

Freedom



Inside

**A Newsletter For Prisoners
Based on the Conversations with God Material**

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Reinventing a Life

First of all, let me thank all those who wrote to me with loving thoughts, comments and good wishes during my mother's last few weeks. I really appreciated all that loving energy that came to me through letters or directly from Spirit to Spirit.

Thank you.

My mother passed on May 1st. Her death was very peaceful and loving, exactly what I wanted for her.

Coming back home after her funeral, I found myself living in a house that felt huge and empty. I had the same feelings about my days. They seemed endless and somehow meaningless.

And I thought that this may be a little, a very little bit, what some soldiers feel coming back from the front. My whole focus for 3 months had been on making sure my mom was comfortable and at peace. All I did day and night felt extremely important, was very intense. And all of a sudden I had nothing 'intense' to do. All of a sudden I had nothing 'important' to do.

After a few weeks of rest, I emerged not quite knowing what

I was going to do with my life. It was a strange feeling. Mainly because I had all possible opportunities opened in front of me.

And then I thought of some of you guys.

"Having complete freedom to do anything I want feels.....strange, exciting, scary"

It's not a comfortable feeling. As a matter of fact, it is possibly the very opposite of comfort since there is a powerful force, inertia, that pulls us to stay just as we are, to continue to do what we are doing, to not rock the boat regardless of how unrewarding it may be.

There are few moments in our lives that are particularly open to making completely new choices. I am living such a moment right now. It's a little unsettling to say the least.

Having complete freedom to do anything I want feels.....strange, exciting, scary. My life is so very nice here that thinking of changing it is very uncomfortable.

The problem is that this comfort feels a bit stifling. If I don't make changes, I will keep my comfort level high. I can easily imagine myself staying here and doing chores, writing Freedom Inside every other month and just enjoying my beautiful surroundings.

But this comfort feels like closing a door at this point. It feels okay but not creative.

I decided to share this decision making process with you guys in the hope that you will relate with the discomfort of changing our ways.

I am 59 years old. Both my parents lived long lives (my father passed at 81, my mother at 92). So I can presumably live another 30 years, give or take. That's a long time to stay put not so much physically but spiritually. I feel that this is what would happen if I stayed here. This is unacceptable to me. I choose to make a change, see what doors open for me, what feels right.

Weeks ago, I told the Universe that I was open to change, open to grow spiritually in the best possible way.

I waited for an answer, knowing
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Reinventing a Life

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that something would come up eventually.

How do we know when something is right? How do we know when the ideas that pop into our head are the best possible outcome, the most powerful choice?

None of you will be surprised to hear that the way I knew I had to look into a particular choice is that when I thought about it, I felt excited for the first time since my mom's passing. I felt good about it. Feeling good is very big for me. I just love feeling good. :-)

So I will be going to visit friends in Ashland, Oregon. I went there years ago and felt such a connection with the place that I knew there was something for me there. The time was not right to move there back then so I am going to see if the time is right now.

I believe it is. I believe my life will take a profound turn now. This turn feels good....most of the time. The rest of the time, it's just plain scary, almost overwhelming when I think of all I have to do to move there.

Moving will be unsettling...by definition. It will shake my life, what I do each and every day. This is an amazingly powerful time for me, an extraordinarily creative time.

What would you do if you had all doors open in front of you? What would you choose for yourself? And of all those choices, which can you make today, wherever you are at this very moment?

Which of the limits we put on what we choose to do every day come from inertia? From fear of change? Can we make of this moment, a moment of complete creation? This is what I wish for you.

*With much love,
Janine*

An invitation for you to join ...

A FEAST FOR YOUR SOUL

By Valerie Skonie

"What nine months does for the embryo

Forty early mornings

Will do for your growing awareness."

Rumi

This article is an invitation for you to join people around the world next winter in an event known as A Winter Feast for the Soul: forty days of spiritual practice that will change your life. 2010 will be our third annual Winter Feast for the Soul. The event begins on January 15 and ends on February 23 each year.

The first Winter Feast for the Soul began in a small community in Idaho in January 2008. The previous summer, a woman read a poem by a 13th Century Sufi mystic and teacher named Jelaluddin Rumi. The poem started a series of questions: What if this was true? What if forty early mornings could change our awareness? She already had a daily spiritual practice of meditation and she knew how it had changed her life once she was absolutely faithful to it. How could she bring this to her local community? How could she inspire them to try it on their own?

