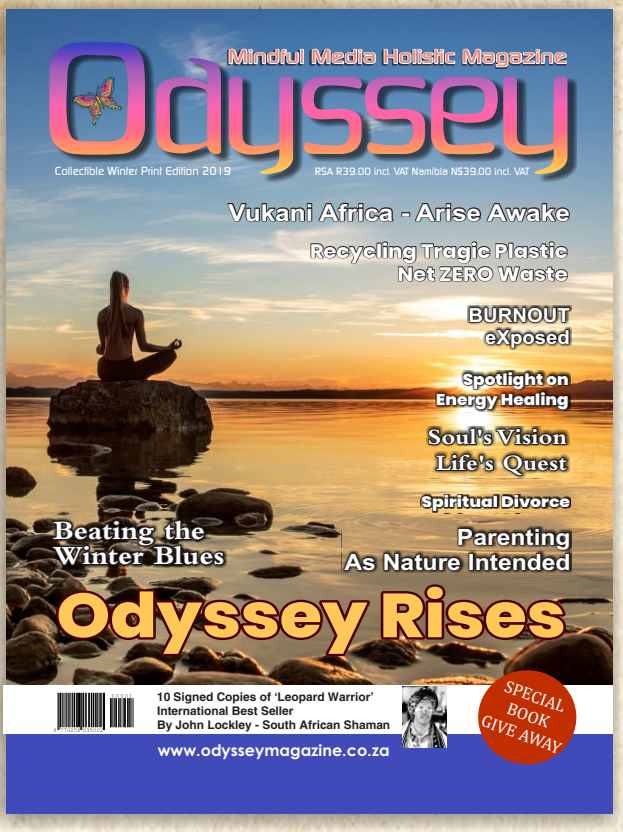


Debra Stevens-Robins is the fourth custodian of this well-read and much-loved magazine; that has not only survived, but thrived over four decades and enters its fifth decade in 2026. Her mission to celebrate conscious and holistic living; publishing content to nourish and inspire and to create a phenomenal advertising platform for advertisers across both its digital and print media platforms. Never losing sigh that the best things about Odyssey Magazine is YOU.

As this new chapter began, it became evident that what transpired pre and post the handing over the baton was divinely guided and surrounded by significant synchronicity.

Synchronicity, as defined by Carl Jung, refers to meaningful coincidences that defy simple cause-and-effect explanations. It's the perception of two or more events happening simultaneously, where the events are connected by a meaning that goes beyond mere chance.

NEXT PART I and PART II of this 'New Chapter.



All, in the seen and the unseen world, is a circle

The circle, a universal symbol, is infinite. No beginning and no end; a continuum completing revolution after revolution. It brings the energy of wholeness, original perfection and timelessness in this cyclic movement.

Odyssey bade farewell to Silke and Chris Erasmus under the rising Gemini Full Moon. Gratitude and love to this team who shepherded this beautiful magazine for over 18 years. We honour their dedication and commitment as we enter a new phase of Odyssey's evolution.

The Sabian symbol for the Full Moon is: Sailors Lowering an Old Flag and Raising a New One. Lowering the sail at sunset - 22.11.2018 - I let the sunset show me how beautiful a goodbye could be. I watched it with awe as it unfolded. As the last rays of the coloured sun slowly hid behind the horizon, then came the realisation that tomorrow - 23.11.2018 - held endless possibilities for me as the new custodian of this magazine. This 'Grand Old Gal' as I have come to call and love her.

I felt I was looking at the sky through ancient eyes of first man and beholding the first circles, the moon, the sun, the pulsating spots; changing colour in the night skies, a plethora of planets and stars and the wonder that is spoken in this circular language. Looking up at the night sky, the full moon on the 23rd, reminded me gently of this circle, a new revolution.

I stood under the night sky, we placed our imaginary stick to the earth and formed my own circle; representing the infinite nature of energy and the inclusivity of the universe.

To the northern Native American mind, the circle is the sun, the moon and her children man and woman. The

2018 A NEW BEGINNING A NEW CHAPTER

A Blog, All Hallows Eve, Odyssey and Synchronicity

Debra's Inaugural Editor's Note, Minimag 1/2019

perspective is vastly deep. And so, the circle also embodies a spiritual energy. Circles were protective emblems to the Celtic mind. Circles were often drawn as protective boundaries, not to be crossed by enemy or evil. Circles were also Celtic symbols of the cosmos – noting in symbol the intangible procession of time.

In Chinese macrocosmic symbolism, the circle expresses the shape of heaven, with earth signified by a square. The deeply significant yin yang symbol is circular and thus speaks to us of encompassing the whole of duality with intent for unified balance.

The circle includes us in the grand scheme, the greater plan; and when a symbol, is shown with a circle around it – that's our intuitive cue; the symbol beckons the viewer to be drawn in and included in the experience of whatever symbolic message the centre may hold.

Ours is the Odyssey magazine butterfly within the O of Odyssey. It represented a new revolution, transformation and a new beginning.

Excerpts from the first digital magazine January 2019 in celebration of Odyssey going back into print, with the winter edition 7 July 2019, after being out of print since December 2012, kept alive, on a free digital online platform for seven years.

"My custodianship of the 'Grand Old Gal' began on 23.11.2018. Here I am , seven years later crafting my 27th edition and the 250th Odyssey Edition"
Debra Robins, Current Editor Odyssey Magazine

"The Universe wasn't just whispering, it was prompting 'loud and clear' with a twinned personal broadcast between Silke and Debra"
Jill Iggulden-Stevens (Jankowitz), Founding Editor, Odyssey Magazine



2018 A NEW BEGINNING A NEW CHAPTER

Odyssey, Synchronicity and the Unexplained

"The Universe is whispering to us" . . .

The Enquiring Mind, set up in 2015, was in its second phase and we had introduced an element of research, *à la* parapsychology, for the layman! Still out on a limb in attempting to prove the power of belief through the cutting-edge science of quantum mechanics, I had decided to concentrate on synchronicity. Our increased awareness of meaningful coincidences became almost second nature. Unlike serendipity, whereby a discovery is made accidentally, synchronicity is linked directly to an intention and its practical outcome.

This issue of Odyssey, exemplifies (dare I say *entangled!?!*) synchronicity in full swing. Silke's and Debra's twinned *intentions*, a-causally linked across more than a thousand kilometres, brought about a committed change of ownership within three days.

We wish Odyssey's crew and its passengers a safe, meaningful and blessed voyage as the magazine embarks on its fourth journey. The uncharted waters ahead invite a growing understanding of scientific spirituality in a rapidly changing world with Debra at the helm.

I am deeply moved and honoured to have been entrusted with a regular column, with unconditional freedom to share my thoughts with Odyssey readers. However, my remit is to open with a bumper version which is to include my *personal journey* - the story that has not yet been told.

Facts and opinions referring to the first seven years have been well covered in newspaper articles, editorials and Chris Erasmus's June/July 2007 issue, celebrating Odyssey's 30th anniversary.

In order to avoid repetition, I re-read the 30th anniversary article. A particularly significant paragraph caught my attention. I had referred to the magazine's relatively painless birth. Yet, according to a concerned warning by the printer's accountant, this could not have happened under normal circumstances. "We had been told that it took at least two years to establish a market for a new magazine and that one needed a lot of funding. The Odyssey Foundation's only material assets were *a home-made light box and an electric typewriter.*"

So, what, besides my faith, I asked myself, were the '**ab**normal' circumstances which gave me the acquired confidence to go out on a limb!

Going through my diaries I found that I had become obsessed with wanting to know more about the realm of spirit. In April 1974 a very dear friend had drowned.

At the time, I was a successful freelance journalist, taking on short-term supply teaching to boost my income. While standing in for the head of the English Department at the Notre Dame Convent in Cape Town, I became friendly with a colleague who, upon hearing of my obsession, told me that she was involved in rescuing lost souls who had passed on. Her claim was *way out* of my personal belief system. Fortunately for me, she was also a member of an A.R.E group (Association for Research and Enlightenment) in Tokai, a suburb close to my home in St James. The group met once a week to study the readings of Edgar Cayce. I was interested and she invited me to join her for their next meeting.

The 'Cayce' group was run by Mrs. Hazel Tops. Her study was, for me, an Aladdin's cave with bookshelves of reading material that I could but dream of - the works of Carl Jung, Alice Bailey, Marilyn Fergusson and - most intriguing - Bob Toben and Fred Alan Wolfe, authors of *Space-Time and Beyond*.

In retrospect I can say with confidence that Odyssey was 'conceived' during those first few months and that Hazel was the midwife at its birth.

Hazel was a mine of information and was connected to several meaningful alternative groups including the Friends of Findhorn, the Soil Association and the Theosophical Society. I had had no contact with the Friends of Findhorn, but I owed my success as a Freelance Journalist to Fay Goldie, who happened to be a member of the Theosophical Society. In 1964, I had enrolled for a comprehensive journalism course at her New Era School of Writing in Durban. I remember well the evening when she walked into class wearing a bright red bow in her hair. Some of us couldn't suppress a giggle while others felt embarrassed by the class's disrespect. Fay Goldie never batted an eyelid. Facing the class, she said gently “My dears,” I do not recall her exact words, but the lesson was clear: Know Thyself. What others think about you is irrelevant. Mrs. Fay Goldie King was an excellent teacher and several of us went on to be successful editors, journalists and writers.

London1953: Aged 19, with a year's worth of credits towards a science degree, I arrived in April for an interview with the Women's Royal Air Force - lured by an advertisement recruiting matriculants for training as radar officers, which I had read in my mother's *Women's Weekly*. I was put through a series of practical cognitive and reaction tests. My responses met the required standards. I was told that I would need to join the ranks for two years because I was too young to be placed in charge of men in their 40s.

It was Coronation year. London was abuzz with visitors from all over the Commonwealth. The newspaper vendor's announcement “Everest conquered” still echoes in my in my ears. I had found a super job at Cheiron Press in Berkeley Square. Six months working in the art department, *spotting and stripping large negatives over a light box*, proved to be a major cost-effective experience in 1977.

On my return to South Africa in 1954, for some 'unknown reason', I enrolled for a three-month course in *touch-typing*. I then went on to study through Unisa, majoring in *English and Psychology*. The section on psychosomatic problems, which confounded the medical profession, introduced me to the existence of a-causal phenomena. This made me realise that thoughts literally have the power to affect our physical bodies.
Having 'researched' my own story, I can understand why in 1977 I had no qualms about launching a magazine. I was virtually into all the alternatives - from technology, philosophy, medicine, vegetarianism to Transcendental Meditation and my first love - the interface between science and spirituality.

I was soon to realise that all I needed for the initial stages of production was an IBM typesetter and a light box. I remember placing a photograph of a typesetter upright on the desk in front of me. It is the only time that I have ever actively engaged in a meditative visualisation to materialise an object 'of my desire'.
Lo and behold it worked! I was able to lease a brand-new typesetter from IBM which. unbeknown to me at the time, automatically become Odyssey's property. The rest is history, well covered by local newspapers, the 30th anniversary issue and Chris Erasmus's editorials.

The miracle of Odyssey's survival into the 21st century

The events leading up to Odyssey's unplanned change in ownership are detailed below. They illustrate the influence of subjective, so-called 'a-causal' phenomena (visualisations, emotions, thoughts) upon our physical reality.

On 27th June 2018, I received my regular copy of Dr Bruce Lipton's on-line newsletter'. It occurred to me that it might be of importance to Odyssey's then editor, Chris Erasmus... I had not been in touch with either him or his wife Silke since a meeting at their home in Tokai shortly before they opted to go Digimag.

On reflection, I asked myself, why I would have felt the need to bring to the editor's attention, a newsletter which I thought he may or may not have been aware of.

Four months later, on the evening of 30th October, I received an email from Silke, who had been scanning through unanswered correspondence. She told me later that she had been contemplating selling the magazine for some time and that, in reference to the content of my email, she had made a spontaneous decision to sell.

She thanked me for the information about the newsletter,, welcomed me back to Cape Town and informed me of her decision, explaining that she had decided it was time to move on and focus on writing some books. Debra's name sprang to mind. On 31st October I phoned Silke and gave her Debra's telephone number. Then left it at that.

On the 19th of November I received a call from Debra to invite me to lunch the following day. She had signed a contract to buy Odyssey and was due to meet Chris and Silke in Tokai on 21st for the handover. The effective date of new ownership would be the 23rd November.

I already knew why Silke had decided to sell. I was curious to know what had motivated Debra to buy? She told me that it was her passion to write. For about two weeks, she had been manifesting with an affirmation. Her son was about to set up an internet blog for her, when she received Silke's call.

The Universe wasn't just whispering, it was prompting 'loud and clear' with a twinned personal broadcast between Silke and Debra which lasted a mere three days! Following my call to Silke on 31st October, Silke had phoned Debra. Debra said she was interested.

The following day on the 1st November Debra sent an email to Silke confirming interest. By the 3rd of November an offer had been made and accepted. I would like to congratulate Silke and Chris on their dedication to the principles of the magazine over their 18-year tenure

The recipe for survival? Chris, Silke, Debra and I have, independently, ascribed the longevity of Odyssey to a spiritual dimension - each within his/her/our own belief system. I see the smooth transitions from 1984 to the present as being an esoteric continuum, with the 'persona' of the publication remaining true to itself - metaphorically - as in Polonius's advice to his son, Laertes.

This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
(Hamlet Act 1 Scene 5)

Excerpt from Jill's 'Wavelength Column' in the first digital magazine January 2019 preceding Odyssey Magazine going back into print, with the winter edition 7 July 2019,



Taking the 'odd' out of Odyssey

The fellow on the other end of the line, a chemical engineer, was surprisingly kind and rather effusive in his praise of Odyssey Magazine, as incarnated in the hands of my-beloved-of-this-life, Silke, and me.
Christopher Erasmus Odyssey Editor 2000 to 2018



We were well into our tenure at the helm of Odyssey, after Rose de la Hunt's long and remarkable stewardship of this title, which is globally almost an unique creature and far longer-lived than any equivalent we are aware of, anywhere. The Odyssey we took charge of was overtly 'spiritual' in tenor and content, as well, one may say, in style.

But times had changed and so had Odyssey to meet those changing consciousnesses-hungry for alternatives to a system, already clearly in decline, while the whole planet was equally clearly in distress, thereby to provide options, choices, alternative narratives (though never loathsome trash such as QAnon-style made-up 'alt facts') and, above all, a sense of hope and empowerment for individuals seeking to understand and optimise their individual experience of life.

We saw that a subtle but important shift of emphasis was called for: Not overt spirituality but rather a focus on holistic lifestyle, incorporating elements of the former as generalised into all of life.

Odyssey became, thereby, more accessible to those who did not resonate necessarily with the language of those overtly living 'spiritual lives', but who shared many of the same attitudes towards nature, animals, other humans and even themselves.

As an example, Yoga, a frequent subject of the title, moved, in this small but important reframing, from being a spiritual practice based largely in the Hindu system and using body and mind techniques, to a consciousness tool for integration of body and mind.

The switch to an explicit focus on consciousness as the key to self-development, mirrored by the switch from a focus on different religious and spiritual expressions and forms, was designed to incorporate essential points of crossover or commonality.

And it was timely, albeit implicit, in Odyssey's very existence from the outset.

We were far past hearing about 'diamond mind' Buddhist-type systems, not because what was being described was no longer relevant, but because being a Buddhist monk, for instance, sitting in splendid isolation to achieve an elevated consciousness state - while others, all herky-jerky '*jivas*', just like you and me, served the 'ascending one's' physical and worldly needs, don't you know – was simply an impossible indulgence for the vast majority of people.

We found that 'spirituality' was frequently the self-claimed domain of those keen to teach (for a fee) what they claimed to know or be able to do, but which claims all needed plenty of scrutiny.

In consequence, in the course our more than 17 years at the helm, we sent packing and refused advertising and editorial space to a range of scamsters and straight-up con people, as well as many self-deluded types, writing in great earnestness to either Silke, editor for Odyssey's last several years in our joint hands, or myself as executive editor and/or publisher.

Some of those clamouring loudest for space to express themselves, thereby to expand their baleful influence on others, have since gone off to become shouty proponents of the aforementioned QAnon dementedness, complete with the latest 'proof' (actually utter BS, if one has any science and common sense), in some cases, of the very flatness of the earth, posted inevitably in social media with 'BOOM!' necessarily tagged on, proving not their point at all, but rather the sheer idiocy which is unavoidable when we stop working in 'best known facts'.

Humanity, it is clearer by the day, has a minimal grasp on reality at best – hard physics and cosmology reckon we know something about maybe five per cent of everything in the physical universe.

Indeed, recent AI-driven quantum computer analysis shows that, at the level of the very small, the universe seems to be all about consciousness, rather than matter - the 'quantum wave function', in terms of which a photon of light or electron can be both wave and particle at the same time, their potential expression as measurable physical aspects of reality not only collapsing upon measurement into the hard reality we are familiar with, but that the wave function collapses in anticipation of the determination by a scientist to make the given measurement, by some 400 nansoceonds to be exact.

I suggest the reader re-reads that last point, since it is crucial to everything upon which Odyssey is based.

In short, it turns out with increasing probability hedging towards certainty, that the universe pre-exists as a range of potentials (undifferentiated energy) which collapses into the matter and forms, we know, all consequent to interactions with observers of those very interactions. Thus, the observer 'makes' the universe as he or she goes along.

But we are mostly trapped in a consciousness that just makes more of the same old useless 'stuff', and which we have collectively outgrown.

The universe, in other words, operates at the most profound level, as a feedback mechanism of exquisite delicacy, driving everything towards more complexity - and therefore beauty - not only in physical form of expression through evolution, but through intention as carried by consciousness and expressed as ever-evolving higher consciousness.

It is a 'wow' moment to be alive.

Odyssey's primary thesis has been borne out – all is one, everything connects with everything (through 'entanglement') and at all levels and, therefore, we each are unique expressions of a universal determination to evolve and express consciousness, at evermore complex levels, based on a pre-existing but undifferentiated 'field of potential expression'.

Another way to say this is that we are the universe itself, at play with itself and unambiguously evolving towards an emergent awareness which, for most alive, seems more fantasy and fairytale than achievable reality.

But it is achievable – if consciousness changes.

While Silke and I have moved on in life, dealing with the same issues of challenge and pain that are inescapable in this resolution of collective consciousness – and therefore, collectively-shared 'reality' - which have arisen in our own lives, we are both immensely proud of our efforts to make Odyssey as widely accessible as possible.

We took the title from some thousands of dedicated readers to a multiple of that number, then launched helter-skelter into the digital zone due to turbulence and the impending necessity of that move and thereby suddenly reached, in the December 2013 issue of the title, well over 330 000 sets of eyeballs, globally.

I would have loved to have spent a moment in relishing the call from the chemical engineer, as it was my semi-secret intent from the outset to fully ground Odyssey, under our control and make it a user reference guide for people seeking health of body, heart and mind and the integration of their being up to 'soul level', if folks could manage that.

With Silke's amazing design eye providing beauty and elegance to our offerings and my adamant adherence to basic principles of good journalism, we were more than happy with every single edition we produced and delighted by many.

It was a fulfilling but demanding adventure. It left no time, however, to enjoy ticking any 'achievement boxes', as existed in my mind – we only had another edition to produce and so we did.

To all Odyssey's readers, new and old, know you live in the times of great change long anticipated and predicted.

Getting along in such times is hard enough, but flourishing in one's being is another, sometimes seemingly impossible-to-achieve, task altogether.

But that is exactly what is being asked of each of us now.

Along with the turmoil come opportunities to free ourselves from limiting identifiers and relocate our sense of being in something much vaster and more enduring, something some folks call 'soul'.

Our souls are calling us to remember that these life journeys we are on begin and end, but as concious beings, some essential part of us persists.

Turns out the universe preserves information and we are that, embedded and embodied, but also deeply forgetful and neglectful of how we came to be as we are.

Time to remember collectively is upon us and it is required of each to apply themselves to a reassessment of their being – or remain stuck in a consciousness that is increasingly disharmonic with the underlying vibratory conditions of the collective human (and global) resonant fields.

Odyssey has not, therefore, outgrown its own purpose, but has survived long enough to be the genuinely-voiced herald of a new way of being human, of which condition we mainly have some few notable examples in history but as yet far too little common experience.

Time for all to become more fully human, more humane, more compassionate, more aware of others, of animals and the eco-systems of our planet on which we depend.

The Age of Aquarius is finally upon us.

Time, then, to become consciousness drivers, co-creators and better players in a much vaster scheme that does not centre around the machinations and moronic blatherings of idiots at large, nor vile self-indulgent material conspicuous consumption, nor any of the many other misdirections of focus of being which are possible to us as free will beings, learning what that means. In what is bound to be, for a time at least, a soupy unclear mix of 'what is to come' and 'what is dying', guidance will likely be of help.

And so it is, in its 48th year of being, with this 250th edition on the shelves, as you read this, Odyssey remains a shining light upon the path less trodden, but now demanded to be walked by all. Christopher Erasmus.

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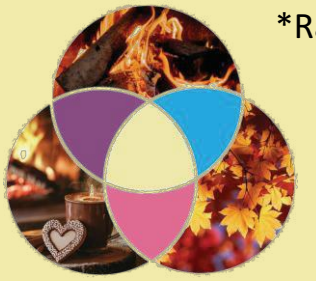
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On the 26th of February this year, I received a WhatsApp message from Debra Stevens-Robins, Odyssey's fourth publishing editor, which really warmed my heart.

The previous editorial partnership was Chris and Silke Erasmus and when Silke told me that she was going to write a book and wanted to find someone to take over the magazine, I immediately thought of Debra, who was running the Energencia Academy in KZN. Debra flew down to Cape Town and, within a few days, she was already working on her first digital edition. After three monthly issues she announced, in the third one, that the winter 2019 magazine would be printed and back on the shelves by 7th July 2019 on Odyssey's 42nd anniversary.

In her opening Editorial Note, which marked the first printed edition of the magazine in seven years, she wrote: *"As I scribe this heartfelt note I am filled with immense gratitude to our readers and the Odyssey team both past and present for the opportunity to follow my path and my passion as the new* ***custodian*** *of Odyssey Magazine"* ***Debra's choice of the word 'custodian' made me consider the possibility that Odyssey has a life of its own?***

Esoterically or metaphysically that could explain why I was enabled to launch the first edition on my father's birthday 7.7.1977, with no funding and equipped physically with a light box and a typewriter... This means that I was not the *founding editor* but rather the divinely selected *custodian of a magazine waiting to be propelled* into the Aquarian Age; intended, I think, to help us embrace the necessary lifestyle changes we would need to protect the environment, our fellow creatures and all humankind regardless language, culture or religious affiliations

Since 1964, after completing an excellent course in Freelance Journalism by Fay Goldie in Durban, I became a member of the National Union of Journalists (N.U.J.) and was, at the time of launching Odyssey, a reasonably successful freelance journalist, having had my work published in mainstream South African Newspapers and magazines, including: *Women's Argus, The Cape Times, Fair Lady, Drum, Sarie* and *Personality* magazines. I used my maiden name, (Iggulden), when submitting personal preferences or, as was the case when I wrote material related to psychology, counselling or educational material. Depending on the readership, I also used pseudonyms when submitting work related to, for example: short stories, commentaries, advice columns and the like.

My life changed dramatically in 1974 when a very dear friend drowned. I was devastated and wanted to know what happens to us when we die.

I was introduced to Hazel Top's Edgar Cayce Group in Tokai. Hazel was a member of The Association for Research and Enlightenment (A.R.E). Hazel's Cayce group were also in close connection with the South African group membership of the Findhorn Foundation, in Scotland. In her home in Tokai, Hazel had a library with books related to New Age Living, Alternative Technology, World Religions, Vegetarianism and Caring for the Environment.

In October 1976 I wrote an article entitled *New Age Living: Open Highway, which bypasses the rat-race* and submitted it first to *Women's Argus*, then, after rejection, seven days later, to *The Cape Times*. It was again rejected. The rejection by both of the newspapers that normally accepted my work, came as an unwelcome and inexplicable surprise.

I re-examined Fay Goldie's section on marketing, as well as my current copy of *The Writers and Artists Year Book*, I then went on a search mission into the bookshops to find a newspaper or magazine which covered the type of articles which I wanted to read. There was nothing. There were specialised magazines on the environment and on science and vegetarianism, but nowhere on the shelves could one find a magazine similar to *Resurgence*, which covered 'New Age' articles.

After my ongoing unsuccessful search, I clearly remember thoughtfully looking out of the window, while standing in my former whaling house cottage in St James, Cape Town thinking... "Why don't I start one". During the next A.R.E. Meeting I put the idea to the group and they were enthused.

I then recalled my year in London, towards the end of 1953, where I held a part-time job working in the production studio of Cheiron Press in Berkley Square, which printed magazines and I was one of the production team. My job was to 'spot and strip' the negatives and get them ready to go to the print section.

So confident was I from my training and experience and encouraged by fellow members in the Cayce group, I decided to 'set the ball rolling'... By the time Peter and Eileen Caddy arrived on their visit to Cape Town for a Findhorn Workshop, I was able to share my intentions with Peter Caddy during the lunch break, in this moment Odyssey emerged with a life of its own.

The rest is history and was covered in Chris Erasmus's 30th birthday edition- June/July 2007 and then again in Geoff Dalglish's article after interviewing me for Debra's winter 2020 edition.

During the last 48 years, Odyssey has grown beyond all expectation. The content now includes major aspects which, I must confess are beyond my own experience, chakras, advanced energy healing methods sending healing telepathically, announcements of retreats and access to a growing number of qualified practitioners.

My interests have been focussed on exploring the changes brought about by quantum physics, with frequencies and 'out of body' experiences, reports on NDE's and revelations during meditation.

Momentarily mind searches, looking for a pearl of wisdom recalled from the August September 1981 issue, to the reviews of Marilyn Ferguson's *The Aquarian Conspiracy*, where she shares *"Intuition, that 'Natural Knowledge' becomes a trusted partner in everyday life available to guide even minor decisions generating an evermore pervasive sense of flow. and rightness"*.

As Odyssey continues to move forward we may well learn how dimensions are becoming merged because in this 250th edition we will be presented with a really 'mind boggling' merger.

Odyssey's choice of a fearless open-minded custodian in Debra, with her wealth of natural wellness experience is truly holistic. In the words of Shakespeare's Hamlet: "There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."
As Odyssey continues its Voyage...

I wish our readers an inspiring Bok Voyage – Jill

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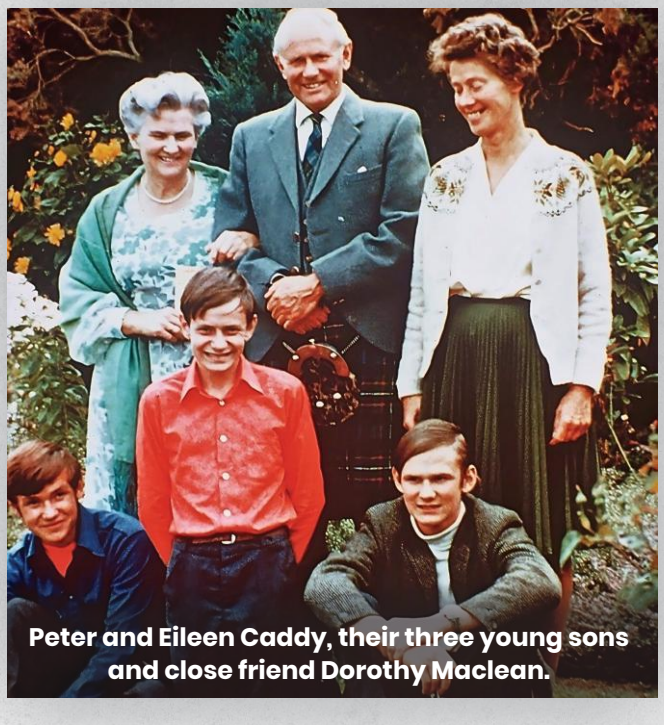
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The Legacy of Findhorn

Celebrating 50 years

with Geoff Dalglish - 200th Odyssey Edition 2012



Peter and Eileen Caddy, their three young sons and close friend Dorothy Maclean.

"If we could rewind life a half century, we'd be greeted by a very different world to the one we know today."

"Mine would be the mostly joyful place of a 13-year-old who shyly visited the gorgeous little blonde a few houses up the street, or kicked off his shoes after school and raced to the beach or bush in search of adventure. TV had yet to arrive in apartheid SA and I was largely oblivious that the superpowers were edging us perilously close to a potential nuclear holocaust as the Cold War escalated between the US and the Soviet Union." Geoff recalls

It was in 1962 that President John F Kennedy imposed a naval blockade on Cuba; Marilyn Monroe was found dead of a suspected overdose; East German border guards shot an attempted escapee and left him to die on the Berlin Wall; the US landed a rocket on the moon and Beatlemania gripped young people everywhere with the launch of the Fab Four's first single, *Love Me Do*.

Big movie hits included *West Side Story, Lawrence of Arabia* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* while musical influences were as diverse as the surf sounds of The Beach Boys and the protest voice of a young Bob Dylan.

I was too young to be part of the hippie generation although I identified with the 'Make love, not war' message and later proudly wore a peace ring.

Meanwhile, in a bleak wintry dunescape in northern Scotland, sacked hotel manager Peter Caddy and his wife Eileen parked their caravan at the Findhorn Bay Caravan Park, while trying to figure out what to do next and hoping to be on their way within days.

With them were their three young sons and close friend Dorothy Maclean.

That was on November 17, 1962 and never for a moment did the trio of adults guess that they were the nucleus of what would become a renowned spiritual community, holistic education centre and celebrated eco-village with the lowest recorded ecological footprint in the developed world.

The beginnings alongside a rubbish dump were inauspicious, to say the least and it wasn't until the early 1970s that a book entitled *The Magic of Findhorn* by visionary environmentalist Paul Hawken, along with a BBC documentary, put the fledgling community on the map, attracting seekers from around the planet.

Fast forward 50 years and we find an oasis of green living with solar panels, whirling wind turbines that harness electricity, eco-homes - some fashioned from discarded whisky barrels - and The Living Machine, an ingenious natural and chemical-free process that uses plants and bacteria to convert human sewage into clear water that looks good enough to drink.














As Neale Donald Walsch, author of the best-selling *Conversations with God* series, observed: "There is a unique energy here — it makes it easy for people to access a different level of knowing, understanding and experiencing of some of the higher truths of life and how it is."

Here people are encouraged always to question, knowing that it is at the edge of our comfort zone that life begins.

"Come to the edge," Walsch invites. "What Findhorn brings to the human spirit is the possibility of flying."

It has been described as a greenhouse for spirituality, a mystery school, a laboratory for change and even a steaming Atlantis rising from the ocean depths — but perhaps most popularly as a beacon of love and light in a troubled world.

I love that lighthouse analogy as lighthouses seem somehow synonymous with my higher purpose, whether I'm striding along the coast from one to another or trying to live a bigger life that beams love and light out into a world that often seems threatened by brooding storm clouds.

In more than 5 000 km of walking with a message recently, my feet have criss-crossed whole countries Pausing to rest and renew in the shadow of lighthouses with inspirational views over vast oceans. But nowhere do I experience the lighthouse analogy more powerfully than at the Findhorn Foundation community, whose legacy has been to serve as a beacon of illumination, touching lives around the world.

Each year it attracts thousands of visitors, many attending Experience Week as an introduction to another way of living and looking at the world. Some return again and again.

What's the attraction? For me it's the indefinable energy of the place: People smile and laugh a lot, as well as having the courage to confront all the difficult questions. Who are we? Where are we going? Is there a way out of the mess Spaceship Earth finds itself in as the end of 2012 looms large? Can we build a new social paradigm where money and economic growth are not the primary motivators?

Increasingly, I've felt the need to go deep within to find peace and to acquire the tools to connect with the Divine and Findhorn has been a pathway, teaching me how to live more simply and sustainably.

I'm also impressed with the power of the group processes. Almost all start with an 'attunement' where participants hold hands in a circle while one person says a few words, encouraging each person to be present in the moment and appreciate exactly where they are and what gifts the day or activity is bringing.

This is a chance to connect with spirit, the group and yourself. It's a time when you forget about mobile phones, computers and deadlines - and quietly go within.

If your starting point is an open-hearted space where you deliberately connect with others in a circle, I believe you are wiser, more loving and more intuitive in whatever you do. Findhorn has definitely made me more compassionate and empathetic. Instead of thinking: Just get on with it and do your job, I'm likely to try and understand the other person's unique challenges and perspectives.

Without doubt Findhorn is a force for positive change and new ways of living more lightly upon the Earth, the pioneering community having famously fostered a creative collaboration with the overlighting intelligence of the natural world.

The gentle compassion of an attunement is one of the things I miss most when I'm back in the 'real world' which feels like a much harsher and more insensitive place.

Check-ins are also a regular feature, each person in the circle saying how they are feeling and if anything is troubling them. Initially, I was impatient, feeling that I had more important things to do. Soon, though, I realised how important it is to connect with the inner-self and I love the honesty and transparency of the group, where it feels safe to talk from the heart about the most intimate feelings.

While the community has continually evolved, it remains founded on three fundamentals: Going deep within to access the stillness and divine guidance that Eileen Caddy relied on in her daily meditations; co-creating with nature in the way that Dorothy Maclean demonstrated; and following the example of Peter Caddy who regarded work as love in action.

So what is Findhorn really like? It has taught me to see the world through new eyes and to appreciate that there is love and beauty wherever we choose to look.

Often I've met really inspiring people here, be they community residents or visiting guest speakers or workshop presenters.

One of my sources of inspiration has been Satish Kumar, a Findhorn workshop host and the presenter of BBC2's *Earth Pilgrim*, who insists: "As a pilgrim I discover the mystery, the magic, the meaning and the magnificence of life in every step I take, in every sound I hear and in every sight I see."

It was after spending some days with him that I felt inspired to follow Mahatma Gandhi's entreaty to "be the change you wish to see in the world".

That has meant shedding most of my worldly possessions and basing myself at Findhorn in between walking.

I know that we can each make a difference and need to if our children and their children are to inherit a world as magnificent as the one we were born into.





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Findhorn
phoenix rising

Photography: Mark Richards of Aurora Imaging

By Geoff Dalglish, Odyssey's pilgrim-at-large

The celebrated Findhorn spiritual community in northeast Scotland is rising Phoenix-like in the devastating aftermath of Covid, Brexit, an arson attack, massive job losses and near financial collapse.

Battered by its recent painful past, it is preparing a determined response to offer fresh hope in a rapidly changing world that's navigating a great disconnect from the healing intelligence of the natural world. From Mother Earth, our first mother, herself.

Centred in what is now known as Park Ecovillage Findhorn, adjoining the iconic centuries-old former Findhorn fishing village and an historically and ecologically important dune field alongside the North Sea, it is physically small and outwardly seemingly insignificant. But its messages and pioneering example have touched thousands and perhaps millions of lives over the past 60-plus years.

Described variously as a mystery school, a laboratory for change, a hothouse for spirituality, or simply the 'Findhorn experiment', it was and is a quest to explore ways of living that are kinder to the Earth, to each other, and to all beings seen and unseen.

"It's so sad Findhorn has closed down," several people suggested to me in the wake of some misleading headlines. An announcement in 2023 implied that the Findhorn Foundation was closing. The reality is that the Foundation, which is not *The Community* but a part of it and is but one of more than 40 local organisations, was facing financial collapse and radically downsizing and reimagining itself.

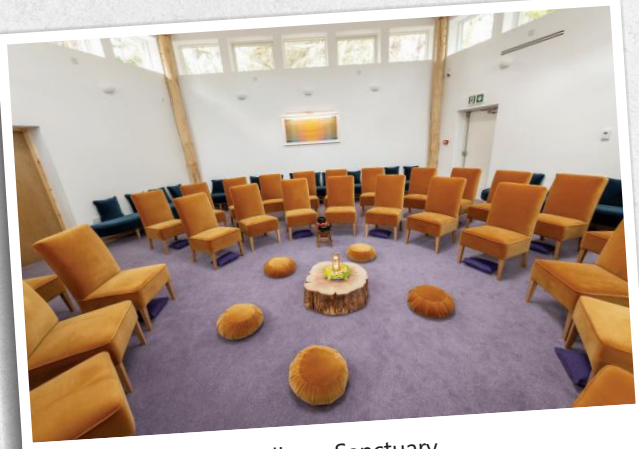
Before Covid, it had about 125 staff and volunteers like me. Suddenly there were no guests which were the charity's financial lifeblood. I was one of seven in the Guest Department and we quietly and sorrowfully disbanded ourselves.

One of the Foundation staff who lost both his job and home didn't take the changes so calmly. In the small hours of the night, he torched the Community Centre and Sanctuary, striking a blow at the social and spiritual heart of the community. Luckily there was no loss of life.

I was at the opposite end of the world and watched on my computer screen as firefighters battled the blaze. Believing that there's a perfection to all that happens in life, I pondered what perfection might emerge from this seemingly disastrous night. I imagined it might create true community by bringing everyone together, replacing the smallminded 'them and us' mentality that often separated the Foundation from those around it. Happily, that has partially happened.

On Easter Sunday 2025 in a powerful moment of renewal, the magnificent new Light of Findhorn Sanctuary opened with a beautiful meditation led by project manager and community elder Kathy Tyler. It was a joyful blessing and celebration, the sacred space literally rising from the ashes of the original sanctuary lost to the fire of 2021.

In a wonderful synchronicity Kathy Tyler also noticed that the image on co-founder Eileen Caddy's popular Daily Guidance calendar for Easter Sunday is of the original sanctuary.



Findhorn Sanctuary



Sanctuary Meditation



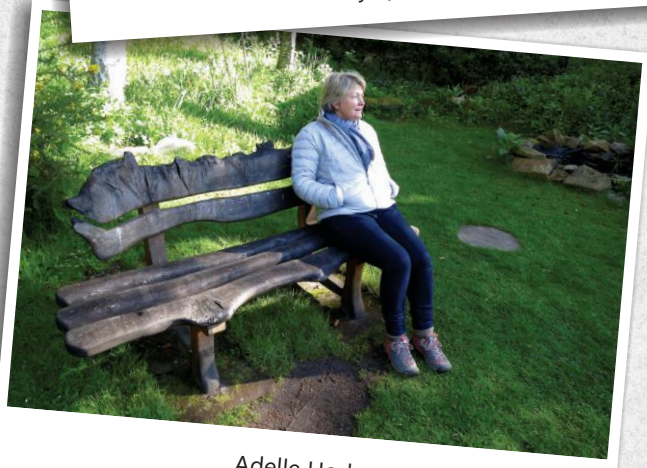
Jonathan Caddy and John Willoner



Kathy Tyler



Mark Richards



Adelle Horler



Tara Pinheiro Gibsone

Eileen had faithfully recorded the daily guidance she received from what she described as 'the small still voice within,' which she took to be the voice of God. The accompanying message is, "*Go into the silence and feel peace and serenity enfold you. In that state of perfect peace, ask and receive My blessing. Then go forward in absolute faith and do what has to be done*."

Now that guidance echoes again with the new sanctuary's birth.

Linking the two visually different spaces, Kathy read aloud Eileen's guidance from Easter Sunday of 1968, "*The Sanctuary is now, and always shall be, a tremendous powerhouse, where power will be generated out to the four corners of the earth. It will become known all over the world and many will be drawn to it and find great strength and help from the power and radiations which emanate from it. They will find peace and love, light and wisdom, as well as great joy and happiness, from simply being in there. Many problems will be solved as they sit in complete silence, find Me in the midst of them, and come to know Me and Love Me and do My will. My full blessings are upon My Sanctuary, My Ark of the Covenant. Let it be treated as a sacred and consecrated place, where all may find their true selves*."

Today this striking pentagonal building is a symbol of faith, hope and renewal, the outcome of a major fundraiser and thousands of hours of work by many who lovingly crafted the mostly locally sourced materials. Interestingly it is Jason Caddy, the grandson of community co-founders Peter and Eileen Caddy, whose company was responsible for the design and construction.

Jonathan Caddy, son of the co-founders, is a witness to all the chapters that have unfolded in the Findhorn story. "I've been in this privileged position of being here from the very first day on the 17th November 1962. The new sanctuary connects so much more with the Original Garden, and it looks right onto the caravan, and that's the caravan I was born in. For me it's the juxtaposition between the legacy and the transformative nature of the place."

While the old sanctuary served for 53 years, it was a double garage bought for £1 000 in 1968, reroofed a couple of times, and had various things done to it over the years. "Now we have something wonderful to replace it.

"I've been a witness to change, transformation and the amazing power of this place. And the world came to my doorstep. It's been crazy and amazing at the same time. It's a wonderful story, starting from really simple beginnings. Dorothy (Maclean), Mom and Dad, and Lena (Lamont), came here to simply follow that inner calling, whatever we call it, Spirit, the God within, in our daily lives. And put that first. How can we do that as individuals and what is the result of that? That's the simple experiment that happened here. Part of that inner listening was listening to the natural world. The garden was important to us as well. Out of this tiny seed so much has come.

"And it's not about creating Utopia here in the northeast of Scotland. How can we in our own way help with positive change in the world?"

Against the backdrop of climate change and the identity crisis Ecovillage Findhorn and other communities are facing, searching questions are being asked about relevance. Findhorn is still vital and viable, Jonathan says, although "We're being forced to change, which is great. We're being forced to transform. And transformation is different than change because we're going somewhere where we don't know what the end point is. Change can be incremental, but transformation is something new that you go into. It's been needed for many years.

"We are in a fluid state which is full of opportunities, and the main thing is to grab those while we can. We've been talking about change for probably the past decade and a half. Now is the opportunity to make that change."

Adelle Horler, a journalist, editor and content creator who birthed the website Visit Ecovillage Findhorn, says, "From my first visit to Findhorn 10 years ago I felt this was a place of accelerated personal change. I had a moment of certainty that once I stepped onto this path of spiritual growth there'd be no turning back. And that's been true.

"There's certainly an energy field here – who knows whether that's the accumulated effect of the community practising deep kindness here for over 60 years, or it's somehow deeper and more elemental, part of the land itself.

"I know that it's affecting. It's a real privilege to live in a place that's not only absolutely beautiful, it's also where spiritual practice and eco-consciousness are an accepted part of the fabric of daily life.

"While the 'practice' itself is diverse – from a variety of religions to mindfulness and meditation, to dance and singing, to conscious nature connection – there are commonalities that tie the community together.

Most gatherings, whether it's a work party in the garden, a business meeting or a community election, start with an attunement – a pause where we release what's gone before to connect with each other, align with spirit (whatever we may call it individually), and focus on the task ahead.

"There are also three practices that were developed by our founders, which still resonate with and guide most of us today: Inner listening, co-creation with the intelligence of nature, and work being an expression of love in action. There's also Common Ground, a kind of manifesto of agreements for living in community. Which get invoked some of the time.

"Another privilege, and for me a real joy as one of the facilitators here, is to watch the effect this place has on visitors coming to share a workshop. A group of disparate strangers arrives, often unsure of what to expect, and slowly over a few days they bond into a tight group, gradually feeling safe enough to share and release things holding them back. For many it's a profound turning point.

"So, it's a place of transformation, and it has undergone painful and traumatic transformation itself over the past five years.

"And now it's transforming again. The profound changes at the Findhorn Foundation have created a perception that the ecovillage has closed down. No, we're not closed – as the 400 or so residents will tell you, as well as the 40-odd enterprises, organisations and charities that continue to thrive.

"There's a subtle shift being felt by many. A quietly growing sense of aliveness, that we may be starting to emerge from an uncertain few years. A move to create a formal community education structure is in development, and we have a Sanctuary again! While challenges around our evolution continue, having a beautiful spiritual centrepoint is a thriving and joyful step. As Eileen Caddy would say, 'All is very, very well.'"

Community photographer Mark Richards observes, "There seems a positively palpable bubbling up of energy and new spirit. Many more young folk are engaging with ideas for events, ceremonies, concerts, dances, get togethers. The community feels like it has a real sense of coming together in the spring warmth and expanding into its potential. Watch this space!"

Tara Pinheiro Gibsone was born in one of the iconic whisky barrel homes in 1994, grew up in the community, and continues to be actively involved in projects rooted in the area. She currently works as a project coordinator on a Horizon Europe research grant, supporting community approaches to renewable energy integration. She has contributed to a range of initiatives focused on nature-based social inclusion, education, and environmental action. Meditation and the exploration of human consciousness remain central threads in her life, bringing depth to her outward engagement in the world.

"Findhorn has been going through another major transition, a shift in identity, structure, and being, she says. "While much has changed, the path it has forged remains very relevant to the world. It continues to be a longstanding example and experiment in doing things differently: living consciously and collaboratively with each other and with nature.

"Rather than a tightly defined community, it is increasingly stepping into its role as a village. Despite recent challenges it remains a place where individuals continue to live, grow, and explore new ways of being and creating together.

"From land stewardship and renewable energy systems to affordable housing, green building, and cooperative governance, Findhorn continues to offer tangible, practical models that speak to the global need for transition. While the community faces real challenges - an ageing population, fewer visiting guests, and a quieter programme calendar than in the past — a growing number of young families and children are bringing fresh energy to the area. And the broader Findhorn region, influenced in part by the community's values and presence, feels dynamic and alive.

"I was moved when I first stepped into the new Sanctuary. Coming together in silence has been a core part of the community from the beginning. Losing the original sanctuary in the fires was a real fracture, one that was compounded by the pandemic and the loss of the Community Centre. To sit together again in silence, to settle our minds and tend to the heart, feels both healing and vital."

The community website, www.visitecovillagefindhorn.uk, lists a full calendar of workshops, as well as how to visit – it's worth signing up to the mailing list to keep up with happenings.



Geoff Dalglish is a writer and spiritual and ecological activist dedicated to raising consciousness. He has walked more than 30 000km with climate change messages about treading more lightly and lovingly upon the Earth. He is an ambassador for the Findhorn spiritual community and ecovillage and is Odyssey's 'Pilgrim at Large'.
Visit: www.earthpilgrimafrica.com





Energy Healing for Workplace Stress

Corporate Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP)

Chronic workplace stress affects employees behaviourally, emotionally and mentally; studies would suggest that over two-thirds of the workforce report difficulty focusing due to stress.

Effects on employees include:

Sleep disturbances, headaches, gastro-intestinal upsets, hypertension and poor heart health, anxiety and irritability; often manifesting as lack of motivation and poor decision making. This is often compacted by resultant behavioural aspects, which may include: Substance abuse, tardiness and tenuous relationships with co-workers and stakeholders due to isolation or unwarranted outbursts

Impact of workplace stress on an organisation includes:

- High levels of absenteeism and poor timekeeping;
- Increased staff turnover;
- Low morale, poor performance and loss of productivity;
- increased ill-health and accidents in-company.

Recent studies support the incorporation of energy healing modalities such a Reiki into the Employee Assistance Programmes and corporate wellness initiatives to alleviate workplace stress and to offer remedy to organisations.

Reiki: How does It work?

Hands-on healing practice like Reiki 'rebalances the biofield, thus strengthening the body's ability to heal and increasing systemic resistance to stress,' as described by Miles and True (2003, p. 65).

Everything in the universe is made up of energy, including the human body; a disruption in that energy can cause illness or disease. Moore (2005) states that Reiki supports the individual's energy to become 'restored, free-flowing or balanced and one is more likely to feel relaxed and the body's own innate healing abilities are 'jump-started' and utilised for healing.' Recipients of Reiki report a heightened state of awareness and inner peace and calm (Miles and True, 2003).

References:
Miles, P., and True, G. (2003). Reiki-review of a biofield therapy history
Moore, A. (2005). Reiki energy medicine: Enhancing the healing process.



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Choje Akong Tulku Rinpoche, pictured with Rob Nairn
Photo Courtesy Lindi te Water

It is almost two years since this much-loved teacher of meditation, mindfulness and Tibetan Buddhism transitioned into the light and he shall always be remembered as a pioneer in presenting Buddhist philosophy and practice in a way that is accessible to 'every man'. We honour and remember Rob in this 250th edition of Odyssey Magazine and share this powerful tribute by Odyssey Thought Leader Kiki Theo. We follow this heartfelt tribute with an article by Rob in the 150th Edition of Odyssey Magazine Feb/Mar 2004 'Transcendence in your Lifetime', in which he announced a five-year programme whereby participants would have the necessary authorisations for the 'Four Foundations', which refers to a foundational practice known as Ngöndro in Tibetan Buddhism, a set of preparatory practices that create a solid base for all higher spiritual practices, including those related to Dzogchen, to be given by Akong Rinpoche when in South Africa in 2004. Ed

A Tribute to Rob Nairn

30 Aug 1939 – 30 Sept 2023

By Kiki Theo – Odyssey Summer 2023/24 #244

Last week I attended Rob Nairn's memorial at the Cape Town Kagyu Buddhist centre. Author of *Tranquil Mind; Diamond Mind; Living, Dreaming, Dying* and founder of Mindfulness Africa and Mindfulness Association UK, Rob, our beloved friend and meditation teacher passed away, leaving a huge legacy of work and gratitude behind.

People flew in or were connected via live stream from around the world for this celebration of his life. Charlie Morley, a lucid dreaming teacher who came from London was a key speaker. He said,

"I owe this man everything. He was my Dumbledore. He was my first Buddhist teacher, my first lucid dreaming teacher. He was the one who first suggested I should teach lucid dreaming. He taught me about conscious dying. He showed me the power of the hypnopompic state. And, he introduced me to my guru Lama Yeshe Rinpoche. I owe this man everything and I love him with my entire heart."

This deep love and appreciation of Rob is shared by the thousands whose lives he has touched. I met Rob in Nieu Bethesda where he lived and ran a *dharma* retreat centre, in the mid '80s. He taught me everything I know about mindfulness, meditation and mind training. It was Rob's insight training that enabled me to become present with my thoughts. In his words, being aware of what is happening while it's happening', helped transform crippling anxiety I had suffered since childhood. I too owe him an enormous debt. He led me to the *dharma* and my guru Choje Akong Tulku Rinpoche, pictured above with Rob and affectionately known as The African Lama.

In the account of Rob's life written by Trish Swift, Rob met Akong Rinpoche when he went to study a postgraduate certificate in criminology at Edinburgh university in 1968 following his law degree. Rob 'caught a bus and, failing to find a lift, had to walk five or six hours carrying a heavy suitcase' to Samye Ling – the first Tibetan Buddhist Centre in the West, established by Akong Rinpoche and Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche.

Rinpoche's connection with Rob and the invitation to come to Nieu Bethesda led to Kagyu Dharma centres being opened in Cape Town, Johannesburg, Randburg, Grahamstown, Harare, the Congo; thousands of people being trained in mindfulness and taking refuge in the Kagyu lineage; the establishment of numerous charitable institutions serving the needy under Rokpa Trust and much more. Akong Rinpoche said, "without Rob there would be no *dharma* in Africa."

In Charlie's words: "It's sometimes said that the guru is even more important than the Buddha because it's the guru who connects you with the Buddha. What about the person who connects you with the guru? Surely that person is also incredibly important and Rob was that person for so many thousands of us. He connected us to the guru. Rob was the gateway, the bridge. Rob was the path that led us to the *dharma*."

Rob was an incredibly brilliant teacher – always lucid and crystal clear. Kind, humorous, loving and enormous fun, he taught us while working on his own path too. He completed the four-year solitary traditional retreat without fuss and simply continued to serve.

Charlie elaborates: "It was the balance of Rob's humanity and flashes of awakened clarity that made him so good at what he did. Rob was an embodiment of the teachings in action, still happening… He was *more* inspiring than if he had been a full enlightened master because it was relatable. And through that inspiration, he led us to those enlightened masters, to that profound Vajrayana path, to kindness and joy and for that we owe him everything."

It is incredible to consider how much benefit one single person can create in a single lifetime. Rob Nairn may be gone, but the ripples of his memory and good work will last forever.

Transcendence in your Lifetime

By Rob Nairn – Odyssey Feb/March 2004 #150

A true guru is an enlightened teacher – one who has gone ahead and can guide others safely on the path of life. In Tibetan Buddhism a guru is essential, says Rob Nairn, who believes transcendence is possible within a lifetime.

I met my guru 35 years ago and didn't bliss out or see lights. He was stern and hardly spoke. I thought I had done something wrong. Later I learned that the guru reflects our minds back to us. We don't want this because we prefer not to face ourselves. We want to be told how special we are and made to feel good. A real guru won't do this because it doesn't help. They are born to help us, not inflate our egos.

I was tested for years to find out if I was serious about my spiritual aspirations. I also did some testing to find out if my guru was for real. Now I find most of the help and guidance arising inwardly – very quietly, so I must listen without egocentric grasping. A wise man said: "A student who has confidence in the guru will become enlightened as certainly as a person who jumps off a cliff will hit the bottom."
Maitripa, one of the great Mahasiddhas of the 10th century, defined *Mahamudra* as: "Non-dual awareness that transcends intellect; it is non-conceptual, lucid like all-pervading space. Through manifesting boundless compassion, it is devoid of self-nature. It is like the reflection of the moon on the lake's surface, lucid and indefinable, without centre or circumference, unstained, undefiled and free from fear and desire. Like a dream of a mute, it is inexpressible."

This is what is so fascinating about the path of meditation – it takes us beyond our boundaries. What are those boundaries? They are our thoughts, concepts and mental and emotional understandings. The life we know is limited by concepts, which are the raw material of egocentric and unenlightened existence or *Samsara*. *Mahamudra* is the heart of the Kagyu Lineage and the path followed by all the great masters who became enlightened.

The course of training involves the following:
First, is what I call the bachelor's degree in Kagyu education, which is the four ordinary and four special foundations. These meditations involve visualisations, chanting, mantras, prostrations, reflecting and offerings. A working person should be able to complete this in two years.
Second, simultaneously one begins a series of over 50 progressive meditative exercises, which train one to stabilise the mind and to meditate on emptiness, resting the mind in its own nature. A lot of this training will be familiar to those who have practised *shamatha* or tranquility meditation. This aspect of the training can cover three to seven years, depending on the intensity of the programme.

A third element is the connection with the guru. This is actually the foundation of everything else.
The course I intend offering will run over five years and will require commitment from participants to do a certain amount of daily practice. Refuge will also be a prerequisite since the meditations bring students into the mainstream of the Kagyu transmission. Participants will need to have the various levels of authorisation for doing the four foundations, which will be given by Akong Rinpoche, when he visits SA this year.

The life of Dr Akong Tulku Rinpoche

By Ken Holmes

Akong was born in 1939, near Riwoche in Kham, Eastern Tibet. He was discovered at a very young age by the search party seeking the reincarnation of the previous (1st) Akong, Abbot of Dolma Lhakang monastery near Chakdado, near Kham.

Around the age of four, the child was taken to Dolma Lhakang to receive the spiritual and formal education necessary for him to be able to resume his work as Abbot later on. Dolma Lhakang was a monastery with some 100 monks and many associated small retreats and nunneries.
As a teenager, he travelled to communities performing religious ceremonies and treating the sick after training in Tibetan medicine.

The 1959 takeover of Tibet by China caused him to flee to India, in a nine-month journey with a 300-strong party, of which just 13 survivors made it to safety.

In 1963 he was able to sail to England to learn English at Oxford where he supported himself by being a hospital orderly, sharing an apartment with Tulku Chime of the Benchen Monastery.

