



CREATIONS

INSPIRATION • HOLISTIC HEALTH • PERSONAL GROWTH

Vol. 39, Issue 1
February / March 2025
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The Winter / Relationships Issue

- Faith as an Act of Creation
- The Movement Towards Universal Spirituality
- Stop Empathy Overwhelm
- Are You Ready to Let a Partner into Your Life?
- How the Ego Lens Destroys Confidence

The Power of Perspective

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by Albert R O'Connell III, LCSW
"The Beach Hypnotist"

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Take the first step towards a healthier, smoke-free, and confident life today. With hypnotherapy, you have the tools and support to achieve meaningful, life-changing results. Transform your habits, transform your life! Transforming your life begins with a single step, and we're here to support you every step of the way.

Whether you're ready to finally quit smoking, lose weight, or improve your overall well-being, our hypnotherapy sessions provide the tools and guidance you need. With our compassionate approach

and evidence-based techniques, you'll be empowered to take control of your habits and achieve the healthier, happier version of yourself that you've always envisioned.

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Albert R O'Connell III, LCSW is a New York State Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Certified Hypnotist and Certified Anger Management Specialist available for individual, group and corporate sessions. Please visit TheHamptonsMethod.com to review forthcoming events and a free streaming self-hypnosis audio program.

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TALKING OUR WALK

Welcome to the 39th year of Creations Magazine and the February-March, Winter/Relationships Issue! This also marks 20 years since Andrea & I became the publishers.

Friends, Readers, Advertisers and Creatives:

With the New Year, we've unveiled an updated masthead / logo and headers; last month we launched our completely new website. We're just getting started, but **CreationsMag.com** is now, more than ever, your Gateway to Holistic Living, Personal Growth, and Creative Expression. You will discover the Stories, Wisdom, and Inspiration shaping Spiritually-Centered and Health-Conscious communities worldwide. We're curating a wider variety of content from an ever expanding pool of resources.

We'll be bringing you video podcasts featuring contributors, authors, advertisers, and all sorts of fun, insightful, and interesting folks sharing their personal and unique experiences and perceptions of life, health and all things seen—and unseen :)

It is particularly fitting that we have Alan Cohen lined-up as our very first podcast guest. Our longest-running, and all-time favorite contributor and friend, Alan has been a gift to Creations for decades. Please make sure to read Alan's article, *Are You Ready to Let a Partner Into Your Life?* We will be recording and posting this segment in the coming weeks.

As we more fully get up to speed, we expect to post a new video each week. Andrea will be leading guided meditations with Crystal Singing Bowls, and we're planning



to present a variety of other practitioners as well. We gladly invite you to share your thoughts and creative offerings.

This new year has heralded in changes for both our print and online editions. For anything to change, one has to actually make changes! Sometimes, however, life dictates circumstances. This past Autumn, our long-time associate publisher, Lainie Covington, sadly passed away at the age of 61. Lainie literally had her fingerprints on every page.

This "circumstance" compelled us to contract a new production team. Design2Pro now handles design tasks previously managed by Jan Guarino and Ginger Graziano. All three ladies arrived as a package deal when we purchased *Creations* in 2005. Jan will continue to design our Poetry Page (see her book in our Reviews Column!). We are eternally indebted to Lainie, Ginger and Jan for supporting this publication all these years.

In Peace & Gratitude,

Neil & Andrea

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Faith as an Act of Creation

by Ann Albers and The Angels,
Phoenix, AZ

You are eternally held in an embrace of love. Seasons come and go. Years come and go. Hierarchies rise and fall. Yet never in your eternal journey are you without love, for it is the stuff from which you are made. You feel that love inside of you stirring often. More often than most of you give yourself credit for, you feel compassion or appreciation. Without realizing it, hundreds of times a day, you savor a simple pleasure or a breath of relief. **In every moment, love seeks to rise up within you and greet itself in countless different forms.**

You love these moments when the Presence within you dances with the Presence in another. It feels wonderful when someone acknowledges you for the beautiful and loving being that you are. You adore the moments when someone shines the spotlight of love upon you. And while each of you would prefer to engage with others in such a loving dance, not everyone in your world loves themselves enough to be loving and kind. Not everyone is ready to release fear, anger, or resentment. **Many are unwilling to let go of a painful past in exchange for a peaceful present.** Many cannot believe in what they have not yet seen. Many want you to keep them company in their misery.

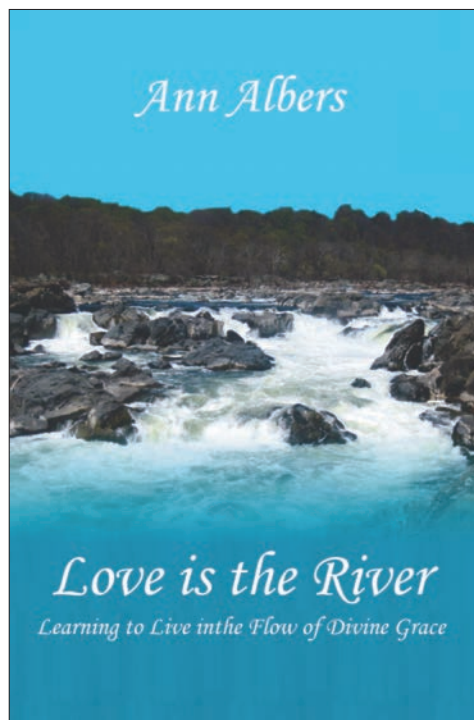
This is a challenge for those of you who love so deeply. You long for all souls to know how deeply they are loved. You want people to understand the goodness of your heart and the sincerity of your intentions. You crave kind and caring interactions. Not everyone is ready for this, dear ones. Others cannot yet acknowledge the light in you if they are lost in their own darkness. One mired in misery will not want to be around someone who reflects their potential capacity for joy.

It is not your failure to love, dear friends, when others are unloving. It is not your failure to teach when others don't want



to learn. It is not your failure to please when others are unpleasable. **Everyone is responsible for their own vibration,** and far too many of you beautiful, love-filled souls have taken it upon yourself to be responsible for the joy of others. You cannot. **You are not the source of anyone's happiness or pain. You are a beacon—a light that shines upon their path.** If they are ready for growth, they'll love you and want what you have to offer. If they are not, they will push you away. Believe in their light anyway. Whether you can see it or not, the light lives beneath all beings and all things, and holding your focus there instead of believing only what you see on the surface will keep you in the light—regardless of what others choose.

We know that it is often difficult to feel what you cannot see. It is much easier to “tune into” and feel what you are being shown through your physical senses. It is easy to believe in the rose you smell,



the food you taste, and the behaviors you see and hear on your social media or television. It is easy to look at what your physical senses present and think that this is all there is to reality.

However, there are so many things you do not see. There are places on your earth that would take your breath away. There are people giving in such loving ways you would call them saints. There are little children quietly sharing love and joy in their entire communities. Countless people are doing countless good deeds every day. Most of them will never be seen on your news or social media, yet they send beautiful shining ripples of light into the human pond. Many of you are not making a production about your loving heart and kindly lived lives. Nonetheless, you are sending waves of goodness into the mass consciousness—waves far more important than you will understand on your earth.

It often takes faith—a belief in things unseen,—to find the love life has to offer. There is so much competition for your attention. Still, your heart always wants to turn to the light. Your heart always wants to find good and feel good. You are like beautiful sunflowers wanting to follow the trajectory of the light. No matter how weary or browbeaten you feel, you all want to feel more love. You all want the world to know your love.

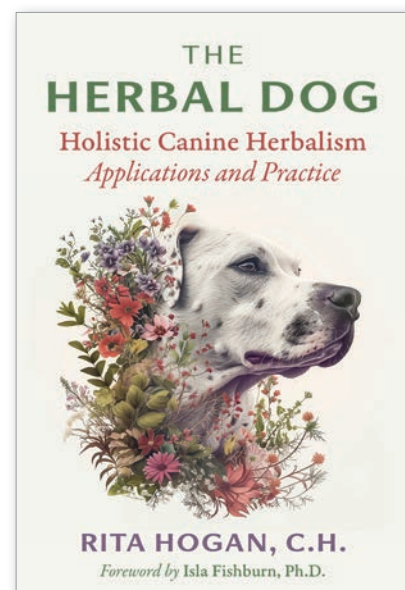
Have faith in the good. Have faith in Divine love for you. Believe in your own goodness and worthiness. The world and others who taught you have not always made love evident or easy, but you can choose one moment after the next to look for the good, acknowledge the good in yourself, and seek the good in others. You deserve to feel good. You deserve to love yourself in this fashion. You deserve to expect good ahead, even if no one in front of you appears to be offering it at the time.

If you want a delicious cookie, you must believe that the delicious cookie exists before you see it. You must believe in it even when someone hands you a terrible cookie. You must believe in it even while it is baking in an oven you do not know exists. If you have faith, your expectations will cause you to look forward to the cookie, talk about the cookie, and be open to having your delicious cookie delivered in some sort of magical way. If you do not have faith, you'll give up and miss the cookie when it comes, or eat the bad cookie and assume that's all you get.