In January 2008 about 150 people gathered daily in small groups, or alone in their own homes, to share the practice of meditation. The secret was that they made a commitment to themselves and to one another that they would be faithful to their practice for forty days. Word spread rapidly and people around the country, and the world, wrote and asked if they could join the Idaho group. And many did join.

In 2009 it is estimated that nearly 10,000 people in 29 different countries joined the Winter Feast for the Soul, including 10 men housed in an incarceration center in Boise Idaho. Of these ten men one wrote regularly and submitted drawings of saints that came through his practice. "We are doing sacred work," he wrote. "What we are doing will change the world. Thank you for letting me be part of this. It is changing my life."

In preparation for the 2010 Winter Feast for the Soul, we are reaching out to prisoners everywhere to join us in this great experiment. We invite you to sit in meditation or prayer for forty minutes

each day for forty days: January 15-February 23, 2010. We invite you to quiet your mind and find that "monastery within" where the secret of who you really are is hidden. It could change your life. You could find that your heart is filled with peace once your mind is quieted.

Pope John the 23rd wrote a letter to the world in 1963 on the topic of Peace on Earth (Pacem in Terris) where he said: "We will not have peace on our planet until there is peace in the heart of every person." By finding our own personal inner place of peace, we make a huge contribution to the world and to the peace that it so badly needs. What you do makes a difference.

WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW?

January 15 2010 seems like a long time away. As I write this letter to you on June 22, 2009, it is 207 days till the next Winter Feast...29 weeks. You can begin finding that place of peace inside of yourself beginning right now, today. Here is what I would recommend so that you start building your sacred inner place now. Let's call it your quiet time.

BUILDING SPIRITUAL MUSCLE THROUGH PERSONAL QUIET TIME:

- Begin by sitting quietly with your eyes closed for five minutes a day for the next week or two.
- It is best to do this in the morning before you begin the day, and perhaps again in the evening just before going to sleep.
- When you feel ready for more, increase your time to ten minutes each day.
- Then increase your quiet time to twenty minutes a day and continue to do that till around November 1st.
- Beginning around November 1st, increase your time to 30 minutes each day.

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Spiritual Path / Life
from Questions and Answers on
Conversations with God
by Neale Donald Walsch
(compiled in 1999 from letters received and answered by Mr. Walsch)

For many years now I have sought to walk a spiritual path. It has not been easy. What should have been easy—what, by all rights, ought to have been easy (shouldn't getting to God be the easiest thing of all?)—turned out to be very difficult. Until recently.

I see now that this was because for most of those years, I was not clear on where my spiritual path was. Still, I knew I wanted to be on some kind of path, so I walked a path laid out for me by others. Only recently have I decided to follow the path of my heart. Only recently have I come to understand that it is okay to do so.

That was a great revelation. It was life-changing. God wasn't going to get mad at me if I made a mistake, got it wrong, went astray, missed the boat. I wasn't going to burn in the everlasting fires of hell if I failed to discover and adopt the

one true religion, worshipped improperly, or didn't worship at all.

So what is it like to walk the spiritual path? Look to your own life to find the answer. You've been walking the spiritual path since you were born. Since before you were born. There is no way no to be walking the spiritual path, because there is no other path to walk. All of life is spiritual, and every step you take is a step on the spiritual path. You are a spiritual being, and everything that you think, say, and do is a spiritual event.

Where will your path take you today? Wherever that is, I am sure it will be a great adventure. Life is a lot of things, but it's rarely boring.

Neale

On Not Giving Up
Waiting for God to Answer

Dear Neale: I feel very frustrated. I feel very confused. Is God the God of the Bible (vengeful, judgmental, vindictive), or is He the God of your books (couldn't care less about your daily existence, just go out and play)? I feel broken. I feel alone. I've prayed all my life and never felt His presence or a response. I've run the gamut of praying for 'things' up to what I need now: peace within myself. I've read the Bible, I've cried, I've begged, I've screamed, I've been angry, all to no avail. I've given up. I've asked Him, in Jesus' name, to take over my life. I've told Him how very tired I am—all to no avail. I've paid \$150 for a mantra, \$250 for a psychiatrist—nothing! I've tried to meditate for years, but can never quiet my thoughts, ever! My self-disgust is growing stronger and stronger. I have no idea why I wrote this. I'm still seeking, seeking, seeking.
 MM, Silverthorne, CO

Well, MM, it sounds like you are exactly where I was when I started having my conversations with God. That's super! There is no better place to be than fed up. That's the place of new beginnings. That's the place of letting go. That's the place of "giving up." You are giving up what's been going on so far, and getting ready now to create a new

reality.