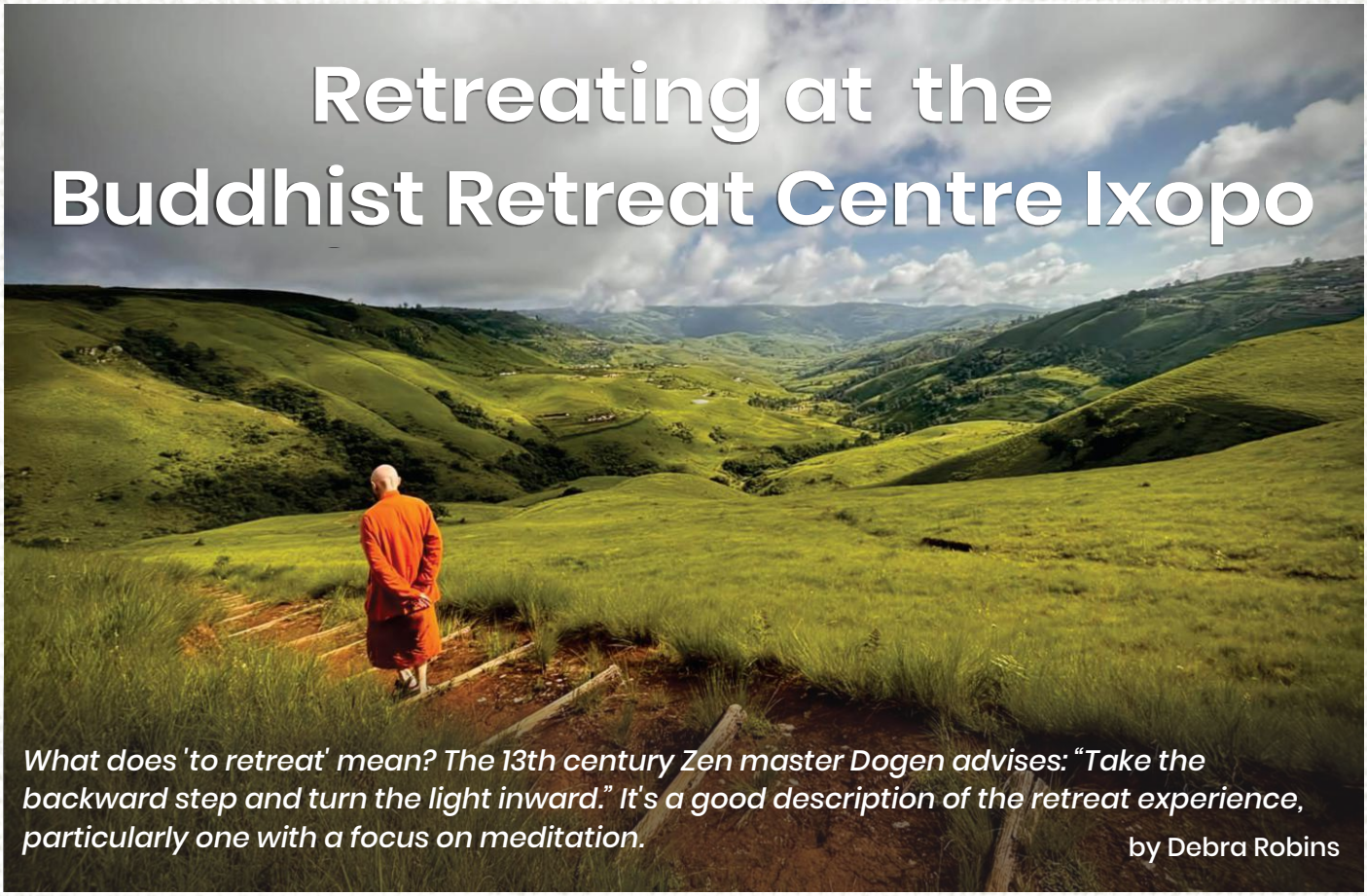
The next 25 years (1963–1988) were spent introducing the West to Tibetan culture and religion. In response to a growing demand for specific teachings from the Kagyu traditions, he invited its greatest living scholars and meditation masters to Scotland.

Dr Akong Tulku's main activity in the 1990s concerned the expansion of his humanitarian activities, principally in Tibet and Nepal, but also in Europe, where he started several soup kitchens to feed the homeless in major cities.

With tremendous vigour and diligence, he has brought well over 100 projects into existence, each project being a school, clinic, medical college, self-help programme or scheme to save the Tibetan environment. These are mainly located in isolated rural areas of the eastern part of the Tibetan plateau.

In 1994, Akong Rinpoche was one of the people to discover the reincarnation of the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa. He took him to the Karmapa seat at Tolung Tsurpu monastery and later arranged the visit of the two Regents – the 12th Tai Situpa and the 9th Goshir Gyatsabpa – who gave him the naming ceremony and later enthroned him formally as the 17th Gyalwa Karmapa, Urgyen Drodul Tinley Dorje.
Dr Akong's brother, the Ven Lama Yeshe Losal, now runs Kagyu Samye due to the increased burden of Rinpoche's work in Tibet.

Retreating at the Buddhist Retreat Centre Ixopo



What does 'to retreat' mean? The 13th century Zen master Dogen advises: "Take the backward step and turn the light inward." It's a good description of the retreat experience, particularly one with a focus on meditation.

by Debra Robins

CNN featured the BRC as one of the 10 finest meditation centres in the world.

Meditation benefits every aspect of our being - body, mind and soul. We spend most of our lives looking for happiness, peace and fulfilment outside ourselves. During meditation we begin to explore and expand awareness, the essence of who we really are, restoring the memory of wholeness in our lives. It is a process to rediscover the quietness that is already there, that has always been there – this silence is the thought between thoughts, the silence of pure awareness.

My first retreat was undertaken in silence at the Buddhist Retreat Centre in Ixopo, KZN. That was 1986. I was the breadwinner, with an almost three-year-old toddler and a 15-month old baby and had found myself in a fast-paced job and a JSE listing, way above my business savvy and life experience.

The escape from the cacophony of my life and external distractions and embracing solitude and silence for the first time in my life... I thought I would lose my mind! As the fears and the rollercoaster of emotion started to dissipate... I began to connect with my thoughts and emotions on a deeper level, gently gaining equilibrium. This coupled with a 'Work-Life Balance' retreat a few months later was the beginning of an entire new way of being.

Twenty years later I experienced 'Silent Awakenings' in Monterey California, with Deepak Chopra and David Simon. This retreat moved me from the pursuit of 'mindfulness' to deep mindful experience that felt more like a hyperawareness of everything within and around me as I witnessed the 'going within' occur in a fraction of a second.

A silent retreat is an intense, life-changing experience. From a personal perspective I have received lasting transformation in my life, the most impactful, not being as caught up in my thoughts and feelings as I move throughout my day. Calm has become my 'super power'.

The BRC has been my go-to space over almost 40 years...

Over the years I have hosted retreats at the BRC, one that springs to mind is 'Touch your Soul.' I have attended the most powerful retreats with some of the most incredible teachers, not always meditation.

I have embraced the silence, the beautiful energy, the gardens, the birds and all of the gifts from Gaia at times when I needed them the most. It has been a space to complete books and other works for publishing. An inspiration when faced with difficult decisions and my space of choice to feed my soul. One of the most memorable retreats I attended was a birding retreat, to experience the Blue Swallows of the BRC with Aldo Berruti.

Aldo began birding in his youth; this evolved into a career as a research ornithologist, attaining a MSc and PhD. After 2O years, including work on albatrosses at Marion Island, water birds at Lake St Lucia and seabirds of the Western Cape, Aldo changed to conservation, becoming the first Director of BirdLife South Africa from 1996 until 2004. He shares his experience of the BRC.

"The Buddhist Retreat Centre at Ixopo is a special place. Of course, most people associate the BRC as a font of Buddhist teachings and practice. For myself, the BRC played a watershed role in my life some 35 years ago at a time of personal introspection. My involvement there included running a birding retreat, which led to a chance reconnection with a wonderful woman from university days, leading to marriage and a lifelong partnership.

Birds have been a pillar of my existence from innocent pre-teen days, becoming both a passion and remunerative work, with jobs centred on birds as a researcher, conservationist and birder. After nearly 60 years of birds and birding, the BRC represents to me a Kohinoor birding gem, being host to one of South Africa's rarest and most iconic birds - the Blue Swallows."



Louis and his beloved cat, Hemingway

A Tribute to Louis van Loon 1935 - 2024

Founder of The Buddhist Retreat Centre, Ixopo KZN, South Africa

"From you I learnt words beneath the Bodhi *Tree. A – Z resonant in simplicity as you spun the* Dharma *Wheel* anatman bardo mudita zazen *whirled off your tongue. Your rondavel heart, lined with thatched volumes, still speaks to us in a 'last words' book. I read of a dying mystic, when brought his favourite layered 'last wish' cake. Novices leaned in to listen to wise whispered words that recall our Cake the Buddha Ate – my, but this cake is delicious. Your intention, presence, poise, nowhere, everywhere, rakes the zen garden, barefoots the labyrinth, circles the* Stupa *and the dam."*
Excerpt: Man in a Mist Swirl by Dorian Haarhoff

"Louis was a great character and to spend time with him was to be infused with some of his spirit. It became obvious that he was an adventurer, a great inquirer and a pioneer, someone who would follow inspired hunches with persistence and effort.

Sure it made him stubborn at times, but it was also a mark of that spirit that moves in all of us. For most of us it just lights up from time to time, but in Louis it seemed to be a steady flame. I suppose at some time or another most of us kind of get knocked off our feet by near-death experiences or by the death of a beloved other or breakdown of some kind. And some get moved by this towards a greater sense of purpose, but not that many had the resolution to follow it through for decades. So from Louis' severe illness to having a vision of a rain-swept hill, to actually purchasing 300 acres of derelict farmland in KwaZulu-Natal and subsequently putting in years of work and financial and emotional effort and commitment to convert it into the gem we see today. It takes faith, steadied by resolve backed up by sheer energy and made agile by that inquiring dancing flame. Most of us from time to time have been moved by the wish to help and provide for the wealth of others, but not so many are ready or capable of taking on the responsibility and risk of establishing a centre, especially one that created itself as Buddhist in a country of which the religious expression at that time was that of the Dutch Reformed Church. That's the way it is with people of spirit. Challenge brightens and feeds them. So today - and every day - let's inhale some of that spirit. Louis was also an elder, by which I don't mean an old person, I mean someone who's prepared to take on the responsibility of being a custodian of a way, of a tradition, of a lineage.

So as an elder, he naturally attuned to the ancient ways of truth that inspired him as he travelled throughout Buddhist Asia. He also sensed the first thing to do when establishing a place in a new country was to consecrate it.

It's kind of like putting the flag of the tradition down. Hence the *stupa* was the first thing - the first creation - and for that he invited Lama Govinda, here from India, to select the site that would link it to the ancient Buddhist tradition.

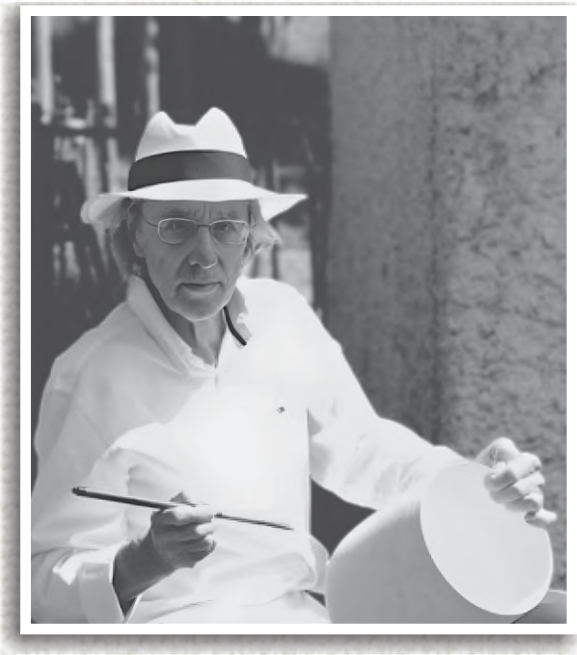
When you look at it, the *stupa* is, could be Sri Lankan, could be Indian, it could be Thai, possibly Chinese, maybe Tibetan. It's all of those, but it's also South African. You look around the Buddhist Retreat Centre, that's the same collage of impressions that you get. You see Japanese Zen garden. You see Chinese scroll paintings, you see Thai Buddha images, you see Indian artefacts - and it's all wrapped up in an architecture that's strongly based upon indigenous Zulu rondavels and thatch roofs, but with twists that give it more light coming in, the long windows that descend to the ground.

So it's all kind of blended together. And that's the way an elder works, inhabiting the place in the way of things and the great way of things. By keeping the tradition expressively alive, having their own personal angle, placing it in a modern contemporary context.

So it is invigorated by local current initiative and that's the mark of the spirit. As an elder, Louis also knew not to claim it as a personal possession, to let the inspiration move through him and then, when it was time to pass it on, not to hang on, to pass it on - which he did very cleanly and directly and with little fuss.

So that's what we have. Can we continue in that sense of clarity, effectiveness, relationship to what's gone before, what's authentic and what works and fits that contemporary situation? That's the ongoing responsibility that we carry."

Ajahn Sucitto, a Buddhist monk in the Thai Forest Tradition of Ajahn Chah, a highly respected teacher who runs retreats across the globe.



"Louis, we honour your light and life and we are grateful to have shared this space in time, in touch and 'in love' with you"







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CNN

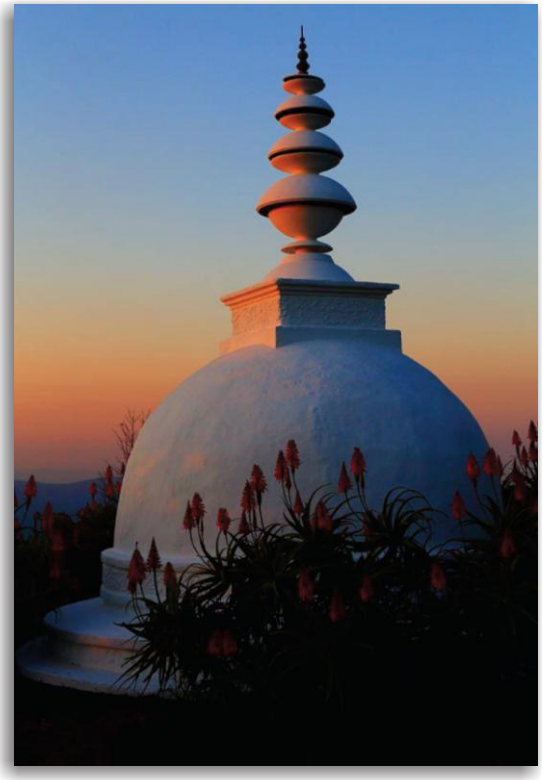
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What does it mean to retreat?

By Louis van Loon - *Odyssey Summer 2019*



> *You may wonder, should this not be looking back? On the contrary, Louis' teachings are as timeless as is the art of retreating, spanning past, present and future, and suggest that meditation originates from within a space where time is not a linear progression, but rather a simultaneous continuum.*
> Ed

Meditation. Is it as inane as watching the grass grow?

When I was busy building the Buddhist Retreat Centre, a friend of mine was puzzled and asked me why I would want to do something like that. To spend so much time, energy and money on building a lovely country resort and invite people to sit quietly on black cushions, doing nothing - just watching their breath. "This, surely, was as loony as watching the grass grow," he said.

He was a dynamic businessman and very successful in running a string of clothing factories and shops. I had created one of the primary architectural and structural engineering consulting practices in South Africa, with branch offices in other parts of Africa. To him, the idea of withdrawing from such achievements and reflecting on the deeper meaning and purpose of life was a waste of time. He wanted to advance and expand - not retreat or withdraw.

A similar dilemma happened 2 500 years ago when Siddhartha Gautama, the future Buddha, decided to become a mendicant Yogi rather than wallow in the luxurious life that awaited him as the son of a wealthy landowner in northern India.

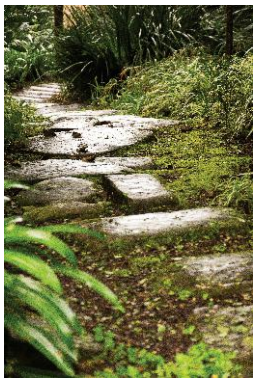
Siddhartha's father had been told by a Yogi that his son would become one of the greatest gurus of all time. Even so, this was bad news for dad. He had visions of his son succeeding him and expanding his empire - not abandoning it for some nebulous *nirvana*.

We all come across similar choices at some stage in our lives, even if they are not quite as dramatic as that. It often happens when something painful pounces on you. This may lead you to some reflection: Is life just a relentless succession of random and painful experiences alternating with pleasant ones, or is there a larger purpose lurking behind them that you need to uncover to make it all meaningful?

This is what happened to me when I was still very young. I experienced the very painful years of the Second World War in Holland when my family, along with most Dutch citizens, was reduced to poverty. Although I did not know it at the time, this is where I believe my journey into Buddhist philosophy started: In suffering (*Dukkha*) - the first of the Buddha's Four Noble Truths. The other Truths spell out the psychological processes and mental disciplines that can be learnt to enable us to deal with suffering wisely and effectively.

That is why the Buddha's philosophy has endured so vigorously for 25 centuries. It tackles the most fundamental human experiences - the ones that underlie our everyday lives: The way we deal emotionally and mentally with needs and wants; our likes and dislikes and the way we delude ourselves and misunderstand situations - deliberately or otherwise - and helps us to navigate our way through circumstances, particularly the unpleasant or challenging ones and, in doing so, to get to know ourselves - and the world - at greater depth.

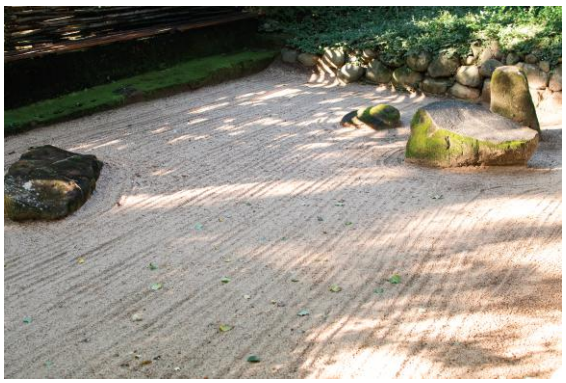
So - what does it mean to retreat? To me and to Chrisi, my wife, who has been at my side for almost 33 years? And to the thousands of people who have experienced, often for the first time, what it is like to sit on a black cushion for half-an-hour or more, letting go of the thoughts that randomly and relentlessly elbow their way into your awareness - only to return almost immediately? The Retreat Centre offers a range of retreats to equip us with powerful mental and psychological tools to bring clarity in these issues. They range from those investigating Buddhist thought and philosophy, through to meditation; as well as those featuring bird watching, cooking, pottery and photography. At first glance the latter might appear to be unrelated to Buddhism, but even these retreats will contain some element of mindful awareness, refracting the chosen subject matter through a Buddhist lens.

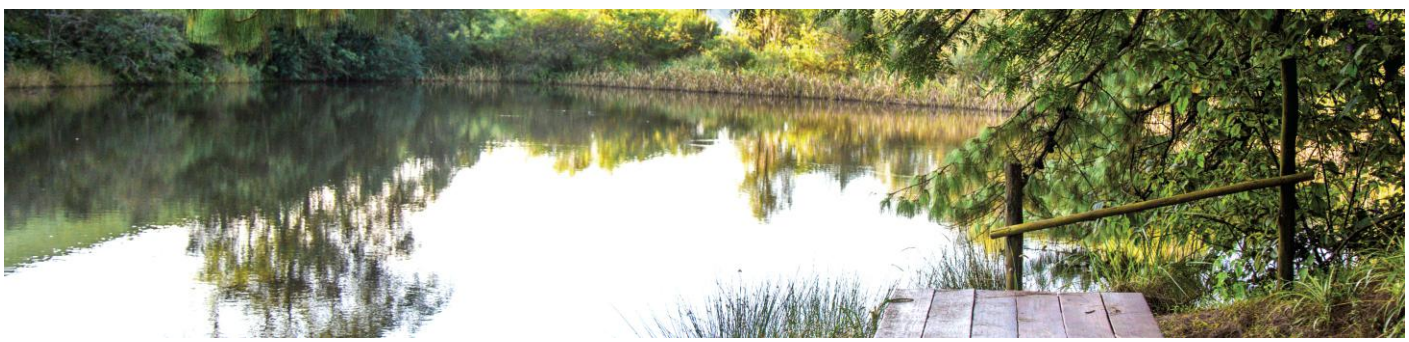











People from all walks of life come to these retreats with a variety of motivations and expectations. Perhaps they want to deepen their meditation practice, to take some time out from a hectic working life; to reflect on a tense domestic situation; to consider the trajectory of their lives; to decide about a way forward. Maybe they just want to learn how to take a good photograph or prepare a great vegetarian meal. Each person will have a different reason for going on a retreat. Different paths will have led them to this place.

The 13th century Zen master Dogen advises: "Take the backward step and turn the light inward." It's a good description of the retreat experience, particularly one with a focus on meditation. This is not a selfish practice; as Dogen says elsewhere: "To study the Way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to perceive oneself in all beings, to be enlightened by all things. To be enlightened by all things is to remove the barriers between oneself and others."

There is a story about the famous psychiatrist and thinker Carl Jung. A patient called urgently wanting an appointment for the next day. However, Jung already had a booking for that time so an appointment was made for a later date. The next day at the preferred appointment time the patient was walking in the park when suddenly he came across Jung sitting on a park bench. The patient became angry. "You told me you had an appointment!" "I do," said Jung. "With myself."

We all need to make an appointment with ourselves from time to time. To re-connect with who we really are; to maintain balance; to recharge exhausted batteries. To make time to go on a retreat is a necessary and healthy step for anyone.

A few thoughts on retreating

"Take the backward step and turn the light inward." The BRC provides the space for that backward step, for the light to turn inward. During a retreat everything is designed to allow that process to occur - this is 'time out' from daily activities.

A weekend retreat typically begins with an introductory talk on the Friday evening and ends with a guided loving kindness meditation in which one deliberately projects kindness and compassion to all beings, including ourselves. A retreat has a dynamic all of its own - and this dynamic will be different for each person - but, like a good film or a book, it will probably have a beginning, a middle and an end. The overall experience can often be cathartic.

Attending a retreat is not only making a commitment to yourself, but also to the other people who have come. There is a collective, supportive energy generated during a retreat, especially in a meditation retreat held in 'noble silence' which creates the psychological space, to better enable us to 'turn the light inward'. Such silence allows us to experience our inner self more fully; to drop the masks and the various other defences we often employ in our day-to-day interactions with others and also gives us the chance to experience better the world around us: The sounds of birds, the creak of trees in the wind. Raindrops. Noble silence allows one the precious release from the incessant internal dialogue that never seems to stop, not even in our dreams.

Many expect that a retreat will automatically be a blissful experience. For some it may be, but, as with anything in life, there are no guarantees.
If you are not comfortable with yourself in daily life you won't suddenly find yourself in some magically transcendent state simply by going on a weekend retreat.

As Jon Kabat-Zinn points out: "Wherever you go, there you are". Sitting on a meditation cushion, breathing in and out, there is no escape from who you are. That is not always a comfortable place to be. Like it or not, you are forced to confront the reality of your own circumstances.

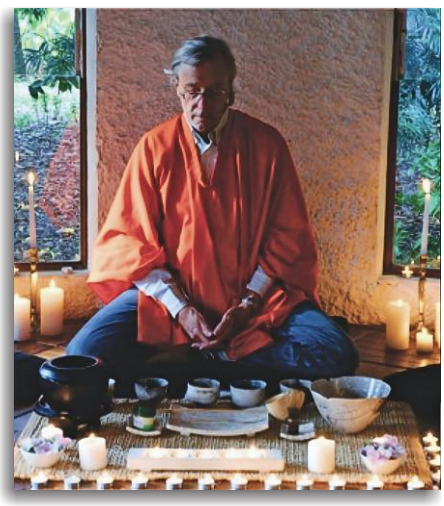
So choose the retreat you wish to attend with care, with a sense of where you are right now, what you are looking for and what you need.

Retreats demonstrate, in a surprising variety of ways, how we can harness the clarity and calmness to engage our world of experience boldly, both the rough and the smooth - and act creatively and compassionately within it. Indeed, it is our primary task in life to navigate our way through these difficult processes wisely and, in doing so, to get to know ourselves at greater depth than would be the case if we ignored them or pretended they did not exist.

When I first envisioned the BRC 50 years ago, I intended it to become a space for people to experience what it is like just to be still and to disconnect from the daily routine of life. Simply to sit and tune in to whatever happens - to wake up - even if it is just a pigeon calling in the Erythrina tree outside the meditation hall.

The centre has become all that - and more - to the thousands of people from all over South Africa and the world who have visited. Many feel enriched by their experience and able to carry that spirit forward in their relationships with their families, their friends and colleagues and all those they meet along the 'Great Way' as it is called in the Zen tradition.

Honouring Louis van Loon - 1935 to 2024 - of The Buddhist Retreat Centre, Ixopo, KZN, South Africa



Myth as Mirror: Reclaiming Your Soul Expression Through Archetypes and Stillness

In our fast-paced, hyper-connected world, many of us are left yearning for something deeper - a reconnection with purpose, clarity and the quiet voice of the soul. But how do we find our way back?

One surprisingly powerful answer lies in ancient stories. For millennia, cultures have used **archetypal myths** - especially those of the Greek gods and goddesses - to understand life's cycles: Birth and death, wounding and healing, loss and self-realisation. These myths were never just entertainment; they were **maps for transformation**.

Today, these same archetypes live within us. Recognising their presence helps us understand our inner world and navigate life's changes with more grace.

Take **Persephone**, goddess of spring and queen of the underworld. Her descent represents the call to face our shadow, grief and unseen gifts - a rite of passage many of us avoid, yet desperately need. Or **Athena**, the wise strategist who guides us to live with purpose, vision and integrity. Then there's **Aphrodite**, whose sensuality and creativity remind us of the power of authentic expression.

When we intentionally work with these archetypes, they become **mirrors** - reflecting aspects of our psyche that want to be seen, healed and integrated. They offer language and symbolism to understand who we are becoming.

Why stillness is the gateway

Of course, we can't hear these inner voices or access archetypal wisdom in the noise of everyday life. That's where sacred stillness becomes essential.

Taking intentional time out - in nature, away from your usual responsibilities - creates space for clarity and deep listening. It's not just a luxury; it's a necessity for anyone seeking to **realign with their purpose, passion and personal power**.

That's where retreat comes in - not as escape, but as a sacred return.

The Soul Expression Retreat

From **25-28 September 2025**, the **Soul Expression Retreat** returns to the tranquil embrace of **Temenos Retreat Centre**, McGregor. This transformative experience is facilitated by Celeste Du Toit, a seasoned transformational coach, bodyworker and spiritual guide. With over a decade of experience in personal growth facilitation, integrative healing and archetypal work, Celeste brings a grounded yet deeply intuitive presence to each journey she holds.

At the heart of this retreat is the invitation to **remember who you truly are** - not in concept, but in embodiment. Through **archetypal exploration, journaling, breathwork, movement, ritual, storytelling and sacred stillness**, participants are guided to peel back layers of conditioning and connect to the **core frequency of their soul**.

Rather than offering quick fixes or surface-level inspiration, this retreat invites deep listening, compassionate presence and the courage to align with your soul's calling.

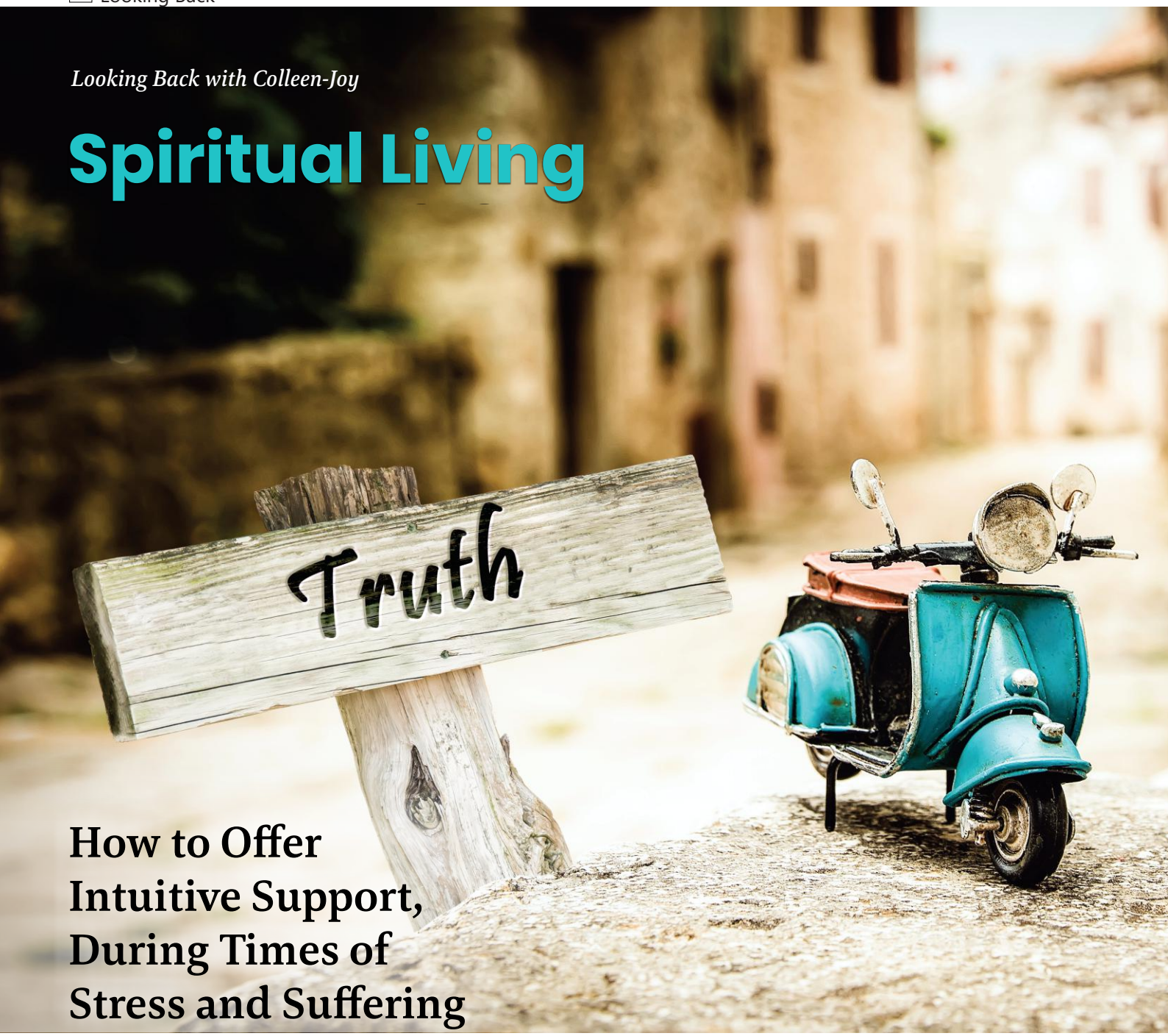
Whether you're navigating transition, seeking clarity, or simply ready to reconnect with your authentic self, this is a powerful portal into inner freedom.

Reignite Your Joy. Reawaken Your Purpose. Remember Who You Are
Details and bookings:
www.celestedutoit.co.za/soul-expression-retreat/
or email hello@celestedutoit.co.za



Looking Back with Colleen-Joy

Spiritual Living



How to Offer Intuitive Support, During Times of Stress and Suffering

What if it's possible to support your loved ones and your world intuitively without needing to say a word?

I'd like to show you how to use your natural intuition in a specific way - to not be overwhelmed by collective fear and suffering but, instead, to broadcast authentically the intuitive songs of truth, felt as the experience of peace, love and joy; and that you can weave this into ordinary life - no need for any special skills - only your sincere intention and willingness to practise and discover.

This intuitive training is for you if...

- You're feeling the collective stress of the world and your loved ones and want to help support them;
- You're an empath who is easily impacted by others' feelings and, instead of shutting down intuitively, would love to learn how to stay open, but without endlessly feeling other people's emotions;
- You're aware of your intuition and would love to develop these skills in a grounded, natural way;
- You're interested in spiritual growth, non-duality and self-realisation and would like to experience for yourself directly, the 'reality' that is taught by non-dual teachers, instead of hoping and believing;
- You'd like to be able to tell if it's your real inner guidance or fear, ego or wishful thinking.



Most of my childhood and teens was spent being obsessed with trying to work out why I could pick up on intuitive information - *which was supposed to be impossible*.

The first clue I had was in early primary school, when I discovered that my friend Anne and I had shared an identical dream the night before - complete with extraordinary detail.

Like a young Sherlock Holmes, I went into mission mode to work out how it was possible - *were we all connected in some mysterious way?*

I thought I invented telepathy when I had my friend stand on the other side of the school playground, thinking of a random number between 1 and 20, that I would then try to pick up on. When I thought that I *had* the number, I'd wave and we'd run to the middle of the playground to check.
We got too many right for me to let my obsession go.

If you'd told the young me, that one day I would rely on intuition, to find my way through some of the most challenging years of my life - financial collapse, being a young mother of two daughters, one of whom was born with life-threatening health problems, using intuition to learn to support my sick baby, negotiating and surviving an armed robbery, using my intuition to build a business, heal my shyness and stand on stages around the world speaking and teaching; if you'd told me that this is where my intuition would take me, I would never have believed you.

So, you can understand why intuition means everything to me. It has literally saved my life and has been the instrument of saving others' lives. The simple, ordinary and natural skill of intuition is precious beyond words to me.

That's why I can tell you with confidence, that we can support others without saying a word. We can learn to tune in to the highest, to wholeness instead of lack, to that which is deeper than the surface of thoughts and feelings - even the true self.

To support yourself and others intuitively I feel there are three helpful steps.

- First understand your natural intuition;
- Second to use your natural intuition to tune in deeper than the apparent surface of life and lastly,
- Discover and explore that reality.

Understand your natural intuition

You already have natural intuition - it's really a case of how conscious you are of the skill and how practised you are with using it.

The key to intuition is to understand and use **attention + intention**. If you think of a friend, and set your intention to **feel what they're feeling**, your body-mind will start to play some of the song of your friend - perhaps the emotions they're feeling or the state of mind they're in.
Everything is singing to us, *but are we listening?*

Attention, intention and the songs of life

Pay attention to attention.

Attention is subtle, it's prior to the physical senses - how we know this is because we can move attention between the physical senses. You can place attention on seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, smelling - you can also place attention on thoughts, emotions and memories.

Intention, which is different from thoughts - is a **silent decision** that we make to *direct attention*.

If the universe is like a library of knowledge, where every expression of life is a **songbook** that we can read and that we can tune in to.

- **Intention** chooses the songbook.
- **Attention** opens it.
- Then the song of that knowledge **plays** through your body-mind - it's up to you to notice and to learn to translate the knowledge into conscious understanding.

- **Body-mind as antenna**
  Think of your body-mind as an antenna, the instrument that picks up on all the information from the songbooks of life. And like a radio that picks up on the invisible and inaudible songs that play through the air - our body-mind is also wireless technology, sacred technology, capable of transmitting the songs of life.

- **Choose to change what you tune in to intuitively**
  Consider the possibility, that you can work with attention and intention, to choose and to change what your body-mind is tuned in to.
  Instead of tuning in to fear and its familiar song, why not set your intention to be interested in what is deeper than fear, to be interested in the truth?

- **Refine the subtle art of translation**
  Once you're consciously paying attention to attention, using your silent decision-making power to intend what you want to tune in to and experimenting with tuning in at will, now it's time to refine the subtle art of translating the songs of life.

The truth is, that truth cannot be translated. But it's a worthwhile pursuit to do our best to find words and understanding. This art of translating the silent songs of life takes practice, but I've seen many of my students gain insight, even from the very first attempts.

Tune in deeper than the surface for truth

So how do we use this intuitive skill to support others? I've mapped this out into three steps.

- **Set your intention to tune in deeper than thought, feeling and personality.**
  First, set your intention – make a silent decision in your gut and heart, with a feeling of sincerity and interest to help - to tune in to your loved ones. Notice any subtle or strong changes that occur in your body-mind after a minute or two. Then set your intention to tune in deeper than these feelings, to tune in deeper than the personality for the essence, the soul, the wholeness and the truth of their being.

- **Notice the subtle or strong changes in your body.**
  Then notice any subtle or strong changes in your body. We are not manipulating or forcing this, we set aside any personal agenda. This is done with an intention to support.

- **Openness and peace indicate that you're tuned in to truth.**
  How you know that you've tuned in deeper than fear, emotion or personality is that you'll experience a subtle or strong change in your own body – you'll feel more openness and peace.

Openness and peace in the body indicate that you're tuned in to a song of truth.

The truth feels open

This understanding is incredibly helpful.

When we focus our attention on something that is true, we can feel it, *we feel it as peace.*

Why? Because truth, peace, openness, love are the same thing. They are the shared self, the ground of reality.

We miss this when we tune in to other songs, when we tune in to thoughts that don't reflect truth, this causes contraction and heaviness in the body.

When we tune in to the deeper truth, the song of this is offered to the person we are tuned into. That way we are supporting them without saying a word.

This can be a helpful way to go through life, tuning in deeper and having your body-mind sing the songs of this peace, love and openness for all to benefit.

Discover truth everywhere and in everything

My invitation to you is to use your intuition to discover the truth that is everywhere and is everything.

Instead of tuning in to your thoughts about a tree, why not set your intention to tune in to the *actual tree* and to the *deeper reality* of the tree. That way you discover the real tree and the reality of the tree.

Why not discover the truth of who you are instead of the thoughts of who you are? The truth of people, instead of your thoughts about people?

Deeper than the surface mind is the song of truth and it is a song of love, peace and openness that never closes.

In these stressful times, give yourself and others this silent intuitive support, with love.

Colleen-Joy's site https://www.colleen-joy.com/
Colleen's Youtube https://www.youtube.com/colleenjoy



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What if the future is like a tree, with many potential branches growing from every present moment? Some potential futures are strong, like thick branches; others are weak little twigs. What if, when we focus on trying to predict the future, it's like taking a chainsaw and cutting all the other possibilities away?

When I became an accidental professional psychic at the age of 16, this was exactly the dilemma I faced. At the age of 13, I had dedicated my life to wisdom - it was a desperate dark-night-of-the-soul plea to find a reason to live that was bigger than the pain of being alive. I had chosen wisdom because the word represented deep answers to life's biggest questions.

Only three years later, when my mother asked what I wanted for my 16th birthday, I asked for tarot cards. In my pursuit of wisdom, I'd stumbled across the idea that the one and only thing I could test was my intuition. Maybe intuition could help me find wisdom. Maybe intuition could give me a way to find answers for myself instead of relying on surrogate truth - the beliefs everyone asked me to swallow whole without question.

Now, you must understand that back then, tarot cards were contraband. This was in the 80s, when even Pink Floyd's song *Brick in the Wall* had been banned in South Africa. The only shop my mother could find my taboo birthday gift in was in Hillbrow. But bless her - she bought me a tarot deck. The cutest, least frightening-looking deck, mind you: Hanson-Roberts.
So there I was on my 16th birthday, enjoying my special gift, sitting in a caravan - because that was all my parents could afford for a weekend holiday. The irony is not lost on me. With only the small instruction booklet to guide me, I made up how to choose cards and 'read' them.

Studying the meanings and practising non-stop all Saturday, I was still at it on Sunday when my mom's best friend joined our family for lunch.

"Are those tarot cards?" Mom's friend squealed with delight - she was a big fan. "You've got to do a reading for my boyfriend." She insisted, despite my arguing that I was a one-day-old Tarot Reader.
But she got her way. I'm not sure who was more awkward - the boyfriend or me - as I randomly pulled cards from the deck for past, present and future. Even in those early moments, I saw that the real power of the cards wasn't in the pieces of paper printed in China. The cards were a comfort blanket, helping me focus my intuition.

The reading sounded something like me fumbling with these impressions:
"Your past card shows... a woman... the swords represent stress... she had mental fatigue and there's a feeling of being trapped. Your present card - there's a struggle, delays and you're feeling worried. And the future... well, that looks lovely. Ace of Cups is new love, celebrations and hope."

He went pale and, without saying a word, got up and walked away.

I was summoned to the caravan by my mother, but instead of getting into trouble, I was greeted by a glowing, proud mom and her friend saying, "I knew my Col was special." They told me I'd revealed a secret her boyfriend was keeping from her - about a past girlfriend who had a mental breakdown and whom he was still visiting in hospital to support.

Despite arguing that I knew none of these things, my mom's friend announced that she would be referring clients to me for readings - which is exactly what she did. And so, my accidental career as a teenage psychic began. I was terrified. The only reason I said yes was because, despite the fear, this felt like my chance to put this intuition thing to the test, to appease my sceptical mind and try to find wisdom.

For the next few years, I would get home from school, change, wolf down a quick lunch, then receive clients. The readings were stressful, but they gave me enough proof to be satisfied that there was something else - this intuition thing was real, but complex.

What I loved were the moments in a reading when, despite the client saying nothing and giving no clues, I was able to deliver specific, mind-blowing details about the past and present. Things like, "You have three children… your youngest… a son… is in trouble at school… for stealing a car."

That's when things would unravel. I was satisfied - my Sherlock Holmes hat was still on and I wanted to figure out how and why this worked. But they weren't interested in that. These vulnerable adults, sometimes 20 years my senior, would hand me their power with the dreaded question, "So Colleen, tell me about my future."

I'd squirm and stutter, because truly, whenever I tuned into the future, I felt more than one. Some wispy possibilities mixed with firmer, more solid timeline branches.

When I tried to explain this to my clients, they would argue, "I know you can see, Colleen. Is it that bad that you don't want to tell me?"

And when I bowed to the pressure and said, "There is only a potential," and "You can choose a different path," these were ignored. I'd hear months later only how spot-on my predictions were - and how they would refer even more clients to me.

Please don't get me wrong. I am beyond grateful for those years and have no issue with the role of an ethical psychic, which has its place. But I was after wisdom. After three years of accurate work, I felt hollow. I wanted to empower clients, not just impress them. And ultimately, I had to admit the truth: Being psychic did not mean being wise. So, I gave up my role as a teen psychic, pretending that I'd 'lost my abilities' to stop clients from calling.

What happened with these abilities surprised me. In my 20s and 30s, I learned to use the same fundamentals those testing years gave me - but I put them to work learning how to build my wisdom well (access inner wisdom).

A few important insights I found along the way:

- To do psychic work, I needed to not care, to feel empty (which is why I couldn't read for loved ones or myself).
- To do wisdom work, the opposite was true. I needed to care, to feel love - which meant I could access wisdom for myself and for anyone (once I learned to feel love for everyone).

The common key was still attention and intention.
I saw that intention guided subtle attention. Like choosing which radio station to tune in to, it was an inner decision that sent attention like an ambassador to find the gold.

- For psychic work, I sent attention to find impressive 'hits' about someone's past and present.
- For wisdom work, I sent attention deeper than 'the surface mind', to still, quiet knowing - like a bucket lowered into water.

What I found surprised me. Wisdom was powerfully healing - like water healing the dry, dead surface of things. Wisdom opened anything that was closed. It opened my heart. Healed my shyness. Gave me strength and clarity, often daily. And it took me home to my true being and true seeing, where our inner student lives with our inner teacher.

It also showed me how to support others deeply and help them claim their true being and seeing - and find their inner teacher.

This became the guiding force in my life. I spent decades learning how to improve my ability to access wisdom and tell it apart from ego - to translate silent being and seeing into words. As a result, everything changed.

What about the future and predictions?

When I have asked Wisdom about the future, I have still felt timelines as potentials. But instead of feeling afraid and closed, Wisdom shows me that we are 'equal to' all futures. The sovereignty of the true self is equal to the worst and best of life.

A mistake I used to make in the earliest years was believing that a closed feeling was an intuitive 'no' - like a 'not this way' - when choosing possible options and opportunities.

And so, like a compass, I only followed the open feelings, thinking they were intuitive 'yeses' about which branch of the tree to focus on. But this was not true.
Wisdom showed me that:

- **OPEN** meant only that I was seeing clearly. I was equal to that path.
- **CLOSED** meant I was not seeing clearly. I was not equal to that path. Fear, ignorance, or not feeling equal to it was blocking my ability to see true.

This insight was life-changing. It meant that I was choosing only futures and options that I was already seeing clearly and felt equal to. Fear, which feels closed, was the chainsaw cutting away possible new futures for me.

My job was to help my heart, mind and body get equal to all possible futures - to turn closed feelings into open ones. And then, only then, in the inner peace and strength of this, could I see all options clearly enough to choose.

When all options felt open, then I could shift my attention to notice which open path felt as if there were a flow - a flow of love, inspiration, energy, or interest. As if the life force were stronger there. This, I came to see, was my way of knowing, 'This is my path. This is the branch of the tree for me to nurture.'

When a pipe is closed, there is no flow. A lack of clear seeing blinds us intuitively to futures we could be saying yes to.

The truth is, we want a way to predict the future to avoid pain - which I've tried hundreds of times. It's normal to want to protect ourselves and our loved ones. My ego and fear didn't like the answer Wisdom gave me about this, but the truth of it was freeing:

"There is no pain-free path for the river to flow down a mountain. But there is a way to increase the flow, so that your life river can meet all obstacles with courage and the strength to overcome."

Today, at 54 years old this year, I thank my teenage self for her courage. I am almost always tuned in to when I feel closed - because that's when I know there is inner work to do. That's where Wisdom is being called to heal.

Then I find the clarity of seeing that opens. When I feel open and equal to the paths before me - to saying 'yes' and 'no,' to 'this way' and 'that,' to success and failure, to tough days and good days - then I can feel the answer to the question:

"Where does love want to move today?"

And love, which is life itself, creates with quiet power.

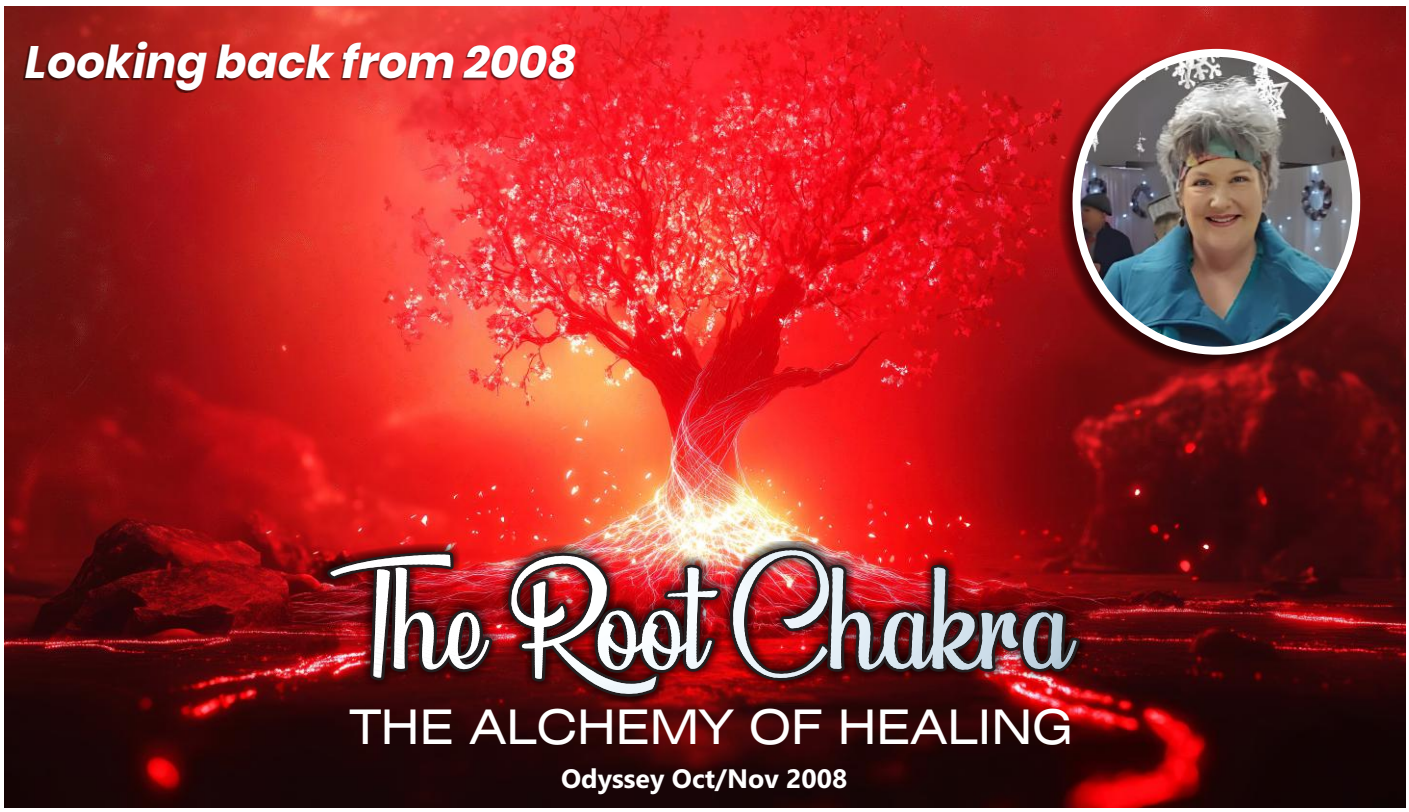


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Dr Arien van der Merwe

The first chakra, located at the base of the spine near the tailbone, is your root connection to the earth and to your physical body. The basic drive of this chakra is survival and it is the seat of the stress response: The fight-or-flight reaction, also called 'fight and attack'. The energy of this chakra can remain rooted, or stuck, in fear - the primitive survival response - if not made conscious and released in trust and surrender.

This chakra is the most instinctive of all the chakras and is connected to the oldest part of the central nervous system, the reptilian brain, which we share with most living creatures. Fear leads to stimulation of the adrenal glands on top of the kidneys, which are the stress glands - the endocrine glands that secrete adrenaline, noradrenaline and cortisol, the stress hormones. To understand this chakra, pay attention to your animal nature and what your physical body needs to stay and feel alive: Food, shelter, territory, your sense of safety and security. Which spot on earth makes you feel most alive? For you, this is chakra one's home environment and habitat. Once basic needs have been met to ensure survival, other first chakra issues address your fulfilment of what's right for you. An unbalanced first chakra might be due to living a life that others think fitting or appropriate – you always try to win approval or please others by doing and thinking what's expected of you, justifying your worth through others' approval. Chakra one is the primary seat of the lower mind, the unconscious drives and its concerns. A synopsis of the first chakra mental-emotional energy blockages: Our skeleton, muscle and joints represent our connection to the earth, grounding, survival, nourishment, safety, trust, using our senses to scan the environment, family, home, our foundation.

These are linked to the basic stress reaction or ancient survival response of flight or fight. The underlying issues to examine include fear, anxiety about financial security, feelings of deep unsafety, criticism of self and others, rigidity, being judgmental, holding back, pulled down by own victim mode and experience of life as a heavy burden.

Associated ailments and illnesses in this root area of our physical bodies: Arthritis, problems in base of spine area, disorders of the large intestine (constipation), anus (haemorrhoids), rectum, disorders of the skin, muscles, bones, ligaments (sciatica), joints, legs, feet, knees and obesity.

This perspective is not meant as criticism or judgment in saying that you cause your own disease. It is meant as a tool of empowerment in realising that disease has deeply unconscious symbolic meanings and can act as a powerful and gifted teacher in helping you return to health and wellness. Mind-body issues to consider include longstanding bitterness, anger, resentment, criticism of self and others and fear of failure.

OSTEOARTHRITIS AS PRACTICAL EXAMPLE OF THE INTEGRATIVE APPROACH TO CHAKRA HEALING

Within the old mind-set, osteoarthritis (OA) is synonymous with normal ageing, affecting 70–80 per cent of the population over 50 years of age. With the baby-boomer generation and the explosion in human consciousness comes the age of pro-ageing, or positive ageing, where OA is not regarded as inevitable and, if it does arise, many tools exist to control and even reverse the process. The natural treatment approach provides all these tools. These are mostly aimed at reversing the sensory-motor amnesia, or SMA, as discussed in Thomas Hanna's book *Somatics*. The secret is to restore the alignment of the spine, as well as the rest of the skeleton through sensory-motor remembering, releasing all the blocked cell memories from years of stored wrong thought-patterns and emotions with its associated stress responses, causing the deposits of sediment inside the cells where the physical body becomes distorted and shaped according to these wrong memory patterns, body alignment, craniosacral therapy, Yoga, Nia technique dance, Tai-chi and so on, all help to recover sensory-motor memory for the body to heal itself, so that we can walk upright, in suppleness, moving freely, until we reach our allotted human lifespan of perhaps as much as 120 years. The remembering process is an active one where the individual takes control and works from the inside of the brain to the musculo-skeletal system and back, restoring the energy pathways between mind, nervous system, muscle and bones, balancing and re-igniting the drive to integral wholeness, homeostasis and health.

Causes of osteoarthritis:

- Declining ability to repair the collagen matrix in joints
- Fractures and mechanical damage often associated with excessive exercise and extreme competitiveness in sport at a young age, linked to repetitive overuse, joint instability and hyper-motility.
- Hormonal factors

Genetic predisposition. This again is a clear indication of faulty thought patterns, linked to old stuck emotions of insecurity and feeling unsafe in the world, carried from one generation to the next. The inner drive to over-excel in sport, with consequent joint injuries linked to later development of osteoarthritis, is also often to prove one's worth.

NATURAL HEALING STRATEGIES: Diet

A healthy diet is aimed at restoring nutrition and oxygen supply to ailing, degenerative joints, as well as assisting in the anti-inflammatory process. Avoid simple, processed carbohydrates. Eat a varied diet of complex, high-fibre carbohydrates, such as oats, whole-wheat and low GI bread, muesli and rye crisp bread or crackers. Eat lots of berries and their extracts.

A small percentage of people with osteoarthritis might be sensitive to nightshade vegetables such as tomatoes, potatoes, peppers and eggplant. Eliminate them for two weeks then add them one by one to ascertain whether you are sensitive to some.

Use extra virgin olive oil, a tablespoon of crushed linseeds and a handful of nuts every day. Eat cold water fish such as salmon, trout, mackerel and sardines at least two to three times a week. Some polyunsaturated vegetable oils favour the synthesis of inflammatory prostaglandins, as do trans-fatty acids found in brick margarine and hydrogenated vegetable oils, so avoid these.

Drink six to eight glasses of purified, filtered water every day. Drink every glass with a clear intention to heal, clearing away all the debris - physical, mental and emotional - that do not serve your health and wellbeing. We are 75 per cent water, our brains are 90 per cent water, our thoughts and the molecules of emotion are carried by water into every cell of our bodies.

Exercise and physical therapy

Arthritis has everything to do with movement. Often, movement will be curtailed because of the fear of the pain involved. The vicious circle continues: Lack of movement will cause joints to freeze up and become stiff. This increases the pain, which leads to even less movement; muscles atrophy, injuries increase, more function is lost. Wrong movement can also be the cause of arthritis, especially stressful, excessive and arduous movement over time, as described above.

Avoid muscle strain and too many weight-bearing exercises. Visit a chiropractor and/or therapeutic masseuse for deep tissue massage, body alignment and corrective exercises. Swimming and water aerobics work well to gently massage and mobilise sore and stiff joints.

Massage inflamed joints every day with two drops each of juniper, ginger, black pepper, red chilli powder, chamomile oils and five drops of lavender oil mixed in a carrier oil of five dessert spoons olive, grapeseed, sweet almond or jojoba oil.

Yoga, a slow gentle walk, hydrotherapy and joint mobilisation therapy are all very effective. Start with Yoga practice two to three days a week at a gentle pace, not forcing yourself, working within your pain and comfort threshold, starting and ending your practice with deep relaxation and breathing exercises (Yoga nidra). More exercises one can do to focus on balancing the first chakra are any physical activity like aerobics, weight training, running and vigorous dance to a fast beat.

Helpful therapies

Acupuncture, acupressure, deep massage therapy (such as Thai massage), physiotherapy and transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) are all good for relieving inflammation, pain and discomfort.

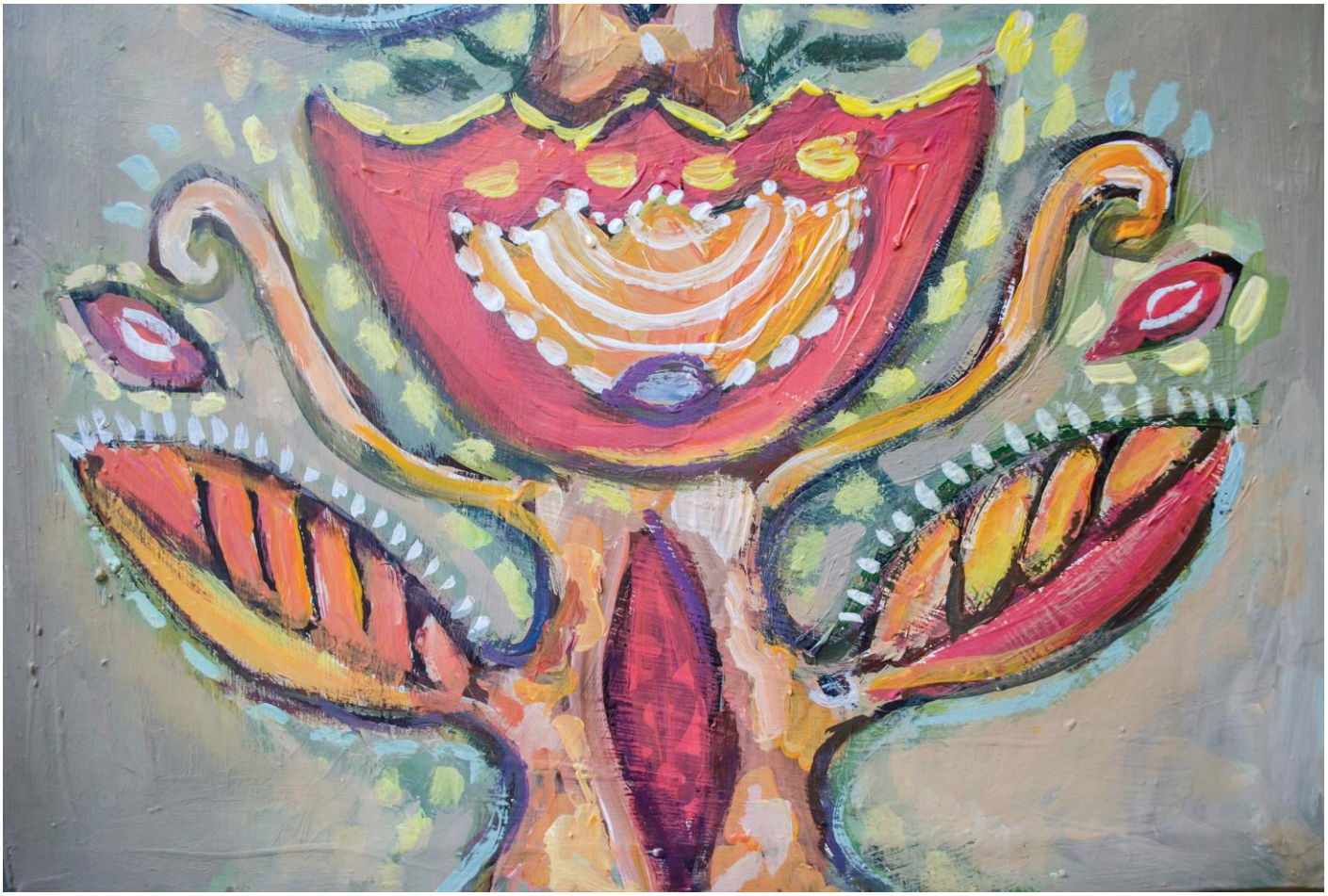
Stress management, relaxation and addressing underlying mental-emotional patterning are equally important. Also, regular and profound connection to nature - reconnecting to its ebb and flow and the natural progression of seasons and time, helps with re-establishing and maintaining an inner balance to cope with stress and anxiety.