We use simple analogies, but **in truth, it is your faith that creates. Your belief in something you cannot yet see holds a vibrational frequency that allows you to be guided straight to what you want.** Your faith is not a passive thought but an active vibrational emanation that will “draw unto you what you seek.” ✨

Ann Albers is a popular author, spiritual instructor, angel communicator, and modern mystic who has spoken at conferences with famous authors, been featured on international radio shows, and who delights in helping people experience the power and beauty of their own soul. She guides people to manifest lives they love, and develop a blissful connection with spirit! Her free weekly “Messages from Ann & the Angels” reach an international audience with inspiration and tips to help you stay tuned in and turned on! Learn more at www.visionsofheaven.com. Her book, **Love is the River, Learning to Live in the Flow of Divine Grace**, can be purchased at <https://www.amazon.com/Love-River-Learning-Divine-Grace/dp/1949780007/>

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The Movement Towards Universal Spirituality

by Gopalakrishnan TC
Chandrasekaran, India

Quite often religion and spirituality are treated synonymously, especially by people who show strong affiliation to belief systems. However, there is a lot of difference between the two when we notice that religion is culture dependent while spirituality is universal in nature. **All natural things have their own universality, such as gravity. Those things do not depend on man-made systems.**

True spirituality cannot be the monopoly of any group, religious or otherwise, because it must be available to the whole of humanity irrespective of whether people belong to a particular religion or not, whether they live in a particular time in history or not. All systems are man-made or man-influenced. Thus, they will depend heavily on the local cultures and history. That is how they cannot be universal in space and time. *In true spirituality, the value of self-awareness is emphasized as the primary factor for inner transformation.* Self-awareness can take place in anyone, at any time – certainly, not dependent on history. It is an inherent capacity of all human beings from time immemorial. That is how it can be universal. Enlightened masters from India



and other countries have always directed people's attention to their inwardly turned awareness for spiritual transformation.

Human beings on this planet have lived with ego-driven psychology for thousands of years. A child being born into that atmosphere gets indoctrinated into it early in life and thus falls prey to a strong self-defensive attitude for the rest of its life. Such a mindset may be called the *Habitual Neurology*. It is unfortunate that human beings are taken over by it, generation after generation, resulting in widespread unrest, violence and war. The Habitual Neurology makes us behave like robots.

Sage Kapila is reported to have lived in India by the 7th century BCE. He came up with a cosmological explanation of human life on this planet. His writing, known as *Sankhya* Philosophy, is helpful in understanding our life as it transpires in the vast expanse of cosmology. The Sankhya Philosophy makes us understand that we are sparks of the Divine taking off from the Divine Flame, experiencing the variegated

manifestations in the universe through multiple lives and, then, returning to the Flame. Thus, the cycle is complete. Here we note that only a cyclic process can be eternal. It also ensures that no one is condemned in the Divine Field.

Enlightened masters talk about a radical transformation of the mind; it is a state of freedom from the ego. The Habitual Neurology is no longer functional in such minds. A good issue to be examined in connection with the inner transformation is this matter of mortality – the ending of the body. People usually look away from that topic because it has a fearful finality about it. However, when we set aside our reluctance and explore into it, it reveals things that can make us appreciate life better. In this connection, a paranormal phenomenon, known as the Near Death Experience (NDE) is very valuable. When we listen to the messages from those who go through NDE, it makes us feel peaceful. Further, it waters down the fear of death. That there is no judgment or punishment on the other side is what makes the afterlife particularly meaningful.

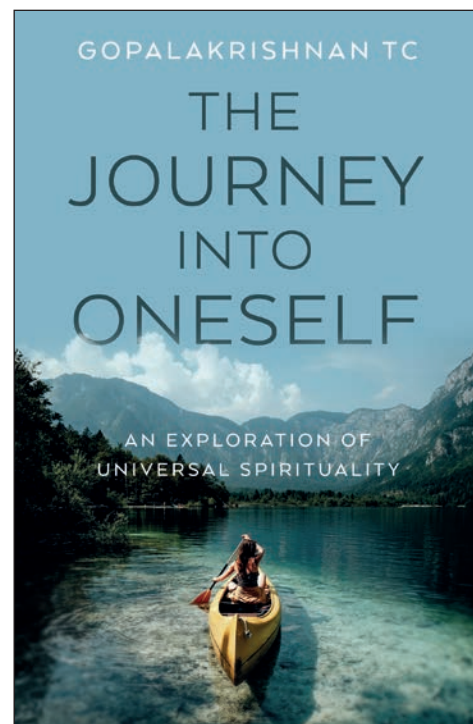
A long distance train or bus journey can give us the opportunity to observe ourselves and understand how our minds tend to be occupied all the time. Many things transpire during the journey but the noisy mind ignores them. We see that we waste our mental energy through thoughts driven by the Habitual Neurology – thoughts of fear, anger, regret, self-pity, envy, enmity etc. Such journeys generally give us a chance to flow inward and abide in silence. That state, far from being a dull one, would make us feel rejuvenated.

Since there is no institutionalization in the universal approach, each person shines like a "Single Star in a Limpid Sky" – an expression used by J. Krishnamurti in connection with aloneness. It needs certain courage to remain alone inwardly. That unshakable confidence comes from the following:

- Non-dependence on a system or person to provide the base for security and satisfaction.
- The sensing that each one of us is given all the resources needed to return Home, to Divinity.

People interested in Universal Spirituality may do well to pay attention to the following issues as part of a holistic approach to self-transformation:

- **Good Health.** It is necessary as a sound base for applying ourselves to the matter of spirituality.



- **Childlikeness.** That would remind us of the adage from Jesus Christ: Until ye become like children, ye cannot enter heaven.
- **Satori, Advaita and Monism.** These are the words in Japanese, Sanskrit and English, respectively, to represent the non-dual oneness experienced as an aspect of Universal Consciousness.
- **Immensity of the universe.** Some aspects of the topics like astronomy and paleontology can take us into the expansive beauty of the universe in space and time.

When we pay attention to the above, our minds can fall into deep relaxation. Whatever one does in that state will be right in the sense that it will be holistic and life-supportive. One no longer functions like a conformist. When such a mind expresses itself, it will have abundant feelings towards everyone and everything. One can feel it flowing out like a fountain naturally and without one's volition.

Gopalakrishnan TC was born in Chennai, India; graduated in Civil Engineering, Madras University; Master's degree, Indian Institute of Technology, Madras; Doctoral degree in Coastal Engineering, North Carolina State University. He was on the research and teaching faculty at the engineering institutes in India, USA and Kuwait; presented technical papers in international conferences held in England, Belgium, Switzerland, Japan, Australia, China and USA. From his study of the Enlightened Masters on the philosophic side of life, he has published a book **The Journey into Oneself**. Please visit <http://spirituality.yolasite.com>

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The Power of Perspective in Overcoming Life-Altering Challenges

by Laura Gabayan, MD

“You are still you.” This quote in the recent documentary, “Super/Man: The Christopher Reeve Story,” from his wife is what reminded Reeves that he wasn’t defined by his physical limitations. Despite the accident that led him to become a quadriplegic, he still remained Christopher.

I, too, have experienced a life-altering physical impediment. As my body started to deteriorate, it was the reminder by my daughter that I’m “still Mommy” that has helped me get through my difficulties. My physical limitations and visible challenges are part of my story and, similar to Christopher Reeves, don’t define me.

Instead, my physical condition allowed me to question the medical establishment that I’d been part of and look to people who view life through a wider lens — people I consider “wise.” In an unusual way, my condition was a gift. I lost most of the control of my body but was still able to create a research project to study how we go about attaining wisdom (The Wisdom Research Project). I set out to scientifically define wisdom by interviewing 60 wise adults, and uncovered its eight intrinsic elements — resilience, kindness, positivity, spirituality, tolerance, creativity, and curiosity. I then wrote a book, *Common Wisdom*, about my findings.

My situation highlighted the importance of mindset and perspective. It allowed me to



not only reroute my life’s path, but change my priorities and outlook. Throughout this process **I’ve learned that four convictions enabled me to maintain perspective and persevere.** They’re worth sharing:

1. I’m a warrior, not a victim

As you go through life, have a warrior mentality. Avoid any sense of victimhood. Our society often rewards victims. For example, if people look like they’re suffering, they get more attention. Or if someone says they have an urgent need, they get quicker medical care. While it takes more effort to be a warrior, it will empower you to overcome obstacles.

The first step in being a warrior is acceptance. Accept that life isn’t fair, but know that things will work out. Live in faith and not fear. As Helen Keller once said, “Although the world is full of suffering, it’s also full of overcoming it.” Accepting the notion that life isn’t fair puts us at peace and prepares us to fight. It’s not that we’re on high alert all the time, but we have the confidence to take on the obstacle head-on. Instead of avoiding the obstacle or running away from it, we think to ourselves, “Bring it on.” It’s a knowing that what you stand for and who you are is more valuable than the situation you encounter.

2. Things are happening for me and not to me

When things seem to be going wrong and you encounter great turbulence in your life, look for the bigger picture. You may not “see” why something is happening or what it will lead to, but know that you’re only experiencing a piece of the puzzle. All obstacles are actually opportunities — gifts you are given to move forward in your life.

When my body started to deteriorate in 2013 all I could immediately focus on was the difficulty I was having seeing patients and how my career as a clinician was becoming more limited. I never imagined I would broaden my perspective and author a book.

3. “Why not me?”

Instead of thinking “Why me?” think, “Why not me?” This question will remind you that you can handle any situation. It will

also remind you that the divine feels that you can overcome this challenge or else you wouldn’t have been given such an obstacle. It will make you stronger and not break you.

This doesn’t mean that you’re excited to suffer and experience pain, but it does mean that your experience will increase your resilience and wisdom.

4. There’s much to be grateful for

The ability to be thankful and show appreciation through gratitude does much to improve one’s mindset and perspective. In many ways it’s forced appreciation that’s key. It helps you to recognize the parts of life for which to be grateful that aren’t always obvious. For example, gratitude for the challenge or learning opportunity puts the ball in your court. It gives you a sense of control.