I know what you're going through right now, M, and what you have been going through these many years. Now, just as you are giving up everything, there is one thing more I'd like you to give up, my friend, and then you will be totally ready. I'd like you to give up your idea that you can't find an answer. I'm here to tell you that you can. God will never let you down, and if you have not received any response from God before, it is not because He hasn't answered, it is because, like me, you have been unable to hear the response. But trust me. God is responding. Right now. And every day and moment of your life.

I'd like to take a look here at how you have characterized God, though, because I think you've got Her all wrong. You've paraphrased CWG 1 to say that God "couldn't care less about your daily experience" and just wants you to "go out and play." That would be a mis-characterization, M, and I don't want you to hang in there with that. God does care about your experience. God simply doesn't care how you go about creating it.

Imagine loving parents watching their children play Tag or Hide-and-Seek. It matters not to them what games are invented. But they do care about whether the children

are safe and having a good time. So they make sure the yard is safe, and, if the children get hurt and call out for help, the parents are right there, running out to the yard to see what's up, and to make everything better. It is not so very different with God. She gives us the toys with which to fashion the most wonderful "games" (read that: life) and a safe place in which to play. Then, He leaves us alone to have our experience, and has absolutely no preference whether we play Tag, or Hide-and-Seek. But if we call for help, God is there—right there—to make everything better.

That is not someone who "doesn't care" about our daily experience. That is someone who loves us enough to give us our freedom to do as we wish, and promises to be there for us whenever we need Him. Sounds like a pretty neat God to me.

So now, call on God to answer you. Ask God to show you a sign, give you some help, and provide you with some special insight that might help you now. But be on the lookout. Her response may come in a form other than the one you are expecting. It could be the lyrics of the next song you hear, the story line of the next movie you see, the

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text of the next book that falls into your hands. It could be the chance utterance of a friend on the street, or a thought that comes to you in the middle of the night. So watch! Look! Listen! For you do not know the hour, nor the form, in which God will come with your word of encouragement.

Can You Speed Up Enlightenment?

Dear Mr. Walsch: Is there any way one can speed up the process of enlightenment, e.g. a “Cliff Notes” shortcut, or the use of the powerful “I AM” commands? Steve, Saline, MI.

Dear Steve, The fastest way I know to “speed up” the process of enlightenment is to begin to seriously conjure the grandest version of the greatest vision you ever held about yourself and Who You Are. What does that look like? How would you dress? What would you eat? Where would you go? Who would you hang out with? What things would you do? (And not do?) What would you say? Get very specific here. In your highest idea about yourself, what are the answers to these questions? Write them down. Take pages, if you have to, to explain yourself to yourself. Then, once you’ve got that picture drawn, step into it. Wear the clothes. Do the things. Say the words. (This is where the I AM commands come in!) And do, say, and think nothing else.

This will seem presumptuous at first, because, believe me, your highest idea about yourself is pretty high. And people all around you will wonder what in the name of Sam Hill you are doing. Ignore them. Forget them. They know not of Who You Are. But remember this. Should you move into this vision, people will fall away on your right, and fall away on your left. You could feel

deserted by those you thought loved you the most. Even your family could denounce you. I remember how hard it was even to make the really easy shift in what I was eating. Half my family made fun of me. It was crazy. You’d have thought I’d committed this huge sin, because I was changing the way I was eating. But, you see, what I was now choosing to eat really bugged them, because they saw it as making a judgment of them, even when I was doing nothing of the sort.

Your life will never be the same. The heaviness will go right out of it. You will be on the fast track toward enlightenment.

If you feel you still want a practical, hand-on tool, I suggest the *Guidebook to Book 1*. If you faithfully do each and every exercise, process, and assignment in that guidebook from beginning to end, it is my thought that you will have given yourself the tools and mechanisms with which to make the wisdom in *Conversations with God* functional in your daily life—which, of course, will also hasten your journey to enlightenment.

I Want My Behaviors to Change, But I Can't Seem to Make It Happen!

