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Southern California's Guide to Conscious Living

MARCH / APRIL 2017

VOLUME 24, NO. 2



**INTERVIEW WITH
JUDITH ORLOFF, MD:
THE EMPATH'S SURVIVAL GUIDE**

Discover Life Strategies for Sensitive People



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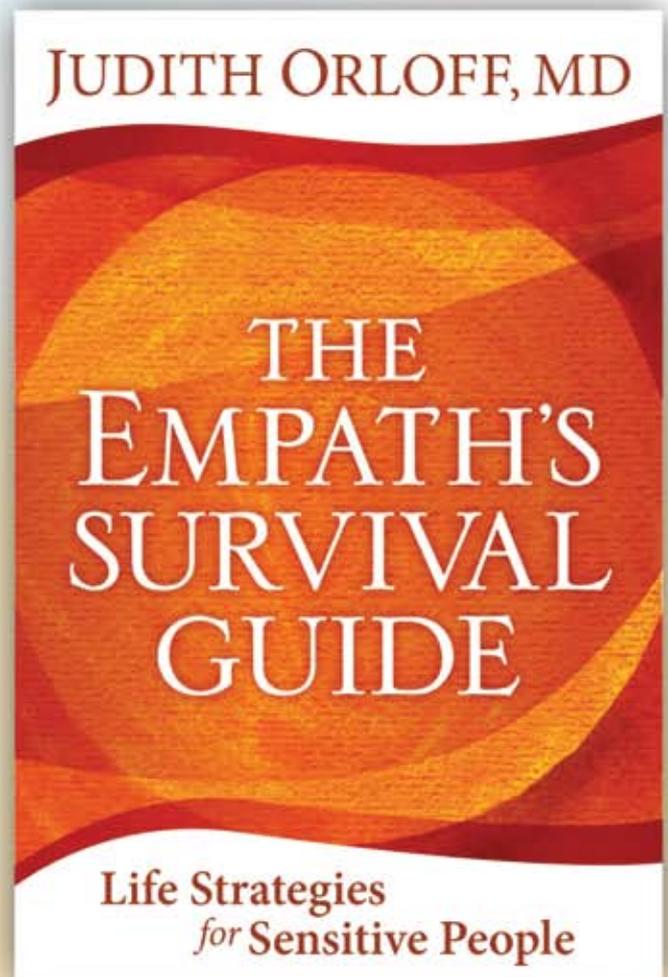
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twitter.com/awarenessinfo
facebook.com/awarenessmagazine
www.awarenessmag.com

PUBLISHED BI-MONTHLY
Awareness®
Southern California's Guide to Conscious Living
MAILING ADDRESS
PO Box 491111
Los Angeles, CA 90049
(714) 283-3385
E-mail:
Yolanda@awarenessmag.com
www.awarenessmag.com

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AWARENESS



Interview with Judith Orloff, MD: The Empath's Survival Guide

By Laurie Sue Brockway

The *Empath's Survival Guide* is a new book that offers life strategies for sensitive people who need help staying centered and hopeful in a stressful world. But it also shows everyone who wants to keep their hearts open when coping with adversity or toxic people how to hone our gift of empathy to make the world a better place.

No one knows the joys and challenges of being an empath better than Judith Orloff, MD.

She was born with second sight, into a family of 25 physicians and several generations of healers. As an empathic child, she struggled in her early life to find a way to cope with and then finally embraced her gift of intuition. Her journey led her to devote her life to helping others.

Her new book, *The Empath's Survival Guide: Life Strategies for Sensitive People*, is a guide for a wide range of empaths and all sensitive people who struggle with managing the gifts—intuition, creativity, and spiritual connection—with challenges that overwhelm them. The book also offers a much needed acknowledgment that empaths are not imagining the things they feel and sense.

As Dr. Orloff explains, “We actually feel others’ emotions, energy, and physical symptoms in our own bodies, without the usual defenses that most people have.”

As an Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at UCLA, she synthesizes the pearls of traditional medicine with cutting edge knowledge of intuition, energy, and spirituality to achieve physical and emotional healing. Her bestselling books, *The Power of Surrender*, *Emotional Freedom*, *Sec-*

ond Sight, *Positive Energy*, and *Guide to Intuitive Healing* offer readers practical strategies to overcome frustration, stress, and worry.

We spoke with Dr. Orloff

to learn how empaths can thrive. As an empath I know how demoralizing it feels to be labeled as “overly sensitive” or told “Honey, you have to get a thicker skin” by



Judith Orloff, MD. Photo courtesy of Bob Riha.

about *The Empath's Survival Guide* and she shared helpful insights.

So many people have been told “you’re too emotional” or “too sensitive” and they grow up feeling like there’s something wrong with them. Is it your experience that many of these people are empaths?

Absolutely! I wrote *The Empath's Survival Guide* to legitimize the gift of sensitivity and teach sensitive people of all

parents and society, as if we were some kind of weaklings who just need to “steel up.” The opposite is true. I believe that empathy is the human trait that will help all of us to save the world. Everyone who is an empath or who simply wants to lead a more heart-centered life in an often insensitive world can benefit from learning skills to protect their gift of empathy.

What are some of the common hallmarks of an empath?

Empaths are sponges who absorb the emotions and physical symptoms of others. They don't have the usual defenses that other people have to filter out noise, light, sound, intense emotions or stress. So empaths often end up taking on other people's stress in their bodies—and they feel exhausted, anxious, depressed or sick. As a psychiatrist, I've worked with many empaths who come to me totally worn out and misdiagnosed by mainstream medicine as being hypochondriacs, neurotic or with some “disorder” that requires antidepressant or anti-anxiety medication. With the empaths in my private practice, I always begin with teaching them how to avoid absorbing other people's energy so they can feel stronger and more grounded within themselves. The upside of being an empath—and there are many—is that empaths have depth, intuition, deep compassion, deep spirituality and are passionate lovers and mates. As an empath, I would never give up my sensitivities for the world. They let me know the secrets of the universe because I can feel the energy of all things.

Is being an empath something people inherit from their parents?

Many factors can contribute. Some babies enter the world with more sensitivity than others—an inborn temperament. You can actually see it when they come out of the womb. They're much more responsive to light, smells, touch, movement, temperature, and sound. Also, from what I've observed with my patients, some sensitivity may be genetically transmitted. Highly sensitive children can come from mothers and

fathers with the same traits. In addition, parenting plays a role. Childhood neglect or abuse can affect your sensitivity levels as an adult. A portion of empaths I've treated have experienced early trauma such as emotional or physical abuse, or they were raised by alcoholic, depressed or narcissistic parents. This could potentially wear down the usual healthy defenses that a child with nurturing parents develops.

What is the difference between an empath and a Highly Sensitive Person?

Highly Sensitive People (HSPs) have all the sensory components of extreme sensitivity such as sensitivity to light, sound, touch, crowds but empaths actually absorb emotions/energy/stress /physical symptoms from other people. As a result, empaths can become exhausted or ill and not know why. They are emotional sponges! Empaths also have heightened intuitions. Both highly sensitive people and empaths

have very active mirror neurons to increase our compassion.

In your book you explain there are many types of empaths. Which are the most common?

- **Physical Empaths.** They are especially attuned to other people's physical symptoms and tend to absorb them into their own bodies. They can also be energized by someone's sense of well-being.

- **Emotional Empaths.** They mainly pick up other people's emotions and can become a sponge for their feelings, both happy and sad.

- **Intuitive Empaths.** They experience extraordinary perceptions such as intuition, telepathy, messages in dreams, animal and plant communication, as well as contact with the Other Side. Under this category you find a range of empaths with abilities from mediumship to empath attuned to earth changes.

Can you share some of the gifts of being an empath?

I cherish being an empath and I'm grateful for the blessings my sensitivities bestow on me each day. I love being intuitive, feeling the flow of energy in the world, reading people, and experiencing the richness of being so open to life and nature. We empaths have many marvelous traits. We have huge hearts and the instinct to help others in need or who are less fortunate. We're dreamers and idealists. We're passionate, deep, and creative, in touch with our emotions, compassionate, and can see the big picture. We can appreciate other's feelings and become loyal friends and mates. We're intuitive, spiritual, and can sense energy. We have a special appreciation for the natural world and feel at home there. We resonate with nature, plants, forests, and gardens. We often love water. Whether we are soaking in the womb of warm water in a bath or living

by the ocean or a river, it energizes us. We may feel special intuitive bonds with our animal companions and become involved with animal rescue or animal communication.

What is the biggest challenge for empaths in intimate relationships?

Empaths have different requirements in a relationship for it to work. Empaths need a lot of alone time. They sometimes need separate beds or even bedrooms. Empaths get overstimulated with "too much togetherness" and need to authentically communicate this to their partners. Empaths are often unconsciously attracted to "unavailable people" who don't let them come close enough to have all their fears of intimacy arise. It's possible to have loving, healthy relationships if empaths can define and express their special needs.

Do empaths have less ability to defend against stress

(Continued on page 6)

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Judith Orloff MD...

(Continued from page 5)

and stressful people than other people?

Yes, because empaths are so open they absorb the energy around them—so they are susceptible to stress. But when an empath uses the protection techniques I present in the book they have extra defenses against stress so empaths can be resilient and thrive.

What are some examples of protection techniques for empaths?

Empaths must learn to center themselves so that when stress hits they are not knocked over. Techniques I recommend are shielding your energy, meditation, Earthing (going barefoot on the earth), setting clear limits and boundaries with draining people, breathing techniques, and learning how to navigate intimate relationships so you don't feel suffocated. These are all part of the empath tool kit.

What exactly is emotional contagion? And how does it impact the empathic person?

Research has shown that we actually "catch" other people's emotions and empaths are more prone to doing this because of their high sensitivities and openness. Research has shown that many people pick up the emotions of those around them. For instance, one crying infant will set off a wave of crying in a hospital ward. Or one person loudly expressing anxiety in the workplace can spread it to other workers. People commonly catch other people's feelings in groups. A recent New York Times article stated that this ability to synchronize moods with others is crucial for good relationships. What is the lesson for empaths? To choose positive people in our lives so we're not brought down by negativity. Or, if, say a friend is going through a hard time, take special precautions to ground and center yourself. These are important strategies

you'll learn in this book.

You write that there are introverted empaths and extroverted empaths. How does the feel-good hormone Dopamine come into play with each?

Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that increases the activity of neurons and is associated with the pleasure response. Research has shown that introverted empaths tend to have a higher sensitivity to dopamine than extroverts. Basically, they need less dopamine to feel happy. That could explain why they are more content with alone time, reading, and meditation and need less external stimulation from parties and other large social gatherings. In contrast, extroverts crave the dopamine rush from lively events. In fact, they can't get enough of it.

