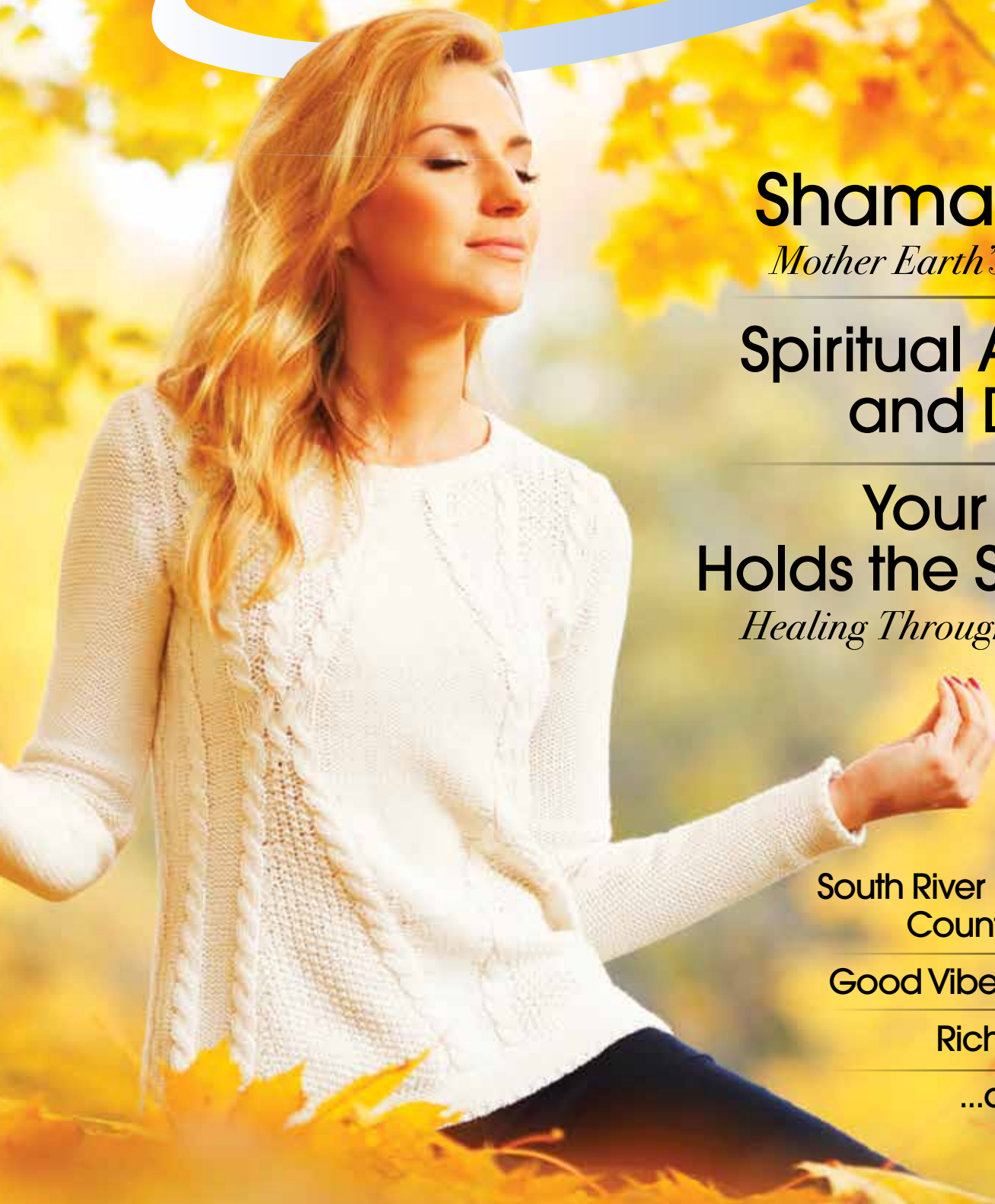


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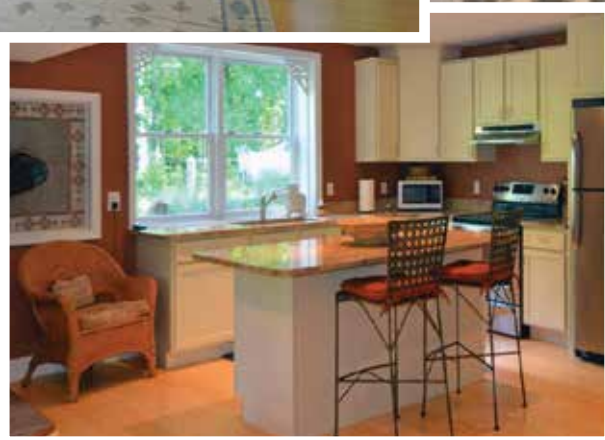
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NEXT ISSUE – JANUARY 2017



“Alternative lifestyle” ... “Alternative belief system” ... “Alternative medicine”

When I grab my trusty old and well-worn *Webster’s Dictionary* and look up the word *alternative*, I find ... “a choice limited to one of two or more possibilities.” I think this word is very important to the era we find ourselves in today.

Within my lifetime, those of us who began a more spiritual path questioned the conventional ways of living, believing, and healing. We thought of ourselves as well outside the mainstream and subject to ridicule if we expressed those parts of our journeys. It was always a thrill to find someone that knew about energy work or reincarnation or near-death experiences, etc., but they seemed to be few and far between. This entire shift in consciousness took on the appropriate title of *New Age*. However, this term quickly became clouded by negative connotations that brought derision from those who embraced only conventional religions and the scientific medical practices of the previous 100 years. Still, amazingly the numbers of people making the shift away from these conventions grew exponentially, as it was the right time for humanity to do so.

As we grew in numbers, the information we sought became more plentiful through books and magazines, seminars and teachers, healers and practitioners. Suddenly, the phrase *New Age* lost its negativity and is now rarely heard. When used it is respected and referred to with honor, such as with *New Age Christians*. In its place, came the word “*alternative*.” Though not bringing the negativity of the earlier designation, it still implied something outside of the standard. We’ve all used it and found comfort in it in some sort of tribal way. Now it is time for that to change.

Only 50–60 years ago acupuncture would have been considered voodoo. Energy healing for emotional and physical ailments was something out of a sci-fi movie. Meditation was something done in Asia. Insistence on organic and sustainable food took a backseat to frozen dinners. The concept that we are all connected and part of one consciousness, that we live many lifetimes and existences, was only beginning to register as *Truth*. Now, look around ... all of that is not *alternative* any longer, it’s mainstream and it’s growing in acceptance as such.

For us to consider ourselves as choosing an *alternative* is no longer valid. We are now part of a shifting *norm*, returning to the way things once were. Hopefully, this shift benefits everyone and everything—we’re all in this together.

May you know Peace.

Ray

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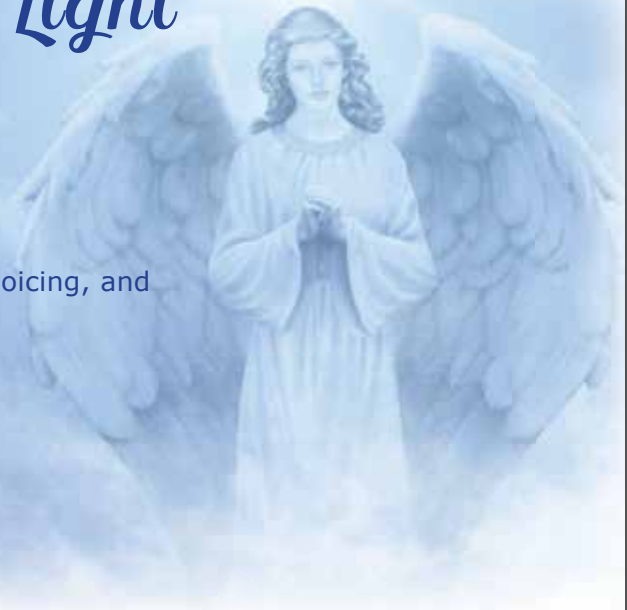
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BY CATHY EGAN

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This Little Light of Mine

TRAVELING SPIRITUAL PATHWAYS

BY NICKI PEASLEY



When we stand in the light of awareness, we cannot ignore our shadow. I love Love. And I've spent my life creating circles of love. Something magical happens when people come together in a circle. There is a spirituality of connection to self and other that ultimately translates to the world and beyond. Connection, after all, is our deepest human value. Born with a simple and innate desire for authentic relationship, we *are* because we belong. That's why we come to the circle. To see and be seen. To give and receive. To teach and to learn.

A while ago, I discovered the African philosophy of Ubuntu, which essentially means, *we are, each of us, brilliantly unique, and we are ONE*. I designed a story circle experience for children around this idea of celebrating difference and then seeing beyond it. And each time I tell the story, I can feel my bones and heart and spirit expanding to more fully hold the paradox of separation and oneness. I really *get* it in these sacred moments of connection, sitting in these perfect circles of children.

I am because we are.

But recently I've come to notice that my *we* is too much, well, like me. My people look like me, talk like me, play like me, pray like me, and endure the same struggles as I do. I am validated and liberated in these circles that mirror my experience. I love *my people*. They are my home.

Yet, I am unsettled. Where is the difference in my life? Where is the spirit of Ubuntu?

And then ashamed... Am I a discriminator?

In my desperate quest for answers, I listened to an *On Being* podcast featuring Mahzarin Banaji, author of *Blindspot, Hidden Biases of Good People*. Banaji and a team of researchers formed Project Implicit to design a test

that measures attitudes and beliefs that people may be unwilling or unable to report (implicit.harvard.edu). With shaky hands, I took the test and my fears were confirmed. I am biased.

And I am a good person. I take full responsibility for this shadow of mine and I recognize the inevitability of it. We are steeped in a culture of bias everyday. And we, as humans, crave the safety in likeness and the comfort in categories.

However, we are living during a time that begs us to expand our circles so that they reflect the diversity of our world. A time to bring our unconscious biases to the surface and explore them with profound curiosity and unyielding compassion. A time to ask real questions and to immerse ourselves in the discomfort that comes with different answers.

We must realize that while difference, in the spiritual sense, is an illusion, it is not one to be brushed aside as such while we are on this earthly plane. Difference creates disequilibrium, the state in which real understanding and sustainable soul growth happens. Difference implores us to widen our lens and love bigger. When we deny the other, we deny ourselves.

To be a better *me*, I need a bigger *we*.

But how? How can we shift from fear to fascination of this complex world of difference?

One connection, one relationship, one circle at a time.

In my early 20s, I took a class entitled, "A Multicultural Perspective on Poverty." Paired with an impoverished, minority senior citizen, our assignment was to complete an oral history of this stranger's life. For me and my partner Venny, this semester-long project turned into a decade-long friendship. It was an honor to share the oral history we created together at his funeral.

Initially, I approached this assignment with my bleeding liberal heart agenda to help this *poor* man. As the newest mission on my crusade to save the world, I bought him healthy food, vacuumed his apartment, and made sure he had clean clothes. But one day, I realized that all my *do-gooding* was just a way to avoid my discomfort. To avoid the clumsy miscommunication and awkward overcompensation that comes from white guilt. And so I stopped ... and Venny smiled.

In our circle of two, I listened to Venny's stories in a way I had never listened before. He had a way of speaking to my heart that broke down the walls of gender, age, race, and socioeconomic difference. It was one of the most raw and soul-expanding experiences of my life. It was Ubuntu in its purest form.

Venny and I did not ignore our difference; we explored it. In the safe space of our merged hearts, we talked about stereotypes and judgment. Venny helped me acknowledge my white privilege, but did not allow me to rest in the shame of it. Together, we discovered the depth of reciprocity, equality, and mutuality in the human relationship. And we learned to laugh at the absurdity and illusion of the earthly experience.

What must people think, we mused, of this little blonde girl and this old, silver haired African-American man sitting at a café together—her working obsessively on a school project, him taking swigs out of a bottle of Banana Mad Dog 20/20? (This wine-based flavored beverage was a good source of potassium, he would argue.) How ridiculously wonderful.

Over time, our circle of two expanded to include our families. We spent holidays together, breaking bread and sharing stories. We learned to see beyond form—beyond our physicality, our roles, our positions in life. To see with the eyes of Spirit and to love a little bigger.

