

The Inner Traveler

Meditation Society of America

Vol 1 No. 7

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Welcome To The Inner Traveler

There is a veil that once torn asunder reveals our unity with the infinite, eternal Truth, Consciousness, and Bliss that is Reality. The moment of this Realization is not a new beginning of understanding, but rather a return to the everlasting Truth that is, and always in all ways has been the underlying condition of our existence. A change in perspective from “Apart from the rest of the Universe” to “The heart of the Universe” occurs and ends all the illusionary physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual suffering we have dreamt we were in. Pure Consciousness stands over the illusion, acknowledges it without reactivity, and acts dispassionately compassionately. Knowing at-oneness with the ever present Love that permeates everything everywhere, life is experienced. The aim of The Inner Traveler is to share those things that will tear your veil.

Peace and blessings,
Bob Rose, President
Meditation Society of America



Evolution

By Bob Rose

We are thinking too small. We erroneously exclusively identify ourselves and who we are with our body. In reality we are consciousness infinitely connected to everything in the universe. Our body is made of billions of cells that have come together to form a unit. The cells grow, divide, whither, shed. They are in
see *Evolution* pg. 2

Sage Advice

By Kir Li Molari



*Stop carrying around anger.
It's too heavy.*



*Practice Concentration.
Meditation will come to you.*



*Meditation is a tool to empty your
mind and fill with wonder.*



*The path to Enlightenment is
neither sharp nor narrow. It is
gentle, infinite, and ever available.*



*Om is the sound of the
ever-changing, never changing
silent essence.*



*The universe is a paisley patterned
dance of loving energy. Wisdom is
to Witness and dance with it.*



*Pay attention to your life
as it takes place. Now.*



*Breath comes effortlessly.
The effect of Witnessing
it is effortlessness in everything.*

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from *Evolution* pg. 1

constant movement. Uncountable armies of molecules merge, interact, transfer chemicals and information to form and reform the cells in a never-ending dance. The molecules are made up of atoms that arrange and rearrange in trillions of combinations, and they in turn are made of quarks that are made up of pre-atomic energy that has been in movement since the Big Bang.

This is the same energy that forms all life, as well as the elements that form the earth itself. All life on this planet is in movement. The continents that comprise and contain all the landmasses are in constant motion as are the oceans. The earth itself is spinning around itself as well as in an orbit that pulls on and is pulled by its sister planets and their moons as it and they revolve around the sun. The whole solar system is revolving as it spins around our galaxy. The Milky Way and its one hundred billion stars are moving in concert with billions of other galaxies that are traveling around our local galactic cluster and the billions of galactic clusters are combining and intersecting to form uncountable super galactic clusters that make up our ever expanding Universe.

We are not apart from this evolution and movement. We are a part of it. The same pre-atomic, quarkian, atomic, molecular, cellular structures that makes up everything in the Universe makes us up.

Feel this expansive unity. Know your "body" to extend beyond the sack that contains your organic cellular structure. You are atomic, pre-atomic, and interactive infinitely, eternally, with everything everywhere.

Sit in a comfortable position in a quiet place with your mind and body as calm as possible. Visualize your sub-atomic and universal connectiveness and every level between. Try not to comment, compare, analyze, critique or classify. Just visualize. If you must, to quiet your mind, repeat "I am infinite", "I am immortal", or any other phrase or word that has an uplifting significance to you. Practicing this meditation will free you from the bondage of ego driven separatist identification and lead you to reunion with your spiritual birthright -- liberation of your consciousness. Merge with it all, all of the time and experience a universal perspective of infinite knowledge and bliss.

*This is one of the Concepts of Meditation at <http://www.meditationsociety.com>
The cover art, "Super Nova" is at <http://www.cosmic-art.co.uk/pics.html>
is by Andrew Stewart, whose art appears in astronomy books for Cambridge University Press. Also, a BBC TV series titled Extreme Universe has alot of his artwork in it. Andrew can be contacted at STEWPO1A@aol.com*

ART BY RASSOULI



"From Alpha to Adam"
is one of many works of wonder and words of wisdom
by Freydoon Rassouli that you will find on his website at
<http://www.Rassouli.com>

INSIGHT FROM RASSOULI

Now that "From Alpha to Adam" is the first image to introduce to your readers, let me tell you about the Myth that is my inspiration for this painting.

