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WORDS FROM THE PUBLISHER.....

Inspiration. It has been a lot easier picking this theme than writing about it. So many thoughts go through my mind on what it means to me. Settling on what to put on paper is another thing. But isn't that what inspiration is all about? We get bombarded by thoughts throughout each day- some inspire us to act upon them and others fade off. I think it's easy to look back and acknowledge the inspirational thoughts that played large roles in shaping our lives. Such as the first time I heard Wayne Dyer speak and the focus of his talk was "Don't die with your music still in you." I went to that lecture with an open mind and left with ideas on a new direction and focus. This really set in motion the opening of what became a holistic health center. It was an oasis for people to come to find the sparks, their own inspiration, to facilitate healing in their lives...and perhaps to help others on their path. In fact on the sign below the name it said "A Store full of Healing, Hope, Inspiration and Motivation." One of the first lessons I learned there was that inspiration comes in different ways for different people. I made sure there was a good mix of inspirational tools for people to use, such as books, CDs, crystals, yoga classes, nutritional food and information, to name a few. What I believe is that we are all searching for ways to feel good and be validated. When that isn't happening, perhaps we need a spark to set us on that path. Inspiration can also come in unexpected ways. A divorce inspired me to get sober. A loss of a job can help one reflect and be inspired to find what their true purpose is. Just a casual conversation with a stranger can become the catalyst to a greater version of ones self. Where we get our inspiration may have a direct relationship to how receptive we are to change in our lives. If we choose to close ourselves off and live deep in the mundane distractions we have in our daily lives, we probably won't be open to thoughts that inspire us to come forward into a more spiritually base existence. May we each be open and receptive to what we need as individuals for inspiration to help to collectively change our human consciousness and create the best world we can. Namaste' Clyde

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Our Theme for the Next Issue...

Connecting the Dots

DENNIS J. KUCINICH
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
INTERDEPENDENCE DAY
LA JOURNEE DE L'INTERDEPENDENCE
PARIS, FRANCE
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2005
THE ARTS AND CULTURE AT THE HEART OF INTERDEPENDENCE
INTERDEPENDENCE AND CULTURE



ART HEARS HEART

In the starry reaches of the Sistine Chapel we meet that “instinct within us that reaches and towers.” Where Michelangelo’s Man is touched by Divine Force. Where spirit and matter unite. We rendezvous with Mater and *Pater Noster qui es in caelis* in the realm where painters, poets, writers and sculptors are God-sparked and sanctify the world with their art.

Veni Creator, Creatrix: Come, Oh Creative Spirit: Imbue us with light, fire, passion, grace and space to soar. Show us the thundering and flashing Planets, let us inhale the intoxicating music of the spheres; feel it, see it, hear it, paint it, speak it, sculpt it, write it.

Drinking deeply from the Fountain of Creative Life where we meet God within at the altar of our aspirations, where timelessness is intimated, we escape the Fall from Grace, enter the bliss of Oneness, Immortality. Where knowledge and hope spring eternal and reproduce infinite delight.

Open, our heart becomes the heart of the world; we know love and hope springs eternal.

In the heart of interdependence where the past, present and future exist simultaneously, the landscape has already been painted but the canvass is blank and awaits the colors, the brush, the beautiful eye to draw it out. The music has already been composed, open to the discerning ear to hear a note which becomes a symphony.

Archetypes of color, sound and form are on call, having already been seeded in our souls *In Principio Erat Verbum*. In the Beginning was the Word. The Word was God. Sacred space coextensive with the unuttered, the unwritten, waiting for ensoulment, enspiritment, enlightenment, encouragement, the exhaling of God Force.

In that celestial canopy of the Sistine Chapel, rejecting doctrines of separation, Man achieves a holy wholeness. Soulfully reaching for the divine, hope confirms courage

Veni Creator, Creatrix: Come, Oh Creative Spirit. Birth us as gods gifted of visionary gleam. Breathing in let us be inspired to sing hymns at Heaven’s Gate. Let our forever reach become one with our grasp as we fearlessly create the Spirit of Our Times and it in turn recreates us.

Art hears heart. It hears its forever longing. It remembers forever. It sees forever. We craft, we practice art. It

reconciles us with the creative gods of our higher nature. In all its expressive glory art enables us to draw out the power of nature, give it color, texture, form.

Freedom of expression is a precondition of political freedom. America’s Founders understood this by protecting free speech in our First Amendment. Today in America, some would use the power of government to proscribe freedom of expression, either sharply limiting funds available to the arts, or through passing laws like the Patriot Act, which gives government the power to require librarians to hand over library patrons’ reading lists, and to inquire of people why they read what they read.

Art empowers the drive for creative expression in all of civil society, inspiring structure and beauty in all endeavors and enabling transformation, answering the question: “What is to be done?”

This afternoon I would like to focus on the possibility of peacemaking becoming an art in my own nation that cuts money for education and closes schools while spending nearly 50% of its disposable income on the military.

This week in Washington, thousands will converge on the Capitol to support a bill to create a cabinet-level Department of Peace and Non-Violence to achieve a condition where we can make non-violence an organizing principle in our society.

The preamble of the bill sets forth the philosophy. It has this finding: “We are in a new millennium and the time has come to review age-old challenges with new thinking wherein we can conceive of peace as not simply being the absence of violence, but the active presence of the capacity for a higher evolution of human awareness, of respect, trust and integrity; wherein we all may tap the infinite capabilities of humanity to transform consciousness and conditions which impel or compel violence at a personal, group or national level, toward developing a new understanding of, and a commitment to, compassion and love, in order to create a ‘shining city on a hill,’ the light of which is the light of nations.”

More than 60 members of the United States House of Representatives are cosponsoring the bill which will address long-standing crises in domestic violence, spousal abuse, child abuse, gang violence, violence in the schools, racial

violence, violence against gays, police-community relations challenges

The Department of Peace and Non-Violence will employ the principles of Dr. King, Christ, Gandhi and others to teach peacemaking, peace-sharing, mutuality and looking at the other person as an aspect of one's self in schools.

Its mission is to (1) hold peace as an organizing principle, coordinating service to every level of American society; (2) endeavor to promote justice and democratic principles to expand human rights; (3) strengthen nonmilitary means of peacemaking; (4) promote the development of human potential; (5) work to create peace, prevent violence, divert from armed conflict, use field-tested programs and develop new structures in nonviolent dispute resolution; (6) take a proactive, strategic approach in the development of policies that promote national and international conflict prevention, nonviolent intervention, mediation, peaceful resolution of conflict and structured mediation of conflict; (7) address matters both domestic and international in scope; and (8) encourage the development of initiatives from local communities, religious groups and nongovernmental organizations.