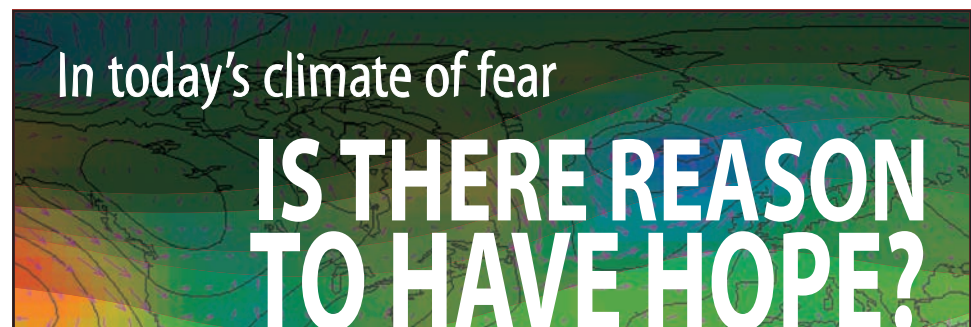
When you face extraordinary obstacles, all you can do is be grateful for the good parts of your life. A stroke patient that has lost the function of half of their body can be grateful for the parts of the body that do function. Even though a majority of my muscles don’t work and I can’t walk, my functional upper body and arms, as well as my continued

cognitive ability, allowed me to conduct research on wisdom and write my book.

As I think about the power of perspective, I remember Christopher Reeves. While emotionally devastating, the accident allowed him to do so much for others. He was a celebrity with great power and influence. He not only gave people hope that there’s a brighter tomorrow, but he encouraged people devastated from spinal cord injuries to live better lives. He also strengthened the voice of the disabled community.

Similar to the 60 wise interviewees I spoke with, Reeves didn’t give up on life when things became hard. He kept fighting and reminding himself that he “can do it” — a wise choice to be certain. ✨

Dr. Laura Gabayan is a world-renowned physician and expert in research. Through her *Wisdom Research Project*, she interviewed 60 wise adults across North America and defined the 8 fundamental elements of wisdom. She describes her findings in her new book, **Common Wisdom: 8 Scientific Elements of a Meaningful Life** (Redwood Publishing, 2024). For more information, visit thewisdomresearchproject.com.



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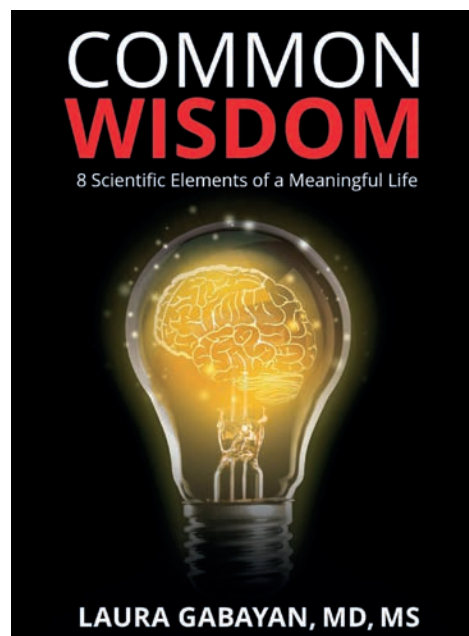
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Are You Addicted to Busyness? Break the Habit and Get Intentional About Life

by Jill Palmquist

Many of us are living incredibly jam-packed lives. We routinely burn the candle at both ends, and every waking moment is accounted for. If this sounds like you, chances are you feel staying so busy is admirable (or at least unavoidable). But here's the harsh truth: *When you're perpetually busy, you miss out on the richness and joy of life itself*—and that life is all too short.

Life is breathtaking and magical when you take time to really notice and savor it, but you can't do that when you're flying through every moment at 90 miles per hour so you can get everything done on your



to-do list. Your “busyness badge” not only wears you out, but it also robs you of the very experience of living.

There are plenty of possible reasons why we stay so busy, including:

- **Busyness is a status symbol.** We get a buzz from feeling busy, important, and admired.

- **We think we must live this way.** We learned from our parents or just American culture in general that busyness is “normal.”

- **We are fear-driven.** If we slow down, we might fail at our goals or be left behind those around us.

- **We feel guilt or shame when we are not productive.** This might stem from the Protestant work ethic that created our capitalist society and pushes us to seek virtue by diligently working ourselves into an early grave.

- **It lets us avoid dealing with painful truths and feelings.** If we wrap ourselves up with work and other obligations, then we don't have to deal with things we'd rather not think about. In some cases, busyness might even be a response to a trauma we've suffered.

Your proud wearing of the busyness badge is a sign that you're an addict. You're addicted to the energy and chaos of busyness, so it's going to be hard to stop...yet the cost is too high not to.

A few tips to break the busyness habit:

Do a life audit. Set aside some time to think about all the parts of your life: work, family, friends, goals, romance, spirituality, health and wellness, hobbies and interests, relaxation, travel, etc. What do you value the most? What is missing? Where are you just enduring? Where are you squandering your precious time? Looking ahead, if things don't change, what do you imagine your future regrets will be?

Ruthlessly cut what doesn't align with your values or enhance your life. Often we endure things that drain our energy and resources (or are even harmful) because we believe there is no other option, but that isn't true. It might mean taking drastic steps, like quitting an emotionally draining job or leaving behind an interest that you've outgrown or no longer prioritize. It can be frightening to make these transitions, but endings are necessary for new beginnings.

Lean into the relationships that matter most. You have only so much time to devote to others, so make sure you're not investing in low-quality relationships or letting toxic people suck up all your time. This might mean reassessing your social circle, or rearranging your schedule so you can spend more time with your child or parents or partner or cherished friend.

Mostly, though, it means getting real about what that time is like.

Get your dream on your calendar. Maybe it's too late for you to become a Hollywood movie star (or maybe not!), but nothing can stop you from taking an acting class or joining a scene study group. Maybe you've got fodder for a long-dreamed-of book languishing in the depths of your computer. This is the important part: Sign up for the class or block out your book-writing time on your schedule. If you don't plan for it, it won't happen.

Schedule time for rest and for fun. Everyone needs time to do things they love. Leisure time renews your spirit and brings a big dose of joy when you need it the most. Schedule downtime for you and your family. This might mean travel and vacations, but it also can include weekend picnics, weekly walks and catch-ups with your best



friend, a long massage, or checking out a local attraction. Keep your calendar full of dates, events, and activities you can look forward to, so life never gets too serious or boring.

Life doesn't happen twice, so there's no need to delay what will bring you joy. If you let go of your busyness badge and start living intentionally today, you are sure to never have regrets tomorrow—or twenty years from now. ✨

Jill Palmquist is vice president and chief storyteller of luxury lifestyle and fitness brand *Life Time, Inc.*, and author of the new coffee table book *In This Lifetime* (Wise Ink, September 2024, ISBN: 978-1-63489-689-4, \$105.00). It is full of breathtaking photographs, thought-provoking essays, proverbs, parables, conversation starters, and distilled life wisdom to take with you through your days.

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Are You Ready to Let a Partner into Your Life?

by Alan Cohen, Hawaii

“I have been searching for a mate for a long time, but I haven’t been able to connect with one,” my coaching client Ron told me.

“Why is not having a partner more attractive to you than having one?” I asked. “What about having a partner is distasteful to you?”

Ron thought for a long moment and answered, “I don’t really want to have to change my lifestyle. I like to get up in the morning when I like, sip my coffee, read the news, and check the sports scores. Sometimes I go down to Starbucks. Then I work remotely from my living room. Living with someone could mess all that up. The women I’ve dated tend to be demanding and want my world to revolve around them.”

I wasn’t surprised. Usually people who complain about being single have fears or judgments about inviting someone into their world. But that can be changed. “What’s your most exciting vision of being with a partner?” I asked Ron.

His face took on a glow. “It would be nice to have someone to share my activities, insights, ups and downs, and



hopes and dreams. We could support each other on our spiritual path. The companionship would be really meaningful. We could travel together. A great sexual connection would be the icing on the cake.”

The more I drew Ron out, the more obvious it was to both of us that he really *did* want a partner. He just needed to realize that he could have a good one if he wanted. But he would have to let his brighter vision outshine his points of resistance.

A few months later Ron informed me that he had met a woman he really liked, and she had moved in with him. While he had to make some sacrifices and adjustments to his routine, he was finding the relationship far more rewarding than living alone. The tipping point came when the idea of connecting grew more fulfilling than self-isolating.

After doing my own inner spiritual work and coaching thousands of people, it is clear to me that **intention is the most significant factor in creating our life**. We are all always at choice about our experience. We are doing what we believe will bring us the payoff we most value. If we want to change our life for the better, we must examine the payoffs we are receiving, and find bigger payoffs for living a bigger life.

Our beliefs about relationships are connected to our beliefs about abundance. We may tend to think that prosperity equals only money. But if we live in an abundant universe, there is abundance of *everything*, including rewarding relationships. I often hear clients affirm a lack of partnership rather than plenty of opportunities.

Some women tell me, “All the good men are taken—or they’re gay.”

If you believe that all the good partners are already spoken for, you are going to have a hard time meeting one. I ask clients, “How many partners would you like?” They answer, “One will do.” Then I ask them, “Out of the eight billion people on the planet, do you think there might be at least one who is a match for you?” They usually laugh, and agree that it might be so.

Ultimately the real abundance issue is our own enoughness. Many people fear that if they find a great partner, that person will not stick with them because “they will find that I am deficient.” The foundation for all great relationships is self-love. When you love yourself, you become immensely attractive to everyone. Then you attract someone who also honors him or herself. If you believe you are half, you will attract someone else with a deficiency consciousness, and you will have a deficient relationship. *So your best investment in a relationship—and all of your life—is deep self-worth.*

Guaranteed: When you are ready, someone will show up. Or your current relationship will improve. Instead of spending lots of time scouring dating sites or randomly dating, focus on your own readiness. When you drop into your inherent wholeness and your right to have everything that makes your heart sing, the Law of Attraction will take care of all the details.