I am proud to be a light worker who longs for a little more Heaven, a little more Ubuntu, on Earth. But I am not naive. I recognize the magnitude and complexity of the human struggle to conquer fear and remember Love. I am grateful, beyond words, for places like Richmond Hill (featured in the “Piedmont” section of this issue) that work to rebuild the broken systems that perpetuate division in our communities. While I may not be equipped with the knowledge and skill to be part of the solution, I am equipped with the heart. What may look like *do-gooding* actions on my part are actually intentional efforts to form authentic relationships with different people. And like all worthwhile actions, mine start with my own self-awareness and desire to change.

We can build small bridges across difference everyday when we make connection a priority. It could be as simple as looking into the eyes of the person behind us in the grocery store line and inquiring about their day

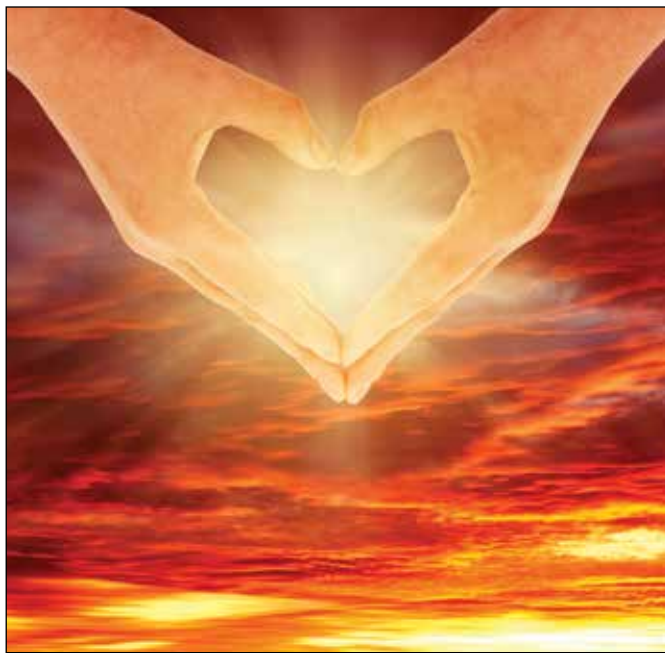
because we *really* want to know. While seeing with the eyes of Spirit is simple, it's not easy. It takes a lot of practice ... and self-compassion.

Recently, in my thirst for more Ubuntu my life, I returned to the church that Venny and I attended together a couple times. Ebenezer Baptist Church is a historic African-American church in the heart of downtown Richmond. This is a community of rich fellowship, bold intention, and expansive joy.

One of a handful of white faces in attendance that day, I allowed the discomfort to wash over me like a prayer. This is the stuff that transforms us. As the minister spoke of the “the unforgettable beat of our collective heart,” I could feel Venny beside me, smiling his toothless grin. With that collective heartbeat pounding in my chest, I took the microphone to introduce myself as a returning visitor from decades ago. There was a pause—that was God—and then the passing of the peace. “Welcome Sister,” I heard over and over again. A sacred song that transcended difference for a moment of radical Love. Ubuntu.

When we let love live between us, we organically expand our circles. One connection at a time.

As Venny reads this over my shoulder, I can hear him whisper his signature mantra to my heart, “This is true, Lady. Yes, this is true.” ☺



An educator by trade, Nicki Peasley is a student and storyteller of life and a teacher of love, both inside and outside of the classroom. She lives in Richmond with her husband, three children, and their chocolate lab, George Bailey.

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WHOLE LIVING

Connecting with the Earth

BY KRISTA AND ROB RAHM

Preparing For Cold And Flu Season

Our family uses herbal medicine as our primary health care. We get sick a few times a year, but it is rare that it knocks us down to a nonfunctional state. Over time people began asking for our secret to staying healthy. Truthfully, it all begins with our view on everyday health and wellness more than it does our view on sick-care routines.

Our intention in writing this column on nutritional and herbal care for colds and flu is to give some simple, safe, and healthy ideas for everyday living, along with some simple remedies to help you have fewer illnesses with shorter durations. Our Forrest Green Farm website (www.forrestgreenfarm.com) offers fully detailed

workshops on Preparing For Cold & Flu Season with more detail on the use of herbal treatments for cold and flu symptoms, and complications associated with both.

The average healthy adult may get sick 2–3 times a year. If you get sick more than that, then it is definitely time to take a closer look at your eating habits and lifestyle. Please remember that children usually get sick more often than adults. This is how they build immune systems that become stronger.

So, what are colds and flu? They are infections of the upper respiratory tract. Areas most affected are the eyes, nose, throat, and head. Colds are short-lived viral infections (usually 2-3 days) with symptoms of runny nose, sore throat, coughs, and mild aches. The flu comes on suddenly with harsh coughing, fever, body aches, extreme fatigue, and sometimes a sore throat. It lasts seven days to a couple of weeks. Pneumonia is a complication of the flu and can be deadly.

We “catch” a cold when conditions in our bodies are right for that virus to survive and thrive. Both colds and the flu are signs from your body that something in your system is out of balance. The best defense against a cold or flu is to ensure that all your body systems are operating at their optimum levels, especially the immune system. We need to make an extra effort to stay nourished by eating a healthy diet, getting proper exercise (yes, even when it is cold outside), embracing the darker times with some added rest, and managing our stress levels (yes, even at the holidays). In the fall, as the wheel of the year is turning and our energy wanes with the diminishing sunlight, many

people find themselves eating heavier and less healthy meals. They supplement with caffeine for energy (which is false energy), get less rest, less exercise, and feel stressed out about their ability to keep up with expectations for the holidays ahead. This is a recipe for sickness.

Here are a few basic food and nutritional boosts that can start your journey to maintaining health:

- Eat a rainbow diet full of fruits and vegetables. Avoid sugary foods and an excess of starchy breads and pastas.
- Take a Vitamin D3 supplement as it plays a vital role in our immune system function. For many, Vitamin D levels fall below optimum levels during the winter months.
- Consume bone broths often because they are nutrient dense, healing, and nourishing. We have some recipes and more information about bone broth benefits as well as herbs that you can add to your broth for medicinal support on our website under “RECIPES.”



- Drink nourishing herbal tea infusions made with herbs that are known to be rich in vitamins and minerals such as nettle, oatstraw, raspberry leaf, red clover, burdock root, and horsetail. Use dried herbal plant material, (1 tablespoon to 1 cup of water) and steep for a long period of time (around 4 hours or overnight). This allows the maximum extraction of vitamins and minerals in a form that our bodies recognize and more easily assimilate than a synthetic vitamin.
- Eat fresh garlic! Garlic contains a compound called allicin, which has potent medicinal properties. Studies prove garlic's ability to reduce the duration of the common cold. It is activated when freshly peeled garlic comes into contact with oxygen. To create an old-timey tonic that will ward off colds and keep circulatory systems healthy, crush some garlic cloves, cover them with some apple cider vinegar and a little

raw honey, and let it infuse for around 1 hour. The tonic should then be stored in the refrigerator for long-term use. Typically, one would consume 1 or 2 tablespoons daily.

Here are some herbs for prevention and at early onset of cold and flu symptoms:

- **Elderberry** (*Sambucus nigra*, *S. Canadensis*) is quickly becoming one of the most well-known herbal remedies for colds and flu. It is a superb antiviral herb that stimulates the immune system. (See our recipe in Krista's Korner for making your own elderberry elixir or syrup.) Take elderberry syrup or elixir as a preventative if you have been exposed to people with illness or if you begin to feel symptoms yourself.
- **Ginger** is an herb with a long history for the treatment of colds and flu and for strong antibacterial properties against food-borne pathogens. It is gentle enough to curb nausea and upset stomach/vomiting. Ginger is a stimulating diaphoretic that warms the core while promoting outward circulation to pull excessive heat out of the body. For upper respiratory infections, make ginger tea from the fresh or dried root, and add a little lemon and honey to the tea. Adding ginger into your daily cooking is a great way to ward off illness and add great flavor to your cooking.
- **Echinacea** (*Echinacea* spp.) is an herb for use at the first sign of infections because it is an excellent immune stimulant. It can be a wonderful ally in boosting the white blood cell count and supporting the immune system to better fight off infection in the body. There are many scientific studies that boast the use of Echinacea against staph and strep-type infections. We recommend taking Echinacea in tea or tincture form (not capsules). Because Echinacea is an immune stimulant, it is contraindicated for those with autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, diabetes, AIDS, multiple sclerosis, Crohn's disease, and other compromised immune system diseases. They would be better to try using astragalus root.
- **Astragalus Root** (*Astragalus membranaceus*) is an immune enhancer, restorative, adaptogen, and antiviral, which enhances lung and spleen function, and also helps digestion. It is easy to use. Add to soup broths or make as an infusion or tea. It will help repair a depressed or damaged immune system with little to no side effects.

There are many great medicinal herbs to use for the relief of symptoms such as coughing, fever, ear infection, and all the many nuisances that come with colds and flus. We cannot possibly cover them all in this column. When beginning to use herbs on a medicinal level, consult a local herbalist or health food store for help in transitioning to using herbs as your healthcare.

Don't forget the power of preventative medicine! Taking care of your body, keeping it in balance with the proper nutrition, exercise, and rest are vital in your ability to ward off colds and flu or to quickly recover should you be afflicted with an ailment. ☺

This information has not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration and is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. We recommend that you consult with a qualified healthcare practitioner before using herbal products, particularly if you are pregnant, nursing, or on any medications.

Krista's Korner Elderberry Elixir (long shelf)

- Fill a mason jar 1/4 way full with ripe elderberries (they can be dried).
- Next, cover the elderberries with raw honey to the half-way point of your jar and stir well.
- After it is well mixed, fill the remainder of the jar with 80-proof brandy.
- Store on counter and shake daily.
- After six weeks, strain off the berries, and it can be stored in the refrigerator or at room temperature (brandy acts as a preservative).

Elderberry Syrup

- Place 1 cup dried or up to 2 cups fresh ripe elderberries in 6 cups of water in a saucepan.
- Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 30 minutes.
- Smash the berries to release remaining juice and strain the mixture.
- Allow liquid to cool and stir in 2 cups of raw honey.
- Will last for about 2 months stored in the refrigerator.



DOSAGE: Take a tablespoon daily to ward off illnesses or a teaspoon every 2–3 hours while sick. For children under two, do not give product with honey without consulting your physician.



Krista and Rob Rahm purchased a farm in Louisa, Virginia, in 1992. After many years of learning to live off of the land, learning and using herbal medicine as their primary health care, and making farming their full-time occupation, the

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Dreaming

WITH

Bobbie Ann

BY BOBBIE ANN PIMM



The following is excerpted from Chapter 3 of my book, *Notes From a Dreamer...on Dreaming*.

Types of Dreams

I believe that most of the dreams we have fall into three categories:

- **Category 1** – our unconscious’s way of dealing with our everyday problems, repressed memories/emotions and daily stimuli or “day residue.”
- **Category 2** – spiritual or personal growth dreams that provide clues or warnings about the path we are on in life and what we are doing wrong or right.
- **Category 3** – psychic or “psi” dreams such as precognitive dreams.

You may have heard of another type of dream called a lucid dream. Lucid dreams are dreams in which the dreamer becomes aware that they are dreaming while dreaming. There can be many levels of lucidity—from pre-lucid (questioning if you are dreaming, but are not fully aware of it); to lucid, with no control—you know you are dreaming but can’t do anything about it; to fully lucid—you know you are dreaming and can control what happens in the dream. The reason I do not include lucid dreams in my categories is because dreams can fall into each of these categories whether they are lucid or non-lucid dreams. I, myself, am not a frequent lucid dreamer. I have had only a handful of dreams in which I knew I was dreaming—and then immediately woke up.

The majority of dreams fall into Category 1. Most of our dreams are a result of the mind processing all the leftover stimuli of the day, often referred to as ‘day residue’—making connections to what it knows or previously experienced. If there is no special feeling or aspect to the dream, chances are it is a Category 1 dream. Don’t underestimate these “ordinary” dreams, they often

have a lot to teach you. (*I’ll discuss ‘day residue’ in more detail in a future column.*)

Dreams that fall into the other two categories will usually leave you with a special impression—it may be more vivid or colorful; or you may hear or see or feel something “different” about these dreams; you may have a special “guide” with you; there may be information that you “know” or are aware of that isn’t expressly revealed in the dream; or you may just “know” the dream is special. I can’t tell you how you will experience and identify these dreams because we are different people with different life experiences. After a while, you will learn to trust yourself and your intuition in identifying these dreams.