After having created the entire universe, God realized that he has not manifested himself. Then God picked up a handful of dust from the Earth and played with it for forty days and nights until he was sure that he had manifested himself in that dust. He called it "the Heart".

Once the whole universe got aware of the existence of God, the jealousy started... So God told the angels to make a body so that he would hide "the heart" in it. (From Alpha to Adam)

The moment that man became aware that God was inside him, he wanted to use that power to his own benefit...So...The Divine Hand cut off the connection between the mind and the heart of the man.

All the reasons for our fights and animosity is nothing but lack of realization that GOD IS INSIDE US.

Love & Light, Rassouli

The Self

By H. H. Dalai Lama XIV



There are many different systems by which we posit the conventional self. In some non-Buddhist writings the self is explained as a phenomenon which is permanent, pervasive, is never subject to change or destruction, and is a separate entity from the aggregates. From the Buddhist viewpoint the self does not exist.

According to Buddhist scripture, the self exists from within the aggregates and not as something unrelated or coming from elsewhere.

The five aggregates are classified into two categories: body and mind.

We have an innate feeling that this body is our own possession. We posit this body as belonging to the self. In the same way, we have an innate feeling of ‘my mind’, so that the mind too is looked upon as belonging to the self. Therefore we consider the self to be different from the body and the mind. Although we do this, when analytically sought, the self cannot be found apart from the body and the mind.

On the other hand, if this self did not exist at all, there would be no human beings.

Thus since the self does exist, yet we cannot find it when we search for it analytically, this indicates that it does not exist independently.

In the writings of the Middle way, it is called a mere label or imputation that is not substantial.

We must recognize that although things appear to us as independently existent, that appearance contradicts the conclusion that we reach through investigation.

Why is the investigation conclusion more valid in our lives? Belief in appearance gives rise to grasping at its supposed independent existence, which in turn gives rise to emotions like desire and attachment. Refutation of the appearance of true existence by understanding its inconsistencies can prevent such negative emotions from arising.

All negative states of mind have their root in the self-grasping attitude, a mistaken consciousness which can be shown to be distorted. By refuting grasping at true existence, one can cut the roots of all delusions.

The prevention of delusions can be looked at as occurring in three stages.

One first has to refrain from their manifestations, which are misuse of the body and speech. Secondly, one must work toward abandoning the delusions themselves in the mind. Finally in the third stage, one works toward the elimination of imprints left by the delusions.

Through these three stages we achieve the following results. Refraining from misbehavior of body and speech, we take rebirth in a higher state as human beings. Abandoning all delusions, we achieve nirvana or liberation. Thirdly abandoning even the imprints left behind by delusion, we achieve the omniscient state. Thus we follow the path.

The path is explained briefly in the three higher trainings.

First comes the training in self-discipline, the practice of restraining the body and speech from negative ways. By this restraint, one prevents gross distractions.

The second training, that of single-pointed concentration, or calm abiding meditation, achieves a state of mind free from the subtlest distractions.

When such single-pointed concentration is used in the third training, meditation on the nature of emptiness, it becomes special insight, or transcendent wisdom.

These three higher trainings free us from the three types of suffering.

Having passed beyond the state of the desire realm and having achieved the form realm via training in self-discipline, one becomes free from the suffering of suffering.

Secondly through the practice of calm abiding meditation one transcends the form realms and achieves liberation from the suffering of change, which is the experience of pleasure becoming pain. Instead one always remains in a transcendent state.

Thirdly, through understanding the real nature of all realms of existence, one achieves freedom from the suffering of conditioned existence.

*Tenzin Gyatso, His Holiness the Dalai Lama XIV, is a Nobel Peace Prize winner.
He is regarded by Tibetan Buddhists, and millions of others, as a Bodhisattva,
a reincarnation of the compassionate Avalokiteshvara form of the Buddha.
This article is from Cultivating A Daily Meditation.*

*“Golden Buddha” artwork is by Atmara Rebecca Cloe
Her visionary art can be enjoyed at <http://www.nvcreations.com>*

Yearning

By Michael Read

Having heard that the truth lies within, many turn the search within. There they find the beliefs and concepts of the mind presented like some living picture show. How fascinating it is. So much is offered as the answer. So much personal drama unfolds that the seeker is often captivated by the images and emotion he deems it real, that he has truly found the essence. The truth he believes is that all the experiences, the visions, the emotional states, and so on are the truth.