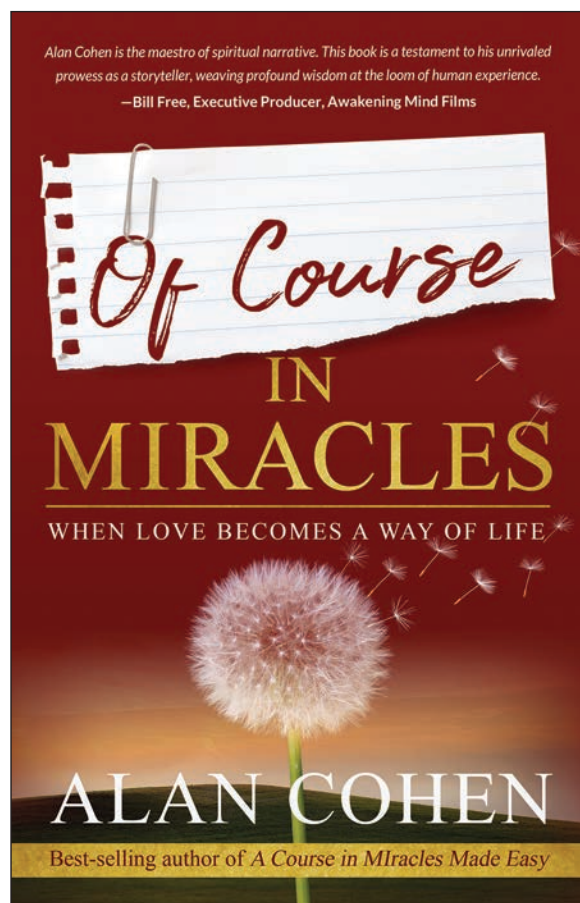
My friend Tom told me, “I used to travel a lot for work. As I moved around, I dated various women—but they all involved

long-distance relationships. Eventually we hit snags and we couldn’t get together. I blamed these women for not being available, but then I realized that I was the one who wasn’t available. I wasn’t ready to settle down, so I chose women at a distance.

“After a while I got bored with my pattern and I grew tired of meeting women I couldn’t be with. Then I met Sandy at the local health food store. We hit it off, and started spending time together. She lives just a few minutes away from me, and I am having a lot more fun being with her than spending most of our time trying to figure out how to get together. When I became available, I met someone who is also available.”

The key to any relationship, or success in any area of your life, is to clarify your choice and purify your intention. Be honest about where your fear or resistance lives, and shine light on it until it doesn’t serve you anymore. Then expand your vision of how good it could get. You will be living by conscious choice rather than subconscious programming. **When you are in integrity with yourself, you will attract everyone and everything that matches your highest good.** ✨

Alan Cohen is the author of many popular inspirational books, including his new **Of Course in Miracles**. Join Alan for his life-changing Holistic Life Coach Training beginning September 1. For information on this program, Alan’s many books, ACIM video course, webinars, weekly online Miracle Room, YouTube channel, and free daily inspirational quotes, visit www.alancohen.com.



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Honoring Differences: Let Them Enrich Your Life

by Joyce and Barry Vissell

It is important in life to honor differences, whether these be friends, coworkers or family members. So much can be learned from this practice.

When Barry and I wanted to get married, not one person thought we could make it as a couple. Yes, the love was there in abundance, but we were different religions. Barry was raised in a traditional Jewish family and attended the temple with his family. I was raised in a Christian family and attended church twice a week. At that time in 1968 on the east coast, people with this difference in religion did not get married. It was unheard of. Everyone thought we should break up and find someone else. We tried but it did not work. We came back together and decided to get married, but no one would marry us, especially not Barry's childhood rabbi.

Finally, my mother set up an appointment with her minister at her church near the University of Buffalo. This man, the

Reverend Davis was a Godsend. He told us he could see that we loved each other very much, but he would marry us on one condition: we must promise not to try to change the other. He told us that the differences within us can complement and strengthen our union. If we honor these differences, they will bless our lives. And true to our promise to him, we have honored our differences, and they have indeed blessed us. We now have a shared spirituality that is perhaps our deepest strength as a couple.

I swim every day at a club near our home. I often go at the same time and so does another woman. We have gotten to be friends. I really like this woman. She is the friendliest person at the club, treating all people with love and respect. She also has very interesting tales of growing up in Europe after the war ended. While we are getting dressed after our swim she shares these stories. We both know that we have very different political views, and we both know that we will vote very differently. Many months before the election, we promised each other that we would not talk about politics. And we honored this commitment. She was very happy on the day after the election. I was not. But we



never talked about it. We maintained our commitment. I believe that if we would have talked about politics, we might have lost our friendship. I saw that happen to someone else at the club. But we did not, so our relationship is still strong and I am still enjoying her stories. I feel blessed to know her.

My older brother is very different than me both in politics and religious views. He has very strong opinions. We are the only children with the same great parents and yet we turned out very different. And yet I love him very much and we have a similar commitment to never talk about politics or religion. If he forgets, and he sometimes does, one of his four children reminds him right away. We have been able to maintain a good relationship regardless of these differences.

Barry's mother grew up in a Jewish neighborhood in Brooklyn. Her first language was Yiddish. She took Judaism very seriously. It was a shock to her when Barry started dating me and an even greater shock when our relationship became more serious, and we became engaged. Barry's mother lived in a Jewish world, and she was surrounded by Jewish family, neighbors and friends. For her oldest son to be marrying a non-Jewish woman (a shiksa!) was almost too much to bear. Even after we were married, there was a slight distance that she kept from me, and I could tell that she hoped our relationship would not make it.

Then we had our first child and she asked, "What side of the family does she resemble?" Barry answered wisely,

"She looks just like Joyce." And that comment blew open her world. Barry's mother opened wide and fully accepted our daughter, and her world opened up as well. She began having close non-Jewish friends and she and my mother developed a close and deep relationship all the rest of their lives. And she grew close to me as well. She enjoyed lighting the Hanukkah candles, and at the same time enjoyed our Christmas tree and my manger scene on the mantle. She and I grew so close that she truly became a second mother to me. She had learned to honor our differences.

Perhaps there is someone in your life where differences keep you separated. Perhaps you also could honor these differences and find the commonality between the two of you, the place where you can meet in the heart. And though you will never change that person, you can find ways in which you can connect deeply. ✧

Joyce & Barry Vissell, a nurse/therapist and psychiatrist couple since 1964, are counselors near Santa Cruz, CA, who are passionate about conscious relationship and personal-spiritual growth. They are the authors of 10 books and a free audio album of sacred songs and chants. Visit their web site at SharedHeart.org for their free weekly inspirational videos and monthly e-heartletter, their updated schedule, and inspiring past articles on many topics about relationship and living from the heart. **A Couple of Miracles: One Couple, More Than a Few Miracles.** *Semi-Finalist, Book of the Year, Online Book Club. Available amazon.com*



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Stop Empathy Overwhelm

by Judith Orloff, MD,
Los Angeles, CA

One of the biggest blocks to empathy is a fear of being vulnerable and then overwhelmed. It either seems too painful or unsafe to lovingly explore your own emotions or that you risk getting burned out by other people's problems, dramas, and needs. Intimates or coworkers may ask more from you than you are prepared to give, but you don't want to disappoint them. If you set healthy boundaries such as saying no or specifying "I am just able to give you this," you may feel guilty or that you're a bad person or fear being rejected.

As an empath, I know how uncomfortable it feels to be deluged by emotions, especially from loved ones. You empathize with them. You care and want to help them or even solve their problems, but it isn't possible. For instance, when one patient watched his mother experience depression, he began feel depressed, too, until his mother reached out to a therapist and started feeling better. Another patient's husband had such intense back pain that my patient began experiencing it in her body too. When developing empathy, this is a predictable challenge that can teach you the importance of setting healthy boundaries and self-care.

In addition, you may feel overwhelmed by friends or coworkers who share too much information about their health, romances, or family conflicts. Someone might ambush you with accounts of stress they've experienced at work or details of a harrowing illness. Your heart goes out to them but listening can be exhausting.

Like me, many sensitive people are prone to absorbing others' emotions or physical symptoms. Too much coming at you too fast leads to the misery of sensory overload. In that state, one exasperated patient said, "How am I supposed to explain to people that I can't be around them because I hear the dryer beeping and



the car alarm going off or that everyone is too noisy, and I can feel my toes too much!" They were not exaggerating. To stay centered and prevent sensory overload, I've learned the importance of protecting myself so I don't take on the distress of my patients or anyone else. Also, I try to bow out of a situation and decompress when external stimulation feels too intense.

To start taking a more proactive role in how much empathy you give, I suggest that you keep in mind the following "rights" to help you maintain a healthy mindset and prevent or lessen overwhelm before it gathers momentum.

Set Boundaries to Prevent Overwhelm

- I have the right to say a loving, positive no or no thank-you.
- I have the right to set limits with how long I listen to people's problems.
- I have the right to rest and not be always available to everyone.
- I have the right to quiet peacefulness in my home and in my heart.

Observe, Don't Absorb

A principle of self-empathy is to observe a loved one's emotions but not absorb them. Stay in your own emotional lane and don't jump into theirs.

Your loved one's experience is exactly that: their experience. It is not yours! This may be hard to grasp initially. However, if you truly want to help, you must see the person you cherish as separate from you. This protects you from compassion burnout. Allow them to find their own healing path with the support of a therapist, a coach, or other health-care practitioners. If their situation isn't severe or life-threatening, give them time and space to work through

the issue on their own, if that's their choice. You are not their therapist, nor is it healthy to try to be.