The Department of Peace and Nonviolence attempts to take the concept of Interdependence, which recognizes "I am my brother's and sister's KEEPER" to the next level, **Interconnection**, which recognizes "I AM my brother or sister. The legislation was written to have the structure of a poem. Wordsworth described poetry as "emotion recollected in tranquility." The Department of Peace seeks to establish tranquility in a society so that we can once again call forth the poet in each one of us to find a way to express love for ourselves and everyone else.

When I first wrote the legislation it was long before 9-11 had descended upon America. It was before the lexicon of preemption, nuclear first use, first strike and domination had poisoned political dialogue inside America and between America and the world. It was before the accelerated militarization of thought and deed in contemporary America, before the Patriot Act, color-coded threat systems and the massive database collection of personal information about law-abiding citizens.

It was before the U.S. scrapped the nonproliferation treaty and refused to participate in the biological weapons convention, the chemical weapons convention, the small arms treaty, the land mine treaty. It was before my country said NO to Kyoto Climate Change Treaty and NO to the International Criminal Court. It was before an attack on Iraq which represented further separation by spurning the UN Charter, the Geneva and the Hague Conventions. It was before America was wrapped in a shroud of media misinformation and paralyzing fear, before the attempts to dismantle the government wholesale for delivery to special interests, before America was prepared to be delivered alive to the sepulcher of fascism.

Yet sentiments of human freedom, of interdependence, of interconnection, of peace and nonviolence are, in fact, still very much alive in the United States, because this week, over 60 members of the United States Congress will put their names upon the legislation which creates the Department of Peace and Nonviolence. Dozens of members of

Congress from across America will affirm the power of hope over despair. The power of courage over fear.

We will make of peace an art. And in so doing we will be responding to the heart of America and the heart of the world that is longing for reconnection, for a change to become one with each other and one with the world. The first motto of the United States: E Pluribus Unum, "Out of Many One", spoke not simply to the unity of 13 original colonies but to human unity.

As we seek to unite and to declare our interdependence, our interconnection, let us remember the words of brother James Early who reminded us of the mundane aspects of interdependence. When our brothers and sisters are drowning in attics in New Orleans because they could not afford to get out of town there is something to be said of the need to make Economic Justice an art. When most of those brothers and sisters happen to be black there is something to be said of the need to make Racial Justice an art. When millions of our own citizens are drowning in poverty without decent housing, health care or education we know must find the artist in all of us to help each of us.

The poet Tennyson calls us forth from the gloom: "Come my friends, 'tis not too late to seek a newer world." "Come my friends, 'tis not too late to see a newer world." We will seek it. We will find it through tapping our creative capacity. Through finding the god-spark of the artist within each of us.

A speech given in France by Dennis Kucinich/2005



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Inspiration

By Carlos Jones

Inspiration can come to us in many different ways, and at any time in our waking or sleeping consciousness. The dictionary defines it as some motivating influence, stimulating one mentally or emotionally, and usually moving one to action in some form. How many times have you stood and watched a magnificent sunset and felt that sense of awe and wonder, or have woken up from a dream with a sense of purpose, knowing exactly what it is you have to do? It's that feeling you can't quite describe in words, but it seems to take over the whole body, infusing it with a kind of energy.

We so often turn to nature and natural surroundings for the feeling that it gives us, an unending supply of beauty and solitude, and a sense of reconnecting with a part of ourselves that we've been apart from for too long. Like returning to a Mother's warm and welcoming embrace, we instinctively sense our connection. You could be looking up at the stars at night, or standing on the shore of an ocean, gazing out over the water. It could be the sound of birds singing in the morning or the way the trees look against the sky. Whether it's a majestic mountain range or seeing your baby come into the world, we can palpably feel the miracle that life is and that God/Love that connects us with the All/One and with each other. We want to somehow capture and hold on to that euphoric feeling in our everyday lives, but often the moment is fleeting because there is so much outside interference: noise, human activity, synthetic materials and random energies constantly rushing around us, pulling us off our center and blocking our reception. There can be too much mental noise as well, hindering our ability to pick up on the more harmonious frequencies that are vibrating all around us.

Things that can inspire us are constantly present; some people are more receptive than others. Many are content to simply enjoy and savor the feelings that are brought on by whatever the stimulus might be. Then there are those that exist in a near constant state of acute awareness and receptivity that feel driven to tap into, preserve and express in some form their interpretations of whatever the occurrence might be. It is a primal response to that feeling of wonderment and well-being

brought on by a given situation. These people are the artists, poets, authors, dancers, musicians, scientists, gurus and prophets among us.

As a musician and songwriter for nearly thirty years, I have become quite familiar with that strange and wonderful feeling, and count myself as blessed to be a receiver and interpreter. I have always, even as a child, been very sensitive to things around me and can remember impressions that shaped the course of my life from a very early age. I treasure those little bolts of lightning, when they come, that shake and illuminate my ordinary life, giving me glimpses into that "other" plane of existence, to confirm my lingering suspicion that there really is more to it than just what we can see. It is for a brief and crystal clear moment, a chance to see not just with open eyes, but open heart, mind and soul and feel and know your place in the scheme of things. What could be better than that?

Visual beauty, music or profound ideas can spark that same flight of fancy, and can have a lasting effect on our consciousness. Inspiration is cyclical, meaning that the receiver will go on to create an expression that will in turn, inspire others, creating perpetual waves of ecstatic realization that will reverberate on and on through time. Great works of literature that have endured for thousands of years are a prime example of this. Just look at The Bible, for instance, and the profound impact it has had on all mankind. It will continue to shape the human psyche for as long as we exist on the planet.

People can inspire us as well. Deep feelings of respect and admiration for someone can move us to want to better ourselves or aspire to be more like that person. It motivates us to try to attain and maintain a higher level of being and a deeper level of thinking. When we feel love for a mate, a child, a parent or friend, we (hopefully) act in ways that provoke feelings of love and respect in return.

So, what is inspiration? Many will say that it is simply God instructing us. Others might say it's the voice within; you just have to hold still and be quiet long enough to hear it listen to it. I say, what's the difference? Couldn't it all be one and the same?

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Ask an Angel

By Evstarr

What *inspires* me? Well, at this very moment it is pain – pain bleeding from my heart. As I lie here in my bed, sipping my Ginkgo tea, allowing myself to be in the moment of my thoughts, I feel a throbbing, aching feeling coming from somewhere deep within the cellular memories of my heart.

Despair overcomes me as I deal with the grief and the realization of the ending of a relationship that can no longer exist as I knew it. The burial of things gone by, the closing of the final curtain. As the room fills with darkness, I am left alone with my thoughts. The comfort lies in the familiarity of the pain. I embrace and welcome you my friend, I know you only too well. So, now that I've let you in – what do I do with you?