Many empaths tend to absorb others' issues, energies, and emotions like a sponge. Is there an explanation for this?

Empaths don't have the usual defense mechanisms that most people have. We don't have the same filters. For empaths, it's like holding something with 50 fingers instead of 5. Because of this, we tend to feel other people's stress and symptoms in our own bodies. In addition, we can feel their joy, compassion and well-being in our bodies, a major advantage of being an empath.

An old cliché is that women are more sensitive than men. Does gender play a role when it comes to being an empath?

I have a Facebook empath support community with over 6000 people and most of them are women! Women tend to be more open in expressing their emotions, and take on a lot of stress and get drained. Men are also empaths (of course!) but sensitive boys have often been shamed by their sensitivities so they shut them off as adults. I embrace sensitive men, and urge them to come out of the empath closet and shine!

Are there certain things

that agitate empaths almost all the time, like loud music, crowds, or people with vexing personalities?

Many empaths like myself, can't tolerate loud noise, bright light, crowded shopping malls, or draining people I call energy vampires. They also can't tolerate yelling—it pierces right through them—so I have a "no yelling rule" in my house and life. Empaths also don't like small talk because they prefer going deep.

Why do empaths and narcissists often have a fatal attraction?

In the book I discuss the toxic attraction between empaths and narcissists. Narcissists are self-absorbed charmers who can feign empathy in the beginning but really have what science calls an "empathy deficient disorder." They are attracted to the empath's loving heart and desire to give. Empaths, who are so giving and often naive, are attracted to the narcissist's charm and charismatic energy, feeling that all the narcissist needs is love. This is the trap that empaths fall into. Narcissists cannot usually be cured by love because they see others as "the problem". I tell my empath patients to run as far as they can away from narcissists so they don't get involved!

Do empaths have to be especially careful about exposing themselves to negative news coverage and social media?

Because empaths have such big hearts, they often hurt very deeply too. For all my empath patients, I suggest limiting their exposure to the news so they don't start absorbing the suffering of the world. This doesn't mean that we don't keep informed. It means we get the basics and don't allow sensitive selves to be demolished by the massive suffering. I also recommend news and technology fasts so that empaths can regenerate themselves in nature or during quiet time.

What is the neuroscience behind being an empath?

In the book, I discuss five intriguing research findings. Empaths may have hyperactive mirror neuron systems which heighten our compassion for loved ones and fellow human-kind. Other findings include the possibility that empaths are reading the information in other people's electromagnetic fields (such as those around the heart and brain.) Also how we process dopamine, the pleasure hormone, is a factor. Empaths don't require as much dopamine stimulation to be happy-- but extroverted people who aren't empaths do. They can't get enough of parties, and high stimulation events—whereas empaths love their alone time and quiet meditation—they need a lower amount of dopamine input to be content.

What is empathy so important in our world today?

Empathy will help us know what it's like to be in other people's shoes. It will foster compassion in a divided world. It will help our families and world come together in harmony. We all desperately need to develop and practice more empathy to bring our troubled planet together. Empathy is the medicine we need in our world today!

The Empath's Survival Guide: Life Strategies for Sensitive People.

<https://www.amazon.com/Empaths-Survival-Guide-Strategies-Sensitive/dp/1622036573/>

Come see Dr. Orloff in Los Angeles for a book talk & signing April 11 7PM at Mystic Journeys Bookstore in Venice, April 13 7PM at Vromans book in Pasadena + May 20 empath workshop at Insight LA in Santa Monica. To learn more about the power of empathy, Dr. Orloff's book tour schedule, and to sign up for her Empath Support Newsletter visit www.drjudithorloff.com

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The Evidence for Nature's Healing Powers

By Carl Greer, PhD, PsyD



Photo by Pat Greer

In this excerpt from ***Change Your Story of Your Health: Using Shamanic and Jungian Techniques for Healing*** by Carl Greer, PhD, PsyD, the author writes about the healing powers of nature and how we can integrate its benefits into the new story of our health and wellness...

Many people have intuited that nature has healing powers, but now researchers are discovering more about how our bodies and minds benefit from our interactions with nature. When it comes to scientific and medical research, some of the positive effects of nature are measured by study participants' self-reporting. Others are measured by lower blood pressure or lower levels of stress hormones such as cortisol. Some studies look at brain activity changes, which show we have a different internal experience when we are exposed to nature. These experiences contribute to better mental and physical health in the short and long term.

A 2007 British study showed a walk in nature reduced depression in 71 percent of the participants. This matches up with Japanese research into the practice of *shinrin-yoku*, which can be translated as "forest bathing," or immersion in a wooded environment. Studies have shown that walk-

ing in the woods lowers levels of the stress hormones cortisol, adrenaline, and noradrenaline, boosting immunity and mood. It also reduces heart rate, lowers blood pressure, improves sleep, and increases anticancer protein levels.

Eva M. Selhub and Alan C. Logan have pointed out in their book *Your Brain on Nature: The Science of Nature's Influence on Your Health, Happiness and Vitality* that, in England and America, the Victorians sent those with "nervous conditions" or tuberculosis to sanitariums. These facilities were typically located in pine forests, as evergreen trees were believed to emit something into the air that promoted healing. As it turns out, these claims were not the mere invention of imaginative promoters of sanitariums.

Selhub and Logan note, "Natural chemicals secreted by evergreen trees, collectively known as phytoncides, have also been associated with improvements in the activity of our frontline immune defenders." The air in natural areas, especially in forests or near moving waters such as rivers, tends to have a very high concentration of negative ions, known to increase levels of the mood-boosting neurotransmitter serotonin. These types of ions also are associated with a sense of greater vitality, and

they reduce depression, fatigue, and stress. Breathing them in is easy to do when we are outdoors in nature.

Touching soil, or perhaps just being near it and breathing it in to some degree, benefits health, too. An increasing amount of research is showing a connection between microbes, encountered when outdoors, and a healthy gut colony of organisms that contributes to digestive health and even positive moods and protection from depression and anxiety. Dirt puts us in contact with microorganisms that establish their home in our digestive system.

As David Perlmutter, MD, wrote in his book *Brain Maker*: "The microbiome is dynamic. It's ever-changing in response to our environment—the air we breathe, the people we touch, the drugs we take, the dirt and germs we encounter, the things we consume, and even the thoughts we have. Just as food gives our bodies information, so does our gut bacteria speak to our DNA, our biology, and ultimately, our longevity." A healthy colony of microbes in our gut serves to promote our immunity as well as healthy cognitive abilities and emotional well being.

Gardening is one outdoor activity known to have many health benefits, including reduction of physical pain and stress, improved mental wellness, increased physical fitness, increased social contact and sense of community, and greater consumption of fruits and vegetables. In a garden, you are exposed to sunlight, needed for the production of vitamin D and serotonin. Both affect mood, reducing the risk of depression. Most of our serotonin, a neurotransmitter that contributes to a sense of contentment and happiness, is pro-

duced not in the brain, where it is used, but in our digestive system, where microorganisms from the environment live. It makes sense that being in the sunlight, touching dirt, and getting physical activity could improve depression and anxiety. Then too, planting, weeding, and harvesting vegetables in a garden offers the health benefit of greater accessibility to foods known to promote health.

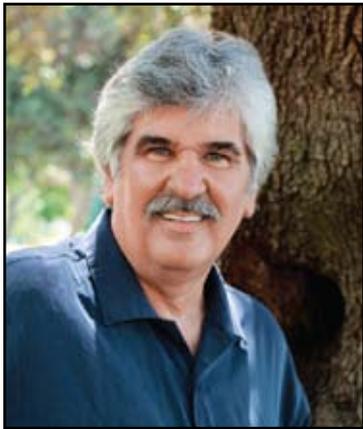
One of my clients, who had cancer, told me that gardening made her feel happy and relaxed because it made her feel connected to the earth and life itself. She also said it made her less preoccupied with her cancer.

Although being in nature, enjoying it and moving our bodies as we appreciate it, is good for the body and mind, we are increasingly spending time indoors in artificial environments. Consequently, our eyes and skin are exposed to artificial light. We know that interaction with technological devices affects our eyesight. It's now common to have an eyeglass prescription for close reading, one for regular vision including distance vision, and yet another for reading from a computer screen or mobile device located 20 to 26 inches from our eyes (trifocals are common now, too). Children who spend more time indoors have an increased risk of near-sightedness. Researchers are still looking into how indoor lighting might be affecting us differently from how natural sunlight affects us. Fluorescent lighting, for example, may increase your chances of developing an eye disease or cataracts. Being indoors or in an urban setting, away from natural sounds and exposed to more mechanistic sounds created by humans, has del-

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S.O.S. Save Our Sea Otters

By Tom Porter



Tom Porter

Sea otters (*Enhydra lutris*) are the smallest of all marine mammals and live along our California Central and Northern coast; and are native to the West coast of North America, Alaska, and Siberia. They are the smallest of all the marine mammals, but are the largest member of the weasel family. Unlike most other marine mammals, which have fat or

blubber, to keep their bodies warm in cold ocean water like whales and seals, the otter's primary form of insulation is its exceptionally thick fur. Their fur is the densest of any in the animal kingdom, which lead to its near extinction by early fur hunters. Sea Otters play an important role in maintaining our planet's healthy environment because the otter has a disproportionately large effect on the ecological community, making them critical in this marine environment. Sea otters are the primary predators of sea urchins. They are considered a keystone species because they control sea urchin populations, which cause severe damage to kelp forests. Their role in the ecosystem is analogous to the role of a keystone in an arch, the arch will collapse without it. Otters protect kelp forests from hungry sea urchins, which eat kelp

"roots", called holdfasts that are anchors, and perform similar roles to the roots of land plants. Kelp grows quickly and creates large forests that gather nutrients from the soil. Sea urchins will rapidly consume nearshore kelp. When otters are present, sea urchins tend to be small and hide in crevices,

diverse variety of marine life, which helps increase the productivity of nearshore ecosystems. The sea otter dives to the sea floor in search of and eats a variety of marine creatures. The otter preys mostly upon sea urchins, various mollusks and other marine invertebrates and crustaceans such as crabs,



A mother otter with her baby. Photo by Tom Porter

therefore protecting the kelp. These kelp forest ecosystems are an important habitat to a

and occasionally fish. They are one of the few animals species that use tools, such as rocks to open shells to remove the prey inside. Yet, sea otters are sometimes prey for sharks and orcas.

