

Newsletter

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Spiritual Directions

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"So ring the bell you still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There's a crack, a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in. "

From
" Anthem"
Leonard Cohen

Contents

Director's Corner	1
Upcoming Events.....	2
Book Reviews.....	3
Discerning the Caretaker And the Healer.....	4 & 5



Director's Comments

For some of us the New Year has provided us with resources for a rewarding time, often referred to as blessings. For others the beginning of 2006 has been a challenging experience, what some might call, at some point in the future, a blessing in disguise. The spiritual journey is a movement through life experiences that we measure in light of Divine intention, and in which we look for the Divine Presence. This intentional awareness of spirit leads us to gratitude or hope. I hope Spiritual Directions can be a part of your spiritual journey this year.

Spiritual Directions recognizes that we are part of a wider world community, and that personal spiritual growth includes honouring our commitment to our human family. This year we have committed one percent of registration income to RESULTS CANADA. An organization that works to alleviate poverty, eradicate disease and encourage development in the poorest countries of Africa. Take a look at their website: www.resultscanada.ca.

A lot of people have used our library this past month. We have CD programs and books on personal and spiritual development as well as DVD's from the Spiritual Cinema Circle.

May the sacred light of love keep shining deep within your spirit.
May the hand of the Creator go before you and show you the way

May the Holy Voice of Wisdom speak loud enough
so all of us can hear it.

May the love of life be your inspiration every day.

Upcoming events

COURSES AND WORKSHOPS:

Changes, Additional Information, and New Courses

(There is more information about these courses and workshops on our web site)

<http://www.spiritualdirections.com/Happenings.html>

1. **Enneagram: The Inner Work and You** begins this Saturday, Feb 4, 8:30 am – 1 pm, followed by 6 Wednesday evening workshops, beginning Feb. 8th, 2006
2. **Arc Training in Energy Bodywork** begins with a weekend workshop, February 17 – 19. For more information visit www.thearcinstitute.com
3. (DAY CHANGE) **Healing Touch** appointments will be on **Wednesdays** this winter. Friday sessions are still possible by special arrangement.
4. (DATE CHANGE) **The Sacred Drum Workshop** on February 19th has been postponed to **March 26th, 2006**, as we are unable to obtain elk hide. There are still a few spaces open.
5. (NEW) **Theta Healing** is a powerful healing technique that allows us to quickly identify and change subconscious energies that influence our behaviors, reactions to the people and events that are drawn to us. April 21, 22, 23. Check our website and www.thetahealing.com for more information.
6. **Awareness I** with Wes Geitz, www.windwalker.ca, has had a good response this winter. We need four more people in order to set a date.
7. **Authentic Happiness** is a new course at Spiritual Directions, with roots in the positive psychology movement. Begins February 28th. Check out their website at www.authentichappiness.com.
8. **Family Constellation Workshop**, With Annette Aubrey, www.aubreyassociates.com, on March 4 and 5 still has some spaces left.
9. **Council of all Beings Retreat**: April 7 – 9. A weekend to celebrate and find new energy to care for our home, the earth. Special price. See www.spiritualdirections.com/COABposter.htm for more information.

Have some fun...

We are offering a spiritual movie evening on Friday, February 10th at 7:00 pm called **Finding Wisdom at the Movies**. 7 pm. There will be an opportunity to discuss the film afterward.

Book Reviews: Let us know what you are reading.

Authentic Happiness by Martin E. P. Seligman.

This has become the textbook for the new positive psychology movement. It is a very practical and enlightening book that asks the question "What makes us happy?" Shifting the emphasis of psychology from pathology to creativity, Seligman uses information from many research projects to define the importance of positive emotion. He defines 24 signature strengths and 6 enduring virtues found in all cultures that are the basis of one's fulfillment, and suggests ways we can find and maintain authentic happiness in our lives. The book has many surveys to help the reader assess their own perceptions of optimism, hope, happiness, etc. In the last part of the book he shows clearly how these teachings relate to our everyday life of work, relationships and love to help us achieve meaning and purpose. The same surveys are found at www.authentichappines.com.

Coming Back To Life: Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World

by Joanna Macy and Molly Young Brown,

This book is a summary of the theory, which is the basis for the retreat called *The Council of All Beings* led by Diane Allan and David Johnson, April 7 - 9th, 2006. The book has exercises to help us in the process of coming to terms with our relationship with the earth, owning our feelings, moving to new insights and finally taking action. The movement is from despair (what can one person do when the problems are so big) to empowerment (connecting to your heart, connects you to the earth and people who care).

Marriage A History: by Stephanie Coontz

What is a traditional marriage? This question led me to this recent book. The author takes us back as far as records go and shows us the development of marriage as it was practiced in many cultures. It looks at the history, the purpose, the process, and the culture that influenced (determined) marriage relationships. If you do not want that much information, the last four chapters dealing with the development of marriage in the last one hundred years is worth reading. This is the time when love becomes the basis of the marriage relationship. It is available at the library and will give you a good understanding of where we have come to and why we can't go back to previous marriage ideals.