That's what *inspired* this article. Wow, I thought as I lay in bed this morning wallowing in *My Own Sorrow #101*, I've taken this course several times. I had just finished my daily meditation and put some extra matters on the table for the Board of Angels to deal with today. I asked, "Help me deal with this pain." Then I picked up my journal and my pen glided over the next few pages as if I was performing at the Olympics gliding over the ice with the grace of a swan and the speed of a roadrunner.

Pain is a motivator, it *inspires* you to move beyond the pain to a more peaceful place, calling on your reserves and bringing in backups from when you visited this place before. "We must embrace pain and burn it as fuel for our journey." – *Kenji Miyazawa*

As I ponder the multitude of things that *inspire* me I think of the various times I took off work (without pay) because my daughter was in a school play or concert recital. As I sit in the overcrowded, hot school auditorium my eyes are only on that one little nervous yet proud face among all

the other children on stage, my daughter. As my own eyes well up with tears, beaming with pride, I think to myself, "This is it, the moment I live for." I am *inspired* to make all the necessary sacrifices for this one moment in time that will be etched in the memory banks of my mind forever.

When I'm doing something I love, something that I have tremendous passion for, like teaching the Louise Hay groups, I am *inspired*. I am *inspired* from a deep love within to teach, guide and nurture those looking and searching for a way to express themselves as the divine creatures of God that they are, and to heal their lives. The gratification I feel from being a part of the metamorphosis of watching my students blossom from the caterpillar to the ever-elusive butterfly *inspires* me to teach and go the extra mile needed for such a process to be complete. "The most powerful weapon on Earth is the human soul on fire." – *Ferdinand Foch*

I am *inspired* when I sit on the point (a grassy section of cliff in front of my home overlooking Lake Erie) and watch the sunrise or the full moon rise above the horizon changing in colors from blood red, to deep orange, to pale yellow, to finally that luminous white silvery ball in the sky. I sit in awe as I listen to the sound of the waves crashing against the shore, noticing a squirrel scurry up a tree and an occasional seagull swoop down to grab a fish. The vastness of this marvelous Universe *inspires* me to do whatever is necessary to keep this planet we call Earth alive and healthy.

I am *inspired* by the smile of a stranger on a crowded street that just touched my heart by his random act of kindness. It *inspires* me to want to be a better person. In amazement, I reflect on how a solitary act of kindness can touch a person's soul and change their lives forever.

So, I ask you my dear readers, what, who, when and where do you get your *inspiration* from? The *inspiration* is inside each and every one of us, waiting for you to open the door and let it run wild. The next time you're moving through your pain, ask an angel and become *inspired*; I did!

Evstarr's spiritual journey has taken her coast-to-coast studying the various schools of thought. Look for Treasure Mapping & Prosperity classes coming up in Avon Lake (440-930-4135). Contact Evstarr@yahoo.com for speaking engagements for your upcoming events & to book your Angel Card parties. Check out her web site www.reachforthemoon.net for latest listings & to be added to her mailing list.



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INSPIRATION

By T.M. Brown

"I always say I am a little pencil in God's hands. He does the thinking. He does the writing. He does everything and sometimes it is really hard because it is a broken pencil and he has to sharpen it a little more."

– Mother Teresa

When I looked up the word inspiration in the dictionary recently I got a jolt of surprise. The primary definition in Webster's New World Dictionary says that inspiration is a "breathing in, as of air into the lungs; inhaling."

Wow. Not what I expected. The subsequent definitions fit my expectations better. That is that inspiration is a stimulus to creative thought or action; a divine influence, etc. But the more I thought about breathing in, the more I connected that relevance to the secondary meanings.

To be inspired is not so unlike receiving the breath of a life-giving substance to an idea, emotion or action. Inspiration empowers, turning me into a divinely inspired Dr. Frankenstein that allows me to infuse my thoughts or creations with vitality and quality.

How important is inspiration? Oliver Wendell Holmes said "a moment's insight is sometime worth a life's experience." It can and has been a powerful factor that helps me accomplish my best work. That influence often tiptoes in silently out of the blue, carried by the whisper of a quiet, intuitive inner voice filled with a knowing confidence. And it often strikes in a finger-snap instant of time, an "aha" moment with all doubts laid aside.

Still, I sometimes try my best to corner inspiration, but it is not so easily pinned. For instance, when I begin the first draft of a writing project, I often grab my materials and head for my favorite, cozy coffee shop. I know the blast of espresso will get my motor running and the hum and buzz of the patrons and acrid smell of roasting coffee beans help me swerve into the focus I am looking to achieve.

That doesn't mean inspiration always pops in, of course. I've found that inspiration is not an obedient, tail-wagging pet eager to jump into my lap to lick my face every time I call. Predictability and inspiration do not stroll hand-in-hand.

As Mother Teresa suggests, inspiration is more a quality that properly belongs to the world of the unseen, residing within the realm of the divine. But sometimes we are unsharpened pencils, dull and unable to let go and let God. Solitude can help. Once a week, in the

middle of the night, I drop in at a tiny chapel for an hour of meditation and prayer. It's not always so easy to drag myself from a warm bed at 2:30 a.m., but the payout is well worth the effort. That hour of quiet and peace has become a touchstone for the rest of my week. When I leave that chapel, I am often filled with a sense of joy and awe, infused with a deep spiritual buzz that carries me easily through the next day and beyond. That's inspiration!

Inspiration cannot be categorized nor is it a concrete substance that can be touched, tasted or smelled. That's not to say that inspiration isn't connected to the material world, however, in that certain "things" or events often inspire me. The beauty of standing in the sand before a rolling ocean, listening to music that strikes the right inner chords, watching a color-splashed sun set or sun rise, gazing at a luminous moon in a star-speckled sky, or seeing uniquely shaped clouds float by have all inspired me in deep, soul-touching ways.

Inspiration also comes from the least unexpected places. Who wasn't inspired or even brought to tears recently by the story of Justin McElwain, the autistic, teenage basketball manager who scored six three-point baskets in the waning minutes of his school's last game when he was put in for the first time ever. He was cheered wildly by both teams and fans and later by most of the country when the story surfaced.

Put simply, I know I am inspired when something sets off a harmonious signal within, a message that I instinctively know to be the real deal. The feeling often generates a burst of energy, though not all inspiration calls for action. The secret I've learned, yet sometimes still fail to heed, is to act when it strikes. Too many times I get jazzed with inspiration only to let it dissipate back to its invisible realm. Or I erect personal hurdles, disguising my laziness that I can then use to justify my non action. Well, I think, great idea but maybe I'll get to it later. Most often, later never comes. Sometimes, as an antidote, I remember a nugget uttered by Wayne Dyer – "Don't die with your music still inside." That's putting inspiration into action.