The otter's diet also includes aquatic creatures that often conflict with human fisheries because of their high value. Once sea otters numbers were estimated between 150,000–300,000, and were hunted extensively for their fur between the 1700 and 1800s, to the point of near extinction. Their population fell to 1,000–2,000 individuals living in a small fraction of their natural territory range. An international ban on hunting them, conservation efforts, and reintroduction programs have contributed to their numbers rebounding. Yet despite these environmental successes, the sea otter remains classified as an endangered species because their numbers remain low. The species now occupies only about two-thirds of its former habitat. Surpris-

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A sleepy sea otter rests on the water.
Photo by Tom Porter

ingly the populations in California and the Aleutian Islands have recently declined, or have plateaued at depressed levels. The recovery of the sea otter is considered an important success in marine conservation, although the number of sea otters remains classified as an endangered species.

In Central and South America the jaguar, whose numbers have been classified as near threatened, also act as a keystone predator, because of its it's widely varied diet, helping to balance the rain forest and jungle ecosystem with it's consumption of a wide variety of different species of prey. Because the lion and gray wolf play a similar role in their ecosystem they are also known as keystone species.

A keystone species have a very large effect on their environment relative to its population. These predators play a critical role in keeping the relationships of an organism in an ecosystem. This arrangement affects many species in the ecological community. They determine the diversity of types and numbers of various organisms in the food-web environment. Just as the role that a keystone serves in an archway, to prevent its collapse, so too do certain species play an analogous role in their ecosys-

tem. An ecosystem may experience an environmental disaster if these creatures are removed because of the critical role they play in the food-web, in both diversity and genetic quality.

Without the keystone in an arch, the arch will collapse. An ecosystem will experience a dramatic shift in biomass and productivity if a keystone species is removed. This is an important concept in wildlife conservation. The concept is an important description for particularly strong inter-species interactions in the complex ecological system; and it has allowed better understanding and communications between policy-makers, ecologists and conservationists. Robert Paine, professor of zoology at the University of Washington developed and introduced the concept of the keystone species in 1969. Through Paine's observations and experiments on the relations between intertidal invertebrates, he developed this revolutionary breakthrough in conservation knowledge. Paine's work in, Food-Web Complexity and Species Di-

versity, especially keystone species, gained support and became popular throughout conservation movement.

Elephant seals (*Mirounga angustirostris*) are large, ocean-going seals. They derive their name from their great size and from the male's large proboscis. Both sea otters and elephant seals were hunted to the brink of extinction by the end of the 19th century, fortunately their numbers have since recovered.

The northern elephant seal, ranges over the Pacific coast of the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. A nearby popular breeding location on the California's Pacific Coast is near Hearst Castle, San Simeon. Elephant seals breed annually in colonies that have established breeding areas.

Elephant seals make extraordinarily loud roaring noises, especially during the mating competition. The mating system is highly polygynous, a successful male may impregnate as many as 50 females in one season. Elephant seal's sexual dimorphism in size is great. Males can reach up to 14 ft (4 m) and 5,000 pounds (2,300 kg), the fe-

males are much smaller, growing to 11 ft (3 m) and 1,400 pounds (640 kg).

Marine conservation, the protection and preservation of our ecosystems in oceans is important to the health of our planet. Hopefully we can focus on preventing human caused damage to our marine ecosystems, preserving and restoring vulnerable marine species which in turn will enhance our own human existence, survival and beauty.

Tom Porter produces the video series Animal Consciousness, which has featured Guide to Whale Watching, sea otters, elephant seals, sea lions and bird rescues. Tom was a student and educator about the Cruising Classroom at U.C.L.A. in Marine Science. Currently he is working with Craig Downer on the Maverick Mustangs of the Salt River. Tom's goal is to inspire and empower people to care about animals and the planet.

"Until he extends the circle of his compassion to all living beings, man will not himself find peace"

— Albert Schweitzer

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Granny – Messenger of the Sea

By Mary J. Getten



When we think of great environmentalists, Rachel Carson, Ado Leopold and John Muir come to mind. I admire all of them, but my favorite is an orca named Granny. Can a whale be an environmentalist? Of course! Who knows the sea's issues better than a wise and elder inhabitant?

My best friend for the last 25 years was a whale - a wild orca in the Pacific Northwest known as Granny, or J2. I met her in 1991 when I started leading whale-watch trips in the San Juan Islands of Washington State. I spent ten years on the water with Granny and her family, J pod, and with the entire Southern Resident Population of orcas, totaling 80-98 whales.

During those years, I expanded my skills as a telepathic animal communicator, and I also developed a relationship with Granny, on the physical and telepathic planes. I was curious about these whales, and to understand them better, I embarked upon a research project with an animal communicator colleague. The information we gathered through direct dialog with Granny and other whales was published in the Nautilus Award winning book, *Communicating with Orcas; The Whales' Perspective*.

Granny was the matriarch and leader of J pod for many decades. Scientists believe

that she was born in 1911 and passed away in the late fall of 2016 at the amazing age of 105. It's hard for me to believe that she is no longer leading J pod, calling the shots about where to find fish and meeting up with the other members of their extended community. Her loss is unimaginable to the whales, and deeply sad for the thousands of people who have known and followed her over the past forty years.

Granny was a whale with deep wisdom and love for humanity. She raised the alarm about the health of the waters and often requested that we send love and healing energy to the water. She said *"We whales are doing this all the time, but there are not enough of us, and there is so much damage in our environment that we cannot keep up. To have a large group focused on this matter will help enormously, and do not do it for just one day. This needs to become a practice that is done on a daily basis. And while people are focusing on doing this for the planet, they will also be getting healed themselves, as you cannot spend time in this energy without being affected."*

Over the years, Granny's calls for help became louder and more frequent. In 2014 she said, *"Things have never been so urgent. As I've said in the past, no matter what happens, the earth will survive. Eventually it will heal itself, especially if the other life forms are gone, so there is no need to worry about that. But it really is time for everyone to understand how dire it is and to put their differences aside and work together to create the healthiest environment possible."*

In June of 2014, at Granny's request, I began the Global Water Healing meditation. This monthly event, every first Fri-

day, brings together an international group on a conference call to send loving healing energy to all water. It is designed to keep us focused on the water and to enhance our daily practice. I host the calls and recruit a variety of facilitators to lead the meditations. They are unique and fresh each month. The www.globalwaterhealing.org website has messages from Granny and also an archive of meditations that anyone can do anytime. We welcome everyone to participate in this important and urgent work.

When I told Granny that that it may be too late for the oceans, she replied, *"Humanity thinks that it is helpless, hopeless and fearful about the environment and the state of the world, but you are not. You are powerful beyond measure and by joining with us cetaceans, great change can happen. Focus on the water, the earth and the air, but also focus on the hearts. If human hearts can be healed, all else will fall into place. Raise your vibration and send that energy and love to everyone you meet. Send it further to every corner of the globe. Healing hearts will heal the world – this is our work, but we invite and welcome your participation."*

I have learned so much from Granny in our decades of telepathic conversations. She has taught me that whales live their lives in balance and harmony, in the present moment and in a state of oneness, connected to nature and their place in it. They are compassionate, non-judgmental, loving and non-violent. Whales and dolphins do not blame us for the environmental havoc we have wreaked; instead they work with energy to raise our vibration so that we will do better. Granny says that if humans were more like whales and

dolphins we wouldn't have so many problems.

I invite you to join Granny's movement to heal the waters of the planet and restore balance to our world. Every day, hold the vision of vibrant, full of life, healthy and pristine waters. Participate each month in the Global Water Healing meditation calls – there is power in numbers. In Granny's own words -

"It is now time for humans to step into their greatness. You are way bigger and more powerful than you know and it's time to stop pretending. You can change things – in the world, in your life, in your self. Own your power and take action to create the life and the world that you desire. We whales are holding you in our hearts. We have a vision of peace and love, clean water and air, food a plenty and balance and harmony. Now go make it happen."

Mary J. Getten is a telepathic animal communicator, marine naturalist, teacher and author of the Nautilus Award winning *Communicating with Orcas: The Whales' Perspective* and contributing author to the new best-seller, *Dolphins and Whales Forever*.

Since 1996, Mary's work as an animal communicator has helped thousands of happy clients worldwide understand and create more harmony with their naughty, sad, sick and puzzling pets. She teaches animal and nature communication workshops and tele-classes, and leads whale and dolphin trips. www.MaryGetten.com

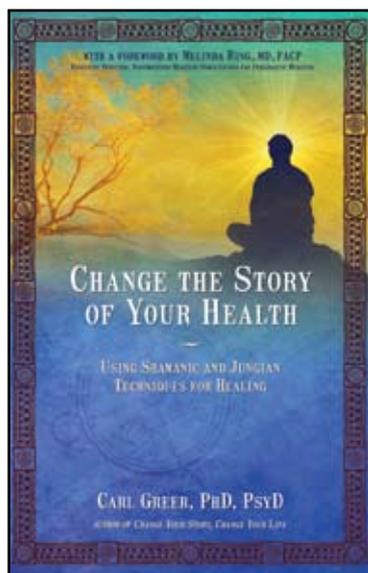
"Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land."

— Aldo Leopold

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(Continued from page 7)

eterious health effects as well. According to a report issued by the Harvard School of Public Health in conjunction with the John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, “Excessive anthropogenic [caused by humans] noise has been associated with annoyance, disruption of sleep and cognitive processes, hearing impairment, and adverse impacts on cardiovascular and endocrine systems.” It seems the further away from nature we get, the more our bodies have to struggle to adjust to our unnatural lifestyles. Consider whether this struggle may be related to health problems you are experiencing.



Why are we so sensitive to the difference between natural and unnatural environments? How could something as simple as unnatural sounds have such strong effects on our emotional wellbeing and health? The answers may lie in how the body, brain, and nervous system process experiences in man-made environments versus natural environments. One benefit of spending time in nature is that you enter a mind state similar to the one typically achieved when using shamanic practices, and the nervous system is able to switch from an alert sympathetic state (fight or flight) to a soothing, restorative

parasympathetic state (rest and digest) for better health. That switchover fosters greater immunity and triggers a process of cellular repair in the body.

Research on “green exercise”—in other words, exercise undertaken outdoors, in a natural area—shows it provides even greater health benefits than exercise indoors, presumably because of the effects of nature. Exercising near water may be especially advantageous.

In his book *Blue Mind: The Surprising Science That Shows How Being Near, In, On, or Under Water Can Help Make You Happier, Healthier, and More Connected at What You Do*, author Wallace J. Nichols cites many neuroscience studies showing that our moods can be positively affected by time spent interacting with bodies of water. He suggests we humans evolved to be calmed by the mere sight of water before us — a patch of blue meeting the sky and above a field of green.