Thus the seeker finds something to declare, something to defend, something to depend upon. What they have is nothing more or less than a more elaborate picture show - all created from asking the right questions of the wrong source.

To ask the mind for the supreme answer is like asking the village idiot to become the king. Though the results may be humorous. No good comes of it.

Yes, look within. Look at what the mind offers and let those offerings go. No, no, no. Do not get caught up in the visions, in the ecstatic states of emotion, or the guilts, despairs and miseries. Let them go.

Yes look within. Neither accepting nor rejecting what the mind offers, simply look. You will be caught up from time to time in some elaborate fantasy, but that is only normal. These fantasies all tend to unravel almost of their own accord. Continue to observe.

Though you may be tempted with infinite knowledge, infinite power, understand even these as illusion, as fantasy. Let go.

Yes, the gateless gate is within. The doorway that you will pass through is there. Ah, when the portal is discovered, Dear Friend, do not hang onto the doorframe, don't plant your feet on the jamb and then pride yourself on your discovery.

Step through. Meet yourself. Life is good.

*Michael's in-sights are shared on the web at his group, The Way Station
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/thewaystation> He can be contacted at maread@taosnet.com*



"Gateway" Artwork by Chy

Hatha Highlights

By Bette Rose



Salabhasana (Full Locust)

The posture of the Salabhasana, the Locust, has long been regarded by Hatha Yoga practitioners as a good example of an extreme yet gentle backward bend to the spine. It brings a rich blood supply to all 26 vertebrae simultaneously. Salabhasana is also excellent for improving digestion by placing slight pressure on all abdominal organs, affording a gentle internal massage. Those suffering from asthma or other respiratory ailments benefit from the expansion of the chest muscles in the pose. Finally, the muscles in the shoulder and neck area are stretched and toned as well as the lower back.

As a prelude to the Locust, you should practice the Half-Locust (Ardha Salabhasana). Begin in a face-down position, with the tops of the feet flat on the floor. Place the chin firmly into the mat. Make fists with the hands and place them, flat side into the ground, together, beneath the top of the thighs. Inhale as you raise the right leg, without bending the knee or twisting the hip. Hold this posture and retain the breath for a count of 5. Exhale as you lower the leg slowly. Repeat with the left leg, alternating for 3 to 6 times each.

Now you are ready for the Full Locust. Prepare the position of the body exactly as in Half. Be sure to stretch the chin forward as much as possible. Take a long, cleansing breath. As you inhale, begin to raise both legs, concentrating on keeping the breath in unison with the movement. Gradually lift the legs while stretching them out, being cautious to keep the upward movement smooth. Hold the position for at least 5 seconds, exhaling as you lower your legs. Completely relax and regulate your breathing before repeating the pose, 3 to 6 times.

Salabhasana increases concentration and mental control of the body. As you deepen your practice of the posture, don't get hung up on the strength that it requires, but rather the strength and energy that it produces. Don't be discouraged if you find your legs do not lift up very high at first; persevere and realize your progress in time.

Regular asana practice tones not just the obvious physical body. More subtly, it provides the practitioner with enhanced mental and intellectual poise and capacity, emotional stability and focus, and opens the spiritual capabilities beyond your wildest imagination.

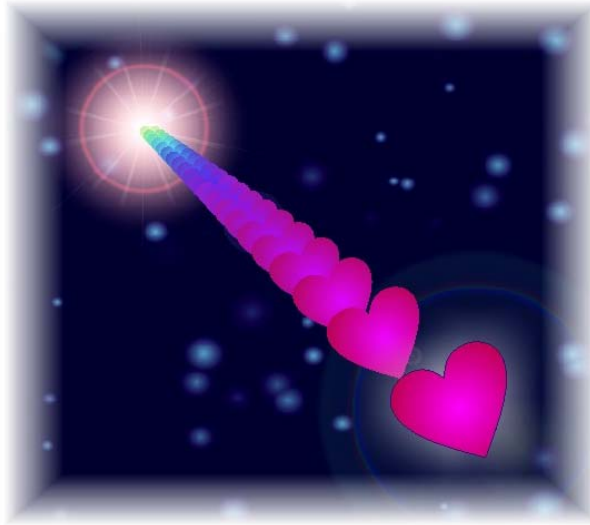
Spread peace through Yoga and Meditation
Shanti, Shanti, OM