Perhaps a story I saw best illustrates inspiration's concepts. It was an analogy comparing inspiration to a walk in the dark. Suddenly, a flash of lightning illuminates a steeple up ahead. To get to the steeple, you have to continue walking in the dark while keeping in mind that sudden flash on the horizon and your destination. Just keep walking.

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Dear Louise,

My son's fiancé is a lovely woman. I think she'd make a great daughter-in-law. However, I do have one silly concern. Her birthday is June 15, 1977. This factors down to an astrological number of 6-6-6. I've heard so many bad things about this number. I haven't spoken about this to anyone, let alone my son. Please advise.

D.C., Atlanta, Georgia

Dear D.C.,

Yes, it's silly. You might as well be concerned about a certain flower or a color. Do you really think that everyone born on this date is doomed? There are some people who have nothing better to do than sell fear.

Remember all the hoopla over the year 2000? The fear surrounding that date was widespread. Many people lost money trying to escape the coming of the millennium.

Please don't listen to fearmongers. Trust your inner wisdom. I sense that your real concern is for your son. Here are some affirmations I suggest you use to ease your concerns:

My son's marriage is blessed and divinely protected. The safety I seek in the outer world begins with the safety I create within myself. I am willing to learn to love my son's fiancée and to support her. We support each other, and our way is made easy. My understanding of life and how to live it deepens and grows. All is truly well in my world.

Dear Louise,

I know that everything you say in each book is true, but somehow I don't want to accept it. I'm in a relationship that is kind of traumatic in some aspects. I don't want to live a life like this. It makes me feel horrible. My wife doesn't want me to have friends or go out with them, and she doesn't even want me to have my mother living with me.

I'm afraid of her, but afraid of leaving her, and I don't know how to get out of this relationship. The reason I'm writing is because I'm desperate for help. I look for it, but I don't find anything that really helps me. I hope you get this message, and if you can write back and tell me how to get help, I will be grateful forever.

V.J., Dallas, Texas

A Monthly Column from Louise Hay

Dear V.J.,

You don't have to believe anything I write. You have the freedom to think exactly the thought you're thinking. However, your thoughts have created the mess you're living in. Instead of saying, "I'm desperate for help," you could say, "I am now willing to make the changes that will create a good life for myself and my family." Or simply, "I am willing to change."

Don't try to change everything all at once. It will be too much for you. At this time, you need to start small. Take deep breaths and affirm:

I am safe. I am safe. Do this over and over for a week. The second week, say: I am at peace. I am at peace. You need to get peaceful inside so that your inner wisdom can kick in. Also, go see the pastor of your church. You need more guidance than you can get in a brief letter.

Dear Louise,

My younger brother was just diagnosed with scleroderma, and he is terrified. He's aware that I lost a dear friend to this horrific disease about nine years ago. How can I help him?

E.C., Toronto, Canada

Dear E.C.,

The best way to help your brother is to stop using terms such as "horrific disease." Just because one person dies doesn't mean that everyone, or even your brother, will react in the same way. Don't let yourself be consumed with fear. You must know that there's an answer. Let's see your brother rising above whatever circumstances contributed to this disease. I want you to begin knowing and affirming that there's an answer, and your brother will attract whatever he needs to heal this condition. Don't use the word *scleroderma* again. It has too much of a charge on it for you.

On the physical level, I'd go to a practitioner of Oriental medicine. They're well versed with conditions like this. Begin there, and step by step you and your brother will be led to the solution. It would be good for both of you to meditate. Your minds need calming. This is not the end of the world. It's a challenge, and you *will* step up to the plate. Be at peace.

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The Process of Inspiration

By Diana Repko,

Founding Minister of Unity Center for Transformation in Mentor, Ohio

A h, to live an inspired life...The mere idea of it conjures images of fulfilling creativity, color and sound, richness and texture. Inspired people are in tune with something greater than themselves. They live beyond the mundane. They experience that certain quality that says, "Yes, this is a life well lived."

To be inspired is to be inwardly on fire with Spirit, to be "aroused by divine influence," as Webster says. Each of us longs for such a life, sometimes without realizing we already have"—innate within us—the capacity to experience it.

We are often tempted to think others are inspired, and we are not. Or some other time we may experience inspiration, but not now. Spiritually speaking, this makes no sense. If God is everywhere all the time, then God is within us now. If God as creative energy expresses through ideas, then divine ideas are present all the time in each one of us.

So, our first task in opening ourselves to innate inspiration is simply to turn our attention to the ideas forever flowing in our minds. We do this by stilling ourselves to the voice of God. As we hear it—even if for a moment—it draws our attention from the routine to the divine. Peace inevitably follows.

As we pause in peace and feel its rejuvenation, we begin to catch a divine idea. Do this or that, be such and so. Accept. Forgive. Step forward. Sometimes these inspirations are specific, often they are open-ended impressions. Regardless of their form or content, once we become aware of them we are ready to follow our guidance.

Here, we humans can get stuck, for even though we see the value in an idea we sometimes let it go in one ear and out the other. Why? Be-

cause we don't see ourselves as worthy to carry it forward. Spiritually speaking, this makes no sense either. Consider this: the Universe is efficient. If we receive the idea it is ours to do, for reasons we may never know.

Each of us is here to express the goodness of God...by acting on God's ideas. To do our work, we must see an idea's innate value, grasp the timeliness of it and believe God gave us the idea because we are best qualified.

Then we act, releasing the idea and our channeling of it to God's perfect outworking. What?! We don't get to stick around and make sure the action gets the results we think it should? We don't get to see how the divine idea manifested in tangible good? No. To cling to an idea—as if it belonged to us—is to make ourselves rigid, no longer an open vehicle for God's continuing work.

A story to illustrate: One evening, my husband and I went to the movies. Shortly after the film began I realized it wasn't my kind of flick. I leaned over, told Tim I'd see him later, and headed for the lobby. Hmm, what to do for an hour and a half while waiting for a movie to end? People watch! So I began...and after 20 minutes or so of that, I was bored silly. So I began people blessing. That was much more fun. Randomly, as folks walked by, I sent them a positive, life-affirming thought. After about 45 minutes, a most interesting event occurred.

Plunk! Right next to me on this long, empty bench, sat a 10-year-old kid who began to yak up a storm. I thought, "Okay, God. I'm paying attention." The conversation rambled for a good, long time.