Category 2 dreams will usually be dreams about your spiritual or personal development and you usually can easily identify at least one symbol as being spiritual or growth related. Carl Jung referred to these dreams as “big dreams” as they carried a message that was of utmost importance to the dreamer’s life or life goal. These dreams usually speak loudly and clearly, leaving you with a feeling of awe that lasts well into the day or sometimes even years. If you have a dream that you can remember in vivid detail from many years ago, it is probably a “big dream” and should be explored further.

Category 3 dreams cover many different types of dreams including precognitive (prophetic) dreams, mutual dreams, dreams of past lives, finding lost or missing items in your dreams, dreams communicating with loved ones that have passed, and any other dreams involving intuition or psychic abilities. These dreams, too, will often take on a special feeling about them that you will learn to identify.

I have been in contact with several people who have prophetic dreams all the time and want to know how to stop having them, or how to prevent what they dream from happening. The answer, as far as I can determine, is that you can’t do either.

You might also keep in mind that when one of your dreams that you believe is prophetic doesn’t come true it



Most of our dreams are a result of the mind processing all the leftover stimuli of the day, often referred to as ‘day residue.’

doesn't necessarily mean that you were wrong. Remember the future has not happened yet and your dream may have only been one of several possible outcomes. (*Tip: Dream journaling on a regular basis will help you identify and confirm your precognitive dreams.*)

Recurring Dreams and Nightmares

At one time or another most people have had either a recurring dream or a nightmare—or both (nightmares are often recurring.) Most recurring dreams and nightmares will fall under Category 1, though they certainly can be Category 2 or 3 dreams. I suggest starting the exploration of your dreams with a recurring dream or nightmare. I do so for two reasons: 1) you will probably remember many details easily; and 2) you have these dreams because your unconscious is really trying to bring something important to your attention.

Dreamworking Technique

In her book, *The Natural Artistry of Dreams*, Jill Mellick suggests writing a ‘list poem.’ No poetic talent is required as it is as simple as the name implies. To create the poem, make a list of six to ten nouns and their accompanying adjectives selected from one or more dreams. Don't censor or edit your choices. List the words in whatever order your nonrational mind decides. Add the words

“I am” to the beginning of some, or all, of the lines. When you are finished, read the poem out loud. You may be surprised at the emotional impact of connecting “I am” to inanimate objects. The adjectives you use can be very revealing to how you feel or think about yourself and your life. What do you feel as you read it? When do you feel this way in waking life? Some lines may have more impact on you than others. Which line or lines speak to you loudest? Try relating the lines in the poem to some aspect of yourself or your life. Do you agree with what the poem is saying? Why do you agree or disagree? Having strong feelings either way is a sign that further exploration would be beneficial. Your emotional response may be telling you that there is room for improvement or change within yourself or some aspect of your life.

If you have a dream you would like to share, please send it to awareness@bobbieann.net. ☺



Bobbie Ann Pimm lives in Albemarle County. She is a dream educator and the author of Notes from a Dreamer...on Dreaming: A Personal Journey in Dream Interpretation, available at createspace.com (paperback) and Amazon.com (paperback and Kindle). She is also a consultant for dreamscloud.com and a member of the International Association for the Study of Dreams (www.asdreams.org).

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your body HOLDS THE *Secret*

BY JOCELYN AUDET



Even something as simple as the way you hold your head when you look at another person can hold clues to your unconscious beliefs about yourself and the world.

The history of every experience you've had in your lifetime is stored in your body. It is visible in the unique gestures you make, the habitual ways you move your body through space, your patterns of muscle tension,

and even the way you experience emotions internally. Are you ever surprised that you keep doing the same things over and over again in your life—maybe getting into the same kinds of relationships, jobs, or circumstances, even though you consciously don't want to? Or perhaps you've been trying to accomplish something creative, or change your eating habits, and something inside you prevents it, sabotaging your best efforts. You might even



some progress, yet we often still don't have the desired outcomes.

Why does this happen? The answer to this perplexing question is finally being revealed in the new field of somatic, or body-centered, therapies.

“The history of every experience you’ve had in your lifetime is stored in your body”

Right now we are in the midst of a revolution in understanding the way we are put together as human beings. The highly intellectual and mind-oriented culture we are a part of is finally turning toward *the body*—or *the soma*—as it never has before in modern times. We now hear terms like *embodiment* and *mind-body healing* regularly. Many new and novel methods of healing are focusing on the body to heal our disconnected sense of self, in relationship to ourselves and to others, and on a broader scale, the earth we live on. There is a growing recognition that the way we have lived in western culture for many centuries has been divorced from the deepest aspect of our nature—our physical embodiment—the flesh and blood and sinew and cells that carry us in this life from birth to death.

If we turn mindfully toward our *present moment* bodily experience we can contact all that is stored in our body. This is much more direct (and more powerful) than going back mentally into the memories of the past to try to figure out what is affecting us. Cognitively, most of us know our past already. Or at least we know what is *consciously* available to us. We've thought about it and talked about it. But our bodies hold the knowledge that is not available to us consciously. The beliefs and patterns that operate below the surface, out of sight of the mind, are the ones that often block healing and growth. They are here now even if we don't notice them. With skilled guidance we can access them through things like habitual gestures and postures, and sensations and images, that are familiar to us inside the body.

The body holds the implicit core beliefs we formed early in this lifetime. We must learn to turn to the body's inner wisdom for the true keys to change and healing. Skilled guidance in doing just that is becoming more abundant.

have some insight into why—perhaps a past experience has made you fearful of certain kinds of situations—but your mental understanding just doesn't seem to be enough to make things turn out differently.

Many of us have experienced this. We try all kinds of therapy, make resolutions, journal about what we want to change, even participate in groups that support us in our resolution to do things differently. Perhaps we make

There are many new modalities being created and older ones getting long-deserved recognition for their effectiveness. Some of these are new but well known—like Somatic Experiencing and Yoga for Trauma. And there are others that have been around much longer, such as The Hakomi Method, which is a respected elder in the field of body-centered therapies. The unusual name “Hakomi,” came to the founder Ron Kurtz in a dream. He later found out it is a Hopi Indian word that asks, “How do you stand in relation to these many realms?” or, more simply, “Who are you?”

As an example of this kind of work, in one body-focused session of Hakomi, the practitioner noticed the client always held her head slightly cocked to the side whenever she faced someone talking to her. Both she and the therapist became curious about that habit in her body. The practitioner asked her to let herself gently stay in that posture and mindfully sense into it, studying whatever arose inside her as she did. The client closed her eyes as she held her head in the tilted position. In a few moments a memory came up of holding her head that way as a child to avoid a sudden slap from her mother. She realized that she held this posture of defense with everyone she met because she believed unconsciously that she might be attacked at any moment. With this realization and the gentle guidance of her practitioner she began to compassionately work

with her body’s patterns of fear and defense—she practiced slowly facing directly forward with those she really trusted. Because the expected slap from a long-gone assailant did not come, her body began to relax as she had the experience of being able to face someone with no violence. New neural patterns formed out of a real bodily experience of safety, and old fear-formed neurons were gradually trimmed away. From this simple somatic exercise she felt a release of inner tension that she had not been conscious of carrying her whole life. She was amazed how different and empowering it felt just to look straight ahead, directly into another person’s eyes. Everything became easier for her to do, as the world was no longer seen from a posture of defense and fear.

Your body holds the secret to your integration and growth. My wish is that you are able to travel into the beautiful and luminous depths of the soma, where so much is held in trust for us. There is a transformation and richness there that is worth the journey. ☺



Jocelyn Audet has many decades of study in both spiritual and psychological work. Her greatest fulfillment is helping her clients achieve inner growth and the life they’ve always desired. She lives on a farm with several wise horses and becomes grounded and embodied doing African dance.

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Author in shamanic energy session

SHAMANISM

We are *Mother Earth's* Children

BY RACHEL MANN, PHD

Do you love Mother Earth? Do you feel a deep connection to the plant and tree people, to rocks, stones and mountains, to the waters, animals, the movement of the weather, and the sky? Do you look for inspiration and messages for your life journey in nature? Do you seek deep healing for your own wounds with energy medicine using the rattle, stone, and/or plant medicines? Do you seek out like-minded people who love to drum and circle dance? Have you long collected stones and feathers for their beauty and

wisdom? If the answer is, “yes,” then you are walking a spiritual path in life sometimes called “shamanism.”

For 30 years, I have been a practitioner of eco-spirituality and eco-psychology—a rich and powerful way of being in the world and looking within. Shamanism as it is practiced in the Western world draws, in part, on the wisdom that has been offered to the westernized world by indigenous peoples in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, and/or is rooted in the ancient practices of the peoples of the European continent before Christianization under the

Roman Empire. I myself met my Cherokee teacher, the Venerable Dhyani Ywahoo, (so-called because she is also a recognized teacher in the Tibetan Buddhist Drikung Kagyu and Nyingmapa lineages) in the early '90s. She and others had founded the Peace Village, near Lincoln, Vermont, based on the concept of ancient healing centers that used to be scattered across the Americas. She says these places were available to anyone who needed respite and healing. Even a murderer could come if he or she had the desire to do the hard work of healing and reconciliation with the family of the victim.

My mind and heart were illuminated by the powerful teachings for finding healing and inner balance that Venerable Dhyani offered from an ancient lineage passed down through 27 generations of her ancestors. When I first went to the Peace Village, I came with a love of Mother Earth, which had been with me since childhood. I also wanted to find an enduring inner equilibrium and healing of my childhood wounds. That fateful meeting in the early 1990s with this beautiful Native American woman, one of the first to step out to offer the ancient teachings to non-Natives, led me deep into a study of Native American spirituality and Western shamanism. Eventually, I became a shamanic healer and spiritual teacher of an ancient human system for spiritual and personal exploration and growth called the Medicine Wheel.

Shamanism is a word borrowed from the Tungus people of Siberia by literary writer Mircea Eliade in his book published in the 1950s, entitled *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* to describe their medicine people, *shaman*. Eliade was a controversial figure. Nevertheless, his description of the men and women from across many cultures who went on magical flights to heavenly upper worlds in service of the healing of their people was quickly adopted by scholars of anthropology, history, and religion to describe the medicine people and cultures of indigenous peoples in Asia, Africa, the Americas, and the Pacific Rim. Eliade and these academics were invested in defining and homogenizing very diverse cultural practices of non-Western peoples into one overarching system. However, as I speak of shamanism here, it is important for me, as a shamanic healer and student of Native American spirituality, to

note that when I speak of shamanism, I do not refer to the spiritual and cultural practices of indigenous peoples, but of a practice in the Western world that has been *influenced by* them, which includes many other elements, including understandings from Western psychotherapy and transpersonal psychology. This distinction is important to make, as many indigenous peoples are still fighting for the preservation and integrity of their cultures and the right to call what they do and who they are by the names they choose.



“Shamanism
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and assist
us ... “

Yet it is nevertheless true that Western shamanism has been and continues to be strongly influenced by Native American spirituality. A second, all-important book by John G. Niehardt entitled, *Black Elk Speaks*, was also published in the 1950s. In it, the old Lakota Sioux Holy Man tells the story of his life with a particular emphasis on a great vision of the destruction of his peoples and Mother Earth by the “blue man.” The blue man appeared to be a symbol of the destruction brought by Western civilization to the native peoples and the planet. Black Elk believed the vision was meant to help him restore the culture and dignity of his people who had been under siege, nearly destroyed and put in reservations by the U.S. government in what were called “The Last Indian Wars” of the late 19th century. Black Elk’s great vision inspired an interest in Native American spirituality in the West, and contributed to an already long history of Native Americans seeking to maintain and reclaim their tribal sovereignty and cultural practices.

Around the same time Eliade and Niehardt’s books were released, another controversial figure, Carlos

Castaneda, published his doctoral dissertation for a PhD in anthropology at UCLA called *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge* about his apprenticeship with a Yaqui medicine man living in the Sonoran desert. In later years, Castaneda’s work was debunked as fake (a topic still hotly debated). His stories of his fantastical, imaginal journeys while using the sacred plant medicine San Pedro under the tutelage of Don Juan, however, galvanized the imagination of young hippies opening up to the use of psychedelics as a way to explore new dimensions of consciousness.