*Bette is the Vice President of the Meditation Society of America
She can be contacted at bette@meditationsociety.com*

Psalm of the Bursting Heart

By Mark McCloskey



This moment, only this moment, this gentle moment adrift in the void of the universe,
there is a heart bursting forth in liquid light in a plasma of love.

From just here and now there is a bolt of energy sailing freely into the soul of all being and all beings.

I cannot contain this, I can just express this as I am able, the expression of which is so limited,
which is so small and yet contains every word, every thought, every exasperated emotion.

Take this now Worldheart, take this and taste; eat; digest this which comes only from you
and is now returned in the sublime presence veiled as truth, love and life.

In my smallness I entreat you to drink from your own Pure Silence, which is me and thou and all.

Would that I could caress you now in joyful touch, in a never ending embrace.

How I long for you to see your own blossoming into the infinity which you already are.

I understand the fear, the rejection, the coils and snares
into which and out of which you have birthed and died.

Only for this millisecond, will you please just stop and see
what has always been your host, your echo and your target.

And in that seeing, look past the seen, the words,
the ideas and the memories and allow just the seeing itself.

see *Psalm of the Bursting Heart* pg. 9

from *Psalm of the Bursting Heart* pg. 8

I know you will find me. I trust in your own groping. I live in your very hope.

Return now to the gentleness.

Bathe in the warmth of this bursting heart, just for a sec!

There you are now.

You, I, and we.

One

May all beings enjoy this moment

Mark shines more light on Pure Silence at

www.puresilence.org

“Burst of Love” Artwork by Chy



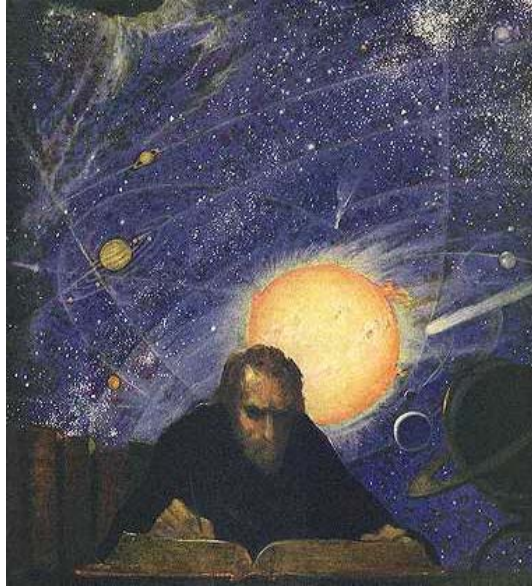
Elevating Art

By Bob Rose

I'm becoming more and more convinced that art may be one of the most powerful ways to transmit consciousness-elevating knowledge. It certainly is one of the earliest, as the cave paintings in France demonstrate, and "works" without any language barriers. Like the greatest words of wisdom, enlightening art transcends the mind and goes right to the heart. In this issue, we have been greatly blessed by being able to share the brilliance of Chy Marshall, Andrew Stewart, Rassouli, Atmara Rebecca Cloe, and Francene Hart. I suggest that you not only visit their sites, but also consider buying a print or original work, or commission something specific, so you can enjoy and benefit from their insight and light everafter.



“The Wayfarer” Artwork by Rassouli



Suggested Reading

By Rusty Morgan

Two books reviewed this issue, for starting the path and completing it.
First:

Lonny J. Brown has put out a beautiful gift: A book that fits nicely into the waiting room, lobby or coffee table. "Meditation- Beginners Questions & Answers". This book answers the FAQs of mediation for beginners. And for experienced mediators who get asked those questions;

What is Meditation?

How do I meditate?

What does it do for me?

Just hand the questioner this book. The beauty of buying this as a gift is you get to read it too.