Ultimately, our goal in this life, is to transcend our primitive animal survival response and feel safe and secure within ourselves. This will allow our first chakras to relax enough to ignite the process of awakening the *kundalini* or 'serpent energy', to move upwards through the spine to the higher chakras for our continuing evolution as souls in bodies. Only then will we be able to transcend the physical fear response and flow with what life brings our way, rather than resisting it by shouting 'no' at events, with our attention riveted on what we don't want, forever attracting the unwanted into our life. It is important to remember that part of our spiritual growth and evolution is to remain rooted in the earth with this physical body for now, paying attention to its needs, but also simultaneously soaring to the heavens and back in an ever-evolving healing spiral dance of balance and integration, ever moving upwards and downwards in a celebration of life.

"Much remains the same since 2008, however, updated research finding with regard to medicinal mushrooms, fungi and the mycelium have enhanced treatment. This is further boosted by significant growth in the use of nootropics: substances that enhance cognitive function including memory, focus, and creativity. This is evidenced in Dr Arien van der Merwe's 'Looking Forward' article, after the 17 years that have since passed." Ed

Dr Arien van der Merwe is a medical doctor, author and holistic health counsellor. She developed and presents continued professional development training through VideoLearn and Synergetica CPD Courses on Mental Health in Challenging Uncertain Times; Heart Health; Inflammation both Friend and Foe and Neuroplasticity. These online CPD Courses explore ways to support both ourselves, our nearest and dearest, as well as our clients/patients.
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The Root Chakra

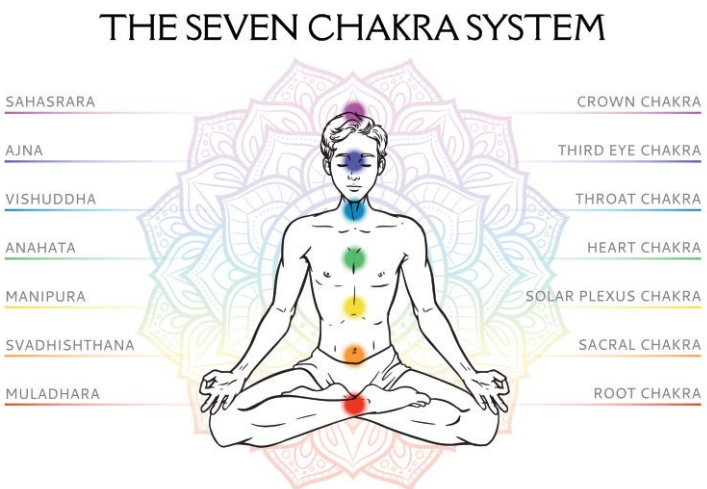
2008 to 2025

"This chakra promotes a sense of safety, security, earthing from EARTH STAR spiralling up through all chakras (endocrine gland nodes), to eighth and beyond to 22nd, out into the cosmos to SOUL STAR and back in an eternal DNA spiral of energy."

by Dr Arien van der Merwe

Root chakra, or *Muladhara* chakra, is the basis of the chakra system and associated with survival, security and grounding, while manifested as a body in this world. Addressing root chakra entrapment involves connecting with the physical body, practising earthing techniques and engaging in movements like free dancing to lift out of survival mode into the lightness of being, raising arms, flying with arms like a bird, bending down, moving slowly up unfolding vertebra by vertebra, lifting, opening heart and chest, visualising being free, while stomping feet in rhythm to music.

Consciously rising from root chakra emotional energy blockages, entails daily practice to engender a sense of stability, security and confidence, leading to a more grounded and balanced state.



Signs of root chakra entrapment:
- Chronic anxiety or fear;
- Feeling disconnected or ungrounded;
- Financial or housing instability;
- Trust issues;
- Constipation, lazy gut, or lower back pain;
- Obsessive focus on safety/security;
- Hoarding or over-attachment to material things.

Causes of root chakra imbalance:
- Childhood trauma or neglect;
- Physical or emotional abuse;
- Poverty or unstable living conditions;
- Sudden life changes (job loss, breakups, moves);
- Feeling unsafe in your environment.

Understanding root chakra deeply cellular ingrained emotional entrapments and their impact:

Traumas: The root chakra is particularly vulnerable to traumas related to physical survival, such as financial struggles, disease, or abuse.

Symptoms of blockage: Blockages can manifest as feelings of anxiety, insecurity, fear, or difficulty with digestion, leading to physical and emotional instability.

Practices for unblocking and strengthening the root chakra:

Earthing/grounding: Practices like walking barefoot on grass, sand or in water, gardening, or spending time in nature can reconnect you with the earth's energy, promoting a sense of stability.

Physical movement: Yoga, Pilates, dance, walking, gentle jogging, can help you feel more grounded and connected to your body.

Visualisation: Imagine roots growing from your root chakra into the earth, visualising yourself as deeply rooted and connected.

Affirmations: Use positive affirmations to reinforce your sense of security, self-worth and grounding.

Consciously lifting from root chakra entrapment

Cultivate awareness: Pay attention to your thoughts, feelings and physical sensations to identify and address root chakra blocks. Write it in a journal.

Practise self-compassion: Acknowledge and accept your past experiences, fostering a sense of self-acceptance.

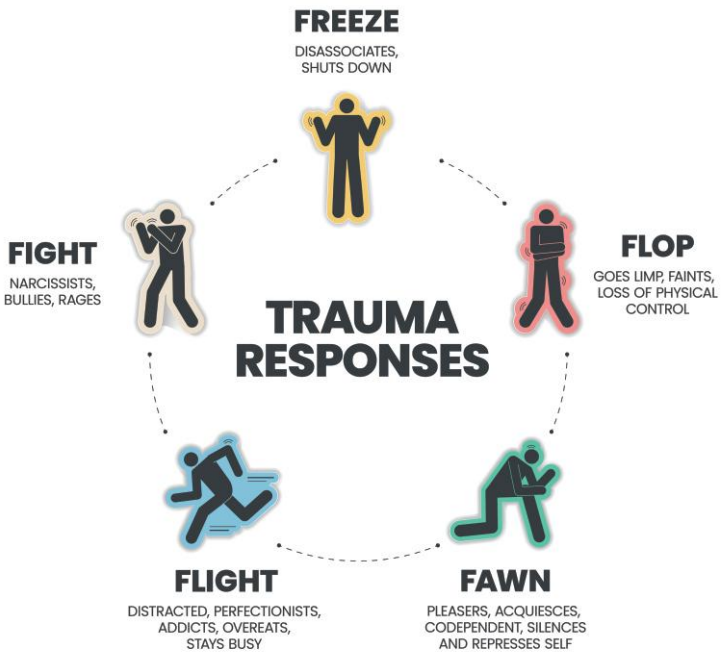
Make time for activities that bring you joy and a sense of calm, practising mindfulness, or engaging in creative expression.

Celebrate small wins to increase dopamine secretion: Nootropics like Lion's mane, Ginkgo biloba and Ashwagandha increase all of these naturally.

Recognise and appreciate your progress, building momentum and motivation.

Connect with your emotions:
Embrace your emotions without judgment, allowing your body to express what words cannot.

Four types of trauma responses



Neuroscience coaching (what this writer practices) can help you cope with this:

Neuroplasticity/brain plasticity: The brain is not static; it can be changed and adapted through new experiences and learning. Coaches can use this knowledge to help clients/patients build new neural pathways for desired behaviours and thought patterns.

Emotional regulation: The brain's stress response can significantly impact learning and change. Coaches can help patients develop strategies for managing emotions, such as mindfulness and relaxation techniques, to create a more receptive environment for new learning.

MEDICINAL MUSHROOMS


LION'S MANE


REISHI


SHIITAKE


TURKEY TAIL


CORDYCEPS


CHAGA

The habit loop: Habits are ingrained patterns of behaviour that can be difficult to break. Coaches can guide patients in understanding the triggers, routines and rewards associated with unwanted habits and develop new, healthier habits.

Cognitive biases: Mental shortcuts or biases can distort thinking and decision-making. Coaches can help patients identify and challenge these biases to promote more rational and effective decision-making.

ROOT YOURSELF THROUGH MEDITATION: Inhaling deeply for three to four counts, hold for two and exhaling for six to eight counts. Then visualise roots actually growing from your tailbone into the Earth.

We need to root much like Mycelium, the root-like structure of a fungus (mushrooms). This network of thread-like structures grows underground and absorbs nutrients and water. Mycelium also plays a crucial role in the 'woodwide web' a network that connects trees and other plants. Much like we connect, share and cohabitate with others when we are well rooted, feeling safe and well-balanced.

More ways to heal and balance

Nutrition
Root vegetables (mushrooms, carrots, potatoes, beetroot).
Protein-rich foods such as meat, fish, poultry, legumes.
Red-coloured foods (tomatoes, strawberries, red berries, red peppers, peppadews).

Herbs like Lion's mane mushrooms, Ginkgo biloba, Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera)* and essential oils like sandalwood, cinnamon, cedarwood, frankincense, myrrh, vetiver, patchouli, lavender to balance first and seventh chakra alignment.

Crystals from the Earth
Red jasper, hematite, black tourmaline, smoky quartz.
Place on your lower spine or carry with you for grounding energy.

Sound healing
Chanting 'LAM' (the seed sound of the root chakra) or 'I am here'.
Listening to frequencies around 396 Hz.
Dancing with stomping feet movements, drumming, gumboot dancing.

Therapy and inner work
Address unresolved fears and trauma with a depth or transpersonal psychologist/therapist.
Re-establish a sense of personal safety through boundaries and stability.

Root chakra healing meditation script you can record and a simple daily practice plan to help restore safety, stability and grounding.

Create your safe space: You can place a grounding crystal (e.g. hematite or red jasper) at your base while meditating.

CONNECT WITH GAIA – MOTHER EARTH
PULL ANAL MUSCLES TIGHT TO GROUND. IMAGINE ROOTS SPREADING FROM YOUR BASE TO ROOT YOU INTO THE EARTH. LIKE A TREE, OR THE MYCELIA OF MUSHROOMS CONNECTING YOU TO NATURE AND ALL BEINGS.

Sit or lie down comfortably and warmly. You can sit cross-legged or in a chair with your feet flat on the floor. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths.

Breathe and ground: Inhale deeply through your nose...hold...exhale slowly through your mouth. Feel your body become heavy and supported by the earth.

Visualisation: Bring your attention to the base of your spine - your root chakra.
Visualise a glowing deep red light, like molten lava or a warm ember.
With each breath, see this red light growing brighter and more vibrant.

Grow roots: Imagine strong roots extending from your coccyx down into the earth. They go deeper and deeper, anchoring you to the ground. Feel yourself safe, supported and steady - like a tree.

Affirmations (repeat mentally or aloud):
Here I am.
I am safe.
I am grounded.
I am supported by the Earth.
I trust the flow of life.
My needs are met.
I am LOVE.

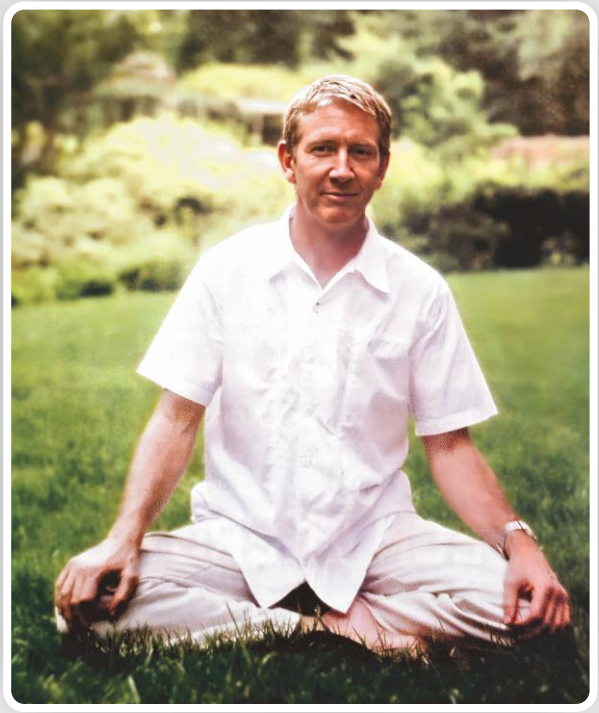
Let go, surrender, trust: As you breathe, let go of fear, worry, or tension. Imagine it being drawn out through your roots and dissolved in the Earth.
Close: Slowly bring your awareness back to the room. Wiggle your fingers and toes. Stretch. When you're ready, open your eyes.

Daily root chakra practice plan
Morning (3–5 min):
Walk barefoot on the earth (grass, soil, sand, in water
Say affirmations: 'I am grounded. I am safe'.
Midday (5–10 min):
Eat a grounding meal: Root vegetables or protein-rich foods.
Take five deep belly breaths while visualising the red root chakra.
Evening (5–10 min):
Short meditation or journaling: 'What made me feel safe today? How do I feel now, in my body, in my mind and in my emotions?'

Light a red candle and express gratitude for stability, shelter, food.

Dr Arien van der Merwe is a medical doctor, author and holistic health counsellor. She developed and presents continued professional development training through VideoLearn and Synergetica CPD Courses on Mental Health in Challenging Uncertain Times; Heart Health; Inflammation both Friend and Foe and Neuroplasticity. These online CPD Courses explore ways to support both ourselves, our nearest and dearest, as well as our clients/patients.
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A Nutritional Revolution

by Patrick Holford

Odyssey Namaste April May 2004

With a loyal and large following in South Africa, Patrick Holford needs little introduction – making a name for himself internationally as a leading expert in holistic health. Although little is known about Holford '*the man*', this is not due to a lack of a personal life, as Shihaam Parker finds out.

What motivates you?
The Dalai Lama reminds us that all human beings have two fundamental desires – to be happy and to be free of pain. I try to remember that my desire to be happy and free of pain is of no greater or lesser importance than whomever I am with. When your body and mind are in 100 per cent health, it gives you the opportunity to reach your full potential, whatever that might be.

Tell us about Patrick Holford the family man?
I share my home with my fiancée, Gaby. She's a healer and used to be in the rock and roll business and often comes with me on lecture tours, taking care of the details so I can focus on my teaching.

My son, Kyle, is here much of the time. He's an ace DJ (drum and bass style) training and working in music production. He has great taste and can get any dance floor jumping. He was born in the same year as the Institute for Optimum Nutrition (1984) and recently did all the audio visual for a big conference we did on 'Optimum Nutrition for the Mind' and did a great job.

My daughter, Jade, lives with her Mum and step Dad up the road most of the time. She's hell bent on becoming a doctor and runs for London and, boy, is she fast.

Describe what you love about your home?
I've opened up the living space so, when you walk in, you can see all the way through into the Japanese style garden, through the temple-like conservatory, with hanging vines of *stephanotis*, that flowers for half the year, with a jasmine-like fragrance.

There are mementos from various adventures: A rock from Mount Kailash in Tibet; a meteor given to me by a Shaman I worked with in Peru; a conch (sea shell) from the Pacific; a beautiful woven, hanging fabric from the Shipibo tribe in the Amazon who imbibe a plant called *ayahuasca* which reveals to them the healing power of plants.

Both my fiancée and my son have developed a love of cooking since we 'upgraded' our kitchen. Everything is within arms-reach for a great creation – ginger, garlic, coconut, spices, cinnamon, chilli, lemongrass, perhaps a vegetable or a fish-based steam fry with wild rice, pasta or sweet potatoes. Great soups are often created, each different from the last. I love cooking, but don't get enough time.

Would you call yourself a spiritual person?
I have had numerous 'spiritual' experiences that have shown me that the true nature of who we are is magnificent, all-wise, loving and eternal. I call that 'the self' or the essence of who we are. For me this is not a belief, but an experienced reality – unfortunately, not all the time.

My first spiritual experience was when I was 14 years old and since then I've read, studied and searched for teachers and systems that explain the fullness of who we are. I was an avid reader of Carl Jung and Herman Hesse as a teenager. To this day I think the *Glass Bead Game* is one of the all-time best books.

What belief system do you feel closest to?
The three philosophies that have the most 'juice' as far as I'm concerned are Dozgen Tibetan Buddhism, Kashmir Shaivism and the teachings of Socrates and the Platonists.

Not many people realise that the wisdom of Socrates moved into Sufism and Islam when the Neo-Platonists were kicked out of Athens. From there the knowledge moved across into Kashmir and into India and Tibet.

I know there is one essence, one truth, one light and for this reason I have difficulty aligning to any one religion in such a way as to exclude others. I believe most religions at their true core are describing the same reality.

What centres you spiritually?
I spend a lot of time in my head, thinking, and there's something very grounding about walking in nature. Having your feet on the earth, breathing better air.

Exercise is known to be highly effective for depression, and I think exercise in nature also gives you time to contemplate and feel part of the larger scheme of things.

Do you have a personal motto or mantra?
I have many favourite sayings, which help me to look at things differently.

My top three are: "*only the ego is serious*" – this reminds me not to be too attached to any position and that most problems are transient and soluble.

"No good deeds go unpunished" – most parents of teenagers might relate to this one. It reminds me to offer my good intentions but not get too attached to the results.

The last is the definition of insanity: ***"to keep doing the same things and expect different results"***. I see this all the time in sick people who don't really want to change anything.

I believe it is almost criminal for a doctor to recommend a patient to have a breast tumour removed without counselling her about the known contributors to breast cancer, such as diet, alcohol, stress, lack of exercise and HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy).

What do you find the most irritating about yourself or other people?
I get immensely frustrated by the piles of European legislation that aims to control the shape of medicine in the future, leaving less and less room for a nutritional revolution. I am quite impatient and drive myself and others quite hard at times. I don't like wasting time. I like adventures and try to do things 'out of the box' occasionally. Last week I took my kids snowboarding by Mont Blanc. We had a good week, although some of it was 'stealth' boarding in blizzards. I can still keep up but my days are numbered.

Who would you say has been your greatest role model or had the strongest influence on your life?
I'd say Dr Linus Pauling; a Bolivian philosopher called Oscar Ichazo and an Indian guru called Swami Muktandanda. Swami Muktandanda died in 1982 but was so full of wisdom. I remember someone asking him 'How do you know if you're doing the right thing?' he answered: 'From the results'. Someone else asked: 'Is there a difference between a living master and a dead master?' He answered: 'Yes, a living master can tell you things'. 'What kind of things?' the man replied. Muktandanda said, 'You're too fat'.

Oscar Ichazo is alive and kicking and has taught me more than I can say. My mentor in nutrition, Dr Linus Pauling, was the founding patron of Institute for Optimum Nutrition. He had two unshared Nobel prizes and 48 doctorates - what a mind. He used to tell me not to worry about the double-blind randomised controlled trials - they come later.

The important thing, he said, was the logic of your propositions.

What is the secret of your success and what advice would you give to people to whom you've become a role model?
You have to share your own truth, whether others like it or not. Most of us are so concerned over the opinions that others hold of us that we forget that others are likewise concerned over our opinions of them; hence no one expresses their personal truth. It takes courage, passion and energy to push beyond the status quo and to get up every morning and keep doing it. There's an old Chinese proverb that says 'perseverance furthers'. If you believe in something you have to stick with it. I also believe in experience. I've tried many things, many diets, many supplements and I'm always experimenting. It's good to be sceptical, but try it anyway, for at least a month.

What advice would you give to people who want quick fixes, shortcuts to happiness through substance abuse?
I think we all want shortcuts to happiness and most of us learn that the shortcuts, such as drugs, don't work in the long run. However, it is natural for people, especially adolescents, to experiment. Parents can't sit back and get drunk on a regular basis then give their kids a hard time for getting stoned. That's just hypocrisy. The kids I know whose parents have been more honest with them usually end up with the most sensible attitude towards all drugs, including caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, Ecstasy and Prozac. Most cultures, from the Egyptians and Greeks to the Indians and existing Shamanic cultures, use mind-altering plants in ritualised ways. In the right circumstances, such experiences can open the door to a fuller understanding of who we are. In the wrong circumstances, such experiences can make people crazy and, with over-indulgence, damage you. It's a fine line.

What would you say is the path to spiritual enlightenment, happiness and personal growth?
One man said 'I do good things, I feel good. I do bad things, I feel bad. That's my religion.' I believe we all have inner wisdom that we have to listen to, to make the right choices in life. If we betray our own inner direction we end up depressed and unfulfilled. I believe in being kind and true to yourself and others. Life always gives you opportunities to grow. It is your choice whether you take them. For me optimum nutrition is not only a means to feel great and stay free from sickness - it's also an act of respect to this body of mine, through which I experience the many pleasures of this wonderful life.

About Patrick Holford, The Man.

Patrick Holford is one of the world's leading authorities on new approaches to health and nutrition. Holford began his academic career in experimental psychology. While at York University he became interested in the biochemistry of mental illness. His research led him to two pioneers in the field (Dr Carl Pfeiffer from Princeton's Brain Bio Centre, and Dr Abram Hoffer, former director of psychiatric research for Saskatchewan, Canada). Both claimed that nutritional therapy gave outstanding results in treating mental health problems. He became their student, and later, that of twice Nobel Prize winner Dr Linus Pauling.

In 1984, Patrick Holford founded the Institute for Optimum Nutrition, a charitable and independent educational trust for furthering education and research in nutrition. ION is now one of the most respected training colleges for clinical nutritionists. At ION, he researched the role of nutrition in intelligence, culminating in a landmark trial in 1987 proving that nutritional supplementation can raise IQ. He also researched nutritional approaches to depression, schizophrenia and eating disorders and developed a method for assessing a person's optimal nutrition requirements that has been tested on more than 100 000 people.



Patrick Holford is committed to bringing a new and proven approach to mental health to those in need.
Contact Patrick Holford. Nutrition Expert and Founder of the Institute for Optimum Nutrition
pat@patrickholford.com
Buy Supplements Online: patrickholford.com
Find out more about Patrick's work in mental health: foodforthebrain.org.



Regain Mental Health

"So, here we are 21 years later. I am still aligned with all I said all that time ago - Patrick

I predicted there would be a mental health meltdown because no government or healthcare system is prioritising mental health and nutrition and pharma is running the agenda for most. In fact, the latest report in the Lancet shows that 43 per cent of the world's population has disability due to a brain or neurological or psychological issue. Every three seconds someone in the world is diagnosed with dementia. The youngest age of a non-genetic Alzheimer's diagnosis is 19. Autism diagnoses are going through the roof. In Scotland one in 14 schoolchildren are diagnosed with autism. In the UK we have about three million effectively addicted to anti-depressants. That's the bad news.

The good news is that we really do now know how to prevent these problems and have found the way to do prevention on a major scale – to help people change their health behaviours for the better to be happy, healthy and mentally sharp. That's the major part of my work these days at the charity foodforthebrain.org.

My new book *Alzheimer's: Prevention is the Cure* makes this clear. Leading US neurologist and five times New York Times best-selling author Dr David Perlmutter says: "Becoming an Alzheimer's patient is almost always a choice. This book explains why." The 'almost' relates to the less than one per cent of Alzheimer's cases being caused by genes. It is not genes, but our modern lifestyle – both with a lack of nutrients, but also excesses of toxic substances, that is creating a 'total load' that exceeds so many people's and children's capacity to adapt. It is tragic to see what we have done to our children, which is why we have launched COGNITION for Smart Kids and Teens, a free service as foodforthebrain.org, as well as the adult version, to help all know how to regain mental health. My book *Upgrade Your Brain* is all about that.

On a personal front our children have all grown up – we have five grandchildren - and live in the Black Mountains in Wales, where we grow almost all our own food, except for fish. The alpacas protect the chickens. Life is good in our Forest Barn Mountain Retreat centre where groups of people seeking transformation come and stay. When I turned 65 I figured I should learn a new trick – retirement is bad for the brain – you have to keep learning. So I've graduated as a paraglider pilot and go flying across the mountains when the conditions are right.

Last year we were in China and Japan, launching our campaign to prevent Alzheimer's. Next month we launch in Brazil.

I am looking for interested partners to help fund and make this happen in South Africa. It's been far too long since my wife, Gaby, and I have visited.

In a way the world is getting smaller and faster, with digital connections and AI, which is changing everything so fast. Against this speed it is so vital to have a strong 'centre' or ground in our true nature. In that interview 21 years ago you asked me for my favourite quotes. I will add one now: **"Love is the proof that consciousness is shared."**



Looking Back to Look Forward

The value of introspection and understanding how the past shapes your future

As humans, we're wired to think about the future and to focus on planning for what's next on our journey, which can be a great thing, as it helps us set goals and strive for success. However, it can also make the idea of looking back seem counter-intuitive, almost regressive.

Yet, in the realm of mental health and personal growth, the opposite is often true because meaningful introspection and the conscious examination of our thoughts, memories, experiences and emotions, can be a powerful tool for shaping a more self-aware, resilient and fulfilled future.

Understanding how your past influences your present is not about dwelling on regret or becoming stuck in nostalgia. Instead, it's about reclaiming ownership of your narrative, identifying patterns that no longer serve you and forging a path forward rooted in insight rather than unconscious repetition.

When approached thoughtfully, examining your past enhances self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and decision-making. Conversely, when it devolves into rumination - repetitive, unproductive thinking - it can exacerbate anxiety and depression. The key lies in reflective introspection, which is active and intentional, rather than passive brooding.

Psychologists like Carl Jung believed that, until we make the unconscious conscious, it will direct our lives and we will call it fate and that idea underscores the value of revisiting our personal history with curiosity and compassion.

When we understand why we react the way we do, why certain situations trigger us, or why we are drawn to particular people or patterns, we begin to loosen the hold of the past on the present.

How the past shapes the present

Whether we're aware of it or not, our past plays a defining role in our choices, relationships and emotional responses and this unfolds in several key ways:



1. Core beliefs

Our formative experiences, especially in childhood, shape our core beliefs about ourselves, others and the world around us. For instance, a child who grows up feeling neglected may carry a belief of being unworthy of attention. These beliefs operate like invisible scripts, guiding how we interpret events and interact with others.

2. Attachment styles

Early interactions with caregivers influence how we form relationships later in life. Someone with a secure attachment style typically had consistent, responsive caregiving. On the other hand, inconsistent or neglectful parenting can lead to anxious, avoidant or disorganised attachment patterns, which may manifest as relationship instability or fear of intimacy in adulthood.

3. Coping mechanisms

The strategies we develop to deal with stress or trauma - whether adaptive or maladaptive - often persist into adulthood. For instance, a child who learned to avoid conflict to keep the peace may continue to suppress their needs or emotions in adult relationships.

Introspection in practice: Looking back without getting stuck

Reflecting on the past can be an emotionally charged experience so it's important to engage with your history in a way that is constructive rather than overwhelming and, if you do so with practical intent, it will offer rewarding enlightenment. There are several constructive ways in which to do so:

1. Journaling with purpose

Journaling is one of the most accessible tools for introspection and prompt-based journaling can help focus reflection. Some helpful prompts include:

- What are recurring themes in my relationships?
- What situations trigger strong emotional reactions in me, and why?
- What beliefs did I inherit from my family or culture that I now question?

2. Therapeutic exploration

Working with a therapist can provide a structured and safe environment for introspection. Modalities like psychodynamic therapy, inner child work and cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) are particularly effective for exploring the connections between past and present.

3. Mindfulness and meditation

Mindfulness cultivates awareness of your present experience with non-judgment. While it may seem focused on the 'now', it helps reveal habitual thought patterns rooted in the past. When practised consistently, it offers insights into how old narratives still shape your reactions and choices.

4. Healing hypnosis

Hypnosis is a really effective therapy for healing trauma. I was a sceptic and very nervous about it but after experiencing a few sessions with a qualified professional I was able to release trauma on a cellular level.

Healing the past to empower the future

Looking back is not just about identifying wounds and traumas; it's about healing them and it is this healing process that can empower your future in many ways, including:

1. Breaking generational cycles

Introspection can reveal inherited patterns, such as emotional suppression, conflict avoidance or even unresolved trauma, that have been passed down through families.

By becoming aware of these cycles, you gain the power to disrupt and replace them with healthier dynamics.

This can be worked on in family constellations which is a powerful tool to sort out most types of family and generational trauma.

2. Clarifying values and priorities

Many of our goals and desires are shaped by early experiences or societal expectations. Taking the time to explore where your motivations come from allows you to align more authentically with your true self. Are you pursuing a career for validation, or out of genuine passion? Are your definitions of success and love your own, or inherited?

3. Cultivating self-compassion

Understanding the context behind your behaviours - especially those you regret - fosters self-compassion and recognising that you did the best you could with the tools you had allows you to forgive yourself, release shame and approach growth from a place of kindness rather than self-criticism.

Treat yourself with the same compassion you would your own child. Would you advise your child to live with regret and stay stuck in the past? No, it's about acceptance, self-love and moving forward.

Looking forward: The role of conscious intention

Once you've gained insight from the past, the next step is to apply that knowledge so that you can shape a more authentic and fulfilling future.

1. Set boundaries with old narratives

You are not defined by your past. Identify which narratives no longer serve you - such as "I'm not good enough" or "I always mess things up" or "I am not enough/too much" - and challenge them. Replace them with more empowering, realistic alternatives.

2. Make values-based decisions

Use your understanding of your past to set intentions for how you want to live going forward. What values do you want to prioritise? What kind of relationships do you want to cultivate? How do you want to handle conflict or change?

3. Visualise a future self

Imagine your future self - five, 10 or even 20 years from now. What kind of life is that version of you living? What choices would that person be proud of? Visualising a compassionate and wise future self can serve as a compass when navigating difficult decisions in the present.

I view life as a dot-to-dot drawing; Just complete the path to the next dot and eventually the whole picture will reveal itself. Celebrate small wins, you'll get there in spite of yourself and what bagage you carry. Give yourself an opportunity to create something like a highlight reel where you actually celebrate difficult moments that you got through and persevered.

It takes courage to look back, to face discomfort, confront mistakes and revisit pain. But it also offers liberation and, by understanding the forces that shaped you, you reclaim the agency to reshape your path. Introspection doesn't mean clinging to the past; it means mining it for wisdom and using that wisdom to craft a future with intention.

In the words of philosopher Søren Kierkegaard,
"Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards."

Your past holds keys not only to healing but to thriving. By turning inward with compassion and curiosity, you equip yourself with the clarity to step forward with purpose.

Yes, your past is part of your story, but it doesn't have to dictate the ending. By looking back with intention, you gain the insight needed to write a future that is conscious, authentic and whole.

Some spiritual or religious beliefs are that you are exactly where you are supposed to be right now - perhaps a little faith and acceptance is a nice way of looking at it.



Yael Geffen is the CEO and shareholder of Sotheby's International Realty, South Africa. She grew up in a real estate dynasty established by her grandmother, Aida, and, prior to joining the family business in 2009, she acquired extensive real estate marketing, brand building and business development experience in the United States.

Yael is also an accomplished public and motivational speaker and her broadcast experience includes hosting and producing her own radio show from 2013 to 2017. Yael is a sought-after Life and Business Strategy Advisor.

Darkness Retreat. The Womb of Revelation.

The very first time I went into Darkness, it was to meditate. I sealed off the door of my windowless pantry behind the kitchen. I switched off the light with my eyes closed and waited for the light memory in my eyes to fade. Then I opened my eyes to the Darkness. In that instant, I knew myself. There was no inside or outside, no 'me' being in the Darkness - just immediate, primordial wisdom: Still, vast, familiar. It was home. I was home.

Needless to say, I was hooked. I began planning for the time when my children would leave home and I'd be free to spend extended time in Darkness.

As life would have it, the last of my children finished high school just as Covid began. Somehow life conspired to get me to Europe and to a retreat centre where Darkness Retreat is a way of life. I was scheduled for 10 days in Darkness in November 2021. My longing was to spend that time in paradise with the Divine Beloved/Source - and I did. The Beloved met me in my passion and the experience was transformative and life-affirming. It also transformed my understanding of Source, as St Francis said: "The one you are looking for is the one who is looking." I often describe it as five years of personal growth in 10 days. The scattered stars of my life experiences formed constellations. Where there had been confusion and dis-ease, wisdom, meaning and love emerged. Just recently, a client at Darkness Retreat Africa said much the same about her five-day experience.

The following year, Darkness Retreat Africa was born. My spiritual path didn't begin - or end - in the Darkness in France. It began four decades earlier and has included its own dark nights. A surrender to both light and dark became the hallmark of my way. I've come to believe we can only hold the light to the extent that we've befriended our own darkness.

Stepping into physical darkness for 10 days did bring fear. About a month before my retreat, I was suddenly confronted by the spectre of madness: What if the darkness takes my sanity? Everyone who comes to Darkness Retreat brings their own version of that question. For some, it's mild and manageable. For others, it's intense. Many have had frightening experiences - often as children - and the darkness itself becomes the enemy.

But that's not truth. Darkness is neutral - a womb, a tomb, a labyrinth. A place to let go, to grow and to discover or create a new path. As contemplative teacher Andrew Holecek describes, it is 'a metaphysical mirror', reflecting not just what's inside you, but what you project into it.

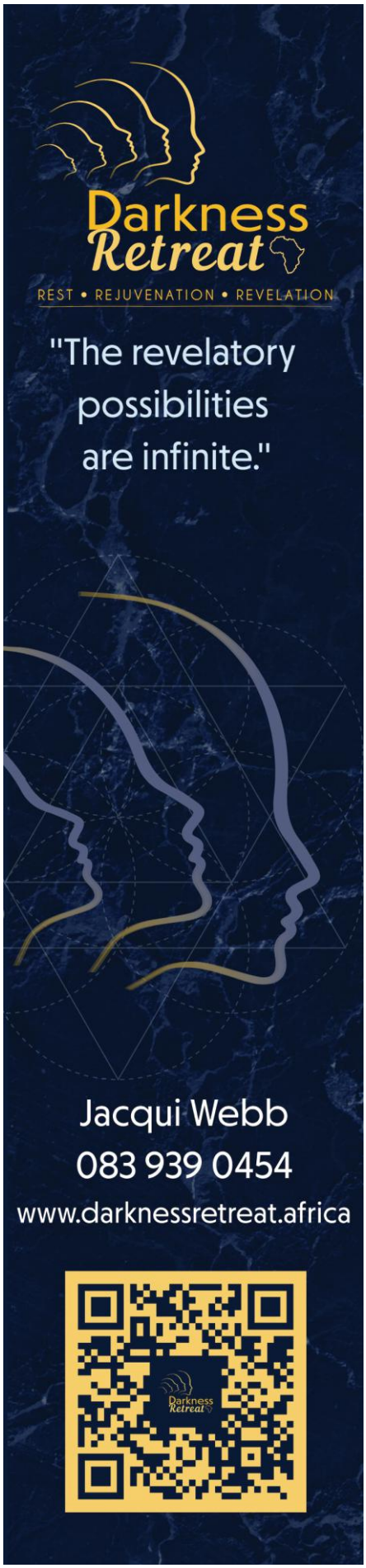
In three years of running Darkness Retreat Africa, I've seen the Darkness meet people exactly where they are. Healers, leaders and seasoned seekers often describe it as the most profound experience of their lives. Some return regularly, saying the clarity and restoration they receive is beyond compare.

And sometimes, someone comes who's never meditated. This is a great honour. The Darkness meets their trust with gentleness, insight, peace and renewed aliveness.

Whatever your need or uncertainty, you are welcome here. I will tend to your comfort and care. The Darkness will tend to your soul.

Come. Be still. Begin again.

"Darkness itself is neutral. But what you project into it isn't. You're literally forced to own up to your projections. And when that happens, the tomb becomes a womb."
Contemplative and Author Andrew Holecek





The Gift of Looking Back

How the Past Gently Lights the Way Forward

By Sharon Castle

We often hear the phrase "don't look back" - as if our past holds us hostage or distracts us from the present. But what if looking back isn't about getting stuck in old stories or regrets, but rather a quiet invitation to remember what we've come through, what we've seen and how life has gently shaped us along the way?

I've spent over four decades in the personal development field and, if there's one thing I've come to see, it's that nothing from our past is wasted. Even the messy bits. Especially the messy bits.

In my 60s now, with more behind me than ahead, I find myself looking back more often - but not with nostalgia or regret. I look back to listen. To see the threads. To recognise the grace I couldn't see at the time. And to marvel at how every single detour, breakdown, heartbreak and unexpected turn somehow carried a seed that would blossom later.

Life doesn't waste anything

There were times in my life when I would have preferred to skip ahead. Times when it felt as if life had got it all wrong. But when I look back now, I can see the deeper intelligence that was always at work - even when I couldn't feel it.

I remember being in my 30s, full of ambition and seeking success in all the ways I thought I should. I was ticking boxes, making plans and doing all the 'right things'. But something always felt off, as if I was chasing a version of life that didn't fit. Back then, I thought the discomfort was a sign I needed to try harder or fix myself.

But when I look back now, I see that discomfort for what it was: Wisdom. A subtle nudge from life saying, 'Not this way'.

That wisdom - though often disguised as restlessness, sadness, or confusion - was always present. It didn't come from books or experts. It came from the stillness beneath the noise of my thoughts. The same stillness that's here now, when I pause to listen.

Seeing through new eyes

One of the most beautiful things about revisiting the past from a quieter, more present place is that you begin to see it through new eyes.

Instead of judging or analysing, I now simply notice. I see how much of my struggle came from believing thoughts that weren't true. Thoughts that said I wasn't enough. That I needed to achieve more. That something was missing.

And yet, when I look closer, I see that even those false beliefs had a role to play. They eventually wore me out in just the right way. They brought me to my knees - humbled, cracked open and willing to see life differently.

I used to think transformation came from striving. Now I see it comes from softening.

The beauty of broken places

Looking back has also helped me soften toward the parts of myself I used to judge. The insecure teenager. The anxious young mother. The woman who pushed too hard, said the wrong thing, stayed too long, or left too soon.

There's something deeply healing about honouring our younger selves - not to indulge them, but to acknowledge their innocence. To see how hard they tried. To thank them for getting us here.

I used to cringe at some of my past choices. Now I see them with tenderness. They were made from the level of understanding I had at the time. And from that understanding, they made perfect sense.

There's no point in arguing with the past. It's not a puzzle to solve. It's a story that continues to reveal its meaning as we grow.

Let the past serve you, not define you

One of the greatest gifts of looking back with presence is that it liberates us from being defined by the past. We don't have to drag it forward like a heavy suitcase. But we can let it inform us. Guide us. Humble us. Remind us of how far we've come.

Every time I revisit a moment that once felt impossible, I remember that I survived. I learned. I healed. And that gives me courage when life feels uncertain again - which it always will.

Looking back isn't about staying stuck in the past. It's about honouring the terrain we've crossed so we can walk forward with more clarity, more compassion and more trust in life itself.

There's nothing to fix

One of the most profound things I've seen over the years is that there's nothing broken in us. Our default setting is wellbeing. Peace is not something we earn - it's something we return to.

Looking back helps us see this truth more clearly. We see the times we were carried, even when we felt lost. We see the moments of grace that arrived when we stopped trying to figure everything out. We see how life keeps offering us a new beginning, moment to moment.

You don't have to wait to become someone else to feel whole. The version of you reading these words - right now - is already enough. Already wise. Already whole.

Let life surprise you

If I've learned anything from the past, it's that life has a way of surprising us - often when we let go of the reins.

Some of the most beautiful chapters of my life weren't the ones I planned. They emerged when I surrendered. When I stopped trying to control every outcome and started listening more deeply.

Looking back reminds me that the future rarely looks as we imagine. And that's a good thing. Life is far more creative than we are.

Let the thread lead you

There's a thread running through your life. Maybe you've seen it. Maybe you haven't. But it's there.

It's the thread that pulls you toward what feels real. The thread that whispers, 'This way'. The thread that connects your past to your present to your future - not as a straight line, but as a spiral, an unfolding, a dance.

Looking back helps you trace that thread. Not to hold on to it, but to see where it's leading. It reminds you that there's always been something bigger at play. Something trustworthy. Something that knows the way - even when you don't.

You're already on the path

So if you find yourself looking back lately, let it be an act of reverence. Of gratitude. Of curiosity.

Let it be a way of seeing how much you've grown, how much you've learned and how deeply life loves you.

And then, when you're ready, turn toward what's next - not with fear, but with openness.

You don't need to have it all figured out. Just bring your whole self forward. The one who's walked through fire and joy, tears and triumph. The one who knows how to get back up. The one who's never really been lost.

You are not starting over. You are continuing the sacred unfolding of your life.

Look back. And then walk on.

"If the only thing people learned was not to be afraid of their experience, that alone would change the world."
Sydney Banks



Sharon Castle is a transformational coach, mentor and founder of Mindfit Coaching Academy. With over 40 years of experience in the personal development field and more than a decade working from the inside-out understanding known as the Three Principles - mind, consciousness and thought - she helps others return to their innate wellbeing and reconnect with the intelligence behind life. Through her writing, coaching and speaking, she invites people to slow down, listen inward and rediscover the freedom of being fully alive. Known for her down-to-earth style, deep insight and lived wisdom, Sharon brings warmth, humility and a spiritual perspective to all she does. At 66, she's living proof that peace, vitality and purpose are not destinations - they are available right here, in the present moment.

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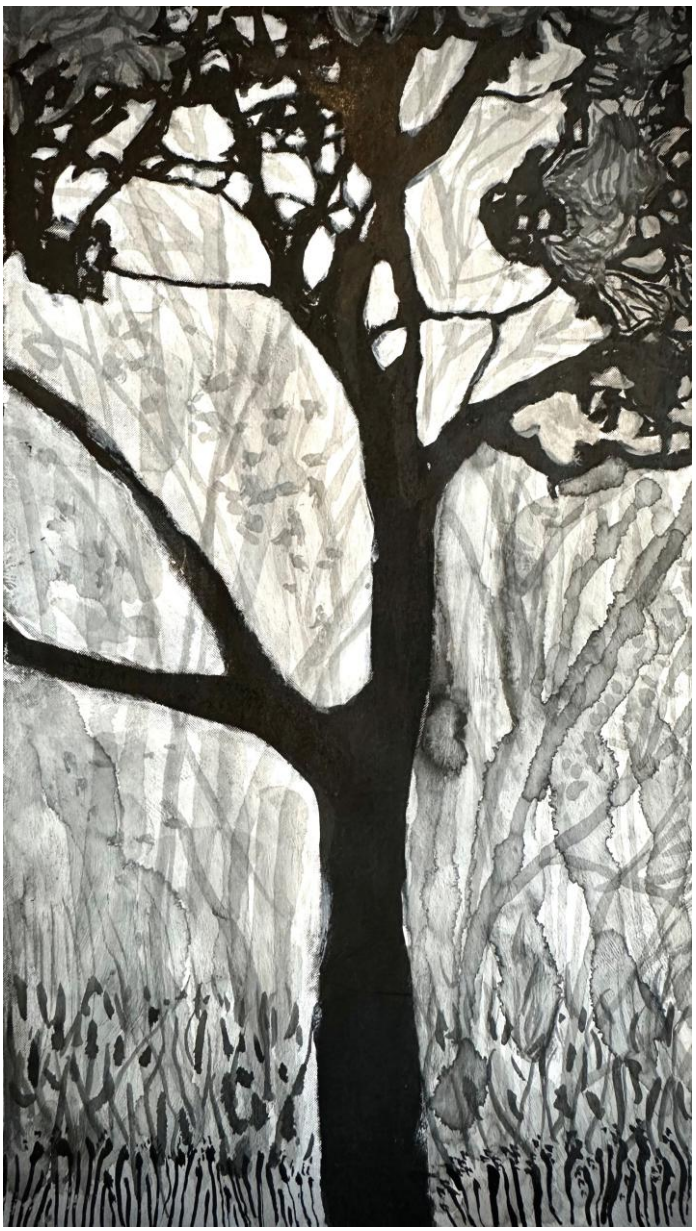
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The Bhodi Tree

By Steve Hurt



At the centre of my garden stands a Bodhi tree. It was grown from a pinch of seed and soil I gathered at a Buddhist temple in Asia. This was no ordinary tree, but a direct descendant of the original Bhodi tree beneath which Siddhartha Gautama became the Buddha. Back in South Africa, a green-fingered friend took great care to nurture the seeds for me and, a few months later, presented me with a beautiful new sapling whose two leaves were the shape of tiny hearts. I have cared for the tree for nearly five years, transferring it to increasingly larger pots until, recently, I felt it was time to give her a permanent home in my garden. Now that sacred tree grows and spreads its branches more every day. She takes centre stage in my garden, marking how precious she is to me, this sacred friend.

All creatures great and small, physical and subtle, are welcome in this space and I speak to the garden every day, asking them to some closer to me. They are the body of this living temple of greenery and I make daily offerings of sweet hibiscus tea, fruit and seeds as gifts. Together, the tree and these offerings form a sacred temple of peaceful contemplation, alive with birdsong and the joyful presence of the subtle world.

There is quiet magic in listening to their conversations, a silent crescendo of communion with the Earth Mother. I tend to this garden as a sacred sanctuary and it brings me a simple peace. This is the place where I can watch the seasons unfolding and reflect on how they mirror the seasons within me: Summer, winter, spring and autumn, each a turning of the wheel in the greater dance of my own life path. It is a place where Nature is placed on a pedestal, where She is invited to thrive, to unfold, to offer her living sutras in the cycles of the seasons.

In contrast to this garden space of remembrance is the outside world, where we live in an era of collective forgetfulness. Our eyes, which were once so finely attuned to the presence of the living Mother, have become dulled into seeing the earth as an objective thing. We have removed the sacred from the earth, forgotten the nature spirits, lost touch with the natural rhythms of life and it is evident in our collective ecological crisis. To me it is important, now more than ever, to return to the natural sacredness of Nature, to look towards Her as the teacher and to surrender our relentless pursuit of spiritual awakening to acts of service to the great Mother. This is not a time for the outward evolution of humanity, but a time to step inside and hold a space of love for the Mother Earth who has been so damaged by an era of masculine domination over Her body. This is why the garden itself is my temple. It is a temple made of Her flesh, in service to Her unfolding, a place where I can intentionally hold a space of love for Mother Earth. And so the Bhodi tree is a symbol of this anchoring, of this rooting of the spiritual path in her flesh, of making a place where she is simply allowed to be, without expectation.

Nature is a teacher. She is the embodiment of the Tao, she is the silent feminine who initiates us into the deeper, unseen aspects of the spiritual path.

This garden is a place of in-scendence rather than transcendence, a place where our spiritual life is taken back, deep into the source of creation beyond the words, teachings and beliefs of the masculine spiritual path that seeks always to reach outward, upward. But She turns ever inward, She is life force expressed as a circle, concentric spirals of rising and descending energies that weave a magic between soil and sky. And in some way, the planting of the Bhodi tree in a temple dedicated to the Earth Mother is a ritual act of giving the Bhodi tree history back into the earth, back to its source, returning the masculine tradition to the depths of the feminine, to reach downward and inward where it can be renewed.

I imagine the roots of this Bodhi tree reaching deeper into the soil, as the energy wrought from the sun is imbibed into its growing. It is the feminine wisdom that gently weaves connections through mycelium, subtly and silently communicating, sharing wisdom from the older trees. In the soil, she invokes the wisdom of interconnectedness, the silent dance of light through the cycles of time. She stands as a living mnemonic of the Buddha, embracing the teachings of one of the great masters of this world, but her roots are now like prayers reaching into the earth and weaving the golden thread that binds all of life in the slow, turning spiral of creation. She is the embodiment of this grand mystery of life playing itself out. And, as summer concedes to winter's downward pull, so her leaves fall down into the dark soil and her life force retreats inward. I imagine her reaching back through the layers of time, her roots entwining with those of the mother tree from which she descended and then further back in time to the origins of all life. This is an ancient thread, a silsila of nature's wisdom that precedes humanity, a living thread that is alive and sentient, a holy return to the source of what is sacred and pure.

Sitting in silence with this living green being, I watch with the eye of the heart how this young tree teaches in the quiet language of Nature, her sutras written in roots and leaves, in the gentle meandering touching of branch to sky. And, as she ventures into the dark depths of the soil, I see with the inner eye how she reclaims the ancient light, the long-stored breath of the sun, absorbed by the soil over centuries. She sinks her roots deeper every day, drawing this living sunlight from the underworld and bringing it back into the leaves, returning the light to the sky. And now, as the bright god of the sun begins its northern journey, leaving our southern skies to the long shadows of winter, I sit in quiet reverence, watching his retreat and the slow, rising breath of winter. Like the tree, it is a time for me to reach deeper, into silence, into my own roots, to retrieve the light that is hidden in my own fertile depths, to return to the depths of the feminine.

The tree points me to the goddess of winter who is a teacher too. I watch her slow, imperceptible dancing in an ancient ritual that has unfolded in nature since time began. That patch of garden grows colder each day, as she claims the shadows, her reach stretching ever broader, reclaiming the fruits of summer and drawing them back into the depths. She opens the doorway, revealing the underworld closer, inviting us to peer into the fertile darkness from which all life arises, weaving the outer with the inner. She shows me how the return of winter is the same journey of the soul, rejoicing in its own slow descent into the depths and how this is a transformation that we can deeply witness through her stillness and darkness. She carries the memory of countless aeons, her wisdom written in the dark weave of forest soil. She knows that sometimes the way forward is first to fall down — that growth is not only an upward reach toward the sky, but also a deep, anchoring descent into the body of the Earth. There is deep wisdom in the Earth.

The Bodhi tree knows this ancient dance of growth and retreat that the goddess of winter brings. She is intimately woven into the lineage of generations of trees from which she descended, a living thread in the forest of deep, dreaming roots that have made their way into the soil for millennia. She was witness to the flowering of consciousness beneath her great grandmother's branches and in some way I believe that she held this space for the process of his transmutation.



Sharing her wisdom with Gautama, holding the space in which he was taken to that perfect unfolding of the Golden Flower of consciousness inside his own depths. The Bodhi tree whispers her invitation to turn inward. 'Come in,' she gestures. 'It's time to surrender to the ancient feminine source, for without this letting go, there can be no renewal'.

Then the rain begins to fall again — a soft, misty autumn rain, saturating the earth. This beautiful tree becomes the empty chalice that seeks His nourishment, an empty vessel for the sky's long exhale. She knows what to do, graciously succumbing to the downward pull, her roots spreading into the dark, fertile underworld. Everything is a holy balancing of restoration, a testament to the cyclical nature of life, a reminder to always surrender to the silence within, to reach deeper, to go to the source where the light enters the world and consciousness blooms.

I sit here, watching the majesty of creation unfolding and seeing how, in this autumn garden, the Bhodi tree turns the sun's light inward. I see how this is the ancient Taoist turning of the light, turning the eye of the heart inward with the descending breath. The tree reminds me of the quiet living stream of feminine wisdom that is always hidden within. And it always points back to the heart. Then I see it. Beyond the form of this tree, this garden, beyond the constructs, there is an even deeper stillness pointing to a perfectly still mind. I see how it is Her mind reflected in every unfolding leaf, every spiralling root. I see how it is Her mind that shapes all of creation. This is the unity, the sacred blossoming of the Golden Flower and it is Her gift on this drizzling Autumn day.



Steve Hurt's writing falls within the paradigm of spiritual ecology which approaches ecology from a spiritual perspective. His writing is influenced by shamanism, sufism and a deep love for the earth. Steve currently lives in South Africa and runs a business that trades in African medicinal plants, a trade that is driven by his wish to preserve the rich heritage of African medicinal knowledge for future generations.
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Weaving with Stars

By Gérraine Rozenkrantz

Once upon a time, there was a night when I asked the Earth to take me. I prayed and bled tears, begged for a hole to open beneath me and swallow me whole. The inner unravelling was too much to bear. I lay in a field of wild grass, the only light in a vast and aching dark was the swollen full moon, pregnant. The burning pain in my chest felt like the end of me and, what I didn't see then, is that it was the end of me. I had nothing left but wails and salt and surrender. So, I asked for the ground to open - to draw me into its dark belly for one last holy decomposition.

But instead... it gave me an intensely clear vision. The sky above me cracked open - black, vast - and in it I saw my own hands: Torn, bloodied, shaking. Stars scattered all about the black canvas void. Bloodied hands worn from a life of trying - and failing. A voice, ancient and holy, whispered only three words: Weave with stars. Again and again: Weave with stars...

That was the beginning of a journey I never sought, never imagined, never understood - but one that rooted itself deeply in me. A journey into my own soul, into surrender, into motherhood, into mystery. I did not understand it then, but the words became a thread that stitched themselves into my being. They returned each time I faced the rawness of being human - each time life stretched me beyond what I thought I could hold. And in those moments, all I would hear was: Weave with stars...

Over the years I've come to know that weaving with stars is no small thing. It is to weave with the unseen. To live not from plans or formulas, but from presence, awareness, grace and love. It is to become the hands that do not know exactly what they are doing, only that they are... and that somehow, that is enough. It is more than enough, it is holy.

A few months ago, I saw those hands again in a vision... but this time, they were not bloodied or broken. They were simply working and weaving, working and weaving - steady, quiet, weaving woollen thread at a loom. Oh, they were working! And it was beautiful! As if each movement was a hymn of praise and love itself. So devoted to the weaving that they had forgotten that they were even doing anything. Suf... Suf... Suf... The accompanying sound. Suf... Suf... Suf... Weaving, weaving, weaving.

The vision wove its way into my tapestry of life. Calling me to understand new depths of living, loving and parenting. I am just a walking story, like any other. Etched and scarred. Patterns and prints woven into this soul being that I call 'self'. The unravelling came to rip apart pieces of this self that were no longer serving my deep, authentic soul being. But what came after that absolute inner death... were the same two hands. Their essence changed and refreshed, their wounds healed somewhat - and they were dancing in front of a loom...

My visions became holy visitations - a voice no less than a hush from the unseen, a breath from beyond the veil. To name it would be sacrilege. It bids to remain ineffable. It didn't arrive with thunder or fanfare but rather pressed itself into my being like an ancestral watermark, a sigil left behind by the unseen hands of time. I yearned - ached - for explanations, for the deeper architecture beneath all… and yet, only the smallest droplets of divine revelation ever reached me. Each one, a holy offering. I drank them thirstily like a parched beggar might sip from the cracked rim of a sacred chalice.

I opened my eyes inward; I opened unto myself through them. And quietly, over time, subtle yet searing revelations rose from my depths like long-forgotten stars coming home to light. They arrived unannounced and sat beside me like old friends, like soul-companions returning.

In their glow, she appeared too - my grandmother, by the stove, always by the stove, stirring, cooking, baking, singing her inner-compass hymns. Her weariness silent and hidden, her heart a willing altar. Her hands - those holy instruments - carried generations. She would rise at the drop of a hat to feed the congregation, while her own soul, her voice, her dreams, were often swallowed by the enormity of duty. Silenced in ways I cannot explain to another and yet… I saw her. I heard her. I listened with wide eyes and a vulnerable open heart. I became the miner of her stories, gently coaxing the jewels from her memory-caverns, treasures buried beneath years of self-sacrificial duty. I loved those moments when the veil of obligation lifted and she was simply herself - radiant, raw, luminous with soul-truth. Her own mythology, spoken aloud.

And over there - my grandfather. Stooped, yet always reaching toward some upright dignity, clutching at the fading echoes of a masculine patriarchy that made him, silently broke him, and shaped him into this becoming. He had to believe his way was the way, that safety could be found within the known scaffolding of dictated belief. He holds such a posture of grace beneath his now translucent sheath of skin - fragile, luminous. His spine reflects the architecture of burdens, his pain a map of a lifetime spent carrying the unseen. I often watched him and wondered at the mirror between his body and his soul. And when he crossed over recently, I saw him again - his great hands stretched out in trust, drawn forward by a hidden pull, a current of divine magnetism. Love had come full circle. His ninety-year love affair with his Beloved had reached its crescendo and, at last, he surrendered - into the arms of the One he had walked with in gardens, in song, in bowed reverence. Together we would often cry, ask for forgiveness and forgive freely. The two of them - my holy grandparent duo - never closed the door of love toward me when I strayed from their beliefs. Instead, they held open the gate of unconditional love so I might wander where I felt called, even when it diverged from their own sacred grove. Somehow, they saw the infinite threads I worked with in my heart. Through them, I heard the hushed echoes of ancestral prayers - sent from lips I never knew, in tongues my mind cannot recall. Yet my body remembered. My blood remembered. A rhythm older than language stirred inside me, like a breath more ancient than time itself.