Dear Neale: I am having some trouble, and I wonder if you could help me. The difficulty is, frankly, my own personality. I seem to snap at everyone, bring other people up short, exhibit enormous impatience with ordinary everyday occurrences, and, in general, make myself a pretty difficult guy to get along with.

What is amazing about this is that it is getting worse rather than getting better since reading your book. I mean, I was always an impatient sort, and found myself frequently making others “wrong”, but after reading CWG 1 had convinced myself to change, that this was not the person I wanted to be. I even went so far

as to declare that I would never again act insensitively to others and their needs—after which I promptly did exactly that, more than ever before. I don’t seem to be able to stop this abrasive behavior!

I know that deep down inside of me is a person everyone could love—and some people actually do, believe it or not— but while I feel some love in my life, I also feel that no one actually likes me. There is a difference, and I sense that unless people are in my innermost circle and know Who I really Am, they dislike me. And, as I said, I seem to be even more powerless than ever to stop my unlikeable behaviors. Can you help? I thought reading your book gave me great insights, but when I try to apply them, things go haywire. Nick, Kansas City, MO.

Dear Nick, Thank you for your transparency. It takes courage and strength to look at oneself, and openly and candidly assess what is going on. That is not a small first step, but a giant first step (one that many people never take), and I commend you.

Now first let me tell you that I am not surprised that things have gotten worse before they have gotten better. CWG teaches that the moment you declare yourself to be, do or have anything, everything unlike it comes into the space. That is because in the absence of that which you are not, that which You Are is not. (You may want to reread that sentence, Nick, if its meaning slipped past you.)

In the absence of cold, warm is not. In the absence of up, down is not. In the absence of short, the experience of long does not and cannot exist. So the universe will always bring you the experience of that which you are not, in order to create a context within which you may more magnificently experience That Which You Are.

Now there is a way out of this
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INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Freedom Inside now contains 12 pages. We're growing and I just love it.

A while back I bought an internet course called The Thomas Messages that I found wonderfully uplifting. I am now choosing to share this course with you in these new pages. There are 16 messages in all, I will include one in each issue until all 16 messages have been shared with you.

If some of you would like to receive the messages more quickly, please go to www.emissaryoflight.com and for a suggested donation of 50 US dollars, you will receive one of these messages every few days.

Here is how James Twyman, the author of the course, describes it.

THE THOMAS MESSAGES:

In 2002, a book was published called "Emissary of Love: the Psychic Children Speak to the World" chronicling my journey into the mountains of Bulgaria to meet a group of children who possess amazing psychic powers. One of those children, a young boy named Thomas, claimed to be able to send messages and insights over great distances, even to the other side of the world. I didn't remember this until I was sitting in a hot tub some months later and "felt him" inside me.

It was the first time I ever had an experience like this, and it was the beginning of a long discourse on the role of the New Children (sometimes called the Indigo Children) and their role in healing the world. These amazing lessons, all from the mind of Thomas, are the result of that dialogue. He claims that there are thousands of children in the world today who have the same gift, the ability to "align" with others who can then help them complete their Great Work.

If you are interested in learning this, or connecting with one of these young masters, then this course is the way. Thomas shares insights that will help you live a fulfilled life, and even teaches how to enter the "Grid" where the children work together.

It is important for you to decide why you are taking this course. Is it because you want to perform miracles? Do you want to feel more powerful than you have ever allowed yourself to be in the past? If these ideas approach the reasons you are reading this right now, then it would be best for you to stop. Find something else to occupy your time. You will not achieve these things if they are the goal you seek. However, if you are reading this because you have decided that you are on this planet to be an "Instrument of Peace," and to heal the world by healing your own mind, then please continue. If you open your heart and mind to these simple lessons and dedicate yourself to this mission, then you will achieve it. Guaranteed!

And here is the paradox: If you do seek these higher ideals, to love and to realize that you are already whole and enlightened, then the miracles will surely follow, and you will realize yourself to be more powerful than you have ever allowed yourself to be in the past. They are not the goals, but they are the products of a higher goal. You are here to learn how to apply the force we call LOVE. It is as easy as learning a certain technology that has been known by the mystics of many spiritual traditions for thousands of years. Now it is your turn to learn it, then apply it to your life.