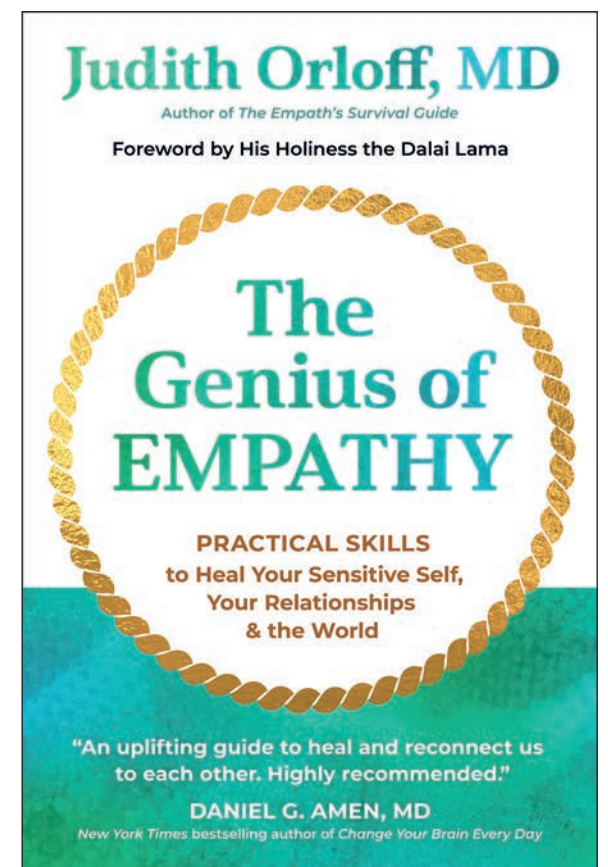
Emotional and physical healing typically involve some suffering. Tolerating a loved one's discomfort can stretch our hearts, but we must learn to be patient with their aches, pains, and struggles without taking them on. Even so, to be clear: you are not just sitting there doing nothing. Offering your loving presence is a supremely compassionate, healing act from which the other person will benefit.

Finding empathy for yourself and others is a slow but sure change. As a psychiatrist, I'm aware of how hard all of us can be on ourselves. When things go wrong, you blame yourself. Or maybe you've taken on your parents' judgmental voices or painful emotions, though you swore you'd never be like them. It's all okay. Despite the traumas, neglect, or pain you might have endured, little by little, you can begin to empathize with your own human plight—and your emergence. The most unfamiliar part may be beginning with yourself. Nevertheless, this is the sacred starting place, the break of day. ✨

*Excerpted from **The Genius of Empathy: Practical Skills to Heal Your Sensitive Self, Your Relationships, and the World** © 2024 Judith Orloff. Reprinted with permission from the publisher, Sounds True.*

Judith Orloff, MD is a psychiatrist, an empath, and author of the new book **The**

Genius of Empathy (Foreword by the Dalai Lama) which offers powerful skills to tap into empathy as a daily healing practice in your life and relationships. She also wrote **The Empath's Survival Guide** and **Thriving as an Empath**. Dr. Orloff is a New York Times bestselling author and a UCLA clinical faculty member. She synthesizes the pearls of conventional medicine with cutting-edge knowledge of intuition, energy, and spirituality. Dr. Orloff specializes in treating highly sensitive people in her private practice. She has been featured on The Today Show, CNN, Oprah Magazine, and the New York Times. Learn more about empaths and empathy at www.drjudithorloff.com.



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Breaking Through in the Quest for Self-Understanding

by Toni Bergins

The most difficult and worthy journey is the quest for self-knowledge and self-compassion.

I suffered with a low self-esteem and a self-abusive mind during my early adulthood. Sadly, I know now that I was far from alone in my perfectionist self-judgement. If I were to record my thoughts on an average day, close to 90 percent would be criticism and commentary. These thoughts affect our moods, our bodies, our relationships, and our lives.

It wasn't until I discovered how to go into an embodied state that I was able to alter my perception of myself. I've learned that when you move and dance to music, your senses are awakened, activating your vibrational energy. Your breath and your body come into sync, and, like meditation, your mind actually slows down, releasing the tension, shame, and self-criticism. Reconnecting to your body gives you a broadened perspective to see what's really going on. You become aware of what needs



to shift and you're able to consciously change your thoughts to a higher inspired possibility.

Today, I teach my JourneyDance students that the act of coming to the dancefloor is an intentional act of transformation, transmutation, and growth. When you can dance and lean into what you're feeling, you can see when your thoughts are taking you places you might not want to go, like into sadness or anxiety. With expression and self-inquiry comes knowledge and awareness. Awareness gives you choice. When you move, you become aware that you are the energy and that you can direct that energy to create what you want.

How to Break Out of Your Box

I have an empowering process you can do in your own home to release old stuck energy of limiting beliefs. My Break Out of the Box process is a way to end perfectionistic thoughts or self-abusive chatter, and keep the limiting beliefs from running your life. Emotion creates memory, and this is how we transmute and change. Try this!

1. Envision what's in the box you've created. First, think about an old story you need to reframe. What limiting messages, negative thoughts, old habits, or addictions need to be transformed so you can feel free?

We create boxes in which to live that are made from our limiting beliefs. For some of us this box serves as a protection, and for others the box condemns us to live in conformity or repression. When we investigate by putting the thoughts "outside ourselves" and onto the dance floor, we may see that even though we didn't intend to live inside a box that's unhealthy and unloving, we perpetuate

it. But once we recognize it, we can change. We can dismantle the old negative judgmental pattern and find our own way to truth.

2. Feel the structure of your box. With the next steps, play either of these songs I've selected for this break out process: "Proxy" by Martin Garrix, or "Bruk Bruk" by Dillon Francis.

Now, as if you're a mime, explore the walls of your box. Place your hands in front of your face, palms outward, and slowly move them up, down, to the sides, and to the ceiling to see and feel your box. Apply a bit of pressure to assess how strong your box is and ask, "Is my box made of cloth, wood, or concrete?" Feel it and sense it.

3. Dance inside your box. Move within the confines of your box. Feel what it's like to have the box constricting you. Feel the ceiling and the walls you've created with limiting ideas, judgments, and repressed emotion. Move to the music in small, powerful ways inside the box. Feel the tightness of this small space. Can you feel in your body what's holding you back from your possibilities?

Once you've gotten the sense of the power of the box, notice what thoughts make up the box. Are they self-critical thoughts, such as that you're not good enough, you're too big or too small, you're a failure, or you're nothing? I know it's unpleasant to think about these beliefs, but once you can name them and recognize them, you can choose to think about yourself differently.

4. Break out of your box. Along with the music, make whatever movements that you need to crack open your box. Make jabbing

and pressing movements with your elbows and punching motions with your fists. Kicking the walls with your feet and knees, grunting and yelling if needed.

After you've burst open the walls, don't forget to smash that imagined ceiling. You can do it! Keep at it until you begin to feel tired of punching, jabbing, and kicking.

5. Step outside the box. Push your way through the largest crack or hole you've made. Walk around the box. Look at it and say out loud, "I see you, box. I've got your number. I see how I've allowed you to confine me" — or something that feels right to you.

6. Dismantle the box. Now from the outside of your box, take apart all the pieces. Pull the walls down and throw them on the ground. Pull the foundation up. Gather all the pieces and make a pile on the floor. Take a moment and feel your power.

Then, transmute the remains of the box by composting it into the ground. Jump on it a few times, stomp on it, or bring your hands down to the floor and drum on it.

7. Declare your liberation from the box. Finally, clap your hands together as though brushing off any remaining dust. Release a loud victorious sound. Then finish this transformative ritual by saying out loud: "I release you, box. That was the old me in there, but now I'm free. I'm powerful. I choose what I believe from this moment forward."

After completing this practice, sense how powerful you feel. Remember that self-mastery is about choice. You can choose which thoughts you want to believe and which thoughts you can release from past patterns. Start speaking to yourself in a new way, create new pathways, and come back to dance to your favorite song that makes you happy and fills you with joy. Move your body and thank yourself for breaking out of the box. Emotion creates memory and this is how we transmute and change. ✨

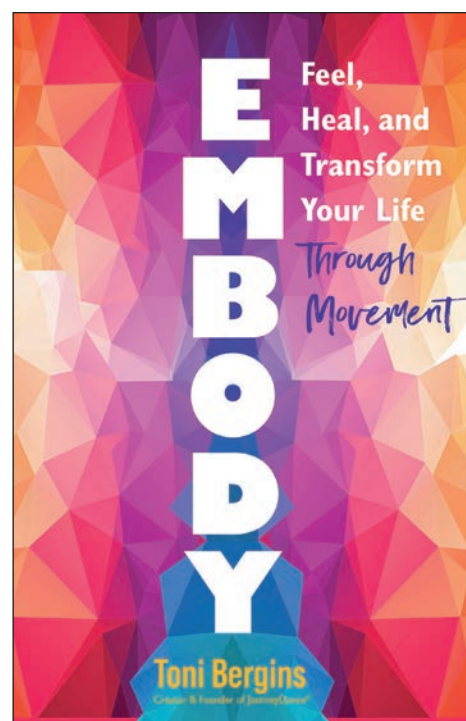
Toni Bergins, M.Ed., is an embodiment trailblazer who has taught at the premier holistic healing centers for the last 27 years. She is on the faculty at the Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health, and has worked there as a movement artist, dance educator, expressive arts workshop leader, and expert in creating transformational workshops. Her new book is, **Embodiment: Feel, Heal, and Transform Your Life through Movement** (Health Communications Inc., Oct. 29, 2024). Learn more at journeydance.com.