<http://www.holistic.com/lonny/products.htm>

And for those who have started the pathway of the realized beings throughout history, Andrew Cohen shows us how in a simple, short, but powerful book. "Embracing Heaven and Earth". If your caterpillar is ready to become a butterfly, this is the handbook. But beware; once you enter the pupae stage outlined in the first chapter, you can never be a caterpillar again.

<http://www.andrewcohen.org/home/default.asp>

Ed Note: I once mentioned to Rusty that I was going to identify him as "Canada's smartest man" in one of these under the article blurbs. He humbly replied that I shouldn't do this, as that would be "hubris". Unbeknownst to him, I then had to hurry to a dictionary to check out what "hubris" meant, thus proving my point. To see for yourself, please check out Rusty's website at: <http://www.serendipityhappens.com>



Membership Information

A membership in the Meditation Society of America is \$29.95 and includes a Meditation Is Infinite Love T-shirt (usually \$14.95), a copy of the Guided Meditation CD (usually \$13.95), and a subscription to The Inner Traveler, usually \$9.95 (6 issues/one year). The membership now also includes a CD of the first 10 issues of The Inner Traveler (usually \$9.95). The CD has over 150 pages of the best articles and art ever assembled dealing with meditation. For more information about the T-shirt, the URL is <http://www.meditationsociety.com/tshirt.html>

For more information about the Guided Meditation CD, the URL is <http://www.meditationsociety.com/cd.html>

Please consider helping us in our effort to share meditation techniques and concepts from all traditions, with all that seek this liberating knowledge. To become a member of the Society, the URL is <http://www.meditationsociety.com/merch.html>

We also invite you to use our Yahoo Group to ask and answer questions, share your experiences, or just to follow the discussions of meditators from all over the world. The URL is <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/meditationsocietyofamerica>

Please let us know if you have any suggestions as to how we can further share meditation knowledge. It is our aim to help you experience inner peace, self-control, wisdom, and bliss. If our projects lead to this, we will have achieved our goal.

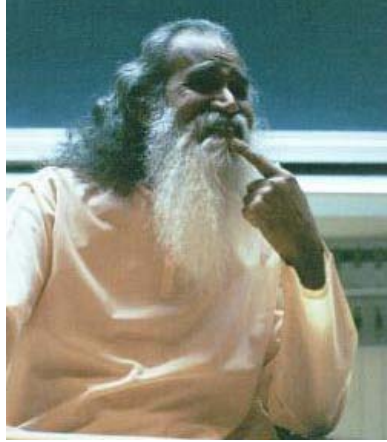


Put It In Perspective

By Kir Li Molari

We are one of 6 billion people that are one of billions of species of living things on Earth. Our planet is one of several circling a medium sized star that is one of hundreds of billions of stars in the Milky Way. Our galaxy is one of hundreds of billions of galaxies in our galactic cluster, and our galactic cluster is one of hundreds of billions of galactic clusters that comprise our universe, which is one of an untold number of universes. So just how important is that problem you're worried about?

Meditation Tips



Self Mastery

By Swami Satchidananda

As human beings, the biggest task we face is training the mind. The great thinkers have said, "It is easy to win victories over all the continents, to conquer the entire world, but the biggest victory ever won is over your own mind." If you can master your mind and make it listen to you, obey, then you are a great conqueror. Not otherwise. If you go to an executive office somewhere and see the director of a big company, he or she might be even bragging, "Look at that. A thousand people are working under me. Just with the twist of my finger, I can command people. I can make them stop or work or do anything. It's all under my control." The CEO brags about it. Let me tell you a story. Once upon a time a CEO was really bragging. I looked at the CEO and said, "I'm really glad to hear that and to see just how powerful and influential you are. But when you were telling me that, did you see that somebody was giggling at you?" The CEO questioned, "Who was that? There's nobody here except you and me." "No," I said, "I saw your cigarette laughing at you." The CEO was startled and said in disbelief, "My cigarette laughed at me?" "Yes," I replied. "You control all these thousand people, but the cigarette controls you. Without the cigarette in your hand you cannot seem to do a thing here. You are a slave to your cigarette. You may be the boss to all your employees but you are a slave to your cigarette. Where is the control?"