“...many indigenous peoples are still fighting for the preservation and integrity of their cultures and the right to call what they do and who they are by the names they choose.”

After meeting Venerable Dhyani, I went on to meet and study with other influential, contemporary Western shamans such as Bradford Keeney and Alberto Villoldo. Keeney, himself a clinical psychologist by training, traveled all over the world to study the “shaking medicine” of indigenous peoples, most notably the Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert in Africa. Villoldo, a medical anthropologist who met and studied with the healers and medicine people across Central and South America for over 20 years, founded one of the biggest shaman training programs in the Western world, the Four Winds Society Healing the Light Body School (www.thefourwinds.com). At the same time, anthropologist Michael Harner established another well-known school; The Foundation for Shamanic Studies was based on a system he developed called “core shamanism.” Core shamanism was based, in part, on his long years of study and his comparison of the ways indigenous peoples from around the world use rhythm and journeying for personal and community healing.

“Shamanism’ is in vogue at present,” says Robert J. Wallis, scholar of religion and author of *Shamans/Neo-Shamans: Ecstasies, Alternative Archaeologies and Contemporary Pagans*. Books falling under the rubric of shamanism continue to be released yearly.

Shamanism in the Western world has also embraced the use of sacred plant medicines such as *ayahuasca*, as a means to heal and open up and explore new dimensions of

personal and collective consciousness. These medicines are not the same as a hallucinogen such as LSD in which a very particular molecule is extracted from the plant with chemicals to be taken recreationally and often at great risk to the individual. In contrast, sacred plants are prepared by a medicine person to retain their organic properties with the specific intent to activate its innate healing properties. These usually nasty-tasting brews then are administered in a sacred and controlled setting so that the patient will garner the greatest benefit to mind, body, and spirit as possible. An excellent book explaining the mystery and magic of *ayahuasca* is Joan Parisi Wilcox’s *Ayahuasca: The Visionary and Healing Powers of the Vine of the Soul*. More recently, in 2015, documentary filmmaker Nicolas J. Polizzi chronicled the journey of eight patients from the Western world, who with a variety of physical and emotional ailments—from depression to cancer to diabetes—ventured into the jungle of South America to work with indigenous medicine, including *ayahuasca*.

So how does one become a modern-day shaman or learn about contemporary shamanism in the Western world? Healers do not seek out the work; rather the spirits seek *them*. In indigenous cultures across the world, the authenticity of a medicine person’s gift is known by how they were called and by the years of sacrifice and service he or she has given to help others. Being hit by lightning, dying and being brought back to life, or healing oneself from a serious illness are among just a few ways a person finds himself or herself called into service. It has been said this path is not for the faint of heart.

Meditation, ceremony, self-reflection, the development of self-awareness, confrontation of one’s wounds, and the development of compassion for



Left: Shamanic tools
Below: Shamanic altar



self and all beings are part of the work. In order to heal others, one must have been able to heal oneself. Ceremony and energy medicine, common to Western shamanic practice, calls on the powers and forces of nature in service of cleansing and cleaning the heart and mind. The old Sioux Holy Man Fools Crow called it becoming a “hollow bone.”

Most of us, though, are not called to the path of being a healer. Instead, we simply wish to deepen our connection to Mother Earth and to live in greater harmony with ourselves and others. We do not have to remember who our indigenous ancestors were to look to Mother Earth for wisdom and healing (for if we look far enough back into our ancestral lineages, we would find that all of us, bar none, come from indigenous stock). When I took classes in Villoldo’s Healing the Light Body School almost 10 years ago, there were doctors, lawyers, professors, housewives, engineers, computer technicians, and many others in the classes with me. These were not the stereotypical “granola types” you might expect—although there were a few of those (I include myself among them!). Most of them were ordinary mainstream professionals, parents of children in suburban public schools, and upstanding citizens of their communities. They were Black, Native American, Middle Eastern, Asian, White, or of mixed ancestry. Many were Christian, Muslim, and Jewish, or simply “spiritual,” agnostic and even atheist. Many had never until the moment they stood in Villoldo’s class studied anything so off-the-beaten track.

Shamanism in the West recognizes that we are all Mother Earth’s children and that she has both the will, intention, and properties to heal, support and assist us—not simply our bodies through the food we eat, but also our minds, emotions, soul, and spirit through her elemental energies and vast consciousness. If you have walked in places in nature still remote from civilization, you may feel this raw life force and presence emanating from Mother Earth’s body and all her children—the rock, stone and plant people, those that swim, crawl, fly, and creep, the feathered, furred, scaled and shelled,

those who walk on two and four legs. You may feel it in the raw forces of the weather and in the light of Mother Moon, the Star People above, and Father Sun. These are not “gods” and “goddesses,” as Christianity and Western scholars have interpreted them—they are, like us, individualized emanations of a great universal consciousness that is, above all, an expression of love. Thus they are a bridge in physical form to the ultimate, *All That Is*.

So it is that Western shamanism recognizes that reality is far more complex than what meets the naked eye. There are multiverses within multiverses in which past, present, and future exist simultaneously. In this multidimensional matrix, we human beings share the planet with many beings both visible and invisible to us, yet no less alive. All wish to work with us to restore harmony.

Western shamanism teaches that through the cleansing and balancing of our minds and hearts with energy healing, through the use of meditation and individual and community ceremony, we can connect into the awake and aware consciousness within all things—in the stones, waters, mountains, forests, animals, plants, deserts, the moon, sun, stars, and beyond.

For my part, I am deeply grateful to all my teachers, both Native American and Western, who have offered to the world this rich and powerful path for personal transformation and planetary healing. Without them, I would not be who I am today. I would not have healed my own wounds from childhood trauma. I would not know how to connect so deeply into myself and into the luminous and loving multiverses within, through and around Mother Earth. I would not be a real human being. ☯

Rachel Mann, PhD is a practitioner of shamanic energy medicine and ceremony. She offers healing sessions and classes on contemporary shamanism in Virginia and abroad, in particular at Sacred Circle Bookshop in Alexandria, VA. More information can be found at www.rachelmannphd.com or she can be reached at rachel@mettaknowledge.com.



TWO TRAINS RUNNING:

Spiritual Aging and Dying

BY ROBERTA CULBERTSON

There are always and only two trains running. One is life and one is death. Each of us rides them both. To live life with dignity, to celebrate and accept responsibility for your presence in the world, is all that can be asked of anyone.

— August Wilson

We never thought it would happen, but it has. Baby boomers (born 1946–1964) are getting old. Individually we feel our bodies slowing down, our skin changing, our knees aching. We are finding that “you’re only as old as you feel” goes both ways. That is bad enough. But as a whole, the problem we pose is much worse than a few cranky oldsters. We will form the largest cohort of the aged in history: the “Silver Tsunami.” This is not a compliment. We may well live past our nineties, but we won’t be “forever young,” we will be forever aging. Since aging is seen as a series of diseases—heart failure, stroke, digestive disasters—doctors will treat us far into our debility and senility. Our minds may well fail faster than our bodies, and our bodies will continually weaken. The costs of our care and of our awareness and joy will move in opposite directions.

The pressure to care for us will weigh heavily on our families, the infrastructure of old-age care, and our environment as we live 20–30 years beyond our grandparents’ lifespan. The average lifespan of Americans

was age 72 when boomers were children. In some of the world now, people die in their thirties and forties. How can we demand overwhelmingly costly “health” care that keeps us alive well beyond a normal human lifespan? Aging is not a disease, and death is not an affront to life; it is its natural end. Life defined as breathing must not become an end in itself.

This coming disaster is economic, environmental, and political; in fact, these areas will all be affected by the root cause. The runaway train of medicalized longevity is fueled by a lack of two kinds of spiritual awareness: first, that caring for the world is the root of human happiness; and second, that death is real. To stop the train, we must pay attention to these spiritual truths.

Spirituality demands care for creation; humans, plants, nature—all of the unfathomable whole—are ours to care for. A spiritual life must be lived with compassion for others. In fact, the teachers say, caring is the *only* source of happiness. If you doubt this, read the works of any faith ... read the words of the truly happy. Loving your body, money, even beauty, is not going to make you happy; the universe runs on acceptance and respect. Compassion and grace are fundamental energies, as real as heat and gravity. We are each others’ keepers. But the universe also runs on cycles of life and death. To prepare to leave is also a spiritual responsibility, and when it is time, staying alive will bring no happiness.

To live while we can still give love, respect, and wisdom is a gift to the world. But when we remain alive only because we are not prepared to die, we offer only fear and sadness. How can we be anyone's keeper then? Nature has seen to it that human cells finally wear out. We needn't fear death, just think it through.

Taking a role in our own aging—not waiting for it to overtake us and overwhelm others—is a spiritual calling as much as feeding the poor, giving money to charity, or protecting the innocent. In fact, it indirectly does all of these. A spiritual calling for someone aging at this time is not to overwhelm others with our needs, and to prepare to leave.

How can we do this?

We will have to live in a spiritual way. We will have to see that caring for the planet, which we likely have supported our whole adult lives, will continue to be our responsibility. Just now, maybe, the invasive species will be us. Others will fight for the wolf or clean water; we will need to be responsible for how and how long we live, how much “curing” of our “diseases” we will really need, what we will do when we slowly lose the ability to remember and think.

We will have to give up rights we have cherished: driving, living alone, spending our own money, when we cause harm to others by doing them. We will have to learn to surrender to others with grace and affection when we feel rage. We will have to confront our own egos. But don't panic; these are the demands of any spiritual practice. Discipline, ego-taming, surrender, are where God lives, or where the universe sings, or however you imagine it is when your heart becomes free.

So, it is a spiritual matter to leave the world as you found it or better and to leave it on time. Happiness comes of being human, which is a group process. But what about death?

At other times and places, people knew death was its own reality and that getting to death was a hard, lengthy, painful process. Death wasn't just the end of life—it was its own demanding time of life and a gateway to eternity. Birth was hard, childbirth was hard, but death was hardest of all. Eternity might be heaven, hell, reincarnation, union with all, or nothing at all, but it was real, and death was its earthly form.

Around the middle of the last century, while everyone was looking the other way at the excitement of “life-saving” medicine, death became a medical failure. It also became a cultural blank space when medicine and other fields of science declared that only the material is real. Death, along with mind, the invisible, heaven, and the afterlife was no longer a legitimate topic. Communication with the dead, ghosts, premonitions, and the visions of the dying

were relegated to the realms of quackery and folk beliefs. Death as a stage of life disappeared into the study of diseases. Even churches backed off their descriptions of after-death, and left dying members to the care of church committees.

But the experiences surrounding death and dying is as much a teacher as life. It changes our perspective, slows us down, and leads us to ask questions. It brings us up short when we realize everything will end. When someone dies, we are shocked by how final our losses can be. What happens to all those goals of money, beauty, and accomplishment when your skin begins to sag and you cannot go up the stairs? Death is humbling, frightening, demanding, and mysterious. Preparing to meet it consciously and bravely is a spiritual practice.

At this time in our lives the challenge isn't to live longer: it is to live respectfully and to accept death as our new teacher. If enough of us can do this, may be we can limit the damage of the “Silver Tsunami.”

We can plan for our old age by simplifying our living to leave others with more, creating places that will let us live as old and dying rather than as patients. We can prepare ourselves and others for the reality of death. We give all of those steps more clarity and depth when we begin to look at death as a spiritual teacher and dying as a practice.

As playwright August Wilson said, there are always and only two trains running. When does the shift come? If you are over 65, ask yourself what has changed: Your knees? Your back? Your strength? Your vision? Your memory? Now try to see these changes not simply as aging, but as a signal to start thinking about what you owe your family, what you want for them, and what your responsibility is to the society that gave you an education, work, and meaning. You can even begin to think about an afterlife. There is plenty of literature on the subject, much of which challenges the idea that there is no life after death, and offers reasoning going back more than 3,000 years. It might just be that if we can accept dying as a teacher and death as our subject, we won't need to hold onto a broken body and an anxious soul at the end of life. Maybe we can learn not only to say goodbye, but also to tell those who love us to let us go. If enough of us can do this, we can accomplish the spiritual task of living for the whole and dying for it as well. ☺



Roberta Culbertson has a Ph.D. in Anthropology and is founding director of Responsible Old Age and Death (responsibledageanddeath.com), dedicated to planned aging and timely death in the name of families, society, and the environment. Also a long-time student of violence and its effects, she is the author of

Dangerous Worlds: A Spiritual Guide to PTSD.