Continued on page 16

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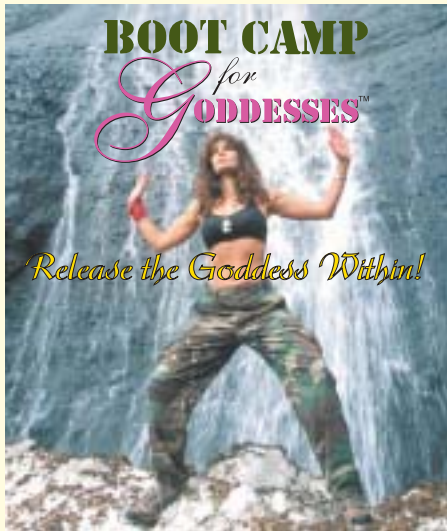
Then this boy said two sentences of monumental import, and the moment he did, I knew why we were speaking. He said, bubbling with fire and gusto, "I figure that when I grow up, I'm going to be a millionaire!" Then, in a flash, all the light was gone. His face fell to the floor. In utter discouragement he concluded, "But I don't know how, so I guess it'll never happen."

That's my cue! Without thinking, I said, "Oh, don't you worry about that. An idea will come to you, and then ideas on how to make it work. Just stay open. That's all you need to do." He looked up...that beautiful, joy-filled light back in his face. "Really?" "Really." Just then, his sister came up. "Mom's here. We gotta go." He threw his backpack over his shoulder and said, "It was nice talking with you." Then he was gone.

Did he get the message? I don't know. It's God's job to see that he gets the message. My job was simply to relay truth at that moment in time.

This is the process of inspiration...a stilling, a receiving, an expressing. It is fluid, ever-moving in us. More than a moment of enthusiasm, more than a great idea, inspiration is a way of being and living in the world, a way of radiating who we are - vehicles for God.

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PRESENT MOMENT WONDERFUL MOMENT

By Jennifer Lenhart

“Red bird!” 18-month old Sebastian shouted as he pointed to a tree behind us. Turning to look, I saw he was right – there sat a cardinal in the branches. I had missed it. My son’s excited exclamation brought me back to the moment. “Yes, that’s a pretty red bird, isn’t it? He’s called a cardinal. Good job spotting him,” I replied. The bird’s brilliant red was almost shocking against the gray, brown and white background of this day. What a gift it was for my late winter eyes to see such a brilliant flash of color. And I had almost missed it.

Each day since he was born, my son has inspired me to live in the moment, to see each one as the Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh instructs us as “Present moment, wonderful moment”. As I spent countless hours walking with Sebastian when he was an infant, I treasured the time. I consciously felt the soothing warmth of his head against my neck and the downy softness of his hair against my cheek, inhaled deeply his indescribable new baby scent, marveled at the miracle of new life and remembered that these times of such sweetness would be gone in the blink of an eye.

I was right. Already he’s a toddler; walking, talking, growing more independent each day. Yet he continues to ground me in the moment and to inspire me. When Sebastian and I take walks together, I feel we are practicing walking meditation. While some might grow impatient with him on our forays, I view each as time spent with a guru. We might walk for an hour and only travel a few yards, perhaps even in circles. But as we walk everything we encounter is reason to stop, ponder and wonder: a red bird, a stick, a flower, a tree, a rock, a bus, a dog, an ant...As we walk I try to be in the moment as Sebastian is. For him, there is no yesterday, no tomorrow. Only the present moment. Wonderful moment.

But, it’s not always easy. Nights of little sleep due to teething, the occasional temper tantrum, reading the same book for what feels like the one-hundredth time sometimes make it hard to see each moment as a wonderful one. But as Buddhism teaches us, life is full of suffering. So, being in each and every moment, good and bad, and not growing attached to them brings me

joy. Whenever I catch myself starting to lose patience I remember that I am truly blessed to have a child who is healthy. I remember that I am fortunate to have clean water for him to drink, plenty of food for him to eat and a warm, safe place for him to sleep. Too many people in the world cannot say the same about their children. And so I return to my breath and my mantra, “Present moment, wonderful moment.”

My guru also helps me to remember and accept that change is inevitable. It’s the only constant. Every day he himself manifests this truth: new teeth, new words, new skills...he changes so much and so quickly that it’s hard to keep up. I am awed that in only 18 short months he has gone from a totally helpless, dependent being with little control over his muscles to an increasingly independent little boy who can solve problems, make sentences and climb on everything. I know that he will continue to grow and to change every day. He inspires me to accept that fact and to be in the moment of each of his developmental stages.

He reminds me, too, that loss is inevitable. The snuggly baby he once was is now gone, replaced by an energetic toddler. Soon the toddler will be replaced by a school-age boy, then a teenager, then a young man. He’ll become more and more independent each day until eventually he’ll be on his own. His beautiful innocence, amazing purity and unconditional loving acceptance of those he meets will be challenged by the grown-up world. His ability to live so perfectly in the moment will likely be diminished. It’s hard for a mama to accept such losses sometimes.

Sebastian has inspired me to see the world with wonder and laughter, to live in the moment and to play. I hope that as his own childhood is lost to adulthood he will hang on to those very qualities that have inspired me, and that thanks to his inspiration, I will model the kinds of habits that will one day, in turn, inspire him. I pray that as he grows he continues to see wonder in everything and that the sight of a red bird will inspire him to stop and say, “Present moment, wonderful moment”.

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SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

By Eileen Coan

Inspiration can be elusive. When you need it most, is when it is most likely to remain hidden. Whether it is searching for the perfect word, or seeking the whole plot, a writer often does better to walk away from the computer, rather than wracking their brain. The magic of inspiration is that it takes no effort at all – it just seems to arrive whole when we least expect it. All one really needs is to remain open, and be willing to see magic amid the mundane.

Part of being open is to be in touch with the child within. I have been accused of being *too* in touch with my inner playfulness, but that is another story. All I know is that I still hear the bell in the Polar Express, and my eyes get big at the sight of ice cream concoctions. Here in Northeast Ohio, there are many opportunities for an inhibited adult to stay in tune with their childlike nature. Any time I am at a street fair and that big silver Rocket car is giving rides, I hop in line. And I drag along whatever adult is with me, in spite of their protestations. I love the sound effects, the wind, the people along the route that wave.

There have been a few times when I eagerly signed up for a class or program that sounded fun, only to arrive and realize that I am the oldest unaccompanied student by three or four decades! A few years ago, I was reading

the course catalog for Lake Farmpark and my eye caught the title “Dig your own spud”. Now, being born and raised in suburban Cleveland, I remember how fresh and juicy the corn can be when it comes straight from the farmer’s market to the pot and onto my table in a matter of hours. I visualized that a fresh potato might taste just as sweet! I sent in my fee and showed up, to see I was the only one over four feet tall. Luckily the other children (and their parents) made room for me around the campfire.