As foreign and peculiar as my perspectives may have seemed to them, there were moments when they received them - softly - and glanced back to the tapestries of their own lives. In their quiet way, they honoured my deep longing to create something new, something free, something radiant with joyous light. Unknowingly, they urged me to listen again to the long-forgotten art of the heart… the naked soul reaching forward, always seeking renewal and the sweetness of rediscovery. Their eyes would begin to glow, their bodies subtly illuminate, as they held my children close - breathing into them the forgotten dreams of our ancestors. They whispered silent prayers into the folds of time, prayers for the generations to come, hoping they might, just maybe, weave something new and release what has long been lost.

And my children know. Yes - they know it too. Not yet in words, but in shimmering, half-remembered ways that hover just beyond my reach, rippling through the cosmic waters. It is too mystical to fully grasp, yet their marrow and bones speak it to the morning sun and the moon at night. Quietly, they write soul-notes of their own, composing the strands of their tapestry, their own orchestral becoming.

And so, I stay here, with it all. In front of the golden loom of life. In stillness. In awe. Listening. Feeling. And in return I am held and guided by the rhythmic murmur beneath all things. Suf… Suf… Suf…

Eight sparkling eyes look to me daily, as though I know it all. And yet I know exactly how little I know. But I've come to understand that, as a human, I am the living, breathing touchpoint between the ancient past and the unborn future. The vessel through which soul, lineage and destiny converge in the now.

I am the weaver - one thread drawn from the ancestral memory of all that came before, the other from the invisible realms of promise. I simply weave, with the hands of the present, holding both threads ever so lightly, reverently. In every conscious breath I take, with every intuitive act of love, I can weave something ancient and something new into the fabric of now. Humble fingers guided by the invisible – not perfectly skilled, but ever so immensely willing – holding the threads of both the memory and the dreams. In this way, I am not just raising children, I am not just a friend, not just a lover or partner, I am stewarding the evolution of life itself - one sacred moment at a time.

Weaving... Suf... Suf... Suf...

All throughout this journey - through the unravelling and the returning, through unfathomable visions and veiled working hands - *suf suf suf* became the subtle pulse beneath my existence. A silent mantra, plucking the tender chords of my heart over and over again. With every breath, every ache, every offering of presence, it strums me from within. To me it is not a word, but onomatopoeia in full bloom. A vibration subtly permeating all things. It is something I feel in my bones, the spiral of becoming. The quiet whisper of life weaving itself through human form, not a mantra to speak, but a current I hear in the sacred and holy stillness of the heart's fulcrum. When breath slows, when thought dissolves, when only the thread of presence remains. It is the sound of weaving. The Divine moving through matter. The soul stitching time. In that sacred rhythm, I am no longer the doer. I am no longer trying to hold the pattern. I simply become the act of weaving itself. Becoming the breath that binds the threads. It is time undoing itself... and beginning again.

When I feel it, I am not meditating. I am not 'doing' anything. I am weaving with the Great Weaver. Here, I simply participate in the sacred act of holding the fabric of time together - through breath, through presence, through the yes in my bones.

Suf suf suf... the whisper of surrender between what was and what will be - the sacred yes between mother and child, between ancestor and unborn, between lover and loved, between soul and Source.

Suf. Suf. Suf.



Gérraine Rozenkrantz is a seasoned NLP, EFT, mBIT Master Coach, with a BA (Hons.) Psych. Counselling degree, Gérraine brings all her experience into her daily life and surroundings with vigour! She lives fully and believes anyone can create their dream life, interwoven with grace, wisdom, love and joy. She touches hearts and lives through her writing, by hosting various workshops and with public speaking engagements. Her passion towards conscious parenting is founded on her love of working with relationships holistically, honouring it as a living ecosystem of flow. Beyond her professional pursuits, Gérraine is just a homeschooling mom of four gorgeous souls, a passionate writer, weaving mystical insights into everyday life to inspire transformation. For her, life is a daily practice of infusing spiritual awareness into every moment, with as much fun as possible. She finds immense joy in exploring the world with her adventurous spirit, as she believes that each experience is there to enrich our understanding of ourselves and the universe.

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Angela Whitehouse is a founding member of the Reiki Guild South Africa. All Reiki courses are accredited, certified and Internationally accepted.

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A Wealth Odyssey



If anything can be termed an odyssey in modern life, it's the wealth quest. Every single person on the planet is on it and it is highlighted as the very purpose of life itself by most.

Your wealth journey began the day you were born. You brought wealth into someone's life - untold, immeasurable wealth. New life, what price can be put on that? The preciousness of human birth is a key reflection in Buddhism. It is said that human birth is as rare as a turtle swimming across all the oceans of the world coming up for air every thousand years, putting her neck through a single hoop which is also floating somewhere in the oceans! Imagine that!

Contemplating the preciousness of human birth is very useful, as it naturally leads you to think about what you should be doing with this precious gift. Shopping up a storm - for sure, making lots of money - definitely, but what then? What do you do with your life journey? And how do you align it with your wealth quest?

Before you begin a journey you must find out where you are. That is an obvious but profound truth. You absolutely cannot get anywhere unless you know where you are. No exceptions.

Knowing where you are means stopping for a moment to assess your condition with kindness and without judgment. Where are you? What is going on in your life? Where are you in terms of your life journey? Are you aware you are on a journey? Do you know where you're going? Where are you along your wealth journey? Is your money-making in alignment with your ground plan? Is it woven together with your purpose and your spiritual path?

'In the middle of my life I found myself in a dark wood'
from Dante's *Inferno*

Wealth expansion and the spiritual path are often looked at as mutually exclusive. Yet money-making is a journey to the self. It is a journey of discovery. It is a journey towards a destination of new beingness. And without a destination, there can be no journey.

The journey to money-making is an exciting one; it is like a quest and an odyssey. You set off armed with only your vision and your enthusiasm. You meet challenges and overcome monsters and demons. You must cross treacherous terrain and grow, grow, grow, before you can arrive at and capture your prize, your goal.

Goal is important. Not goal as an object you acquire, but goal as the destination of a journey. A destination has a landscape, a feel, a sense, a feeling. A destination will change you. And that, after all, is what you are after, a new you.

Because making money is a journey of discovery of the self. Not only the superficial one- or two-dimensional self, it is also the discovery of the deeper self, the hidden, unexplored and unexpressed self - and the dark self. This is the self that contains all the magic. The self that will unlock all your treasures. The self that guards all wealth. The dark self is the twin self of your heart.



by Kiki Theo

Facing and transforming the dark self is the greatest aim of money alchemy. This is the very real lead that you need to transform into gold. And we all have lead - lots of it. Jung said, 'the greater the being, the greater the shadow'. Uncovering, facing and transforming our shadow is the main part of all the life journeys and it is especially the case with the money journey.

'One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious'
Carl Jung

Money will provoke and activate every fear, every insecurity and every shadow you possess. When you commit to a wealth journey, when you take the decision to take money as a teacher and to open wide your coffers and reveal your treasure, be ready!

Money is a great teacher, the greatest really, which is why money is at the core of so much on the planet as a whole - and also in our lives. Not only that, but as your money-making journey helps you grow, so your shadow grows with you. So money-making has an in-built transformational component to it. It's really quite fabulous (if you maintain a sense of humour...). The more your money grows, the more you grow. That is the best part of the journey!

To start the journey you must find out where you are. Reflect on where you are, right now in your life, in your path, in your journey, in your wealth creation programme, whatever that means to you. Meditation is useful for this. Observing the mind. Not identifying with it, just observing the thoughts that arise. In the same way you can observe yourself. Discover where you are. Take stock. Make some notes about it.

You are reflecting on money as a journey of transformation, of becoming, of expansion of the self as much as of wealth. You are looking at journey as having a point of departure, this being the here and now. You are considering that if you don't know where you are, you cannot get to where you are going, or to anywhere for that matter.

You can consider some other questions too. What does wealth mean to you? Who would you need to become, to be wealthy? What would you need to let go of - and have - to be and feel truly wealthy?

'A wealth you cannot imagine flows through you'
Rumi

The reason more people are not wealthier is because they do not know what that means. It is an abstract, like 'I would love to have lots of money'. What does that mean? If you can't imagine what it means, you won't become it. People become wealthy when they become specific. People become wealthy when they know what that means to them, not only in terms of the objects and amounts involved – the physical, concrete reality – but also in terms of how they want this wealth to make them feel.

"We say I am not quite sure where I am, or where I am going, but I will sit here and try to work out if going by bus or by train is better. I will look at all the timetables, work out the routes, calculate the fares and figure out how hard I have to work before I can afford these fares. (This is called a retirement plan). I will bitch and moan every year that the fares are getting more expensive.

Eventually, I will say I can never afford to go on this journey. Not that I ever knew where I was or where I was going. For if I did know where I was and where I was going, I may have discovered that it's near enough to walk – I never needed a bus or a train." From *Money Alchemy* – Kiki Theo

Making money is not an event. It is an ongoing process of evolvement of self. This means you need to pack a lunch at least, if not a suitcase. And you need to find out both where you are and where you are going before you set out on your journey.

Do not think of making money as something that will happen one afternoon in between lunch and tea-time. And then you just carry on with life as you know it. It is not like that. Making money will change you - and displace you. So be ready to become a new you in a new place. Who is that you that you want to become? What does that you feel like? Where is that wealthy you living? Deep down inside you know - and that space is your destination.

The other reason more people do not make more money is fear of travel. They want to stay where they are. They want to remain who they are, doing things the way they always have been. They fear change and may even be resistant to it. Often they don't know who or where they are or who or where they want to be.

The wealth odyssey is a grand and exciting adventure! It is called life. To have a great trip you must know you are on a journey. You must know where you are, as well as where you are going. Most importantly you must know what that feels like. The destination of your money journey is a new expanded you. So the question is not so much, 'how much money do you want to make', it's 'who do you want to be'. And more specifically, how do you want that to make you feel?

When you know where you are and where you are going - and how you want to feel when you get there, - your wealth journey has begun. Enjoy!

Kiki Theo is a wealth expansion author and facilitator. Bridging money and energy, she offers a combination of business experience, based on her own successful background as an entrepreneur, including over a decade as the owner of a fund management company, and energetic transformations, based on her lifelong study and practice of energetic healing, Jungian psychology and metaphysics. She is the author of nine wealth expansion books and offers courses and one-on-one sessions focused on wealth expansion for self and business that create tangible results. www.kikitheo-wealthworks.com kiki@moneyalchemy.com

Wanted:

High energy, efficient Internet wizard assistant for Kiki Theo

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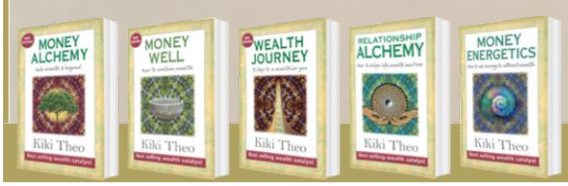
*** Posting articles, images, videos, books on a variety of platforms (incl Amazon, Youtube, Patreon, Thinkific, Mailchimp, FB, Insta, Wix)**

*** Editing and layout of above**

*** Ability to duplicate instructions, work alone and produce top level results**

*** Have a positive, expansive can-do attitude, a desire to excel and to be of service**

Familiarity with Kiki Theo's work a distinct advantage. Salary negotiable.



Please send CV to kiki@moneyalchemy.com

Money, Energy & Consciousness

AFRICA HAS A LEADING HOLISTIC WELLNESS CONSULTANT and COACH and Holistic Mental Health Practitioner Madeleine Pretorius.

Madeleine is a seasoned behaviour expert. She works seamlessly with private individuals as well as business leaders, teams across all organisational levels. Madeleine facilitates individual sessions, workshops and conferences as well as hosting retreats. She is also sought after as a motivational speaker.

A passionate educator and human, Madeleine empowers people to overcome that which does not serve them or that which debilitates them. She an enabler, assisting her clients to overcome and conquer their challenges, enabling them to thrive and succeed.

Below is how Madeleine has redefined this outdated term psychotherapy and shares, as she sees it, below.

'Personal Growth Mentoring'

- Positive psychology coaching;
- Emotional intelligence development;
- Transitional Intelligence expertise;
- Mindful growth guidance;
- Personal growth guidance;
- Breaking through to bliss facilitation;
- Holistic wellness consulting and conferences;
- Personal transformation coaching;
- Alternative strategies for wellbeing and conscious living;
- Conscious living guidance;
- Empowerment therapy;
- Life transition support;
- Personalised coaching and support;
- Podcasts - Voices of Africa (stories and testimonies).

Madeleine also finds the term counselling a total misnomer and embraces the term **'wellness navigation'**, this being far more aligned with both her counselling and mentoring styles. She empowers her clients and patients to take the journey of transformative growth though holistic wellness practices.

Madeleine is able to **unlock your potential** with her expert guidance in transitional intelligence, mindful growth and personal transformation, to take you to where you want to be and were destined to be. This beautiful quote below by Marianne Williamson, reflects this.

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure"

https://madeleinepretorius.co.za





Disability is not the problem... it's how you define it.

Sphelele Dlamini was born in 1996 with a condition that made it necessary to surgically amputate his legs from below the knee shortly after birth.

Growing up with his brother, sister, mother and her family in the township of Kwamashu near Durban in KwaZulu-Natal, he vaguely remembers when he first started walking with a walking frame and his first set of prosthetics. He grew up in a very toxic and violent environment.

"Here I had limited access to equipment and opportunities. For most of my young life, I was teased and called names due to my disability and also, being limited in so many things. Sometimes people will test you with simple things and ask you simple things like how to spell your name or count just to prove and see if you are capable. Most will be jungle basic on the disability. Doors being shut. Lost opportunities due to conditions. But I have learnt one thing: Disability is not a problem - it's how it's defined. "Growing up in a township with my mother's family has made me a stronger and better person because I was never treated like a person who was disabled. I was treated like a normal person and everyone was equal. That helped me a lot to not feel sorry or bad for myself but also not to think about it too much. It has been a blessing to grow up under such a great family, which has a bit of an understanding of the condition, especially myself. From a young age I knew and understood about the disability, which made life a bit easier because they didn't have to be stressed about anything. Especially being a parent of a differently abled human being is not easy because there is limited access to equipment and a higher cost of living.

"My parents played a huge role in my life. Growing up I wanted to be a medical orthotics prosthetic doctor because that's what I loved as a kid. But along the way sport came into my life during my primary school days, which has opened a lot of doors and opportunities. I got to travel to some places through sport and I played several competitions for KZN and won medals. I met Jumping Kids, and they opened a lot of opportunities and supported me. The support I have been receiving from them since 2012 is massive; they have been behind my back. And getting an opportunity to use the high-quality prosthetic legs."

Right now Sphelele is a Jumping Kids' role model.

"When I met the team from the Jumping Kids Prosthetic Fund, I had already been using government-issue prosthetic legs for some years. The opportunity to have my prostheses custom-manufactured, as part of the Jumping Kids Open Air School Project, made a huge difference. It became easier to get around and that boosted my confidence," says Sphelele. He adds that it was through this project that he met some of his favourite role models.

"I have quite a few role models. For me, they are the people with whom I have accomplished great things, people I greatly admire, such as Tyrone Pillay, Ntando Mahlangu, Michael Stevens and Black Coffee.

I am focused on being a good role model myself. I hope that in the future I can do my part to make sure more differently abled kids get the opportunities I had or to encourage more female athletes to take up paralympic sport," he says.

About the sport

Sphelele was introduced to wheelchair basketball in primary school. He fell in love with the game and has been playing ever since.

In 2016, he had an opportunity to play wheelchair basketball professionally abroad.

At the time, Sphelele could not afford the flights, visa and travel insurance necessary to take the contract. In 2022, when the opportunity to play internationally presented itself again, Michael Stevens from the Jumping Kids Prosthetic Fund decided to help make it happen.

"Gravelines had given me an offer to play for them. I had to handle the visa application, flight bookings and travel insurance myself. That's when Mike got involved. He made and paid for all the necessary arrangements on my behalf to make sure I could get to France!

I knew I had to go for it. It is not easy for a South African wheelchair basketball player to get noticed and be offered this kind of opportunity. In South Africa, we do not often get the chance to play on an international level.

"I knew that, if everything went well and I got the opportunity to play in France, I would gain valuable exposure and if I did well, it would give me a better chance to get noticed for more opportunities to play professional wheelchair basketball in Europe," Sphelele explains. He received a warm welcome at Gravelines.

"I am impressed by the understanding the club shows for each player and the efforts made to make us feel cared for, comfortable and at home. France is a warm, welcoming country. People are always willing to help and there is a lot of support. It is very advanced.

"I would love the opportunity to play in a higher league in Germany, Spain or Italy. It is my goal to keep pushing to get recognised on the European wheelchair basketball circuit and to continue to play professionally. It is my further dream to play for South Africa one day.

"I have a lot of plans and ideas that I would like to see through in the future. Doing my part to help more differently abled kids to get access to assistive equipment and inclusive opportunities is one of them.

"For me, it is important to keep reminding the world that we are one big family under God.



We are all created by and belong to God, whether differently abled or normal. My focus is on loving myself and growing as an individual, to be the best possible version of myself and to pay it forward when the opportunity presents itself," Sphelele concludes.

"Now I have an opportunity to play further in a higher division that will move me closer into playing in the higher leagues and fully professional wheelchair basketball in Italy, Spain, Germany. Funding assistance or sponsorship is always needed. There are many financial costs needed to stay active and healthy, sometimes depending on the teams. Countries like Italy, Germany and Spain are fully professional.

Lastly, I want to share my experience and also be able to help, in the way Jumping Kids has helped me with one of the hardest things: Limited access and opportunities and the higher cost of living that many of us can't afford. I have had the privilege of being part of a charity that has supported me for years: Jumping Kids who recently supported me. Not all children have the same privilege as me. Life is hard enough as it is in South Africa. Many South Africans living with disabilities cannot reach their goals and potential because they do not have access to equipment. Jumping Kids' support has had a huge impact on my life, not only on prosthetic leg support but also on my journey, allowing me to live my dream. In the last two years I got to travel to a number of countries: France, Dubai, Belgium, Qatar and the Netherlands, which has allowed me to build my profile on the European market and also to get a sense of what we can do to get more Africans or South Africans to play wheelchair basketball in Europe and understand the European markets.

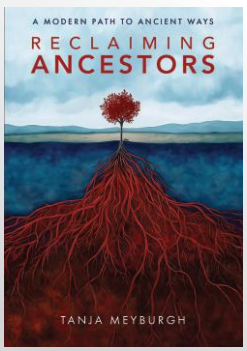
Wheelchair basketball truly saved my life, it gave me a second chance and a purpose in life and the understanding that the challenges and struggles I had were part of the journey. My late mother and her paternal side of the family have played huge role. It is never easy to raise a child living with a disability, especially when you come from humble beginnings. In my basketball journey, a special credit goes to Siphamandla Gumbi, who truly believed in me. He pushed me to believe that there was something I could offer and gave me a chance when no one did. He was like a father figure, an elder.



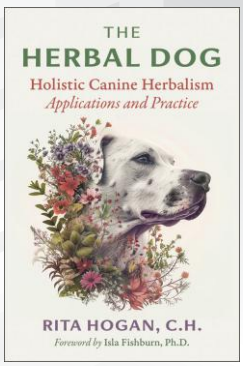
The Wheelchair Basketball that that Sphelele and others like him participate in requires significant funding. Should you wish to participate in contributing in any way contact emails and informative social media links are below. Visit Jumpingkids.org.za for donor information.

Email: spheleledlaminimax@icloud.com
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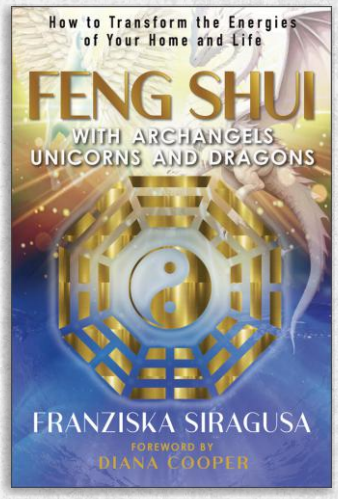
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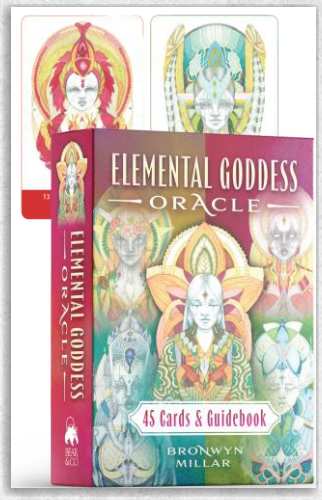
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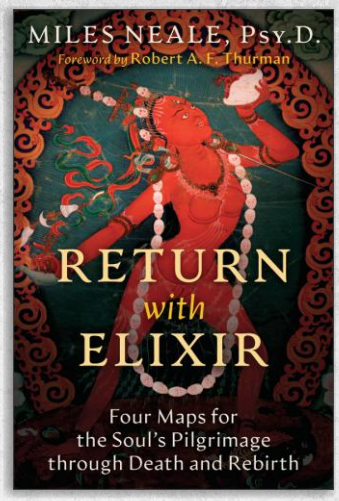
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& REALIGNING.

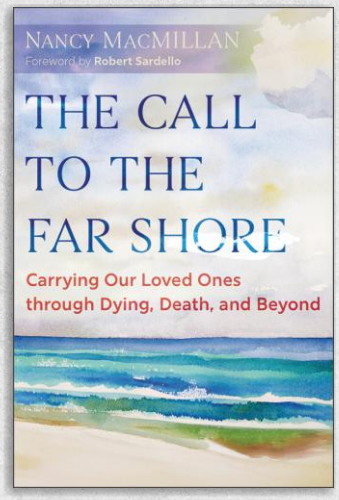
Krystalini Yoga invites you into a 1-day guided digital immersion - a self-paced sanctuary with breathwork, meditation, yoga, creativity, and powerful self-reflection practices.

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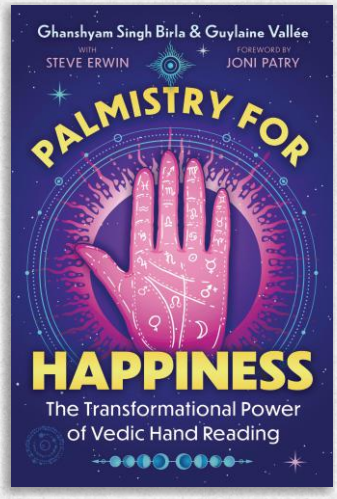
Feng Shui with Archangels, Unicorns, and Dragons
Franziska Siragusa
In this 5D Feng Shui guide, ascension teacher Franziska Siragusa shows you how to activate the flow of cosmic abundance in your home and life with the support of archangels, unicorns and dragons. Introducing us to the realms of these higher beings, Franziska provides practices to connect and interact with angels, unicorns, and dragons and work with them to help clear spaces and infuse them with positive, uplifting energy and higher frequencies. Detailing a 10-week journey of transformation, the author presents weekly activities and exercises to help you flourish and energetically clear specific areas of your home and life, beginning with meeting the angel of your home and drawing your own 5D Feng Shui Bagua of Higher Aspirations. Meet your personal unicorn, dragon, Guardian Angel and overlighting Archangel.

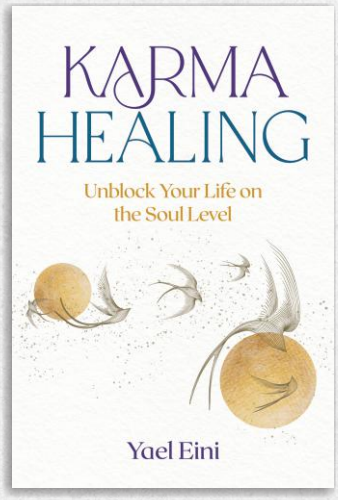
Elemental Goddess Oracle
45 Cards & Guidebook
Bronwyn Millar
The author is a South African artist, writer and kinesiologist who discovered the healing wisdom of interdimensional Goddesses during meditation sessions. Artfully blending interdimensional Goddess wisdom, the five elements of Chinese medicine, trauma healing techniques and hands-on acupoint practices, this evocative deck and guidebook introduces 45 Goddesses, each from dimensions where the sacred feminine is active. Speaking through the author, the elemental Goddesses share their healing wisdom on releasing sexual trauma, shame and taboos and show us how to embrace and love our bodies, our sensuality, and our feminine power and magic. Each card features a hand-drawn symbolic portrayal of an elemental Goddess, each named for her theme or the acupoint she is connected with. In the accompanying guidebook, the author explores each Goddess in full.

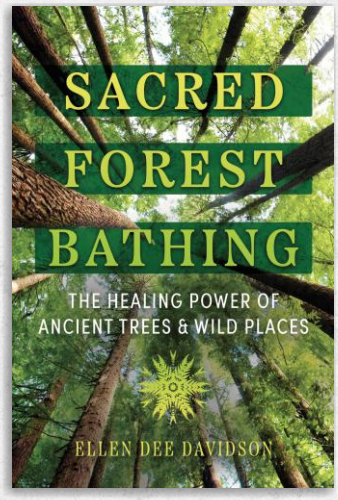
Return with Elixir
Journey of Rebirth
Miles Neale, Psy.D
Exploring wisdom from mystical traditions and perennial philosophy on "dying before you die," Buddhist psychotherapist Miles Neale shares his own hero's journey of rebirth, providing a detailed roadmap for the pilgrimage through dissolution, into the great mystery, and back again to the world. He shares his transformation through a spiritual crisis and, ultimately, his creation of a more meaningful life. He provides four intersecting maps to help guide readers through the experiential process of metaphoric death, reclaiming the soul and sharing one's genius with others. These four maps, the cosmological map, psychological map, alchemical map, and mythopoetic map, draw on the mythological stages of Joseph Campbell, Carl Jung's process of individuation, the Tibetan Buddhist alchemy of conscious rebirth and the astrological phenomenon of the precession of the equinoxes.

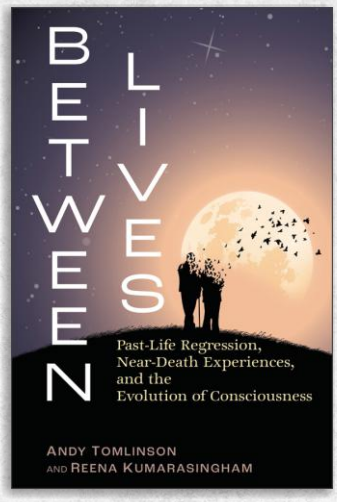
The Call to the Far Shore
Death, Dying & Beyond
Nancy MacMillan
Through her work with the dying, Nancy MacMillan reveals the very real imaginal world where nature, myth, dreams, ancestors and those yet to be born whisper from the far shore, a place beyond our last breath. She reminds us that caring for our dying consciously is a transformative act, radical even, in restoring meaning to our place and purpose in the universe. She explores how to carry our loved ones through death ,how to honour their bodies and spirits and how to awaken to the ever-present help of our ancestors. She shows how the practice of caring for the dead can help both those grieving and the newly dead and she reveals how healing and closure can be brought about through preparing the body for a vigil or funeral.

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Palmistry for Happiness
The Transformational Power of Vedic Hand Reading
In this detailed guide to the art and science of Vedic palmistry (jyotish), renowned Vedic palmist-astrologers Ghanshyam Singh Birla and Guylaine Vallée reveal how the lines on our hands are a direct reflection of our thoughts, behaviour and energies and that it's possible to change our lines and shape our destiny. Sharing insightful case studies that illustrate the connection between changed behaviour and changed handprints, the authors teach us how to interpret what our palms tell us about where we have been, where we are now, and where we are capable of going. They explore the meaning of different lines and signs on the palm, including the correspondence between the Life Line and happiness and the minor lines and mindfulness.

Karma Healing
Unblock Your Life on the Soul Level - *Yael Eini*
Exploring the concept of karma and its profound impact on our present lives, Eini explains how to identify and work through soul lessons, past life experiences, reincarnation patterns and the karmic knots holding you back. By understanding and resolving these deep-rooted issues, you can align with your soul's purpose and unlock your true potential. The author details the transformative power of Karmic Constellations, a method she developed, which combines elements of energy healing and of family constellations to intuitively engage with past lives, soul contracts and soul lessons. Through real-life examples, the author illustrates how understanding and working with Karmic Constellations can facilitate profound self-transformation and healing. Examine the role of soul contracts and agreements in shaping our life experiences.

Sacred Forest Bathing
Ellen Dee Davidson
The Healing Power of Ancient Trees and Wild Places - Weaving together environmental science, wilderness adventure, goddess mythology and the sentience of old growth redwoods, the author shows how to cultivate a sensitivity to the forest and open a channel to its wisdom. She presents simple techniques of receptivity, some from her Buddhist mindfulness practice, along with forest bathing protocols to help you strengthen your bond with nature and learn to listen deeply to the denizens of the forest, especially trees. She examines the scientifically proven healing benefits of spending time in nature, showing how forest bathing can calm, soothe and heal our bodies, minds and spirits. She recounts her own remarkable healing from fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue. Revealing how ancient trees can help expand our consciousness.

Between Lives
Past-Life Regression, NDEs and the Evolution of Consciousness
While neuroscience reveals much about the brain, it has not determined the precise relationship between the brain and consciousness. The authors, Andy Tomlinson and Reena Kumarasingham, probe the depths of this relationship while offering practical ways to develop and raise one's own consciousness. They examine evidence that supports the existence of consciousness independent of the brain, such as savant syndrome, lucid dreaming, telepathic communication in dreams, mediumship and out-of-body experiences. The authors also consider case studies of near-death experiences including Kumarasingham's own finding commonalities across such phenomena, particularly with between-lives memories gleaned through regression hypnosis. Readers will gain deeper awareness of the spiritual energy imbued within the physical world and learn how to transcend self-imposed limitations.

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Closing Date 20 August 2025



The New Human

a Return to Your Soul

by Lilah Wolpert

As a human collective, we are in an extremely transformative time, calling for a new way of being, an evolution in consciousness and a reconnection to our Souls, both individually and as a human species. This year's intense astrological shifts are deeply associated with beginning again and the year 2025 is a powerful year to do the work that is necessary to prepare for a rebirth. In a way, I see it as the great collective Phoenix Rising, where the fire of Aries burns away the old and, if you are ready, you can soar to new heights and connect with your Heart and Soul's desire. But, it will ask of you to be courageous, for you to show discernment and for you to let go and make the necessary changes to negative mental and physical health habits and possible changes in career and personal relationships that may be calling you.

As a lifelong spiritual seeker, I have always wanted to know who and what God is; my concern has always been the state of my Soul. What is it calling for? What needs healing? What do I need to be aware of in my field and am I honouring its journey? In an age where there are multitudes of spiritual distractions and misinformation, you are being called to be humble to make deep connections with your Soul. To prepare your physical, emotional and mental bodies to receive the energies of the Soul. You will be asked to work with your energetic field, working with lower vibrational and negative thought patterns, belief systems, perceptions and physical habits that hold you in a state of disconnection from Spirit and constriction within. Seeking out your Soul whilst the world has gone mad is an act of Spiritual Revolution.

During these challenging, chaotic times, I believe we need to ask ourselves the question. What does it mean to be Human? For me, to be Human is to be spiritual, it is to be led and animated by a force higher than your thinking mind, greater than your ego and aligned to both Creator God and the heart of Mother Earth. This is not to move you away from yourself, but rather to embody more deeply who you truly are, who we truly are, humans in a physical world that have access to higher dimensions and more loving ways of being. I believe this to be our true identity, to be guardians of life. To honour the Garden of Eden blueprint that was offered to us by whoever you believe God to be. We have lost our way and we are feeling this on all levels, deeply and profoundly.

To be Human, then, is to be a guardian of all of Life. To be Life. To know what it means to be a conscious creator and to be deeply aware of how you animate this life force in a way that supports both your life and the life of others.

The New Human is someone who is both committed and dedicated to the receipt of their Soul's wisdom and calling, in service to humanity, not in service to self. To make time to listen, to be committed to working with lower vibratory thoughts and emotions and to know that spiritual mastery in physical form is the greatest service to the Divine. As a healer, I see the unseen and I believe that life does not end here on the planet when we leave our physical bodies. What I know to be true is that you are part of a conscious and living connected universe.

I believe that there is an intelligent, creative and loving force behind all that exists. And that this creative source lives in every one of us and within it exists our truest and highest potential. You can give common names to these forces, God and Soul perhaps, but then you can also just refer to them as your life force, your light, your infinite and pure vibrational essence. This divine vibrational essence is the pulse of energy of which we were a part when the birth of our Souls took place. When the creative pulse, I call the Breath of God, sent out, one more unique vibrational essence fills the void.

You are naturally wired to be unique, to find ways in which you can express the uniqueness of your soulful expression, however, the societal systems and everything that affects your living situation today act against you becoming connected to this Divinity. Becoming connected to Life. Once connected to these natural planetary grids, you become 'off grid', disconnected from harmful energetic matrices and negative influences, yet connected to a much more powerful and natural energetic currency.
You may ask, then, what is it that you need to do to move towards a place of greater Soul connection, of working with your energetic field in a way that supports this embodiment of your Soul and Spiritual Life Force? The first step is building energetic integrity, which means holding yourself in a balanced state where you are not taking power away from others and where you are not enabling others to take power away from you. This will require you to examine elements of co-dependency, manipulation and power over struggles, to name a few.

LILAH WOLPERT

FOUNDER & DIRECTOR: SCHOOL OF SPIRITUAL ALCHEMY

HEALER AND SPIRITUAL TEACHER

"The world and humanity are suffering from a spiritual crisis, in which the soul and its power to heal and bring higher forms of wisdom have been largely ignored."

Lilah is a healer & spiritual teacher who has been working with clients one-on-one for over a decade. She offers the opportunity to learn new ways of living, assisting you in moving towards a more spiritual and soul-led way of life. Her client sessions are offered on a donation basis according to your means and the value you receive.

Lilah holds her signature "Alchemy of Awakening Programme" in Cape Town, with the next intake for February 2026. Applications are now open.

You can contact Lilah via email or WhatsApp to book a session or enquire about the School's programmes.

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The second and probably the most important step is to connect deeply into your heart centre. The energetic heart centre or, as I like to refer to it, the spiritual heart centre, is a stargate, which needs to be open to both receive the Soul and distribute the Soul's wisdom and healing throughout your multidimensional existence in this third-dimensional realm. Since the Soul only knows truth and the Heart is the seat of the Soul, you will need to deepen your authenticity, connecting with those truths that are difficult for you to acknowledge, difficult for others to hear - and work from a place of self-compassion, for yourself and others. The third and often the most challenging stage of Soul embodiment is when you have achieved sufficient heart expansion on both the vertical and horizontal energetic planes that you now can go into the lower realms, where mostly fear and death traumas reside, to move through this underworld, examining and sinking into its depths. It is here that you work deeply with your subconscious, and working with dreams is critically important to gain clear insights as to what it is you are being asked to both clear and awaken within you. The deeper you move into your underworld, the more you activate your psychospiritual biosphere. Clearing out the depths of emotional stagnation is not just a spiritual act but an act of reclamation of your sovereign spiritual body.

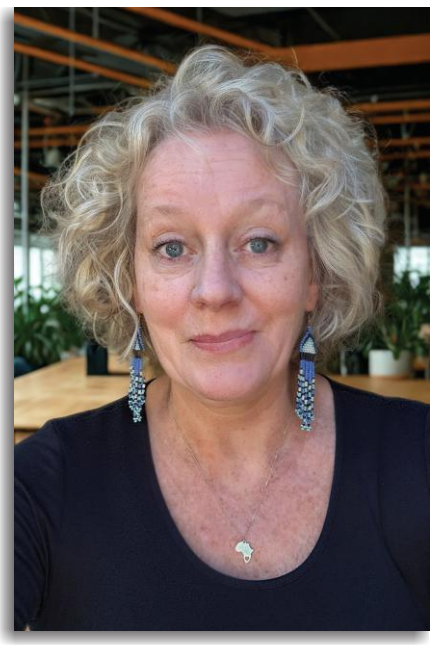
These stages are the stages of your life and the last and most difficult is likely to happen in your later years. Soul embodiment is the journey of your lifetime. Life itself offers you the conditions and opportunities to choose from a place of the Heart and Soul, or to be swayed by the lower dimensional thinking mind and persuasions from others and the outside material world. Everything comes from within and it is here that your most important work lies.

The key to working with yourself in a way that supports the embodiment of your Soul is to take complete responsibility for yourself, your thoughts, words and actions and to implement practices that allow you daily access to contemplation in silence and solitude. If you aren't able to create this space at home, go and find a tree, a quiet place in Nature and make that your sacred retreat. Regular practice in the same place is beneficial as you begin to build a sacred field, a space where you will be greeted by your Soul.

Soul embodiment is an act of reclaiming all of who you truly are, bringing harmony and balance to a system that is self-organising, connected to the natural energetic circuitry of the planet and the Cosmos.

This year and next year will require hard work, commitment and dedication. You will be asked to move through your underworld and the underworld of the collective as the New Human is birthed through the landing of your Soul. This is not a time for 'ascension' or to escape into the spiritual realms. This is a time for your Soul to be in Power, for you to be empowered in your sovereignty as a soul-filled human. This is a time for descent and, ultimately, for resurrection into the new soul-filled human.

For the future of our children and our children's children, we need to start understanding ourselves as energetic beings and why the health of our physical, mental and emotional states is dependent on the state of energy that we hold in our psychospiritual biosphere. Can you imagine how much more beautiful the world could be if we committed to living from a place of the Soul?



Lilah is a healer and seer and is the founder of the School of Spiritual Alchemy. She offers public talks and teaches on The New Human – the Path of Soul Embodiment. She also works privately with clients who are seeking out healing and guidance from their Soul and the realms of Spirit.

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In a world where health is often reduced to symptoms and prescriptions, BodyTalk offers something truly different - something deeply intuitive, profoundly personal, and remarkably effective. This revolutionary system of healthcare taps into your body's own innate wisdom, helping you heal from the inside out - physically, emotionally, mentally, and even spiritually. Imagine a practice that doesn't just treat your body like a machine but honours your whole story - every experience, every emotion, every challenge you've faced. That's BodyTalk.

At its core, BodyTalk recognises that your body knows how to heal - it just needs help remembering. Using light, non-invasive tapping on key areas like the head, heart, and navel, BodyTalk sessions reconnect the communication systems within the body, enabling natural healing to occur. This is not guesswork; it's a finely tuned conversation with the body that uncovers hidden imbalances and restores harmony. Each session builds on the last, creating a ripple effect of cumulative healing. Whether it's chronic pain, fatigue, anxiety, or simply feeling out of alignment, BodyTalk works by addressing the root causes - often hidden beneath the surface.

What sets BodyTalk apart is its foundation in a unique blend of Western medicine, Traditional Chinese Medicine, neuroscience, quantum physics, and ancient wisdom. These systems are woven together into a cohesive, intuitive, and profoundly effective approach to healing that is safe, non-invasive, and suitable for all ages.

But it's more than a therapy - it's a journey. A BodyTalk session feels like stepping into a sanctuary where you're seen, heard, and held with compassion. It's a sacred space where your story is honoured and your body's intelligence is acknowledged. It's not about fixing you; it's about empowering you to reconnect with your natural state of balance and wholeness.

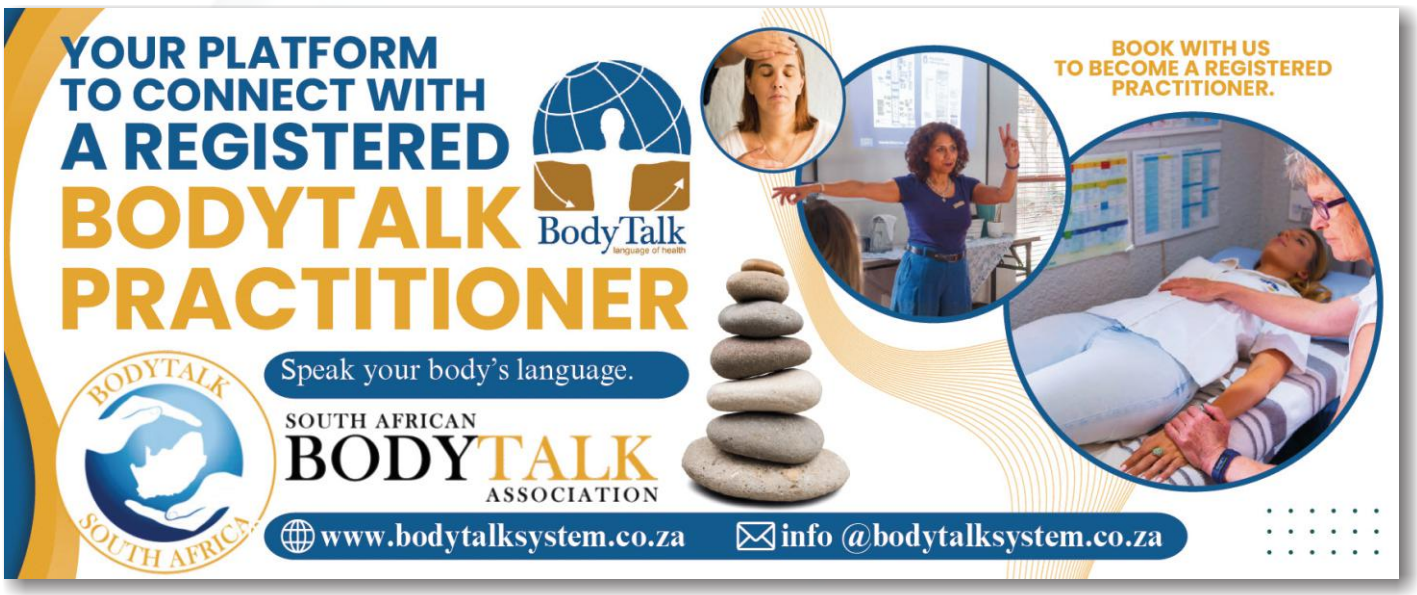
What makes BodyTalk even more extraordinary is that anyone can learn to do it. Becoming a BodyTalk Practitioner is an invitation to walk a path of purpose and transformation - not just for others, but for yourself. You don't need a medical background, just a willingness to learn, listen, and trust. Practitioners around the world come from all walks of life, yet they all share one thing: the desire to help people heal in a way that's lasting, gentle, and deeply holistic.

When you train in BodyTalk, you don't just gain a toolkit - you undergo your own personal evolution. Each module you study, each technique you practice, aligns you more closely with your own truth and helps you show up more fully for the people in your life. You learn to trust the body, to respect its signals, and to communicate in a language that transcends words.

Whether you're a healer, coach, parent, or simply someone on a quest for deeper meaning, BodyTalk offers a fulfilling and flexible career path that truly makes a difference. And in a world craving connection and authenticity, there's never been a better time to say yes to this journey.

So, are you ready to experience the power of BodyTalk? To uncover what your body has been waiting to tell you? Better yet - are you ready to be the one who helps others transform their lives too?

Visit www.bodytalksystem.co.za for a Full Practitioner listing as well as the steps to becoming a Certified BodyTalk Practitioner. For any further assistance, please contact info@bodytalksystem.co.za





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Online



Internet addiction

Digital Dopamine

"He seems to prefer his own company," says Dad, glued to a soccer match on TV and leaving his son to do his own thing.
"She finds her own entertainment," adds Mom in answer to a query about their daughter's whereabouts.
"You're so lucky," remarks a visitor, "not having to worry about your children."
But wait. What are the youngsters actually doing and why are they so absorbed with it?

United nations statistics showed that around 77 per cent of people aged between 15 and 24 used the Internet in 2023 and the figures have been mounting exponentially. Children who find ways to amuse themselves are increasingly likely to be seeking entertainment of one sort or another on a digital device, usually connecting to the Internet. This could well be by researching a topic that interests them and could help them with their studies – or they could be courting serious trouble.

While easy access to the Internet has created opportunities for children and young people to communicate, learn, socialise and play, giving them new ideas and more diverse sources of information, this comes with serious risks. A good deal has been written about cyberbullying and other forms of peer-to-peer violence, possible exposure to hate speech and violent content - including messages that incite self-harm and even suicide – disinformation and online sexual abuse. But these are by no means the only dangers that lurk in the cyber world.

Statistics show that the average person spends over two hours per day on social media and the seemingly innocuous pastime of taking an interest in how other people lead their lives can lead to comparisons and dissatisfaction with one's own body shape, lifestyle and perceived opportunities. The resulting loss in self-worth can lead to serious depression and, in extreme cases, suicide. These reactions can affect people of all ages, but are particularly worrying in children and adolescents.

While girls are most likely to suffer from loss of self-confidence as a result of comparison, boys are more liable to get hooked on games – neither of which is a healthy occupation, particularly for adolescents, whose brains are still developing. Add hormones to the mix and the situation is heading for crisis proportions.

The unwitting culprit is a substance called dopamine – the 'feel-good' neurotransmitter - but its role in the brain is far more complex than simply making us feel pleasure, driving us to seek out experiences that our brains perceive as beneficial.

Each time you check your phone and see a new notification or a 'like' message, each time you overcome your digital opponent in a game, your brain releases a small burst of dopamine, giving you a sensation of pleasure and encouraging you to check your messages again soon or start on another game, looking for more satisfaction.

But you can get too much of a good thing. Like anything else – from cream doughnuts to drugs – dopamine gets less effective the more you get of it. So you carry on, trying to get more of your dopamine fix, until you are truly 'hooked'.

The Journal of Behavioral Addictions found that the dopamine release associated with smartphone use was similar to that experienced during gambling or substance use.

Carrying on with activities that trigger dopamine release, our brains begin to form strong neural pathways associated with those activities. Over time, these pathways can become so entrenched that they lead to compulsive behaviour. Too much dopamine can lead to a condition known as dopamine desensitisation, when the brain becomes less responsive to normal levels, prompting you to search for more intense stimuli to achieve the same level of reward.

Research shows that young people with internet addiction experience changes in their brain chemistry. A study published in PLOS Mental Health showed these changes were evident throughout multiple neural networks. According to this study: 'Adolescence is a crucial developmental stage... the brain is particularly vulnerable to Internet addiction-related urges during this time.' This, it continues, can lead to potentially negative behavioural and developmental changes.

In 2020, the World Health Organisation formally recognised addiction to digital technology as a worldwide problem, leading to inability to manage time, energy and attention, disturbed sleep patterns or insomnia, citing digital addiction as one of the major reasons why people - and adolescents in particular - sleep less and less well.

Internet addiction disorder (IAD) and Internet gaming disorder (IGD) are both characterised by altered punishment-reward sensitivity and deregulation of the dopamine transmitter pathways in the brain, causing total loss of impulse control. They are, therefore, equivalent to any other form of addiction.

Defining the problem is one thing – finding a solution is another.

Parents and teachers need to be on the look-out for behavioural changes, especially those lasting two or more weeks. Notice if youngsters are obsessively checking for messages, spending more and more time alone, losing interest in their hobbies and struggling to concentrate.

There are several things a family can do to halt the insidious creep of digital disruptions to family life. Banning cellphones at mealtimes is a good place to start. Previous generations were not allowed books or comics at the table so insisting on family interaction at meals is not 'picking on' the younger generation. Banning digital devices in bedrooms may prove more difficult but it's necessary if you want to keep track of what they are actually doing online.

Set a good example. You'll never convince them to put down devices if you're checking yours instead of interacting with them. Hopefully the generations will come to enjoy each other's company and conversation. Take an interest in what they are doing. Just as you'd ask about school or friends, chat about their online interests. They are, after all, the digital generation and they might be able to teach you something.

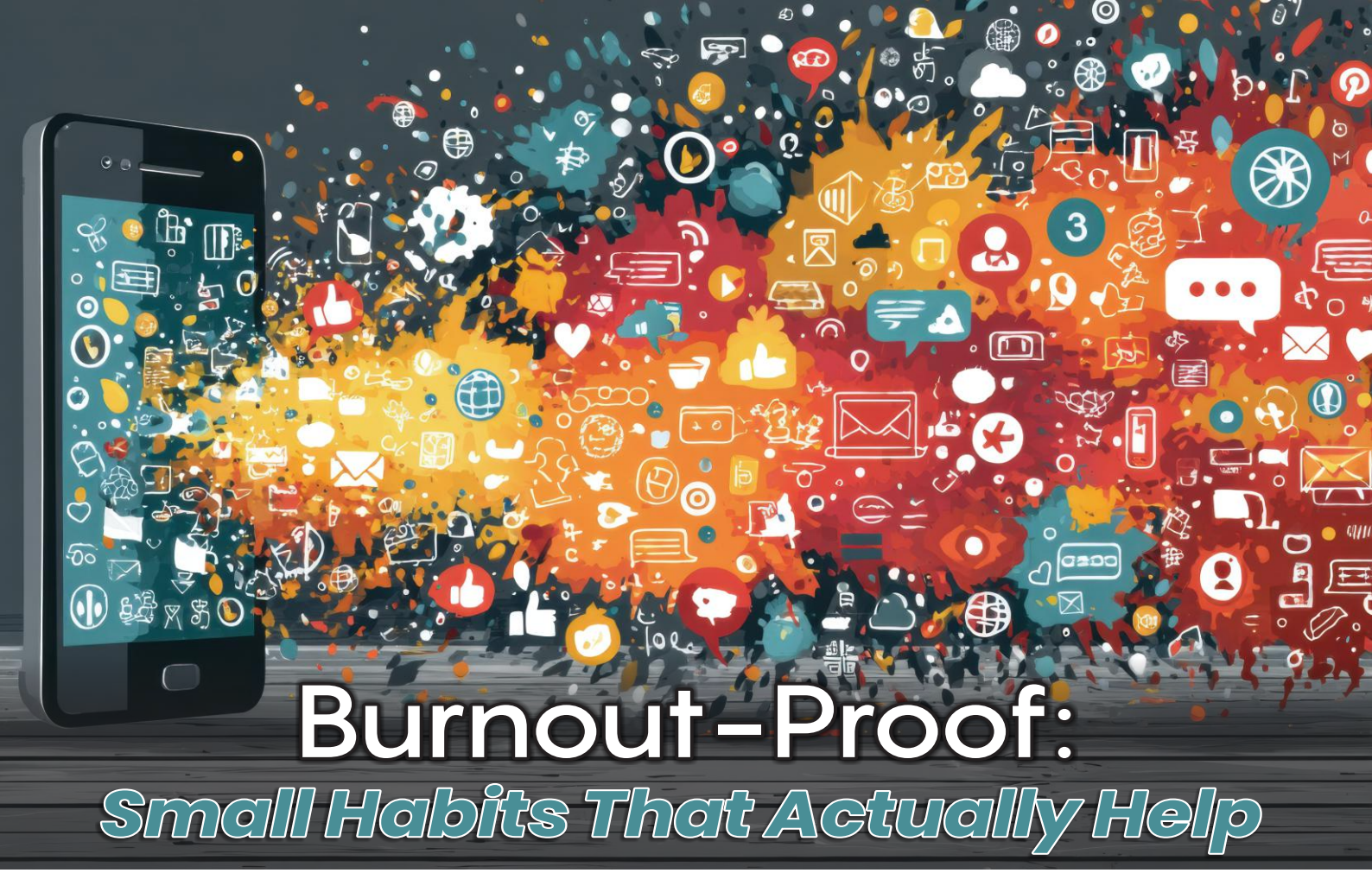
Encourage hobbies and outdoor pursuits they'd enjoy. It helps if you can also join in.

Of course, the youngsters in your family may well be researching some topic of special interest to them, or getting more background information on a subject that has been touched on at school. We have all seen interviews with young people who attribute their academic success to the Internet. This is particularly true of those that have attended under-resourced schools, though the trend seems to be the encouragement of pupils to do their own research rather than expect to be 'spoon-fed' in the classroom.

Used wisely, online platforms can support learning, foster friendships and provide creative outlets. But you can have too much of a good thing. The aim is balance.

.





Burnout-Proof:

Small Habits That Actually Help

Kelly Ann Ward

We talk a lot about burnout - and for good reason. Whether you're juggling a full-time job, side hustle, relationship drama, or just trying to keep your life together without losing your mind, burnout doesn't always crash in like a tidal wave. Sometimes, it's the subtle stuff: Waking up exhausted even though you slept, that constant brain fog, or realising you've been staring at the same email for 15 minutes and haven't typed a single word.

And while we're flooded with quick fixes ('just take a bubble bath!'), what actually helps isn't always what's trending. It's the small, consistent systems that keep you grounded, especially when your brain is in overdrive.

Here are four habits that have helped me feel more human again. Not hacks. Not perfectly curated wellness rituals. Just practical shifts that support your mind and body, especially when you're this close to losing it.

The berry smoothie I've been making on repeat

I know, it sounds basic, but it's kind of the point. When your life feels chaotic or your energy is unpredictable, having one simple thing that nourishes your body and takes zero mental effort is gold.

My go-to is frozen berries, banana, oat milk, a scoop of protein, maybe chia seeds or peanut butter. It's not revolutionary. But it's something I do for myself most mornings. It wakes me up, fuels me with energy that doesn't spike and crash and, more than anything, feels like an act of care.

It's a small system that reminds me: I don't need to get it all right. I just need to show up. Sometimes we wait for motivation. But the magic is in repetition. Tiny daily rituals that reconnect us to ourselves, even if we're still in our pajamas, spiralling about deadlines.

Moving your body in a way that feels doable (and yes, even when it's freezing outside)

I used to treat workouts like a punishment. I'd feel guilty if I didn't 'go hard' at the gym or do the exact number of reps a fitness influencer swore by.

Now? I ask one question: What does my body need today?

That mindset shift changed everything. Because sometimes the answer is an energising Pilates session. But sometimes it's stretching in my living room for 10 minutes, or just taking a walk on the beach with a podcast.

Movement doesn't have to be intense to be powerful. It's not about forcing yourself through it - it's about reminding your nervous system that you're safe, supported, and strong. Let go of that unrealistic pressure on yourself.

Especially in winter, when we naturally slow down, it's helpful to reframe movement as connection, not obligation.

Think less 'I need to burn off stress', and more 'I get to show up for myself'.

That's the kind of movement that sticks. The kind that brings you back to your body, instead of disconnecting you from it.

Reading books that rewire your mindset (and calm your nervous system)
I'll be honest: I love a good mindset book. Not because I want to live in productivity-optimised robot mode, but because reading helps me slow down, reflect and reframe.

Burnout can feel as if your brain is constantly loud. Reading, for me, turns down the volume.

It's also one of the few habits that's both relaxing and energising, especially when the content lifts you up. You're not just scrolling or zoning out. You're engaging with new ideas, reminding yourself what's possible and learning how to support your inner world.

The two books I always recommend:
The Power Is Within You by Louise Hay
A gentle reminder that your thoughts create your reality and you don't have to believe everything you think. It's grounding, healing and encourages self-compassion in a way that's actually actionable.
And
Awaken the Giant Within by Tony Robbins.
This one's like a personal trainer for your brain. It's intense, a bit shouty at times, but also packed with useful mindset shifts. Tony really said: "You're the problem and the solution" and, honestly, he's not wrong. It's giving 'get your life together' energy in the best way. Even just 10 minutes of reading before bed or while sipping your coffee can create a rhythm of slowness, the kind that busy, burnt-out brains desperately need. Bonus: it also helps with screen time. Speaking of which...

Rethinking your screen time (and why you might feel drained even when you're doing 'nothing')
If your average screen time looks anything like mine did a few months ago - hello, seven-plus hours, it's no wonder you feel wiped out at the end of the day, even if you didn't do anything particularly exhausting.

Endless scrolling might feel passive, but it's actually overstimulating your brain. You're consuming hundreds of pieces of content in minutes, comparing your life to strangers, absorbing negativity and confusing your nervous system. The result? You feel drained, not rested. Foggy, not clear. Numb, but somehow also anxious.

I started setting small screen boundaries and it made a huge difference, not just for productivity, but for how I feel.

Try:
- No phone for the first 30 minutes of your morning (give yourself a second to wake up as a human, not a notification).
- Reading or journaling before bed instead of watching a screen (your brain will thank you).
- Replacing one scroll session with a walk or even doing nothing for 10 minutes. Yes, you're allowed to be bored on the couch.

You don't have to delete every app or do a full digital detox. Just notice where your energy is leaking and gently close the gaps where your energy keeps slipping through.

What actually helps you bounce back from burnout?
Not more pressure. Not another to-do list disguised as self-care. But small, consistent habits that support your energy, emotions and mindset, even when life is messy.

Because burnout isn't always about doing too much. Sometimes it's about not doing enough of what actually restores you. So here's your reminder:
- A smoothie counts.
- A walk outside counts.
- Reading a few pages counts.
- Shutting your phone off and breathing for five minutes? That absolutely counts.

You don't need a morning routine with 18 steps. You need a system that meets you where you are and helps you come back to yourself, again and again.