Message Thirteen

We have come a long way together, and I can feel the momentum building toward a final climax. It is hard for me to know exactly what that means, for nothing has been planned, at least not by me. Every week I wonder what the next step will be, where we are being led by the Children, and what it will look like when we finally arrive. I can feel so much happening beneath the surface, as if the words are not the real measure of our progress. This is true this week more than ever before. As I transcribed the words from Thomas and reread them, I had a hard time following his thoughts. But I felt something new, or perhaps deeper, and I remembered what he said about the multidimensional aspect of this course. Sometimes all we have to do is open our hearts to what is being offered, and an alchemical response occurs. This is sometimes hard to believe and certainly takes faith. The proof is ultimate within each one of us, and we must decide these things on our own.

I remember when I started writing the original lessons for the Beloved Community almost three years ago. I had a general idea where the course would lead us and how we would arrive at the final experience. I can't say that about this course though, and yet I believe it is leading us somewhere very real. As I said once before, I feel the energy of Thomas' message, and then I

translate that energy through my own words and mind. That is why it sometimes sounds like my voice, because it requires effort from both of us. Ultimately, the Children are trying to do the same thing with all of us, open the channel so that their message might live through all our lives. I believe it is happening exactly as it should, and I therefore choose to not judge things by my old standards. Better to watch and observe, and see where I am at the end. The only measure is love, and if this moves us to a place where we can extend this to a world hungry for love, then it will have been the greatest success.

Thomas' Message:

In the last lesson you were asked to spend time SEEING the Light within others, then KNOWING it within yourself.

"This is the [Beloved], present within me now."

The more you practice this the easier it will be for you to realize that the Light you are SEEING is your Light, and the Beloved is within you now. There is no other, only God. There is no limitation, only eternity. This is what it means to be enlightened, and it is the only place the Children are leading you.

I once said to you that your willingness to SEE what is real is what makes you a miracle worker. It is not something you can offer anyone but yourself, because it is what will make you free. And freedom is the choice you must make if you are to stand beside us and help us complete the work that needs to be completed. As long you are held captive by your own mind you will not be of true service.

Are you willing to risk everything you thought was real to be free and join the Children in their work? Sometimes this is what it takes, and it may even seem like a sacrifice. It may feel like you are being asked to give up what you love in this world. But being a miracle worker is not a sacrifice at all, because it is what you were born to be.

Anything less than this won't do, and so you are not risking anything that has any value. But you will be accepting everything of value, for it has already accepted you.

Now does God turn back to you to witness your acceptance.

I would ask that you continue last lesson's practice, for it has the power to naturally move you to the space you are seeking now. No other practice is required. This lesson,

I would like to share more of the Children's mission, for it is now your mission as well. If you know the direction of the path you are walking, then you will know what to expect as we journey together. If you understand the Gift you are here to offer the world, then you will be able to give that gift freely to everyone.

I have said before that humanity stands at the brink of an amazing opportunity. We can choose to create a new world that reflects Truth, or we can continue to recreate the world that supports the illusions we have held till now. You know that it is your choice. You don't need to be told this again. But you do need to choose. This is the key. It is not enough to stand still and wait for it to happen. You have been chosen to contribute to this experience, for that is why you are reading these words now. You have been being prepared for this moment, and your Child Guide has been working with you in the inner planes whether you are aware of it or not. You already know that you are ready, and now is the time for action.

You can change the world, but you must be willing to lay aside all the things that have not served you till now. The exercises we have offered have all been focused on creating a tangible experience of your oneness with all reality. This is a new experience, for we have all been trained to see separation as the rule, not unity. You have chosen to be weak instead of strong, and this is the first thing that must change. How

can you change your own mind and assist others in doing the same if you are weak and ineffective? When you remember to embrace the childlike qualities that have always been inside of you, then a miracle happens and you remember your strength. Does that surprise you? Your strength lies in your innocence. This is not the power the world embraces, but it is embraced in Heaven.

How humbled do you feel when you look into the eyes of another and see the Face of God? Do you realize that this humility is your salvation? When you see the Truth within another you are moved to know the Truth within yourself, and the illusions you held a moment before simply disappear. As you continue your practicing, try to sense this quality. It is not something that can be described, but it is always right in front of you. The humility I am referring to is not one that makes you feel smaller than anything, but releases you to know your grandeur. Seek it within everyone, and you will be a step closer to realizing it for yourself.