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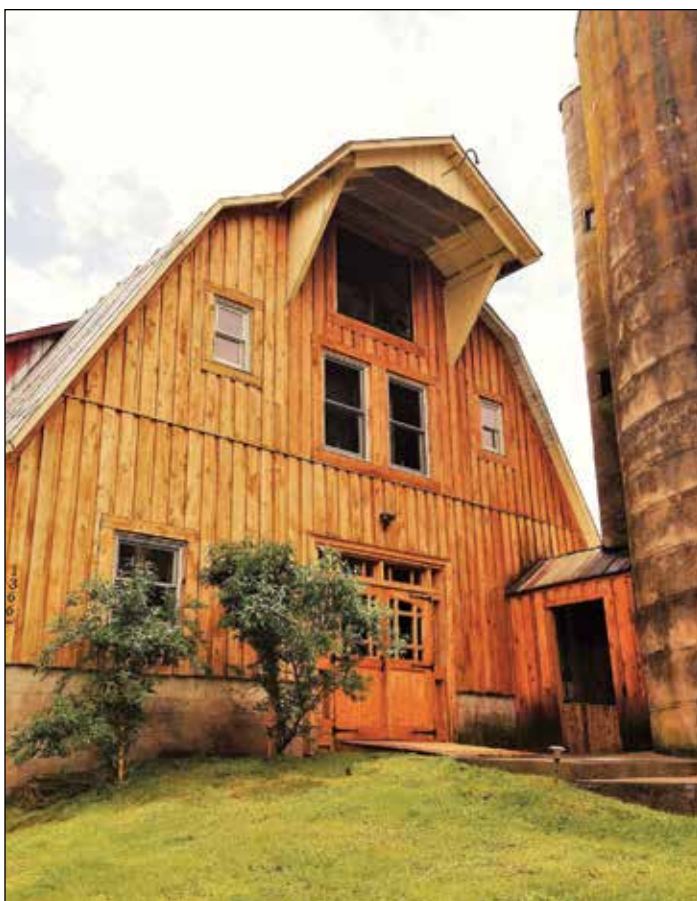
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Heartstone Lodge

South River Highlands Country Retreat

Be with Nature, Be with Spirit

BY RAY WHITSON

You often hear the phrase about a vision being manifested ... you can experience it at South River Highlands Country Retreat and the Heartstone Lodge. Co-owners Antonia Albano and Barney Brown are offering pure magic in the surroundings and facilities there. While the comfort of these two areas, located on a sprawling 250 acres, is only 10 minutes outside of Lexington, it feels worlds away! The

spiritual backgrounds of Barney and Antonia permeate the retreat and its offerings at prices that are incredibly affordable. There is no way to adequately describe how much there is to be appreciated, and readers are encouraged to go to www.SouthRiverHighlands.com and www.HeartstoneRetreat.com to get a full understanding of this amazing retreat center and event facility.

Perched above the confluence of the South River (a very feminine energy) and the Maury River (a very masculine energy), the property is actually two separate retreats with the Heartstone Lodge being the event area at the front of the property and South River Highlands Country Retreat towards the back.

Heartstone Lodge and Retreat Center

Just 12 years ago this was a working dairy farm with a massive old barn and other aged structures on a plot of ground worn completely bare by the herds of cows. Today it is lush with gardens and grasses and beautifully renovated buildings that you would never guess were anything other than new construction. The building renovations have been executed primarily under Barney's supervision and are still ongoing. The grounds are dotted with sculptures designed by Antonia and there are special areas in which one can meditate, relax, or connect with the energy its beauty offers. Attention to detail is evident everywhere. The event spaces and the guest rooms were

built using locally sourced woods and decorated with tasteful furnishings throughout.

The Heartstone Lodge is the renovated barn that has three floors, the first being a huge great room that can accommodate up to 120 people, with a beautiful two-sided fireplace, and an adjoining fully equipped commercial kitchen. The second floor offers another large meeting room along with guest rooms. The third floor consists entirely of sleeping areas.

The grounds and the lodge are of such size that there is an almost endless array of events held there: weddings, spiritual retreats and workshops, business seminars,



Above: Heartstone banquet

Below: Wedding





Yoga seminar

graduation parties, family reunions, church retreats, and holiday parties ... with plenty of beds for sleepover attendees. The grounds can (and have) accommodated tents as well. You'll find yourself drawn to the area under a 65-foot long pergola that at one end has a round fish pond. This pond is actually the bottom couple of feet of a silo once used on the dairy farm.

The two private guest studios are renovated old farm structures and are good examples of the comfort and luxury offered to guests. Decorated with Antonia's fine eye, you'll be especially amazed by the beds. The high-quality mattresses also have pads to further increase the level of comfort. You may not want to sit or lie on the bed upon arrival, as you might not want to get up for the rest of your stay!

South River Highlands Country Retreat

South River Highlands Country Retreat consists of five restored cabins, walking trails, dense woods, hay fields, and a breath-taking 360-degree views of the Roanoke Valley from the amazing Mount Grace. Mount Grace has an incredible "infinity labyrinth" surrounded by Antonia's metal sculptures. These sculptures, called the Geometries of Love, pulsate with an energy all their own.



Stonecutter's great room

The cabins, which range in age from the 18th to the early 20th centuries, were painstakingly moved from other areas and reassembled exactly as they were with additional living space added to each. Each in a secluded setting, perfect for rest or introspection, the rustic exteriors belie the space and comfort of the contemporary interiors with all their modern conveniences included. Again, you must go to the website to truly appreciate what is being offered for such a reasonable price.

The real crown jewel of this part of the retreat center is Mount Grace and The Grace Walk labyrinth. The vistas are stunning, especially if you live an urban life. The Blue Ridge Mountains to the east and the Allegheny Mountains to the west, converge together in the south to form the base of the Roanoke Valley. There is a procedure for entering



Stonecutter's cabin



Above: The Grace Walk
Right: Infinite Love

and obtaining maximum advantage of The Grace Walk; instructions are available. From personal experience, I can tell you that insights are easily obtainable in this sacred spot of earth. Please do allow yourself to feel this magic. Photos don't do it justice.

Heart and Soul

This exceptional retreat center is easily accessible off I-64 and offers a stay you won't forget. Be sure to schedule events or stays, as this retreat is no longer a well-kept secret. Barney and Antonia have put heart and soul into this undertaking—respect the property and the facilities, and you'll find yourself immersed in its amazing energy.

To schedule and make reservations, visit www.SouthRiverHighlands.com or www.HeartstoneRetreat.com or call (540) 463-2593. ☺



Ray Whitson is a 20 year resident of the Charlottesville area and has been on an evolving spiritual journey during that time. He is a writer and is the publisher of this magazine.





Notes from a dreamer...on



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YOUR LUCKY STARS

Moon Magick

BY NICK LASKY

I'm standing in the apothecary at the Aquarian Bookshop in Richmond and hear a customer walk up to an employee and ask when they should light their magick candle for getting a new job. The employee tells them they should wait until the moon is increasing. Later in the day I hear a different customer at the apothecary counter saying they want to let go of all of the negative energy in their life. Another employee explains to them that it will be best to wait until the dark of the moon to do deep cleansing magick. What is this all about? Are there better times of the month to do particular things and set particular intentions? You bet there are. Astrology has been very instrumental with this kind of thing for the past several thousand years. Let's start at the beginning.

The new moon occurs approximately every 29.5 days and is considered the start of the lunar cycle. This is the time to set new intentions. It is a time to embark upon new beginnings, like opening up a business or moving into a new house. The new moon is the time to

plant the seeds for that which you desire to grow over the course of the moon cycle. If you desire to manifest a new relationship, this is the time to tell the universe what kind of partner you are looking for and to do a little magick to boost your intention. What do I mean when I say magick? Anything you do to try to affect change on the physical plane can be considered magick. Common magick that is done to support your new moon intentions would be lighting candles, creating a vision board, or doing a visualization meditation in which you imagine what you desire to create. One of the simplest,

yet effective things that you can do at this time is to write down your "new moon intention" on a piece of paper, magickally sealing your intention into form.

Roughly 14 days later the moon will become full. At full moon, the part of the moon that we can see is completely illuminated by the light of the sun, thus symbolically marking a time of illumination or awareness. Suddenly you can see what you could not before. It is a time of realizing the intentions you set at the new moon and also

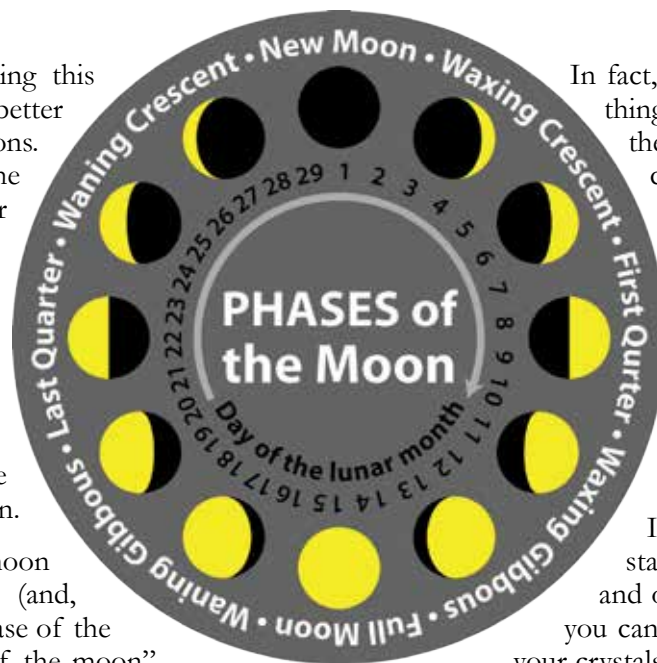


a time of celebration. During this phase we are able to have a better understanding of our intentions. Common magick to do at the full moon is to gather together in a group to celebrate or to set intentions of things that you want to let go of. Since the moon rules the emotions it can also be a time to let yourself go and do something a little wild like going out in the middle of the night and howling at the moon.

The final phase of the moon that I want to talk about (and, incidentally, also the final phase of the moon) is called the “dead of the moon” or the “dark of the moon.” This is the final 2.5 days of the moon cycle as it goes from being a sliver moon to the new moon, when it is completely dark. This is the time to do your cleansing and purification work. Anything to do with letting go, releasing, or banishing is deeply supported at this time. It is when the energy is clearing out the old in order to get ready for the new cycle. Magickal things you can do at this time to use the energy are cleaning your house/car, taking a salt bath, scrubbing yourself in sea salt in the shower, throwing out or donating things that you no longer need, and smudging your house with sage or palo santo.

It is important to note that the energy of each new or full moon will be different based on which sign it is in. For example, the new moon in Cancer brings new beginnings and an emphasis on your home and family. A new moon in Aries may plant the seeds for new opportunities for you individually and lay the groundwork for perceiving yourself in a new way. The full moon in Libra will bring heightened awareness and attention to your relationships whereas the full moon in Taurus may illuminate the financial department of your life and help you realize something about what your values are.

Of course, there are skeptics who will question if the moon has any special effect on us humans at all. I may run the skeptic through the following logic: The moon pulls on the water on the earth as seen through the tides. Humans are roughly 50–60% water. How can the moon affect the water in the oceans and not have any effect on us humans, even if it is subtle? Do you notice that around the time of full moon people tend to be more emotional, restless, or intense? Infants are made up of a much higher percentage of water and behave more lunar or instinctual than adults. Many scientists will say that there is no physical explanation for this, but truthfully the effect of the moon is more metaphysical or energetic, something which modern science is slowly beginning to open up to.



In fact, the moon affects many more things on the earth than just the water. Many cultures and civilizations, such as Ancient Egypt and the Incan Empire, used astrology and the moon cycle for agricultural purposes. For instance, plants will grow stronger and live longer if planted during an increasing moon and in fertile signs, such as Taurus.