So if you're feeling behind, heavy, or as if you're barely keeping it together, you're not broken. And you don't need a total life overhaul to start feeling better.

You just need to give yourself permission to pause. To shift gears. To care more about your inner world than your to-do list.

Maybe it's not about getting everything 'right'. Maybe it's about building systems that support the version of you that's still becoming, the one who gets up, tries again and redefines what balance really means.

And when it all feels too much?

Just remember:
There's nowhere to go but everywhere.
So take a breath.
Take your time.
And keep going...
even if it's just one tiny change at a time.



I'm Kelly Ann Ward, writer, podcaster, founder of Kewel (a beach-inspired handmade jewellery brand) and I'm the kind of person who believes an iced matcha and a good book can fix almost anything. I host Chill Out with Kelly Ward*, a podcast where we talk life, growth, relationships and everything in between (no fluff, just real conversations). I'm also the author of* Bright Days Ahead*, my debut book on mindset and navigating hardship with grace, and I run a weekly lifestyle blog called* The Ward Method*, where wellness meets real life. Whether I'm writing, recording, or just sharing what's helping me lately, my goal is simple: To make you feel a little less alone and a lot more inspired.*



The Best Part about Almost Dying

Two years ago, someone tried to kill me – and here I am to tell the tale about it. Not to caution people so much as to share the gifts in what can only be described as a horrific story. And it happened to me, not as a helpless naïve young woman but just after I turned sixty, happily married, mother, stepmother, grandmother, creative, intuitive, sangoma. American born and South African by choice, I'd been around the block on both continents and had amassed quite a magic toolbox full of training and experience. I was trained in and practising all manner of trauma modalities, both practical and esoteric, life coaching, philosophy, energy work and traditional African spirituality to boot.

In short, I was as prepared for this - and as qualified as a professional could be for dealing with such a seriously damaging attack. And somehow, it happened.

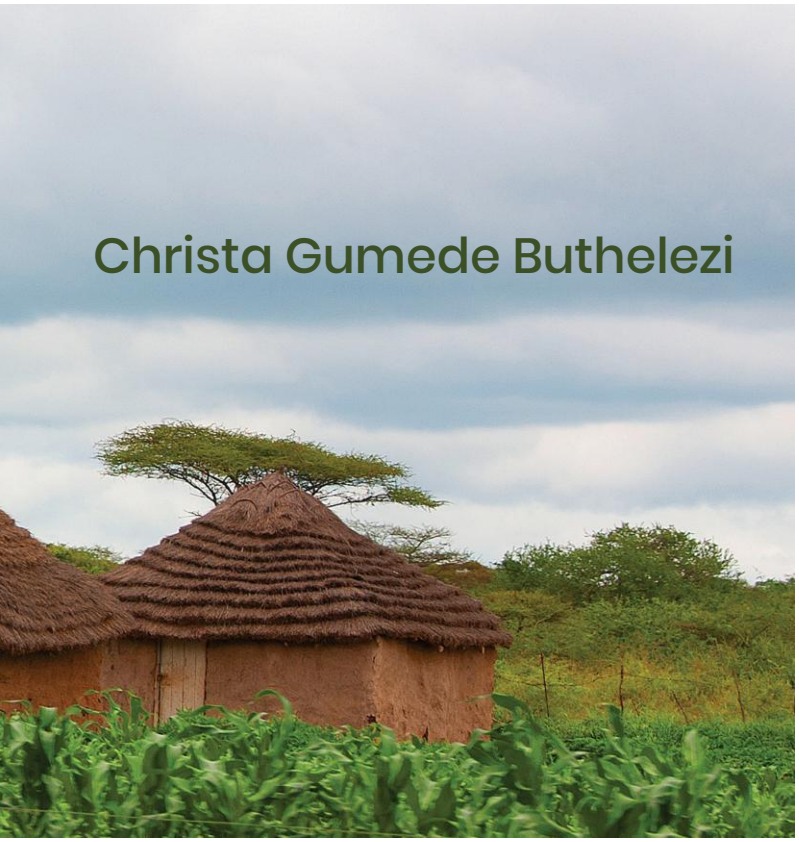
It happened to me.

Ultimately, this tragic event? It would bring me the kind of learning which comes only from experience. Only from walking through fire. Only from rising from unimaginable depths.

I'll tell you the story but let me preface it by saying I cannot answer the question you likely will have. Legalities prevent me from stating what may become obvious in terms of who poisoned me. And that's fine, really, because the lessons learned are far more valuable than pointing fingers at the troubled soul who would inflict such incredible pain on another person.

Let's start at the beginning. I woke up very early one morning, assuming I was in my own bed - only to hear the beeps and shuffled steps which clearly meant I was somewhere else. Those noises, added to the unmistakable feeling of a too full catheter bag backing up and the tugging of an IV drip line in my arm when I tried to roll over, told me I was in my least favourite place – the hospital. I'd spent far too many days of my life in those uncomfortable beds with the railings on the side, remote controls falling through to the floor, and while I'm grateful for the medical interventions, I've also experienced far too much already at the hands of allopathic medicine. Childhood surgeries in faraway hospitals faced without the presence of a parent, many rounds of pneumonia throughout my life, biopsies and subsequent removals of different cancers, a broken neck requiring fusion and more had left me highly traumatised both physically and mentally. Over the years, I'd invested a lot of time and money in my health to stay out of this arena. I'd felt much better, too, until this past year when I'd just not been well – and was unresponsive to alternative medicine which usually worked well for me.

But not so gravely ill as to be hospitalised, so that morning I began to panic, being back in this scenario, and the far too cheerful nurse who had woken me to take my blood pressure seemed quite alarmed.



Then I saw the huge blotches of black and blue on my arms and my legs when she pulled back the covers, tasted blood and felt huge sores in my mouth and it all began to come back to me. As she adjusted the inflatable cuff on my other arm to triple-check her results, I started to search my foggy brain for any memories of how I'd got there.

The nurse introduced herself, as she noted my vitals on the oversized paper chart at the standing desk attached to the foot of my bed. She asked me "Do you know where you are?" and as I struggled to find words, she told me I was in the ICU of the local suburban hospital just down the hill from my home. She went on to say that I'd come into the Urgent Care yesterday with my friend, that I'd scared them all and she was glad to see me awake. "No one thought you would live, nobody lives through this. Thank God they were able to get you into theatre immediately!" I recalled then being on the surgery table under conscious sedation as they inserted stents in my kidneys to allow all the blood clots to pass and the feeling of relief as my organs could begin to work again. I'd learn later that they'd all begun to shut down – exactly as I'd felt, my body had begun to fail.

The cogs in my brain started to move and it all downloaded pretty quickly – the past several days had been painful and troubling. My body had seemed to be quitting on me, and overreacting to the simplest of things, like mozzie bites. Those would bleed profusely, the area around them becoming black and blue and then spreading into patches five centimetres or more in diameter. There had been sores in my mouth I'd never had before, growing in size and becoming more painful as my tongue swelled up and eventually turned black. I'd not been able to urinate normally for days and had had to soak in a warm tub of water to be able to pee at all. That's what eventually led me to give up and acquiesce to my husband's demands that I go to urgent care. The new integrative doctor I'd found who had been counselling me on Whatsapp over the weekend had said the same, that soon it would be too late, and so I'd leaned on my husband's back in order to make it down the stairs from our bedroom, where I'd been largely in bed for several days. He half carried me, joking that it was a good thing I'd married a fireman, out of the house and into the car, seeming very relieved I'd finally agreed to go.

The days were a blur of being bathed like a child, poked and poked again for twice daily blood tests, IV drip sites being changed again and again as my body went through several hospital acquired infections requiring massive antibiotics. Christmas came and went in a fury of thunderstorms reflecting the environment in a ward full of staff and patients who didn't want to be there. The doctor who admitted me from urgent care was not one I would have chosen and when things got to the point that she was medicating me while sleeping with drugs contraindicated by past experience despite agreeing not to, I had had enough. She had, in all this time, given me very little information, asking occasionally if we kept rat poison on our property. I answered her, as I had the same question from several nurses, saying no because we have kids and dogs. At one point, when I was a bit more clear, I asked if she was saying I'd been poisoned, and she shook her head no emphatically, saying "of course not!".

After two-and-a-half weeks in the ICU and seven infections along with multiple mishaps, I was considering checking myself out. I would have except for two things: Given the holidays, the vital medication I needed to have at home was just not available and my growing concern about whether I'd be safe in my own house. It was clear I needed a physician I could talk to openly and so somehow I gathered the strength to initiate the switch. As New Year's Eve approached, I asked a friend to help me switch doctors. When my new doctor and the hospital's specialist doctor he brought in and called their "Dr House", both vehemently agreed that I should be out of ICU as quickly as possible to prevent more infections and that I'd been given medications they didn't understand, I burst into tears out of relief.





They began working on getting me set up to go home where I wouldn't be in danger of further superinfections, then made sure I was out of ICU and in a private room on a surgical ward. And that's when my life really began to unravel.

I spent the night grateful to be out of the ICU but slept fitfully, wrestling with all that had happened and my sense of something being very wrong. The doctors were stunned that I'd lived through the ordeal given the amount of poison in my body and were very clear that they did not consider me safe yet. Going home to a house full of family and unanswered questions didn't feel particularly restful and I lay awake in the wee hours trying to come up with a better, more restful solution.

I woke when my husband began messaging me on Whatsapp starting early in the morning, initially very happy I was coming home. Then a barrage of messages saying I didn't trust him, that I didn't think he wanted me to get better, to come home. Nonsensical things and with an anger and a vitriol I'd never heard him have towards anyone, at least not sober.

That's how quickly things changed. It got completely out of hand, fast. I closed my phone to give us both time to calm down, reminding him I wouldn't be released if my BP was too high. The nurse came in to take my vitals and was shocked by those numbers. I meditated, visualised, used all the calming techniques I'd ever known and which had all made it possible for me to manage the last 18 days. Once I'd settled myself, we got a better result. The doctors stopped by and were incredibly clear that I had been deliberately poisoned with rat poison or Warfarin, which makes your body both bleed out and clot in ways that result in death. They asked if anyone other than me cooked at home – I'd told them I made all the meals for the family. And then they asked me if anyone made me tea, or coffee or smoothies, the common way to deliver this poison. And that told me all I needed to know.

They told me very slowly and clearly that I needed to "clean house". That I shouldn't use any bottles of liquid anything that had been opened, or consume any foods left in the house, or wear clothing I'd worn often. They suggested I even be careful about who was in the house when I was sleeping, saying that I couldn't possibly be too careful in these next few weeks when I was to be on total bedrest. I wasn't completely in the clear yet. They didn't know how this recovery would go, given that it's exceedingly rare to survive, that I should contact them with any concerns along the way. I could read between the lines, but just couldn't address what I knew they were saying, what I could see clearly now. I didn't want to lose my composure and risk being told to stay in hospital longer. All I wanted to do was go home, and yet home was going to have to change in so many ways, all at once.

I reopened my phone to find more awful messages and texted him that I couldn't come home to such a hostile environment, that I needed him to please go to his mom's for a few days so I could rest and that he should take both the girls as I wouldn't be able to care for them. This unleashed more fury and I told him I'd find another place to stay. I called my daughter and asked for her help with that, and to come fetch me. Bless her, she got to me very quickly and I explained the situation. As we began to make a plan, a photo of his car's dashboard and windscreen headed out of the driveway popped up on my Whatsapp with the words "I am leaving now." We packed up my things and headed up the hill toward home.

I was wary, of course, yet it turned out he had left, but both the girls were still there and greeted me happily, along with my granddaughters. I am a very strong person and have lived a life overly dedicated to taking care of others, yet this made my heart sink. I just wasn't capable of being a caretaker. For possibly the first time in my life, I knew I had to put myself first. And that wasn't going to be easy.

All of them helped me get up the stairs – I was extremely weak and wobbly and my eldest was trying hard to sort out my medication schedule so the younger ones helped me get undressed and under the covers, the last born bringing me my water bottle.

It was so poignant, these little women doing all they could to help when the one person who had sworn to love me for the rest of my days was absent. In retrospect, this was the day I knew, even in my beyond exhausted state, that I fundamentally had to change my life.

Until then, I had been a recovering perfectionist, an eldest child trained to care for everyone but herself. I internalised this very well as it was reinforced by abuse on many levels. Once I went through my own healing journey in my late 30s, I found my way to self-compassion through talk therapy, somatic work, meditation and creative expression. It took more than a decade but by the time I accepted my calling and moved to South Africa in 2015, I was a wholly different person. Freed, liberated and committed to being who I was rather than who I'd been told I should be. I knew, the minute my feet were on South African soil, that I was home.

My first few years here were spent in the Lebombo mountains of KwaZulu-Natal, in a very rural community which is extremely low in resources of all kinds. It was the middle of a four year draught and everything (and everyone) was stretched thin, it couldn't have been more opposite of my privileged life in Washington DC. And yet, I was happy. Every single moment was a learning experience, physically being in a place I'd dreamt of all my life yet had no clue how to navigate. For the most part, I was accepted in inexplicable ways, welcomed by the majority and made an integral part of the local Zulu settlement. There were challenges, of course. There is no end to need and I quickly learned that even in my enthusiasm, I'd have to set boundaries in order to maintain my own equilibrium. My life lessons continued, just on a different canvas, and those years are shared in my memoir, *UBIZO: A Story of Coming Home*. Suffice it to say that I had plenty of practice in diving too deep and then having to save myself from drowning, having taken on too much. This would continue both personally and professionally, for years.

By the time I met the fireman, though, I thought I had a pretty good handle on things. I had deepened my relationship with my ancestors in ways that healed old wounds and built a strong safety net underneath me. My sangoma practice expanded and strengthened. All of this reflected in major improvements in my health and when that began to change shortly after we married, I assumed it was an adjustment period. We had grown our family, I had taken on familial responsibilities as a new *makoti* and it seemed natural that I might be tired. I'd never felt my age before but as I turned 60 in the midst of all this, my years seemed to be catching up with me. My decline and the accompanying changes in my body snuck up on me, to be honest, and before I knew it, there I was in that hospital bed.

Those first weeks and months after being discharged passed in a fog of medical appointments, legal matters, finding a new house. It was clear, given my husband's complete change of character and ensuing anger, that the marriage was over and so I had to initiate a divorce as well as a protection order. We discovered traditional *muthi* on the property, the sort of black magic items meant to kill someone and in time it became clear that all of my healing tools had been tampered with. This meant burning everything in my traditional round house where I practised, something that I wasn't sure I would recover from. My husband's eldest daughter surprised me that first night I was home by saying she chose to stay with me permanently, so all that brought its own knots to be untied given our divorce just a few months after I came home. I'd been asked to be on bed rest for several weeks and reminded that, for months to come, I'd need as much sleep, nature's greatest healer, as possible. I continued, as I had in hospital, to lean heavily on my magic toolbox. As one part of me felt extreme anxiety – how would I ever trust anyone again? – another would answer from a higher perspective. Breathwork and Reiki kept my blood pressure low, meditation helped me release the life I had planned, prayer supported it all and helped me to remember that all is well.



They are called practices for a reason and the wisdom in the simplest of tools astounded me regularly. While I am immensely grateful for the wonderful professionals who also supported me in myriad ways, through all of this I learned that, ultimately, *I must heal myself*.

In the second year of recovery, I added Yoga nidra to the mix, bringing body/mind/soul back together a bit like the shadow being stitched to the body in Peter Pan. As my mind cleared, I was able to release the future I'd planned for.

Finding ways to be grateful for the smallest of things brought bigger, better and brighter days. Regular spiritual sessions and making time to listen to my inner knowing allowed me to trust that, just maybe, what was to come would be better than I could imagine in my humanness. I discovered something else, too. While I'd worked with self-compassion internally and externally for decades and believed it was the key to healing on multiple levels, I had missed the end game. While healing is good and necessary, in time I found it to be the path to sovereignty rather than the ultimate goal itself. It became clear that if I believed that all human beings are sovereign, so must I be. And if I am sovereign, how could I not take care of myself, first and foremost?

It sounds so simple, doesn't it? Yet all of us, as humans, are so immersed in the cultures of this world that we forget the basics like sovereignty. The powers that be, those who want to run the world, they have created a structure that leads us to believe we are only cogs in the machine. We forget our own magnificence and we are taught that the opposite is true. We learn the lessons well, in order to fit in, to belong.

And more than two years down the road now, that's where my own growth is happening. My body is happier, thanks to the carnivore way of eating, major detoxing and lymphatic work. All of that sort of thing helps, but honestly, the magic is in tending my own light. As I do this, the future looks brighter and brighter and I wonder if this is exactly what the world needs from us all, right now.

I am truly grateful for it all. I wouldn't be who I am today without having walked through this particular fire. It refined me, and continues to temper me much as gold is when it passes through the fire. It is alchemy, pure and simple. To expect life to be different is both naive and ludicrous. This is what I came here for, I know that know on the deepest level, and it serves both me and those whose lives I touch.

I hope my story reminds us all that the shadow brings great light, when we allow it to. Perhaps the poison really is the cure.

Christa Gumede Buthelezi is an intuitive/creative/spiritualist guide who lives, loves and creates in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Her virtual home is www.christa-light.com.



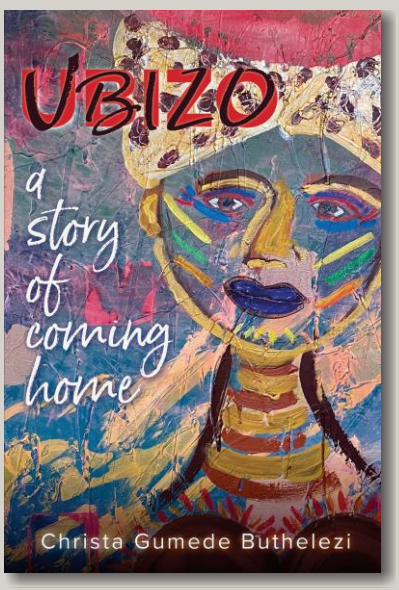
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Light Beneath the Water

A Child's Journey Beyond Drowning

By Ralph and Daniela Klose

Cathrine was six years old when she died.
That is how her parents described it. For nearly three minutes, her heart stood still. She had slipped beneath the surface of a swimming pool during a crowded afternoon - unnoticed until her body floated silently near the shallow end. She was pale, her limbs unresponsive. A lifeguard moved fast, beginning resuscitation until the ambulance team arrived. The paramedics found a faint rhythm. She was rushed to the hospital. Her condition remained uncertain for hours.
When she awoke, she didn't cry or panic. Her first words described something luminous.
She said she had risen - not just above the pool, but above her body. She could see people around her. They were anxious, distressed. But she herself felt quiet and safe. A soft thread of light, she said, connected her to her earthly form below. Then everything shifted.

The place that sang
She entered what she later called a 'bright place' - not harsh like daylight, but suffused with warm, living colour. Figures surrounded her. They had no faces, no names and yet she felt known. They radiated gentleness. She said they didn't speak with words but with light. The message was simple: You are safe. You are loved.
The world around her shimmered. Colours pulsed like tones. The air itself seemed to hum with presence.
"The light was alive," she said. "And it knew me."

Medical confoundment
From a medical standpoint, Cathrine had suffered from significant oxygen deprivation. Neurologically, oxygen deprivation can lead to vivid phenomena - tunnel vision, dreamlike sensations, even euphoria. Yet what she described didn't resemble confused perception. Her experience was cohesive, emotionally resonant and filled with symbols echoed in similar accounts across the globe.
Her family was not religious. No visions of heaven or angels had ever been described to her. Still, she spoke of beings made of light, a feeling of peace and a clear choice.

The thread that didn't break
Cathrine recalled being asked, not in words but through sensation: Do you want to go back?
And she chose to return - not out of fear, but because, as she later said, "Something inside me remembered I still had things to do."
The light dimmed. The figures faded. She re-entered her body with a sudden breath - like surfacing through silk.

A different child
After her recovery, Cathrine was not the same.
She had become more attentive, more reflective. She listened with care. She noticed small details others overlooked. Her empathy deepened - towards animals, her younger brother, even strangers.

She began drawing - spirals of light, threads that glowed, outlines of colour-filled forms. Her parents asked if it had all been a dream. She shook her head: "No. It was a place. I just remember it differently."

Beyond the surface

What do we do with stories like Cathrine's?

We can investigate, analyse, or doubt them. But we can also simply listen.

Her story is not an argument. It is not a doctrine. It is a quiet testimony - something remembered, something gifted. Her words offer no proof. But they offer presence.

A reminder that what we call death may be not an end, but an unfolding. A crossing. A song beneath the surface.

Daniela and Ralph Klose are longtime collaborators in the fields of neuroscience, consciousness studies and spiritual writing. Daniela is a medical writer and translator with a focus on neuropsychology, quantum theory and spiritual psychology. Ralph, her husband and co-author, is a retired neuropsychologist with over three decades of clinical and academic experience.

For many years, they worked anonymously as ghostwriters for academic institutions and spiritual teachers across Europe. Now writing under their own names, they explore the subtle space between science and mystery, especially through stories of human transformation at the edge of life. Their work blends rigorous observation with poetic depth, inviting readers to pause and listen - to what is often said without words.







It's All About Alchemy

Conversations with Kuthumi

Transmitted through Chanel Lingenfelder

I AM Kuthumi, greetings.
The gift of awakening and awareness is a personal treasure. It is the sacred essence of stepping into the higher frequency of that which life gifts you with.

Whilst experiencing your human skin, some activities are distinctly pleasurable, whilst others, unbeknownst, hold their own treasures. Exploring the gifts of awakening through awareness reveals much that awaits within the unknown.

To begin with, you enter life with a 'program' which we previously discussed. You come equipped with a 'dormant' etheric toolbox, which awakens as you do. As you grow out of your old skin, these discoveries come to life. The deeper you delve, the greater the discovery!

Curveball cushions

Your gifts or pointers serve as reminders, strategically placed at 'decision or choice' intersections along your journey, planned before arrival. Much like your alarm clock reminds you to wake up, these etheric 'reminders' (with the help of your guides) do the same, impacting your vast energy field, giving a squeeze, nudge, or push 'wake-up' call.

These triggers are stored within your programming or etheric memory. To a great degree, this is infused into your cellular tissue as part of your etheric energy acting on and feeding off soul instruction.

So too do you receive impulses via your Cave of Consciousness or *Akash*, acting on previous or karmic memory. Your *Akash* is also infused into your DNA, thus biology. These pointers pulse information between internal and external influences, thus from a non-linear perspective, all is as ONE. Thus, in truth, there is no given separation between your extended bodies and humanness.

You have 'various' energy bodies and systems infused into and beyond a very complex physicality. Thus, along with a multi-dimensional biological system, you have complex brain function as previously discussed. No matter who you 'think' you are, you are ALL of it! The only time separation occurs is during transition, leaving the flesh behind.

Now that too can be complicated as you experience (and explore) various consciousness shifts during separation. Your essence as a whole facilitates this, be it a 'quick' exit or prolonged lessons to the end. This includes the part that your personality-self plays in all this. This may commonly take on the form of a coma, semi-coma, self-induced exit, or full consciousness.

Separating your cell tissue from its etheric connection can thus be systematic or sudden. Next is the full reconnection (recognition) of your etheric self with your soul/super consciousness. This includes traversing through your planetary 'memory lane' along with recognising your *Akash* and its complicated impulses or programming.

The 'disconnected' soul essence infuses completely into its greater aspect, your Higher Self, as the final 'evacuation' completes.

There are a great number of influential portals supporting your entrée and exit. The thought of it all can be extremely intimidating, *especially to the uninformed*.

Awareness stirs awakening into motion

Your pointers serve as reminders, yet true awakening cannot be enforced. You can't 'decide': "Oh well, let's see what this 'new age' fuss is all about, so let me awaken." NO, it happens to *you*.

This happens when lower brain function gives control to higher mind processes, allowing the gateways of the unknown to open up.

Thus by consciously exploring Free Will (12 chakra), you venture along unexplored paths creating amazing new Timelines or 'ways of being'.

Once that initial seed is planted, the soul essence takes the lead, encouraging you (the personality) to explore, which prompts you to 'react' to etheric triggers with greater ease. Your consciousness, depending on its evolved state, receives its 'guidance' via your subconscious, intuition (higher mental) and your spirit, thus super consciousness, which becomes multifaceted.

Once your sacred connection to the latter is secure, TRUST allows the pathways (of your pointers) to reveal themselves. A clearer connection is (re)established between the 'purest' part of your essence (Higher Self) and your lower duality personality 'awakening' self.

Your Higher Self is the amalgamation of your soul essences, including fragments not part of this incarnation. It is the greater aspect of you, overseeing you. One of its main attributes is its gift of filtering higher information into an understandable frequency for your humanness to grasp.

ALL higher communication, channelling and the like is done via your Higher Self. Full stop.

Some experience the 'awareness of their awakening' as a jolt, an epiphany, or near-death experience. Others have out-of-body experiences, 'seeing things' within the astral planes, or during a dream or astral travel. Consciously, synchronicity then plays its 'pointers' game!

Generally, in the old energy, it was either fear of the unknown or fear of the known, as with your institutions, that 'pointed' folk in the direction of making peace with the afterlife, at a price.

Alchemy sets transmutation in motion

Once awakening stirs, a series of alchemical events begin to unfold. Once indoctrination transmutes into golden awareness, you have arrived!

Gold as an etheric frequency is active throughout your 12th chakric system, opposed to a mere fraction within the lower 'limited' system. Most prominent are: the evolved heart(4), crown(7),eighth, 10th and the 'recalibrated' solar plexus, whose core flame is Ruby Gold. The Golden Crown (7) and Ruby Base (1) merge, creating an alchemical explosion or recalibration within the solar plexus (3), which births authenticity.
Why the solar plexus (SP)?
Well, what needs a jolt more than the seat of the Personality-Self!

The base (1) and crown (7) chakras ALWAYS feed off each another, facilitating an alchemical understanding of the higher levels of the lower self, authentically (3-SP).

Yes, the more aware, the less selfish. Yet, even if you master 'organic' selflessness, never lose your identity! You will never be expected to pretend that past experiences or selfish choices didn't happen. When you make peace with anything, it no longer has lower egoic influence or command over you. Once able to 'creep from its shadow', heal your guilt and let it be gone!

Know where you have been, where you are at and, most importantly, what your intentions are focused upon! The alchemy of transformation lies in transmuting all experiences to (re)shape the new.

You leave behind many boxes you *tried* fitting in but couldn't. Some even bring excitement, yet as you awaken, discomfort sets in, especially when it comes to the boxes you are 'expected' to fulfil.

The alchemy of your consciousness creates this and the innate alchemy of your soul facilitates the 'joyful ticking of those boxes'!

One of the greatest attributes of this process is freedom. Breaking free from restrictions set by another - and to, like the phoenix, rise from your ashes and be born anew!

You test yourself!

Follow like sheep, or embark on the journey your soul personality dreams of and is fully capable of unveiling! To facilitate this, ***fear must go!*** The alchemy of your shifting consciousness calls upon the Golden Pyramid within the eighth together with the evolved sixth chakra, to help facilitate letting go of fear on deeper levels.

From 'below' you leap into the unknown, from 'above' the unknown reaches out to you. The Cosmic Counsel of Light, together with your 'watchers and guides', connect and 'read' your colours (personality and soul frequency) by tapping into the sacred essence within the highest level of your Soul Chakra Pyramid (eighth).

Challenges aren't meant to 'trick or test' you unless you gave permission for this. Thus, 'You test yourself.'

Humanity is quick to 'blame God' for this and that, yet YOU give the permission and God allows your journey to be set into motion. All of Creation is in constant motion, learning, discovering and evolving.

Creation is way beyond what humanity may *think* it is. It is INFINITE, ORDERLY, INTENSE, COMPLICATED, YET SIMPLE. Although you prefer to relate to legions within hierarchies, it isn't, yet it is! There is no real separation as EVERYTHING IS ONE yet distinctly different without set divisions.

This is all I can share for now about that.

Focus on the questions of self in *this* timeline. If you feel unfavourable about the choices and decisions you have made, analyse these.

Validate your decisions from your heart space using your chakric system. Visualise your Golden Key/Ankh within the Golden Rose to enter into your Sacred Heart.

Welcome home!

Personality Self→Soul→Spirit→Higher Self→Monad→Creation

As long as there is breath in your body, you are connected to Source as a human earthling. When the physical connection terminates, it folds into itself and is dispsosed of. Your true essence, including the part reading these words, remains, has awareness, memory, remembers discoveries and experiences. It recalls where you've started and ended. It expands beyond the limitation of this illusion.

You are greeted by your earthly experiences 'back home'. Beloveds, see your lifetimes as 'programmes' instead of mistakes, for mistakes don't exist! Some experiences you conquer, whilst others you don't. Then there are those that are simply 'reloaded', forming the basis of your next.

An alchemist transforms through LOVE. Like a cup of sand that can never be separate from the beach where it's collected, or a glass of sea water from its ocean, neither can you be separate from Source, which only knows LOVE.

The gift of life *welcomes* your entry as it does your exit. Don't let the lessons in between spoil your fun whilst working towards the Ascension of your Consciousness!

Physical ascension

Creation is mostly undefined, it's that vast. Like your Earth and ALL of Creation, your physicality has been manipulated, restructured and is ever evolving. Yet the continuous expansion of the mind is where your more valuable treasures lie lovingly in waiting.

Now hear this, what on God's green earth would you want to do with this body anywhere else?

What would be the point? To impress whom? To drag where? If the infinite part of yourself in this existence is pure consciousness, why would you insist on dragging the finite along? For validation that you are (were) indeed human?

We will leave it at that! We shall continue this discussion in discourses to follow.

May the Light of the Living Christ be within you, may you know that not now or not ever can you be alone.

You want to walk this journey? You want to learn, discover and be the alchemist? Welcome home beloveds! Welcome indeed!

I AM Kuthumi, I AM the Lord and Master Chohan of the Golden Rays of Love and Wisdom and I greet and bless thee with awakening and awareness.

Adonai.



Chanel lives in Howick South Africa. Author of From Party Patsy to Praying Patricia - *www.visionoftheheart.co.za. Transvoice channel for the Ascended Masters since 2006 after surviving a mind-blowing extraordinary ordination, detailed in her book.*

kwazuluspirit festival programme

Meet Chanel at KwazuluSpirit Festival 2025

Channelling Kuthumi - 09:30 27 July

Transformational Channelling With Chanel Lingenfelder in the Sails Conference Venue

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Hearing the Voice of Spirit

Cissi Williams

A year or so into my travels, I met an astrologer in Varanasi, India, who told me I was very depressed and disconnected from life. I could not relate at all to what he was talking about, as I felt quite happy. A bit empty perhaps, as if I lived in a void, but at least I didn't walk around on eggshells any more.

Now in hindsight I can see how frozen I was, as if I just lived from my head, planning on where to go next, just drifting from place to place, avoiding setting down roots anywhere. As I had felt so trapped at home, I now craved freedom.

Then, a few more years into my travelling, when I was living in Tokyo in my early 20s, I met someone. I remember being in the kitchen, with a cup of tea in my hand, when this man from London, a decade my senior, came up to me. I had this inner voice telling me, "Stay away from him," which I thought was a bit odd. I ignored the warning and we ended up together.

Our relationship opened the gates to all my inner wounds and within a short space of time I abandoned my former self. I was victim-oriented, controlling, needy and had a deep-seated fear of being rejected. I also developed an eating disorder to try to numb my inner turmoil. I would binge eat and then purge and it would exhaust me so much, I would fall asleep afterwards.

Hardly surprisingly, this relationship ended and, as it did, I fell into a deep depression, into a darkness that seemed to drain me of my life force. This was in the autumn of 1992. I was 24 years old and living alone in London. I remember having this thought that I looked like a shiny apple on the outside, but inside I was completely rotten.

Then one night, in my tiny little room on Pond Street in Hampstead, I had a dream where I saw myself hanging dead from the ceiling. As I woke up, covered in sweat, I knew I had to change. I could no longer keep blaming my dad, or my ex-boyfriend, for how I was feeling. I knew I had to change my thoughts, but I had no idea how to. The nightmare of seeing myself hanging from the ceiling had really shaken me, as if it was giving me a glimpse into my future, so I sat up in bed, pulled the duvet tighter around me and I prayed. I had never prayed before, but I was desperate. I didn't know who else to turn to, so I turned to the Universe, hoping to get an answer.

Nothing seemed to happen at first, but then I got this inner feeling that I should go back to Stockholm. I immediately booked a flight back home.

The very next day I found myself in a spiritual bookshop in my hometown, where three books seemed to just land in my lap - *The Power Is Within You* by Louise Hay, *Love Is the Answer* by Gerald Jampolsky and *Creative Visualization* by Shakti Gawain.

As I started reading these books, I could feel myself getting lighter. It was as if a door to another universe had opened, a light-filled universe, that led me out from this dark world I previously felt trapped in.

I realised that my prayer had been answered as these books gave me the tools I needed to help me change my thinking and connect with the light from Spirit - a light I recognised was also in me. This was such a huge revelation for me; that this light existed within me!

As I kept focusing on this inner light, as I kept choosing love instead of fear, the darkness began to recede. Within six weeks my depression was gone and, within four months, my bulimic behaviours had stopped. Just from my choosing to focus on the light, choosing to focus on love, choosing to heal my thinking.

Through healing my thoughts, my mind became more peaceful, which allowed me to hear Spirit's Voice more clearly. The inner critical voice - the ego's voice - is so loud and noisy, while Spirit's Voice is soft, gentle and loving, so we can only hear it when our mind is peaceful. This loving inner voice guided me to study osteopathy and naturopathy. So one year after having reached rock-bottom, I found myself enrolled in a four-year university degree in osteopathic medicine in London.

This loving inner voice also guided me to meet my husband! As I was in my fourth year of osteopathy training, a new clinic tutor walked in - Mr. Williams - and the moment I saw him I heard this inner voice say: "That's your husband!" We were married on the full moon at the summer solstice the following year and we are still going strong, nearly three decades later.

I started to trust this inner, loving voice and it guided me later to study hypnosis, neuro-linguistic programming and various shamanic healing modalities (including those from the Incas, Norse and Celts).

I was passionate about sharing with others what I knew - that we have this amazing power within us to heal. Over the next two decades, I helped thousands of clients, patients and students tune in to their inner wisdom. I also set up two spiritual wellbeing magazines - one in Sweden and one in the UK - and founded the podcast *Awaken Your Inner Wisdom*.

I had no idea that I was about to receive an invitation from my heart to step through another door of initiation that would lead me into the magical realm of the ancient wisdom found in the feminine.

A message from my heart

On a full moon in November, just a few weeks shy of my 52nd birthday - what is it with me and full moons? - I was sitting on my sofa with my laptop, working on an episode for my podcast, when I suddenly experienced extreme chest pain. It was so bad I fell to my knees. The pain was radiating up to my right jaw and it was hard for me to breathe. The pain lasted for perhaps five to ten minutes. Then it eased and I felt better.

I sent a text message to my husband, who was teaching osteopathy in London, where I wrote: "Don't worry, but I've just had extreme chest pain, radiating up to my right jaw, but I'm fine now."

Then I sat back down on the sofa and continued editing my podcast episode, as if nothing had happened.

My husband, on the other hand, freaked out and drove straight back home. He pleaded with me to see the GP, but I insisted I was fine now and I absolutely had to finish this podcast episode, so seeing the GP had to wait.

Then the pain came back, although not as bad. I still felt it was no big deal, but to ease my husband's worry, I phoned the GP surgery and was told to come in immediately. I took an ECG test, which revealed signs of a heart attack. I was still ignoring the seriousness of what had happened, but the GP told me that if I felt worse, I needed to go to the hospital.

Over the next few days, I still had chest pain on and off. My husband was getting quite frustrated with me as I did not seem too concerned. In the end, he persuaded me to come with him to John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, so off we went. As we were sitting there in the waiting room, I took out my laptop from my bag and started typing away.

My husband looked at me and said, "There's something really wrong with this picture, with you sitting here at the ER with your laptop." I just smiled at him reassuringly and, as I felt fine, I kept on working. I was sure the wait would be a little while and I just had a tiny bit left to finish off and then the podcast episode would be ready to be uploaded.

At that moment my name was called and I went to have various blood tests and another ECG done. This too showed signs of a heart attack and my blood pressure was really high.

They kept a cannula in my vein in my left arm to make it easier to give me any medication or take more blood. This proved to be very effective in stopping me from working on my laptop, as I could not bend my elbow.

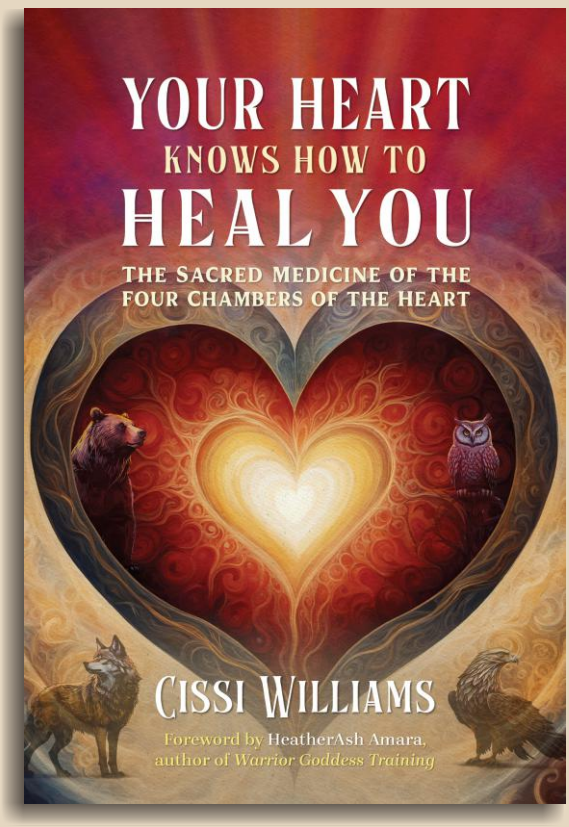
I was taken to another waiting room and, by this stage, we had been at the hospital for a few hours, so my husband went to get some sandwiches. This was the first time I was completely alone. And that is when it hit me, as I was sitting there, looking out through the windows at the grey November sky. I had had a heart attack! Just as my mum had when she was only 48.

My mind finally stopped being in denial and I registered the enormity of the situation. I felt overwhelmed by sadness and grief and fear, as I had seen what the heart attack did to Mum. She became a prisoner of her own body.



Cissi Williams is an osteopath, naturopath, NLP trainer and master practitioner in hypnosis. A teacher of shamanic energy medicine and Seidr Magic, she is also initiated as a Priestess of Freyja. Cissi founded the Nordic Light Academy of Energy Medicine and the Awaken Your Inner Wisdom Podcast. She lives in the Cotswolds, England. https://www.cissiwilliams.com/

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by Cissi Williams

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When the Dead Visit Us in Dreams

The Quiet Alchemy of Grief and Transformation

by Jock Brocas

I have spent over two decades walking alongside the grieving, listening to stories steeped in sorrow, mystery and meaning. Yet nothing quite pierces the veil - or mends it - like the dreams people have of their loved ones who have passed. These dreams aren't like others. They arrive uninvited, vivid, urgent and often life-altering. In fact, I have become more interested in identifying if the dreams we have of our loved ones are actually transformational.

Grief is something few talk about openly: Waking up from a dream where the deceased felt so real and vivid - not imagined, not symbolic, but as though they'd returned for just a moment to say something that couldn't be said in waking life - is as real as having your loved one back in the room with you in full objectivity.

These moments are more than dreams. They are thresholds of spiritual reality.

Recently, I embarked on a journey to explore this phenomenon more formally through a collaborative research project. The question we posed was deceptively simple:

What is the lived experience of individuals after awakening from a dream about a deceased loved one - and does that experience result in a lasting transformation?

The answers revealed something more profound than I expected. They were not simply recollections of the grieving mind, but lived experiences filled with emotional intensity, vivid presence and unmistakable moments of personal awakening. For many, these dreams became turning points. For others, they prompted a deeply personal reckoning with grief. The myriad emotions ranged from joy to sadness and everything in between.

Dreams that don't fade

In ordinary dreams, images scatter like leaves in the wind. But dreams involving the deceased linger. Participants in the study reported dreams that stayed with them for months, even years. These dreams carried emotional clarity, vivid presence and, in many cases, healing.

One participant, dreamed of her father in a way that sharply contrasted how she remembered him in waking life. In the dream, he was peaceful, younger and kind. The moment shifted her entire perception of their relationship. It helped her process years of difficult memories, not through conscious effort but through the dream's symbolic rewriting of their bond.

Others experienced waves of unexpected emotion. Another participant described waking up in a state of deep joy, touched by a sense of reunion. In contrast, another awoke in tears, moved by unresolved grief that spilled over from the dream into waking reality. These emotions did not fade by morning. They lingered and reshaped the emotional landscape of the dreamers' lives. When we dream of our loved ones, we are entering a space where we can be affected in our waking life.

Encounters that transform the living

One of the most powerful themes in our research was 'transformation.' Not all dreams brought resolution, but every participant reported some degree of inner change. For some, the dream was a spark that ignited a search for meaning, a spiritual reawakening, or a shift in belief systems. For others, the dream caused more discomfort.

As an example, one of our participants recognised that the dream had unearthed long-standing issues of abandonment. Rather than turning away, she faced those feelings and started profound changes in her life - without external therapy. This is not to suggest dreams replace counselling, but that they can be catalysts for deeply personal insight and growth. In short, do not discount these dreams, as they have hidden meanings.

Another one of our participants in the study, who had long doubted the continuation of life after death, described her dream as a turning point. Her experience nudged her into a belief she hadn't previously allowed herself to hold. "Perhaps there is some sort of life after death," she reflected. The dream had stirred something spiritual, personal and irreversible. The experience of the dream had become the catalyst for a deep spiritual awakening.

Disconnection within connection

Interestingly, not all dreamers experienced harmony. Many shared moments of disconnection or a struggle to reach the loved one. Some participants described walking through room after room but never quite making contact. They recounted the sensation of not being able to speak - of words failing in the dream - and continually looking for a sense of connection. This recurring theme was evident with most of the participants at some point in the grief journey.

These fragments, far from diminishing the dream's importance, served as mirrors. They revealed what still hurt. They highlighted what remained unresolved. And they, too, carried the seeds of transformation. Painful as they were, they acted as signposts toward healing work yet to be done.

Vividness beyond sleep

Lucid vivid dreaming has been reported throughout history and it's only been recently that science has taken a great interest in trying to understand the phenomenon. Dreams often have no meaning and can be representations of wayward emotions and a replay of what is on your mind that day. However, lucid-type dreams can be entirely different and hold deep mystical meaning; they can also be experiential in terms of having discarnate contact in the dream state. The experiencer finds it difficult to identify if the dream is real because of its content and lucidity. It feels as if you are alive in the dream state. Lucid and vivid dreaming were constant in the accounts. Participants often emphasised how the dreams felt more real than waking life. Details were rich - the colour of clothing, the tone of voice, the setting. The emotional clarity was sharp, untouched by the usual fog of sleep.

This vividness led participants to believe these were not mere figments of imagination. They felt like visitations - moments when the veil between the living and the dead thinned just enough to allow presence. For those already open to spiritual experiences, this offered comfort and affirmation. For others, it opened doors to a reality they had not yet considered.

The art of meaning-making

A crucial element of transformation is meaning-making. How do we find meaning in the experience and how does that affect our waking life? Participants in the study did not simply wake, recall the dream and move on? They reflected and asked questions. In their mind's eye, they revisited the dream repeatedly to make sense of it.

One of our participants shared that reading about dreams of the deceased helped her realise she wasn't alone. That realisation grounded her experience in something shared and spiritual. Another individual interpreted her dream as a confrontation with unresolved emotional patterns. Nevertheless, in both cases, the dream opened a dialogue between the conscious self and the deeper, often spiritual layers of meaning.

Grief often leaves behind a sense of unfinished business. Dreams can offer a sacred space where that business is addressed. Whether closure is found or questions are raised, the process itself becomes transformative.

Why grief needs dreams

In my mind, and actually from my experience - grief is a spiritual crisis. It cracks the psyche, shatters routine and leaves us longing for connection. In that brokenness, dreams can offer healing not accessible in waking life. They are unfiltered, potent, and - often - divinely timed.

These dream experiences challenge the notion that grief must be linear or logical. They show us that grief is relational. The bonds of love don't end with death. They change form. And, through dreams, they sometimes speak.

While sceptics may dismiss such experiences as wishful thinking or neurological residue, the impact on the dreamer tells a different story. The dreamers' wake changed. Their pain has shifted. Their lives take new direction. These are not the hallmarks of ordinary dreams.

One thing I would like to make clear - and this is from the many messages I receive throughout the world. Just because you do not remember your dream or do not have a lucid experience does not mean that your loved ones have abandoned you - far from it - and it does not mean that you are not having any dream experiences. You may not remember your dream or you may be in such an emotional state that you are not in the space with which to dream. Just stay with it and train your mind. I have a gift for you all at the end of this article. Keep reading!

The need for a new framework

The research uncovered a need that exists to further the research into spiritual awakening from dream state connections. I believe this must be addressed in future research. Most dream studies are observational or psychological. They rely on anecdotal narratives and lack the empirical structure to explore whether actual contact with the deceased occurs.

As someone grounded in both transpersonal research and parapsychology, I propose that future research integrate these frameworks. We need methodologies that measure the impact of these dreams, not just emotionally, but potentially empirically. Are there shared characteristics that mark a true visitation? Can we trace patterns that point to something beyond psyche and into spirit?

Only two of the dreams in our study held the hallmarks of authentic after-death contact that in my mind, offered a level of evidential connection. Yet even those two were transformative enough to warrant deeper investigation. If parapsychological and spiritual approaches are taken seriously, we may find not just healing, but empirical evidence.

Final reflections: Listening to the sacred

We do not grieve alone. And sometimes, the ones we grieve find their way back to us - in the quiet, in the shadows, in sleep. These are not simply dreams. They are sacred invitations. They are messengers. They are moments of grace.

So the next time you wake with a loved one's voice lingering in your ears, or their image vivid before you, take a moment. Don't rush into the day. Sit with it. Feel it. Ask what it came to show you.

You may find that it didn't just come to remind you of the past - it came to transform your future.

You are not alone. You never were.

You will find access to my free grief community below, and in that community is access to some personally recorded meditations that will train your mind to connect with the other side.



Jock Brocas is a renowned evidential spiritual medium, best-selling author and respected paranormal researcher. With an unwavering commitment to authenticity, Jock blends his rich spiritual experiences with extensive scholarly study, inspiring thousands across the globe. His intuitive abilities and dedication to truth have fuelled his popular books, such as Deadly Departed *and* Powers of the Sixth Sense*. Jock uses his deep understanding of the afterlife to support those grieving, providing comfort through afterlife education. An influential figure in his field, Jock continues to captivate audiences with his fascinating insights into the spiritual realm and the unexplored corners of the human psyche. His work reshapes our understanding of life, death and what lies beyond, offering us a unique lens into the extraordinary.* Jockbrocas.com/grief-group

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Simplifying life.
Returning to (our) nature.
Remembering ourselves.
Realising we are connected. Part of a whole. A unique part, but merely a part.
Being humble and realising our greatness at the same time.
Remembering our purpose.
Realising our work.
Coming home.
Belonging.
Enjoying life.
Enjoying our work.
Thriving together.

IN THE PRIVATE SPHERE WE OFFER:

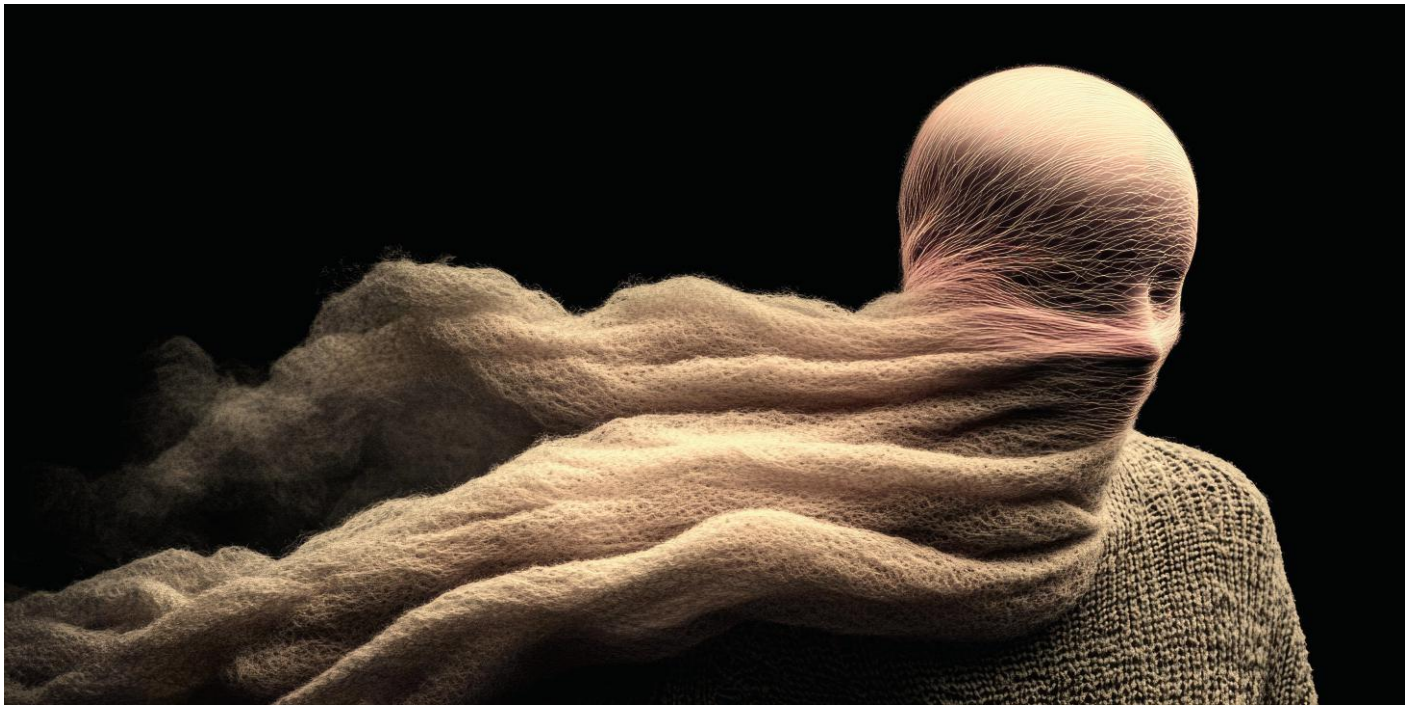
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Remembering Who We Really Are: *My Reiki Journey*

By Gina Ambrose

I never felt seen! I could see others, feel them, read them and sense the parts they kept hidden, but it often as if like no one could truly see me. For a long time, I believed that was a flaw. Now, I understand: it was my gift.

I was meant to notice what others could not see. To feel the subtle nuances that others missed. To hear the quiet voice beneath the noise.

This is how Reiki first found me - not through a logical decision, but through the quiet, persistent whisper of the soul.

Hi, I'm Gina Ambrose. I'm a Reiki Master Teacher, practitioner and emotional guidance practitioner. I've dedicated over two decades to the study and teaching of Reiki in its many beautiful forms: Usui Shiki Ryoho, Karuna® Reiki, Gendai Reiki, Reiki Ryoho, Seichim Reiki - and more. My journey also includes studies in crystal healing, personal alchemy and energy work rooted in ancient wisdom. My path, however, didn't start on a spiritual mountaintop. It started in a boardroom.

How Reiki found me

Years ago, I was caught in the chaos of the corporate world. Working endless hours, chasing goals that didn't belong to me. I ticked the boxes, climbed the ladder and slowly lost myself. I was 'successful' on paper, yet inside, I was depleted, disconnected, and empty.

Serendipitously, a friend invited me to a Reiki course. I said yes, not knowing that single decision would change the entire course of my life. From the moment of my first attunement, something ancient stirred inside me.

A remembering.

A returning.

I didn't just feel energy flowing through my hands; I felt *home*. For the first time, I felt seen by the universe, by myself.

What Reiki is (and what it's not)

People often ask me, "But what is Reiki? Is it religious? Is it just energy? Is it like a massage?"

I smile, because Reiki isn't easily explained with the mind; it must be felt with the heart.

Reiki is a Japanese word that loosely translates to 'universal life energy'. But more than that, Reiki is a sacred system of healing, connection and remembrance. It works with the body's natural ability to heal and restore itself physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

Reiki is not a religion. You don't have to 'believe' in it for it to work. You just need to be open.

Reiki meets you where you are and invites you back to yourself. Another common question: "Is Reiki just placebo?" No. While mindset certainly plays a role in healing, Reiki has been studied around the world and shown to reduce stress, enhance emotional wellbeing, ease physical pain and support mental clarity.

It works on the energetic systems of the body, those same systems now being mapped by quantum science, bioenergetics and even western medicine. But beyond the studies, what matters most to me is what I witness 'real time' every single day.

How Reiki changes lives

I've seen people come into a Reiki session anxious, in pain, or completely overwhelmed - and leave feeling calm, light and held. I've seen tears released that had been stuck for years. I've seen lifelong insomnia dissolve, chronic tension dissipate and emotional walls soften.

Most beautifully, however, I've seen people *remember who* they are.
Not who the world told them to be. Not who their trauma made them. But their true self - soft, strong, glowing and deeply wise.

Reiki doesn't do the work for you - but it clears the fog so you can find your path again. It's not a magic wand. It's a doorway. You still have to walk through it. But Reiki walks beside you with grace and love.

Reiki as a way of life

In 2010, I moved to Cape Town and was invited to bring Reiki teachings to the area. Today, I run Soul2Soul Academy, where I teach students from all walks of life - from Robertson to Cape Point - how to heal themselves and others through Reiki. Teaching is my passion. Every student, every class, every sacred circle is a gift. I teach - but I also learn. My students remind me of the magic in being vulnerable, open and curious. They teach me about courage, laughter and soul-connection.

Reiki has become more than a practice - it's a way of life. It's in how I breathe, how I listen and how I walk through the world. Reiki teaches that healing doesn't have to be dramatic or painful. It can be gentle, quiet and soft. It can begin with one deep breath.

If you hear or feel the call... trust it. Whether you're a curious beginner or someone seeking deep transformation, Reiki will meet you in exactly the right way. You don't need to be 'spiritual' or have it all figured out. Reiki works through love, intention and surrender. Let it start with a whisper - just like it did for me.

Gina Ambrose is a Reiki Master Teacher and founder of Soul2Soul Academy in Cape Town. She offers certified Reiki courses, healing sessions and mentorship for empaths and energy sensitives. Learn more at soul2soul.co.za.



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we welcome you with integrity, care, and grounded spiritual wisdom.

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Part II of a VI Part Series

Chakras in partnership with Astrology



By Anastacia Sampson

Saturn is associated with the root chakra and understanding the condition of Saturn in an astrological chart reveals some glimpses into themes of the root chakra. The same is true of Jupiter and the sacral chakra. The more in-depth expression of a planet should also take into account its degree in the zodiac, house position and aspects to it. Let's keep things light for the chakras.

- **Saturn in Capricorn** instils a serious and disciplined approach to duty. Those with this placement take their responsibilities deeply to heart. Insecurities are overcome by accepting they are not accountable for more than they truly are.
- **Saturn in Aquarius** carries a similar sense of responsibility but with a more individualistic flair. This placement often leads to a strong sense of duty toward humanity and the environment. Insecurities are overcome by embracing psychological healing.
- **Saturn in Pisces** operates with a mix of responsibility and uncertainty. There can be insecurities around relinquishing control. They can excel in structured environments, institutions, or far-off places when they allow faith to flow.
- **Saturn in Aries** struggles with impulsiveness and a fear of not being number one. Accepting personal responsibility and recognising how one's actions impact others is a key lesson.
- **Saturn in Taurus** fosters reliability and dependability. There is a strong sense of responsibility in maintaining financial stability, supporting the home and saving for the future, with tinges of inflexibility. Living in harmony with Nature helps ease insecurities.
- **Saturn in Gemini** emphasises the importance of knowledge and communication. A sense of security is gained through learning, but there is also a responsibility to use words carefully, as they influence others deeply.
- **Saturn in Cancer** finds security in home and family. This placement prioritises protecting loved ones but may struggle with balancing emotional warmth and perceived duty. There may be insecurities linked with trust being broken.
- **Saturn in Leo** takes great pride in family, children and achievements. However, the responsibility of being a protector can feel overwhelming, leading to self-doubt.
- **Saturn in Virgo** fosters meticulous attention to duty, that can be stressful. This placement is highly responsible in work and pet care, with a natural inclination toward precision and organisation. Insecurities are overcome by developing a form of faith.
- **Saturn in Libra** values fairness and balance in relationships. Reciprocity is important and obligations are taken seriously in personal and professional interactions. Insecurities are overcome through compassionate and authentic relationships.



- **Saturn in Scorpio** prefers to fulfil responsibilities privately. This placement experiences intense pressure to meet obligations and is often tested during times of transformation and crisis. Insecurities are overcome through some intense experiences.
- **Saturn in Sagittarius** finds growth through philosophy, education and cultural exploration. Responsibilities often revolve around expanding knowledge and broadening perspectives. Insecurities are abated when the person has a more encompassing world-view.