*We Love You,
Thomas*

No sooner had I finished typing these words when I left the cabin I've been staying in to attend a talk being given in a nearby tent. (I have been attending and speaking at a conference in the mountains of California this week.) The presenter decided to pick up on a subject I had spoken on the day before--Enlightenment. I had said that we are already enlightened and must simply open our eyes to the Truth that cannot change. As it says in A Course In Miracles, "Enlightenment is not a change, but a recognition of what cannot change." Everyone felt the freedom this teaching offered, just as we have felt it. Everyone that was there was ready to admit and realize that they are holy just the way they are. But the new presenter decided to give a new spin to the subject. He had made a list of how an enlightened being should act, and also, how they should not act. "An enlightened being never says the words I, my or mine. An enlightened being is never afraid. An enlightened being is always filled with joy." On and on the list went, and I could feel the whole group beginning to shrink in their chairs. It was as if the air was being let out of a balloon. Finally someone stood up and said: "Well, since we know we're not enlightened and are never going to be, why don't we just relax and have a good time?"

I wanted to begin clapping. "Yes," I thought to myself, "Why don't we give up all these do's and don'ts and just have fun?" Everything the Children have been communicating came to life for me. It's time to realize that being enlightened has nothing to do with the way we 'behave.' That was all this presenter was talking about. It has everything to do with who we are, not how we behave. It has to do with the way we are perceived by God, and whether we are willing to accept the same perception for ourselves and others. We have to give up trying to adjust our behavior to what we think an enlightened being is, and accept the essence that can never change. What an incredible lesson.

Perhaps now you'll have an opportunity to apply this teaching, just as I did. Pay attention to all the ways that the world says you're not perfect just the way you are. But also notice how the Universe honors the Truth within you, all the ways your holiness is made manifest in the world. You will see both, and you will have to make a decision. The decision you make will determine how quickly you will join the Children in their great work. You have been called, and now it is time for you to answer.

In peace,
Jimmy

- By December 1st you can go all the way to 40 minutes, your goal for the Winter Feast.

By the time that January 15 rolls around, you will have already given yourself a great gift. When thousands of people around the world join their intentions with yours for forty minutes each day, it will be easier for everyone who is involved to maintain their commitments. There is much to be said for the commitment that you will make in January and to each baby step you take to change the habits of your mind, as you get ready to make that commitment.

WHAT TO DO DURING QUIET TIME:

The mind is a very busy place, something like a jungle full of wild beasts. We have given our mind the position of Supreme Ruler of our lives and allowed it to dictate our sense of self. The mind, for the most part, was formed when we were young and unable to filter or discern right from wrong, or true from false. It was formed when we were unable to recognize that peace is more powerful than war, that forgiveness is more powerful than anger, that deep inside we all know what is right and true. We just have to get quiet to find that place...to hear that small voice that resides within.

Here is how I suggest that you begin:

- Find a quiet place where you can sit with your spine erect, perhaps with your back against a wall. You want to be comfortable and supported without getting so comfortable that you will fall asleep.
- With eyes closed begin to focus on your inner world.
- Tell your mind that you are going to give it a rest for the next few minutes. This will not be easy, because the mind is a thought-making machine and it must be retrained to be still so that you can do more listening.
- Focus on your breath. It is that simple. If you can just focus on your breath for twenty minutes a day you will be rewarded in ways that you will never guess. Focusing on your breath takes your attention away from the mind and helps to create the inner peace that you are after.
- As your breath slows down your whole nervous system will begin to unwind. This is where new habits of mind can be formed.
- No matter what happens during your Quiet Time, do not judge yourself, or what happens. The fact that you are sitting quietly and you hold the intention of creating inner peace makes you a hero. No one can take that away from you. Once you learn to stop judging yourself, you will eventually stop judging others. Your compassion toward yourself will

grow. You can't be loving and compassionate toward others until you are loving and compassionate toward yourself.

In future articles I will discuss each of these steps in more detail. For now, I think this is sufficient to get you started. I invite your comments and your questions and pray for your success if you should decide to join the next Winter Feast for the Soul.

About the Author: Valerie Skonie is a retired business executive. She founded the Winter Feast for the Soul and continues to direct its growth and expansion from her home in Hailey Idaho. Her passion is to help people establish a daily spiritual practice in their lives. She embraces a daily meditation practice and honors it as a key to her success in her own life.