This same phenomenon happened a few years later when I read in the Cleveland Museum of Art’s newsletter that they would teach anyone how to walk on stilts for free in anticipation of their annual Parade the Circle. While my younger classmates were less fearful than I being suddenly several heads taller, I caught on and graduated with the rest. My stilts come out once a year now, for the annual Race for the Place, that benefits my employer, The Gathering Place, in Beachwood.

I would not presume to say that you have to do children’s activities to find inspiration; I also find inspiration in the activities that I first learned in school and continue to enjoy: literature and film. As an undergrad in psychology, I was inspired by the book “Blaming the Victim” by William Ryan, and the lessons have stuck with me. Ryan was the first author to help me see that much



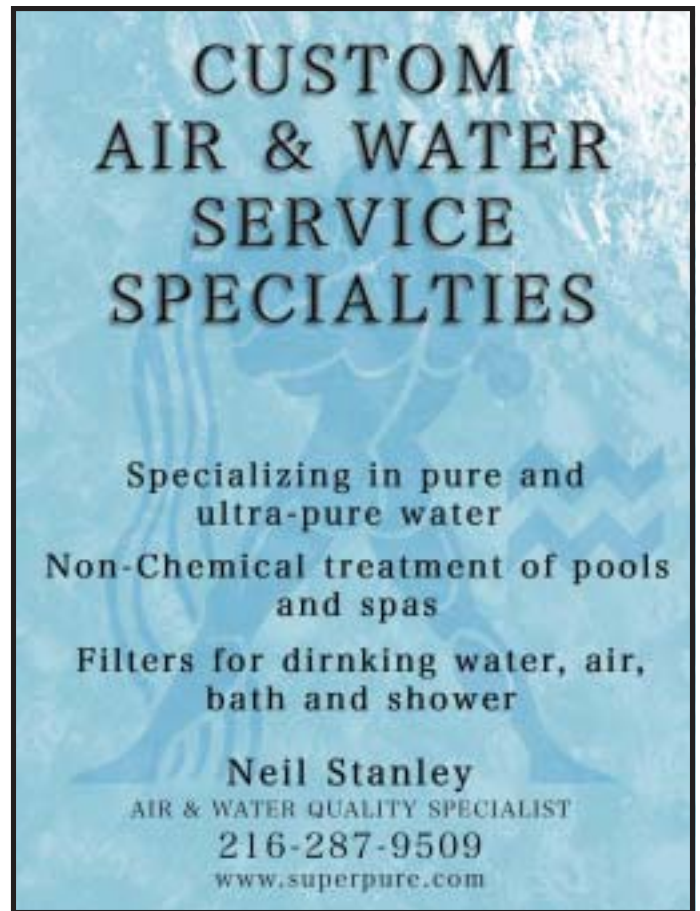
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of the social service programs this country has put forth are trying to change the recipient, rather than the system that is broken.

Later, when I turned thirty and was already feeling burned out in the mental health field, the book "Composing a Life" by Mary Catherine Bateson inspired me. Her words helped me to see that changing directions in my career was not a sign of failure, but a normal and adap-

tive behavior that most women exhibit but are not rewarded for. Now that I am past forty, I see that I never did turn AWAY from mental health work, I have just seen it from other angles and perspectives.

Nowadays, I can often find inspiration in between the covers of The New Yorker magazine. I am always amazed that an article will be on a topic I am quite sure I have no interest in, but the quality of writing will suck me in and time stands still until I finish the story, even when I should be in bed and asleep! Recent articles on ideas as disparate as cross-country freight trains and giant squids have had that effect.

I recently took a week off work to attend the Cleveland International Film Festival. Now, *there is* inspiration. For the last ten years I have been part of that group that temporarily loses its sanity and sees 50 films in 10 days. For the last three years, I have also been part of the selection group that previews a box of films a week for three months leading up to the festival. A well-made documentary can feed my soul. If you get a chance to see "Emmanuel's Gift" or "Knocking" from this years festi-




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val, you know what I mean.

Whether it is books, or films, or taking the opportunity to snorkel at least once a year, I am finding ways to soothe my soul, and calm my anxieties. After a good read or swim, I may go looking for the familiar resentment or wound that had caused me such angst in the past, and realize that it quietly left when I wasn't paying it any attention.

Eileen Coan is the medical librarian at The Gathering Place, a caring community for those touched by cancer, located in Beachwood. Contact Eileen at 216-595-9546, or coan@touchedbycancer.org

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PLANETARY PATHWAYS

By Evsttarr

May: Full Moon: 5-13th 2:51 am New Moon: 5-27- 1:25 am • June: Full Moon 6-11 - 2:03 pm New Moon: 6-25 - 12:05 pm

ARIES

OK Ram, the dice are **hot** and you're on a roll...DREAM BIG...get out of that little arena you've been playing in, it's time to move on up to the major leagues and *play ball with the big boys* in May...charge through those fears like only the Ram knows how...Venus is in Aries so your love life just got a boost also...

Man when you're hot you're hot...*grab onto those horns* and ride baby ride...push aside all that is not related to your life's ambitions and focus on those heartfelt desires that really stir the fires of the Ram's soul...June is heating up, get ready to jump into the fire

TAURUS

The Sun is in your sign Bull, and you're in the arena ready to charge, you're asked to raise your spiritual vibrations in May by moving and grooving to the beat of the music...that's right...play it, listen to it, chant it, sing it to the heavens, and move that soul, visualize all your dreams manifesting to the *tune of the piper*

Venus in Taurus lights up your love life...while other areas ask that you seek the advice of someone you trust, there are people out there who are a bit more knowledgeable in the field where you're seeking answers, it takes a strong individual to recognize it's OK to ask and receive help from others, the June stars say *ask and accept*

GEMINI

OK all work and no play makes the twins doubly stressed, May asks that you *take a time-out* from your harried schedule and take a break...call up some friends...take some time out for some much needed **R & R**...then when you get back to the grind you'll be well rested and full of creativity

The Gemini Sun is shining on you in June...it's time to shine and make way for all the good the Universe has in store for you...to do that you need to **let go** of the old, emotionally and intellectually, say good-bye to that which *no longer serves you*, and Heaven will take care of the rest

CANCER

May is tailor made for what the Crab does well, it's time to get into that shell of yours and *spend some alone time* meditating upon what you truly desire...get to the beach, take a journal with you and ask "what is it that I

really want, and what do I need to do to bring it to me?" *Listen, then DO IT!*

Alright, you should have a pretty good handle on what you want, no more side-stepping Crab...June says *set your sights higher*, increase your standards, no more settling for less than what you desire and deserve...quit trying to rationalize something is OK when you know it isn't...Reach for the Stars, you're ready, set, **GO!**