In addition to planting by the stars, which is a huge subject in and of itself, another great practice you can do with astrology is charging your crystals and water under the different energies of the moon. For instance, the full moon is considered one of the best times to lay your crystals outside or on your windowsill at night in order to charge them by soaking up the energies of the moon and sun. You can do the same thing with water in a jar as we now know how sensitive water is to the different energies that surround it thanks to Dr. Emoto’s work in *The Healing Power of Water*. If you want to take these practices to the next level you can lay out specific crystals and put water out with specific intentions based on the different full moon energies. For example, if you want to charge your crystals/water with mystical and psychic powers then lay them out during the Pisces full moon!

So, in short, the new moon marks the beginning of the “calling” (waxing) period in which the energy is supportive of creating, growing, and bringing things into your life. The full moon marks the beginning of the “releasing” (waning) period in which the energy is supportive of letting go, cleansing, and banishing.

This has been an introduction to this vast subject. As you progress in refining your moon magick, you will also include the other five phases of the moon. You can learn about these from your local astrologer.

To find out when the new and full moons are you can either look online or pick up an astrological calendar, which you should be able to find at any metaphysical shop. ☾



Nick Lasky is a professional astrologer, psychic, and healer at the Aquarian Bookshop in Richmond. Nick is the founder of the Society of Awakening Souls, an organization at UVA and the Aquarian Bookshop for students seeking spiritual awakening. Contact Nick at www.aquarianbookshop.com.



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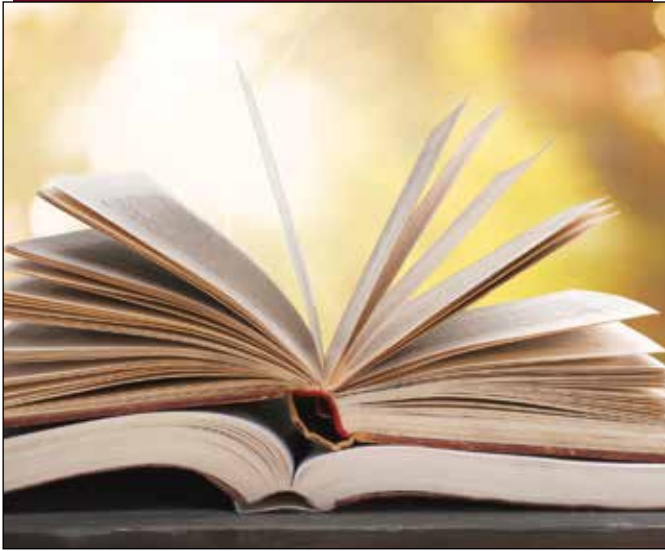
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Whispers of the O’Fae:

Art & Affirmations for the Wounded Inner Child

Jeanie Mossa

Planet Calamari Publishing, 2015
 Alexandria, VA
 First Edition, 92 pages
 ISBN: 978-1516946914
 \$19.99, Available on
 Amazon.com

Jeanie Mossa’s work, *Whispers of the O’Fae: Art & Affirmations for the Wounded Inner Child*, speaks directly to those of us who have experienced childhood trauma, abuse, neglect, fear, and the myriad emotions and side effects that come with those experiences. Survivors of these “rough” childhoods often suppress the inner child and construct elaborate scaffolding in the form of defense and coping mechanisms. Mossa’s book acts as a guide, walking the reader through processing those events and changing their outlook on the past so that their futures may contain more peace and happiness. As Mossa’s favorite author Tom Robbins wrote in *Still Life with Woodpecker*, “It’s never too late to have a happy childhood.”

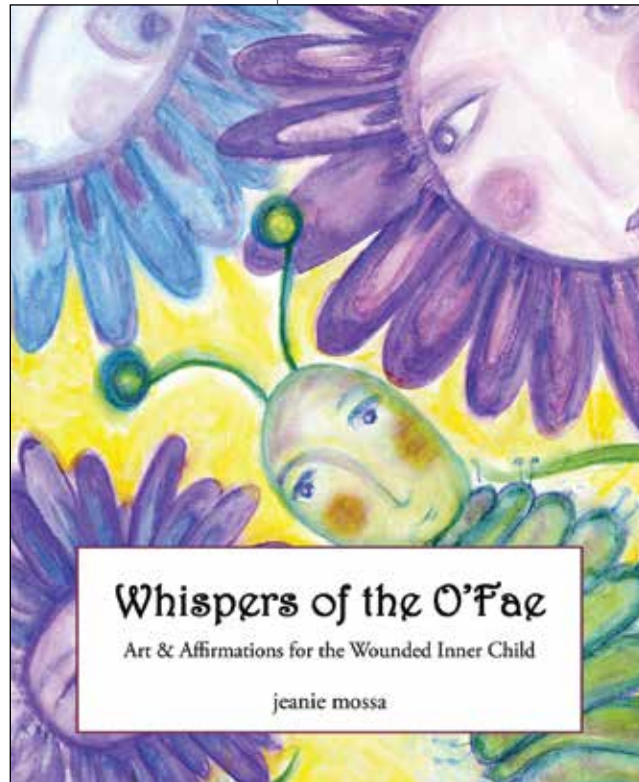
Mossa fully embraces this ideology and does a beautifully gentle job of teasing out blocked emotions and experiences, making them not only OK, but also

necessary to address and process. The book is written as a workbook with beautiful visuals that comfort and welcome the healing process. *Whispers of the O’Fae* begins with an honest and humorous look at Mossa’s own struggles and suggestions on how to best use the book. It then takes you on a journey to prepare your inner child to accept the healing process and recalibrate your personal ideology surrounding traumatic events. Once ready, you may enter the forest and commune with nature and the O’Fae—a group of whimsical fairies and spirits that provide you with healthy and joyful affirmations with which to heal and move forward.

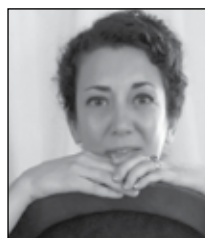
While Mossa is quite clear that her book does not constitute therapy and makes no guarantees, it is a beautiful and thoughtful companion or addition to therapy, meditation, and any other modality used to heal the wounded inner child. To that end, Mossa provides both a glossary of such modalities and a directory of books and websites that are additive to this process.

In her own words, Jeanie Mossa is, “a tree-hugging artist, licensed acupuncturist and medicine woman. A survivor of 12 years of parochial schools, cruel nuns with rulers and uber-strict Italian Catholic parents...” She comes to this book with years of unfortunate

personal experience in childhood trauma and PTSD. Mossa has processed her own experience using the method she outlines in her work as well as many of the methods in the glossary and resources section; as a result, her mental health and happiness shines through. She has a Master of Traditional Oriental Medicine degree from Pacific College of Oriental Medicine. Mossa, who illustrated *Whispers of the O’Fae*, has written and illustrated three other books on holistic healing for pets and people. As an artist, she works in mixed media creating healing



spirit dolls, jewelry and clothing. A former steel worker and glass artist, Mossa lives in Alexandria with her husband. ☺



Pia Donovan is a wife, mother, writer, and consultant living in Batesville, Virginia.

The Indigo Center

Troy

BY CAROLYN GREER DALY



THE INDIGO CENTER IN TROY serves to help, heal, and inspire the whole person in the discovery and attainment of their unique destiny using an array of holistic healing and artistic modalities. It is the long-time dream of Christina Henderson Paxson and became a reality in November of 2007.

How did this dream manifest? After hearing her story, I believe it was a union of Christina's determination, faith, and acceptance of a Divine blueprint that mere chance could not have provided. A series of events, some tragic, some miraculous, could not be labeled mere coincidence—there were too many and they were too perfectly timed.

Christina, the daughter of a general, lived the life that is sometimes referred to as an Army Brat and was indoctrinated with strict conservative social and religious beliefs. A tragic accident at age 17 changed the course of her life forever. While performing in a high-school dance routine, she took a hard fall, resulting in a cracked skull, a closed head injury that left her with a concussion and brain damage. Her inner ear was also shattered, resulting in a loss of balance. A multitude of doctors determined that her injuries were permanent and she would require constant care for the rest of her life. Christina underwent seven brain surgeries in 4 years. Twice her heart stopped, resulting in two near-death experiences that changed her perception of religion forever. She began to hear voices, had visions of things to come, and for a short time, received signals from the dark side of the ethereal causing her to question her own sanity.

While attending a religious camp, a vision of a wispy, freckle-faced woman, looking about 30 years old, appeared at the end of her bed. Whispering words of encouragement, this entity identified herself as a grandmother whom Christina had never met. It was only

after this experience that she discovered in the yellowing pages of an old family photo album, the freckled face of the woman at the foot of her bed, her long-ago deceased grandmother.

In spite of the fact that acupuncture was considered voodoo or quackery by her church and family members, her mother spirited her away to an acupuncturist. After only one treatment, Christina began to feel a slight improvement. Additional treatments brought continuing improvement, verifying to her that there was more to healing than the modern medical profession was willing to admit.

She recovered completely. She attended the University of San Diego and Southern Methodist University, where



Owner Christina Henderson Paxson

she studied pre-med, comparative world religions, and philosophy. In addition to other advanced educational training, she studied at the IM School of Healing Arts and the Maryland Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine. It became her dream to open a wellness center featuring Chinese medicine that included acupuncture.

In 2006, Christina, now a single mother raising two children, decided to try out the principles of manifestation she learned from a class at Unity of Charlottesville.

One day, while driving her daughter to Kindermusic, and pondering the principles, Christine said, “Okay, God, I’d like a house that’s on a main road and easy to find but not so close to the road where my kids could get run over. I’d also like it to be on a lot of land where I can build my own clinic, and I want water nearby.” As she drove past a property, she pointed and said, “Like that, God.”

On her return trip home, a man was standing in the front yard of that same property, pounding a “For Sale

areas of the body. There is *no cure* for lichen planus, so treatments aim to ease the symptoms and clear the rash.” However, 12 years ago, after one session with Christina, Jen was cured. Jen published a blog on how she was cured of lichen planus, spurring an avalanche of emails and calls from all over the world. Christina asked Jen to work from home to be her lichen planus coordinator. Within a few months, Jen moved her family to Charlottesville so she could work full-time at the Indigo Center.

Practitioners at the center include a Thai Massage and Yoga Instructor, Lysie McKowan, and three part-time massage therapists, Eileen Monahan, Jane Neldon, and Sophia Dallair. Dallair is also a spiritual astrologer. The Center also offers Feng Shui consultations for homes and business (acupuncture for the environment).

Christina was mentored and trained in acupuncture by the late Dr. Richard Tan, a 4th generation acupuncturist. Christina took his advanced Feng Shui and Face Analysis course in Paris last year.

“The Center’s location is a perfect setting of tranquility conducive to healing the mind, body, and soul, shaded by large trees whose images are reflected in a large pond.”

by Owner” sign into the ground. The seed of a dream planted so long ago blossomed into The Indigo Center.

The Center’s location is a perfect setting of tranquility conducive to healing the mind, body, and soul, shaded by large trees whose images are reflected in a large pond. Stepping inside we are welcomed by soothing music and the aroma of incense, sage, or an herb called moxibustion, used frequently in Traditional Chinese Medicine.

There are five treatment rooms that correspond with the five Chinese seasons and the five elements; The Spring room is wood, the Summer room is fire, the Late Summer room is earth, the Fall room is metal, and Winter room is water. All have incorporated Feng Shui in their design and arrangement.

A yoga and dance studio used for classes and workshops is available. Current programs and classes include workshops on aromatherapy, nutrition, meditation, arts and crafts, and even belly dancing, all proven to improve the mind, body, and spirit.

As you walk through the door you’ll meet Jen Benson, the office manager and a living testimony for a miraculous cure of a disease called lichen planus. According to the website of the National Institutes of Health, “Lichen planus is a non-infectious, itchy rash that can affect many

Every initial consultation and treatment by Christina includes:

- Full western and eastern medical intake and evaluation and diagnosis.
- An acugraph (a top-of-the-line computer-based diagnostic test) that helps Christina educate her patients and also confirm her diagnosis.
- Nutrition and lifestyle counseling
- Aromatherapy
- Energetic biomedical review and energy work (if requested)
- An acupuncture session

For more information on events and services visit www.theindigocenter.com. ☎

Carolyn Greer Daly is the author of the newly released book, Opening to Fullness of Spirit, published by Ozark Mountain



Publishing, available on Amazon. She is an associate editor of Awareness: Exploring Spirituality, and has been involved in spiritual pursuits for 40 years. She is an active member of Unity Church in Charlottesville.