Overcoming fears and insecurities

By understanding Saturn's lessons, we can work through our fears and insecurities. Saturn's ultimate goal is transformation. To grow, we must confront our limitations, insecurities, endure hardships and emerge stronger. Perseverance is key and overcoming challenges leads to profound personal development.

The root chakra plays a crucial role in inner strength, commitment, responsibility and a sense of security. To nurture and balance the root chakra, consider these practices:

- Engage in meditation focused on grounding.
- Support charities and perform acts of service.
- Express gratitude for your skills and abilities.
- Spend time alone in Nature, such as a garden or a safe outdoor environment.

A well-balanced root chakra provides stability through life's storms, keeping you grounded in your goals and enabling overall transformation as you work with all chakras.

Practical ways to strengthen Saturn energy

Saturn's influence can be reinforced through simple, mindful actions:

- Carry a smooth deep brown or earthy toned stone in your pocket when feeling anxious, insecure, or fearful. Stones support the root chakra and provide a sense of grounding.
- Clean your home or tend to a garden on a Saturday, the day ruled by Saturn.
- Volunteer at an animal shelter, or frail care centre, clean up litter when you are able to, or engage in any form of charity work - especially on Saturdays.
- Perform tasks without seeking recognition, applause, or compensation. Saturn acknowledges disciplined effort made without expectation.

The root system analogy

Consider the roots of a tree. Although they remain unseen beneath the soil, they provide the tree with essential stability and nourishment. A tree with weak roots will fall in strong winds, just as a person without a solid foundation will struggle through life's challenges.

Imagine yourself as a tree. Your roots extend from your spinal cord, perhaps even through your feet when you stand. When in nature - at the beach, in a forest, or in a garden - visualise your roots anchoring into the earth, drawing strength and stability. Even though they are invisible, your roots provide the foundation needed for both survival and growth.

Jupiter in the 12 zodiac signs

- **Jupiter in Sagittarius** enjoys exploring, travelling, seeking new horizons and expanding worldviews. There is real happiness in engaging with and understanding different cultures and societies. Faith fuels joy when Jupiter is in Sagittarius.
- **Jupiter in Capricorn** brings a more reserved expression of happiness. Life may feel more serious for this person, with happiness stemming from achieving goals, earning recognition, holding authoritative roles, having alone time in Nature and fulfilling responsibilities.
- **Jupiter in Aquarius** thrives on unique and innovative ways to find joy. Dedicating time to psychological wellness, supporting community projects and contributing to the collective wellbeing enhance happiness for this airy sign.
- **Jupiter in Pisces** expresses the ultimate form of joy through a deep connection with divinity, the cosmos, or inner faith. There is no need for external validation - joy comes naturally from trusting a higher power and experiencing unconditional love.
- **Jupiter in Aries** finds great joy in competition, taking action and defending the vulnerable. True happiness arises from being courageous and stepping up as a defender with bravery and asserting oneself as being capable and a doer.
- **Jupiter in Taurus** experiences a peaceful sense of happiness when finances are secure, savings are built up and a stable home supports the family. Spending time in Nature and living a lifestyle that is more natural (little to no make-up and being more 'earthy' or 'down to earth') bring an inner content happiness.
- **Jupiter in Gemini** finds joy in trivia nights, playing games, engaging in storytelling and putting on performances. When these experiences involve excessive mental activity or stimulation, that can interfere with the easy flow of joy.
- **Jupiter in Cancer** thrives in a supportive family and community environment, where emotional security and warmth are abundant. Knowing there is always love and protection at home creates deep happiness. Jupiter enjoys the social connections that are based on authentic emotional-based bonds, shrouded with trust and respect.
- **Jupiter in Leo** brings joy through self-expression, creativity and recognition. Having a beautiful home and feeling proud of one's accomplishments enhances happiness. Jupiter can lead others well, when he is in Leo, to assist and guide others to live with greater purpose.
- **Jupiter in Virgo** finds happiness in maintaining a healthy lifestyle, keeping an organised space and paying attention to the finer details of life. The keener attention to focus on details sometimes may deter the easy flow of expansive Jupiterian happiness
- **Jupiter in Libra** experiences joy through balanced relationships, mutual respect and healthy boundaries. Harmony in connections leads to fulfilment. There is a great deal of learned wisdom dispensed through the experience of relationships, when Jupiter is in Libra.
- **Jupiter in Scorpio** discovers profound joy through deep emotional transformations, therapy, astrology and exploring the mysteries of life. Jupiter in Scorpio may be somewhat secretive or selective before sharing his creative and expansive joy with others, as trust must be earned first.

Supporting creative potential and joyful experiences

To support your creative potential, work on processes to release notions of guilt. Most times we do the best we can to survive and, if we are left with guilt, it is time to seek some form of counselling. Religious, holistic-orientated or spiritual counselling may help us see a bigger picture and find deeper solace. As we release emotions of guilt, the restrictions and limits on our ability to be joyful and creative lift like a heavy fog evaporating as the sun rises on a warm sunny day.

- Engage in behaviour that supports your wellbeing.
- Engage in activities which allow you to discover more about the habitat around you.
- Spend time with people who inspire you, whom you wish to emulate and who can mentor and guide you.
- Watch entertainment which inspires and motivates you.
- Encourage learning, to broaden your horizons and become more understanding.
- Practise compassion for yourself and others.
- Enjoy your creative pursuits, no matter how small.

Activities that enhance Jupiter's influence

Jupiter's energy can be supported by engaging in activities that foster joy and expansion. These include:

- Spending time in Nature, particularly in gardens or natural environmental spaces;
- Participating in outdoor physical activities for your enjoyment, especially with good friends;
- Practising laughter therapy and sound healing to elevate one's mood;
- Engaging in spiritual or philosophical studies to broaden understanding.
- Have orange colours in your home and use the orange aromatherapy oil in your home.
- Communication with a good mentor.
- Smile more, especially to strangers.

Our root chakra gives us the endurance and stability to survive and grow. Our sacral chakra supports our ability to cultivate fulfilling experiences and perceive life with greater joy. By nurturing these two chakras, we become secure and flow in creative expression and see our purpose.

By
Anastacia Sampson
D.N. Med. BA(Hons) Psych

Anastacia's bio can be viewed on page 18 in the following article.









Part III of a VI Part Series

Chakras in partnership with Astrology

By Anastacia Sampson

Harnessing our power with love

Mars is associated with the solar plexus chakra and understanding the condition of Mars in an astrological chart reveals glimpses into themes of the solar plexus chakra. The same is true of Venus and the heart chakra. The more in-depth expression of a planet should also take into account its degree in the zodiac, house position and aspects to it. Let's continue to keep things light for the chakras.

Mars in the zodiac signs:

- **Mars in Aries** acts with great energy and determination. This placement fosters uninhibited and forceful action, sometimes leading to impulsiveness and accidents. Think of a rocket - there is immense drive to achieve goals with courage and initiative, as Mars rules Aries.
- **Mars in Taurus**, well, here Mars moves slowly and deliberately, with a stubborn determination to stick to a particular course of action. Imagine an old steam engine train - steady and driven by practical concerns, with a focus on security and stability. 'Headstrong' and unwavering determination are key terms.
- **Mars in Gemini**, this placement thrives in partnerships, collaborating with others to bring ideas to fruition. Mars in Gemini enjoys conversation and multitasking while in action. Mars enjoys trying to carry out simultaneous tasks and he finally acknowledges to be more focused on one task at a time, after learning through trial and error.
- **Mars in Cancer**, reveals struggles to express full constructive energy. Picture an energetic lion confined to a small, cushioned room. This can lead to emotional outbursts and irritability. Learning to channel energy into creative outlets is supportive, to assist in this placement.
- **Mars in Leo**, shows greater ambition and a desire to take on challenges. Think of a performer - natural in front of a crowd and eager to showcase their abilities. This is a person who aims to be leader of the group.
- **Mars in Virgo** is meticulous, analysing every detail before acting. This careful deliberation can sometimes lead to procrastination. Imagine an anxious person debating on moving to a new home for so long that the opportunity is lost. Missed opportunities crop up.
- **Mars in Libra,** indicates actions are taken to maintain balance and harmony. Mars in Libra prefers to maintain the status quo, the peace. When it comes time to act and, if a clear and fair route is not obvious, then actions may often be put on hold.
- **Mars in Scorpio** holds deep reserves of energy that emerge unexpectedly. This placement carries heightened intense energy and an air of mystery. Think of a tennis player appearing to lose the game, but suddenly dominating the final sets to win the match.
- **Mars in Sagittarius,** this placement thrives on adventure, movement and exploration. Imagine wild horses galloping freely across vast landscapes, driven by a desire to experience life's journey.

- **Mars in Capricorn** is disciplined and goal-oriented in actions. Success comes from perseverance and learning from past failures. Think of a five-star hotel chain, built over decades of strategic effort and resilience.
- **Mars in Aquarius,** here energy is expressed in unpredictable ways. Actions may be unconventional and innovative. Picture a person building a unique house using groundbreaking materials. When inspiration strikes, it should be harnessed effectively. Many ideas spark here, support from others is needed to put them into action.
- **Mars in Pisces** acts subtly, often more inclined to dream than act. Think of thick mist disrupting travel - it slows progress but does not halt it. This placement requires conscious effort to translate the intention to do something into tangible action.

Action and aspiration

For those seeking enlightenment, contemplation alone is not enough - it must be paired with action. As we become more conscious, there is expansion to aspire to act with kindness, wisdom and understanding.

To enhance the energy of the solar plexus chakra:

- Practise deep belly breathing.
- Give yourself gentle abdominal massages (on an empty stomach).
- Engage in Qi Gong or Tai Chi.
- Validate your achievements, no matter how small, and acknowledge your personal power.
- Take courses in healthy self-assertion.
- Have a mindset of self-empowerment.

Strengthening Mars energy

With Mars we can destroy or create, attack or defend, be the thief / villain or the hero / protector. To harness the power of Mars effectively:

- Participate in sports, running, or self-defence classes.
- Engage in Hatha Yoga.
- Develop logical thinking through strategy-based games.
- Learn basic DIY repairs.
- Set daily tasks and complete them systematically.
- Take courses in anger and procrastination management.
- Get involved in food preparation and cooking.

The power of conscious action

Acting impulsively out of frustration can lead to destruction, while mindful, purposeful action fosters harmony. At times, we may begin to develop shame around our past actions. Practising mindfulness feeds conscious actions. The power of conscious action helps us always remember, with compassion, we do the best we can, with what we understand at any current time. To support compassion let's explore the heart chakra and Venus.

Venus in Taurus reveals that love is expressed through touch and a deep connection with nature. Physical affection and stability in relationships are of utmost importance. Love, in this sign, is intertwined with security, strong sensuality and a need for lasting bonds.

Venus in Libra expresses love through beauty, harmony and diplomacy. Relationships are approached with grace, fairness and a desire for balance. Romantic gestures and aesthetic appreciation are central to love under this placement. Reciprocity is important along with healthy boundaries.

Venus in Gemini, love thrives through intellectual stimulation. Love is often gregarious. These individuals express affection by engaging in lively conversations, sharing ideas and embracing variety in relationships. Communication is a special ingredient for love.

Venus in Cancer expresses love through care, emotional security and nurturing. People with this placement often have a protective nature and they seek deep emotional bonds. They may be very emotionally needy. A defining trait can be a physically attractive upper chest area, symbolising the nurturing nature of this placement.

Venus in Leo, they love grand gestures, admiration and passion in relationships. Love is expressed with flair, confidence and a desire to express creativity through their love. There is a deep need to share affection in an extravagant way. They are protective over their love interests.

Venus in Virgo shows love through thoughtful gestures, attention to detail and acts of service. However, this placement can sometimes lead to overanalysing relationships. Overthinking can hinder open expression of love. Following a healthy lifestyle supports the romantic life.

Venus in Scorpio is intensely passionate and seeks profound, transformative connections. There is an element of mystery, emotional depth and heightened sexual energy. Trust issues can sometimes arise. Nonetheless the emotional investment always feels more intensified.

Venus in Sagittarius, expresses love with a sense of adventure, optimism and enthusiasm. Relationships need generosity, exploration and a sense of playfulness to thrive. Their love is always expansive and they seek to share experiences with whomever they love.

Venus in Capricorn expresses love in a practical and responsible manner. Long-term security and planning are important in relationships, though this approach can sometimes feel restrictive or overly cautious. To win a romantic heart here, love poems are not an ace card. The trump card is proving you are trustworthy.

Venus in Aquarius, love is expressed through unconventional, trusting and intellectual ways. There is a strong desire for companionship combined with a need for personal space and independence. The expression of love is often a way to explore one's deeper psyche.

Venus in Pisces embodies dreamy, empathetic and romantic energy. Love is expressed in an intuitive, almost ethereal way and individuals with this placement often seek soul-level connections. Love is often more gentle, generous and gracious.

Venus in Aries, love is action-oriented, with expressions of affection through physical gestures and a direct approach. The saying 'actions speak louder than words' resonates deeply with this placement. When declaring their feelings, they may not score high in romantic speech but their actions loudly reveal their romantic feelings.

The middle link

To sum up:
Integration of security (root chakra) + creative self-expression (sacral chakra) + personal empowerment (solar plexus chakra) = compassionate love (heart chakra).

To heal our grief is to heal the heart

Grief is an emotion that is deeply etched into the heart chakra. When we begin to heal our grief, we heal the heart chakra. As we heal the heart chakra, we may feel residue grief needing to be expressed and released.

The heart feels deeply and is always to be treasured. Begin with self-love and respect your boundaries, when healing from any trauma.

Stability with trust + reciprocity in relationships with health boundaries = fertile ground for love in the heart to bloom.

Supporting the heart chakra

To enhance and maintain a balanced heart chakra:

- Wear moonstone or rose quartz as a pendant, allowing the stone to rest near the heart.
- Heart to heart hugs
- Engage in moments of mindfulness and meditation, tuning in to your heart energy.
- Daily say out loving kind affirmations to yourself.
- Allow yourself to cry when needed, releasing pent-up emotions.

To nurture Venusian energy, incorporate the following into your routine:

- Walk and smell fresh flowers.
- Use aromatherapy oils.
- Enjoy massages and self-care rituals that promote relaxation.
- Dance to your favourite music, embracing movement.
- Practise yin Yoga.
- Cultivate social connections with friendly and supportive people.
- Engage in creative activities like playing a musical instrument.

All is interconnected

While this this article series is focused on the connection between one chakra and one planet, it leads to a larger realisation: Everything is interconnected. Our internal energy centres influence and are influenced by our interactions, relationships and life experiences. By understanding these links, we become more conscious with deeper compassion and healing.

Anastacia Sampson, D.N. Med. BA (Hons), has been practising medical and psychological astrology for over 22 years. After obtaining her diplomas in health studies via the UK, she began writing health columns for newspapers and journals. Anastacia completed her honours degree in psychology and was awarded a cum laude pass. Anastacia is a registered member of the South African Pharmacy Council and Association of Supportive Counsellors and Holistic Practitioners.



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Vedanta is a **science of consciousness** that employs impeccable logic to reveal the true nature of the Self, consciousness and reality itself. It is a **timeless teaching**, universal in scope, addressing the fundamental questions that have shaped human inquiry since the dawn of time.

All that's required is an **open, questioning mind**. Vedanta follows a structured methodology - each step unfolding with precision, guiding the seeker toward **understanding, integration and Self-realisation**. The result? A profound shift in how one perceives oneself and the world.

Instead of seeking happiness in external objects - people, achievements, or fleeting experiences - you uncover a **limitless source of happiness and wholeness** within. This is ***moksha*** - liberation. Some call it enlightenment. I call it **freedom**.

Vedanta teaches that our sense of limitation - the feeling of being incomplete, always searching for more - is rooted in **ignorance of our true nature**. And the **only** cure for ignorance is knowledge. Just as light dispels darkness instantly, Self-knowledge dissolves the false identification with the **limited mind-body-ego** and reveals an expansive, boundless identity as **pure awareness**.

This **freedom from suffering** is the highest goal of human life. Yet, Vedanta is not mystical or esoteric - it is a **practical, structured system of Self-knowledge**, relevant to all who seek clarity, peace and an unshakable sense of wholeness.

The journey of Self-discovery is not about acquiring something new but **removing misconceptions** that cloud the truth. Vedanta does not ask for blind faith. Instead, it invites **inquiry, reflection and direct experience**. Through this process, the fundamental nature of reality is revealed - not as abstract concept but undeniable truth that transforms life.

As **Swami Dayananda** put it:

"Vedanta is a universal message and relevant to everyone, everywhere, even though not everyone will be interested in it. The message of Vedanta can be given to anyone because it is relevant to everyone... Without it, one's life is a search that never comes to an end."

To make these teachings **accessible to all**, we have developed the **Vedanta4All app** - a resource designed to support sincere inquirers. The app offers **free content**, including teachings, meditations and retreat recordings. For those who wish to explore deeper, structured courses such as *Intro to Vedanta, the Bhagavad Gita* and *The Three Gunas* are available for **a small monthly subscription**.

For a more personal exploration, you can also **book a private online session** on the website. The path to freedom begins with understanding.

Download the **Vedanta4All** app and take your first step toward Self-knowledge - a journey that will change your life.





The Truth about
The Journey of Trauma

By Neta-Li Gonen

Today, no one goes through life unscathed by trauma. The difference today, there has been a consciousness shift since the '90s. We are in an era where information and technology are readily available at a click of a button. We are also in a place where there are many healing methods available.

At times, life pushes to unforeseen directions with little to no preparation or the skills to comprehend what just happened. Everyone has something behind closed doors even though, on social media, life is portrayed as happy, what seems amazing and beautiful. Divorce, a car accident or abuse are not advertised on such platforms. Unless, you are close family or friends, these life experiences are often unknown.

What is trauma?

It is a deep emotional experience that is very distressful as trauma disrupts one's own internal homeostasis causing a sense of fear, insecurity and helplessness.

Trauma is such an individualistic experience because the same event can be encountered and recalled differently by numerous people, as it depends on personal shutdown mechanisms and life experiences.

Types of trauma

- **Acute Trauma** is a non-routine, irregular, short experience like an armed robbery, car accident.
- **Chronic trauma** is consistent incidents experienced such as a life threatening illness or a divorce.
- **Complex trauma** is a variety of traumatic events over a long period of time. An example is trauma bonding, which is a deep, destructive, emotional relationship in which a person has been broken down by another person to the point that she or he loses the self in many ways.

The conventional perspective

The conventional approach has been well publicised and is a method that has multiple forms of therapy, which may or may not include medication.

There are various approaches to trauma which are:

- One of the common ones focuses on healing the past being psychodynamic.
- Other widely used therapies are Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Dialectic Therapy stemming from the behavioural approach.
- Narrative Therapy and Solution-Based Therapy are examples of Post Modern Social Constructivist approaches.
- Other methods may include humanistic, family systems, existential and neuroscience.
- An important method is integrative, taking a holistic view, using a few of the above-mentioned methods with complementary modalities.

For me, I experienced conventional therapy and was left in circles, circles of victimhood. I left therapy when my own therapist (who had completed one or more of The Journey courses) said to me that, since I attended my own Journey Intensive, she could no longer assist me in my growth as fast as The Journey. I was grateful because she was honest, there was no ego, she put me first and understood her own limitations.

The Journey's perspective
Trauma is just another emotional barrier. The Journey is not about the labels. We have the tools to reframe perceptions and, at times, unscramble the memory until the trauma is a complete blur, so that the defence mechanisms are reduced and emotions which were not felt previously are accessed.

Some clients require conventional assistance and, as Journey practitioners, we will work together with those therapists. In certain circumstances, The Journey cannot replace conventional treatment and we will support in conjunction with a mental health practitioner.

Somatic trauma
The Journey offers various tools when the body experiences trauma. Also, Brandon Bays, one of the founders, has designed processes for the emotional as well as the physical traumas for issues like cancer, sexual abuse, surgery, bullying, just to name a few. There is the emotional mind-body connection as every disease has an emotional root cause.

Music has an incredibly positive and powerful healing effect. The combination of music and people was an interesting discovery for me. At times, going to a club activates my nerves, which causes distress in my body without being able to access the feelings, memories and or understanding why I get triggered. Other times, Tibetan bowls and gongs, sound bath meditations, calm my nervous system. It is as though the vibration of music tunes into the frequency of my own body. The nerves would explain its pain in session and release the stored memory. Thereafter, the body was at peace.

My body has become my reference and guides me in many situations from sensing the energy of a room to letting go of a client. I don't listen to the words, I feel the vibration and embrace whatever message my body sends.

Generational trauma
Generational trauma is the emotional effects, behavioural patterns, beliefs that are passed from one generation to next generation, not necessarily within the family. It can also include a community and even a culture.

A good example is how abuse passes down from one generation to the next and how the children as adults do not understand or are even aware why the cycle of abuse happens within relationships.

This year, in my own healing journey, I have been clearing patterns of consciousness that are not mine. The mentor cut the generational cord and out of the blue, members of the family tree going back a few generations would come down to the campfire. The lineage spoke of their pain of feeling unloved and forgiveness took place with every soul who came to the campfire. This process gave me insight why I had attracted people who can't love others and the unloveability within myself.

Past lives
Sometimes, unfinished business is brought into this life to complete the karma and or find closure with a specific issue, lesson or soul.

I recognise my family in this life from past lives. For many years, I struggled forgiving a member. Forgiveness set me free when I accepted the limitations of that soul from that life to this lifetime. At the end, two souls were set free from both lifetimes.

Technology and AI
We are living in the technological revolution where cloud-based software systems are available and AI can compose a website, notes from a Zoom meeting or even lesson plan. Efficiency, speed and productivity are increased. My issue has come when I recently discovered that people are also using AI to understand other people's reactions and create a response based on the advice of AI, replacing human contact and healing. During the '90s we did not have enough tools and technology. Today, we have an abundance which may not be used with balance. Sometimes, this may be to the opposite extreme as technology cannot replace the human touch.

In closing, The Journey is a wonderful complementary tool in healing trauma with many methods within of itself and is great with many modalities. There is no judgment in whatever method an individual chooses to heal. It is more about holding the space and being a vessel wherever a person holds and goes within.

Neta-Li was connected with Brandon Bay's book, The Journey *and later on wanted to experience the journey. The healing provided Neta-Li offers profound, deep, long-lasting shifts. At some point, there was a calling to become an Accredited Journey Practitioner and Life Coach. Neta-Li discovered her purpose is to: Be the light, heal with light and teach the light For many years, her passion continues with The Journey as she still volunteers, mostly for Journey International, to assist newcomers on their own journey. She sees clients face-to-face in Johannesburg and online in many parts of the world. Info: netali.gonen@gmail.com contact her for specials and giveaways.*





Sun Signs and the Body

By Joanne Brocas

Astrology is a wonderful way to explore our celestial make-up, our vital energy and our physical health and wellbeing in regard to our correspondence with cosmic consciousness. Astrology is an intuitive and symbolic art that can help to realign us with our heart and soul, with our body and spirit - and with the heavens and the earth – so that we come to realise that we are more than just a physical body with blood running through our veins and we come to know more about our spiritual and energetic anatomy and our multidimensional magnificence that's at creative play within the physical world at large.

Astrology as a form of symbolism and even divination, can help us to know ourselves more deeply, to understand ourselves and the complexities that make us who we are. Its ancient wisdom can help us to receive the much-needed self-compassion that can help us to heal, to evolve our consciousness and to live our lives to our highest potential. The following article offers a small glimpse of the multifaceted and dynamic world of astrology in the exciting genre of 'Sun signs,' their associated body parts, their health tendencies and some energy healing tips. This, of course, does not take precedence over seeking out traditional medical care when needed, yet it does help us to understand our consciousness, our body and our vital energies more intimately, so that we can combine all that we need in our healing journey to help us move towards vital health and wellbeing.

Sun signs and their correspondence with the body

Sun signs offer us much more than personality insights – they also provide us with an understanding of the spiritual connection between our celestial makeup and our physical body's health and wellbeing. Each zodiac sign is associated with specific parts of the body and, by understanding these connections, we can bring greater awareness to our health and healing practices.

What follows is a short guide to each Sun sign, its associated body parts, common health issues and practical and spiritual ways to restore balance and vitality.

Aries (March 21 – April 19)

Body parts: Head. Brain. Face.
Health issues: Headaches. Migraines. Sinus pressure. Stress/tension.

Healing tips: Slow down your fast-paced energy by incorporating a meditation practice or by making sure you get enough rest and sleep. Take regular breaks as there is a tendency to be overly driven, which can lead to burnout. An Indian head massage can help to clear the congested energy fields that formulate within and around the head area that often interplay with sinus pressure and headaches. Walking in nature and regular exercise will help to balance your energy.

Taurus (April 20 – May 20)
Body parts: Neck. Throat. Vocal Cords.
Health issues: Sore throats. Thyroid issues. Stiff neck. Weight fluctuation.

Healing tips: Moving and stretching your body will help your energy to flow more freely. A shoulder and neck massage will help to relieve tension. Maintain a balanced diet and enjoy your favourite foods in moderation as there is a tendency for weight gain, which can lead to you feeling sluggish and unmotivated for action. Singing or humming can help to balance your throat chakra – and a balanced throat chakra can help to energetically support the neck and the thyroid. Spending time in nature can help to restore your overall energetic balance.

Gemini (May 21 – June 20)
Body parts: Arms. Hands. Lungs. Nervous system.
Health issues: Anxiety. Shallow breathing. Carpal tunnel. Obsessive thinking. Insomnia.

Healing tips: To help restore a level of inner peace to your overly simulated mind, it's a good idea to incorporate a meditation practice. Make sure that you spend time away from your gadgets, cellphone and computer and that, when you go to sleep, you don't have any too near your bed. A Yoga practice can help with your breathing and with calming the mind. Journaling is also very good for you because it helps you to get your thoughts and feelings off your mind and your chest and onto the paper. Walking in nature will help to balance your energies but be mindful to pay attention to the surroundings (rather than using your walking time to obsess about your thoughts). Many Geminis will walk and talk on their cellphones as communication is the name of the game for them and they do thrive on it; however, sometimes, they also need to relax their mind and just be one with nature.

Cancer (June 21 – July 22)
Body parts: Chest. Breasts. Stomach.
Health issues: Digestive issues. Water retention. Emotional eating.

Healing tips: Warm baths can help you to nurture your inner spirit and calm your emotional sensitivity. Creative visualisation is also very good for you, such as imagining yourself being cleansed by standing under a glorious waterfall. Use your imagination to see the waterfall as having blue healing waters that help to restore balance to your energy bodies and fields. Nourishing foods will also help to support your body and emotions. You are very intuitive, so paying attention to your intuition can help to support your health and wellbeing. Walking around a lake or by the sea is also calming to your heart and soul.

Leo (July 23 – August 22)
Body parts: Heart. Spine. Upper back.
Health issues: Heart strain. Blood pressure. Back tension/pain.

Healing tips: You will benefit from journaling your thoughts and feelings when you are angry or resentful about someone or something upsetting you. It's also a good idea to practise seeing both points of view in a situation as there is a tendency to believe that yours is the more important one or the only correct view. Allow yourself to be more vulnerable by opening up to your closest friends or loved ones when you feel you are upset, rather than keeping it close to your chest due to the fear of not wanting to be seen as weak. The king of the jungle is strong and vulnerability is a form of strength and will support your overall energy. You are very creative and so making something, drawing something or baking something can help to balance your energies. Sitting in the sunshine, as the Sun is the ruler of Leo, will also help to revitalise you. Cardiovascular exercise will help to support your circulatory system and blood pressure.

Virgo (August 23 – September 22)
Body parts: Digestive system. Intestines. Nervous system.
Health issues: IBS. Food sensitivities. Anxiety. Stomach complaints.

Healing tips: As you are a natural investigator, it's good to examine the foods you eat and their effects upon you, so that you begin to incorporate a healthy and nutritious diet and establish a good overall daily routine that empowers you. Grounding exercises, such as gardening, can also help to rebalance your vital energies. Journaling and using your creative expression through adult colouring books is another good way of clearing and balancing any anxiety and nervous tension that can also affect your stomach. Walking in nature, along the beach or in the countryside is very nurturing and can restore your inner joy.

Libra (September 23 – October 22)
Body parts: Kidneys. Lower back. Skin.
Health issues: Hormonal imbalances. Kidney strain. Skin complaints.

Healing tips: Hydration is crucial for you and regular water intake is going to support kidney function. You can balance being overly stressed through your creative expression and sound therapy. Healing music will help you to relax both body and mind and will help to restore inner harmony. Practising mindfulness in relationships also helps to regulate emotional and physical equilibrium. Setting healthy boundaries will help to support your skin and emotional wellbeing. Learning to appreciate the wonderful person you are, rather than comparing yourself to others, will help you to accept your glorious authentic self.

Scorpio (October 23 – November 21)
Body parts: Reproductive organs. Bowels. Excretory system.
Health issues: Hormonal imbalances. Reproductive health issues.

Healing tips: Your emotional energy benefits from deep transformative work that can bring you more lightness and joy. Practices like breathwork, shadow work and sexual healing therapy can help to restore inner healing and emotional balance. Hydration is necessary to support the reproductive system. Creative writing and journaling can also help you to get in touch with your deeper self. Scorpios can benefit from talking to a trusted friend, loved one, or therapist as a way of expressing deep feelings and perceptions that disturb their emotional equilibrium. Spiritual growth and mystical knowledge can help you in many wonderful ways.

Sagittarius (November 22 – December 21)
Body parts: Hips. Thighs. Liver.
Health issues: Liver strain. Sciatica. Restlessness.

Healing tips: You will benefit from regular physical activity due to your active and energised nature. You love adventure and you are a hard worker, but you need to be careful to avoid both excess and burnout. You can help to support your liver energy and health with dandelion tea, turmeric and moderate alcohol intake. Stretching your hips and regular exercise will help to circulate the energy and keep it flowing within and around you. Travelling, spiritual seeking and academic or metaphysical study can help to rejuvenate your energy.

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)
Body parts: Bones. Knees. Joints. Teeth.
Health issues: Joint stiffness. Arthritis. Dental issues. Rigidity.

Healing tips: You thrive on responsibility, structure and routine and, in doing so, you need to be mindful of added tensions and overwork. Stretching and strength training exercises will help to support bone health. You tend to carry lots of responsibility and are very good at business and/or dealing with family matters. You are learning not to carry the weight of the world upon your shoulders and in doing so, you must take time out to relax and let go a little. Massage and acupressure can help to release deep-seated pressures in the body.

Aquarius (January 20 – February 18)
Body parts: Ankles. Calves. Circulation.
Health issues: Poor circulation. Cramps. Nervous exhaustion.

Healing tips: You often live in the head and so you help to balance this energy by grounding the body. Walking barefoot on the grass and leg messages help to bring the energy flow down to the legs and ankles where it is needed. Epsom salt baths can also help to support the overall vital health of the etheric body – the support system for the physical body. You do best when you avoid being isolated and you connect with like-minded souls – which nourishes you and helps you to rebalance. Humanitarian or creative pursuits will help to keep you emotionally healthy.

Pisces (February 19 – March 20)
Body parts: Feet. Lymphatic system. Pineal gland.
Health issues: Fatigue. Foot pain. Emotional overwhelm. Escapism.

Healing tips: You need to protect your energy with regular energy clearing practices and creative visualisation techniques, such as energetic shielding. This is because you are super sensitive to the energies within your environment and can also easily absorb the energies of others, especially if they are off energetic kilter due to some emotional stress. The results of this are energetic drain and fatigue. Regular foot care, such as massage, reflexology and comfortable shoes, can help to keep the feet supported. Epsom salt baths and sage incense sticks can help to clear the etheric energy fields and body from any non-beneficial energies. Creative outlets can help to balance and ground your energy. Meditation and spiritual practice can help you to manage your dream world, imaginary state and your subconscious mind.
Your body is a cosmic map - tune in and let the stars guide you back to balance.



Joanne Brocas is an intuitive healer and divination expert. She is a number one award-winning and bestselling author of several books, including: Angel Medicine, Angel Power *and* Angel Prayers*. Joanne is passionate about astrology, dowsing and oracles and she teaches healing/oracle workshops online and in person internationally. You can find out more about Joanne and her healing/divination work by visiting www.angelicfire.com*

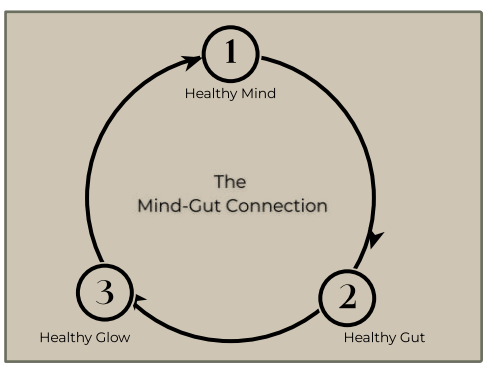
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>
> ***Shannon Smith, Founder & Director***



Our three product ranges are created as a result of years of research, quality testing & sourcing ingredients that really matter. Our flagship Bush Wellness skincare range is intentionally made in small batches, & works in symbiosis with our natural supplements range as well as our certified organic superfoods range.



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Tying the Knot

The phrase 'tying the knot' to describe getting married originates from the ancient Celtic tradition of handfasting, where a couple's hands were tied together with a cord or ribbon as a symbol of their commitment and union. The knot itself, especially the intricate patterns of Celtic knots, was seen as a symbol of everlasting unity and a way to ward off evil spirits.

Are crystals, cleansings, and energy blessings - mysticism and a touch of Wicca - the new trend for those who are 'spiritual but not religious' and tying the knot? Before we apply labels or define this practice as bold, esoteric, or traditional, we might take a moment to consider that almost everything about a modern traditional wedding ceremony is steeped in occult rituals and customs, rooted in the supernatural. From the supportive and large number of wedding attendants to the exchanging of rings...

"Prosperity to the man and happiness to the maid when married in June," - an ancient Roman proverb.

The most popular time for traditional and eclectic weddings is June and it's not about the weather, holidays and vacation clubs. June possesses numerological significance, being the sixth month of the year. The ancient Greeks believed a set of six points represented marriage because it is formed by the pairing of two three-pointed triangles: One masculine, the other feminine. Also known as 'the Star of David'.

The 'white' wedding. As we look back at ancient Roman times, the bride wore a white veil not to symbolise her purity or lay testament to her moral fibre, but rather to ward off any unwanted forces or evil spirits. In ancient Greece, the bride was married in white as it was symbolic of joy. Even here in South Africa, in certain tribal cultures, brides paint their bodies in white before the nuptials.

Something old... This originated with the Celts: Wearing an item owned by a happily married woman in the community would activate magic to transfer that happiness to the bride.

Why the trend for a large bridal party? Transported back to ancient Rome, the role of the bridal attendants was to ward off evil spirits who could take away the happiness of the bride. The larger the bridal procession, the greater her protection.

"The ring has long been regarded as the symbol of attainment, perfection and immortality - the last because the circlet of precious metal had neither beginning nor end." Thus wrote occult scholar Manly P. Hall in *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*.

The earliest use of wedding rings appears in ancient Hebrew ceremonies and is also found in Greek and Roman culture. In ancient Egypt, a circle was a symbol of eternity drawn in the sand. It morphed into a ring that bound the couple for all time, in both this life and the next.

The sweetest moment.
From the classic, multi-tier traditional wedding cake to a modernist ethnic interpretation, this is one of the most visual, ornate and often most expensive parts of a wedding ceremony that is eaten. In eastern European tradition, the cake is not eaten - it is worn. Bread and cake are sewn into the bride's clothing, symbolising life and sustenance.

It's raining rice.
The traditionalists often throw rice over the wedded couple in celebration of the union. Whilst this may be symbolic of abundance and fertility, in ancient Vedic and Chinese cultures rice was thrown to pacify demons and ward off evil.

And for the groom,
The tradition of carrying the bride over the threshold also originated in Rome, where it was believed that the threshold was densely populated by evil spirits and, to protect his bride and thwart their evil intentions, the groom would carry his bride across the threshold.

The magical wedding
The rituals and traditions associated with weddings are highly gendered and extremely heteronormative. They have evolved based on the traditional relationship that existed between a man and a woman since ancient times and, whilst same-sex couples often opt for the same traditional rituals, there are wonderful ways to have a beautiful union of souls with an eclectic ceremony which does not follow gendered lines.

These ideas for magical and soulful ceremonies are perfect for every couple and are gender neutral. The wedding ceremony serves as the launching pad into your marriage and future life together. The more thoughtful and unique you make it, the stronger your foundation will be.

Consulting an astrologer or numerologist to determine an auspicious and fortuitous day as the wedding day has become commonplace.

Diamonds are fast becoming outmoded and current trend indicates that crystals and gems which have different metaphysical properties have become more popular due to their mineral make-up. Emerald has been popularised as it represents the heart chakra. My personal choice, however, was a pink topaz for my wedding ring - a symbol of love and affection that increases the love you have for yourself and your partner. It also promotes openness, honesty and integrity and prompts you to express yourself to your partner in a way that will help your relationship flourish.

Finding a power colour, with both spiritual and auric significance, is very much a part of the magical wedding too.

Anointing the bridal couple with oil infused with herbs associated with grounding and love is a wonderful gift from the wedding party. Those herbs may include rose hips, liquorice root and lemon balm. Jasmine and ylang-ylang are also considered, as they are ethereal, feel like a fairy tale and add a lovely touch.

Another gift from the wedding attendants is to cleanse the aura of the couple with sage. More often than not, a space-clearing of the venue is done before the ceremony.

A morning meditation is a blissful start to the wedding day. Relaxing and connecting to both Source and the essence of who you are is a common practice on the dawning of this magical day.

Receiving energy healing an hour or two before walking down the aisle releases the jitters, calms and opens the heart centre and all of the other energy centres in preparation for the union of souls. Reiki, for example, can be done while the couple is standing up or seated, direct touch is not essential and there is no risk of bridal attire getting crumpled.

The wedding officer is often chosen for their reputation, connectedness to spirit and a deep understanding of the bridal couple's needs and preferences. They must also be mindful of the families' sensitivity and possible reluctance with regard to the type of ceremony their dear ones have chosen.

Keeping the magic alive at the reception can be done with crystal grids placed on the tables. Wishes and blessings notes for each guest replace the traditional thank-you notes and they each take a delicate goodie bag away with them. This could include a crystal, a fresh or dried sprig of a significant herb, or a sage bundle. Magically, the recipient will always get the blessings and bag that was meant for them. – *Ed*

Three popular eclectic wedding ideas

Handfasting
As mentioned in the introduction, it's the origin of the phrase, 'tying the knot'. It's also probably the most universal non-traditional wedding tradition, found in cultures all over the world. The word 'handfasting' actually derives from the ancient Celtic practice of tying a couple's hands together with a ribbon during the ceremony to represent their bond.

This 'joining' symbolism is found in many other cultural traditions. Filipino couples are wrapped in a shawl. As depicted in the film *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, you know that in Greek tradition, the bride and groom each wear crowns that are connected by a ribbon to represent the joining or binding.

Whatever you use to bind yourselves becomes a keepsake of your commitment since it's energetically connected and infused with loving intention from your wedding day. The choice of fabric or cord can be very meaningful. I personally used a combination of woven red and blue cord symbolic of both heaven (blue) and earth (red) witnessing the union. The woven cord was bound with feathers and a turquoise crystal at either end, with blue turquoise being all about cleansing energy and bringing good fortune. Many couples use their favourite colours and, in Scottish tradition, the family tartan.

A sand ceremony
Couples who love the ocean and want to bring a piece of the beach into their ceremony, or even have their ceremony on the beach, often have a sand ceremony.

You could talk about some of the symbolic qualities of sand - that it's used to make concrete, which can stand up to all kinds of 'weather'. like your marriage! Or that sand can be used to make sandbags, which are a powerful form of protection, intending your union to be protected from the stresses of the world and your union free of burden.

The sand ceremony represents two individuals blending together to become one - a soul union.

You'll need two bottles, jars, or vases - small glass vases of coloured sand (stocked by most craft stores) - and one larger one to empty them into. As you layer the coloured sand and weave together both colours, it is symbolic of the union. When alternating colours, you end up with a wavy, multi-coloured sand creation. Due to the popularity of this practice, sand ceremony kits are available from speciality wedding stores and online.

You can make this ritual more spiritual and personal. One of the ways to do this is to take sand from each of your favourite beaches and blend them together. Just be mindful that beach sand can be sticky, so you may want to add some craft sand for longevity.

Planting a wedding tree

This is a most beautiful ritual for those with a deep connection to Nature and Gaia.

Planting and growing something together is symbolic of the nurturing and care that a marriage needs to be strong and healthy as you grow and blossom as one.

The type of tree that you plant may have powerful symbolism too. You need to contemplate what qualities you want to plant and grow in your union, your life as one. The African yellowwood tree (*Afrocarpus falcatus*) is often planted at sacred sites to reinforce the significance of the site; symbolic of the significance and sacredness of the union. Birch trees represent new beginnings and cherry trees are symbolic of love. The list is endless; search online for the spiritual properties of trees.

The logistics of planting a tree during the ceremony can be somewhat challenging. The easiest - and least messy - is simply to have a sapling in a decorated pot beside the wedding altar, where you can each add some soil of your own and then water it together. It's also a mindful way to rekindle the magic of the moment when you transplant it at your home.

The wishing tree

If getting sandy or muddy on your special day is not for you, consider a wishing tree. Select the tree or shrub based on its spiritual properties, plant it in a beautifully decorated pot and place it on a table at the reception with cards, ribbon and pens. Invite your guests to write a wish or blessing on the card and tie it to the tree. This infuses the tree or shrub with all of the well wishes and the cards are a wonderful memento of this sacred union of souls...

Personal wedding vows

In almost every religious tradition, there is no time for the couple to address each other directly in their own words. Generally, you are either repeating words as directed by the officiant or saying "I do." Writing about your love and your commitment to the other and committing your promises to paper is a powerful exercise and breathtakingly beautiful when spoken to one another, witnessed by heaven and earth and/or all those present at that poignant moment of the ceremony - the union to one.

In the more traditional and religious context, you can certainly refer to a divine power relevant to your chosen religion, but the key to writing your own wedding vows is to make them personal, meaningful and original. Whether you speak them during the ceremony or read them to each other beforehand, this is, unequivocally, the most memorable and moving part of the ceremony.

The most important thing to remember on your special day is that it is your wedding - your day - your way.

And... just to keep all couples considering a soul union in the know, there is a new wedding magazine launching soon. This inspirational magazine will not only feature wedding inspiration, articles and photography related to gowns, venues, divine cakes and other wedding-related topics. The magazine will share information with couples about the stresses of planning a wedding, managing the complexities of blended families and other life changes as two become one. Ed



Gamos
TROU / I DO

Gamos: From the Greek γάμος: the celebration of the sacred union of two souls.



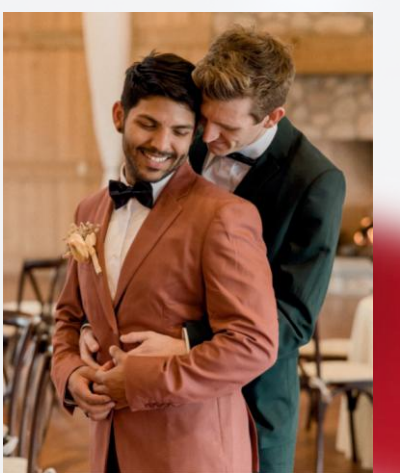




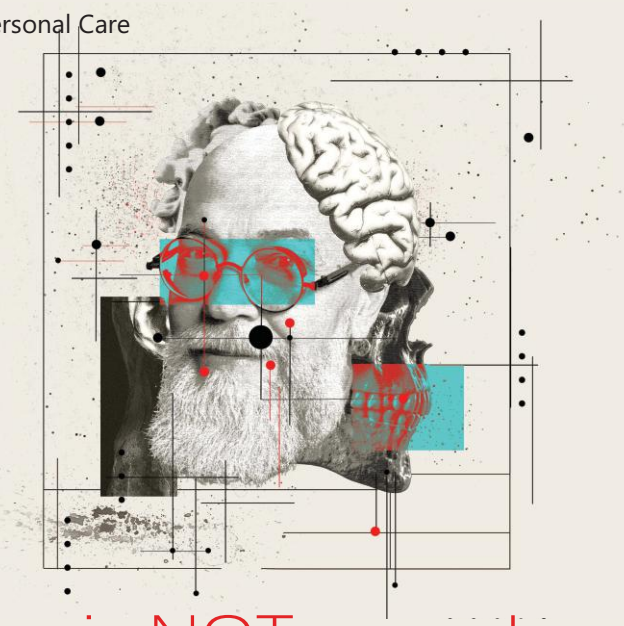
A Celebration of Sacred Union *is coming*

We're excited to announce that something extraordinary is on the horizon:
A wedding competition like no other, designed to celebrate love in all its depth and brilliance.
The details, prizes, and how to enter will be revealed soon...
But for now, we invite you to be part of the journey from the very beginning. Competition starts 1 September 2025.





Stay connected and be the first to know when the magic begins.
Follow the unfolding of this Magnificent Celebration
and Upcoming Publication. Send us an Email for details & entry forms.
competitions@gamos.co.za www.gamos.co.za



Age is NOT a number

Some people die at 25 and aren't buried until they're 75

Benjamin Franklin

'Age is just a number' is a common aphorism, it's also complete rubbish. Age is much more than a number. Age is personal, years are not!

She looked me straight in the eye, indignant. 'I don't like that question.'

January 2020, I was at the Arcadia Health Centre, Australia on a 10-day, water only, fast and had dared to ask the usually friendly Dr Nejla Burton how old she was. Her voice was firm: "If I tell you, I create a cage. If I don't give you a number, I am who you see. Age is not a number. I am not a number." I learned an important lesson. She was right and it was the last time I asked anyone, how old are you? What's your age? With no number, there is no 'age cage.'

Later, I wondered why do we want to know someone's age? And realised Dr. Burton was right - they ask for a number as this allows them to fit you into their preconception of what a 72-year-old, an 80-year-old etc, looks like and totally ignoring the individual. She was right; it is an 'age cage.'

So what does an age number tell you about someone? Surprisingly the answer lies in astronomy. A year is how long it takes the earth to orbit the sun, so age is how many times they've orbited the sun and has absolutely nothing to do with the body, yet these planetary orbits are the basis of chronological age. Every orbit, a birthday, may be convenient for legal purposes and statistics but little else. Look at any group of people born in the same year. Do they look the same age? Never. Some people with 70 or 80 orbits are healthy and active while others with the same number are unhealthy and weak, perhaps frail. Interestingly, this is also true for identical twins.

There have been many attempts to find a more accurate way to describe the effects of the passage of time on the body. One idea is to use age 'groups' based on chronological age. An example: Young old (60 to 69), middle old (70 to 79) and the very old. (80+). Another study proposes young old (65 to 74), middle old (75 to 84) and oldest old (85+); there are more; variations on this theme. Age groupings may help but they're not the solution.

'Biological age' is popular amongst the medical fraternity, using physical and functional biomarkers to determine age, e.g. skin elasticity, grip strength, blood pressure or other measurable body indicators. It may be more accurate but it's also very inconvenient. There is also psychological age, measuring cognitive and memory abilities; how well the brain functions. Social age, is how society perceives behaviour using 'expected chronological markers', e.g. voting at 18, marrying in your 20s, having children in your 30s, retiring age 65 etc.

There is also 'subjective age', where a person is simply asked: 'How old do you feel, *most of the time?*' 'The thinking being the individual has an 'intuitive' understanding about their physical abilities, mental sharpness and emotional stability. Understandably, not everyone agrees, one of the arguments against subjective age is that it reflects the modern cultural obsession with youth. If older age wasn't negatively valued, no one would want to be younger.

It's hard to believe, but there are still cultures where the 'oldest old,' and 'very old' are respected for their wisdom and experience and others where (incredibly) there is no understanding of the concept of age. Where people will say ''I'm 85. I don't know what you mean by: 'How old do I feel?'

Recently, I've adopted a quite different strategy and no one ever asks how old am I. Reason? Whenever I meet someone, I smile and proudly tell them my name and my age. Hi, I'm JJ and I'm 76. It's interesting to watch their reaction.

J.J. Macrae, founder of DiscoverAge and Age Activist and is 76. DiscoverAge is a new and dazzling slant on ageing, it is altered age attitude. It is changed assumptions and new expectations. DiscoverAge is original thinking and new language. Find out more: www.discoverage.life

I to yOu – A Journey to the Authentic Self

As we continue with our understanding between the mInd and bOdy we can see that the I and O are two aspects of this reality we came here to experience.
Like the digital world both are needed for this experience of illusion to unfold.
When we become *the I* in this reality we are limited as *the I* individuates itself into this form of illusion.
Every form around us comes from the O.
The O is the common Energy, the I is what separates us to have this interrelated and interdependent experience of form.

THE O IS COMMON ENERGY = 223 = THE HIGHEST FREQUENCY

The I forms with the information we have inherited from our collective understanding of who we think we are.
As such the more we identify with *the I* the more *the ego* comes into form creating further separation.
This separation is what causes the I-society, this third dimensional reality we are experiencing.
Not a beautiful picture, is it?
We can clearly see how separated and disharmonious the I-society is because of the destruction that is all around us especially to our host mother Earth that we occupy.
Is there a solution to all of this?
Yes, it is bringing the O back.
In the quantum field the possibilities of computations are accelerated because nOw these two states can be occupied simultaneously.
The pathway to healing is to become whole.

I HEALING IS BECOMING WHOLE = 224 = NUMBERS CALIBRATE YOU

This is an arduous journey for one must take the hero's journey to uncover what is creating the obstructions.
This is not done alone as we are assisted by our divine parents gOd-mOm, our circle, numbers and other tools.
Initially when the intention was set to create these series of manuals it appeared that this was going to be an easy one, yet it became more challenging as the target was getting closer to be achieved.
Heartache and pain came in as the old Energy had to be faced and finally released.
It is intriguing for this also brought up generational trauma to be healed, for we carry genetic information from our parents and if this was not enough even past lives were coming in to be integrated into this nOw moment.
The course material intention is to take us from the third dimensional reality and with the wOrx into the fourth and higher dimensional experiences.

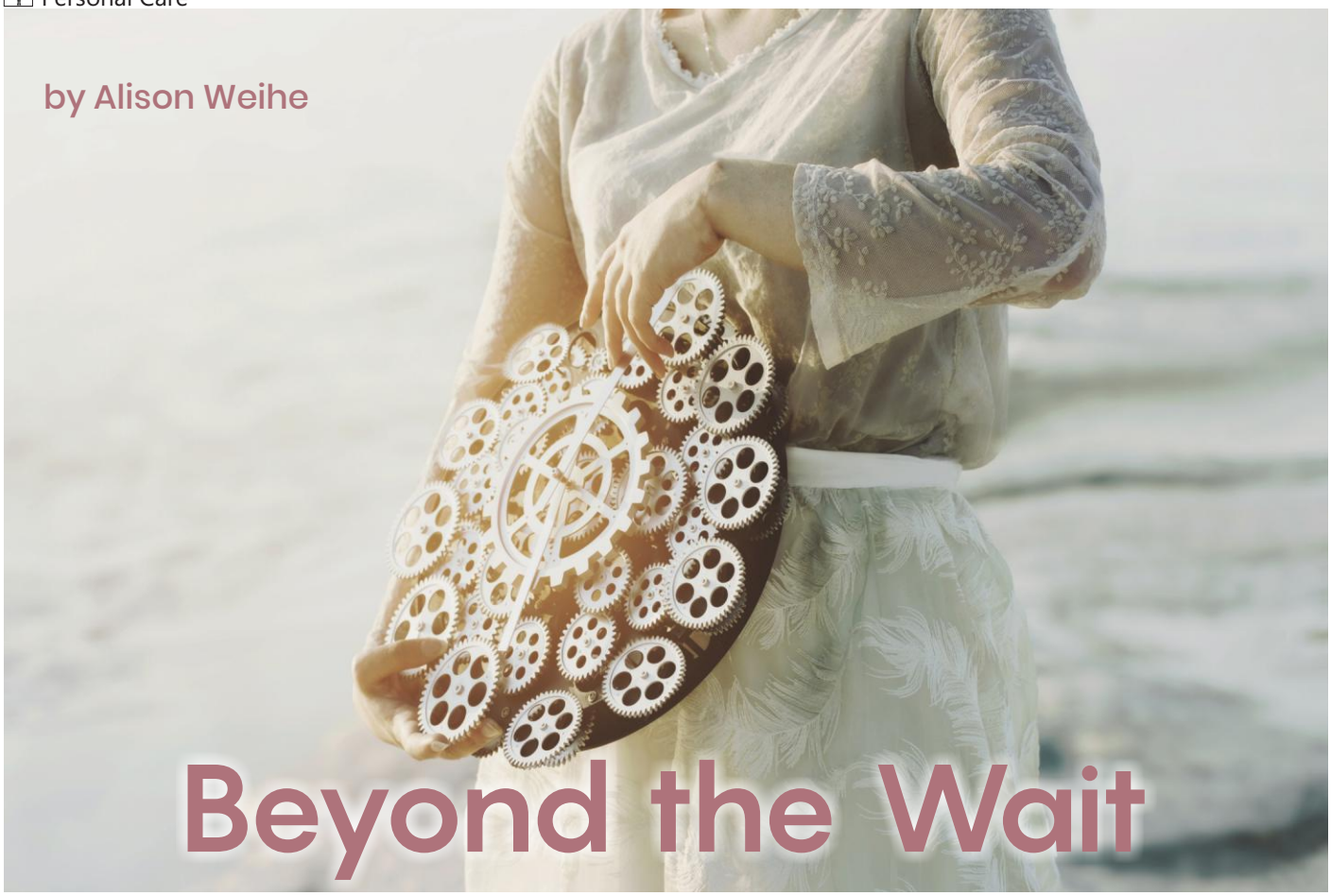
O I FIFTH DIMENSION = 175 = CONSCIOUSNESS = 175 = HEAVEN PLANET EARTH

A good indication whether yOu are in the mInd or the bOdy is the awareness of your breath.
When yOu completely present and conscious of every breath that yOu take then yOu in the nOw. In this course material we understand that there are two experiences of reality the one is on the linear axis, the illusion, which is based on the I, mInd, tIme and lIe and then the vertical experience of reality, which is the O,mOm, gOd, yOu and nOw.
The wOrx gradually takes us to have this experience on the vertical axis.
gOd-mOm then come into this reality elevating the frequency and vibration of this illusion.

GOD-MOM = 67 = SOUL

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by Alison Weihe

Beyond the Wait

Growing up, I wondered if I'd been delivered to the wrong address. My parents and my siblings were extremely sporty and academic. I was the quiet shy child wanting to be invisible.

I found my refuge in my love of animals and in reading. I became a sensitive observer of the world around me. On the surface, our lives seemed idyllic. But underneath that apparent facade was a deeper double life that no one knew about, not even my best friend at school.

My father was a pillar of society as a Rotarian, a humanitarian and a successful entrepreneur. But he battled severe bipolar at a time when there was no name for the disease. He battled with the stigma of medication. When things were great my father was charismatic and a visionary, but when the disease gripped him, he spiralled into rage and despair.

He would drive off, tyres squealing into the night, saying I'm going to drive off a nearby mountain. The sadness suffused my soul. I buried myself in emotional eating. I swallowed my pain and stuffed the anguish down my throat.

It set in motion a deep pattern of emotional eating that I would battle for 50 years. I later found my belonging as a political activist in the anti-apartheid movement, where my immersion in the trade union movement gave me a deep sense of meaning.

I knew as a sociologist that the only way to topple apartheid was through the economic muscle of the worker movement. In that community, I did not feel judged by my weight which yo-yoed from extreme diets, flirting on the fringes of anorexia to ballooning up again, a never-ending rollercoaster of emotions.

As an entrepreneur in my 40s, I became slightly more visible and on the surface more apparently confident, but it was still a facade. My kind and patient husband and my children allowed me to feel a deeper sense of belonging, but I still battled imposter syndrome as well as constant anxiety and a lingering depression.

Halfway through our entrepreneurial journey, when we had won many awards, having been featured on radio, television and in entrepreneur magazines, we crashed.

We discovered that our trusted bookkeeper of eight long years had been defrauding us of more than 10 million rand.

We were on our knees. We had to build a court case, build new company systems, rebuild staff morale, rebuild our marriage, but above all I had to rebuild myself. That fraud became my greatest gift.

In my brokenness I took a brave step. For the first time in my life, I signed up with a personal trainer, a kind man who specialised in leadership development. I walked into the gym in my big baggy black tracksuit.

I could not look in the mirror. I had always been terrified of gyms and all they represented. I could not look at the youthful lycra-clad bodies around me. I kept my head down and mumbled under my breath in victim mode for an entire year.

Then something shifted. I started to feel less in my head and more in my body. I joined Run Walk for Life because there were walkers and runners from all ages. So began a different journey. I remember one morning at the start of a chilly race in Pretoria. I was about to do a 21km race which I had started to do quite regularly. I heard the marshall say: "Athletes, are you ready?" I could not believe it. Yet it was true. I had become an athlete. I had become a different person. I had started to live more in my body and less in my head.