That is the importance of training the mind. Because if we are not the master of our own mind, then we are nothing but a slave in this world. In fact, most of our problems are caused by the lack of control of mind. Sometimes we know certain things are not good for us. Still the mind says, "No, no, no, no, I love it. Come on, eat this, eat that!" It is as if the mind is commanding us and we cannot resist. We seem to be very fearful of something from the outside coming in and taking control of our minds. We read a lot about cults and brainwashing and mind control. But it seems we are more careful to retain our external "freedom" than safeguarding our internal freedom. We can have all the freedom if we just know how to master our own mind.

Let's look at another example of lack of self-mastery. Imagine that you have struggled with overeating for some time. You have recently resolved that you were going to eat only to satisfy your true hunger and

see *Meditation Tips* pg. 13

that you would stop eating after doing so. And this is a problem you have really struggled with, because you have a “sweet tooth” and tend to overeat with sweets. The mind will make so many excuses to do what it wants to do. Anyhow, soon after making this resolve, you have eaten an enjoyable and satisfying lunch. You are full and now want to get up from the table. But suddenly, your sister arrives and she brings apple pie to the table. You are not hungry anymore, but somehow you convince yourself, that just this once, and only because your sister baked the pie, you’ll eat a slice. So you eat it, and you tell her it’s wonderful and you really did enjoy it. So she tells you, “Why not have just one more, small piece.” You think to yourself, “Well, that can’t do too much harm. Tomorrow, I’ll get back on track.” See how the mind tricks us!

With good mental training, you learn how to develop the tools and skills to cope in these situations. You would learn that you could have told your sister, “What a wonderful and sweet thing you did to bring this pie. It looks so delicious. I am quite full right now and I would appreciate your support in helping me to keep my resolve to eat only when I am hungry and only to the point of relieving that hunger. So, please allow me to take a piece of pie and put it aside for my next meal. So that when I am hungry I will really, really be able to enjoy this fabulous treat. Thank you so much.” The undisciplined mind tries to continually trick us. It is a constant fight and struggle. We don't have to fall sick, we don't have to feel bad, feel disappointed in ourselves, or depressed! That is how you learn to develop mastery over the mind.



We won't have any mental or physical problems if only we have that kind of control over our own minds. Nothing is impossible to achieve with that kind of mastery. No challenge is impossible for a person like that. Because you created the problems you have and you are the boss. You did it, you can undo it. If you have the capacity to do something, don't you have the capacity to undo it? Tell yourself, “It's my work, I am the boss.” We can do it.

We need that kind of dynamic strength in our mind. That is real self-confidence. Where there is hope there is everything. Where there is faith, there is everything. Didn't the Bible say that? “If you have an ounce of faith, you can move mountains.” Is that just some sort of joke? No, it's absolutely true. People have proven that proverb. And it's not the monopoly of a handful of people. You cannot say, “Oh, only you can do that.” That's how the mind tricks us. Instead we should be able to say, “If you can do it, I can do.” It's true. You can achieve anything that you apply your mind to fully and completely. We should learn to develop that kind of mental resolve, that strength and confidence.

Swamiji is the founder of the Integral Yoga Institutes. For more information about Swami Satchidananda and about Integral Yoga, see the Yogaville web site at <http://www.yogaville.org>

Meditation 24 x 7

Give Me 5 Minutes

By Chy Marshall



As creative director of MecaCorp it's my responsibility to turn out brilliantly creative designs and ideas on a daily basis. My career isn't 9-5 with weekends off. It's long hours of pouring my heart and soul into my work and I love it. I wouldn't trade it for any other career in the world.

But it has its price. The stress factor is very high. The responsibility to produce creatively on a moment's notice is quite demanding. There are times when I find that I feel drained of all creative energy and there isn't always the luxury of walking away from my desk to hit the treadmills or spend a quiet hour in the gorgeous hills of middle Tennessee seeking inspiration.

My solution for those moments when I have difficulty finding that creative energy and a fresh idea is to take what I've termed the mini-meditation break. I lean back in my office chair and tune into the atmospheres station that plays relaxing, soothing music. I close my eyes and breath. Shutting down my active thoughts I put my trust in my inner self to clear away my mental clutter and open the door for my creative energy to return to me. I don't think of the project before me. In those magical 5 minutes I let go of the pressure to perform and I open my mind to my true self, that part of me which is one with the Divine, the original creator, and I allow the answers to come from within.