LEO

Hey, Lion I know Saturn is still in Leo, *deal with it*...you've asked your guides for help with your next move, now get out of the way and let the Universe do what it does best, Divine Intervention...the Planetary energies in May say get back to meditation, ask, act, and allow

Enough is enough already...**break free**, move out of your safe little cave and get out there and explore that jungle you call yourself King of, Mars is in Leo in June and is backing you up with all the energy and verve you need, *take a walk on the wild side* Lion

VIRGO

The *Synchronicity and Serendipity Sisters* are walking through your neighborhood in May Virgo, get up and **pay attention**...the Universe is answering your prayers and sending you hints all over the place...there are no coincidences and there are no accidents...take heed of all the signs around you and follow the yellow brick road

You're usually the neat freak but the month of June is screaming for you to clear away the clutter, you need to bring a little more balance into your life, a Feng Shui guru wouldn't be a bad idea, simplify your life, get rid of all that stuff and *allow the chi to flow*

LIBRA

Alright, you've spent the last two months preparing for the big leagues, releasing negativity and facing your demons, *now step up to the plate*, the ball game is about to begin, and we're talking major league in May, move out of the minors, see yourself succeeding...it's time to **play ball!**

You're in the ball game now baby, there's no turning back in June, stop seeing yourself as inferior...put those fears on a piece of paper, look them straight in the face, play the what's the worst that could happen game, *walk right through them*...now grab your bat, & come out a swinging, you're about to hit a home run right out of the ball park

SCORPIO

So you haven't always been the perfect angel, and yea, you admit it, you've even let that Scorpion stinger out quite a few times...May is all about *self-forgiveness*, don't beat up on yourself, ask for Divine help, ask that all effects of your mistakes be undone and release all the guilt, get back to loving yourself as the true child of God that you are

June is trying to send you a message, someone out there wants to help you, use that intuition of yours, dig deep (you're good at that) & figure out whom or what that may be and initiate contact...*voice your needs for assistance* and be ready to open your arms to **receive** it when it comes your way

SAGITTARIUS

You pointed your arrow in the right direction, now it's time...the winds in May are blowing your way for self-employment, you're a natural, not to mention you have the luck of your ruling planet Jupiter always at your back...it's time to *start doing the spiritual work*, meditate, visualize, affirm, eat healthy...you know the routine

June is bringing in a new dawn, the Sun is on the horizon and it's shining brightly on the Centaur...the worst is now behind you, you've endured some rough seas, but it's **smooth sailing** from here on out, steer that ship in the right direction and keep your eyes *focused on the positive*, the shore is just ahead and you've just spotted land

CAPRICORN

Alright Goat, no more doom and gloom...Saturn your ruling planet moved direct last month...so come out of the clouds...there's someone out there who is just waiting to help you, but, yea you guessed it...*you need to ask*, seek that person out and ask for their assistance, then start working on manifesting those dreams in May

June stars ask did you not listen? Allow others to **give** to you, open your arms to receiving, let the love and the light in, receive without guilt or apologies...by *letting yourself receive* you're balancing the male and female energies, and you are giving a tremendous gift to the giver

AQUARIUS

I know it doesn't feel like it, but you're being helped, your prayers are being answered, the Heavens are working behind the scenes in May to bring you what you've been praying for, you're getting close to shore, start noticing signs of life, stay centered in faith and gratitude...*you're almost there*

June is flashing the yellow caution sign, **wait**, look

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and listen...don't rush into action right now...there is some information around the corner that will alter your direction...if you move now you'll miss a window of opportunity...be patient, you'll know in your heart when it's time...affirm *I am divinely guided* at all times

PISCES

Your business is surrounded by magical opportunities in May, you have the drive, discipline and desire to be your own boss...start doing research, study marketing techniques, stay enthusiastic and allow the stars to set everything up in *Divine Order*

Trust that the Heavens are watching over your loved ones, keeping them safe and protected...your prayers are always heard...put your energies back on your business, know that everything else on the home front is taken care of in June...*relax fish*

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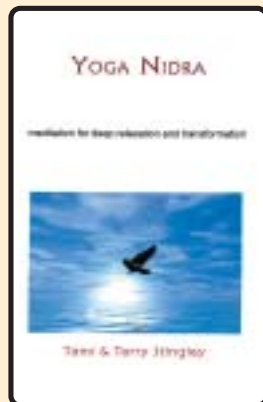
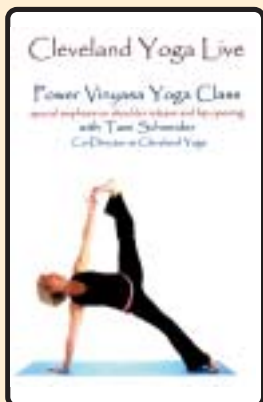
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THE YOGA PAGES

YOGA & INSPIRATION

A Yoga Teacher's Perspective

By wah!

Inspiration is something you take in. It's an impetus for creative thought. It's an opening. How does this happen? What leads up to the -aha!- moment that changes your way of thinking?

If we're talking about breathing, then the inspiration comes only after expiration. Inhale follows exhale. It's only after expelling air from the lungs completely that there is room for fresh air to come rushing in.

If we're talking about thought process, inspiration often comes after discovering old methods and thought patterns which no longer hold true. New theories are born because new information disproves previously accepted frameworks of thought.

And if we're talking about life, inspiration is a delicious moment of welcoming new attitudes. It is often described as a burst of inspiration, aptly describing the exhilarating moment when old thought is shattered and new thought is taken on. When we surrender the old happily and voluntarily, inspiration is effortless.

When our personal junk gets in the way, even huge amounts of inspiration will do nothing. For example, I was at a workshop last week with some good meditation teachers and they were saying things which intellectually made a lot of sense but I wasn't really absorbing their teachings. An interaction I experienced before the workshop had triggered old emotional scars and I was swimming in their latent potency. I sat there, calmly and attentively, waiting for the divine love to seep in. It didn't. After 1 hour, I was cold, shivering and closed down. After 2 hours, I was hungry and distracted. After 3 hours, agitated. And by the end of the workshop, I was pretty much out of my mind. It didn't really matter how inspiring the teachers were, I wasn't getting anything out of it.

My own emotional baggage prevented me from being in the moment, from receiving the inspiration I had paid good money to enjoy. After a good healing treatment and some tears and talk, I was clear again, and finally able to absorb the divine energy of the afternoon.

Inspiration doesn't have to be a dramatic upheaval however. Happily surrendering old viewpoints can be a fun and easy thing to enjoy. Finding things to be grateful for in the day, appreciating new ideas and thoughts from others, reading and studying create a flow of inspiration in your life. And if you are inspiring others in return, well, that's just icing on the cake.