Perhaps we have inherited an ancestral memory of walking across a lush green landscape, rich with plants that feed us and the animals, and looking toward the horizon to be comforted by the sight of the nourishing waters of a lake or river. In such places, we may experience a sense of home as well as a connection to the land that helps us to better understand who we are and what our lives are about. Writing in *Walden*; or, *Life in the Woods*, Henry David Thoreau said, “A lake is the landscape’s most beautiful and expressive feature. It is earth’s eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature.”

Carl Greer, PhD, PsyD is a practicing clinical psychologist, Jungian analyst and shamanic practitioner. He teaches at the C.G. Jung Institute of Chicago and is on staff at the Replogle Center for Counseling and Well-Being, and is the bestselling author of Change Your Story Change Your Life. To purchase his new book, Change the Story of Your Health click here and for more information visit CarlGreer.com



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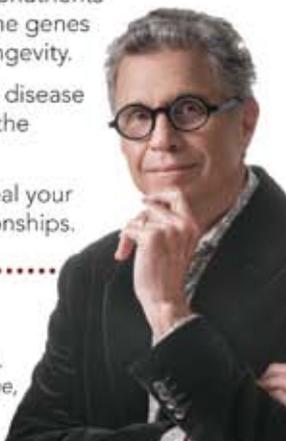
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The Importance of Spending Time with Dolphins and Whales

By Anne Gordon de Barrigón

We all know how much fun it is to see a dolphin. It is impossible not to smile when in the presence of a dolphin, even watching a video or a picture, but important to us? How can that be?

Spending time with dolphins, and whales, brings us great joy, and what can be more important than feeling joy. When we are happy, we are relaxed, have lower stress levels, we can even forget physical or emotional challenges, even if just for a moment. In fact, when you are in the presence of a dolphin or whale, it is literally impossible to think of anything else in that moment. Seeing them, gives us the gift of Being in the Present Moment.

Forgetting our troubles is an

obvious benefit, but there are many other benefits that may not be so obvious. For example, Dolphins play their entire lives, often leaping out of the water for the sheer joy of it. Watching playful dolphins reminds us to play and laugh more in our often too serious lives. The Dolphins inspire us to play more. When was the last time you played or laughed so hard you could not think about anything else? By bringing more play and laughter into our lives, it raises our endorphins and helps us to handle stress and mental challenges better. Schedule a play date with friends, volunteer at a day care center or animal shelter to play with young children or puppies and kittens to play

like the dolphins.

Dolphins go with the flow. When a dolphin encounters stormy waters, what do they do? Run and hide? No! They use the force of the storm to play more, leap higher and let the force of the storm carry them farther than they may have gone on their own. Why is that a good thing? Possibly to find better feeding areas or quiet bays to rest in. They do not fight the storm and waste valuable energy to try to swim against it, instead they go with the storm to discover new opportunities that can improve their lives. Imagine using this strategy the next time you are confronted with a problem of challenge in your life. Instead of meeting the problem head on and fighting it, try to go with the flow and see the problem from the inside, which will give you a whole new perspective to find the perfect resolution.

There are no secrets or lies within a dolphin pod. They live in complete transparency. They use echolocation, which helps them to 'see' in murky or dark waters to find food, avoid enemies, dangerous coral reefs and rocks. The use of sound waves to see in low light conditions also is used to see inside

the bodies of their prey to find out if there is disease or weakness, which helps them find the easiest to catch fish. They also use their sonar on each other, and even on humans to scan for tumors, illness and physical issues. Amazingly, this ability also helps them to detect emotions such as anger, sadness and fear, which they can measure through any tightness in muscles or organs. This allows the dolphins to know, not only the physical but also the emotional state of their podmates. They can also use this on us humans too. That means the dolphins know if we are upset, mad, anxious or relaxed and happy. Imagine if in our society, there were no secrets or lies amongst your friends, family or co-workers! It might sound a bit scary at first, but think about it, if everyone you care about knew everything about you, and loved you for exactly how you are, you would no longer have to waste energy to hide those secrets that you think that if others knew them they would walk out of your life. Living in transparency is true freedom.

Dolphins and whales live in true Unity-Community. That means the good of the pod/ *(Continued on page 22)*

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Aligning with the Cycles of Life with Confidence and Blessings

By Margaret Ann Lembo



Every year, every month, and every day we experience the cycles of life and the opportunity to become a better person. The arrival of spring shifts our energy to bring new growth just like the yellow-green leaves on the budding trees and newly sprouted plants that have been sleeping under the earth. It is a time of birth of the new. As the Sun enters Aries, it brings another round of the zodiac cycle.

There are many vibrationally matching stones in the kingdom of gemstones for this time of year. Golden Calcite and Green Calcite align you with confidence, a strong sense of self, and the courage to let yourself make necessary changes to be happy.



Green Calcite Opaque
Photo courtesy of
Andy Frame Photography

All green stones are helpful to connect with luck and good fortune. Green aventurine is the 'shamrock of the gemstone world.' You are infinitely blessed if you believe you are.

Try out different gemstone jewelry or rocks in your pockets golden calcite, green calcite, and/or green aventurine and add my Solar Plexus Spray for strengthening your ability to realign yourself with power and grace. The magnitude of your positive thoughts along with the essential oils, gemstone essences and more contained within the spray let it activate your joy and mental clarity. Let yourself be creative and design your own concoction.

The fresh, green, citrusy scent of the Solar Plexus Spray invokes confidence, integra-



Green Aventurine
Photo courtesy of
Andy Frame Photography

tion, and is a reminder of your own personal magnificence. Spray on and around you as you affirm, "I am confident, courageous and I shine my light brightly. I am magnificent!"

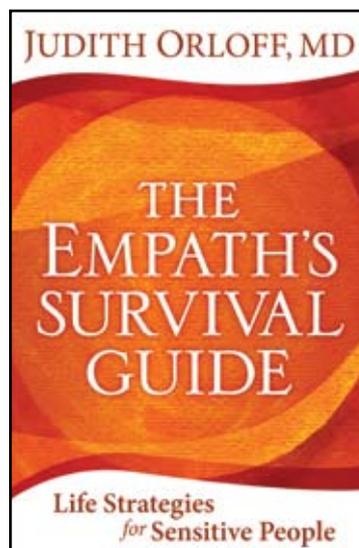
Speaking of magnificence, I am happy to announce my newest deck, *Masters, Mystics, Saints and the Gemstone Guardians*. Matching the vibration of these teachers with crystals, minerals and stone provide guidance and messages of hope and happiness.

Margaret Ann Lembo is the author of The Essential Guide to Aromatherapy and Vibrational Healing and The Essential Guide to Crystals, Minerals and Stones, Archangels and Gemstone Guardians Cards and Crystal Intentions Oracle . . . and more. Find out more at www.TheCrystalGarden.com and www.MargaretAnnLembo.com

The Empath's Survival Guide by Judith Orloff, MD

Reviewed by Caroline Myss

Being an empath is the new normal. The "Empath's Survival Guide" is a perfect guide book. Now people will know how to cope with being highly sensitive and empathic in their everyday lives without developing exhaustion, compassion fatigue or burn out. As Judith says, conventional medicine often pathologizes sensitivity but now you will see it as the gift that it truly is. This book is fabulous and so timely. Everyone needs this book!



they must learn to cope with in a grounded way. Dr. Orloff discusses plant empaths, earth empaths, relationships empaths, telepathic and precognitive empaths, food empaths and more!

The secret to a happy life for everyone who wants to nurture their empathic abilities in an often overwhelming world is to practice the self-protection strategies in this book. Judith's book validates the truth that empaths experience the world around them primarily through their energetic or intuitive senses. Such knowledge is vital to understanding and caring for your own awakening sensitivities.

Come to Dr. Orloff's workshops on empathy and intuition May 20th at Insight LA in Santa Monica, and an intensive weekend workshop at Esalen Institute in Big Sur CA July 28-30, 2017. To learn more about the power of empathy, Dr. Orloff's workshops, and to sign up for her Empath Support Newsletter visit www.drjudithorloff.com

<https://www.amazon.com/Empaths-Survival-Guide-Strategies-Sensitive/dp/1622036573/>

Empaths are sponges who absorb other people's emotions and symptoms. Dr. Orloff offers a wealth of practical strategies to stop absorbing other people's stress while keeping your sensitivities open and alive. She addresses the special needs of empaths—such as getting adequate alone time, setting clear limits with people, and grounding—in areas such as health, work, parenting and raising empathic children, combating narcissists and other energy vampires, as well as in love and all relationships. Also empaths can develop heightened intuition which

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Michael Diamond: In Memoriam

By Steven Halpern

The passing of so many superstar musicians in 2016 had a profound impact upon millions around the world. Whether you're a fan or professional musician, you know how deeply Prince, David Bowie, Glenn Frey and others touched your life from a distance.

In a smaller but more personal context, as a reader of *Awareness Magazine* over the past seven years, you likely enjoyed the insightful album and video reviews that deepened your appreciation and love for the artforms. The New Age music community is already missing Michael Diamond, a much loved and respected San Francisco Bay area music producer, recording artist and reviewer.

His passing has been particularly painful and shocking for me. He was one of my closest friends over the past ten years, bonding beyond music with some shared physical challenges. I was perhaps the last person to see him in his hospital room; I when I was awoken from a deep sleep by a bright light at 1:40 that night, I knew he was saying goodbye.

Michael Diamond

Music and Media Focus

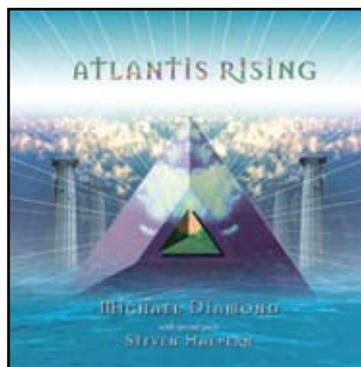
Michael was one of the few professional reviewers who combined well-honed journalistic skills with the insights of a musician. More than just reviewing an individual album, he would include relevant background to add context to provide the reader with a real sense of what the album sounded like, and what the intention behind the album was.

He understood that the role of a critic/reviewer included being an educator. That was the same tradition I was brought up in as a writer, and part of why we bonded so quickly. Over the years, we often "compared notes", concerning a particular album.

When he had completed his



first solo album, *Atlantis Rising*, I mentored him in navigating the New Age market, distributing *Indigo Moon* as well. More recently, we worked together on *Ambient Alchemy*, which he considered his masterpiece.