While you may not have the same pressures and stresses that I experience with my career it's unlikely that you have a life without stress and demands that threaten from time to time to over take you. When those moments come I'd like to encourage you to give 5 minutes to your true self, your divine self, and trust that the solution you need at that moment will follow if you open yourself up to allow the answers to come.

Chyrel Marshall is an artist and Creative Director of MecaCorp.

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Her art can be enjoyed at

www.mecabrush.com

and at

<http://www.rebelartist.com/seller/bio?rid=2149&mt=CL>

54321 Artwork by Chy

THE ULTIMATE INTIMACY

By Vicki Woodyard



Knowing yourself as the Self is the ultimate intimacy. Unconditional love for yourself arises. You don't do anything but sit in the silence, inviting peace. I usually say, "I am in God's presence now," and relax into the silence that is always immediately there.

It took me a long time to get to this place. I studied truth for years and years and then one day I had effortless access--sort of like an ATM machine with no limits. I have had no enlightenment experience; rather, one crisis after another over a period of many years.

Lately I have been reading many accounts of people who have awakened and I know that I am not there yet. "Are we there yet...are we there yet?" ask the spiritual-seeking children in the backseat of the enlightenment limo. Those who have arrived have a lot to say about the silence. Much of it is helpful and most is not.

The most helpful information comes from those who do not wax overly eloquent. Although I have read tons of tomes, usually they did not have the energy contained in some of the pithier statements. I guess it's like the guy said, "if I had had more time, I could have written you a shorter letter."

Find an energy statement that works for you and work it. Here are a few of my favorites:

Let it have you.

Let everything unfold.

I choose to love myself.

And finally, meditate on the word inevitability.

We will get there when we get there--inevitably.

Vicki's website has more she'd like to share at: www.bobwoodyard.com

"Catch a Falling Star" is one of many uplifting artworks by Francene Hart that can be found at <http://www.francenehart.com>

Filling

By Alan Fletcher

One day a Tibetan Lama was speaking to a group of monks and, to make a point, pulled out a large jar, set it on the table in front of him, produced a few fist sized rocks, and placed them, one by one, into the jar. When no more rocks would fit inside, he asked, "Is this jar full?" Everyone said, "Yes". He reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel, dumped some in and shook the jar, the gravel worked between the rocks. Again he asked: "Is this jar full?" The monks were catching on. "Probably not," one answered. "Good!" he replied and reached under the table and brought out a bucket of sand. He dumped the sand into the jar until it filled all the crevices. Once more he asked: "Is this jar full?" "No!" the monks shouted. "Good!" he said and grabbed a pitcher of water and poured until the jar was filled to the brim. Then he asked, "What is the point of this illustration?" One young monk responded, "The point is no matter how full your day you can always fit more things in." "No," the speaker replied, "The point is that if you don't put the big rocks in first you'll never get them in at all. What are the priorities in your life?"

*Reproduced from The Art of Looking Sideways by Alan Fletcher © 2001
Phaidon Press Ltd. £24.95, ISBN 0 7148 3449 1. www.phaidon.com
Alan is one of the founders of the English design firm Fletcher Forbes Gill
and the internationally recognized design firm Pentagram*



"Priorities" Artwork by Chy

from *Contemplation Courier* pg. 18

REDUCE DRUG DEPENDENCY & SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Meditation has proven to be a healthful addiction and detoxification therapy, and a "natural high" alternative to alcohol and drugs. It elevates mood and lifts awareness naturally, with no side effects (and no cost).

QUIET THE MIND, STABILIZE THE EMOTIONS AND RESTORE WELLBEING

The mental peace afforded by meditation helps replace old, automatic reactions for new, freely chosen responses, a generally easier and healthier way to live. Gradually replacing the incessant striving of the surface consciousness, meditation brings a sense of equanimity that is available through almost no other means. Experienced meditators typically associate the practice with a sense of centeredness and connection to their source of energy and inspiration.

DEVELOP AUTO-REGULATION AND PRO-ACTIVE PREVENTION

Due to an increased internal awareness, a meditator has a better chance of noticing systemic imbalances and correcting them earlier than a non-meditator. This auto-regulation can be especially useful for preventing the onset of migraine headaches, asthma attacks, and high blood pressure.