Holistic Touch Center

Nurturing Complete Well-Being

OLD TOWN ALEXANDRIA

BY jeanie mosa

NESTLED IN THE HEART OF ALEXANDRIA'S OLD TOWN, about two blocks south of the Lyceum History Museum, is an oasis of well-being known as the Holistic Touch Center. The center offers a potpourri of integrative medicine combined with pampering for the body, mind and spirit. Services range from acupuncture and massage to energy work and natural skincare.

Owner Linda Wentz, a licensed acupuncturist and massage therapist, opened Holistic Touch in 2010. "I had been working with a chiropractor for about eight

years prior and it was a great experience, however, I wanted to grow and incorporate more wellness services. As an acupuncturist, we look at the whole being so even though we will treat your main health concerns, we also take into account any other health concerns to have a comprehensive understanding of where the root cause of an imbalance is. I wanted to have a place where not only could you be treated with acupuncture but I wanted to be able to refer within house to other modalities of healing such as massage therapy, Reiki, skin care, and

“Often the events provide an opportunity for folks to experience acupuncture, Reiki, and massage at a discounted rate.”

nutrition. To be able to also educate clients in maintaining their wellbeing and be in partnership with the client as a trusted source for their health care.

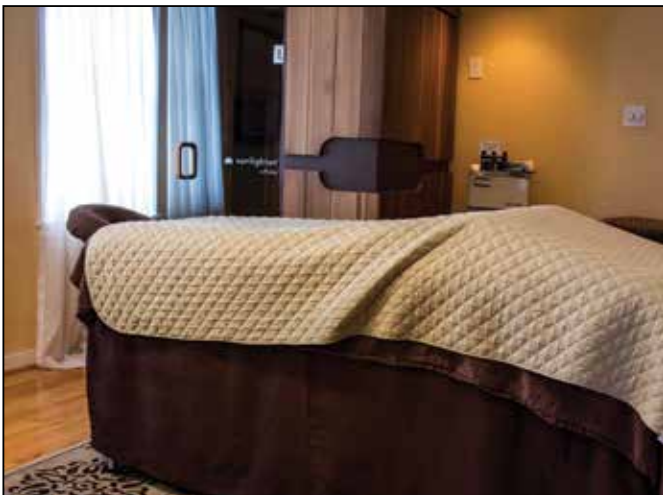
I founded Holistic Touch based on my mission to incorporate mind, body, and soul into a harmonious flow and to truly listen to the patient to do all that is possible to help facilitate the healing process. Holistic Touch has a team of caring, expert professionals to help reach your highest potential.”

Linda is currently in the process of debuting a new line of skin care under the name **Holistic Touch Skin**. These products use organic farm-fresh ingredients and are not tested on animals. They will be available at the center, as well as online.

Taking a Tour

As you walk through the front door of Holistic Touch, you may notice that it was once an old house, one that has been converted into a healing sanctuary with the feeling of a spa. From the outside the center seems small until you enter. Decorated in accordance with Feng Shui principles, the sounds of a soothing fountain and calming music hum in the background.

The spacious waiting room is filled with plants and a cozy fireplace, and serves a dual purpose as a space for events offered to the local community. These community events help to educate the public about alternative wellness



Treatment Room

therapies. Often the events provide an opportunity for folks to experience acupuncture, Reiki, and massage at a discounted rate.

One such event, which helps start every week on a positive note, is **Mellow Mondays**. At lunch time from noon to 1:15 p.m. the public is invited to stop by for a stress-buster acupuncture session for \$20, which lasts about 30 minutes.

On the second Wednesday of each month from 6:15–7:00 p.m. is **Wellness Wednesday**, an Acupuncture & Reiki Happy Hour for \$25.

Once a month the center offers a special **Veterans Stress Relief Happy Hour** to honor those troops who have served our country. Veterans may choose to get a massage, Reiki or an acupuncture treatment for \$25.

Please note space is limited and it is recommended to call the office to reserve your spot for each of these events.



Owner Linda Wentz

As we continue on our tour, on the first floor are two rooms used for acupuncture, moxibustion, cupping and ear candling. (To learn more about these services, please visit the website www.HolisticTouchCenter.com.) These rooms are also used to accommodate clients who are not able to climb stairs. From the back window you can spot the herb and vegetable garden tended by the staff.

The second floor offers a private skin care area, along with another massage room used for Reiki, craniosacral, and energy work. In the back is a spacious area known as the Yoga room. It is large enough to house an infrared sauna with a private bathroom and shower. Couples massage, Yoga, private classes, and educational events take place here.

The top floor also has a small cozy office that practitioners use for hypnotherapy, EFT tapping, and life coaching.



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- Aromatherapy
- Reflexology
- Craniosacral Therapy
- Reiki
- Hypno Therapy
- Life coaching
- EFT Tapping
- Detox Infrared Sauna

And for the staff there is a comfy lounge area with a mini-kitchen alongside a small office for Linda Wentz.

The 12 practitioners at the center work as a team to provide a healthy, happy, and peaceful environment dedicated to wellbeing. This eclectic group of talented individuals is all appropriately licensed and trained with years if not decades of expertise in their fields.

Services offered at the center include:

- Traditional Chinese Medicine: Acupuncture, Cupping, Moxibustion, Laser, Auricular Acupuncture, Herbal & Nutritional Consultations.

For more information or to schedule an appointment please call or visit the website:

Holistic Touch Center

309 S. Washington Street • Alexandria, VA 22314

(703) 299-0500

www.HolisticTouchCenter.com ☎



Jeanie Mossa is a tree-hugging artist, author, licensed acupuncturist, and herbalist. She lives in Old Town, Alexandria, with her husband, a menagerie of animals, and a few unicorns. You may contact her at jeanie@acupunk.rocks or www.acupunk.rocks.



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Richmond Hill

Richmond

BY NICKI PEASLEY

RICHMOND IS A WOUNDED CITY. And Richmond Hill is her most faithful healer. Located in Church Hill, this ecumenical Christian fellowship and residential community overlooks the city it seeks to unify through prayer, hospitality, racial reconciliation, and spiritual development.

As I walk through the doors, I am greeted at the front desk by Olivia's kind smile—the first sign of hospitality. She invites me to make myself at home. At once, I am transported back to the time when the Sisters of the Visitation of Monte Maria lived here a century ago. I envision the nuns moving through this building with passion and purpose and I am comforted beyond words by the peace and the sweetness that emanates from these walls.

Out in the garden, I hear the noise of the city below, somehow in harmony with the birds and the fountain and the lovely gardener singing to her Echinacea. Through the

bamboo, I sense the surrounding urban urgency of rush hour, but the moss under my feet and the cairns guiding my way along the path keep me grounded in this beautiful space and time. Around the bend is the labyrinth, the morning sun casting its light across its twists and turns, inviting all pilgrims to make the journey to the center and then back out into the world. Hope and resurrection are alive in the pond with its single lotus flower and in the mini chapel restored in memory of a beloved child. Everywhere I look there is Love. I choose a place to sit and reflect and read about this oasis in my city.

In 1866, the nuns of Monte Maria were called to this place to pray for Richmond after the Civil War. Their monastery was composed of two of Richmond's oldest and largest mansions. The nuns lived here until 1986 when a nonprofit group of dedicated Christian stewards raised the money to purchase the property.

Ben Campbell, ordained priest, nonprofit director, and remarkable human, led this charge. He was entrenched in his own personal struggle when he walked by Richmond Hill at the time of its transition and felt what he called “an inner awareness, a dialogue in my heart” that this was, indeed, his path. While Campbell knew the project was ambitious, he received assurance that he did not need to “make” Richmond Hill happen. “If it was to happen, God would help it to happen.”

After his visit with Mother Margaret Mary in the confines of the cloistered monastery, Campbell’s vision was crystallized—this would be a multi-racial, multi-denominational community of single and married people, who would witness and sustain each other in shared spiritual life. It would be a place of work and prayer for the transformation of the metropolitan city. Campbell reflected, “This would not be a job, but a life commitment.”

And he added, “In a city as divided as Richmond, we could not afford to give up a place soaked in centuries of prayer that overlooks this city. You don’t decide to pray here ... this place decides you to pray here.”

Life at Richmond Hill revolves around the shared “rule” or practice of conversing with God, obedience to the mission of the community, common life, simplicity, humility, serving others, daily prayer, racial reconciliation, healing self and community, honoring all Christian paths, and working for the social transformation and stability of the city.



Garden and fountain.



Micah Initiative.

Campbell’s lovely wife Annie spoke of the spiritual gifts inherent in the community’s rhythm of life, “It is living in a way that you expect an interruption that reminds you that God *is*. It’s living gratitude and celebration and invitation. My experience at Richmond Hill gave me words for faith so that I could reflect on it and appreciate the faith of others. It was a path to conversation, which is always discovering what we have in common.”

The work of Richmond Hill consists of opportunities for individual prayer and ministry, study, and community engagement. There are introductory classes and lectures, as well as intensive programs of study around topics like pastoral care, urban spirituality, and Christian formation. Richmond Hill sponsors the Koinonia School of Race & Justice, a program designed to engage participants in self-reflection, dialogue, and active promotion of social justice in our community.

Mauren Campbell (no relation to Ben and Annie Campbell) shared her thoughts as a participant in this program, “This experience will stay with me always—it opened doors in my mind that will not be easily shut. Koinonia transformed my understanding of race in Richmond and perhaps, most importantly, it gave me the confidence to build upon my own transformation so that I might begin to spark change in my wider community.”

Richmond Hill accommodates a variety of retreat opportunities. Individual, church, and civic groups moved by the energy of this holy place are invited to make inquiry and are welcomed to share in the community’s rhythm of life while at Richmond Hill. There are also retreats of varying lengths for those experiencing grief, those seeking God through art, and those in need of quiet reflection and spiritual renewal.

The spirit of Richmond Hill is felt outside of its walls, as well. The community's current efforts to heal the city include connecting faith communities to Richmond Public Schools through tutoring and mentoring programs like the Armstrong Leadership Program and the Micah Initiative.

Landon Woody spoke about her participation in Micah, "I've been reading with kindergarteners and first graders for eight years. My role, with the help of my dog, is helping them develop a love of reading. I've found that in addition to that sometimes I'm a place for them to turn with their troubles. I have fallen in love with the children."

From the garden, I make my way to the chapel. Exquisite in its simplicity, it offers an invitation to melt into the sacred silence of the morning. The words above the altar are reminders of God's lead role in the manifestation of Richmond Hill's mission, "Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman keeps vigil in vain." While the work of Richmond Hill is impressively active, the stillness and power of prayer grounds the community in its purpose. Worship includes daily prayers, weekly communion, Taize (meditative chanting), soaking prayer (for those struggling with illness), Eucharist for generational healing, and centering prayer.

"This is the Truth of it," Ben Campbell said, leaning forward, "Prayer and action are not opposites. We pray so hard that we are driven to action and we engage ourselves so much in our action that we are driven to prayer. You can't do one without the other. The intentionality of these things is directly related. We commit to transformation, to bearing things that are bigger than us, and having the courage to do so. It's an opportunity."

On my way out, I stop by the library which contains a comprehensive collection of spiritual and academic resources. I purchase Ben Campbell's newest book, *Richmond's Unhealed History*. A book of hard truths and high hopes, this brilliant examination opens the reader's mind and heart to the healing and ultimate redemption of this wounded city and its people. It is a plea for people to acknowledge the suffering inherent in the human experience as a calling to do the work, pray the prayers, and live the Truth.

Awareness is the first step. ☯



An educator by trade, Nicki Peasley is a student and storyteller of life and a teacher of love, both inside and outside of the classroom. She lives in Richmond with her husband, three children, and their chocolate lab, George Bailey.

NICK LASKY
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Lotus Healing Center

Roanoke

BY RAY WHITSON

THE PROFESSIONALS AT LOTUS HEALING CENTER believe that mind, body, and spirit need to heal together as a whole. The application of this principle has developed in a most unique way into a “full service” concept at their thriving Roanoke facility. Partners Janet Spitzer, M.D. and Leigh Powell, L.P.C. opened Lotus Healing Center in September 2016 at 1901 Denniston Ave. SW in Roanoke. As soon as you enter the space, you’ll sense the peace that is reflected in the tastefully decorated waiting rooms and offices as well as in the holistic modalities offered there.