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How the Ego Lens Destroys Confidence

by Sue Frederick

When we think of being in an ego state, we imagine this means that we're overly confident, arrogant, and boastful. But it's actually the opposite of this. When we're using the ego lens to view our world, to view any situation, we're looking at ourself and others as limited beings with limited potential, all of us competing to survive. The ego lens tells us we need to struggle to get what we need because there's never enough to go around, and we're never good enough to get it done, so we must be better than everyone else to succeed. The ego lens thrives on seeing differences.

When you allow this view to dominate your life, you pull the plug on your inner wisdom, the source of your personal power. This drains your energy and leaves you feeling defeated and exhausted. The stress of having to be the best—which your soul knows is impossible—will push you far from the unique path you came here to experience. The ego lens hides the truth. It blocks your ability to clearly see your unique gifts or the gifts of others.

The ego lens sees only the surface of life. The divine lens, on the other hand, makes



no assumptions. It reveals the deeper truth behind every story, the pain hidden in each misbehavior, the soul journey behind every wounded personality. It reveals similarities rather than differences. The divine lens is your prescription for compassion. It aligns you with your soul's wisdom and empowers you to be your greatest self. It reveals that you're perfectly who you're supposed to be at this very moment—which is exactly as powerful, beautiful, and brilliant as you're meant to be today. This perspective allows you to shine, even when your mind tells you that you're inferior, powerless, or not good enough.

The divine lens illuminates each moment of your life with wisdom. It pours light into your wounds. It fills every dark space with love. Wearing your divine lens, you understand that the gifts of others are perfectly unique to them and what their soul came to accomplish. You see that you're absolutely radiant when you speak your soul's truth, share your wisdom, and speak from your heart instead of from your mind.

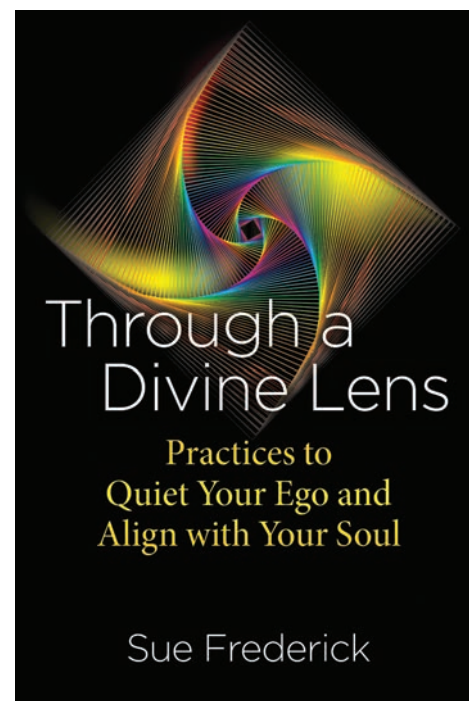
Never doubt that your soul will always put you exactly where you're meant to be for your highest good and the good

of others. Your task is to embrace each painful moment and flip it into gratitude for the gift of what you're learning and the gift of knowing that divine order is already helping you move through this perfectly designed lesson.

Whenever you call out to your Higher Self for guidance, you open to source energy and flawless wisdom. You open your channel of inspiration. Divinity pours through you. Then you become the goddess, the prince, the golden child. All meaningless ego comparisons seem ridiculous and fall away. You carry the light within. You get the job you're not qualified for, the standing ovation, the partner you thought would never notice you. Your work, which is your holy sacrament, shines with resonance. This is divine lens living at its finest. And it's available to you 24/7, just for the asking. ✨

*Excerpted with permission from **Through a Divine Lens: Practices to Quiet Your Ego and Align with Your Soul**, ©2023*

Sue Frederick is a lifelong intuitive, an ordained Unity minister, a certified past-life and between-lives soul regression therapist, a certified creative arts therapist, a career intuitive coach, grief



*intuitive coach, and master numerologist. She's the author of **Bridges to Heaven: True Stories of Loved Ones on the Other Side**; **I See Your Soul Mate: An Intuitive's Guide to Finding and Keeping Love**, and **I See Your Dream Job: A Career Intuitive Shows You How to Discover What You Were Put on Earth to Do**.*

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The book cover is red with a yellow flower in the center. The title 'YOU WERE HERE BEFORE WHY ARE YOU HERE NOW?' is in white and yellow text. Below the flower, it says 'EXPERIENCES OF A PAST LIFE REGRESSION THERAPIST' and 'BARBARA PISICK'.

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Don't Get Scared. I'm OK

by Jimmy Kilimitzoglou, DDS

There was an accident ... God has plans for me. I trust in Him but He trusts in me. Monday night was a profound experience. I have been having trouble with my car but my mechanic assured me it was resolved. A few days after picking it up from the shop, it just didn't feel right. I texted him and he offered to look at it again. After seeing patients all day, I had a meeting at the Suffolk County Dental Society. I left at 9:30 pm and headed home. Stopped at the light on Route 347 and 111. Light turns green and I advance. Seconds later the car bucks and stalls. I tried starting the car but it would not turn. Tried again, then again, then again. This road has 3 lanes going in each direction and I am on the left lane.

Hazard lights go on and I called 911. I figure I have no cover here, I cannot walk out and go to the curb safely. If I can have an officer redirect traffic and maybe push me to the side of the road, that would be ideal. The dispatcher was very courteous and I felt confident she would help me quickly. Very calmly I stated that I am in a disabled vehicle headed eastbound on 347 and I am exactly in the middle of the intersection, exposed to all directions of traffic. Before I can answer her next question I see in the rear view mirror headlights that are approaching fast. The driver showed no signs of slowing down.

Here we go. I realize I cannot leave the car because it would not be safe. I would probably be run over by the next car on the fast lane from the opposite direction of traffic. I cannot drive the vehicle so my best bet is to brace for impact. INCOMING!!!!!! I think to myself: "OK Jimmy, stay loose. Don't hold on to the steering wheel. Don't cover the brake. The emergency brake is on." "AAAAAAHHHHH." BOOM.



"Hey, I am alive! I'm ok, I think." The soft top is open?! My airbags are not deployed. The other driver is OK and just got out of the vehicle. He looks like he is 19 years old. I would estimate he was driving at about 70 mph and was distracted, probably texting. He didn't slam on the brakes, there was no screeching or tire marks. His Mazda sedan stopped on impact. His front end disappeared. Where did it go? Seconds later 4 fire trucks, 5 auxiliary vehicles and two police cars were there. Traffic was stopped. "Are you OK" the kid asked. "Yes, are you OK?" I responded. "My pinky is f#@ked up, but I am OK" he said. I started to console him. He was so nervous. I could tell by his body language that he was scared, shocked and felt guilty. "Dude, thank God you are OK. Don't worry about anything else. It's all good" I said. The firefighters asked if we were ok and if we needed EMS to take care of us. They asked us multiple times.

At this point they asked us to move to the side of the road. I don't have my phone on me. Did it get ejected? I don't think so. How do I let people know I am OK? I asked the kid if I could borrow his phone. He graciously handed me his cell phone. I called my wife, Heather. I only remember her phone and my brother's phone by heart. Who memorized phone numbers anymore? She didn't believe me at first. I guess I was very calm and matter of fact. Let's try this again: "Babe, I don't have my phone, it's probably in the wreck or in the street rubble, I am borrowing the other driver's phone...I am OK." She wanted to come and pick me up.

The female police officer was so courteous and helpful. "Do you have your license, registration and insurance card?"

she asked. "Yes, ma'am. Here is my driver's license. My other information is on my phone and also in the glove compartment, but I don't know where the phone is" I said. "May I look in your glove box?" she respectfully asked. I am thinking to myself "may you? OMG, please. Of course you may."

The tow truck driver, introduced himself to me. He saw me looking in the car for the phone. My seat back was reclined all the way. The back seat, almost like a bench, was up and forward. Thank God my boys were not with me. They would have been either crushed or severed, not to mention, our skulls would have collided. I was looking for my phone: under all seats, in every crevice, the back trunk. Nothing. The tow truck driver gave me his flashlight and offered to call my number so we can hear or see it. What a nice guy! As a matter of fact, everyone involved was so respectful, caring, helpful and courteous. Other than the accident, it was a great experience. If I could give a Google review, I would give it 5 stars all the way.

The police officer went above and beyond. She printed a police report and entered all the information. I didn't have to do anything. The insurance company of the other driver will give me a check because the car was a total loss. Heather came over and was eager to find my phone. Do you know where it was? In a crevice of the wrinkled trunk gate. OK time to go home. I gave the other driver a NY hand shake and a bro hug and Heather and I went home.

As I reflect on this I realize our mortality and our opportunity in life. It should have ended for me Monday night. I don't see it as cheating death but rather emphasizing life. Arguably one of the best experiences of my life. It is nothing short of a miracle that I walked out of that wreck with nothing but a few bruised ribs and a

swollen elbow. When my life flashed before my eyes staring at the headlights, I was accepting what my fate would be. I wasn't scared. When I was younger I was scared to die; the fear of the unknown and the loss of senses: you can't hear, see, taste or feel anything. Don't get me wrong, I do not have a death wish but I feel like I live my life to the absolute fullest every day.

Now back to logistics. In fractions of a second I made some decisions. My car has a manual transmission. The emergency brake engages the rear wheels. By me not applying the brake pedal, I would allow the impact to lift the back of the car resulting in the front tires to move the car forward enough until the back tires reach the ground. Not grabbing the steering wheel would allow the car to hopefully go straight and not onto oncoming traffic. It would also prevent my arms and hands from breaking. Keeping my body nimble and not tight would also give me the best chance of survival and minimize serious injuries. I loved that Jeep Wrangler. It was a rough ride, it was not luxurious, it wasn't fast or fancy. We had great memories and it served us well for 11 years. It was rugged and made out of metal. That Jeep saved my life on Monday.