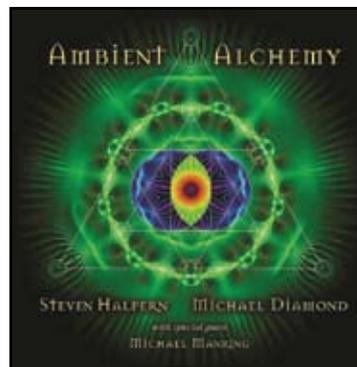


No such thing as 'routine surgery'?

Michael had postponed a 'routine exploratory surgery' til December 15th, and it seemed to go smoothly. Two days later, however, he suffered a massive stroke due to post-op complications, and never recovered fully. (Turns out, it's more widespread than I realized.)

I had never dealt with a

close friend having a stroke. Unlike with my parents, stroke gives no warning. Reading about stroke and heart attacks is one thing. Situations like this severely test our spiritual principles and philosophies,



as we endeavored to honor his DNR wishes.

He passed on January 27.

Michael's sister and two other close friends want offer their words:

Michael started acoustic guitar lessons at the age of seven and never put his guitar down. He started out playing folk music and would come home everyday from school grab his

guitar and play for hours and hours. He later discovered the electric guitar, Jimi Hendrix, Santana, and wanted to be a rock and roll star till he found his true love--New Age music.

One of the biggest thrills he had was to be the opening act for Ram Dass who was giving a lecture at a university in Philadelphia in the early 1980s. It inspired him so and he later taught himself how to play keyboards.

He never went to music school but had the knack to be able to pick up an instrument and start playing it.

When he passed away, we went to his studio and found his beloved acoustic guitar that had been hanging on his wall for years. When we took it down we were shocked to see the image and outline of that guitar was on the wall. It made us think that just as that guitar had left its mark on the wall Michael had certainly left his mark on the world. — Sandy Diamond Milgram

Although my friend and spiritual brother Michael is primarily known as a musician and writer, he had also long been a visual arts creator.

Michael loved to have my dynamic projected visuals accompany him in concert. We also co-created a live audio/visual experience we titled *Sacred Space*. Michael also supplied soundtracks for my music video *Illumination 2*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTBh2w43x94&feature=player_embedded released in 2009. — Ken Jenkins

Michael Diamond was not only a beloved friend but also a wonderful bandmate and first class musician. His unique combination of tasteful synth

(Continued on page 20)

Climate Disruption: The good, the bad, and the necessary

By *Cher Gilmore*

For anyone who believes the defining challenge of our time is climate disruption – the disastrous changes we humans have been and are causing to planet Earth – the present political climate does not engender hope for our survival. But while it's true that huuuuge roadblocks to a sustainable, clean energy future are being thrown up by our new president, many other factors point to a positive outcome in the struggle to preserve our only planetary home. Some are political, economic, or technological; others are evolutionary and spiritual. Let's look at the good first.

On the political scene, despite extreme polarization in Congress, a bi-partisan Climate Solutions Caucus, with equal numbers of Republicans and Democrats, was formed last year in the House of Representatives and is actively looking for legislative solutions. And there are new Republican working groups on energy and the environment in both House and Senate.

Fortunately, a proven legislative means of quickly reducing the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions overheating the planet is available. A simple, steadily-rising fee on GHGs that holds polluters accountable for the damage they cause to our environment – when the money collected is returned to households – both cuts emissions and boosts the economy. British Columbia has had such a program for over eight years, and it works! In fact, Prime Minister Trudeau recently announced that all Canadian provinces have to adopt some kind of carbon pricing scheme (carbon being the longest lasting GHG) by 2018.

On Earth Day last year, 175

countries signed on to the Paris climate agreement, aiming to keep global temperatures from increasing more than 1.5° Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Even China, the second largest polluter behind the U.S. (if you count total emissions) is already pricing carbon in seven pilot programs and intends to go nationwide with them this year.

In technology, a report by the Carbon Tax Center says that as of January 2017 the U.S. electricity sector will have reduced its carbon dioxide emissions by 27% since 2005 – more than four-fifths of the 2030 goal set by Obama's Clean Power Plan! This is startlingly hopeful, since the Clean Power Plan will likely be nixed by the new administration.

Economically speaking, the cost of solar panels has dropped by more than 70% since 2009, and the cost of battery packs for electric cars has declined by 50% or more. With these financial incentives and the popular support for renewable energy, progress can be made in spite of regressive national policies.

Popular support actually may be the key to success. People power on behalf of the environment was growing before the election – stopping the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines, shutting down coal plants, getting fracking bans passed, etc. – but since November it has exploded. Masses of people are waking up, joining activist groups, and speaking out fearlessly on issues that matter to them.

This awakening reflects an energetic change on spiritual levels, as our planet cycles around the heavens away from the influence of Pisces into that

of Aquarius. Aquarian energies carry the qualities of synthesis and unity, as opposed to the separative, overzealous qualities of Pisces, and will soon gain precedence, leading to more cooperation and inclusivity. The Ageless Wisdom tells us this is a time of great transformation, and, according to esotericist Benjamin Creme, a great teacher has come to help us solve our many global crises and lead us into a new time. He'll present himself in an international press conference when we're ready to change our ways – which may be soon!

This Teacher, Maitreya by name, has said we'll have to abandon our current destructive path in order to survive, and instead share the world's resources equitably and restore the environment. If we choose the latter path, we'll create a civilization more beautiful and advanced than anything humanity has ever experienced.

And the bad? Well, we're dealing with the uncompromising realities of physics, and time is short. Our planet is steadily warming, and feedback loops are beginning to accelerate it. In fact, scientists say the warming is now ten times faster than at any time in Earth's history. We're seeing the rapid extinction of whole species; rising sea levels threaten to submerge coastal cities and whole island nations; vast swaths of forest are either dying from invasive pests or burning; and we're enduring more frequent and severe disasters like hurricanes, drought, tornados, and floods, among other consequences of the changing climate. The situation is dire, but not hopeless.

So what's necessary? Very

simply, we must reduce the greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. The quickest way is to put a price on carbon, but to convince Congress to enact such legislation – especially now – we have to become citizen lobbyists. We have to use every possible method to create the political will for change: everything from communicating with our representatives to civil disobedience, according to our individual situations and skills.

To increase our impact, we can join with environmental groups working in various ways for climate action. Citizens' Climate Lobby works directly with members of Congress, media, and the public to promote carbon fee legislation. Other groups, like the Sierra Club, 350.org, Friends of the Earth, and Greenpeace use other methods to stimulate action. We can save the planet if we work together with determination and don't give up. In large numbers and with focused action, the power of the people will always prevail over the people in power.

Cher Gilmore is a long-time member of Share International USA, organizer and Group Leader of the Santa Clarita Chapter of Citizens' Climate Lobby, and contributes to the work of the Sierra Club, 350.org, Friends of the Earth, and Greenpeace, among other environmental organizations.

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Activate LA - Introducing Disclosure Fest

By Adrian Vallera, Jeremy A. Cohen and Devlin C. Warren

The collective consciousness on earth is undergoing a mass awakening. Do you notice significant changes in the human race and in nature? Do you feel the flood of energy pouring onto our planet? These questions are on the minds of many, those who are already on the path of creating a lifestyle that is healthy, spiritual, enlightened and loving. As we are waking from a long slumber tapping into a cosmic intelligence, people are taking action in a "service to others" role that calls us to come together and work to improve all life on earth. These concepts are reaching critical mass through various destinations online, in the media and throughout our communities which have inspired the creation of a new platform to bring forth higher consciousness on planet earth: "Disclosure Fest"—the debut of a series of gatherings and festivals in Los Angeles, CA.

Disclosure Fest is designed to raise the vibration of humanity through a united connection of live music, visual arts, meditations, sound healing, workshops / lectures, interactive experiences and exposure to local and global brands. The goal is to reach like-minded seekers of truth and those new to disclosure topics such as; historical and esoteric information, health and wellness breakthroughs, future science and technology and the power of intention through meditation that connects our world through unity for environmental awareness and humanitarian initiatives.

Disclosure Fest is rolling out a series of events in 2017, partnering with California State Parks for "The Mass Meditation Initiative", an event free and open to the public on Saturday June 17, 2017 at the Los Angeles State Historic Park in Downtown LA. The other two

initiatives taking place throughout the year include the "Clean Air Initiative" and the "Save Our Shores Initiative." Keep an eye out for announcements about the forthcoming music and arts festival / expo in late summer 2017 in Los Angeles.

"Los Angeles State Historic Park is excited to take part in 'The Mass Meditation Initiative' offering a safe environment for the surrounding communities to visit, meditate and enjoy for recreation and education after undergoing a multi-year renovation..." says Sean Woods, Superintendent of California State Parks, Los Angeles Sector.

All ages of family and friends are welcome during a day of mind opening guided meditations, guest speakers, live music, sound baths, light activations, beautiful art, plant based foods, conscious products and services, contest giveaways and much more. This experience brings us together to learn more about ourselves, this world and our universal connection.

One of the nonprofit organizations co-hosting Disclosure Fest's "Clean Air Initiative" is TreePeople, renowned for dedicating decades to planting trees, improving soil conditions and cleaning the local water supply by empowering communities and policy makers in Los Angeles. They bring people together to share in this gratifying and humble cause. Locals are invited to volunteer at the Disclosure Fest tree of life planting events where TreePeople will guide workshops, teach life giving experiences, improve our planet and clean the air we breathe.

"Planting a tree is a simple but powerful act that can last for generations if that tree is cared for and makes it through the first couple of years of life to establish a healthy root system. Like a child, one day that organism will grow to care for you.

The trees we plant today require proper technique, though it's the people that return to care for their trees and other people's trees that ensures that they live for generations and grow to create the benefits we depend on such as urban cooling. We plant native trees, plants and grasses to help the absorption of rainwater to slow down erosion and protect against many non-native invasive plant species that are not only causing landslides and erosion to waterways but can be harmful to birds and animals. The native trees we plant also provide habitats for local wildlife, food, beauty and countless other benefits." shares Cody Chappel, the Wildland Restoration Manager of TreePeople. "We believe that the education and hands-on experience TreePeople provides will last a lifetime. That's why we are looking forward to working with Disclosure Fest to watch our collaborative efforts pay off as the trees we plant together in urban areas in one season grow into bigger life that provides clean air by reducing smog, VOCs, particulates, carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide from the emissions of our heavy traffic lifestyle.