For so much of my life I'd been so disassociated from my body. From the age of 52 to 60, I ran, I went to the gym, I swam, I did Yoga, but it was still a journey of control. I knew that if I ran far enough, I could eat and not put on weight. I still had a fearful relationship with food. Food had always been the enemy. Food had represented torment and anguish. Sometimes I would hardly eat at the dinner table and then, late at night, find myself annihilating the refrigerator.

The constant yo-yo dieting morphed into different periods of bulimia in different stages of my life as a coping mechanism to deal with the anguish in my soul. It was a way of numbing myself, just like others numbed themselves through cutting or alcohol or gambling or shopping.

My health journey in my 50s helped me find a different way. But in my 60s, it became a deeply spiritual journey. A journey of the soul in which I was finally able to find wholeness. To change not just the shape of my body but the very shape of my soul.

At the age of 60 I stopped weighing myself. I started living in a different realm. A world of non-judgment. A world of just being. At the age of 60, I attended a remarkable global summit where I heard powerful storytellers that made me realise the power of words to change somebody's life from the stage and from the page.

I realised that I did have a profound story to tell. Not just my awakening to become a political activist for almost 20 years. But my awakening to live a different life. To become literally a different person.

I became fascinated in what I call identity intelligence. The deep sense of knowing why you came to earth in this particular form, in this particular shape and the power of your story to change other people's lives.

From wanting to be invisible to battling imposter syndrome as an entrepreneur, I finally felt whole when I became a vulnerable storyteller, sharing my struggles, becoming known as a 'soulspeaker'.



Being brutally honest about the wounds of 'not good enough-ness' that had plagued my entire life and how those wounds had scarred my daughter in particular.

This year, I wrote her a letter asking for her forgiveness. Forgiveness for the person I used to be. Now in my mid 60s, I have finally found peace and wholeness. I have not weighed myself for six long years. My identity is no longer tied to a number on the scale.

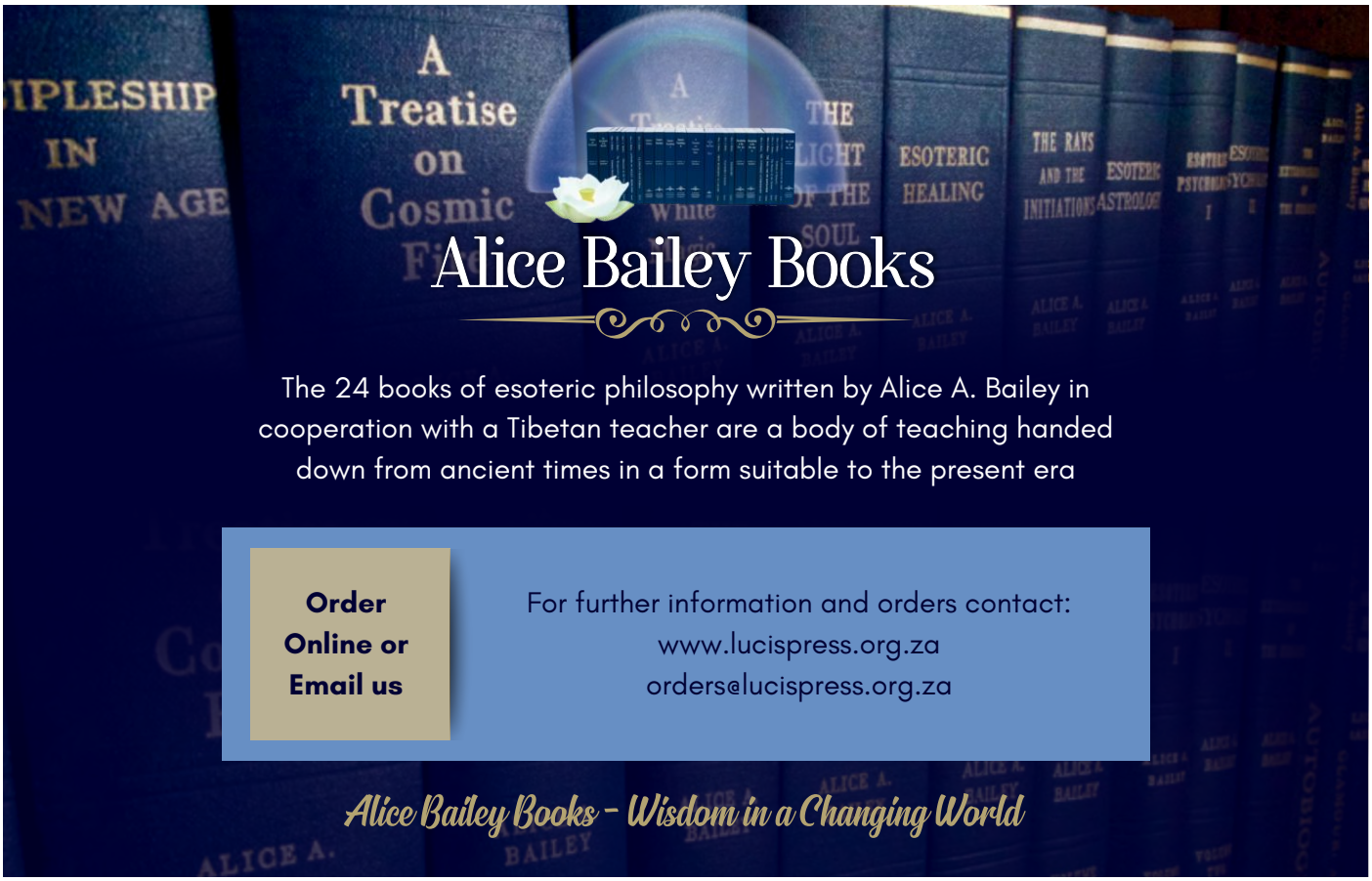
The only scale I have in my home is a small scale to weigh our luggage. I love cooking healthy meals. Food is no longer the enemy. Food is my fuel, the language of love I get to share with my family. I feel as if I am living a second chance. A second chance to live differently. A second chance to be a different wife, a different mother and to be an inspiration to other women that it is never too late to change your life. Now I love Reformer Pilates, weights, swimming, hiking. I move for joy not for punishment.

It's no longer about control. It's about an expression of my true identity. From a 'worrier' living in constant anxiety and depression, I have become a warrior for change, a warrior for peace. Becoming strong, living a dietless, weightless life, not tormented by the scale of judgment, has given me a peace that I never knew was possible.

Don't wait 60 years to start loving yourself.
Don't wait 60 years to live in your body and not your head.
Don't wait 60 years to feed your soul.

Alison Weihe is an author, public speaker and identity intelligence coach. Her memoir Belonging – Finding Tribes of Meaning *shares her inspirational journey of self-discovery and personal growth. An award-winning entrepreneur, Alison is the founder of Soul Voice Journey and The Creative Stone Company, a manufacturing firm which started in a shed and now employs 150 people. As a writer and speaker, she is committed to telling the untold stories of hope and healing in South Africa and building education in entrepreneurship. https://alisonweihe.com*







Spiritual Sexuality

From the profane to the profound

With thought leader, Anne-Marie Clulow, founder of Intimacy Coach International

Integrating sexual energy into the spiritual path or consciousness path, is often the place spiritual folk in many different modalities get stuck.

From the Christians to the esoteric mystics, from the Yoginis to the religious folk. It's certainly where I got mired in the belief systems and agendas of others for around two years.

Sometimes in the beginning of a spiritual sexual journey you have to explore the profane first.

It's not the only way, but what I've found is, if you try and explore the energy from a place of perfection or 'higher energies' only, the lack of grounding and shadow work will shipwreck you before your voyage has even begun.

Sexual energy, meeting needs and desires, exploration with consciousness is often fraught with those who run a sexual agenda that only meets their own needs, not those of the student.

The beginning of the conscious journey into the shadow involves the understanding and often the experiencing of what is taboo in our world, or at least what is considered uncomfortable.

I often watch reality programmes about hoarders, as I love watching the transformations.

Hoarders are often people who get so emotionally overwhelmed that they end up living in rubbish and collected things, feeling frozen, unable to let anything go.

These souls often need serious help from therapists and people who help them practically by wading into the mess with them and cleaning.

Without judgement or force.

I've been around a lot of clients who feel this way energetically around sexuality.

It got overwhelming.

They didn't want anyone to see their mess and shame.
And then it got so overwhelming, change became impossible on their own.

A journey out of the shame and into bliss and awareness is possible. It starts with looking deeply within, seeing and freeing the shadows.
And knowing that you're not alone.

There are many spiritual people who need help with this part of their path. You are not dirty, or disgusting to have desires.

You can work with the root and the sky with awareness and balance.

The unconscious exploration of the profane can get you lost in the ultimate mammal.

The amount of gurus or spiritual teachers who end up in scandals involving sexuality, often even leaning into the abusive, is high.

Perhaps because they felt themselves 'too spiritual' to acknowledge their sexuality.

When I started my journey into exploring desire, I attended quite a few Tantra workshops and began to understand that the fantasy of anything was often not the reality.

One of my favourite stories is when I finally got to experience a group of people massaging me, working with my energy, the taboos of nudity and sensual touch integrated into the space.

I thought it would be overwhelmingly sexual.
I thought it would 'turn me on'.
I thought it would be a fantasy realised.

Until I burst into joyous tears during the experience, as I'd never felt so loved, so much a part of a mindful community with conscious touch.

That experience (luckily) had clear boundaries and didn't include anyone being able to derail it into a merely sexual space.

The safety of boundaries created the experience of desire and sensuality to transcend beyond the mammal, into collective consciousness and heightened energy.

I am not saying that being turned on, or feeling really sexual is bad, or low frequency.

I'm saying that it is the inclusion of discovering all aspects of the sexual energy that can balance it out and remove the fear, shame and guilt.
And it's different for everybody.

There's no one way to do it 'right'.
I have found that, without the conscious exploration of fantasy, taboo and desire, there's no true balance in this human spiritual path.

It also tends to rise up later on the path, connecting the energies between ground and sky like a lightning strike of fear, guilt and shame.

Although quite a few people may say that there's only 'one path' for this energy, that has not been the experience of those I respect and work with on this part of the spiritual path.

I believe that you can learn to harness the lightning in a bottle instead, when you are willing to consciously work with it.
For some, it may include orgies and sexual experiences.
For some it may include gentle exercises within a monogamous marriage.

There is no polarised path here of right or wrong.
There is a calling to balance, to integration.
Of alignment of energies, without judging your own taboos.
.
The lived reality of this energy is such an individual experience, that YOU are the only true expert on your own journey.

For me - and other tantrikas - there is a path through the fire of arousal and exploration that leads to a more balanced integration between sex and spirit.

And it starts with a deep and conscious dive into your own desires, with awareness.
Sometimes it's the missing link that helps everything else make sense Sometimes it's the healing from this shadow that opens up possibilities.

And I firmly believe it's the key to longevity and harnessing your own power when it doesn't cause intentional harm and is integrated into your own personal spiritual journey with respect, awe and deep love.

Far better for us here in this incarnation than fear, guilt and shame.

As Rumi said so succinctly:
"Out beyond the ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing there is a field, I'll meet you there."

You just have to be willing to look into your field.

Anne-Marie has appeared on 702, Radio Today, Power FM and Kaya FM talking about Conscious Sexuality and Neo Tantra. She has been a guest columnist for the Saturday Star, been featured in Woman & Home Magazine and has appeared on ETV's 'Great Expectations' speaking on regaining libido after childbirth. Anne-Marie can be contacted via her website.
https://www.intimacycoachinternational.com/

kwazuluspirit festival 2025 programme

Talk: Spiritual Sexuality
Sat 26 July 13:00 With Anne-Marie Clulow in the Sails Conference Venue
AND Sat 26 July 18:30 -20:30
Sensorium Soundscape
With Anne-Marie and Tim Visser in the Beach Shala





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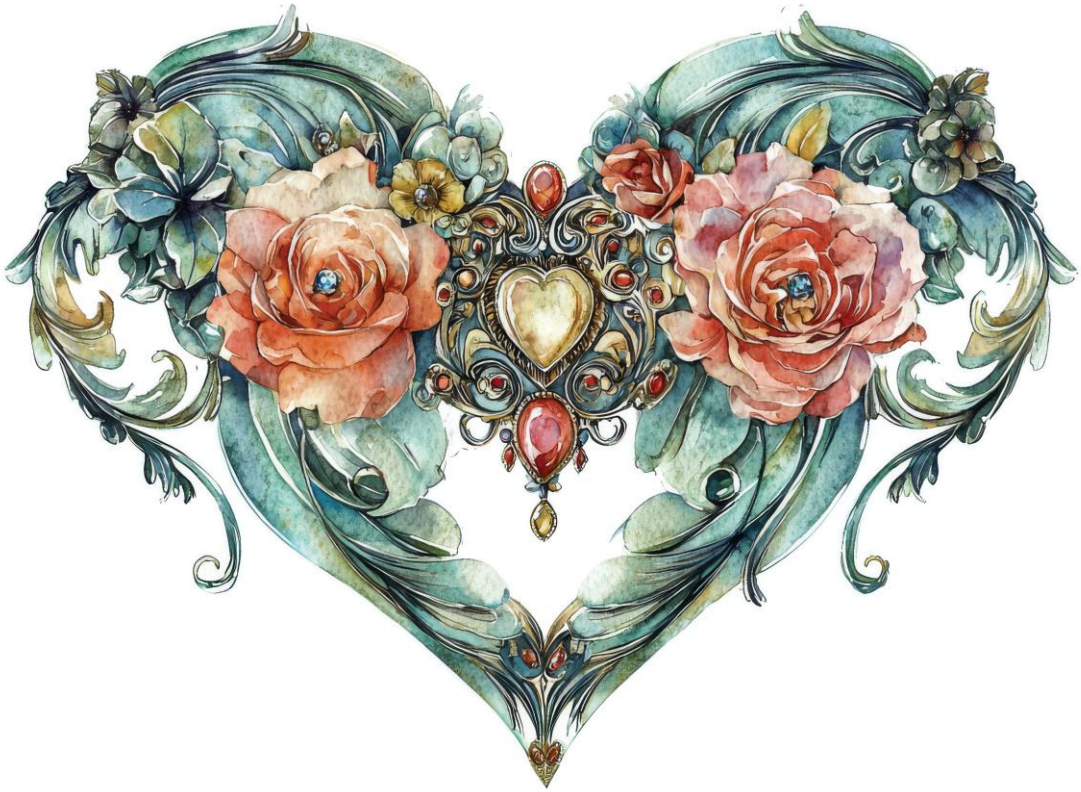
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How To Find And Nurture *Heart-Centred Relationships*

By Livia Devi

In today's fast-paced world, it can feel as if we're constantly caught in the whirlwind of dating apps, fleeting connections and emotional surface-level interactions, but what if we could step away from the noise and focus on nurturing relationships that are grounded in authenticity, emotional depth and spiritual alignment?

According to Livia, a former tech executive turned conscious living coach, heart-centred relationships are not found through endless swiping they are created with intention and care.

If you're ready to cultivate relationships that are meaningful, authentic and spiritually enriching, here's how you can begin:

Let go of the myth of 'The One'

In modern dating, we've often been taught to believe in the concept of 'The One' - the perfect soulmate who will complete us. But Livia suggests that this ideal can trap us in unrealistic expectations, causing us to overlook the beauty of connections that are authentic, though imperfect.

"Instead of searching for perfection, focus on cultivating a connection that feels right in your heart," she says. "True love isn't about finding someone to complete you - it's about showing up as your true self and nurturing a bond together."

Instead of waiting for the 'right' person to appear, take time to explore your own authenticity and bring your whole self into any new connection. Love grows when we show up fully, without expecting someone else to make us feel whole.

Embrace depth over convenience

Nowadays, we're often encouraged to find quick fixes, instant gratification and easy connections, but Livia reminds us that the most meaningful relationships require time, patience, and genuine effort.

"Love isn't always convenient," she explains. "It's about choosing to stay open to someone, even when things aren't perfect. Growth happens when we invest in the real, messy, beautiful parts of a relationship."

Prioritise emotional intimacy over grand gestures

Today's world tends to value grand, flashy expressions of love, but Livia points out that true emotional intimacy is what sustains real, heart-centred relationships. "Intimacy is about being seen, heard and accepted for who we truly are," says Livia. "It's about feeling safe enough to share our deepest thoughts and emotions without fear of judgment."

While grand gestures can be lovely, it's the small, everyday moments of connection that truly strengthen bonds. These could be as simple as having a deep conversation, offering a quiet moment of support, or showing kindness in unexpected ways. When we nurture emotional intimacy, we create the foundation for love to grow naturally and steadily.

Make space for connection

Often, we're so busy with the demands of life that we neglect to make space for the connections we truly want to cultivate. If you feel love has been on the back burner, Livia encourages you to make it a priority.

"If your life is already overflowing with distractions, it's difficult for new connections to take root," she says. "This summer, be intentional about carving out time for love."

This doesn't just mean scheduling dates. It means giving yourself the space to be present with others, to listen deeply and to show up authentically. By setting boundaries around work and social obligations, you make room for the kinds of relationships that nourish your heart and spirit.

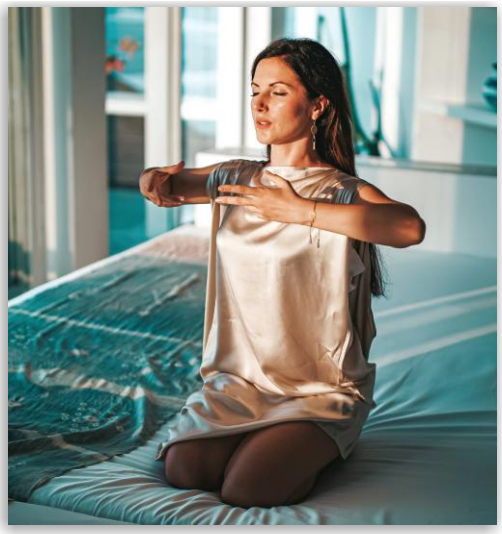
Daily practices to cultivate love

The secret to building lasting, heart-centred relationships isn't in the big moments - it's in the everyday practices that nurture emotional connection. Livia suggests cultivating simple, daily habits that help deepen your bond with others:

- **Be present:** Put your phone away and make eye contact when you're having a conversation. Deep listening fosters connection and makes the other person feel valued.
- **Express gratitude:** Take the time to show appreciation for those you're close to, whether it's thanking them for their kindness or acknowledging the small, beautiful moments you share together.
- **Small acts of kindness:** Love is in the little things - whether it's a thoughtful text, a surprise gesture, or simply being there for someone when they need it most.

"When we prioritise love through consistent, small acts," Livia says, "we build relationships that feel solid and true."

This moment, right now let go of superficial connections and focus on cultivating bonds that truly matter. When you embrace depth, emotional intimacy and presence, you'll begin to build relationships that are grounded in mutual respect and spiritual connection. Love isn't something to be found; it's something to be nurtured.

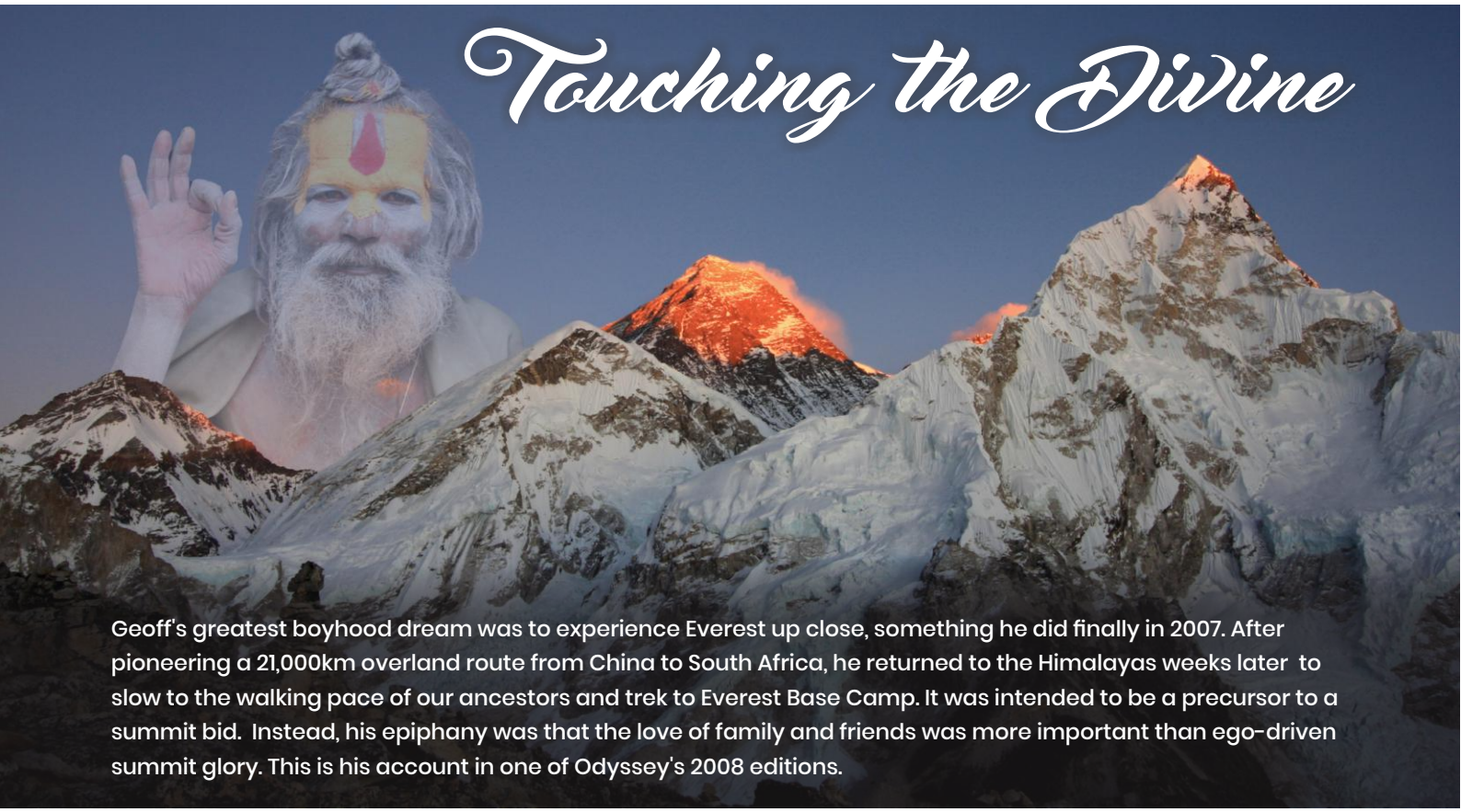


Livia Devi is a visionary leader, spiritual mentor and entrepreneur dedicated to empowering individuals in aligning their wealth, purpose and leadership with the principles of 5D consciousness. As a pioneer in building the New Earth, Livia guides her clients through deep personal transformation, helping them shift from traditional, 3D paradigms of success into higher-frequency living, where abundance flows from inner alignment, purpose and service to the collective. https://liviadevi.com

For more insights and guidance from Livia, visit www.livia.co.uk.



Touching the Divine



Geoff's greatest boyhood dream was to experience Everest up close, something he did finally in 2007. After pioneering a 21,000km overland route from China to South Africa, he returned to the Himalayas weeks later to slow to the walking pace of our ancestors and trek to Everest Base Camp. It was intended to be a precursor to a summit bid. Instead, his epiphany was that the love of family and friends was more important than ego-driven summit glory. This is his account in one of Odyssey's 2008 editions.

Odyssey's Pilgrim at Large, Geoff Dalglish, discovered more than lofty mountain peaks and treacherous glaciers on his 16-day trek to Everest Base Camp in 2007.

God lives in the high mountains of the Himalayas of Nepal. The reminders of our precious connection to the Divine are to be found everywhere: from the gaily fluttering Buddhist prayer flags welcoming pilgrims, to the ancient monasteries, stone altars and carved rock tablets that speak of centuries-old devotion and reverence for life. Even the cheerful clinking of yak bells seems somehow to carry special messages, perhaps reinforcing the mantras of devoted monks and their time-honoured chants: '*Om mani padme hum, Om mani padme hum...*'

Then, of course, there is the breathtaking scenery itself. Who can fail to be stirred by such awesome landscapes? Each breath of crisp mountain air makes you want to sing with joy and gratitude at such bountiful blessings. Is there any place on Earth more stunning than the Himalayas, or any better spot to be alive?

Nepal might be one of the poorest countries on the planet but it is blessed with no fewer than eight of the 14 peaks that thrust above 8 000m into the atmosphere, the most famous of which is Everest, or Chomolungma, Mother Goddess of the World, as she is known to the Tibetans.

Treading ever higher along rocky Himalayan paths is a boyhood dream come true. Since attending a talk by Sir Edmund Hillary in Durban and then shyly asking for his autograph, I've fantasised about sharing that view from the summit, standing on the top of the world with no higher place to climb. I've read the books of courage, determination and disaster; studied the statistics too. The quest to reach the top of Everest took longer than putting a man on the moon, although at the latest count some 11 000 souls have committed to the ascent, 3 000 of them succeeding – an encouraging success rate of 29 per cent. But the dark side of the statistics is that at the time of writing 207 climbers had died with many of their bodies preserved by the icy cold where they fell, serving as graphic and chilling reminders of our mortality.

While I've secretly cherished the ambition to climb Everest, I decided that this would be a look-see, going to Base Camp at 5 364 metres via a 16-day hike that would immerse me in the Tibetan Buddhist culture of the region and also take in the beautiful turquoise Gokyu lakes and include a trek over the daunting Cho La Pass. How hard could this be, I argued with myself?

My closest comparison was Uhuru Peak, the 5 895m summit of Kilimanjaro which is normally reached in just over four days as part of a six-day expedition. So I'd have more time to acclimatise and build fitness, and wouldn't be going quite as high. Easy, I imagined.

Accompanying me were friends Deon Ebersohn, a Cape Town journalist and former motor industry executive, Jen Newenham, an environmental consultant from Mpumalanga, Nepali guide Dibash Onta and porters Sudip Baral and Rajan Bishowkarma. The trio of locals are a lesson in cheerful optimism, good humour and amazing physical stamina.

Sherpa is the tribal name for the Himalayan people living in the mountains of Nepal and Tibet, rather than a job description, although '*sherpa*' is synonymous in the minds of most westerners with porters of incredible strength and courage who are seemingly immune to the debilitating and potentially dangerous effects of acute mountain sickness (AMS). Nothing could be further from the truth, we discover during a talk by volunteer doctors at a rescue post. A snap survey of this particular audience reveals that many of the *sherpas* are from the Kathmandu Valley or other low-lying areas and it is a documented fact that they also suffer altitude-related illnesses, although they invariably hide these for fear of losing desperately needed income for their families.
What is verifiable is that the legendary climbing *sherpas* have adapted better to altitude, their blood carrying more oxygen than is usual. But because of their prolonged exposure to risk while establishing safe routes for climbers to follow and lugging equipment to high camps, they too are crushed in avalanches, fall into crevasses or succumb to extreme exposure.

Perhaps the greatest contemporary local legend was Babu Sherpa who summited Everest 10 times by the age of 36 and spent a record 21 hours on the summit without oxygen, only to fall to his death while apparently taking a photograph at one of the lower camps. Whatever their genetic make-up, the *sherpas* are the real heroes, selflessly devoting their lives to realising the dreams of their clients while supporting their families. For them it is not a recreational pursuit, but a practical necessity.

To the *sherpas* mountains are not obstacles to be conquered but living things to be treated with deep respect. Often we felt humbled by the cheerful good nature of the locals, despite living in such extreme climactic conditions. It is easy to understand how Edmund Hillary was so touched by his climbing companion Tensing Norgay and the deep spirituality of his people despite their grinding poverty. Since the two stood together on the top of the world on May 29, 1953, New Zealander Hillary has devoted much of his formidable energy to improving the lot of local people by helping to build and fund the creation of schools, clinics and hospitals, as well as the dramatic 450m short runway at Lukla.

Now around 88-years-old, he is revered by Nepalis as living proof that one man can indeed make a towering difference. As each day unfolds I celebrate my strengthening muscles, feeling the flab fall off me, although I too am touched by AMS, suffering minor headaches, nausea, sleeplessness and loss of appetite. Once I awake with a start, feeling panicked and realise that I had momentarily stopped breathing.

A long night stretches ahead of me facing my fears. I was an asthmatic as a child and having my oxygen levels reduced to little more than half by altitude is troubling enough, although nowhere near as scary as the idea of not breathing at all – even for a couple of seconds.

I put my absolute trust in the process of life, visualise positive outcomes and eventually quiet my fears. Dawn is a magnificent reward, another stunning day making a mockery of my night-time fears and imaginings.

Two books are keeping me company on my odyssey: *The Autobiography of The Dalai Lama, Freedom in Exile*, and *Left for Dead*, the account of American Beck Weathers and his horrific part in the 1996 tragedy when eight climbers died in a killer storm high on Everest.

I'm tormented by both volumes.
Each day as I trek higher, but always secure in the knowledge that modest lodgings and good food await me, I think of the Tibetan exiles who continue to flee the Chinese occupation and religious persecution in their own country.

Many have to walk in fear for days and weeks, often while poorly prepared and equipped for high-altitude conditions. Many are monks and nuns, while a number of the freedom-seekers are children as young as six or seven.

Depending on your viewpoint this expedition could be the ultimate gift and life-changing experience, or your worst nightmare in the bleakest and most hostile environment imaginable.

Their most usual destination is Dharamsala, home of the Dalai Lama and Tibetan government-in-exile in India, although exiles also enter Nepal, among them traders who cross the border illegally to sell their wares in settlements like Namche Bazar and Tengboche.

Outside the famous Tengboche monastery I watch monks bartering with Tibetans who have walked for several days to sell their cheap Chinese-made clothing.

A story is circulating of seven of their kin shot dead recently by Chinese border guards and one senses a great empathy for people who are willing to take such risks for a few rupees.

In contrast with the human rights abuses across the border, the Buddhist message of love, peace and respect for all life is everywhere around us. Many of the places we stay in feature shrines and posters of His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, along with scenes from Tibet and some of our hosts are of proudly Tibetan origin.

It seems especially sad that genocide, torture and extreme religious persecution has been practised on a formerly peace-loving nation and I'm struck by the gentleness of all whom I meet. Not once during my 16-day trek do I hear a local voice raised in anger or recrimination, although we do have to endure one obnoxiously loud American woman trekker and a group of drunken Koreans who show no respect for their fellow travellers.

Is it *karma* that causes the Koreans to miss their international flight out of Nepal? We try not to gloat or be judgmental.

Thinking of the brutality of the Chinese towards the Tibetans, who are now a minority race in their own country, I'm reminded of the Dalai Lama's comment that his Chinese brothers and sisters are not bad people, but just people behaving badly.

Walking for 16 days allows plenty of time for introspection, along with a deep appreciation for the opportunity to step back in time to an almost medieval lifestyle. Not once do I see any form of motorised transport or even a wheel: No cars, motorcycles, bicycles or wheelbarrows in sight. Instead everything is carried on the backs of humans, yaks and the *dzopkios* that are a cross between a yak and a cow.

We marvel at the realisation that we are witnessing a hotel being carried into the Himalayas in pieces, which also explains why the sound-deadening is so abysmal in the overnight hostelries – how could it be otherwise with lightweight plywood panels for walls.

Seemingly small things like a hot shower are really appreciated. In Kathmandu a bottle of mineral water costs 15 rupees or around R1.65, the price soaring 20-fold to 300 rupees in the remoter regions of the Himalayas. And while a good meal can cost as little as R20 this won't pay for a hot shower as you get closer to Everest Base Camp. My record is nearly R40 for that simple joy.

Often the water has to be carried several hundred metres from a nearby stream and then heated using dried yak dung. So nothing is easy.

Electricity is also a precious commodity, the meagre illumination during our overnight stays invariably provided by solar panels and then only when there have been a few hours of sunlight.

A battery-powered Petzl head torch is essential gear along with a down sleeping bag, warm trekking clothes, an inquiring mind and a keen sense of humour.

We encounter mist, rain, sleet, snow and biting winds, but on the days when it really matters we celebrate views of Everest and other legendary peaks like Nuptse, Lhotse and Ama Dablam in perfect sunshine.

Highlights include the breathtaking view from Goko Ri across a wide glacier towards Everest, as well as the ascent of Cho La Pass in deteriorating weather conditions. It is one of the toughest hikes I've yet experienced and constantly fraught with the danger of slipping on ice or snow-covered rocks and boulders. The pass was closed just before our arrival, and again after the brief window of opportunity with which we were blessed before fresh snowstorms.

On the top I was staggering with exhaustion as I trudged through deep snow in the gloom, slipping and falling more than once. But my spirits soared and I felt so incredibly alive – this is the kind of dramatic Himalayan landscape I'd dreamed of and the sort of physical challenge I relish.

The guidebooks and some friends had warned me that Base Camp might be an anti-climax, lacking a meaningful view of Everest.

I put my absolute trust in the process of Life, visualise positive outcomes and eventually quiet my fears. Dawn is a magnificent reward, another stunning day making a mockery of my night-time fears and imaginings.

But I was energised and exhilarated by the experience of trekking along the edge of the Khumbu Icefall and Glacier, at last coming face-to-face with that giant conveyer belt of rock and ice that forms one of the daunting obstacles to any summit attempt.

The main weather window happens in May each year, allowing a few teams a crack at the top when the notorious jetstream is not howling off the summit at up to 250km/h. We reach Base Camp in sunshine on October 11 to find Thailand's first Everest bid in progress with the team planning to be there for three months.

Depending on your viewpoint this could be the ultimate gift and life-changing experience, or your worst nightmare in the bleakest and most hostile environment imaginable.

(continues on page 144...)

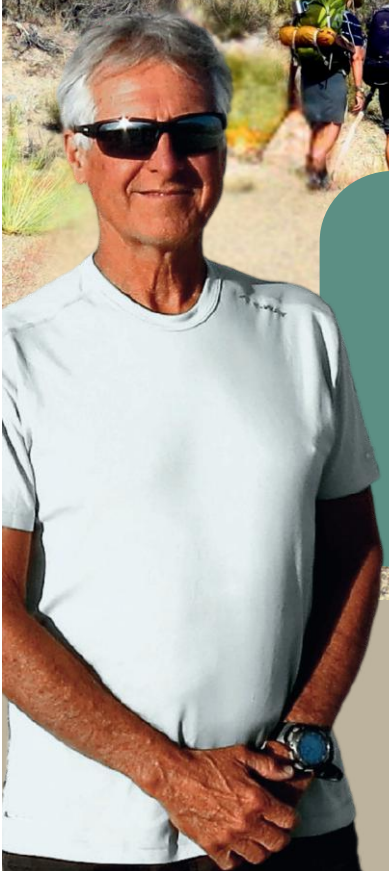
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As Geoff nears his 77th birthday he is stepping up his efforts to raise climate change awareness and help bridge the gap between us humans and the natural world that surrounds us. There's a Great Disconnect that leads to greed, ignorance, indifference and the destruction of the magnificent and interconnected world that we depend on for our safety and survival. Having devoted many years and committed the remainder of his days to celebrating and protecting Mother Earth (our original mother) he is joining other Earth protectors, including members of the indigenous tribes, in a 21-day Lake to Lake 2025 walk in California. It begins on September 1.

Support Our Mission

Contribute to Geoff's GoFundMe link: on www.gofund.me/d3c62cc5 or scan the QR:

Contact Geo ffvia WhatsApp +27 82 990 1032
or email geoff.dalglish@gmail.com

(continues from page 142...)

I love every precious second and am stirred by the aliveness of the scene, drawing a deep breath every time I hear the cracking and crunching of the moving glacier, or the roar of an avalanche exploding from the high peaks.

I volunteer a silent prayer of thanks for being here in this remarkable landscape and more especially for all my bountiful blessings. I've had a minor epiphany early in the trip and felt my heart chakra open with the dazzling realisation that nothing is more important than my daughters Tammy and Bonnie, and all those dear to me.

My partner Adelle has repeatedly warned over the past couple of years: "If you want to climb Everest you must be prepared never to see your loved ones again." My reaction then was cynical (and selfish) amusement.

But thanks to my recent dark nights of the soul, when I was battling my demons, I've some exciting new (and obvious) realisations. Love is all and I'd rather hug my loved ones again than enjoy the unbelievable adrenaline-rush of standing on top of this magnificent world of ours.

If I'm to embark on any extreme challenges, let my first be to push back my personal spiritual frontiers and limiting beliefs.



Geoff Dalglish is a writer and spiritual and ecological activist dedicated to raising consciousness. He has walked more than 30 000km with climate change messages about treading more lightly and lovingly upon the Earth. He is an ambassador for the Findhorn spiritual community and ecovillage and is Odyssey's 'Pilgrim at Large'.
Visit: www.earthpilgrimafrica.com





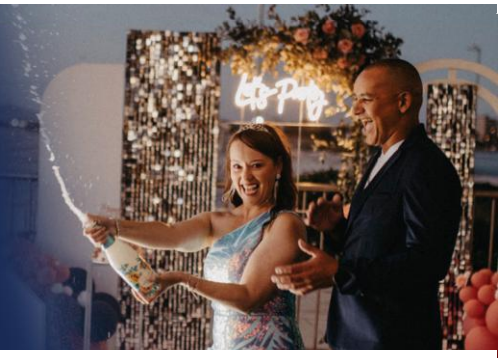




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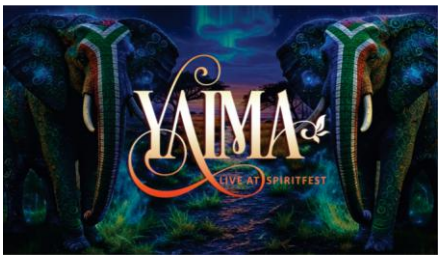


KwazuluSpirit Festival 2025

25 - 27 July 2025

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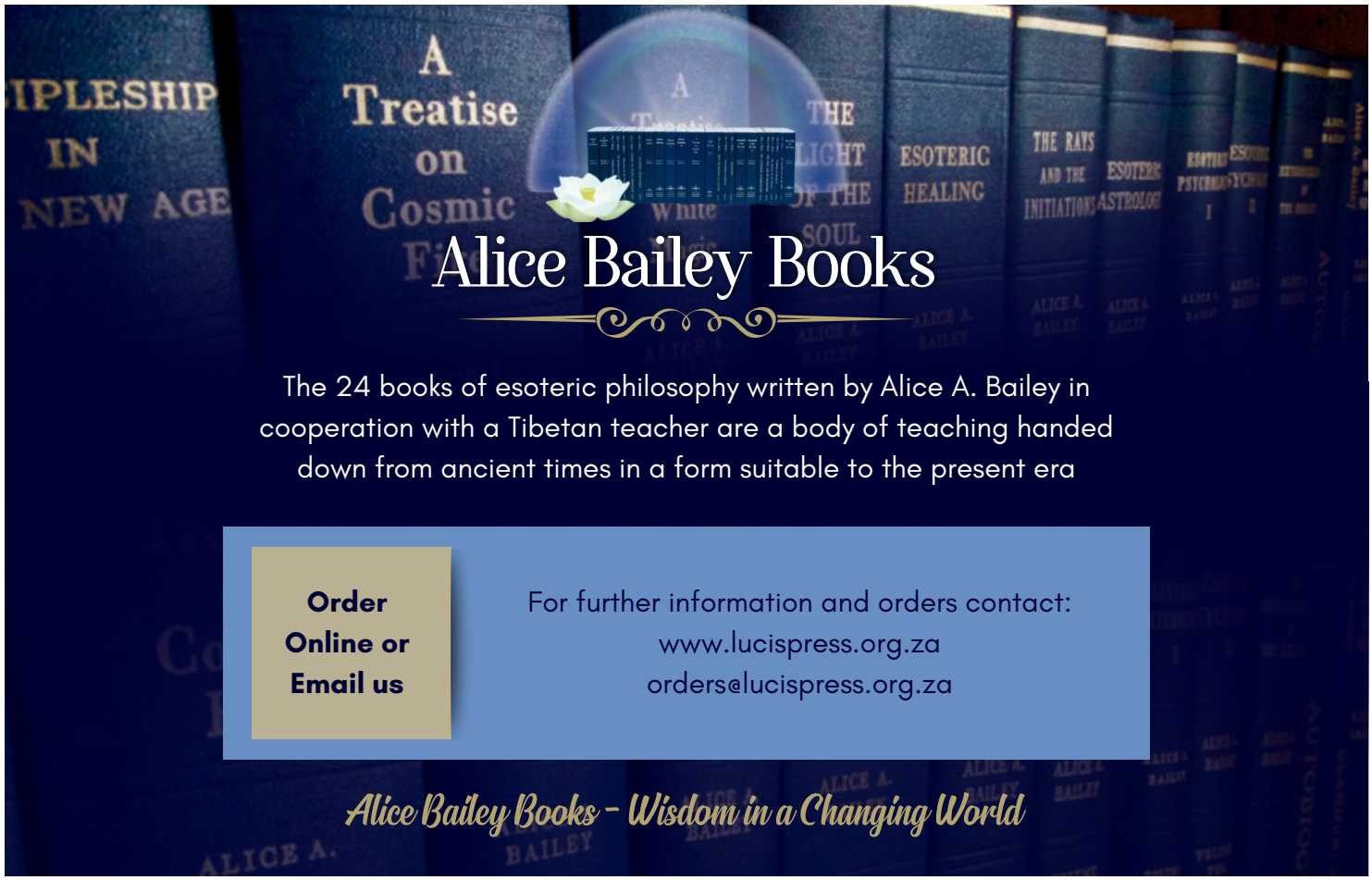
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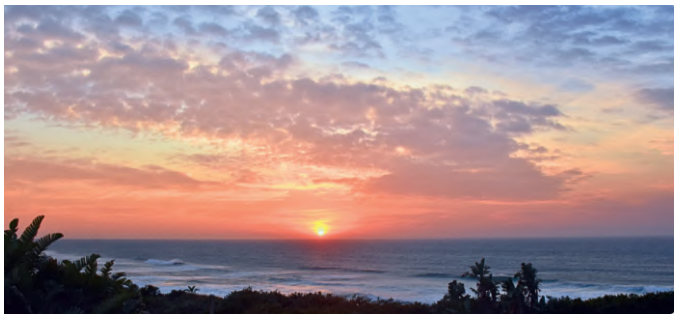
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Programme



kwazuluspirit festival

programme



Salt Rock Hotel - 25, 26, 27 July

THE OFFICIAL KWAZULUSPIRIT™ 2025 PROGRAMME



KWAZULUSPIRIT FESTIVAL™ 25, 26, 27 JULY – SALT ROCK KZN

Join Us In A Celebration Of Consciousness And The Human Sprit

The KwazuluSpirit Festival™, initially inspired by Bali Spirit Festival, the New Zealand North and South Spirit Festival, has been curated in 2025 with the reviews of 2023 and 2024 top of mind. This festival is our third year in celebration of the human spirit, our humanity and divinity, a vibrant exploration of consciousness and wellbeing.

The festival weekend launches on Friday 25 July at 12 noon with a Conscious Parenting Indaba. The KwazuluSpirit Festival continues 26 July 9:30 until 18.00, followed by the Sensorium Soundscape from 18:30 -20:30. The final festival day Sunday 27 July opens Sunday 09:00 and concludes Sunday at 17:00.

On Saturday and Sunday we bring you deeply transformational and uplifting experience.
The programme offers the opportunity to attend Powerful Talks and Immersions with our master coaches and industry thought leaders, both at the KwazuluSpirit Festival on the 26th and 27th July and our Conscious Parenting Indaba on Friday the 25th July.

We bring you Tai Chi and Yoga each day with International masters. Reclaim your sense of joy as you dance with life, in Sacred Dance, Nia and Biodanza. Our bliss booths offer an Energy Healing marathon with over 450 healing sessions over two days.

On Friday 25 July we bring you the Conscious Parenting Indaba.
Conscious parenting encourages parents to understand deeply their own emotions, triggers and beliefs and how these influence their children. Too often *children serve as mirrors of their parents' forgotten self*. We bring you thought leaders who take you through all the archetypes on womanhood, the maiden, the mother and the crone. Those who highlight the role of fathers in nurturing their children's emotional development, building their self-esteem, and providing solid guidance for life. Those who take us on journey to recognise the gift that each child brings into their own lives enabling us to recognise their path and focus on their innate strengths.

On Saturday 26 July we invite you to immerse yourself in Sensorium.
SENSORIUM is a conscious touch and sensory soundscape experience that includes theta and beta waves, solfeggio frequencies, binaural beats, saxophone and vocals. In today's world, somatic polyvagal relaxation work has been scientifically shown to improve sleep, mood, libido and ability to communicate and relate to others. Adding conscious touch and all of our senses in meditative musical space exponentially increases the experience. It's not just music, it's a deep sensory experience that you have, as you let the frequencies, brainwaves and song work with your subconscious mind.

"We look forward to welcoming you and sharing this space in time, in connection with you.
Enjoy this personal journey of discovery curated to nourish body and mind and to set your spirit free.
All love Debra Robins, Curator, KwazuluSpirit Festival™

White Lotus Oneness

Based in Salt Rock on the beautiful Dolphin Coast, White Lotus Oneness is a holistic healing space, dedicated to fostering integrative wellbeing through a range of powerful ancient and modern modalities.
Everyone entering my space brings a tender heart yearning for answers to pressing health concerns, or for refinements in their wellbeing – a truly privileged and sacred interchange. For this reason, Ram Dass's statement, "We're all just walking each other home" guides me to walk respectfully alongside clients in their journey to vibrant health.
In a peaceful, nurturing environment, you are encouraged to discover the powerful healing potential within yourself. Underlying emotions, traumas and ailments are gently explored and relieved, as we remember our innate capacity to grow eternally from life's adversities and to embrace the glorious beauty of life.
Each modality below is offered individually, or in a custom-tailored blend for your unique healing journey.

BioResonance Therapy is a non-invasive diagnostic and treatment technique, utilising the body's own electromagnetic waves, to identify and address dis-ease caused by stress, diet, environment and lifestyle. Weak and disharmonious frequencies are balanced, enabling healthy resonance to initiate self-regeneration. Guidance is provided on supplementation, detoxification from parasites, pathogens, allergens and toxins, resulting in increased immunity and pain alleviation. Analysis and treatment can be in person or remotely.

Therapeutic Reflexology and Meridian Therapy gently stimulates reflex and meridian points on the feet, corresponding to all organs and systems in the body. Enhanced energy flow invigorates your natural healing ability, promoting relaxation, reduced pain and tension, improved circulation and detoxification. Rife frequency healing is included for targeted treatment of specific ailments. Treatments can be claimed from medical aid (depending on your plan).

Metamorphosis transmutes old limiting perspectives, behaviours and emotional blockages caused by trauma and stress. This facilitates a shift in consciousness and our natural creativity and intuition re-emerge. Energy flow clears and trauma-based beliefs 'morph' into powerful self-awareness and personal growth, allowing our full life potential to blossom. Treatments can be in person or remotely.

Himalayan Sound Alchemy uses harmonic frequencies and vibrations to instil peaceful wellbeing. Singing bowls, tuning forks and gongs create a soundscape resonating at a cellular level. Release of stress and tension re-harmonises all energy centres, bringing deep relaxation, calming the nervous system and improving sleep.

Whatever your healing need may be, remember: "*Just as the pure white lotus flower blooms unsoiled in muddy water, our lives, which are supremely noble, can continue to shine even amid life's harshest realities.*" **Daisaku**

Your vibrant future beckons and I look forward to accompanying your unique journey towards optimal health and lasting wellbeing.

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Release your History

Embrace your Mystery

by Liz Cunningham

Here we are, at a macro pivotal point in humanity's story and in this now moment, as you are reading what I am writing, we are both answering a universal call to remember who we really are beyond the noise, the stories and the forgetting.

The patterns of our past that shaped our ways of thinking, doing and being are now converging in ways that can no longer be ignored. These once invisible cycles are becoming visible, calling us to remember who we are, to release what no longer serves and to live in alignment with our soul – the blend of spirit and body that I call SoulBeing.

Let us for a moment imagine living in a state of being that is no longer animated by old programming and external pressure but is moved by heart wisdom and soul resonance in an alchemical energetic formula.

Everything in the Universe is energy. This energy moves in waves. Waves form patterns. Patterns create rhythms. Rhythms shape cycles which begin and end, creating change. Life is rhythm. And you, too, are rhythm - a moving, living, breathing dance of energy in motion.

Accessed through the heart and activated in the body, SoulBeing is a felt experience, in the breath, in the silence, in the movement. Whether you are just beginning your journey or have travelled far along the path of awakening, SoulBeing meets you exactly where you are - with love, with presence and with an experience meant for your highest good in that moment.

As we reflect, soften and lean into this vibration of beingness, we begin to see that our evolution follows a sacred flow: From history to mystery, from doing into being and from being to soul embodiment. This is a path from separation to oneness, from certainty to awe and wonder. It is a shift from attachment and control to letting go and dancing with conscious co-creation through open heart-led awareness, intuitive soul-aligned choices, conscious love-aligned words and actions.

This journey is not a linear one. It spirals, it returns, it deepens with every turn as we are invited to live more fully, more freely and more soulfully. The dance with mystery calls us to show up in all our humanity - emotionally, mentally, physically - letting go of the weight of history through softening the heart, stilling the mind and seeking connection with spirit.

Life invites us to remember that our human experiences, all of them from challenges to triumphs, are a part of our soul's curriculum.

How we show up and do anything is how we do everything and to be the full expression of who you are means to acknowledge a universal truth: That change is inevitable, but growth is our conscious choice.

When we soften our attachment to fixed thoughts, dissolve rigid structures and let go of emotional habits, we dissolve and re-imagine ourselves, not as static beings but as fluid expression of becoming. Like the, nymph (or larva), living in a watery underworld which becomes a luminescent dragonfly, we too transform, evolving from one realm to another.

Our compass of awareness and coherence in this journey is our heart. It bridges consciousness between body and mind, guiding where we place our attention, attention shaping our intention and intention inspiring action. With this compass, we have the choice to learn from our history and to navigate our outer and inner worlds with full (pr)essence and resonance.

In the realm of what might be called the 'Human Doing', a world shaped by outward behaviour, by conformity, by structures designed for control, it is here that we can see and recognise the patterns we have inherited - cultural, generational, societal. Through looking backwards and observing, we become aware of these patterns, a first step towards transformation. Awareness in the mind alone is not enough. True transformation begins when we turn inwards and pay attention to the stories unfolding between the head and the heart. This inward shift leads us into the realm of *Human Being* - a deeper, more intimate journey into the subconscious layers of self: Our beliefs, assumptions, judgments and emotional conditioning. As we sense the subtle undercurrents of emotion and habitual reactions in the body, we open the doorway to emotional freedom and heart energy mastery.

It is in this realm, the space of introspection and insight, that we meet the intelligence of the heart. We learn to understand our own energy, to feel our internal rhythms, our emotional waves that guide us from within. Through this understanding we awaken the ability to live with intention, to shape our energy, not from fear and reactivity, but empowered by conscious choice and a deep desire to grow in our humanity.

And then, we are called beyond. Beyond history, beyond the inward landscape, into what can only be felt, lived and trusted moment to moment. Here, we live into the unknown, the expansion of the universe, the mystery. It is not about arriving at a final truth but about dancing with life itself. This is 'SoulBeing'.

Liz Cunningham

Heart Leader,
Soul Mover,
Free Spirit

Reimagine Your Being. Remember who you are. Through heart energy mastery, divine feminine wisdom, and healing somatic dance, release what no longer serves you, and create a new vibrational reality.



This is SoulBeing; the blend of spirit and body, a felt experience in breath, silence, and movement. It's where spirit fully meets flesh, awakening the wisdom spark of heart and soul.

Life is happening through you, as you. Embrace this internal mystery school of Being, moving from history to mystery, doing to being, to the essence of soul embodiment, a spiritual being having a human experience.

Wherever you are on your journey, SoulBeing meets you with love and an experience for your highest good:

Dance with Life classes: Weekly movement to feel, heal, and amplify your unique soul expression.



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For more information contact Liz:

May your Energy for Life... Be Love

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We awaken the wisdom spark of both heart and soul, allowing spirit to meet flesh fully. It is here that attention and intention become vibrational tools - guides that allow us to shape our lives in alignment with the deeper and higher intelligence that flows through all things.

In this continuous unfolding, our relationship with life transforms, cycling through layers of awareness. Where we once held the belief that Life happens to *me*, we begin to feel the truth that Life flows *through me*, alive in our hearts, shaped by our (pr)essence and intention. And perhaps, we come to embody the knowing that Life is happening *as me*, an internal mystery school of Being, a remembering of our connection to and expression of Source. And when we follow the intuitive nudges to act on our highest joy, to the best of our ability, without trying to control how things unfold, we align ourselves vibrationally with the cosmic intention of 'trusting, trusting, cha cha cha', and we become both the Dancer and the Dance with Life, a spiritual being having a human experience.

You are a wave.
You are a rhythm.
You are a rippling movement.
In the sacred dance of life.

Liz Cunningham - Heart Leader Soul Mover Free Spirit Living, leading and shining the power of heart and soul intelligence into the dance of love awakening on the plane. https://lizcunningham.co.za

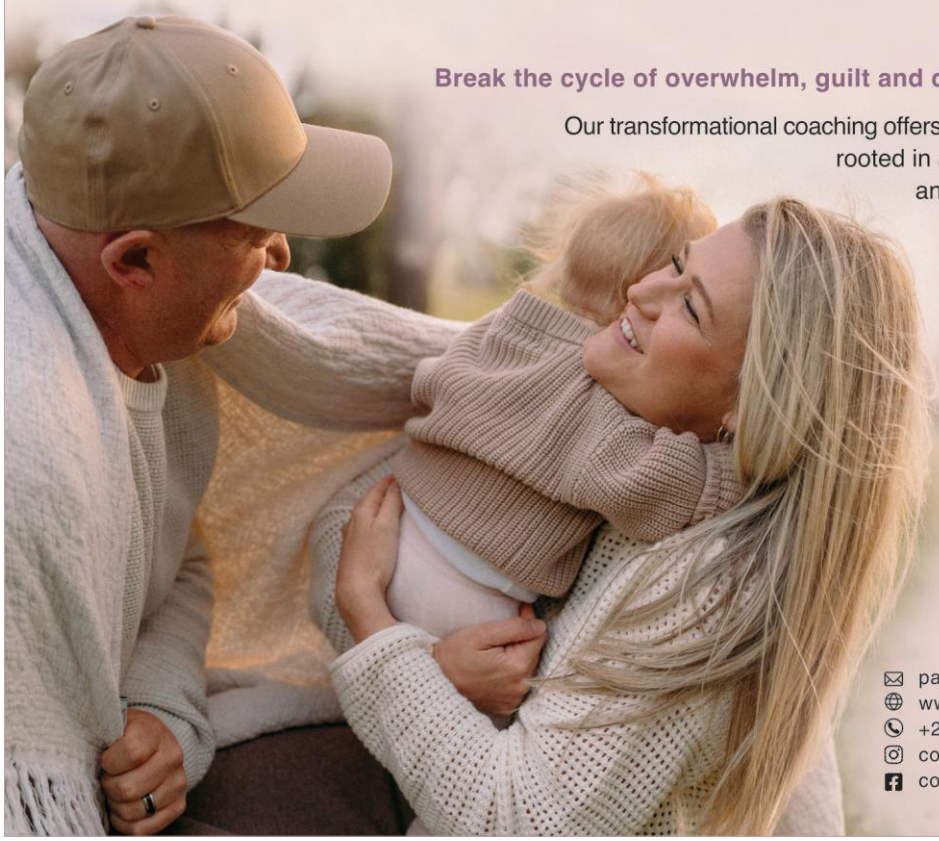


kwazuluspirit festival programme

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The Simplicity of Childbirth

Lynne MacIntyre

I envision a world where giving birth to our children is something we consider a sacred, natural emergence; an event that belongs to mothers, their babies and their families. An event that is seen as matter-of-fact, because it is simply what women's bodies were created to do.

Birth without noise, interference, fear, or the unnecessary involvement of strangers, institutions or industries. Birth that is not sterile, surveilled, managed, disconnected, interfered with and sabotaged.

There is a wave of women and families who have started asking questions and considering options that don't fall into the mainstream approach to birth. Exponential healing is occurring with each child who is born in a way that centres the mother-baby dyad. Each birth that is allowed to unfold physiologically reduces birth-related trauma, disconnection and complications.

There is a beautiful saying among homebirth communities: Peace on earth starts with birth; and I wholeheartedly agree. Our children's births, as well as our own experience of giving birth, shape who we become in a massive way. It ripples out into our communities and the collective field of souls.
Like many women, I grew up hearing rather scary accounts of birth. I was never exposed to birth as something beautiful, natural or revered. When it was my turn to start a family, I only knew that if I couldn't find an alternative to being at the mercy of medical staff in a clinical, fear-based setting, I didn't want to do it.

Even though I didn't fully understand why, it felt inappropriate and wrong in every fibre of my being as a woman.

I am so grateful that I went on a journey to find alternatives and to the people who could support me in birthing on my terms.