“As soon as you enter the space, you’ll sense the peace that is reflected in the tastefully decorated waiting rooms and offices as well as in the holistic modalities offered there.”

Janet is a licensed medical physician who now works primarily through *medical acupuncture*. (In Virginia there is a clear licensing distinction with non-M.D. practitioners titled only as “acupuncturist.”) In this way, she blends the best of western and holistic medical practices for the optimum in health care for her patients. Indeed, of her integrative medical approach, she says she now heals “primarily with needles instead of prescriptions.” Acupuncture works by promoting maximum energy circulation in the body. Every acupuncture point connects with physical, emotional, and spiritual activation, with each of those deriving what is most needed for healing.

Not only does she serve the Southwestern Virginia area, but she also receives referrals from the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, New York when teams there determine that her form of treatment is what’s best for a particular patient.



Waiting room



Acupuncture treatment room



Janet Spitzer



Leigh Powell

Leigh is a licensed professional counselor who helps her patients deal with problems such as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, career concerns, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Her transformational counseling practice of over 25 years helps the patient find a way through these issues, which can lead to greater personal and spiritual growth, and more enjoyment of life. Her career has evolved with extensive training in an impressive array of healing practices; it is not just talk therapy she offers. A most successful technique is her use of music-evoked imagery to allow one to access deeper consciousness in pursuit of healing. A visit to her website at

www.patricialeighpowellpc.com gives a comprehensive overview of her counseling approach.

Janet and Leigh are accepting new patients. Call (540) 989-7700 to arrange an appointment with either of them.

Also at Lotus Healing Center are the full-time practices of Ann Egge, L.M.T., a licensed massage therapist, and Thrive Counseling of Roanoke, operated by Tricia Mazza, L.P.C. Appointments can be scheduled with Ann at (540) 613-9493, and appointments with Tricia at (312) 361-4830. In addition, Lotus Healing Center frequently sponsors visiting healers of various modalities.

The Lotus Healing Center is an attractive professional facility dedicated to total healing. This is holistic treatment at its finest. ☺



Ray Whitson is a 20 year resident of the Charlottesville area and has been on an evolving spiritual journey during that time. He is a writer and is the publisher of this magazine.

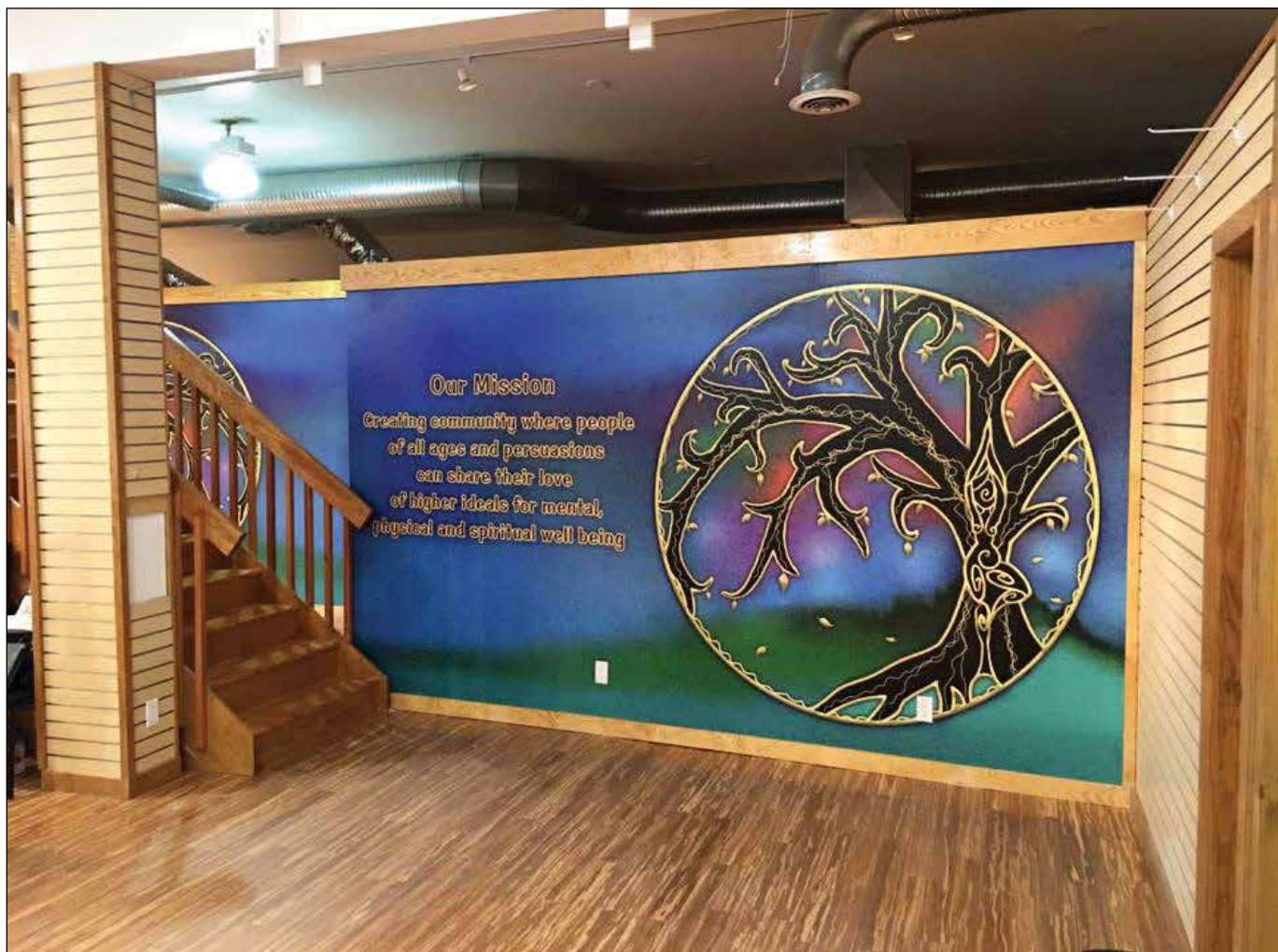
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Good Vibes Wellness

VIRGINIA BEACH

BY CATHY EGAN

I RECEIVED A KIND INVITATION from co-owners Matt Sciulli and Leticia Wightman to come and visit their new spiritual center, Good Vibes Wellness, at 233 16th St., on the corner of 16th Street and Pacific Avenue. Matt explained that the both of them had long held a dream of a center dedicated to building spiritual community with unique services allowing one to develop and heal body, mind, and spirit. Though Matt and Leticia had been pursuing business careers while building sustainable living practices, the dream of this center remained a goal for each of them.

In July of this year, they were ready to make the leap and realize their long-held desire to own and operate this place—a place where dedication is the name of the game. They are firmly committed and dedicated to serving

others through new experiences and healthful practices as well as intuitive readings, a wide range of massage modalities, books, gifts, classes and lectures, spirit circles, local artwork, jewelry, and more. Good Vibes Wellness is a full-service spirituality center.

Upon arriving I found a unique and spacious center of a contemporary design, one that utilized light colored woods and murals and was very tastefully decorated. It is welcoming and enticing, making one immediately comfortable. This level of comfort elicits an excitement about the visit and an anticipation of good things to come. To get to the heart of the matter, Leticia celebrated their creation in her own words:

“I was always an inquisitive child. My family of origin was a blended mix of cultures including Aztec Indian,

Spanish, and Mexican. As I grew, it became quite a habit for me to question my parents on religion, especially as it related to the types of beliefs I experienced from my classmates and neighbors. It was a concern of mine that everyone did not have a safe place where they could express themselves about their life experiences, their dreams, what they imagined as everyday life activity. I desired open communication and a readiness to learn from all ways of life as well as to gain acceptance of new beliefs and perhaps different ways of expressing themselves. Today, at Good Vibes Wellness we are creating just such a place for individuals, families, [and] companies to enjoy exploration into the spiritual subjects which abound, [to] take part in many different activities, exposing themselves to many varying types and ways of expression, along with the physical help in dealing with body needs including specialty massage and also spirit counseling. We get to offer all of this in a special, warm, caring environment designed to enhance their learning and feeling experience. [It is] my dream come true, my passion ignited!"

Leticia goes on to talk about her partnership with Matt. Their similar experiences and passions fueled their dream of creating a space where people could "grow and experience their own spirituality at their own pace and desire."



Showroom

Good Vibes Wellness is a culmination of an open architectural concept, applied to a practical design, housing a multitude of services. There are private rooms for spiritual counseling/readings (an intuitive is always on duty), as well as ones comfortably defined for individual or couples massage. Plans include developing a space for snacks and a modern juice bar, where intimate conversation can take place. Comfort and accessibility are two important factors achieved in the floor plan.



Top: Couples Massage Room

Bottom: Waiting Room

Visitors will take pleasure in the acoustics and modern layout at the center, which truly encourages connection and community. This is a first-class facility in every way. The dream of Matt and Leticia is reflected in the center's mission statement: *"Creating community where people of all ages and persuasions can share their love of higher ideals for mental, physical, and spiritual well-being."*

Stop in and visit Good Vibes Wellness. Shop the many specialty gift items or sign up for Good Vibes services or activities. An events calendar can be accessed online at www.goodvibeswellnessvb.com. Visit www.facebook.com/goodvibeswellnessVB/, or contact Matt and Leticia for a personal introduction by calling 757-321-3784, or email Goodvibeswellness@hotmail.com.

You can be sure of an enjoyable experience ... don't forget to mention that *Awareness: Exploring Spirituality* sent you! ☺



Cathy Egan is one of the spiritual counselors/palm reader at Good Vibes Wellness, whose messages offer path & purpose guidance. She has a BA magna cum laude from Rutgers University and has travelled extensively worldwide visiting indigenous peoples while writing and studying about mysticism.



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Psychic Profile



Name: Juli Richardson

Location: Old Town
Manassas

Contact Information:

(703) 926-4499

email: lightworksreiki@aol.com;

Web: www.lightworks.biz

Hours: Monday–Friday
5pm–9pm; Saturday–Sunday
10am–4pm; Daytime hours
coming soon

Rate:

\$75/hour Lifepath Readings

(Connecting with Guides and Angels for life issues)

\$100/hour Mediumship Readings

(Contact with departed loved ones)

\$50/hour Animal Communication

(Connecting with pets and other animals)

Experience: Offering impressively informative readings professionally for 2 years, Juli has been highly intuitive since childhood and always able to connect with Guides and Angels. She's been offering solicited advice and doing readings for friends and family since her teenage years. It was the accuracy of these readings that propelled her into this public practice after 6 years of accelerating psychic development.

Review: This reviewer has had many psychic readings over the years, but this one brought something that I had not experienced before. Prior to my arriving and settling into a very cozy and inviting reading room, Juli had “tuned in” to get information that “They” (my Guides and Angels) had wanted to address with me. As a

matter of fact, there were several pages of notes she had made. She indicated that she generally quiets before the client arrives to see what messages she will receive, and faithfully notates what comes through. She stated that sometimes the information makes no sense to her until the client hears it and associates it with a life issue. In my case, virtually everything she had notes on was pertinent to current situations in my life. This sort of information keeps coming to her throughout the reading.

As the session begins, she talks you through a brief meditation that helps you get into a higher vibration to assist in the readings. It develops a beautifully serene atmosphere that relaxes you and helps to create a clear channel with Spirit. She frequently confirms that what she is communicating makes sense to you, in that way validating that her connection with Spirit is strong. Things that don't seem to fit or be accurate make sense later in the reading. She is clairaudient (hears), claircognizant (knows), and clairvoyant (sees) in that she receives symbols and pictures.

Juli has a very down-to-earth manner and you'll probably feel like you're sitting with a good friend. You can tell she enjoys doing this for people. She describes herself as a Psychic Medium as she can not only access Guides and Angels, but can also contact friends and loved ones that have crossed over. In my case, two family members came through and what was presented left no doubt in my mind that they were in fact who she said they were! Key details came through without any prompting on my part. In addition, Juli is a very gifted animal communicator and helped me by phone when my cat was gravely ill. Again, some of what came through left no doubt that this was my cat giving the information.

I believe you'll be pleased in a session with Juli. ☺

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