I have a recent friendship which was built solely on inspiration. When we first met, this woman was a novice yoga student, and she asked me for private yoga lessons in exchange for healing treatments. My job was to unlock the blockages in her hips and heart. Her job was to soften and nurture my travel-weary body. Each of us wanted to uplift the other. It developed into a beautiful friendship, boasting



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mutual respect and admiration. I believe all communities are built on this foundation of friendship, enthusiasm and mutual support.

I can't really think of a time I was inspired from something I did myself. The inspiration always comes from outside. After all, if I knew how to do it, I would have already mastered it. How inspiring is that? Inspiration is when I see things in a different way, think differently, feel differently. I don't often get that experience from my own inner chemistry. Others around me are usually responsible for pointing out a way I could do things differently or introducing me to a new healing technology or new way of eating or acting or thinking or practicing – well, the list is endless. Just being around people who embody the positive changes I am trying to make in my life is enough to create the inspirational land-



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scape I need.

My inspiration comes from those I have had personal contact with – friends, saints, family members. Sometimes a book will inspire me or open new doors, but usually it's the personal contact which endures tests of time. When I find someone who inspires me, I stick to them like glue. I study their minds and enjoy their company, slowly and steadily replacing my outdated or unconstructive ways of thinking with their own. If someone has shown me a more open way to access myself, I keep them right close beside me. I keep their picture on my altar, on my desktop, in my car, or around my neck. Whatever keeps their energy alive in my life works for me. I talk to them in meditation, wear the necklace they gave me, and emulate their style. I use their lives to inspire the changes I would like to create.

Sometimes an inspirational experience from the past will leave a lasting impression on me. If it has a positive effect, I use it as for inspiration. For example, my grandmother was a hard-working immigrant who maintained a farm. She made quilts, planted trees, vegetable gardens and caned her own chairs, among other things. And after a long day's work, if you asked her how it went, she always said, "It's a-gainin'!" She never complained about the hard work or became impatient. I use this memory to inspire patience and diligence in my own life.

I have noticed that if I only focus on the positive inspiring things which are happening in my day, my energy stays inspired. If I talk about what's not inspiring to me, it draws my attention away from what I love and basically just drags me

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down. Inspiration works best for me when it is combined with self-scrutiny and self-awareness. When I find inspiration in the little twists and turns of my day, it changes my perspective and I look for even more positive developments. One inspiration leads to another, one grateful thought leads to more, one expression of happiness begins a trail of happiness. It's contagious, and it builds a delightful inner landscape of inspiration and strength.

Inspiring others is a great occupation (being a journalist for this magazine, for instance). Encouraging others towards excellence is a job which has energetic rewards. If you have lifted someone else's spirit, it greatly strengthens your own.

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Inspiration can be gotten from books, friends, teachers and saints. It can be spoken words or a presence felt. It can turn your head around for a minute or last a lifetime. One thing's for sure: inspiration is something we give to each other.

*Wah! is a musician and spiritual seeker who travels the world singing and expanding sacred intention. Her latest CD Savasana*2 is designed for deep relaxation and healing. Visit www.wahmusic.com*



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Yoga Teachers:

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Marni Task, private group or individual yoga lessons. Jivamukti yoga with an anusara flair. Phone (216) 376 2521; email: marnitask@aol.com website: www.marnitask.com

Katie O'Leary, hatha yoga with a vinyasa touch. Private and group instruction available. Also Reiki treatments. Please call 440-669-6850.

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Yoga Events/Workshops:

Tantra Workshop at Karma Yoga Downtown with Shakthi Saturday, May 20 & June 17. Call 216-849-6621 for details and registration.

Yoga Teachers Training T.R.Y. 4 Life 200 & 500 Yoga Alliance Registry - Weekday or Weekend Training - www.try4life.com jan@try4life.com 440-356-5991 or 330-995-4104

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Support YouthAIDS global HIV/AIDS prevention programs by purchasing "Off the Mat, Into the World" T-Shirts at www.gaiam.com/youthaids. T-Shirts and project supported by Seane Corn and Ashley Judd, as featured in The Journey Magazine and Yoga Journal.

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"A daydream is a meal at which images are eaten. Some of us are gourmets, some gourmands, and a good many take their images precooked out of a can and swallow them down whole, absentmindedly and with little relish." –W. H. Auden

Auden's quote is in line with the metaphoric meaning of food in our dreams. Food in our dream life represents food for thought, ideas, concepts, our belief patterns and how we digest them intellectually.

Difficulty with a particular food in a dream may be telling us that ingesting that particular type of food is causing us some harm, such as an allergic reaction. Combining food in our dreams such as peanut butter and jelly, cheese and crackers, cookies and milk may indicate the complimentary interactions between two entirely separate thoughts that we may be thinking about and their joining.

Let's give the action taken with food some thought, such as:

- Back Burner: ideas we're not ready to swallow yet
- Banquet: plenty of food for thought, but given to everyone
- Buffet: wide variety of philosophies, we pick & choose
- Choking: our reluctance to swallow the information

offered

- Cooking: working with ideas, integrating them into your life
- Fasting: refraining from negative belief patterns
- Freezing: shutting out feelings, hardening of the heart

Let's look at some of the different kinds of food:

- Apple: forbidden fruit, seeing both the good & the bad
- Bread: sustenance, money, wages
- Corn: kernels of truth
- Fish: spiritual food for thought
- Garbage: rotten ideas we need to throw out
- Nuts: potential for growth, seed ideas or in a nut-shell
- Pudding: rewards, or the proof is in the pudding

QUESTION: What if a particular food is exaggerated in a dream?

ANSWER: It could imply you are ingesting too much of that item in your daily life, i.e. an oversized coffee cup could indicate you're drinking way too much coffee.

Dear Duchess:

I am in my apartment and a nurse from a tavern I work at comes into my home, sits me down, proceeds to give me a shot in my arm, and says to me "you need chromium." *Needle from a Nurse*

Dear Needle from a Nurse: Sounds to me like this is a clear-cut message from the Universe, especially since she is a nurse from the establishment you work at. If it were I, I'd go to the nearest Health store and get myself a bottle of chromium. *The Duchess*

Evstarr, aka "Duchess of Dreams," has been studying dreams for the past 25 years, attending workshops throughout the country. She has studied under renowned dream author Robert Moss, along with the works of Edgar Cayce, Carl Jung and others. Dream workshop offered at International General Assembly of Spiritualists in Ashtabula, Sunday May 7 - contact 440-969-1724. Visit her website www.reachforthemoon.net for upcoming dream workshops, send your dreams & questions to evstarr@yahoo.com



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