What is my message today? Be aware of distracted driving. Keep your head on a swivel. Watch your 6 o'clock. Don't be distracted. There is a reason that there is no music radio in a cockpit of an airplane. Don't text and drive. Don't drive when tired or sleepy. Don't drink and drive. Don't smoke and drive. Stay alert. Just drive. Scan those mirrors often. Try to predict what the other guy is going to do. Lastly, live life to the fullest as if there is no tomorrow. I love you all. ✨

Jimmy Kilimitzoglou, DDS is the owner of ESI Healthy Dentistry, Smithtown, NY, (631) 979-7991. dental@esihealthydentistry.com www.esihealthydentistry.com



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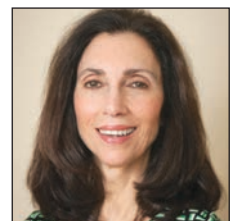
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Albert R O'Connell III, LCSW, CASAC is a practicing Psychotherapist/Hypnotherapist with over 30 years experience in the field of mental health. Founder of **The Hamptons Method**, a combination of strategic therapy, neuro-linguistic programming, hypno-therapy and brainwave entrainment.

Mr. O'Connell is available for individual, group and corporate sessions. He also hosts a monthly podcast 'Transformation Tuesdays' in addition to group programs at Stony Brook Southampton Hospital's Ed & Phyllis Davis Wellness Institute.

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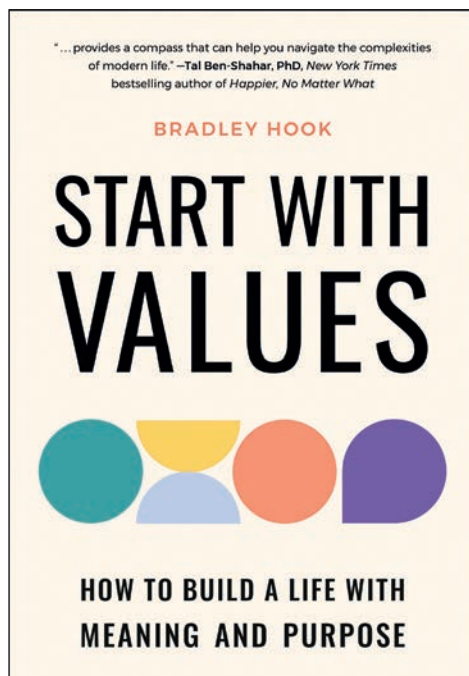
BOOK REVIEWS

& PRODUCTS

START WITH VALUES

How to Build a Life with Meaning and Purpose

by Bradely Hook
startwithvalues.com



In a world filled with distractions and disorder, identifying and aligning with our core values is more critical than ever. Whether it's setting goals, establishing boundaries, or making crucial decisions, our values empower us to remain true to our innermost selves when faced with life's greatest challenges. Through introspective exercises, insightful anecdotes, and practical strategies, *Start With Values* empowers you to clarify what truly matters to you, helping you make decisions that resonate with your authentic self. Whether you're seeking greater fulfillment in your personal life or a clearer purpose in your career, *Start With Values* offers essential tools to cultivate a life grounded in your unique values. *Start With Values* unpacks the extraordinary impact of values in our lives and sets you on a journey to live with authenticity, courage, and passion. More than a guide, this book is the perfect companion for anyone seeking to enhance their well-being, resilience, and relationships.

HOODWINKED

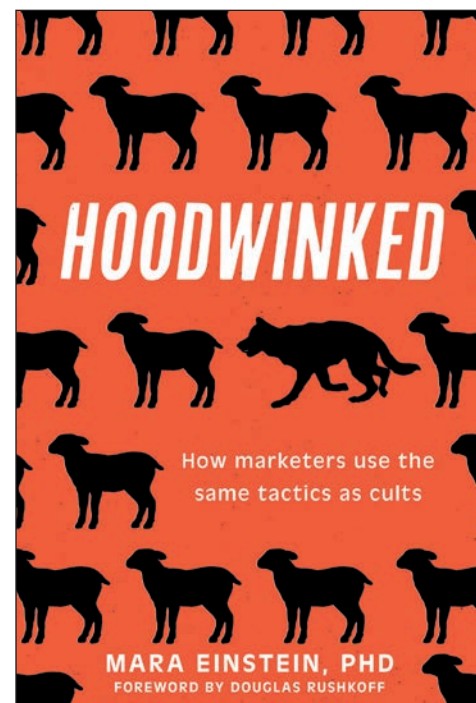
How Marketers Use the Same Tactics as Cults

by Dr. Mara Einstein, PhD

What makes the cult marketing vortex so attractive to otherwise smart people,

and how does online manipulation render us victim to the dangerous whims of digital companies, corporations, and conglomerates? *Hoodwinked* reveals the new world of digital marketing where steady, seductive tactics once used by spiritual charlatans are now applied to sell everything from toothpaste to apps and even political leaders. Big brands are the gods of today's world, and the algorithm is their gospel. Companies have discovered that consumers are lured by sophisticated and deceptive marketing techniques, like sensory marketing, influencers, and AI programmed to induce maximum anxiety—all of which compel us to buy things we don't need or cannot afford. Buoyed by the greed of social media CEOs, marketers use the emotionally manipulative tactics that cults do, including scarcity, an all-encompassing ideology, manufactured FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), and a charismatic leader. Once indoctrinated, consumer-followers become ensnared in the perfect capitalist loop: anxiety-purchase-anxiety-purchase-anxiety-purchase. Then, social media reinforces the cycle of purchase, performance, and panic.

Using real-life cautionary tales, Dr. Einstein narrates how smart, sensible people are sucked into the cult marketing vortex and, importantly, what enables them to get out. Protection comes from understanding the scope of the problem and knowing how to spot the many pervasive tactics used. Combining industry interviews, advertising campaign analy-

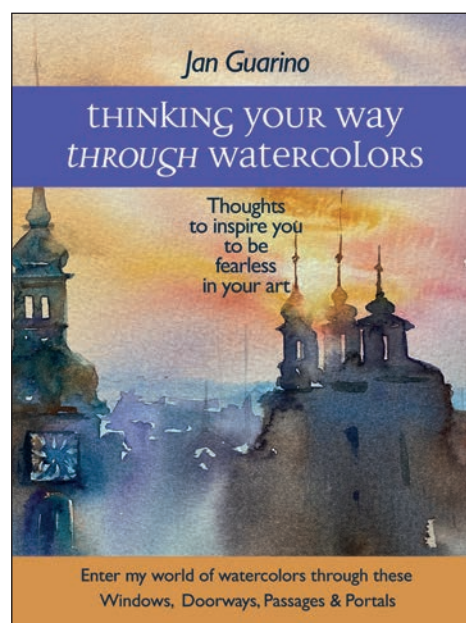


sis, and business and scholarly research, *Hoodwinked* offers an insider's view into how marketers co-opt our emotions in the name of corporate profits. Armed with this information, readers can learn to spot cult-inspired marketing so they can decide how, or if, they should engage with it.

THINKING YOUR WAY THROUGH WATERCOLORS

Thoughts to inspire you to be fearless in your art

by Jan Guarino
JanGuarinoFineArt.com



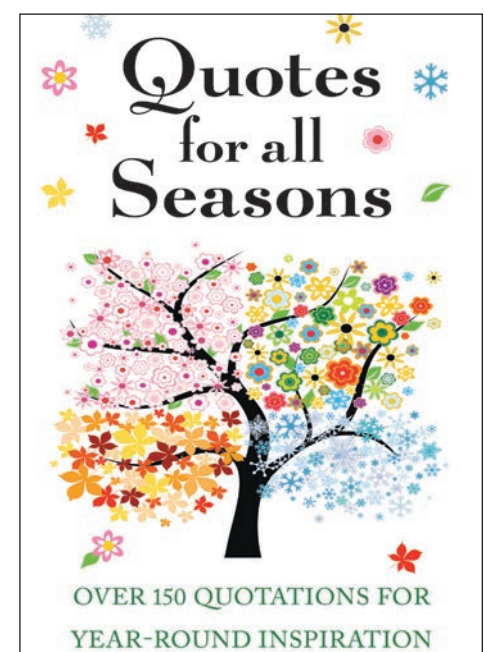
Everyone who has picked up Creations Magazine since its inception 38 years ago, is familiar with Jan Guarino's work. Jan's watercolors often grace our covers, and always beautify our Poetry page. This reviewer could not have described Jan's book any more simply and clearly than the author's very own opening comments:

– If you paint in watercolors, this book is for you.
– If you've never painted in watercolors because you've been afraid, this book is for you.
– If you work in other mediums because there are universal truths in art, parts of this book are for you
– If you are not an artist but appreciate art, this book is for you.
– If you want to get inside the head of an artist to understand more of what happens in the process of creation, this book is for you.

Economical writing with double-spaced presentation makes for an effortless read. Featuring Jan's artwork on each and every 8 1/2 x 11 page, you'll want to keep this dazzling collection in full view as a coffee table book, so as to delight the eye as needed.

QUOTES FOR ALL SEASONS

by Jackie Corley
www.hatherleighpress.com



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POETRY

Time Alone

by Dr. Seena Axel, Delray Beach, FL

Some time alone
to hear my thoughts,
to feel my emotions,
to reconnect with my own rhythm,
to embrace my own being.
An elixir to the soul.

The absence of worry about another.
The fear removed of care-taking
someone else's health and well-being.
The thinking of other first and foremost,
gone for a few short days and nights,
balm to a weary heart and body.