About the Winter Feast for the Soul: Everyone is invited to join in this worldwide movement, no matter what your religious preference might be, and no matter where you live. For those who have access to a computer, further information is available at <http://www.winterfeastforthesoul.com>.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

Don't undervalue yourself, or overvalue others. Realize that you are made of good stuff, and that locked within your mind are many good things. Then get to work and unfold those good things, and make something out of that good stuff. Do this by attention to the things before you, and by giving to each the best that is in you, knowing that plenty of more good things are in you ready for the fresh tasks that will come.

—William W. Atkinson, *Thought Vibration*

Cultivate a belief in yourself. Base it on self-respect and confidence in God's love for his own handiwork. Say to yourself, "I will be what I will be." Not because the human will is all-powerful, but because the Divine will is back of you.

—Ella Wheeler Wilcox, *The Heart of the New Thought*



From the Mail Bag

Hi Janine,

I made it all through the *Freedom Inside* at one sitting again. I'm really getting good. I wanted to share with you an episode in my life that I was reminded of when I reread your piece about tapping into the energy of the one source. (*Freedom Inside*, issue #45, May 2009)

I was at a retreat back in 1985. It was held in the mountains of upper New York state, a beautiful setting. We were way out in the boonies, for six days. We got a maximum of four hours of sleep a day. The point of the entire ordeal was to become conscious of, and experience why we don't take advantage of what we learned was available to us in a previous seminar. The first thing we did every morning after calisthenics, was to run one mile. The course was on the flat for about a tenth of a mile, then up a very steep dirt road for another third of a mile. After that it was up a slight incline, then level back to the starting line. We were instructed to better our time each day. You were not allowed to walk. You had to either run, or stand still. We had people of all ages involved, including two blind people. At the end of four, or five

days, I thought I was going to die, I couldn't shave one more second off my time. Then we were told that the reason for this exercise was to experience what it felt like to put out 100%. On the fifth day we were about a third of a mile from the finish line, running through a beautiful forest, and I came around the bend in the path, and there were two giant loud-speaker turned up as loud as they could go, playing the theme from Rocky. For some reason, I guess because of the dense forest, you didn't hear then until you were right on top of them. As soon as I heard the music, I took off like a big bird, flying across the finish line. Every one else had the same experience. That afternoon, there was a young man sitting behind me in the classroom, who started to cry uncontrollably. The group leader let this go on for a while, and then questioned him as to what was the matter. The young man said that last year he had finished in the top twenty in the Hawaiian Iron Man Triathlon. He said it was so grueling that at the finish line he knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that he had experienced what putting out 100% was. During his morning run each day he was putting out the

same 100%, and now when he encountered the theme from Rocky, and had the same experience that every one else had, he had absolutely no idea what 100% was. So, my take on all this is, that we become conditioned in our comfort zone to set limits for ourselves, though they may be very admirable, we can always tap into the one source that is part of us all the time, and get just a bit more. I feel that resistance is the key to accessing this source. If we resist something that appears at the edge of our comfort zone, we will say to ourselves, this really is my limit. I know from experience that I have nothing left. Let the source of all there is into your life, with an alignment with the intention of the universe, and nothing is impossible.

Your article allowed me to re-live this experience, and I have matured to a point where I can produce wonderful variations from that experience. Thank you for your efforts in touching so many lives in a positive way.

Affectionately

Bill

Spiritual Path / Life

(continued from page 4)

dilemma. There are five magic words I can give you which will help you to recreate yourself anew in the next moment of now in the grandest version of the greatest vision you ever held about Who You Are. These words invoke what I call the process of recontextualization. In other words, they create a new context within which you may place your present experience (whatever experience you are having), and within which you may produce your next upcoming behavior. Here are those

five magic words: What would love do now?

If, every time something occurs in your life, you will simply stop for five seconds and ask yourself this question, you will create a new context within which you may consider your response. When your response to the occurrence becomes your response to the question, your behavior will change. Not every time over a brief period of time. But enough of the time over a brief period that you (and others) will observe a shift—a

very real shift—in your personal dynamics.

Remember to bless each moment and all that it brings you—especially when what it brings you is difficulty. If the world's incoming data contains something that would ordinarily cause you to be impatient or short or abrasive, bless the moment and be truly grateful. See the opportunity. Notice the gift. And turn it into a gift not only for yourself, but for others. For they will be gifted by the new you.