Inviting Silence: Universal Principles of Meditation by Gunilla Norris

This 100-page book is written like a meditation. The first paragraphs reveal the depth of this work, "Within each of us there is a silence - a silence as vast as the universe. We are afraid of it...and we long for it. Silence is the source of all that exists...Silence reveals. Silence heals. Silence is where God dwells. We yearn to be there".

The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when one contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structures of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day. NEVER LOSE A HOLY CURIOSITY.

Albert Einstein

Discerning the Caretaker & the Healer

By

Pietro Abela



I want to thank Pietro for writing this article for our newly designed email newsletter. If you would like to know more about Pietro and Melanie Abela please check out the ARC website at:

www.thearcinstitute.com

John Griffith
Director

I must admit as a health care teacher and practitioner, I always enjoy making this announcement to the ARC students who join us for their very first class: "A part of you, and a significant part of you, is attracted to the healing arts because you were, and maybe still are, a successful caretaker."

A caretaker lives life in hope. Sometime in the early years a child decides her needs are not going to be met. So she shifts the parameter. She may decide to take care of the caregiver. She adopts an irrational rationale that if she could somehow fulfill her parent's needs they will be filled enough to fill her. How she takes care of their needs is a very creative process. She may borrow some ideas from a family member. Perhaps if her mother was a caretaker she might take some of her methods and adopt them for herself or invent her own.

Caretaking is co-dependent behavior. What is co-dependence? Very briefly, co-dependence is an unequal relationship in which one party gives too much of himself to another. The other, on the opposite side of the relationship receives too much. To the provider, it is an energy loss. To the receiver it is an energy gain. The provider, in this case the caretaker, loses power to the other in the hope that the receiver will see him and in turn will provide some sort of attention, recognition, love, nurturance or validation, essentially to make up for what the caretaker didn't receive back in his childhood. The object of this hope could be anybody. He or she could be your parent, your child, your lover, your pet, your boss or your friend. He or she can be whomever you choose to emotionally invest in.

The caretaker may caretake for every waking hour of her life, but she is most vulnerable, or at her best, when she is next to someone who needs fixing: someone who is emotionally, physically or even spiritually in need. The caretaker will immediately move her energy in your direction with the best of heartfelt intentions that you will be helped. But whether she is willing and able to admit it or not, in doing this, she has an agenda. Beneath lies the hope that if she is there enough for you, that if you benefit from her care, you will give her attention and recognition.

Then what is the difference between the caretaker and the healer? The true caretaker will always be empty because the caretaker always gives out more energy than she receives. There is always a net loss in every caretaking activity. Consequently, the caretaker stares depletion in the face. The true healer sees maintaining fullness within herself (taking care of her own needs) as paramount for her energy and thus her care of others. The healer then serves others from a reservoir of inner fullness.

The main difference between the healer and the caretaker then is personal and interpersonal boundaries. Both monitor their fuel gauges. While the caretaker watches the gauge hovering around empty, anxious that she will one day run out and be stranded, the healer will observe the pointer on full, knowing that if it slips to three quarters of the full level, it is time to stand still at the fuel stop long enough to fill up again. The healer's boundary honours the intrinsic difference between his own needs and the needs of another. The caretaker has no concept of this.

Many of our students join The ARC Institute purely for personal growth. Healer or not, living in consciousness is an act of self-monitoring and self-reflection. These acts enable us to know ourselves intimately enough to recognize when we empty out. Self-awareness motivates us to re-fill and maintain our inner fullness.

Ask yourself this. If someone was in need and you knew you could help, but were lacking the energy to give to him, would you be able to turn him away? The caretaker may see this as selfish. For the caretaker there is no choice in the matter. To the true healer, turning another away while in depletion is an act of self-care. The healer has choice in the matter and exercises that choice.

At the very foundation of ARC teaching is the knowledge that life is a reflection of our inner reality and a journey that entails the recognition of depletion in our lives and the movement towards living in abundance. If you are empty inside, does life reflect that inner scarcity? It follows that if we make conscious choices to live with inner fullness, our outer life will reflect that in the form of abundance. Which would you prefer?

Written by Pietro Abela for Spiritual Directions

The ARC Institute teaches physical, emotional and spiritual care for self and others by means of workshops, classes, presentations and therapeutic sessions. Since its foundation in 1994, The ARC Institute has been dedicated to the support and development of high quality education in health care and personal growth. It is with this objective in mind that ARC continues to present its programs throughout the United States, Canada and Europe.

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living. I want to know what you ache for and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's desire. It doesn't interest me how old you are. I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool for love, for your dream, for the adventure of being alive.

From: The Invitation by Oriah Mountain Dreamer