DEVELOP INSIGHT, CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING, AND INTUITION

Artists, writers, scientists, musicians and mathematicians have been known to use meditation as a vital part of their creative process. Great teachers as diverse and accomplished as Mahatma Gandhi, Dag Hammerschold, Thomas Merton, The Dalai Lama, Ram Dass, Thich Nat Hanh, and Deepak Chopra all recommend and practice meditation.

ENHANCE MENTAL HEALTH

On the Mental/ Emotional level, meditation can help reduce anxiety and overcome depression, creating more satisfaction with life. It helps decrease habitual reactivity, and enhance coping skills and flexibility. Typical results include reduced defensiveness and aggression, greater sense of peace, confidence, and more patience, optimism, and humor. Often, meditation becomes the doorway to a source of inner strength and guidance. It can be the catalyst for a greater insight into one's purpose and role in life. This "big picture" outlook gives us a healthful perspective on our problems and pains, greater self-esteem, more energy, better communication, and the feeling of joy that comes from growing and learning about life.

PROMOTE SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Meditation is being successfully employed in educational, athletic, medical, rehabilitative, and psychotherapeutic settings, but the ultimate "benefit" is personal growth and spiritual transformation. The meditative spiritual experience is typically characterized by a sense unity, timelessness, and transcendence. Recent developments in neuroscience indicate that the human brain is hard-wired for religious/spiritual experience, and that meditation is an effective switch on the circuit.

*From "Meditation - Beginner's Questions & Answers," by Lonny J. Brown, Ph.D., www.SelfHelpGuides.com
Lonny also wrote "Enlightenment In Our Time" www.BookLocker.com/LonnyBrown
and "Self-Actuated Healing" (www.Amazon.com).
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Contemplation Courier

Present

Guest Editorial

Vol. 1 No. 7

Why Meditate?

Lonny J. Brown, Ph.D.

First, meditation is good for your health and good health makes all the other benefits a lot more accessible and enjoyable. Meditation is both preventative and remedial in a wide range of systemic disorders, including those of the muscles, nerves, and the circulatory, digestive, hormonal and respiratory systems. Meditation is all-around good for you. Your mother would approve.

REDUCE STRESS AND RELAX

Meditation is a natural tranquilizer. Just the physical act of sitting upright and balanced, with eyes closed, and focusing on one's breath, immediately triggers the clinical Relaxation Response, including reduced muscle tension, slower heart beat, lower blood pressure, less oxygen consumption, and quieter brainwaves. The soothing benefits of meditation can be felt almost immediately, especially in your head, neck and shoulders. Long-term practice brings even deeper levels of relaxation.

CONTROL PAIN

Meditation releases endorphins - the body's own natural pain killers and mood elevators - as part of the meditation-induced Relaxation Response. Meditation students at pain control clinics consistently report significant reductions in pain.

INCREASE CIRCULATION

As muscles relax, blood vessels dilate, delivering more fuel and oxygen to cells, and removing waste more efficiently. You can feel the increase in energy.

LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE

Meditation can be the "treatment of choice" for hypertension. Free, easy, safe, and self-reliant, it can replace risky blood pressure medications. Work with your doctor on a monitored phase-out program.

BALANCE THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM

By reducing arousal of the autonomic nervous system, meditation creates a unique hypo-metabolic state that allows all organs and systems to rest and regenerate. Both immediate and long-term benefits accrue. Science has learned that although overall oxygen intake drops during meditation, the brain receives up to 60 percent more, significantly improving clarity of mind, receptivity, and learning capacity. Researchers also believe that right and left brain hemisphere activity is balanced by meditation, enhancing memory, intuition, and creativity.

SUPPORT THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

By increasing white blood cells, the body's immune system is strengthened through meditation, a phenomenon now being clinically studied by medical science, and revising our approach to cancer, AIDS, and other immune disorders.

REINFORCE OTHER THERAPIES AND HEALING MODALITIES

Meditation enhances counseling therapy, cognitive and behavioral stress management programs, biofeedback, guided visualization, and other auto-regulatory practices.

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