BOOKS AND TAPES

We're All Doing Time by Bo Lozoff. This is a manual on how to understand and improve your life. Its use of straightforward language, humor and common sense to explain yoga, meditation, prayer and spiritual exploration make this a constant lifeline for thousands of prisoners. With over 385,000 copies in print, it was hailed by *The Village Voice* as "one of the ten books everyone in the world should read," and is acclaimed by prison staff and prisoners alike as one of the most helpful books ever written for true self-improvement and rehabilitation

Just another spiritual book by Bo Lozoff

For either of the 2 books mentioned above, write to:
 Human Kindness Foundation
 PO Box 61619 Durham, NC 27715 USA

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1. ***Yoga without words*** (Sandy Chubb) This book is specially produced for inmates from abroad who do not read English and British inmates who do not read. The book is a colorful, pictorial story of how to rise above the misery of prison life by concentrating on the breath and using it with yoga postures, in relaxation and in seated meditation.
 2. ***Wake up and see*** A book of readings about imprisonment, from a PPT evening in 2006 at HMP Wandsworth. This anthology of poetry and prose is illustrated with color photographs taken in the prison.
 3. ***Becoming Free Through Meditation and Yoga*** (Sandy Chubb & Sister Elaine MacInnes) Also available on tape for prisoners. This is a handbook for prisoners on meditation and yoga, written for use in a cell - but it is an ideal, fully illustrated guide for anyone working at either discipline on their own.
 4. ***Clearing the head, relaxing the body through meditation & yoga*** A 75-minute CD to talk you through a yoga session, including postures and movements, relaxation, breathing exercises, and meditation.
 5. ***Light Sitting in light*** (Sister MacInnes) Written by a Catholic nun, who studied and practiced meditation in Japan and the Philippines for thirty years, achieving recognition as a Zen Master. This is both a manual and an introduction to meditation in the Christian context - a discipline of living oneness of body, mind and spirit.
 6. ***Zen Contemplation*** (Sister MacInnes) An autobiographical journey into Zen and Christianity.
 7. ***Freeing the Spirit...through Meditation and Yoga*** by Sandy Chubb & Sister Elaine MacInnes. This is a colorful light-hearted approach to meditation and yoga. It is fully illustrated with delightful cartoons by artist Korky Paul. It has been specially written for those who want an easy to read guide to daily practice. For inmates in Sweden, a Swedish translation exists.
 8. ***Lineage*** is a book of powerful stories about ordinary people on their spiritual journeys, in and out of prison.
 9. ***Nor Iron Bars*** Three events were arranged to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Prison Phoenix Trust in 1998; readings by actors Jeremy Irons and Sinéad Cusack at Grendon Prison, a talk by Bo Lozoff and a talk on 'Imprisoned Spirituality' by Sister Elaine. All are contained in this beautiful book.

For any of the last 9 books mentioned above, write to
 The Prison Phoenix Trust
 PO Pox 328 Oxford UK OX2 7HF

This poem was published in *The Spirituality of Incarceration* by Katja Farden with Jeffrey Stevens.

The poetry is by Mr. Stevens while incarcerated in Florida

FROM MY CELL WINDOW

As I sit in my cell
Looking out the window
I wonder, will my life ever be the same?

I wonder if the sand will ever be warm under my feet?
Will I ever know what the weather is like outside without guessing?
Will I ever hold my son in my arms to tell him how much I do love him?
Walk with him to school with the encouragement to work harder?

God only knows how my heart hurts from day to day, night to night,
sitting in my cell staring at what seems to be an endless nothing.
Will I ever be able to take long walks in the blossoming spring?
The heated sun of summer?
The forever changing of fall?
And the bitter cold of winter?

Each day my memories of yesterday fade more and more.
Sometimes yesterdays are too painful to remember.
I used to desire the material things in life. No more!
Now my cries are about life and the beauty of freedom!
The clouds have become my sanctum.

I consider them to be my first heaven.
Clouds are reflections of beauty, freedom and anger,
but there is always a peaceful calm about them.
Flowers, roses, and plants are signs of tender attachment between two
people
in love.

My yearning for love can never be described in words.
I wonder will my life be the same?
I pray that it will, so this pain in my heart will go away.

I must return to my window once again.

Do you have a poem that reflects
the message in Freedom Inside?
If so, send it in, it just may be
chosen for a future

POETRY CORNER



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Janine Cantin*

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