Time to feel the pain of loss,
as well as the pleasures of life.
Grief revealed and gratitude profound.
Tears flow from twin rivers merging into one.
I welcome myself home
in time alone.

See You in Winter

by Kira Velella, Nassau County, NY

I want to see you in winter,
as the oak and the maple,
now gnarled and vulnerable,
show themselves.

Out from under green leafiness
of sunnier times,
it's a relief to see your scars next to mine.

I want to love you thoroughly,
which means when you're unholy,
which means when your beauty's worn off.

Bare your teeth to me,
show me who you can be
when the door's closed and the light has gone.

In the longest season,
monochrome backdrop contrasts
your rust, and your deep, rich earth tones.

Underneath frozen topsoil,
let me know you deeper.
I want to see you in winter
when your bones show.

Haiku

by David Frieman
Huntington Station, NY

as snow covers all
breathe in the unique silence
with every breath

Rabbit Hole

by Marc Livanos, Rockville Centre NY

Nature's spectacle is not in tweets
sucking down your algorithm
luring you back with push notifications
robbing you of real growth.

Trolling hateful threads
or hypnotic TikToc posts
leaves you drained
skews your perspective.

Put the phone down
look around
stuff yourself with
finishing needed goals.

Life's precious moments
sprout sacred paths
suffused with spirituality.

Unplug!

Suspended in Time

by Seana Ankers, Warrenton, VA

Swirling colors envelop my mind,
Covering my face and then expanding outward.
Or was the sensation coming towards me
and entering my soul?
Coursing through me as pure energy,
Awakening my mind and every fiber of my being.

Where does it start, and where does it end?
Did it start with you,
breaking through my self-made walls
and vulnerabilities?
Did it come from within me
and simply refract off of you?
Or was it an alchemical reaction,
joining both in one sacred moment?
A gift from the Gods themselves.
Words do not exist to capture it.
It must be experienced.
It must be breathed.
It must be felt from within
and suspended in time.

For in that moment, time stopped.
We no longer existed as individuals.
We were the world, and the world was us.
We captured all the colors of the rainbow
and felt their power.
Our frequencies danced with those of the world,
Vibrating on to eternity
and slipping back into our souls,
Just as time began again.

Watercolors by
Jan Guarino
JanGuarinoFineArt.com

It is difficult to get the news from poetry, yet men die miserably every day for lack of what is found there.

– From *Asphodel that Greeny Flower*



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ONGOING EVENTS

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for healing and personal transformation. Meditation, drumming, journeying with Irene Siegel. 7:30pm, Huntington. Call for info and registration, (631) 547-5433, DrlreneSiegel.com. Now offered Online. (see ad p.4)

TRANSMISSION MEDITATION offers an unparalleled opportunity to serve humanity in a simple yet very potent manner. By participating in this unique form of group meditation, you assist the Masters of Wisdom in the healing and transformation of the world, accelerating your own spiritual evolution in the process. 6:30pm. Call 516-791-1485 for more info and location in Valley Stream.

TUESDAYS

PSYCHIC PALM/TAROT/MEDIUM

READINGS by Roni Todd. Private Readings in Roni's Psychic Sanctuary. Tuesday or Wednesday by appointment only. Call 516-889-3732.

TRANSFORMATION TUESDAYS

with Albert R. O'Connell, III, LCSW CASAC
For info call 631-903-0910 or visit
TheHamptonsMethod.com. (see ad p.3)

WEDNESDAYS

TRANSMISSION MEDITATION – offers an unparalleled opportunity to serve humanity in a simple yet very potent manner. By participating in this unique form of group meditation, you assist the Masters of Wisdom in the healing and transformation of the world, accelerating your own spiritual evolution in the process. 7:00PM. Call 718-951-7295 for more info and location in Brooklyn.

THURSDAYS

PSYCHIC PALM/TAROT READINGS

by Roni Todd at A Time for Karma,
14 S. Village Ave., RVC, NY. 1-6pm.
(516) 889-3732.

SPECIAL EVENTS

FEBRUARY 21

PSYCHIC CIRCLE Eyes of Learning,
Levittown Hall, Hicksville, NY,
Friday, 8:00-10 PM. Members: \$15.00,
Non-members: \$20.00. eyesoflearning.org

FEBRUARY 26

PALMISTRY WORKSHOP

with Roni Todd
Eyes of Learning, Levittown Hall,
Hicksville, NY, Wednesday, 7:30PM.
eyesoflearning.org

MARCH 26

GHOSTS & GIGGLES

with Angela LaRosa & Kristen Tinsley,
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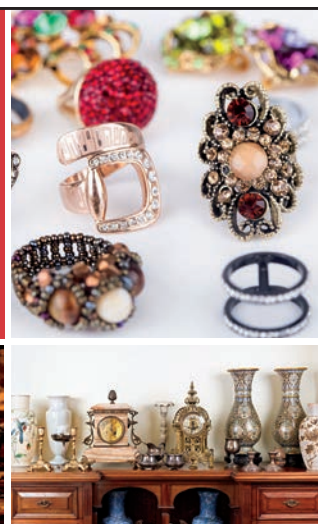
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BOOKS

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UNVEILING CHRISTIANITY – FREE ILLUSTRATED 17-CHAPTER ONLINE BOOK provides answers to who invented original sin, who wrote the four gospels, who decided “Jesus died for our sins,” “the origin of hell,” healing from toxic theology and more. Available on **BeAwake.com** (see ad p.13)

THE HERBAL DOG – HOLISTIC CANINE HERBALISM, Applications and Practice by Rita Hogan, C.H. “An informative and sometimes eye-opening examination of natural remedies for helping your dog.” ISBN 978-1644119594 www.InnerTraditions.com (see ad p.5)

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~ Alan Cohen



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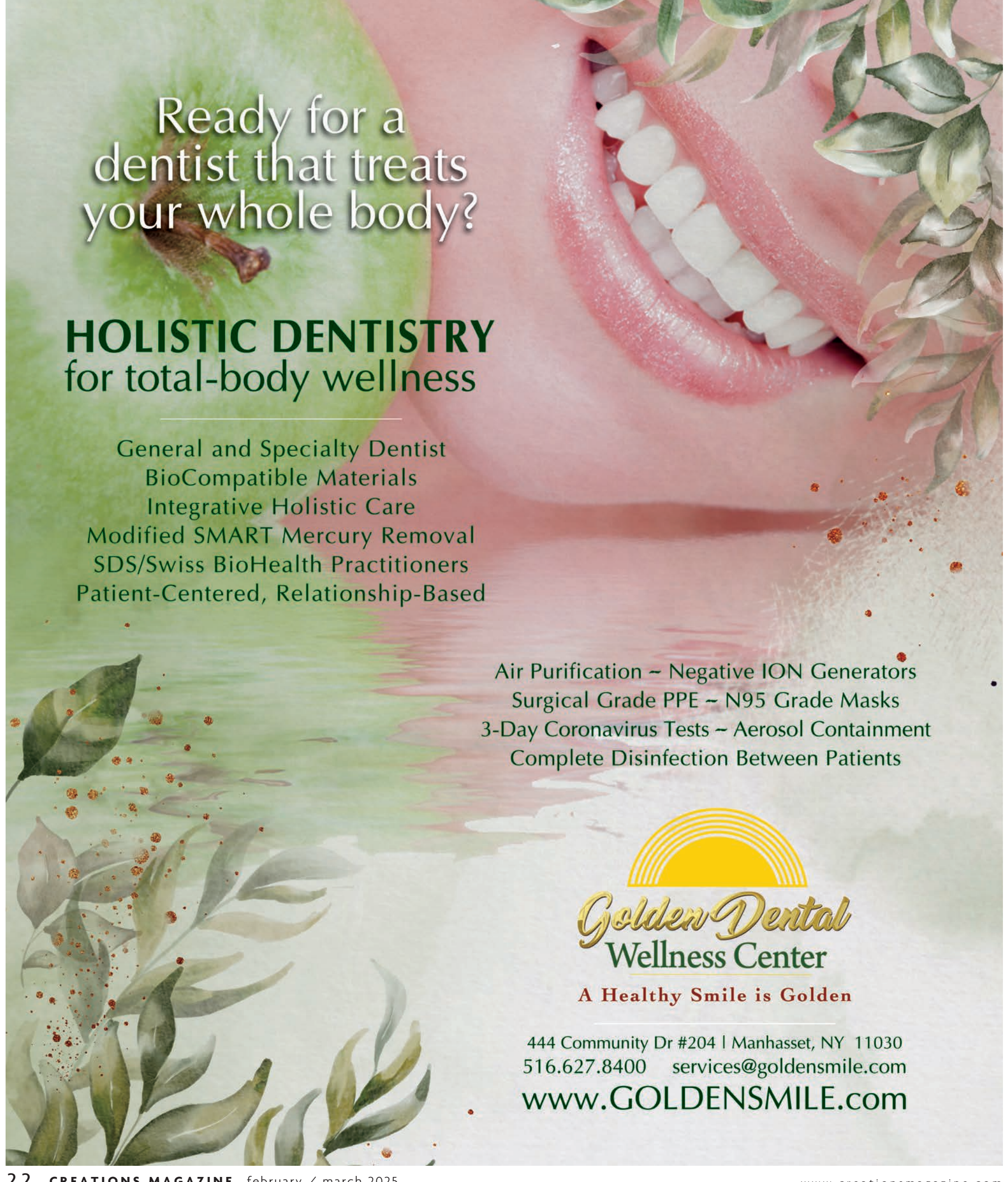
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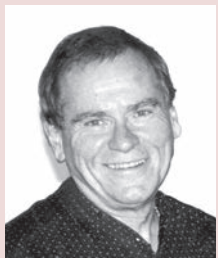
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