An urban tree requires at least 5 years of care that includes watering periodically as well as ensuring the stakes and tree ties are affixed properly and are not overly restrictive to allow for proper growth. We have the most diverse ecosystem in the North American continent and Southern California is a Mediterranean ecosystem of 2 seasons; one dry and the other cool and wet. We plant during late fall and early spring and the remainder of the time we care for those trees."

Help support the wonderful work that TreePeople are doing by donating to their organization: TreePeople.org and sign-up

to volunteer for the Disclosure Fest tree planting initiative: DisclosureFest.com/volunteers/

Disclosure Fest is also partnering with Heal the Bay / Ocean Conservancy for the "Save Our Shores Initiative", an opportunity to participate in beach cleanup events that are a fun way to make a difference and help save beaches and sea life in a socially engaging atmosphere of like-minded people. Stay informed and join the email list for these and more exciting group outings to help preserve our beautiful world.

If you are a meditation center, yoga studio, tai chi and qigong studio, healing institute or meetup, please visit DisclosureFest.com to reserve a designated area for your facility. We invite you and your members to come and experience Disclosure Fest's "The Mass Meditation Initiative" June 17, 2017 and to volunteer for the other initiatives.

DisclosureFest.com for more info, volunteering, exhibitor and sponsorship opportunities.

Transcriptions and Edits: Devlin C. Warren and Lisa Cohen.

Adrian Vallera, born in Los Angeles, CA began in the music industry over 20 years ago producing large events promoting bands such as Linkin Park, Hoobastank, System Of A Down among others to become VP of A&R at Sony and Elektra Records. A passionate UFO researcher, truth seeker and light healer, Adrian has been conducting free crystal healing work for over 25 years and lives a conscious and high vibratory lifestyle.

Jeremy A. Cohen is a graphic artist and new media producer based in Los Angeles, CA with over 18 years of experience in web development, video production and motion graphics. He has devoted years to the research and exploration of energy healing modalities, holistic therapies and anti-aging medicine designing touch points for health institutes, retreat centers and nonprofit organizations.

Devlin C. Warren is an award-winning and passionate spiritualist, visual artist, jeweler and free thinker, born and raised in Los Angeles, CA.

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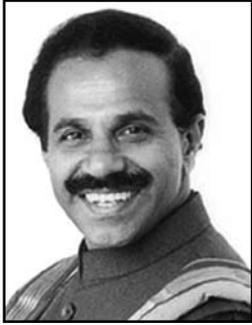
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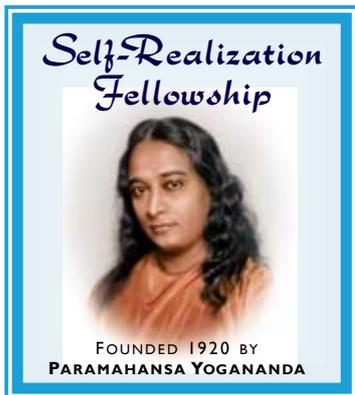
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Michael Diamond...

(Continued from page 14)

textures and Santana-esque lead guitar was a key component of our group Spirit Rising. <https://www.reverbnation.com/spiritrising>

Everyone who met him could tell what a laid back loving spiritual guy he was, but only his closest friends also knew what a delightfully wicked sense of humor he had. I miss him every day. — Jai Josefs, composer of "I Love Myself the Way I Am"

To learn more about Michael's music and reviews:

michaeldiamondmusic.com

(Note: Michael's website will be back up shortly. Please visit again.)

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Steven Halpern and Michael Diamond at the Grammys.

award nominated, multi-platinum selling recording artist, composer, producer, sound healer and founding father of New Age music. His ethereal, healing soundscapes continue to help millions find inner peace,

relaxation and mindfulness through his music. Steven has also written a monthly newsletter since 1985, at www.StevenHalpern.com His latest release is "Mindful Piano".

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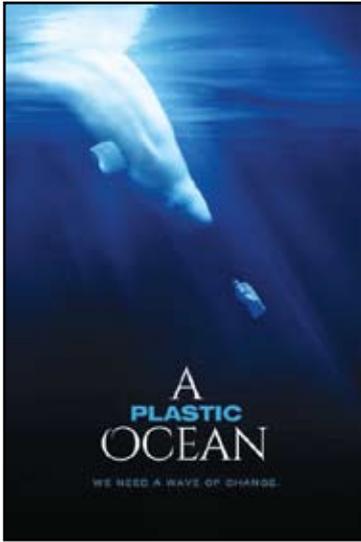
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A Plastic Ocean

By Chris L. Thompson



This story begins with one man. Fourth generation journalist, Craig Leeson is on a voyage to film a pygmy blue whale. While fifty miles off the coast of Sri Lanka, he discovers the extent of the pollution in the ocean. An emulsion of oil, trash, and water found one meter under the surface of the Indian Ocean triggers a memory from his youth. In his native Tasmania, organic chlorine released by local factories contaminated the seas around his home. Politicians moved by public outrage forced the closures of these plants. It took ten

years for the waters to clear. Tasmania now has the cleanest air and water on record. The Indian Ocean detritus impels him to action.

The result is this film; a collaboration with producer Jo Ruxton of the BBC Nature History unit. A number of notable scientists and environmentalists have contributed their time and expertise to this important project. This film is an urgent cry for action.

The ocean is full of trash. The ocean floor is littered with debris. Eighty percent of the refuse is from land-based sources. A lot of it is plastic; which takes four hundred years to degrade. Water bottles and plastic bags account for a majority of the eight million tons of plastic trash in our oceans each year.

The amount of plastic smog in the ocean is affecting marine life. In parts of the oceans, there is one piece of plastic for every two plankton. It is impossible for the fish that fed on plankton to avoid eating the plastic. Those fish are eaten by bigger fish. Plastic has infected the marine food chain. A blue whale starves to death on the plastic ingested while feeding on krill. Dolphins die with stomach filled with plastic from

the fish they eat. Loggerhead turtles die choking on plastic bags mistaken for jellyfish. Let's not forget that 2.6 billion people rely on the ocean for protein. A study by a California university found that the fish in markets around the Pacific Rim contained a minimum of three pieces of plastic.

Plastic also has an effect on the human body. BPA, which is now banned, is only one of a number chemicals that mimic estrogen. Phthalates, an endocrine disrupter, is also released from plastic. This chemical is also found at high levels in plankton, the fin whale, and the bottlenose dolphin. Ninety percent of BPA free plastics still release estrogenic compounds. Cancer, respiratory problems, and birth defects are some of the problems caused by plastic outgassing and burning in non-industrialized nations.

Plastic pollution in our oceans affects us all. We need to change. Some companies and countries are taking the lead. Cynar has developed a

way to turn candy wrappers and chip bags into diesel; recovering over 100 barrels a day. Pyogenesis's plasma waste process breaks down trash into an inert powder and is being used on aircraft carriers. Plastic Bank uses plastic waste as social currency. Rwanda is the first country to ban single use plastic bags. Germany requires manufacturers to be responsible for safe plastic recycling.

All movements start with one person. Explorers Craig Leeson and Tanya Streeter take us on a trip around the world to demonstrate how we all are connected. They also show us how to become change agents. Simple acts such as asking for takeout containers to be plastic free or choosing plastic free containers at the supermarket make a difference. *A Plastic Ocean* is a well-crafted wake up call for the world and a plea for change. Listen well.

Chris L. Thompson is a freelance photographer and documentary filmmaker who makes his home with his family in Sacramento.

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Global Warming

By A Crisis of Consciousness

Asking the right open ended questions can enlarge perspective and initiate expansive thinking. The kind of questions we ask will lead us in a certain direction. If we limit the scope of our questions, then we will often be limited in the kind of answers we seek and find.

During an interview session for the documentary *Sharkwater*, award winning biologist turned filmmaker, Rob Stewart suddenly found himself unable to answer one of the most pertinent questions of all:

“What’s the point of stopping shark finning if the UN predicts that by 2048 the fisheries will be gone?”

Fortunately, at that time he did not have the answer. He immediately found himself pondering such a critical question that would inevitably propel him on yet another epic journey to find the answer.

In an effort to uncover the secrets to saving the ecosystems we depend on for our survival, Stewart discovers nothing less than a revolution is required to save life on earth.

The long awaited response to that pivotal question was revealed through the worldwide release of his second documentary *‘Revolution’*.

In the documentary, Stewart travels to 15 countries, visiting such locations as the coral reefs of Papua New Guinea, deforested regions of Madagascar, and the Alberta tar sands. Along the journey, Stewart begins to see how all of our actions are interconnected to environmental degradation, and that species loss, ocean acidification, pollution and food and water scarcity are limiting, even reducing, the earth’s ability sustain life.

In the midst of disturbing discoveries, such as the widespread disintegration of the coral reefs due to rising carbon dioxide, Stewart manages to find hope. He points to the

revolutions of the past and highlights the current work of selected groups and individuals advocating policy change.

Stewart, who believes “an enlightened humanity can make a difference”, travels the globe to meet with the individuals and organizations working on a solution.

“If people were informed about what was really going on,” he argues, “they would fight for their future, and the future of other generations.”

According to opinion polls, more than 80 percent of Americans want action to reduce the danger from global warming, even if it costs them something. 61 percent believe individual citizens should also be taking a more active role.

Despite the fact that most people have not read the most recent reports on global warming, ocean acidification, over fishing, or deforestation doesn’t mean the threat to life does not exist. The aforementioned issues seem as though they are someone else’s problem.

Deforestation is not happening in the inner city of Los Angeles or New York. The largest effects are felt in foreign countries, i.e. ‘someplace else’.

“Ashok Gangadean, director and founder of the Global Dialogue Institute and professor of philosophy at Haverford College, also stresses that our ego-based cultures are no longer sustainable and are now at a tipping point vis-à-vis a planetary crisis. However, the real crisis, he maintains, is a crisis of consciousness—and we are undergoing a painful transition to increased wisdom and awareness.”

Global warming is a real threat. It is time take personal responsibility, on behalf of all citizens of the world, and assert that monetary influence will no longer determine the fate of our planet.

Here are some suggestions

on what you can do right where you are:

- Decide on a personal level that you can actually make a difference, and take action in a way that is in accordance with that belief.

- Give yourself permission to come up with something innovative and creative.

- Examine the consumer mindset that is consistently willing to corroborate planetary destruction.

- Get informed through climate.gov and get involved in climate change action groups like the David Suzuki Foundation, 350.org, Greenpeace, The Sierra Club, Yale Program on Climate Change Communications, or Idle No More.

- Buy less stuff and become a Minimalist.