What that looked like for me was birthing in the comfort and safety of my own bedroom, attended by midwives for my first two births. I say safety, because to me that is what a safe birthing place is. And, as I subsequently learned in my training as a birth educator, that is because the blueprint for physiological birth requires the mother to firstly FEEL SAFE.

Certainly, there are women for whom a hospital setting and medical supervision denote safety and that is an interesting topic in itself. But for birth to unfold as it would, the ideal setting is actually the same as the setting in which the baby was most likely to have been conceived...

Yes, giving birth requires the same things that making love does. Privacy, low light, warmth, comfort and trust allow the exquisite dance of birth hormones to cause the perfect unfolding of birth. Unique and varied from birth to birth.

In allowing myself to face all the feelings and sensations of surrendering to the process, I received the initiation into motherhood that birth is designed to be. It really is a rite of passage - one that I would not have allowed to be hijacked from me, because it activates us for motherhood. It is the transition into a new reality, in every area of life and self.

While I was pregnant with my third child, I did some deep soul searching - knowing what I know, trusting what I do, what do I truly NEED to carry, birth and raise this child?

I had never considered employing a gyneacologist/obstetrician for my pregnancy care. They are specialists and can offer care that is appropriate when there are real problems.

This time, I opted to have a few visits with my midwife-friend and, a few months before the birth, I realised that I really just wanted to do this by myself. I knew I had the inner resources and I understood the process...

Most of all, I knew this was my last child and I wanted to simply sink into the communion with existence, becoming one with the divine, opening as the portal to this precious new life. Without needing anyone, being aware of anyone, or giving up my power to anyone to save or protect me.

So that is what I did.

My midwife-friend was on standby, but when I started feeling contractions as my partner and I went to bed on a dark winter's night, I was calm and certain that I simply wanted to enter fully into the deep dark opening of my body, psyche and spirit.

I laboured in bliss through the night and, in the transition between my body opening and my body starting to expel my baby, I entered a moment of fear. I moved about, stood in the shower with hot water on my lower back, returned to my hands and knees by the side of our bed to my partner's warm touch. After an eternal moment, I started feeling that tremendous urge to push. Suddenly our baby was crowning, and the next moment his head was outside my body. He rotated that semi-circle that babies instinctively know, to line up their shoulders to the vaginal opening and shot out of my body into the hands of his father.

I took my child into my arms and placed him on my belly. He took a breath and started crying with me kissing him and stroking him and cooing gently to him. He became quiet and started raising his eyes to my face, our eyes meeting for the first time.

He then started making his own way to my breasts where he started suckling. After some time, his placenta fully detached from the inside of my womb and it, too, was expelled. We placed it in a container at my side as I was laying back in awe and relief.

Eventually we severed the umbilical cord and I lay into a warm bath. All the while, my new baby on my chest, relaxing my trembling body. Afterwards, we all three tucked into bed with tea and food to rest and marvel at our child, before his brothers woke up and came to meet him.

The day after his birth, my midwife came to massage me, bind my belly and feed me delicious, warm, postpartum spiced rice. I did not leave home for 40 days, except to sit in the garden with my baby on me.

I offer up my story as inspiration and as an antidote to the over-complication and distortion of birth - and so many other aspects of life where we already have everything that we need after all, exactly as it is. My freebirth may seem like a radical departure from the norm, but it is not radical when we consider the design of our species.

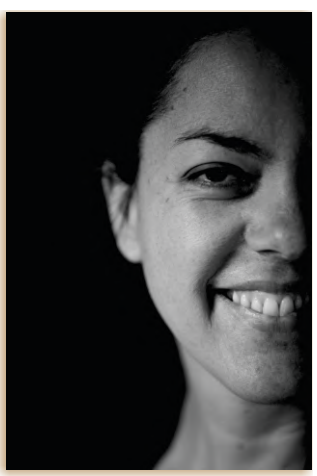
My choices are not appropriate for anyone else, but we all have the ability to ask questions, access information, consider our options, do preparations and make choices that are in alignment with ourselves as mothers.

I will always be profoundly grateful for the grace that led me to experience the simplicity and freedom of honing in only on what was ESSENTIAL to me to bring my children into the world.

And that is what it feels like... freedom. So many things I don't have to outsource - no experts needed when I have my intuition, no gadgets and goodies to rely on and nothing to take my attention away from what is right in front of me... a little baby who needs only to be close to me to be safe, nourished, regulated, nurtured and healthy.

The information is readily available. Science backs up everything that mothers instinctively know.

Lynne MacIntyre is the mother of three home-birthed children. She has an abiding passion for sharing the gold she discovered within the birth portal and how that extends into the rest of life. She is a writer, and artist and her coaching practice, La Mama, offers intimacy, birth and wellness coaching.
Website: lamamalove.co.za



The 'Middle' Wife

"Out of the mouths of babes..."
I have been teaching now for about 15 years. I have two children myself, but the best birth story I know is the one I saw in my own second grade classroom a few years back.

When I was a child, I loved show-and-tell. So I always have a few sessions with my students. It helps them get over shyness and, usually, show-and-tell is pretty tame. Kids bring in pet turtles, model aeroplanes, pictures of fish they catch, stuff like that. And I never, ever place any boundaries or limitations on them. If they want to lug it in to school and talk about it, they're welcome.

Well, one day this little girl, Erica, a very bright, very outgoing child, takes her turn and waddles up to the front of the class with a pillow stuffed under her sweater. She holds up a snapshot of an infant. "This is Luke, my baby brother, and I'm going to tell you about his birthday.

"First, Mom and Dad made him as a symbol of their love, and then Dad put a seed in my Mom's stomach, and Luke grew in there. He ate for nine months through an umbrella cord."

She's standing there with her hands on the pillow, and I'm trying not to laugh and wishing I had my camcorder with me. The children are watching her in amazement.

"Then, about two Saturdays ago, my Mom starts going, 'Oh, oh, oh, oh'!" Erica puts a hand behind her back and groans. "She walked around the house



for, like an hour, 'Oh, oh, oh'!" (Now this kid is doing a hysterical duck walk and groaning.)

"My Dad called the middle wife. She delivers babies, but she doesn't have a sign on the car like the Domino's man. They got my Mom to lie down in bed like this." (Then Erica lies down with her back against the wall.)

"And then, pop! My Mom had this bag of water she kept in there in case he got thirsty, and it just blew up and spilled all over the bed, like psshhheew!

"Then the middle wife starts saying 'push, push,' and 'breathe, breathe.

"They started counting, but never even got past ten. Then, all of a sudden, out comes my brother. He was covered in yucky stuff that they all said it was from Mom's play-centre (placenta) so there must be a lot of toys inside there. When he got out, the middle wife spanked him for crawling up in there in the first place."

Then Erica stood up, took a big theatrical bow and returned to her seat. I'm sure I applauded the loudest. Ever since then, when it's show-and-tell day, I bring my camcorder, just in case another 'Middle Wife' comes along.

Courtesy of Mum and Me Magazine – Words an Anonymous Grade 2 Teacher
www.mumandmemagazine.com
Mum & Me magazine supports conscious, gentle parenting.



Parenting as a Living System - Part 2

with Megan de Beyer

In Part One of this series, Megan de Beyer outlined her ideas on basing parenting philosophy on the collaborative principle that one finds throughout nature.

The way nature manages these flows is by a system called a feedback loop. A positive feedback increases change, eg, ocean temperature influences the temperature of the air and hence its capacity to hold moisture, which leads to more rain. A negative feedback loop reduces change. When a living system receives certain information from one sector it is able to adapt and respond to it with feedback loops and stay in sync with ever-changing conditions. But the key here is responding to the feedback loops in an effective way. In families, feedback loops that lead to a good growth are essential. We need to accept change will happen, be open to it and begin to accept feedback loops. So we look out for change bringing more nourishment, more intelligence, more abundance as opposed to being surprised or scared of change where it becomes disruptive. A teenager will bring a different value system and when he does something that we consider wrong, it is an opportunity, not a mistake. The whole family system can adjust slightly to make allowances. For example, your teenager might particularly love music and may play it too loudly. Is that always going to be ruled out in a family, or will the family find a way of creating music zones or buy earphones so that he can enjoy his choice? There is now a positive feedback loop that the family learns from. Sometimes negative feedback loops are necessary to calm things down. If a teen is too rebellious, we put measures in place to restore equilibrium. The most important lesson here is to be flexible and ready for change.

The idea of emergence in nature is slightly more complex. Fritjof Capra noted that the creativity of life expresses itself through the process of emergence. This is how different relationships and various aspects of a system come together to create something new. There is no focus on outcome, it is organic. Simply put: the connections cause something new to happen and sometimes it's not certain what that new thing will be. Oxygen and hydrogen create air – that is an unexpected outcome. In a forest some trees die and fall to the ground. and from that death and changed relationship with the soil, the sunlight and the water, a new growth occurs, like grass or flowers. The grass and the flowers attract bees or a little buck, bringing new life via pollination or from seeds in the faeces of the buck. All these emergent features evolved as a result of a tree falling down and dying. Meanwhile studies of creativity are showing us that things like procrastination, things like reading more widely, things like doodling, drawing, creating images or working with clay, can actually have a huge impact on a child's thought process for a science project. Going outside into the mountains and taking a walk have sometimes brought the greatest break-throughs in creativity and thinking. And yet this is an activity that seems at odds with something that we have to get done. What is the fertile soil that allows creativity to emerge? Creativity is one of the most powerful forces that a teenager has. It arises by his recognising that there needs to be an opening to different things, different ways of doing and different ways of knowing.

Simple steps that are repeated until a more complex order emerges

In nature there are very clear building blocks and often a few simple laws operate over and over. Birds can fly in formation and fish in massive synchronised swarms because of a very simple rule – watch the one bird or fish next to you. Or take a termite mound. It appears terribly chaotic yet computer simulators and models have shown that stopping, starting and meeting actually optimises the time usage and energy of these ants in such a way that they are not depleted and the optimal job is done in what seems to be a disorganised place. A certain amount of focus and control happens, yet there is freedom for self-organisation where patterns are given a chance simply to arise. This paradox creates harmony. Different instruments playing a different note, different tones yet in the right place, all come together in a pattern that creates harmony, beauty and melody. This stands opposed to fear, shutting down, clamping down, or enforcing strict boundaries that do not necessarily lead to a positive outcome.

If we really take on board that life is changeable and dynamic and unpredictable, that things happen in cyclical phases and sometimes there's growth, sometimes there's withdrawal, sometimes there's apparent chaos, sometimes there's a giving or a sacrifice, then we develop a natural maturity that is supported by the web of life. This allows flow and synchronicity to happen that is deeply affirming and satisfying. In this way, just when you feel as if all has failed, there's new growth and transformation. We can bring this attitude into our family, which means slowing down, observing more and having the patience to see a natural wisdom. These evolutionary processes attune us more closely to the new generation. We no longer see right and wrong, but a growth opportunity. What have we learnt? Did we need to amp up, adapt, make room or simmer things down? Which values were switched on and how attuned were we to the larger whole? Can we do it differently in future? How do we move forward from this? This encourages engagement, meaning, creative thought and purpose, mental wellness and nature connection. Another great lesson is the research revealing that children who are completely disconnected from nature find it difficult to develop empathy and compassionate ways of living, while those teenagers who were brought up close to nature find it easy to move into a more empathic way of living. This outcome is especially evident where respect for nature is encouraged in the home.

I like the term 'human nature' because it brings together the idea of being human and of nature which brings recognition to human character and our continuous link to the natural processes around us. To be human speaks about our connection to the collective human race. Nature, after all, is that collection of living systems operating together. Our old view of human behaviour was that we were partly controlled by genes and partly controlled by environment, but the latest genetic research is showing us the complex reciprosity in which the human operates. Relooking at the nature versus nurture debate says nature is forever in process and co-evolving and we cannot separate environment from biology. Furthermore, the metaphysical, the energetic and mental beliefs all impact on every aspect of being human.

Indigenous wisdoms

The shamanic ways and ancient wisdoms from early tribal systems have been preserved over time and help us understand a different way of living in and with nature. To shamans, all of nature is animate, conscious or expressive of a soul and spirit. In our modern civilised lifestyles, we have lost this way of knowing and in so doing we easily miss the magic of how nature communicates with us. We feel disconnected or separate from the wild and for the most part we don't revere or honour nature as sacred. Native American Indians believed that Great Spirit was the unifying force that flowed through everything – whether it be flowers, wind, rocks, birds, animals – and that all of us are kindred spirits within this whole. This approach helps us to come into harmony or the 'right relationship' with the environment and it can also bring a greater sense of belonging. Vandana Shiva, an Indian ecological activist, says: "Human society prospers best when it functions according to the principles that operate in the natural world." She says that when society and families separate from the natural ways, we gravitate towards ownership, control and power over other living things.

My experience is that many parents who live a busy urban life reduce their role to a sense of duty, seeking control over and criticising their teens. They fail to see adolescence as an evolutionary impulse just as powerful as the metamorphosis of a caterpillar to a butterfly. They miss the magic… Dr Shiva tells us that the creativity, coherence and natural cycles of a holistic worldview is incorporated into Buddhism. The eastern non-duality practices have taught me how to live in the present, to pay attention to detail and to be informed by a love of all of life. This approach shows me that the future will look after itself.

Co-evolving and energetic systems

Our human existence is not static; it is forever co-evolving. In a home there are multiple interconnecting parts, such as upbringing, the personality of the parents, temperament, attachment bonds, biology, hormones, ambience, weather, genes, type of foods eaten and more: These are intermingling forces creating an outcome called the family ethos. Both Peter Senge, in his book *Presence* and Otto Scharmer, in his 'Theory U' approach, say that we see the world not as it is, but as who we are. If we want to see things change out there in the world, we first need to change inside ourselves. Scharmer suggests that we turn the telescope around from always pointing 'out there' and turn it inwards instead, towards our own hearts, thoughts and feelings. In my view, parents need to teach, coach and empower their teens and inspire a sense of purpose. Families could work together as a team in a life-sustaining way. This does not mean progress at all cost. Parents can lead by example, creating an environment that offers excitement about learning and growing, as opposed to one in which discipline is the main focus.

Relationships

Human relationships can look to nature for different forms: A win/lose relationship, where only one party benefits; commensalism, which is a win/neutral, where one gains and the other is more or less neutral; or mutualism, which is a win/win, where both benefit.

Families that have strong values of co-operation, teamwork, trust and sharing can take the knocks of life and accept failures, provided they stand together. When a family operates under incredibly strict rules and there is no flexibility or allowance made for different individual values, a child's development can be impeded. By contrast, a close-knit team that accepts different strengths and different weaknesses living side by side will enjoy the benefit: Resilience in the system. Nature is beautifully interconnected and interdependent. A family can follow this example by acknowledging its interdependence and interconnectedness on many levels. There are times when there is a lot of energy and there are times when there is low energy; there are times when you do things together and there are times when you do things separately; there are times when there may be conflict and there are times when there can be love. We need not be scared of these dynamic cycles, being conscious. So, the ideal is to have a family whose ethos is based on a shared purpose, calling upon the highest values and the core principles of a good life. This is a conscious family. The more conscious parents are, the more they recognise that individuality is important – and that it's not destructive for the family. Guidance becomes more important than discipline; shared values are more important than rules. Change is seen as an opportunity for dialogue, conversation and growth. People who recognise the need for growth, networking and togetherness also understand that change, difficulties, stress and making mistakes all lead to growth and discovery. Also, a conscious family recognises that they operate as a whole and different parts of the systems affect the others.

Belonging

From the moment of our birth we search and yearn for our belonging. Some of us arrive in families where a secure attachment and an emotional and soul home is found, settling us in to a comfortable place of belonging. For many people, as they grow, the home does not feel quite right and there is a search for a partner or one's own home to settle the dis-ease of not completely belonging. 'Stand still. The trees ahead and the bushes beside you are not lost. Wherever you are is called Here... The forest breathes, Listen. It answers, I have made this place around you. If what a tree or branch does is lost on you, Then you are surely lost.' These are words from a poem by David Wagner and they remind me that my deepest sense of belonging has always been within nature or with animals and it is here that I feel a part of the unfolding mystery of life. It has occurred to me over and over that relating on a deep ecological level feels as sacred to me as any spiritual practice. I'm aware that as a human I emerged from the earth; Mary Oliver in her poem *Wild Geese* says that the wild geese who fly overhead keep announcing her place in the family of things and she says: 'You only have to let the soft animal of your body love what it loves...'. I spend many hours advising mothers and during these times I draw on the energy of the greatest mother of all, Mother Earth.

When uncertainty pulls me into panic and parents helplessly ask me what to advise their teenagers about how to be or what to plan for, the answers are no longer as simple as achievement, competency and success at all costs. My heart tells me that we should turn from What to do? towards 'How to be'. It is who we are in times of stress that will have the greatest influence on our homes. We should ask: What informs your parenting? What are the qualities and the values that you stand on? Who are you and where do you belong? Nature's wisdoms have the answers.

Maybe any disruption is an opportunity for growth and change, it's a wake-up call to families really to discover what is essential. As parents we can commit to creating a sanctuary by building a home that honours emotional bonding and authentic relationship; where co-operation, acceptance, patience, understanding, trust and love are central. Making a mistake is a creative opportunity for ALL to grow. In such a home children are seen and validated as a vital part of the home team. To belong is sacrosanct.

Stand still at dusk and breathe in the stillness as the day adjusts to the darkness; watch a mountain range darken to dusky blue, to purple, to black and listen to the night sounds of transition. To feel a pocket of warmth in the air. All this takes skin sense. Start here. The gift we can make. As a parent, I believe that the greatest gift we can give our children is to draw from the wisdom of nature, allowing its systems, rhythms and energy to inform our approach to them and to the home. We invite in an ecological self and embolden ecological relating as an essential element of maturation. It means that we replace traditional ways of child-rearing with an ecological intelligence: Ensuring that the ways we live, conduct ourselves, treat others and inhabit our environment is for growth and belonging.



Megan de Beyer, MA (Psychology), MSc (Holistic Ecology) is an international Psychologist and group facilitator. She has facilitated many successful and well-subscribed Mothers and Sons courses at most Independent boys' school in South Africa. She has been invited to run parent courses in California, Australia and UK on numerous occasions; as well as presenting at conferences on parenting. She is the author of "How to Raise a Man - a modern mother's guide to parenting her teenage son" *published by Penguin. An eBook is available.*

Megan runs wellness and mindfulness retreats in Cape Town, and presently works throughout Africa in mental health for the Singita Safari Company. Overall, Megan's conscious living philosophy is the foundation of her healing work. She exemplifies three fundamental pillars of healing – radical tenderness, passionate kindness and extreme peace. More info: Megandebeyer.com @megandebeyer

Conscious Parenting Indaba 2025

25 July 2025 - 12:00 to 17:30



Birth as a Rite of Passage
Lynne MacIntyre - 12:30 to 13:30



Raising Children by First Raising Ourselves
Gérraine Rozenkrantz - 13:30 to 14:30



Parenting Highly Sensitive, High Needs Kids
Colleen Wilson - 14:30 to 15:30



Breaking Generational Cycles
Pam Mac Donald - 15:30 to 16:30



Difficult Teens? Perfect!
Megan de Beyer - 16:30 to 17:30



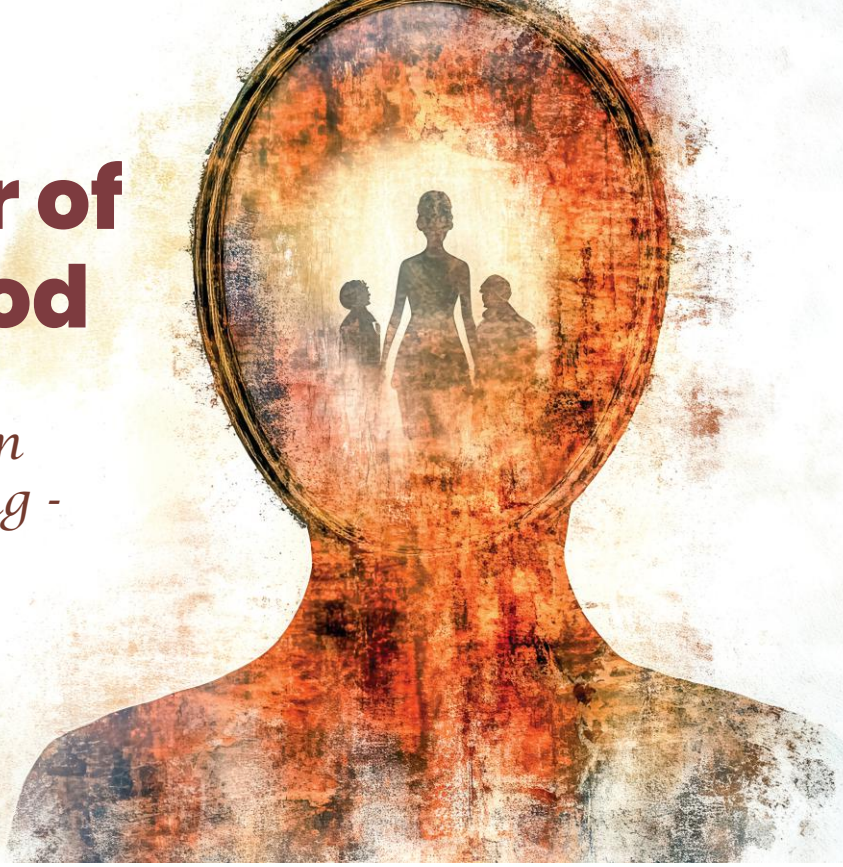
Salt Rock Hotel KZN

Tickets:kwazuluspirit.howler.co.za

The Mirror of Parenthood

Why Our Children Don't Need Fixing - We Do!

By Jenna Dias



Let's be honest. How many times have you caught yourself thinking, "*Why won't they just listen?*" or "*What's wrong with them?*" If you're a parent, chances are you've been there - frustrated, exhausted and baffled by your child's behaviour.

But what if I told you that the problem isn't them? What if the most powerful shift we could make as parents isn't in how we discipline our children - but in how we examine ourselves?

This is the invitation of conscious parenting. And while it might feel counter-intuitive, even uncomfortable, it's also where true transformation begins.

Changing the question

Conscious parenting asks us to shift the questions we ask ourselves. Instead of wondering, "Why won't my child just behave?" we begin to ask, "Why does their defiance affect me so deeply?" Instead of thinking, "What's wrong with them?" we might reflect, "Where did I learn that children should always obey?"

These questions aren't easy - but they are necessary. Because when we start to see our children simply as children, their behaviour stops feeling like a threat and becomes valuable information. They're not trying to make life harder; they're trying to communicate, grow, assert themselves and learn.

The real shift happens when we realise the challenge isn't their behaviour - it's how we perceive and judge it. We've been conditioned to label certain traits as 'bad' because they challenge our need for control. But when we reframe what looks like 'stubbornness' as determination and strength, our entire perception of our child shifts - and with it, our feelings - moves from frustration to appreciation.

This isn't about permissiveness. It's about understanding. Boundaries still matter - but when held with empathy rather than shame, they become guides instead of punishments. Children test limits to understand their world, themselves and their safety.

By recognising our children's traits as strengths, not flaws, we create space for both of us to grow - toward connection, not conflict.

Sitting with discomfort

When our kids push back, meltdown, or challenge us, the discomfort we feel often has little to do with them and everything to do with our past. Maybe you were expected to be the 'good kid' - quiet, compliant, agreeable. Maybe your big feelings were dismissed, labelled 'dramatic', or as 'naughty' or compared unfavourably to a sibling who 'just did as they were told'. In these moments, you probably learned that your emotions were too much, or that you were not enough.

Fast-forward to adulthood: You're sitting across from a child whose rage, sorrow, or unfiltered joy feels overwhelming - and suddenly, you're reactive. This is what it means to be triggered. Psychologically speaking, a trigger is not about the present moment itself, but about the past it reactivates.

Your child's intense emotion touches an unhealed part of you - something you were once shamed for, punished for, or forced to suppress. What you're experiencing isn't just their feeling - it's your own unresolved experience resurfacing, asking to be seen, felt and integrated.

So, we do what was done to us: shut it down.
"Stop crying."
"Calm down."
"Don't talk back."
Not because we're cruel. But because we don't know how to hold their emotions - since no one ever held ours.

The mirror

Dr. Shefali Tsabary, author and leader in conscious parenting, describes our children as our 'awakeners'. They come into our lives not just to be raised - but to raise us. Not to be shaped into ideal versions of what's comfortable or impressive, but to reflect back everything we haven't yet healed.

A tantrum, refusal, or power struggle isn't just misbehaviour - it's a mirror. It reflects our own unmet needs, buried pain and need for control. We try to control our children, their 'big feeling' to create peace, but really, we're avoiding our own discomfort this brings - fear of failure, judgment, or not being enough. That control creates disconnection, not peace. It drives a wedge between us and our children, the very thing we're afraid of.

The hypocrisy we miss

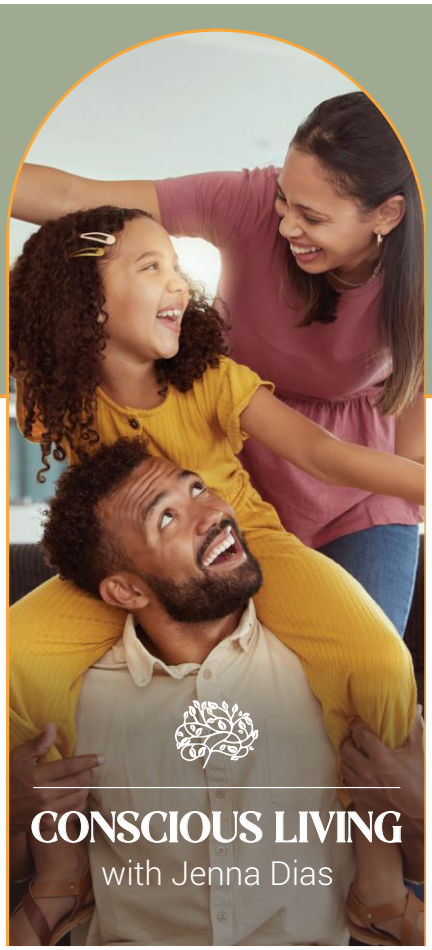
Here's the hard truth:
Many of us expect emotional regulation from our children, while failing to model it ourselves.
We yell at them for yelling. We shame them for not listening, while tuning them out on our phones. We expect maturity from little people whose brains are still developing, while we, as adults, lose it over no homework being done or backchat.

This double standard isn't parenting - it's projection.
If we want emotionally intelligent kids, we need to become emotionally intelligent adults. And that starts with doing our own inner work.

From control to connection

The shift begins when we stop trying to 'fix' our children and start getting curious about ourselves. When we ask:

- Why do I need them to behave a certain way?
- What's my fear if they don't?
- Whose voice am I parenting with — mine, or the one I inherited?



CONSCIOUS PARENTING STARTS WITHIN

Are you ready to stop trying to "fix" your child and start understanding yourself? Jenna Dias blends neuroscience, play therapy, and decades of therapeutic experience to help parents cultivate calm, authentic, and connected relationships with their children.

Services

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Jenna Dias

Certified Conscious Parenting & Life Coach
Founder of Conscious Living

Get in Touch

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www.consciousliving.co.za

SCAN TO LEARN MORE

We begin to realise that much of our parenting isn't about our children at all. It's about our own discomfort, our need for validation, our fears of inadequacy. When our children misbehave, they're not failing us - they're simply being human. It's our reaction that tells the real story.

And that's the power of conscious parenting: The radical notion that parenting is not about moulding our kids to make us feel better - it's about healing ourselves so we can meet them where they are.

The real work

It's easy to fall into the trap of believing that if our child just changed - became calmer, quieter, more obedient - life would be easier. But ease isn't the goal. Growth is. And growth comes from doing the inner work.

Think of a simple moment that might happen in any home: Your child spills juice on the floor and your reaction is much bigger than the situation calls for - not because of the juice, but because somewhere in your own story, mess was never allowed.

The real work of parenting is pausing to ask:

- Why do I feel anxious when they spill?
- Why do I need them to do it perfectly?
- Why do I react with anger, withdrawal, or guilt when they get it 'wrong'?

The answers often trace back to our own childhoods, where love may have been conditional, praise dependent on performance, or emotions too inconvenient to be allowed. When you were a child, you may have adapted to survive - by becoming 'good', quiet, funny, perfect, or invisible. You did what you had to do. But now you're an adult. And your child doesn't need a survival-mode version of you. They need the real you - whole, grounded, curious, imperfect, present.

The cost of not changing

What happens when we don't do this work?

Our kids adapt. They stop fighting for their truth and start fitting into the mould we created - not because it fits them, but because they're trying to survive emotionally. They chase our approval, contort themselves into the versions they think we want. And over time, they lose connection with their authentic self.

Later, they may leave - physically or emotionally - and never truly come back. And we're left wondering what went wrong, when all along, the mould was too small for who they were meant to be.

The call

So this is your invitation.

To pause.

To reflect.

Rather than focusing on changing them, we turn inward and ask, "How do I heal so they don't inherit my unhealed parts?"

Practical tools to deepen this reflection include journaling, which can reveal hidden emotions and patterns; mindfulness and meditation, which help us notice our triggers without getting overwhelmed; and working with a therapist or coach, who can provide perspective and support when our emotions feel too heavy to manage alone. The more we turn inward with honesty and compassion, the clearer it becomes that our child isn't the issue — they're reflecting the areas within us that need care and understanding.

This is how we break the cycle.

Our children don't need perfect parents — they need present ones. They don't need all the answers — they need parents brave enough to grow and show vulnerability.

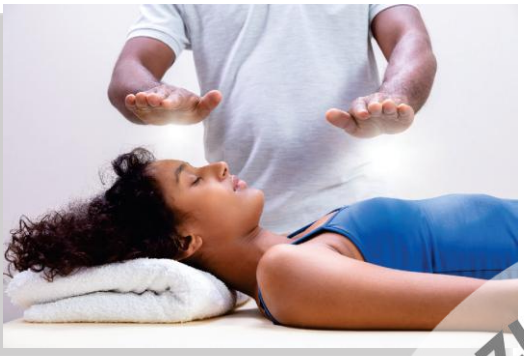
By embracing this, we let go of perfection and make space for humility, courage and the understanding that failure is part of growth.

It's not easy. But it's worth it. They're worth it. You're worth it.



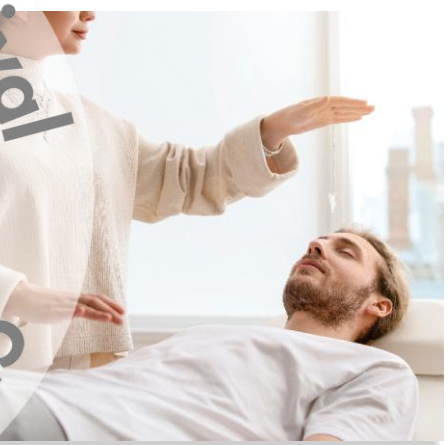
Jenna Dias is a certified conscious parenting and life coach, trained by Dr. Shefali Tsabary. With a foundation in psychiatric care, private practice and neurofeedback, Jenna brings together neuroscience and play therapy to help parents build mindful, developmentally aligned connections with their children. Through her practice, Conscious Living, she offers one-on-one coaching, online support and transformative workshops designed to inspire authentic, heart-led parenting.

Based in Durban and a mother to two spirited boys aged eight and nine, Jenna brings both clinical insight and lived experience to her work. She walks alongside parents on the journey inward — believing that the most profound changes in children begin with the subtle shifts within ourselves.





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Transformational Talks

Saturday 26 July 2025

Liz Viviers — Crossing Over - Whispers From Beyond — Sat 26 July - 10:00



Experience messages from Spirit with Liz. The curtain between us and those who have passed is closer than you realise and crossing over is about connecting. In our earthly garb we pick up our smartphone and connect to people we miss. Spirit does the same using signs, dreams etc. which we often ignore. Working with mediums enables Spirit to connect directly.

Brett Austin — The Importance of Setting Goals — Sat 26 July - 11:30



Founder and CEO of Natural Elixir, coaches individuals worldwide seeking transformation and healing for their mind, body, and soul. Brett's personal journey to self-healing through conscious adjustments in diet and lifestyle, combined with his research on natural plant medicines, has made him a sought-after International Coach.

naturalelixir.co.za

Godfrey Madlalate — Vulindlela - Ancestral Journey on the Terrace — Sat 26 July: 12:30



Godfrey Madlalate, Dip (Herbalism) has been working as a traditional health practitioner since 2001. In 2000 he spent a year receiving training as a healer. He is pecialised in bones divination, physical treatment and energy balancing, using African traditional medicine modalities. His other passion remains patient counselling and life path alignment.

drumbeat@madlalatebiz.co.za

Anne-Marie Clulow — Spiritual Sexuality — Sat 26 July: 13:00



Bliss and relaxation have become sources of shame and guilt for many people, from enjoying what we eat to getting our essential chemicals of connection and community for the fullest human experience. This workshop invites women to reintegrate their intimacy with awareness, longevity and a sacred connection to creative energy. Anne-Marie founded Intimacy Coach International, which trains holistic intimacy coaches worldwide.

blissandrelaxation.com

Taz Singh — Live Mediumship Event — Sat 26 July: 14:30



Taz Singh has become a world-famous medium and life coach with profound connection to the spiritual realm. From an early age, Taz recognised the unique gift allowing her to perceive and understand dimensions beyond the ordinary. As a medium, her compassionate guidance has provided solace to countless individuals seeking closure.

taz.simplybook.me

Colleen-Joy — Turn your Wisdom into Abundance — Sat 26 July: 16:00



Learn how to start and scale a business by sharing your knowledge and experience—without a website, picking a niche, or perfecting a product. Step up and step into your purpose. Colleen-Joy spent over 30 years learning how to build a conscious business. Today, she runs InnerLifeSkills, an international coaching and training brand.

innerlifeskills.com

Transformational Talks

Sunday 27 July 2025

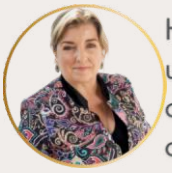
Chanel Lingenfelder — Live Channelling Kuthumi — Sun 27 July: 09:30



Chanel is a Therapist, Spiritualist, Trans-Voice Channel for the Ascended Masters, Lightworker, and author of 'From Party Patsy to Praying Patricia'. Apart from earning mega-academic accolades, she is the bringer of love, light and laughter everywhere she goes. Her service in the light serves all consciousness in support of the unfolding Golden Age.

visionoftheheart.co.za

Colleen-Joy Page — The Enlightened Enneagram — Sun 27 July: 10:30



How to Turn the 9 Personality Prisons into Paths to Enlightenment. Colleen-Joy shares practical wisdom using the Enneagram. Her online certifications sell out months in advance, making this a wonderful opportunity to learn how to use the Enneagram for yourself or to guide others. Download and complete Colleen's free PDF Self-Scoring Enneagram Tutorial Test: kwazuluspirit.com/enneagram/

Sarah Bullen — Channelling to Write — Sun 27 July: 12:00



Sarah Bullen is a multi-published author, spiritual mentor and writing coach, leading international writing retreats and adventures in Europe and Africa. Sarah had a life-altering near-death experience, when she was in a coma for three weeks. Her story has become a book, Love & Above: A journey into shamanism, coma and joy. Her latest book, The Other Side: Journeys into Mysticism, Magic and Near Death.

thewritingroom.co.za

Sharon Castle — The Neuroscience of Awakening — Sun 27 July: 13:30



A lifelong teacher and coach, she empowers individuals to awaken their potential. With decades of experience in personal development, business leadership, and consciousness work, she now focuses on significance over success—helping others find freedom, balance, and joy through holistic coaching, brain training, and a deep passion for growth.

sharoncastlecoaching.com

Heleen Elizabeth — Eating for Transformation — Sun 27 July: 14:00



Heleen of Anouthen Infinite Wellness takes us on a journey of learning to eat to shed that which is not us. Accumulated interstitial waste, the ash of food not meant for us, parasites, heavy metals, and isolated minerals have much lower frequencies than our cells, it is a grand necessity to rid ourselves of it to maintain a higher frequency.

anouthen.co.za

Brett Shuttleworth — Make Your Soul Smile — Sun 27 July: 15:30



Brett Shuttleworth's remarkable journey from farm-boy to spiritual teacher is an awakening story of love, transformation and the pursuit of a higher consciousness. His unwavering commitment to changing lives and creating a ripple of love inspires individuals from all walks of life to embrace their greatness and live authentically.

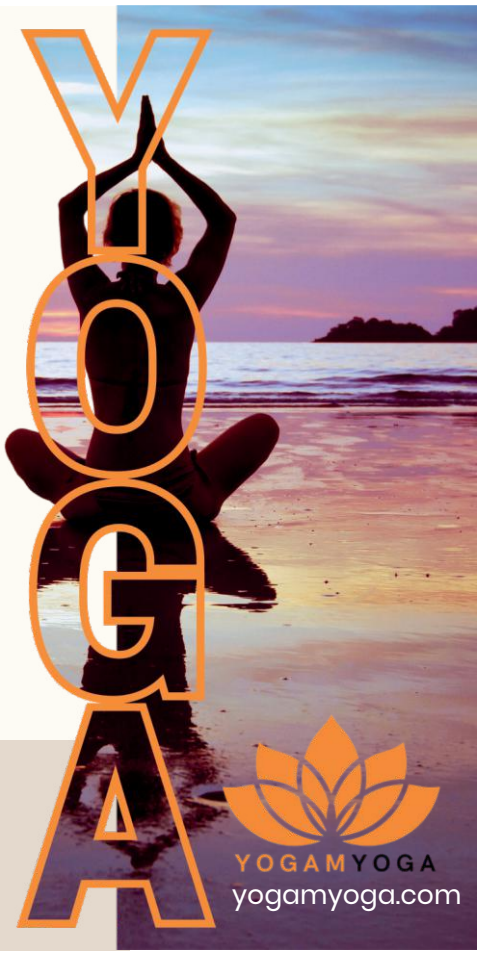
smilingsoulcreations.com

Meet Duncan Rice
at KwazuluSpirit Festival



Hatha Yoga

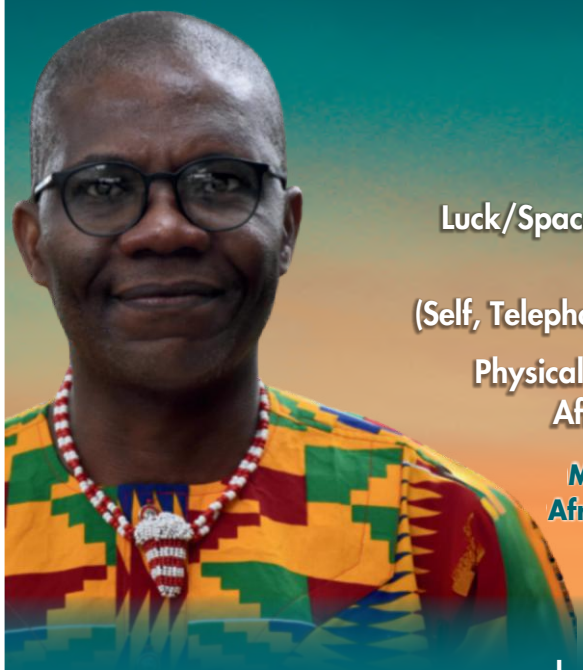
Sat 26 July - 09:30
Sun 27 July - 10:30



Duncan is the founder of Yogam Yoga and a dedicated Yoga teacher in Durban with advanced International Yoga Alliance certification and deep training in traditional Hatha Yoga from India. Inspired by his father and rooted in ancient teachings, his approach blends Hatha, Ayurveda, and Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga to promote balance, calm, and self-connection.

GODFREY MADLALATE

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Services

Counselling & Life Path Dynamics

Specialist Services
(Infertility & Sexual Impotence
Luck/Space Clearing/House & Car Binding etc.)



Bones Divination
(Self, Telephonic, WhatsApp Video/Zoom/Teams)

Physical Treatment & Energy Balancing using
African Traditional Medicine Modalities

Meet Godfrey at KwazuluSpirit Festival 2025 where he will have a African Healing Village and facilitate a Traditional Ancestral Journey

Saturday 26 July - 12:30 at Salt Rock Hotel

Compliance to Traditional Health Practitioners Act no. 22 of 2007

drumbeat@madlalatebiz.co.za/+27 83 524 5979 (WhatsApp Only)

Mindful Movement and Meditation

Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 July 2025

Leo Ming — Tai Chi — Sat: 15:30 and Sun: 09:30



Tai Chi is an art of inner peace arising from yin and yang, the two equal and opposite forces within us and the entire universe. Our life energy arises through the interplay of yin and yang, and wellbeing depends on the balance between these two. Join Leo for a unique experience and let the master lead you with Tai Chi and Qi Gong movements.

mingsmartialarts.co.za

Liz Cunningham — Sacred Nia Dance — Sat: 11:00 and Sun: 11:30



Liz - heart leader, soul mover and free spirit, invites you to connect through the wisdom of your heart and body to the divine feminine energy at the centre of your being... she is nudging you to simply be all of who you are. Explore your own divine dance, the sacred rhythms of your soul. Join in this dance with all your heart.

lizcunningham.co.za

Feroza Mansoor — Biodanza — Sat 26 July: 14:00



Biodanza Facilitator and Director, Dr Feroza Mansoor, is medical doctor who works as a Conscious Transformation Leadership Coach who is passionate about the MIND-BODY-SOUL ENERGY connection and NEUROSCIENCE and who works intuitively to help her clients to understand and manage their internal states

lifeinyourhands.co.za

Duncan Rice — Hatha Yoga — Sat: 09:30 and Sun: 10:30



Duncan is the founder of Yogam Yoga and a dedicated Yoga teacher in Durban with advanced International Yoga Alliance certification and deep training in traditional Hatha Yoga from India. Inspired by his father and rooted in ancient teachings, his approach blends Hatha, Ayurveda, and Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga to promote balance, calm, and self-connection. yogamyoga.com

Pam Evans — Metta (Loving Kindness) Meditation — Sat 26 July: 17:00



Pam Evans guides a gentle Metta Meditation, a loving-kindness practice rooted in Buddhist tradition. Through repeated phrases, we nurture compassion for ourselves and others, dissolve negativity, and open the heart. Join Pam to experience the peace and empathy this powerful meditation brings to everyday life.

Brett Shuttleworth — Closing Meditation — Sun 27 July: 17:00



By immersing ourselves in Brett's teachings, we are guided to rediscover our true essence, find inner peace and make a profound impact on the world around us. His unwavering commitment to changing lives and creating a ripple of love inspires individuals from all walks of life to embrace their greatness and live authentically.

smilingsoulcreations.com

Meet Brett Shuttleworth

at KwazuluSpiritFestival 2025

Talk: Make Your Soul Smile Sun 27 July: 15:30
Event: Closing Meditation: - Sun 27 July: 17:00

Brett Shuttleworth's remarkable journey from farm-boy to spiritual teacher is an awakening story of love, transformation and the pursuit of a higher consciousness. His unwavering commitment to changing lives and creating a ripple of love inspires individuals from all walks of life to embrace their greatness and live authentically.



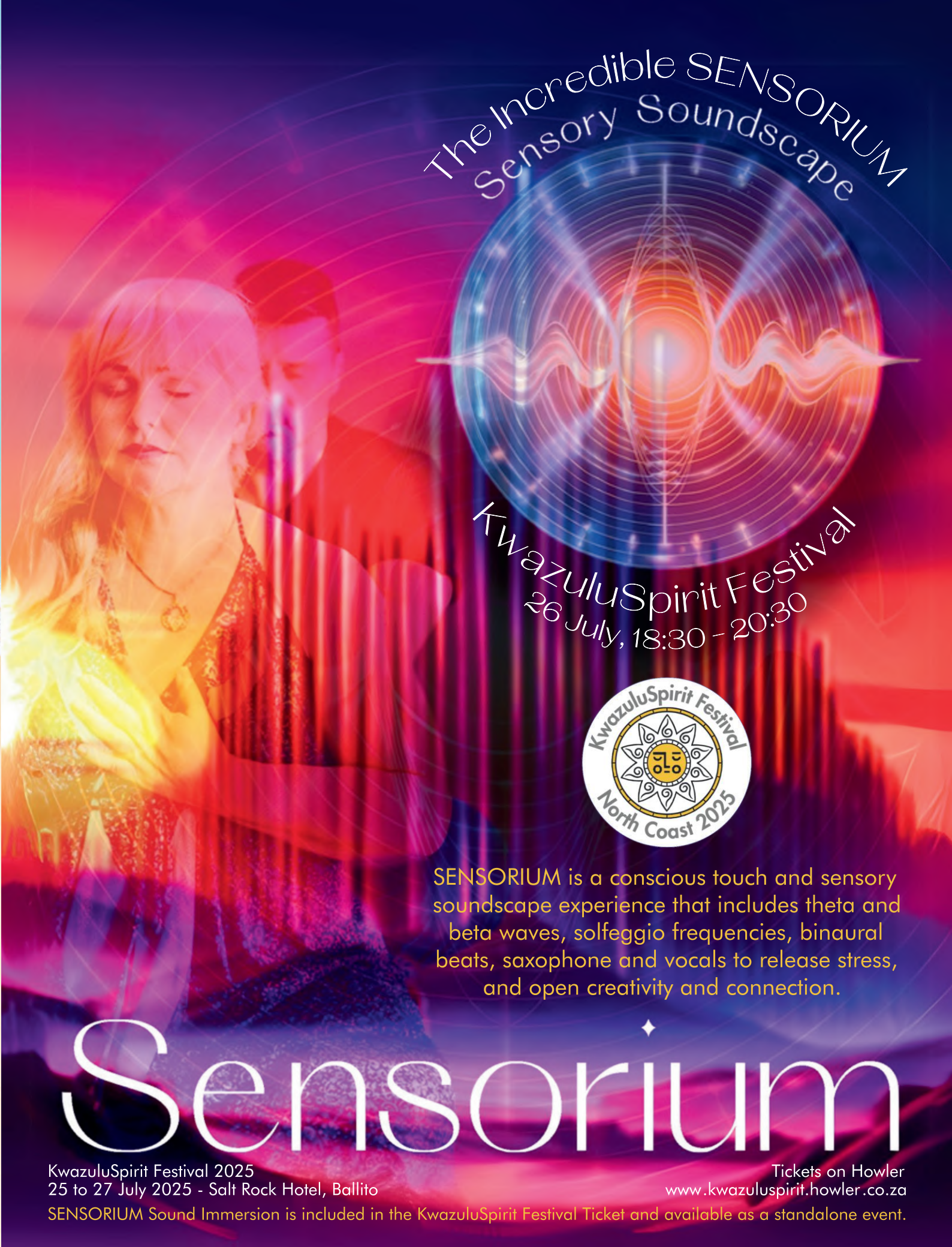
KwazuluSpiritFestival

25-27 July 2025

Salt Rock Hotel, North Coast KZN.

Programme Online:
www.kwazuluspirit.com/programme

Tickets on Howler:
www.kwazuluspirit.howler.co.za


The Incredible SENSORIUM
Sensory Soundscape
KwazuluSpirit Festival
26 July, 18:30 - 20:30
KwazuluSpirit Festival
North Coast 2025
SENSORIUM is a conscious touch and sensory soundscape experience that includes theta and beta waves, solfeggio frequencies, binaural beats, saxophone and vocals to release stress, and open creativity and connection.
Sensorium
KwazuluSpirit Festival 2025
25 to 27 July 2025 - Salt Rock Hotel, Ballito
Tickets on Howler
www.kwazuluspirit.howler.co.za
SENSORIUM Sound Immersion is included in the KwazuluSpirit Festival Ticket and available as a standalone event.

KwazuluSpirit Festival
Programme

Friday, 25 July 2025
Conscious Parenting Indaba

12:00	Event Opens: Welcome and Refreshments	-
12:30	Birth as a Rite of Passage	Lynne MacIntyre
13:30	Raising Children by First Raising Ourselves	Gérraine Rozenkrantz
14:30	Parenting Highly Sensitive, High Needs Kids	Colleen Wilson
15:30	Breaking Generational Cycles	Pam MacDonald
16:30	Difficult Teens? Perfect!	Megan De Beyer
17:30	Event Closes	-

Conscious Parenting Indaba is included in the festival ticket and available as a standalone event

Saturday, 26 July 2025
KwazuluSpirit Festival - Day 1

09:00	Festival Opens	-
09:30	Bliss Booths Open	Open-air Healing Centre
09:30	Event: Beach Yoga – Duncan Rice	Beach Shala
10:00	Talk: Whispers from Beyond – Liz Viviers	Sails Conference Venue
11:00	Event: Sacred Nia Dance – Liz Cunningham	Beach Shala
11:30	Talk: The Importance of Setting Goals – Brett Austin	Sails Conference Venue
12:30	Event: Vulindlela – Ancestral Journey – Godfrey Madlalate	Beach Shala
13:00	Talk: Spiritual Sexuality – Anne-Marie Clulow	Sails Conference Venue
14:00	Event: Biodanza – Dr Feroza Mansoor	Beach Shala
14:30	Talk: Live Mediumship Event – Taz Singh	Sails Conference Venue
15:30	Event: Beach Tai Chi – Sifu Leo Ming	Beach Shala
16:00	Talk: Turn your Wisdom into Abundance – Colleen-Joy	Sails Conference Venue
17:00	Event: Metta (Loving Kindness) Meditation – Pam Evans	Beach Terrace
18:30	Special Event: SENSORIUM Sound Immersion – with Anne-Marie and Tim Visser	Beach Shala

SENSORIUM Sound Immersion is included in the festival ticket and available as a standalone event

2025 - North Coast KZN

Salt Rock Hotel

Sunday, 27 July 2025

KwazuluSpirit Festival - Day 2

09:00	Festival Opens	-
09:30	Bliss Booths Open	Open-air Healing Centre
09:30	Talk: Channelling Kuthumi – Chanel Lingenfelder	Sails Conference Venue
09:30	Event: Beach Tai Chi – Sifu Leo Ming	Beach Shala
10:30	Talk: The Enlightened Enneagram – Colleen-Joy	Sails Conference Venue
10:30	Event: Beach Yoga – Duncan Rice	Beach Shala
11:30	Event: Sacred Dance – Liz Cunningham	Beach Shala
12:00	Talk: Channelling to Write – Sarah Bullen	Sails Conference Venue
13:30	Talk: The Neuroscience of Awakening – Sharon Castle	Sails Conference Venue
14:00	Talk: Radical Cellular Regeneration – Heleen Elizabeth	Beach Terrace
15:30	Talk: Make Your Soul Smile – Brett Shuttleworth	Beach Shala
17:00	Event: Closing Meditation – Brett Shuttleworth	Beach Shala
17:30	KwazuluSpirit Festival 2025 Concludes	-

Bliss Booths Healing Marathon

KwazuluSpirit Festival Day 1 and 2

Hosted by Energencia Academy in the Open-air Healing Centre

Healing modalities include:
Western, Eastern and Angelic Reiki - Crystal Healing
Foot Zone Therapy - Karuna Reiki ® - Kinesiology
Seichim Reiki - Therapeutic Touch

Experience a free15 minute healing session included in your ticket.
Saturday 26 July 2025 - 09:30 to 16:30 and Sunday 27 July 2025 - 09:30 to 15:30

Programme subject to change without notice

Tickets on Howler www.kwazuluspirit.howler.co.za

You are

SOLID GOLD

In many spiritual traditions, GOLD is associated with purity and incorruptibility, as it doesn't tarnish or rust. **SOLID GOLD**, has been refined through a process, life itself is a process no matter what you have experienced you remain valuable. Gold is a symbol of the divine or the inner light within you '**SOLID GOLD**' is both your humanity and your divinity and that worth within your being is unyielding and infinitely valuable.

In colour therapy GOLD is associated with positive energy, prosperity and stability and is used to promote a serene mind and a calm spirit, helping to balance the human energy field and alleviate feelings of unworthiness or emotional distress.

GOLD is often connected to the sun's energy, life-giving, illuminating, and nurturing.

GOLD is used in various forms, such as meditation aids or symbolic objects, to foster energy alignment and spiritual growth

GOLD the ancient use of gold in healing continues in alternative medicine in forms like colloidal gold today.

GOLD is associated with human immunity, vitality and nervous system support

GOLD is also used in traditional medicine to treat, neurodegenerative disorders and is believed to improve cognitive abilities. .

SOLID GOLD AFFIRMATIONS

- I am a **SOLID GOLD** treasure.
- I AM a shining **SOLID GOLD** masterpiece.
- I am as strong and resilient as **SOLID GOLD**.
- I am **SOLID GOLD** - whole, worthy and complete.
- I am as powerful and magnificent as **SOLID GOLD**.
- I am a **SOLID GOLD** work of art, perfectly crafted and precious.
- I AM **SOLID GOLD** - valuable and deserving of love and respect.

Wellness Within

I embrace my worthiness and allow my **SOLID GOLD** self to shine brightly.





Embrace the tiger, return to the mountain

Leo Low Ming is a dedicated, professional martial artist. He has trained with the world's top masters and practised his art for over 48 years. Leo teaches the young and the not so young. This is learning through doing. How to experience and evolve through the martial ways unfurls. Join Leo Low Ming for a unique experience. Step by step, let the master lead you... Simple taiji and qi gong movements and meditation techniques open up an energetic connection with the physical world. The western way thinks vigorous exercise that strengthens the muscles and heart brings good health. But the eastern way is different. Gentle, slow, repetitive movements release tension in the soft tissues and nerves, stimulate the organs, circulate the blood and quietly relax you. Here there is no separation of mind, body and emotions. Unsurprisingly, scientific evidence suggests that taiji can prevent illness and prolong life. Slowly, very slowly, you can feel, release, open and heal all that is bound and restricted within you.

"When the Tao is present in the universe, the birds sing."
Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching: Verse 9

If there is harmony and balance in nature, your true nature unfolds. There is no such thing as early or late. Too much or too little. Too fast or too slow. Taiji is an art of inner peace. An inner peace arising from yin and yang, the two equal and opposite forces within us and the entire universe. Our life energy, or chi, arises through the interplay of yin and yang. Wellbeing depends on a harmony or balance between these two. Africa: The birthplace of humanity, where ancient ways can help us to see how we are part of the world, impacted by it and affecting it. Also as the most dominant species, we see how we burden the planet through our disharmony. As the Tao Te Ching says: "Empty and be filled. Bend and be straight. Yield and overcome." Through mind, body awareness and the breath, it is time to recalibrate, recharge and reconnect with yourself and the natural world.

Leo Ming +27 83 378 0468
To purchase a copy of Leo's taiji book, visit my website at www.mingsmartialarts.co.za



"...whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved."
-Charles Darwin, The Origin of Species

Purchase the online Chi Gong Course
www.mingsmartialarts.co.za/online-chi-gong-course
Contact Leo Ming at +27 83 378 0468

Heal. Transform. Celebrate. Join Us for the Ultimate Trauma Healing Retreat & Wellness Festival!

Reconnect with your joy. Reclaim your power. Rediscover community. Experience a 4-day trauma healing retreat and music festival like no other.

Are you ready to break free from the past and step into your most radiant, authentic self? Welcome to Convergence Wellness Campout, a revolutionary experience, where deep emotional healing meets ecstatic celebration.

Nestled in the breathtaking forests of Missouri's Astral Valley, Convergence is your sanctuary for somatic healing, sound journeys, ecstatic dance, and soulful connection. With expert-led workshops, powerful ceremony, and live high-vibe music, this is more than a festival-it's a rebirth.

Let go of old stories. Tap into ancestral wisdom. Awaken your inner healer. Emerge anew.



Benefits You'll Experience:

- Trauma-Informed Workshops: breathwork, somatic release, grief and sobriety support.
- Healing Modalities: sound baths, movement medicine, spiritual guidance, sacred ceremonies.
- Live Music & Dance: transformational performances under the stars.
- Authentic Community: deep connection in a safe, conscious container.

Whether you're a seeker, a survivor, or simply someone ready to grow- this space is for you.

Step into your healing.

Celebrate your becoming.

Reserve Your Spot Now - www.ConvergenceCampout.com

Limited spots available, the demand has been unusually high. Don't miss the gathering that could change your life.

Convergence Wellness Campout | September 18-21, 2025 | Astral Valley Art Park, 10288 Koester Springs Rd., French Village, MO 63036

MIND MATTERS SUMMIT 2025

Photo by Taryn Elliott

Join us to shape the future of mental wellbeing.



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4 September 2025
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Join 1,500 forward-thinkers for an unforgettable day of stepping into your focus and flow.

The summit features international thought leaders, neuroscientists and elite athletes who will be sharing their personal stories and practical hacks to ignite new neural pathways and reshape your mindset.

2025 HEADLINERS



Mo Gawdat
Chief AI Officer, Flight Story
(Former CBO Google X)



Dr Tara Swart
Neuroscientist



Tatjana Smith
Olympic Champion

And many more powerhouse speakers and panel guests to be announced

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"Mind Matters isn't just another wellness event, it's a global movement to shape Mental Wellbeing 2.0. When we truly understand how the mind works, everything changes - personally, in business and relationships."

Kanchana Moodliar, Founder + CEO.

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