- Reduce meat consumption by picking alternatives from time to time.

- Reduce emissions in transit.

Plant-for-the-Planet.com, founded in Germany by Felix Finkbeiner, is a children’s initiative that aims to raise awareness amongst children and adults about the issues of climate change and global justice. The initiative also works to plant trees, and considers this to be both a practical and symbolic action in efforts to reduce the effect of climate change. In 2011, it reached a goal of planting one million trees.

As I watched the visually stunning scenes of *Revolution*, the hope and optimism relayed by Stewart and his fellow activists conveyed that our days of convenience are over, and that Franklin D. Roosevelt’s quote could not be more relevant:

“Remember, remember always, that all of us, and you and I especially, are descended from revolutionists.”

Bridgitte Jackson-Buckley is a Freelance Writer and Editor of Little Visioners on Medium.com

Spending Time...

(Continued from page 12)

family comes first. They think with a pod-mind, without losing their sense of independence or unique personality. By working together, they ensure a higher degree of success to find food and defend against danger. They prefer collaboration to competition, something we can all aspire to by incorporating pod-mind to work together to achieve our goals.

Whales represent Abundance. They are the largest creatures on Earth and they eat the smallest, and you never see a skinny whale. Whales show us that in nature food is everywhere and it is never hard to find it. For a whale, all they have to do is swim with their mouths open to fill their large stomachs. It is only us humans who seem to struggle because of limiting beliefs about money that we have been taught from a very young age. It is time to release those beliefs and Be Whale and open ourselves up to the natural flow of abundance.

These are just a few of many important life lessons we can learn when we spend time with dolphins and whales. I highly recommend you get out on or in the water with dolphins and whales and open your heart and mind to observe, learn and receive insights that can improve your life in a huge and fun way.

Anne Gordon de Barrigón grew up in Washington watching Orca whales on family boating vacations. She studied biology and animal behavior in university. She now lives in Panama and founded the whale watching industry there with her Whale Watching Panama company and offers spiritual themed Whale and Dolphin Wisdom Retreats in Panama and around the world. She is a Whale Wisdom expert and a certified Dolphin Energy Healing practitioner. www.WhaleWatchingPanama.com www.WhaleandDolphinWisdomRetreats.com www.Dolphinhealing.net

BOOK Reviews

By Chris L. Thompson



EXTREME SIMPLICITY: A GUIDE TO URBAN HOMESTEADING

By Christopher and Dolores
Lynn Nyerges

The authors, who live in the San Gabriel Valley of Los Angeles county, bring over twenty years of personal experience to table. This replication of their 2002 work has a new forward and a sixteen page color insert. The lifestyles of this pair of "gentle survivalists" would allow them to overcome most natural and manmade disasters.

This guide has information on edible and organic gardening and includes natural methods of fertilization and pest control. There are examples on urban animal husbandry while dealing with the neighbors.

The couple are master practitioners of the three 'R's. The methods of harvesting rainwater and greywater, composting toilets, and reusing mail are very descriptive. They use the sun's energy for cooking, heating water, and powering their home. There is also instruction on a variety of ways to recycle many products.

If you are starting down the path of self-reliance, this manual will be an inspiration.

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SACRED PLANT INITIATIONS: COMMUNICATING WITH PLANTS FOR HEALING AND HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS

By Carole Guyett

Herbalist, shaman, and teacher Carole Guyett tells us her story and the stories of others while instructing the reader in the use

of ceremonial plant initiations. Plant initiations, or plant dieting, isn't about using plants to improve our bodies but about creating a sacred bond. The plants used are commonly found around us; Primrose, Dog Rose, Oak, Blackthorn, Elder, St. John's Wort, Angelica, and Dandelion.

In the beginning, we are guided through the steps used to facilitate communication with plant spirits. Then instruction is given in the harvesting of plants and the creation of elixirs.

Via storytelling, we learn about these eight plants; the relationship between different seasons in the year, receiving instructions from the spirits themselves, and the creation of specific elixirs. Detailed directions are given on how to interact with these plants.

Celtic and Native American traditions are blended effectively. It is an illuminating and encouraging read.

Published by Bear & Company,
www.BearandCompanyBooks.com

Available from local booksellers
and online.

SECRET MEDICINES FROM YOUR GARDEN: PLANTS FOR HEALING, SPIRITUALITY & MAGIC

By Ellen Evert Hopman

In this book, master herbalist Ellen Hopman reveals to us the many uses and properties of plants. The memorization of modern taxonomy is not required. For plants that might be unknown to us, she describes a few ancient systems of identification. These include the "doctrine of signatures", the Four Humors, and the Chinese system of temperature, flavor, and direction.

After these lessons, we're introduced to a multitude of plants and instructed on their medicinal qualities. There is also instruction on the many uses of a variety of honeys. The plant and animal magic found in many cultures and the effects on natural medicine is discussed. Recipes are provided along with instructions on the usage for various maladies. The creation of formulas, delivery systems, and prescriptions is descriptive as is the glossary of herbal contraindications and precautions.

A precise and well written book for herbalists of all stages.

Published by Healing Arts Press,
www.HealingArtsPress.com

Available from local booksellers
and online.

THE REDUCETARIAN SOLUTION

By Brian Kateman

Reductarianism is a movement for people who are consciously reducing the amount of meat in their diets. It is inclusive of all people reducing their meat intake; not just vegans and vegetarians.

This book contains articles from many experts. It also contains some meatless recipes to help you start down the reductarian road. The articles are grouped into three sections; mind, body, and planet. Mind is dedicated to making thoughtful choices about meat. It discusses the choice of carnivorism and the quality of life for the farm animals. Body talks about the physical toll that eating too much meat places upon the human body; from cardiovascular disease to antibiotic resistance. Planet informs us of the environmental costs of factory farming and raising animals for food.

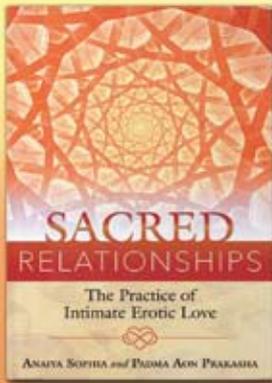
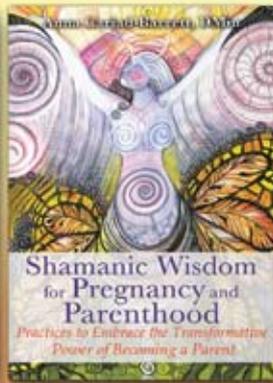
At the end, it encourages us to try to go meatless for one day a week to help bring change to our society. This book is for anyone looking to make that change.

Published by TarcherPerigee, an
imprint of Penguin Random House,
www.penguinrandomhouse.com

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and online.

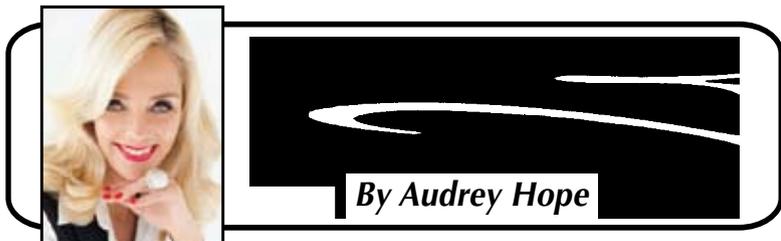
(Continued on page 24)

NEW BOOKS to enrich the Mind, Body, and Spirit

<p>Sacred Relationships Anaiya Sophia and Padma Aon Prakasha</p> <p>A workbook on divine sexual expression, sacred relationship, and uniting the Divine Feminine and Masculine</p> <p>\$18.95 • ISBN 978-1-62055-549-1</p>		<p>Shamanic Wisdom for Pregnancy and Parenthood Anna Cariad-Barrett, DMin</p> <p>A guide to consciously exploring and honoring the spiritual and emotional journey of becoming a parent</p> <p>\$18.00 • ISBN 978-1-59143-243-2</p>	
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By Audrey Hope

The Victory of Our Determined Souls

In dedication to all who stand to save our sacred earth, And who keep on keeping on, despite the storms

Life is how you swim through!
 Trying not to drown - being pulled into the currents,
 And knowing how to keep strong, afloat on the river.
 It's how you stay in the boat, again and again that matters!
 Especially when you look daily at waves that seek to overtake you.
 How do you survive the tempest?
 Make yourself the divine vessel and respect the ride.

Failure is when you get lost at sea. The chaos, and the thirst and the outrage made you forget the lighthouse, that forever shines the way. Failure is needing their mathematical system to calculate the movement when you are really flowing nicely in the breeze. Failure is taking their clock with you.

Failure is being captive to your pain as your compass.
 Failure is listening to loud negative voices and missing the beauty of the gentle night with the moon.
 Failure is looking for the work of art without the process.
 You watch and wonder, where is it? But in your fight to your destination, you are using the wrong language.
 You need to be in silence when you are lost.

SUCCESS IS UNDERSTANDING THE VICTORY OF THE DETERMINED SOUL.

It is that you ever reach, no matter where the boat goes. The center is always the point when you can see the yellow sun and the blue sky. You got in. You're still in, despite the chaos, the confusing times, the destruction and the foreboding storms.

Is it not a miracle, that there are those among us, who still gather to fight for truth and freedom and peace? It is not a miracle that some still choose light amidst the darkness and enter the open gate that has high dreams for all, while the politicians are counting money on the land?

Is it not amazing and astounding and magical that some still refuse limitation and fear? Is it not courageous that you can stay afloat on the boat, on the river, with your beautiful vision to navigate?

You know what wins and who wins really and the true outcome. It is never how it looked when you began. As you change many directions, many times, you get to wave to all the other ships that pass. Those aboard are hopeful beautiful souls like you, who watch and care and love like you...no matter what. They came to travel with you on the special journey.

It is to look up to find the course. Closing your eyes, you may feel the angels blow a gentle kiss to steer the way. They are so happy that you move like gods and fight with wings. They are happy that you wake with vision and energy from other higher spheres. They are joyful that you know the way and how to travel - keeping the VICTORY OF A DETERMINED SOUL.

Audrey Hope is a spiritual counselor and host/producer of REAL WOMEN, an international award-winning talk show dedicated to life-altering perspectives. Visit: askaudreynow.com audreyhope.com and www.youtube.com/audreyhopenow Her CD, The High Voltage Hope System, is available on amazon.com

Book Reviews...

(Continued from page 23)

SPIRIT TRAVELER: UNLOCKING ANCIENT MYSTERIES AND SECRETS OF EIGHT OF THE WORLD'S GREAT HISTORIC SITES

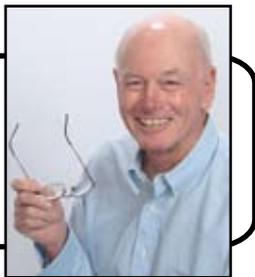
By Sonja Grace

This newest work by mystic healer Sonja Grace gives the reader true insight into eight ancient sites. These sites remain shrouded in mystery despite an abundance of research. The religious and cultural biases of historians have influenced modern views about these places of power.

(Continued on next page)

REFLEXIONS BELTREFIXIONZ

By Robert Ross, CHZT



When Homelessness Hits Home

A letter arrives from the Los Angeles Coroner's office. My chest tightens, the mind focuses. Letter open, the words jump out, "Gary" . . . death, eyes turn away, childhood memories surface.

The Letter

"November 3, 2016

The notifications section of the Los Angeles County Department of Coroner has been assigned the responsibility of attempting to locate family for the above named person. During our efforts to locate next of kin, your name and/or address has been uncovered in connection with the decedent's history.

If the above named is a relative, I first of all extend to you my condolences on your loss and sincerely apologize for the insensitivity of informing you of the death in this manner. Regrettably, other methods of notification have not been successful.

If you are related to the above named person . . ."

By phone, the Coroner's office informs us our cousin was homeless, living on the UCLA campus. Palm on forehead, my thoughts turn to memories of Christmas Eves long ago, childhood faces glowing with excitement, colorfully wrapped gifts, sparkling lights on the tree.

How did this happen?

Daily Bruin Newspaper, November 3
"63-year-old dies after falling from UCLA Biomedical Library

A 63-year-old man died after falling from the UCLA Biomedical Library on Oct. 28. The Los Angeles County coroner identified the death as a suicide.

UCPD spokesperson Nancy Greenstein said UCPD responded to reports of a person falling from the roof or window at 11:30 a.m. She added the person does not appear to be affiliated with UCLA.

Greenstein said UCPD is not releasing the name and is not investigating the death as a homicide.

The library was closed and blocked off from bystanders after the incident. The library opened again at about 2:20 p.m., according to police at the scene.

Counselors were stationed in the library to help those affected by the death, Greenstein said.

Drive down any busy street in San Diego, or Los Angeles, and you'll see at intersections, on the center meridians, the homeless, looking worn, disheveled, with signs asking for money. Some are mentally ill, others support a drug or alcohol habit, still others perhaps adding to their public assistance income. Whatever the motivation, the sleeping bags lining downtown streets, the shopping carts used as mobile homes, and the panhandlers in front of shops and on street corners are disturbing. And the problem is growing.

According to *Forbes Magazine*, San Diego County has the fourth largest homeless population in the country at 8669.

However, New York leads with an astounding 73,523, followed by Los Angeles County at 48,853 and Seattle at 10,730.

My cousin, estranged from family, hadn't spoken with me in 20 years. But now, I wanted to know why. I put an ad in the *Daily Bruin*: "Did anyone know the homeless person who fell from the Biomedical Library on Oct 28? He was my cousin. Please contact me by email ..." No response.

Gary's death hit home. No longer were these nameless individuals staring at me as I wait for the signal to turn green. They're someone's cousin, son, daughter, father, who, for whatever reason, chose not to use the safety nets available to them. Instead, they hit the streets, sliding down a path of self-destruction.

In an attempt to make sense of it all, I watch the documentary *Without a Home*, by Rachel Fleischer. The background music written by her sister Jessica is poignant, and the lyrics linger for days. "Walking the streets, but nowhere left to go, pushing carts, there's nothing left to show, the hunger never dies, the sorrow in their eyes ..." The movie follows Rachel as she documents the lives of six homeless people living in the Los Angeles area. Rachel is pulled into their lives and finds herself attempting to help. At the end of the documentary the viewer is left with the feeling that there is no easy answer. Those who live on the streets surrender their sovereignty, often having mental and emotional problems that exceed the limits of any "Twelve Step" type of program.

The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty indicates, as of 2016, approximately 1,750,000 are homeless in the U.S. Sixty-six percent have alcohol, drug abuse or mental illness issues.

According to a recent article in the Los Angeles Times, "San Diego County is moving forward with a new program that will provide long-term housing

and care to as many as 1,250 mentally ill homeless people in the next two years." And, in February 2016, the Los Angeles City Council, after declaring that homelessness had reached "emergency proportions," approved a \$100 million plan for homeless services this year. And \$2 billion over the next decade for housing – including appointing a city homeless coordinator, creating a network of public restrooms and showers, and, making a huge investment in affordable housing.

Whether or not another layer of programs, another bureaucracy, will make a dent in homelessness remains to be seen.

My cousin, alone, scared, confused, his mind and spirit no longer looking forward to a better life, chose to end it. I'm sorry. I'm sorry I couldn't have done something.

There are 1,750,000 'Garys' living on the streets, alone, scared and confused. I'm sorry for them too.

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Robert Ross can be reached at: SanDiegoRoss@yahoo.com

Book Reviews...

(Continued from previous page)

First, we are informed about what science has uncovered about each of the places. Then, as a spirit traveler, Sonja Grace goes back in time to witness the creation of these places. Her conversations with star beings, demigods, and human ghosts enlighten us. These entities inform her of the reasons behind the rise and fall of these sacred spaces.

Her observations from these travels are very informative. This is a great gift for anyone looking for more information about some of the world's great historic places.

Published by Findhorn Press, www.findhornpress.com

Available from your local booksellers and online.

Chris L. Thompson is a freelance photographer and documentary filmmaker who makes his home with his family in Sacramento.

CALENDAR of Events

Calendars are \$2.00 per word, minimum \$30.00. Phone numbers with area code, websites, and e-mails are considered as one word; hyphenated words are considered as two words. Please e-mail your listing to: Yolanda@awarenessmag.com Deadline is April 15.

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"In all things of nature, there is something of the marvelous."
— Aristotle

MARCH

MARCH 10, 11, 12, 2017 5D New Humanity Movement & 5D Events welcome you to the 15TH Consciousness Event: "They Are Among Us". Symbiotic Synthesis of Star People and People of the Earth. Event is about science, health and consciousness. Amazing epic event with over 33 keynote speakers, 100 lectures, workshops, panels and exhibits. Global Gathering of all Lightworkers, Indigo Star Seeds, healers and truth seekers; the 144,000 who will lead Humanity into the new age of Aquarius and the new Earth the Sentient Beings for celebration of New humanity. Intention: "Global Peace & Transformation". At the Holiday Inn Los Angeles-Intl Airport, 9901 South La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90045 Director of the event: David Farman (310) 908-6682, Email: info@5devents.com website: 5Devents.com Streamed Live on: 5Dstream.com

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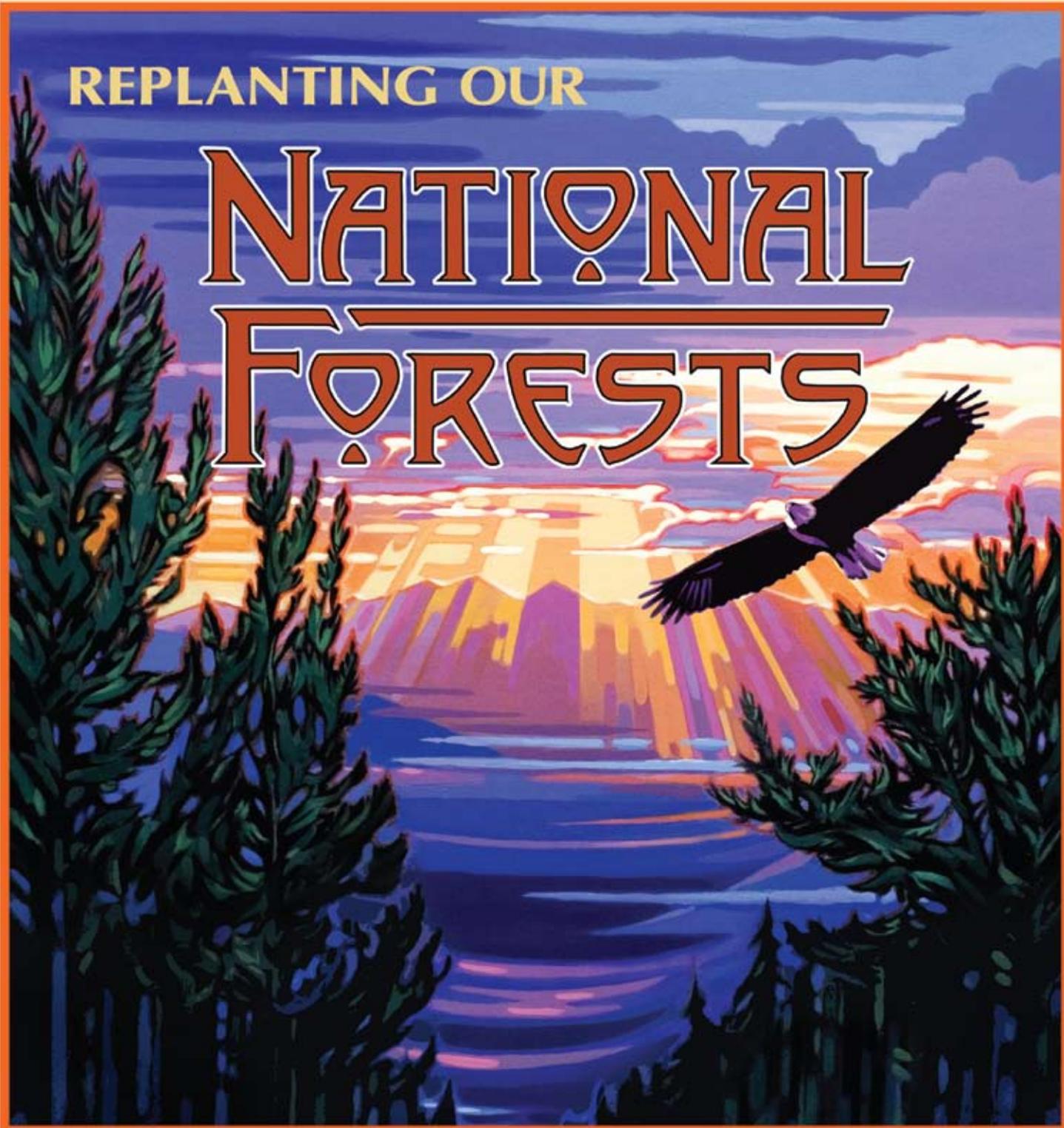
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